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Chief of Army Staff Gen Bajwa vows to foil terrorist acts

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Azerbaijan rejects claims of Armenia

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Briefs

China appreciates PM Khan's visit



BEIJING: China on Wednesday highly appreciated the Prime Minister Imran Khan's attendance of the opening ceremony of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and said that the warm welcome to the Pakistani contingent by Chinese audience once again showed the ironclad friendship was deeply rooted in the hearts of the people of the two countries. "We highly appreciate the Prime Minister Imran Khan's attendance of the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Games," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in response to a question raised by APP during his regular briefing held here. — APP

Faisal Vawda disqualified for life

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has declared PTI Senator Faisal Vawda disqualified for life for concealing his dual nationality from it at the time of submitting his nomination papers in 2018. The ECP disqualified him under Article 62-1-F of the Constitution slapping a life-long ban on him as he could not contest election all his life. According to the decision, Mr Vawda will have to return all benefits and salaries in two months.

We're serving people

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League - Quaid (PML-Q) leader Chaudhry Parvez Elahi on Wednesday said that as an ally of the incumbent government, we are serving people to a fullest extent. German Ambassador Bernhard Stphen met Chaudhry Pervaz Elahi in the Assembly. During meeting, the enhancement of bilateral relations and co-operation in various fields were discussed, while the German ambassador sought the well-being of former PM Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

Opp leaders will end up in jail: PM

Taking a jab at PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, PM Imran said that a "heart patient" was surprisingly climbing stairs and visiting factories in the UK

ISHFAQ MUGHAL / DNA

FAISALABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday said the "dacoit leaders" of the Opposition parties, who had looted the national exchequer during their tenures, have ganged up in a fear of getting sentenced on their cases of corruption. Addressing the launching ceremony of the Naya Pakistan Sehat Card Program in Faisalabad, he termed PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif's speeches in the Parliament as "job applications". In his hard-hitting speech, PM Imran said that those who used to call each other thieves 20 years ago are now joining hands - in an indirect reference to a recent meeting between former president Asif Zardari and Shehbaz Sharif in Lahore to discuss anti-government strategy. "The opposition leaders, who had earlier boasted to 'tear up each other's

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Country making progress

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry on Wednesday said that the country is moving towards stability under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, media reported. Addressing a condolence reference in

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Army Chief vows to foil terrorist acts

The COAS presides over the 247th Corps Commanders' conference

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: While praising the martyrs who repulsed the recent attacks in Balochistan, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa vowed on Wednesday that the armed forces will "eliminate all remnants of terrorists, their abettors and accomplices" at "whatever the cost", the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

According to the military's media wing,

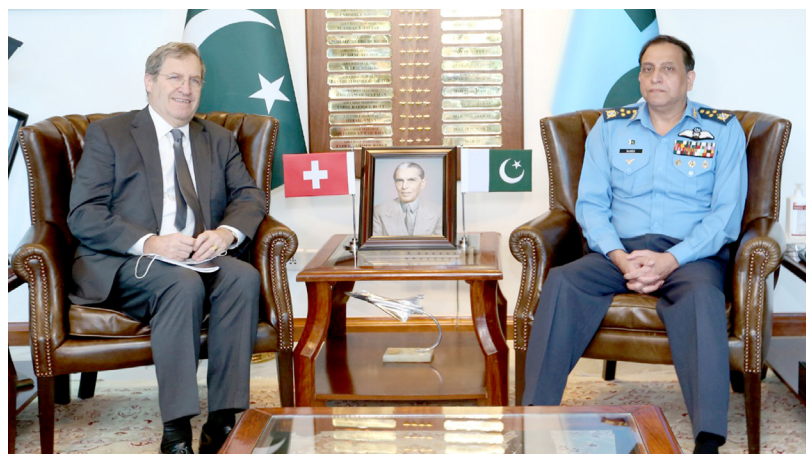
Continued on Page 06

Terrorist killed in fire exchange

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed a terrorist in an exchange of fire at North Waziristan District. On the night, 8/9 February 2022, fire exchange took place between Security Forces and terrorists in general area

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland Benedict de Cerjat calls on Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. — DNA



FAISALABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan distributing National Health Cards at University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). — DNA

Qureshi holds talks with UAE FM

Pakistan deplores Indian govt hijab ban decision

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi held a telephonic conversation with the Foreign Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on Wednesday. The two Foreign Ministers exchanged views on issues of common interest. Reaffirming the close fraternal ties between the two countries, they agreed to further enhance bilateral cooperation in different fields. Condemning the Houthi militia attacks targeted towards the United

Continued on Page 06

Swiss envoy calls on Air Chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland H.E Mr. Benedict de Cerjat called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of PAF personnel and the exceptional progress made by PAF over the years, especially through indigenization. The Air Chief highlighted that both countries enjoy cordial relations and reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral cooperation between the air forces of the two countries. Various matters of mutual interest and professional cooperation also came under discussion during the meeting.

Continued on Page 06

Bilawal says long march to send govt packing

"The PM should dissolve the Assembly before the march if he has the courage to do so," he says



STAFF REPORT

MULTAN: Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Wednesday said that the party's Central Executive Committee (CEC) has decided that it would start its long march on February 27

Continued on Page 06

Opp. agrees on phase-wise process

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The opposition parties have decided on phases of the no-trust move against the incumbent government led by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). According to a private television channel report Wednesday, preparations have begun by the opposition to

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- Trendy drink for trendy people -

Inside...

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Russia sees room for diplomacy amid Ukraine tensions — Page 06

Azerbaijan rejects claims of distortion of Armenian heritage — Page 07

Japan, UNODC boost ANF counter narcotics capacity — Page 08

Afghanistan: Taliban faced with multiple pressures, demands

The US loyal western and European world is thinking on different lines, considering "regrouping and re-assembling" of Al Qaeda affiliated militants a serious threat to the global peace

Comment

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Though certain circles within Pakistan are jubilating and empowering of loyal Taliban militants across the border in Afghanistan, the ground reality is different as some elements are bent up on "maintaining or restoration of what they claim independent, sovereign and autonomous status of motherland." Whereas the US loyal western and European world is thinking on different lines, considering "regrouping and re-assembling" of Al Qaeda affiliated militants a serious threat to the global peace. Both the apprehensions are harmful to much

more interests of Pakistan, whereas its leaders and officials from particular mindset are attaching great hopes with Taliban-governed Afghanistan. Couple of days back an international media outlet aired news pertaining to the visit of Abdullah, son of Osama Bin Laden to Afghanistan whereas he held meetings with top Taliban leaders. Though nothing is mentioned about shelter of Abdullah, definitely the west would blame no other than Pakistan or Afghan Taliban, for alleged facilitation to the family members or followers of OBL who was targeted by US marines in a mysterious operation in the outskirts of Abbottabad on May 2, 2011 last. So far Afghan Taliban has neither endorsed reports of Abdullah's secret visit to Afghanistan in October 2021

last but it generated apprehensions amongst some of the regional countries who were hopeful for return of peace and ending to religious extremism in the region.

No one can deny the fact that Al Qaeda or its other affiliated groups and factions couldn't be disbanded with murder of OBL but all such groups and factions are active and alive throughout the world. For a couple of years, some of the hardliners have experienced their role and capacities in the Islamic States of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) also called Daaesh. But they continued their links and association with the Tehrik Taliban Afghanistan also called Emirate Islami Afghanistan, enabling

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Briefs

Dialogue on interfaith harmony organized in Lodhran

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHRAN: A dialogue on interfaith harmony was organized by the Lodhran Pilot Project in Lodhran. The World Interfaith Harmony Week was aimed to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith. LPP organized a dialogue with an intention to mark the Interfaith Harmony Week on the significance and importance of inclusion, social cohesion and coexistence. Session was attended by 20 participants including Aawaz-II District Forum, Village Forum members, religious scholars including Muslim scholar Maulana Naseer Babar, Pastor Imran Bahadur, Pandit Kishori Lal, local government, like-minded organizations and activists. Religious scholars from the Muslim, Christian and Hindu communities highlighted the importance of interfaith harmony in accordance with their respective religions. In this dissertation, Ms. Aalia Sundus (District Manager Aawaz-II), shared key significant activities organized by LPP in line with the subject session. She also added that how LPP has been able to reach out maximum marginalized segments of the target districts under AAWAZ-II program to reaffirms that mutual understanding and inter-religious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace.

Turkey ready to help Pak for transfer of technology

DNA

KARACHI: Founder President, Pakistan Turkey Business Forum, Muhammad Farooq Afzal met with the Newly appointed Consul General of Turkey Mr. Cemal Sangu Congratulate and greet him. Farooq Afzal briefed him about the activities of the Forum and discussed in details about the promotion of Bilateral trade and investment between two countries. Farooq Afzal said that Bilateral trade volume is very less keeping in view the great potential between two countries and it needs full support and help from the Turkish Diplomats in Pakistan. During discussion, Turkish CG told that Turkey is ready to transfer of technology to Pakistan and that in this regard he assures his fullest cooperation with the coordination of Turkish Trade offices in Islamabad and Karachi.

Over 6.9m people vaccinated in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD: Over 6.9 million (6,941,888) people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im said on Wednesday 4,156,040 citizens were injected the first dose while 2,712,027 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He said that 38,536 health workers were also given the first dose while 35,285 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. As of now 148,373 first doses and 98,916 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, he added. He said that timing of these vaccination centers was 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. except Sports Complex Samanabad center which would remain open round the clock. — APP

Girls steal the limelight in UoG graduate exams

The results for BA/BSc/B.Com IT (part I & II) annual examinations were also declared. The results for the exams were announced by a notification issued by controller examinations Ahmad Jamil Turk



BUREAU REPORT

GUJRAT: Girls stole the limelight by capturing all top positions as the University of Gujrat (UoG) announced the results of Associate Degree Programme Arts/Science/Commerce (part I&II) Annual Examinations for the year 2021. The exams were held in October-November 2021.

Moreover, the results for BA/BSc/B.Com IT (part I & II) annual examinations were also declared. The results for the exams were

announced by a notification issued by controller examinations Ahmad Jamil Turk.

In the Associate Degree Science exams, Sehresh Shaukat of Govt. Zamindar Postgraduate College Bhimber Road, Gujrat, bagged the first position with 678 marks. Aroosha Zainab, also from the same college, captured the second position with 657 marks. Alina Ijaz, Superior Group of Colleges, Mandi Bahauddin, secured the third position with 653 marks. The first position in Associate Degree Arts annual exams was

held by Izza Sattar of Punjab College for Women, Lalamusa (Wehnd), with 644 marks.

The second position was bagged by Arooj Khalid of UoG City Campus, Maraghar Colony, Gujrat, with 626 marks. The third position in the same category was held by Hajra Bibi of Ibn-e-Imam Science College, Jalal Pur Jattan, Gujrat, with 617 marks. In Associate Degree Commerce annual exams, Jaweria Akhtar of Punjab College Kharian won the first position with 1143 marks. Seerat Fatima of Superior Group of Colleges

Mandi Bahauddin bagged the second position with 1118 marks. Fiza Ijaz of Saint Francis Degree College, Sara-i-Alamgir, won the third position with 1039 marks.

According to the controller of examinations, as many as 3675 candidates appeared in the Associate Degree Arts exams, 2028 in the Science and 381 in Associate Degree Commerce exams with the pass percentage of 58.89, 72.51 and 17.84 respectively.

Meanwhile, a grand prize distribution ceremony was held at Hafiz Hayat Campus in which Pro Vice

Chancellor Prof. Dr Muhammad Faheem Malik awarded the position holders with merit certificates and cash awards.

Toppers were awarded a cash prize of Rs25000 each in the three categories. Second position holders received a cash award of Rs20000 each while third position holders were awarded Rs15000 each.

The ceremony was attended by Additional Registrar Raes Ashraf, other senior administration officials, academics and parents of the position holders.

SNGPL takes note of gas theft

LAHORE: Sui Northern Lahore Region has taken action against (03) three Industrial and one commercial consumer involved in gas theft, while taking action against industrial and commercial gas thieves. Consumers involved in gas theft are A-One CNG, ZMB Trading, Mian Traders and a Commercial Consumer Muhammad Shamoan were involved in pilferage. The gas of these consumers has been disconnected and theft amount of 183 million has been imposed / booked on these consumers. — APP

Probe underway to determine how nail impales through woman head: Saif

AGENCIES

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government spokesman Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif has said that a probe was underway to determine how a nail impaled through the head of a woman, assuring that facts behind the incident would be shared once the investigation was completed. Barrister Saif said though the woman has adopted a stance that



she got a nail stuck in her head while working at home however he added the matter would be investigated in detail.

The doctors, he said, preferred treatment rather than going into the detail but there was information that a fake healer impaled the nail into the woman's head, assuring her that she would give birth to a male offspring. He said anyone found involved in this insane and dangerous act

would be taken to the task.

It may be mentioned here that a woman came to Lady Reading Hospital with a nail stuck in her head. In her initial statement she said a healer impaled a nail in her head and told that she would give birth to a baby boy, however later the woman diverted from her initial statement saying the nail went through her head while she accidentally hit her head into a wall.

Deteriorated peace situation in Gujrat dist

Sheraz vice president of Mangowal Gharbi Press Club was shot dead allegedly by six armed persons

YOUSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: Four persons including a local journalist were murdered within less than 24 hours in three different incidents in Gujrat district. It is reported that one Sheraz Yousaf, aged-36, vice president of Mangowal Gharbi Press Club was shot dead allegedly by six armed persons near village Chak Dhillio when he was driving back to home in his car. Kunjah Police have registered a case against six persons under sections 302, 148, 149 Cr. P. C. The cause of this murder is told an old enmity between them. In second incident one Abdul Rehman Jatt was passing through the village Hariawala, his motorbike was hit by a car neat a bricks Killen. He fell down from his bike. It is reported that six armed persons opened indiscriminate firing on the victim. As a result, Abdul Rehman Jatt died on the spot. A minor girl Laila Baloch became victim of the heavy firing and succumbed to serious injuries. Kunjah police have registered a case against six persons. In third incident a businessman Waqar Ali was going back to home after closing his garments shop. When he reached near Nayyar Mall, GT road, two armed dacoits approached him to stop there. He tried to get away on his bike but fell down when the dacoits fired

on him. The dacoits robbed his bike and a cash of rupees 50,000. Nobody helped the victim Waqar to rush him to hospital. As a result, he succumbed to serious injuries. Saddar police Gujrat have registered a case against two unidentified dacoits.

Incident of robbery

Cash and valuables worth lakhs of rupees were robbed in three different incidents in Gujrat. In first incident one Abdul Salam resident of Qamar Sialvi road was deprived of a cash of rupees 60,000 by two armed dacoits. In second incident one Bilal Hussain resident of Sada Chak was looted by unidentified dacoit near Samman Pindi village. It is reported that the dacoit snatched his Iphone worth one lakh and a cash of 9,000 rupees. In third incident one Umer Arif resident of Hussain Colony was deprived of mobile phone and some cash worth thousands of rupees near Bolay, Shadadula Town. Police have registered separate cases and started investigation.

Two motorcycles lifted

Two motorcycles were lifted by unidentified lifters in different incidents. In first incident a motorcycle of one Razaqat was stolen from Islamgarh, an area of police station Saddar Jalalpur Jattan while in second incident motorcycle of one Sultan was lifted by unknown thieves from Mohalla Islam Nagar. Civil Lines police Gujrat have registered a case.

Snow Festival in Kalam from Feb 11

PESHAWAR: The three-day Winter Snow Festival will be commencing from February 11-13, 2022 with visitors and tourists taking part in multiple snow games, musical shows besides highlighting handicraft of Malakand Division. In this connection a meeting was held to review all arrangements for the Kalam Snow-Sports Festival. Additional Deputy Commissioner Irfan Ali Khan presided over the meeting here on Wednesday. The meeting was held in Deputy Commissioner Office Swat Junaid Khan to review the arrangements for Kalam Snow and Sports Festival. Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief Riaz Ali Khan, Assistant Commissioner Bahrain Hidayatullah, Regional Sports Officer Swat Kashif Farhan and other officers of the department and area elders were present on the occasion. The meeting was attended by officials of district administration and sports and culture department. — APP

Bulgarian Ambassador visits Peshawar Museum

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan, Ms. Irena Gancheva on Wednesday visited historic Peshawar Museum, the biggest facility of the Gandhara Art in world. She also visited the historic, Ali Mardan Villa and Sethi House and visited its different sections. The Bulgarian Ambassador acknowledged the efforts and strong commitment of Directorate of Archaeology & Museums KP and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government who have delivered on the vision of heritage. The authorities briefed the distinguished guest about the history and antiquities pre-

served in Peshawar Museum. Established in the heart of Peshawar some 150 years ago, Peshawar Museum has achieved a unique historical distinction of being a home to over 30,000 antiquities and a complete life story of Lord Buddha, attracting thousands of tourists and followers of Buddhism every year. It is the largest Museum of the world in terms of Gandhara Art where about 14,000 ancient antiquities and artifacts out of 30,000 antiquities are currently put on display and preserved. The complete life story of Founder of Buddhism, Lord Buddha was kept preserved in the forms of statues and panels, which are attracting followers of Buddhism from cross the world.



Insaf Sehat Card commendable: Gill

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Political Communication Dr Shahbaz Gill on Wednesday said the flagship program of universal health cards scheme (Insaf Sehat Card) is a praiseworthy achievement of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. "Now every family in all the four districts of Faisalabad division -Toba Tek Singh, Chinot, Jhang and Faisalabad will be able to avail medical treatment facilities at all public and private sector hospitals, including leading expensive

private hospitals like people in other parts of the country".

He was addressing a press conference at the Circuit house here. Chairman NA Standing Committee on Finance Faizullah Kamoka, Provincial Minister for Culture and Colonies Mian Khayal Ahmad Kastro, PTI leader Dr Nisar Ahmed were also present on the occasion. Shahbaz Gill said that Prime Minister Imran Khan mandated treatment facility for each family costing upto Rs one million. "He has put Rs 1 million in the pocket of every family for getting treatment facilities from any hospital".

He highlighted that cardiac surgery in the most expensive hospital costs around Rs 600,000; expenses of a heart-stent are Rs 300,000, and dialysis expenditures cost about Rs 20,000 per week and Rs 80,000 per month. He said that earlier poor people were facing extreme hardship and were forced to sell out everything including ornaments of their daughters for getting treatment of above cited diseases. "But now they could avail the medical treatment easily without paying a single rupee by using health cards". "It is our responsibility including media as well to provide aware-

ness to common man about the use of health cards", he said adding that a sum of Rs 400 billion was allocated for Insaf Sehat Cards annually. Criticizing the opposition, Shahbaz Gill said opposition was holding meetings for bringing in-house change but they would fail in their designs and tactics this time also as in the past. "They made 36 futile attempts against the government already and we would fail their 37th attempt also", he said. He said that the opposition plundered national wealth, and Prime Minister Imran Khan would never grant them concessions.

Shahbaz Gill expressed his opinion that the opposition held a meeting on Kashmir Day which aimed to sabotage the Kashmir issue. Chairman NA Standing Committee on Finance Faizullah Kamoka said that there was no example of health cards facility in the world except in two or three countries. He said that a development package of Rs 8 billion was being spent on improving infrastructure, provision of clean drinking water, sewerage issues, repair and maintenance of road network in the district. He said that public money collected through tax was being spent on people. "The country's economy is flourishing, and industrialists and traders are earning profits due to prudent policies of the incumbent government".



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Briefs

3 fraudsters arrested for duping people

ISLAMABAD: The Intelligence Wing of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has arrested three accused including Shahid Ali Rajpar, Asad Ali, Khalid Mirani on the allegations of issuing fake appointment letters in NAB and handed them over to the police. According to NAB spokesman, the action has been taken on the direction of NAB Chairman Justice Javed Iqbal. Legal action would be initiated against the accused after registration of the FIR. According to the details, a person has contacted the NAB claiming that he has the appointment letters for the posts of Data Entry Operator (BS-14) and Deputy Messenger (NaibQasid) (BS-5). Upon verification by the NAB, it was found that the NAB had not issued any letter regarding the appointment to the said posts. The NAB Intelligence Wing investigated the matter and arrested three accused Shahid Ali Rajpar, Asad Ali and Khalid Mirani and handed them over to the police for onward action. Chairman, NAB has already issued strict instructions to the intelligence wing of NAB that those who use the name of NAB to deceive the people by issuing fake appointment letters in NAB through fake documents and looting the people by posing them as fake officers of NAB, should be handed over to police. — APP

Tarin assures govt's support for farmers

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue ShaukatTarin on Wednesday assured the government's full support for drought hit farmers of Thal region and directed the President Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL) to take measures for providing relief to growers of the effected area. He held a meeting with Malik Muhammad EhsanullahTiwana, Member National Assembly, Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam, President ZTBL and senior officers also attended the meeting, said a press release. Malik Muhammad EhsanullahTiwana apprised the meeting on the problems and issues of the small farmers of Thal area who are severely affected by consistent drought and are unable to pay the agriculture loans and sought support of the government to address their issues and provide them adequate relief. Finance Minister ShaukatTarin said that present government was promoting agriculture and providing a number of incentives to the farmers for their support and better yields. He suggested insurance of crops for sustainable support of the farmers. — APP

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD, Feb 09 (AP-P):Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 9:00 AM to 02:00 AM Rehmatabad II, Ara Bazaar, Line Park, MillatChowk, KSM II, IslamiaChowk, Main Bazaar, Kariala, Dina 3- Rohtas, Raja Sultan, Coral, Lehtar, Rehara, PHA-1, Bahria Enclave, Treat, Pandorian, Ghauri Garden, Suhdran Road, Khanna-II, Alnoor Colony, Khanna East, Khanna Dak, Azad Shaheed, New Waheedabad, Burma, Taxila, Laniwala, Sirka, Shadi Khan, Chakri, Arsalan Poultry Farm, SPD, Padial, Gagan, Chahan, Mahota, Holy Family, F Block, Katarian, Bani, Gulshanabad, Major Masood Kayani, BB Shaheed, Rata, Race Course, Mangtal, Railway Colony Feeders, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Lilla Town, Ahmedabad, SadfarShaheed, Sanghoi, Nathwala Feeders, from 08:00 a.m. to 05:00 p.m. Behter feeder and surroundings. — APP

ICCI for implementation of rent control act in courts

Mohammad Shakeel Munir said that unless the new rent control act was implemented in the courts, the people will be deprived of its benefits while the rent disputes of traders will not be resolved amicably and business activities will also be affected

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has appealed to the Chief Justice Islamabad High Court Hon'ble Athar Minallah to issue directions to the lower courts for implementation of the new rent control act in Islamabad so that the rent disputes of traders could be resolved soon that will help better growth of trade activities. He said that due to the tireless efforts of ICCI and other stakeholders, an amended

bill of rent control act was passed by the National Assembly and the Senate that was signed by the President of Pakistan and was also notified in the official gazette. However, the courts were implementing the new rent law for deciding rent disputes due to which the traders were facing great problems. He expressed these views while addressing a brunch hosted by Baser Dawood, former President ICCI and President Islamabad Founder Lions Club in honor of the ICCI Office Bearers. Jamsaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad

Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Senior Political Leader Senator Zafar Ali Shah, Former Member National Assembly Zamrud Khan, prominent economist Dr Ashfaq Hassan Khan, Former Presidents ICCI MianAkramFarid, Abdul RaufAlam, Khalid Zubair Ahmad Malik,

Tariq Sadiq, MianShaukat Masood, Mohammad EjazAbbasi, Khalid Iqbal Ali Shah, Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari, Sheikh Amir Waheed and Zahid Maqbool as well as Nasir Qureshi, Chaudhry Abdul Rauf, Mohammad Naveed Malik, Dr. Masood Ghani, Dr. Afshan Malik, Safina Shah,

Chaudhry Masood, Khalid Chaudhry, AshfaqChatha, Saeed Bhatti, Malik Najeeb, Raja Safer, Chaudhry Tahir, Shazia Rizwan, Nigin aKhalig, Nasira Ali Naina, Engr. Fahim Iqbal, Engr. Zeeshan Sadiq, Faizan Shehzad, Tahir Abbasi, MianMaqbool, Asher Hafeez, Tahir Ayub, Chaudhry Abdul Ghaffar, Saifur-Rehman Khan, Gul Sher Sajjad, Malik Javed, Imran Minhas, Raja Waheed, Naveed Satti, Arshad Hameed, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali and others were present on the occasion Mohammad Shakeel Munir said that unless the new

rent control act was implemented in the courts, the people will be deprived of its benefits while the rent disputes of traders will not be resolved amicably and business activities will also be affected. He appealed to the Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court to issue necessary directions to the lower courts for implementation of the new rent law so that the problems of the tenants could be resolved in accordance with new rent law that would create more favourable conditions for the growth of trade activities.

Overall school participation improves

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) here on Wednesday said that Pakistan had recorded significant improvements in overall school participation however it still faced severe challenges in providing quality and adequate education to eligible children. According to a report, launched by the bank, titled "Access Challenges to Education in Pakistan", the public sector remained the main provider of education services across all levels. It accounts for the majority of all educational institutions countrywide. Except for the pre-primary level, total enrollment in public schools is almost double compared to private schools. However the report suggested that further investment and reforms are needed at both levels to widen access and increase enrollment and completion adding that improved education outcomes would help assuage Pakistan's high regional, socioeconomic, and gender disparities and promote robust and inclusive economic growth. The ADP report proposed that the government needed to increase the fiscal budget for secondary education to augment access to schools. Given the public school dominance, an increased fiscal outlay for secondary education is essential to increase the number of secondary schools and upgrade school facilities. Investing in expanding access to post primary education was critical to encourage higher participation and completion rates in both primary and secondary education levels and upgraded the quality of basic education, it added. — APP

Reference in memory of Baba-e-Pothohar held

RAWALPINDI: A condolence reference was held at Punjab Arts Council in memory of Baba-e-Pothohar, intellectual, writer, poet, and educationist Professor Karam Haideri here on Wednesday. The reference was presided over by Prof. Dr Ehsan Akbar, while Prof. Jalil Aali was the chief guest. At the ceremony, Hamza and his colleagues performed Prof. Karam Haideri's Milli song 'Ae mere watan'. Addressing the function, Dr Ehsan Akbar said Prof. Karam Haideri was a patriotic intellectual and his fearless love for the homeland was found in his thoughts and words. Naheed Manzoor said Karam Haideri was a sincere and humane person. In his creations, he taught humanity and tolerance, preached love and devotion to the homeland. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Malik Sohail Hussain Secretary General US-Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce & Executive Member FPCCI Presenting Bouquet to Zahid Latif Khan on being elected Chairman Islamabad Stock Exchange ISE Towers REIT Management Company Limited for 3rd consecutive time. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Khazar Farhadov, ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan met with Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir, Chairman of Standing Committee on Petroleum in the Senate. — DNA

Private ambulance services exploit needy patients

RAWALPINDI: Ambulance or Emergency medical services were considered to provide urgent pre-hospital treatment, stabilization for severe illness and injuries, and transport to ultimate care has developed into a source of inconvenience for needy patients. The private ambulances were charging gigantic charges from affiliates of mourning families to transport

bodies from hospitals as the number of official vehicles available, especially at three allied hospitals, were inadequate to meet the demand. According to details collected by APP, a large number of private ambulances of various sizes can be witnessed lined up in front of emergency wards of Holy Family Hospital, Benazir Bhutto Hospital and District

Headquarters Rawalpindi. A private ambulance owner, requesting anonymity, said they get a list of "critical" patients every morning from the hospital's staff to assess opportunities in their day to day business. However, he revealed that ambulance drivers hover around the wards and approach the relatives to offer their services as soon as a patient dies. As a business

trick, he said many drivers sham to be shocked and grieved over the death and even join in weeping with the bereaved family members. Raja Munno, another driver of a private ambulance stationed at the Holy Family Hospital, said usually, we charge Rs 1000 to 1200 to carry bodies in non-air-conditioned ambulances within the city. — APP

RWMC disposes of 35 tons waste in Gujjar Khan

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) was disposing of around 35 tons of garbage from the Tehsil Gujjar Khan area daily in connection with the month-long cleanliness campaign started on January 28 in the entire district. According to RWMC spokesman, a comprehensive cleanliness plan had been chalked under the drive to make the district environmentally friendly. He said RWMC resolved complaints received on social media while wide-ranging cleanliness was also carried out in different shifts. He informed that 132 sanitary workers and a fleet of 23 vehicles, including dumpers, compactors, shovels, tractor-trolleys and rickshaws, were being used to carry out the clean-up operation. — APP

Six more died, Rawalpindi's death toll reached 1,669

RAWALPINDI: Six more people died from fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, taking the total death toll to 1,669 in the Rawalpindi district. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Wednesday, as many as 1,669 people had died in the district since the start of the pandemic, out of which 1271 Rawalpindi's residents and 398 from outside districts. The report updated that 104 more were tested positive for COVID-19 during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 45,417 in the district, including 42,069 from Rawalpindi and 3,348 from other districts. Among the new cases, the report said that 27 belonged to the Potohar town, 24 from Rawalpindi Cantonment, 17 from Rawal town, nine from KallarSyedan, six from Gujjar Khan, five from Islamabad, four from Taxila and Kahutta, two each from AJK, Attock and Chakwal while one of each case has arrived from Sheikhupura and Murree. "Presently, 107 patients are admitted to eight health facilities, including 57 in the Institute of Urology, 29 in the Fauji Foundation Hospital, seven in the Benazir Bhutto Hospital, five in the Holy Family Hospital, four in the District Headquarters Hospital, two in the Hearts International Hospital and one of each in the Attock, Bilal hospital, and Begum Akhtar Memorial trust." As many as 5,192,885 people, including 44,593 health workers, had so far been vaccinated against the fatal disease since the start of the vaccination drive on March 10, 2021, it informed. — DNA

NRSP launches Internet Zabardast Project

ISLAMABAD: National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) with support from Google.org, Google's philanthropic arm, launched the eInternet Dost and Internet Zabardast project. The Internet Dost and Internet Zabardast project is poised to train 18,000 rural women from all over Pakistan to use Internet and digital technologies to enhance their quality of lives. In addition, 25,000 school children boys and girls will be educated regarding the safe and positive use of digital technology and how to be safe internet explorers. CEO NRSP, Rashid Bajwa while introducing the Internet Dost and Internet Zabardast programmes said that despite rapid advancements in internet access in Pakistan, particularly via mobile internet use, which has nearly doubled from 2018-2020, the digital divide between men and women remains stark. Bajwa stressed that while the elimination of the digital divide must be a priority in the nation's efforts to increase internet access, these efforts must also consider the unique or disproportionate vulnerabilities children and many digitally disadvantaged people may face from the internet. Regional Director for Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka Farhan Quraishi, said, "We are confident that our initiatives will build a critical role in helping the women and youth of Pakistan not only learn digital skills but also explore the online world with safety and confidence." — APP

Advisory body to auction 5G services notified

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication has notified formation of an advisory committee to auction 5G telecom services across the country. The committee, headed by Finance Minister ShaukatTarin, would consist of 13 members including Minister for IT and Telecommunications Syed Amin ulHaque, Minister for Science and Technology Shibli Faraz, Minister for Industry and Production, Advisor on Trade and Investment, Secretaries of Finance, IT, Law, members of Telecom, IT, Telecom division, Chairman PTA, Executive Director, Frequency Allocation Board (FAB) and officials of key institutions, according to notification shared with media on Wednesday. Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin ulHaque said the committee would review the spectrum available and used in Pakistan as per international standards. He said the mandate of the committee would be to approve a 'Strategic Plan' for launch of 5G services after review. The minister said that stakeholders, especially telecom companies, would also be consulted for the strategic plan and the committee would approve 5G spectrum auction procedure in light of consultant's suggestions. — APP

ECC approves textile policy with certain amendments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet here on Wednesday approved Textiles and Apparel Policy, 2020-25 with certain amendments. The ECC met here with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin in the chair, whereas Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar, Federal Minister for Privatization Muhammadmian Soomro, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood, federal secretaries and senior officers attended the meeting. The Ministry of Commerce submitted revised Textiles and Apparel Policy, 2020-25 after incorporating few changes along with implementation report. The ECC after deliberation approved the policy with certain amendments, said a press release.

Judicial murder of Guru, question mark on India

Shehryar Afridi said that the verdict of Afzal Guru itself acknowledged the fact that there was only circumstantial evidence against Afzal Guru

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Shehryar Khan Afridi Wednesday said that the Judicial Murder of Kashmiri trader Afzal Guru was a question mark on so-called 'secular India' and his illegal hanging reflected that entire Indian elite was united in silencing the voices being raised for the freedom of people of Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed these views on the 9th martyrdom anniversary of Afzal Guru while talking to a delegation of Kashmiri activists led by Dr. Mujahid Gilani, President of Kashmir Youth Alliance, here at

the Parliament House. It merits mention here that Afzal Guru, a Kashmiri who was hanged on February 9, 2013 in India's infamous 'Tihar' jail after being charged with false and fabricated allegations of abetting the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001. Guru was arrested in December 2001 despite having found innocent in the entire case. Indian police could not find any concrete evidence against Guru who was awarded capital Punishment by Indian judiciary just to appease the Indian extremists who were protesting to question the failure of Indian government arrest the real culprits of attack on Indian parliament. Shehryar Afridi said that the Indian Judiciary had become an ex-



tension of the extremist Hindutva regime and its judgements in Afzal Guru, Babri Masjid, Maqbool Bhat and other similar cases without any evidence had proved the fact. "Unfortunately, the judiciary and legal; fraternity in India are

working hands in glove with the extremist Hindutva thugs. The Hindutva extremists target the Kashmiri people and once they move courts, the saffron judiciary and lawyers fraternity work to provide legal cover to the oppression meted out to the Kashmiris and Muslims of India," he added. Shehryar Afridi said that the verdict of Afzal Guru itself acknowledged the fact that there was only circumstantial evidence against Afzal Guru. "Under no law, anyone can be awarded capital punishment. The judgement was awarded to hang Guru just to appease the Hindutva extremists of India. His body was never returned to his family and he was buried in a lone corner of the Tihar Jail. His execu-

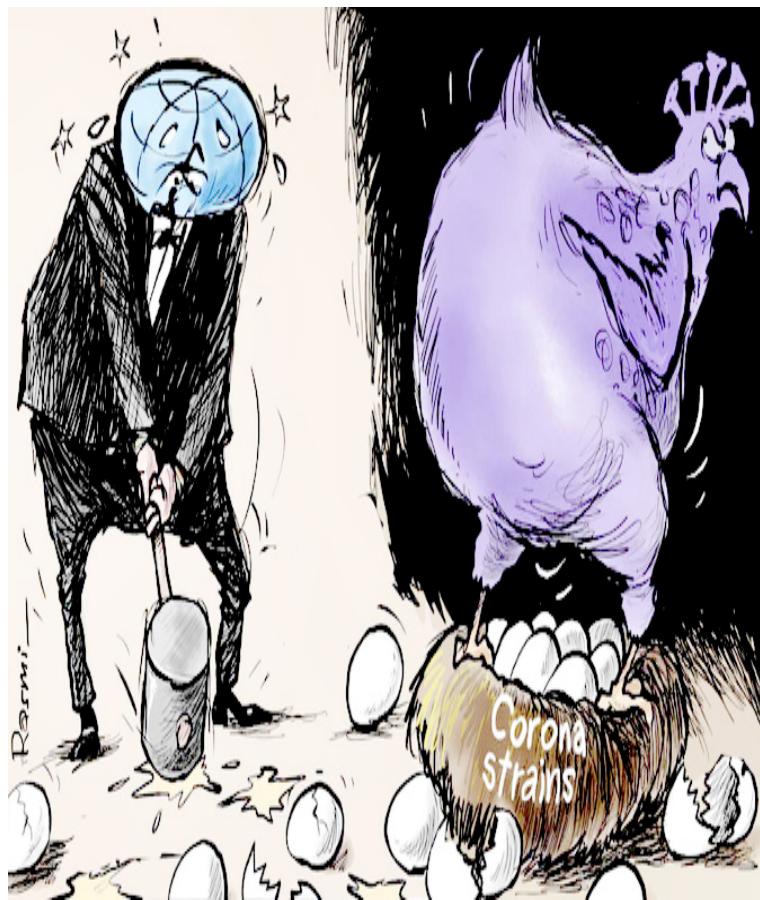
tion was carried out in haste and without prior information to his family. Mass curfew and internet shutdown was enacted in the IIOJK (Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir) to stop people from coming out to the roads against the unjust decision," he said. Afridi said that the world also failed to act to the state oppression of India against Kashmiris though the Hanging of Afzal Guru was condemned by Amnesty International and various other Human Rights Organizations who had termed the hanging as a new trend to executions in secrecy. Shehryar Afridi said that the hanging of Afzal Guru to satisfy the collective conscience of the people of India was a miscarriage of justice.

Divesting SOEs

IT was reported this week that Pakistan has given assurances to the IMF that it will operationalise a Central Monitoring Unit (CMU) within the Ministry of Finance (MoF) by the end of May 2022 for monitoring functions and to provide better analysis at the aggregate State Owned Entities (SOE) level. Though the government already initiated the process of hiring staff for the CMU last year in October, it remains to be seen what the shape of this body will be and the SOE law is yet to be approved by the parliament.

This requirement has been imposed on us only due to our own mismanagement of SOEs as their financial performance has been unsatisfactory, resulting in the deterioration of service delivery and elevated fiscal risk. The primary issue at hand is the governance structure that lacks a proper coordination and supervision framework. Therefore, this could be a good move from a structural perspective as the SOE law would define the rationale for state ownership, ensure that the entity is commercially viable, and also regulate oversight and ownership arrangements. Given how SOEs such as PIA have been churning out massive losses for years, such regulatory mechanisms are certainly welcome.

It is also encouraging to note that in order to maximise efficiency and reduce fiscal risks, the IMF has also advised to follow through with a gradual reduction of the footprint of the state in the economy. This makes sense in principle, especially considering how one third of the SOEs in the country are consistently generating losses. However, some of the requirements put forth by the IMF could have other adverse consequences that we should be wary of. As part of the divestment requirement, Pakistan has assured the IMF that it will complete the process of privatisation of two RLNG power plants and two small banks by June 2022 with proceeds to be channelled to debt reduction and poverty programmes. Given our power generation and procurement woes, the government must evaluate the consequences of privatising these terminals and whether it will increase the import cost of LNG. These measures and their effects should be assessed properly so that appropriate steps can be taken in a timely manner to offset any future hindrances or concerns.



The Opposition's gamble

PAKISTAN People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) have had a rocky relationship. A common rival, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) makes them natural allies; yet the inherent difference in ideologies, as well as just petty politics, has made almost every Pakistan Democratic Movement endeavour a failure so far.

It is thus somewhat surprising that four years into the PTI government, PML-N and PPP appear to be moving towards burying the hatchet once more for achieving their common goal of sending the government packing. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari met the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz and PML-N leader Hamza Shehbaz Sharif, where the issue of bringing a no-confidence motion against the government was discussed. How likely is the opposition to succeed in defeating the government through a no-confidence motion? It is true that legally, under Article 95 of the Constitution, if a no-confidence motion is passed by a majority of the total membership of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister shall cease to hold office. What is also working in the Opposition's favour is that some allies of the PTI and some fragments of the party itself appear to be discontented with the government, and if PPP and the PML-N present a credible and united front and play their cards right, there could be a realistic possibility of bringing over the dissatisfied elements to the opposition.

However, despite the inconveniences being faced by the government, one would not be faulted for viewing this opposition effort with cynicism. As mentioned before, any opposition effort to curry favour within the National Assembly would require some credibility that this would be a long-term effort. The many failed attempts and non-commitment of the major opposition parties will not win them any allies with independents any time soon.

In fact, with only a year and a half left for the government to complete its term, another failed gamble by the opposition could turn out to be counterproductive since it has already failed thrice in the Senate despite having a clear majority.

Foreign funding a complex phenomenon

Dr. Abdus Sattar Abbasi

International recognitions, titles, awards and associated prize moneys all are part of specific design. In today's open and global community we certainly cannot put embargos on such instances

AN interesting history of foreign funding demands continuous vigilance and probably stringent regulations in certain areas. Current wave of discussions on foreign funding to a political party attracted attention of masses. A penny of foreign funding whether it is political, developmental or academic is unconceivable without an agenda. On political front we witnessed both obvious and tacit foreign funded campaigns and programs for several political parties. An analysis of international dynamics and our history of relations with other countries clearly indicate that every nation acted in their own interest and played their part in exploiting sentiments of masses through carefully designed funding programs. Almost every political party from right, left and centre seems labelled as beneficiary of direct or indirect foreign funding and influence including those who snatched power without being in any political party. Our partnership with international campaigns inside Afghanistan opened a huge corridor for other countries to openly fund political parties to toe their line which many times seemed appropriate to policy makers of the time but in the long run those proved detrimental. There is hardly any country, may be except one, in our friendship list that missed any opportunity to damage our sovereignty through their accomplices in the Country for their own strategic national interests. International recognitions, titles, awards and associated prize moneys all are part of specific design. In today's open and global community we certainly cannot put embargos on such instances.

However, we can surely develop a program to engage with such accomplished personalities and may be organizations that are being recognized internationally to brief them grater designs being part of such programs. Historically we remained judgmental and disassociated with those who stayed little away from the mainstream and we intentionally or unintentionally started creating doubts about their thoughts and activities. We need to expand our horizon to accommodate every thought which emerges in our society, we should give due attention, listen to them carefully, try to resolve their concerns to the utmost possibilities and publicise all such endeavours for the masses to determine appropriate dimensions. It is all about acceptance at the grassroots level which provides breeding opportunities to ideas and thoughts. Genuine engagements melted several movements in recent history, let people know about every thought which any faction of the society pursues but this awareness has to be through authentic and mainstream sources not from purposely built infrastructures for objective communications or kind of sponsored programs and personalities which pollute even straight realities. Let the market forces determine appropriate course of events, but it can only happen when masses and these forces have access to all truths; partial information breeds confusion where actors with malicious intentions find space to implement their agenda. We witnessed several events in recent past from Iraq war to campaign in Afghanistan those initiated with the help of popular consensus and also terminated due to growing public opinion against these instances. Now is the time where we cannot survive with narrow views about circumstances, we cannot hide realities from being public, we cannot mould opinions according to our desires, we can only engage with every thought, every viewpoint and every individual to find common grounds and to provide appropriate solutions for all stakeholders.

Academic funding in terms of scholarships and projects are never introduced without plans. Although these programs are of great value for countries like Pakistan; beneficiaries get access to latest knowledge, technology trends, evolving thoughts and groomed infrastructures, but still we need to understand deep-rooted agendas in these programs. On the homepage of Fulbright program it is clearly mentioned that one of the objectives of the program is mutual understanding between the United States and partner nations, these understandings are tac-

itly about creating advocates for the U. S. We are quite familiar with the role of certain graduates of Russian scholarship. A report on the China Scholarship suggests, "Since the 2010s, U.S. officials have voiced concerns that the Chinese government may attempt to influence or exploit Chinese students on study abroad programs in its quest for foreign technology. Some Chinese student associations at U.S. universities have spoken out about the Chinese government's efforts to provide unwanted "guidance." Environmental protection, education and awareness of rights, rule of law, freedom and inclusion are indeed important aspects for the development of the society. However, incidences such as DNA sampling through an NGO do shake the trust on projects funded by the NGOs. Government has already initiated several precautionary measures and generally now people are quite aware of role of NGOs and other such institutions, therefore, it is also important to provide space to those development sector players who really desire to contribute to the economic, cultural and social uplift of the nation. There is a huge responsibility on political parties to remain transparent in terms of funding they receive especially from overseas. It is probably true for all parties to collect fund from expatriates on regular basis, which I think is not unlawful at all. But political parties should remain vigilant to avoid any trap under this cover. It is the responsibility of the state to channelize every funding extended to any party even being aligned with national policies, as happened frequently in the past, to avoid complications in the future. Once international donors have direct access to any party in the Country, then it becomes difficult even for the state to stop flow of funds. Hidden funding or open acceptance of foreign support certainly needs strong attention of law enforcement agencies to stop external interventions. We being multi ethnic and multi sectarian society conveniently provide opportunities to probably every plotter on this planet to pursue his/her designs. Therefore it is required to promote rule of law, equal opportunity, equitable progress and the nationhood, to include every stakeholder of the society to reap the benefits of peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.

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Decades of Israeli lies are finally being exposed

Ramzy Baroud



There was Tantura, a peaceful Palestinian village where more than 200 inhabitants were exterminated by the Israel Defense Forces' Alexandroni Brigade on May 23, 1948

A succession of events in recent weeks all point to the inescapable fact that nearly 75 years of painstaking Israeli efforts aimed at hiding the truth about its origins and its current racially driven apartheid regime are failing miserably. The world is finally waking up and Israel is losing ground quicker than it can gain new supporters or whitewash its past and ongoing crimes. First, there was Tantura, a peaceful Palestinian village where more than 200 inhabitants were exterminated by the Israel Defense Forces' Alexandroni Brigade on May 23, 1948. Like many other massacres of unarmed Palestinians throughout the years, Tantura was mostly only remembered by the village's survivors, ordinary Palestinians and Palestinian historians. A 1998 attempt by an Israeli graduate student, Theodore Katz, to shed light on that bloody event ignited a legal, media and academic war and he was forced to retract his findings.

However, in a social media post last month, Israeli Professor Ilan Pappé revealed why, in 2007, he had to resign his position at Haifa University. He wrote: "One of my 'crimes' was insisting that there was a massacre in the village of Tantura in 1948 as was exposed by MA student, Teddy Katz."

And some Alexandroni Brigade veterans have finally decided to confess to the crimes in Tantura. "They silenced it. It mustn't be told, it could cause a whole scandal. I don't want to talk about it, but it happened." These were the words of Moshe Diamant, a former member of the Alexandroni Brigade, who, along with other veterans, revealed the gory details and horrific crimes that transpired in the Palestinian village in the documentary "Tantura" by Alon Schwarz.

An officer "killed one Arab after another" with his pistol, Micha Vitkon, another former soldier, said. "They put them into a barrel and shot them in the barrel. I remember the blood in the barrel," another explained. "I was a murderer. I didn't take prisoners," Amitzur Cohen admitted. Hundreds of Palestinians were killed in cold blood. They were buried in mass graves, the largest of which is believed to be under a parking lot at Dor Beach, where Israeli families now flock daily.

The Tantura massacre and its aftermath is arguably the most glaring representation of Israeli criminality. However, this is not the story of Tantura alone. It is a representation of something much bigger: Of large-scale ethnic cleansing, forced evictions and mass killings. Thankfully, the truth is finally being unearthed.

In 1951, the Israeli army launched a full-scale military operation that ethnically cleansed Palestinian Bedouins from the Naqab (Negev). The tragic scenes of en-

tire communities being uprooted from their ancestral homes were justified by Israel with the usual cliché that the terrible deed was carried out for "security reasons."

In 1953, Israel passed the Land Acquisition Law, which allowed the state to seize the land of Palestinians who were forced out of their homes. By then, Israel had unlawfully expropriated 247,000 dunums in the Naqab, with 66,000 remaining "unutilized." The remaining land is at the center of an ongoing saga involving Palestinian Bedouin communities and the Tel Aviv government, with the latter falsely claiming that the land is "essential" for Israel's "development needs."

Recently revealed documents, uncovered by extensive research conducted by Gadi Algazi of Tel Aviv University, point toward Israel's version of events in the Naqab being a complete fabrication. According to the documents, Moshe Dayan, the former head of the IDF's Southern Command, was central to an Israeli government and military ploy to evict the Bedouin population and to "revoke their rights as landowners," as per the conveniently created Israeli law, which allowed the government to "lease" the land as though it was its own. "There was an organized transfer of Bedouin citizens from the northwestern Negev eastward to barren areas, with the goal of taking over their lands. They carried out this operation using a mix of threats, violence, bribery and fraud," Algazi told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. Furthermore, a newly released book by French historian Vincent Lemire has entirely dismissed Israel's official version of how the Moroccan Quarter of Jerusalem was demolished in June 1967. Though Palestinian and Arab historians have long argued that the destruction of the neighborhood – including 135 homes and two mosques – was carried out on the orders of the Israeli government through Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, Israel has always denied it. According to the official Israeli account, the demolition of the neighborhood was carried out by "15 private Jewish contractors (who) destroyed the neighborhood to make space for the Western Wall Plaza."

In an interview with Agence France-Presse, Lemire stated that his book offers "definitive, written proof on the premeditation, planning and coordination of this operation," including official meetings between Kollek, the commander of the Israeli army and top government officials.

The days of Israel getting away with these crimes seem to be behind us. An example is last week's Amnesty International report, "Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians: A Look into Decades of Oppression and Domination." The 280 pages of damning evidence of Israel's racism and apartheid did not shy away from connecting the country's violent present with its equally bloody past. It did not borrow from Israel's deceptive language and self-serving division of Palestinians into disconnected communities, each with a different claim and a different status. For Amnesty International, as was the case with Human Rights Watch's April 2021 report, Israeli injustices against the Palestinians must be recognized and condemned in their entirety.

"Since its establishment in 1948, Israel has pursued an explicit policy of establishing and maintaining a Jewish demographic hegemony... while minimizing the number of Palestinians and restricting their rights," the Amnesty International report stated. This could only happen through mass killings, ethnic cleansing and genocide, from Tantura to the Naqab and from the Moroccan Quarter to Gaza and Sheikh Jarrah.

– Courtesy: Arab News

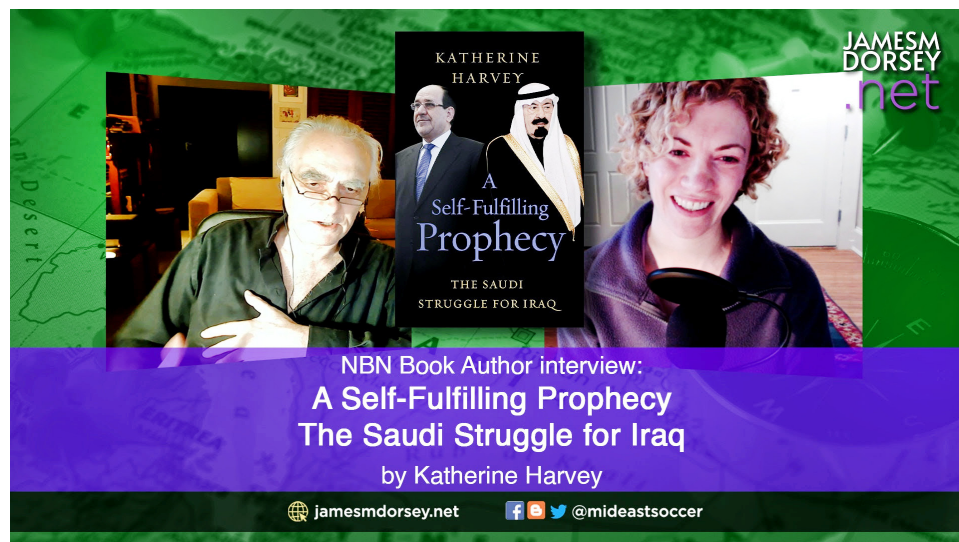
The Saudi struggle for Iraq

BOOK REVIEW

By James M. Dorsey

IRAQ has in the last year taken a lead in sponsoring talks between Middle Eastern arch-rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran in an effort to prevent tension in the region spinning out of control. The Iraqi role is remarkable given that Saudi Arabia for more than a decade after the 2003-led US invasion of Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein wanted nothing to do with the country's post-Saddam leadership. Saudi perceptions of Iraq as an Iranian pawn persuaded it even to refuse reopening a diplomatic mission in Baghdad until 2019.

In Self-fulfilling Prophet: The Saudi Struggle for Iraq (Oxford University Press 2022), Katherine Harvey paints a fascinating picture of what happens when policy is crafted based on perception rather than fact. Harvey tells the story of a post-invasion Iraq that was systematically rebuffed by Saudi Arabia in its efforts to reintegrate into the predominantly Sunni Arab world. Iraq had been ostracized following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait and expulsion from the Gulf state



in 1991 by a US-coalition. Saudi King Abdullah, convinced that Iran had successfully infiltrated Iraq and that Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was an Iranian stooge, blocked Iraq's reaching out to the kingdom and eventually drove into the hands of Iran. In doing so, Saudi Arabia was standing up for its perceived interests that diverged from those of the United States.

The US wanted the Saudis to engage with the Shiite Muslim majority that came to power in Iraq as a result of the US invasion. As a result, Harvey's well-documented book contributes to understanding the limits of US power in the Middle East and the significant perceptual gaps that Middle Eastern states need to bridge to ensure that a regional détente is sustainable.

Briefs

Army Chief vows to foil terrorist acts

FROM PAGE 01
the army chief presided over the 247th Corps Commanders' conference held at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. The conference was given a comprehensive briefing on the security situation in the country, particularly recent incidents in Balochistan, the statement said, adding that participants of the conference were also briefed on the steps being taken to "counter hostile efforts to destabilize Pakistan". The military's media wing said that the top brass of the Army paid tribute to the martyrs who gave the "ultimate sacrifice" for the defence of the country while repulsing the recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan. The ISPR said that Gen Bajwa expressed "satisfaction over the operational preparedness of the formations and safeguards in place to thwart designs of inimical forces". "We have come a long way in our fight against terrorism. Armed forces – with the support of the nation – have conducted successful operations against terrorists of all hue and colour," said the army chief. The terrorists' desperate attempts for revival will not be allowed to succeed, he added.

Bilawal says long march...

FROM PAGE 01
from Karachi as it has declared war on the "selected government", media reported. Addressing a party conference in Multan, Bilawal said that PPP exposed the PTI-led government on the first day of its tenure and is fighting it since then. "Other parties were not participating in the by-elections, however, the PPP stood its ground and fought against the PTI by not leaving the field empty," he said, adding that the party fought in the Senate election as well. The PPP chairman said that the march will be successful as "Imran has already lost the first round of local body elections". Bilawal took a swipe at the prime minister and said that "Imran Niazi is running away after disqualifying his candidate (Faisal Vawda) to contest in the next elections." "The PM should dissolve the National Assembly before the march if he has the courage to do so," he added.

Opp. agrees on...

FROM PAGE 01
bring a no-trust move against the incumbent government in phases. It has been decided to initiate the process of a no-trust motion from the Speaker National Assembly. The opposition decided to bring a no-trust move against the NA Speaker in the last week of February, whereas, the opposition leaders expedited contacting each other to finalise the preparations. Sources added that the opposition leaders will also contact the government allies once again. The efforts for a no-confidence motion against the PTI-led federal government were commenced after a recent meeting between Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari. PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif had also given go-ahead to the planned no-trust move. In the next phases, the opposition benches will bring a no-confidence motion against Punjab chief minister ahead of entering the final phase of a no-trust move against the prime minister. The ally political parties, Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pakistan Muslim League Quaid (PML-Q), have decided not to part way with the PTI government. The PTI allies in the Centre have rejected the no-trust move planned by the opposition parties. Amid recent political developments, MQM-P had rejected PML-N's plan to bring a no-confidence motion and told the leadership of the major opposition party that it will not part ways with the ruling PTI.



KARACHI: Ambassador of Spain Manuel Duran along with Honorary Consul General, Ghouse Akbar met with Special Assistant to Chief Minister Sindh on Investment and Public Private Partnership (PPP) unit, Syed Qasim Naveed and Secretary, Investment, Bilal Ahmed. – DNA

Russia sees room for diplomacy amid Ukraine tensions

Russia has repeatedly denied any plans to invade Ukraine. But with well over 100,000 troops massed near the Ukrainian border, some Western countries including the US have warned that a Russian attack could come at any time

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: Russia's EU ambassador has told the British media in an interview that his country still believes diplomacy can help de-escalate the crisis over Ukraine. Vladimir Chizhov said his country had no intention of invading anybody, but warned it was important not to provoke Russia into changing its mind. It comes after a flurry of diplomatic activity on Monday and Tuesday. Russia has repeatedly denied any plans to invade Ukraine. But with well over 100,000 troops massed near the Ukrainian border, some Western countries including the US have warned that a Russian attack could come at any time. After two days of intense diplomacy led by French President Emmanuel Macron, there is some suggestion that a renewed focus on the so-called Minsk agreements - which aim to end the conflict with Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine - could be used as a basis to defuse the current crisis. Some diplomats agree that the agreements could offer a route to de-escalation, with France's ambassador to the United States, Philippe Etienne, tweeting they should be used to "build a viable political solution".

Majorities across EU 'think Russia will invade Ukraine'

BRUSSELS: A majority of people across the European Union think Russia will invade Ukraine this year – and believe the EU and NATO should come to Kyiv's aid in the event of Russian aggression, according to a new pan-European survey. The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) found a majority of people in six out of seven countries surveyed thought a Russian invasion of Ukraine would happen in 2022. Moscow has troops massed near its border with Ukraine but has repeatedly denied US claims that it is poised to attack. More than 5,500 people were questioned for the online survey in the last 10 days of January in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Sweden. "Russia's military build-up on Ukraine's border has triggered a mood change in Europe," the think tank says, adding that majorities now hold the view that the EU and NATO should stand behind Kyiv. NATO and its member countries are seen as the primary defenders of Ukrainian sovereignty, the ECFR's survey finds, a sentiment felt particularly strongly in countries near the EU's eastern border, such as Poland, Sweden and Romania. – Foreign Desk

President Macron said talks would be revived as early as Thursday and include Russia and Ukraine along with France and Germany - known as the Normandy quartet. Mr Chizhov did not say whether Russia planned to move troops away from Russia's border with Ukraine, and instead asked why no-one was talking about the number of Ukrainian soldiers directly facing Russia.

But he was clear that further talks could still produce results. "We certainly believe there is still room for diplomacy," he told the BBC's Europe Editor Katya Adler. Vladimir Chizhov told Katya Adler that Nato's expansion in Eastern Europe was key to any talks Russia has made a series of demands to the West over European security, including a guarantee that Ukraine never

becomes a member of the West's defensive military alliance, Nato. This demand has been flatly rejected, with Western countries insisting that only Ukraine can make decisions about its own security arrangements. But Russia's EU ambassador made clear that Russia still saw Nato's eastern expansion as a key point in any negotiation. "We are not going to forget it. And we cannot afford to forget it. Five waves of Nato expansion, that was not the evolution that we expected," Mr Chizhov told the BBC.

The envoy's apparent optimism for continued diplomacy followed two days of frenzied diplomacy from European leaders seeking to end Russia's military escalation. French President Emmanuel Macron has been at the forefront of those efforts, visiting Moscow, Kyiv and Berlin. After his meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv on Tuesday, Mr Macron said both the Russian and Ukrainian leaders had recommitted to implementing the so-called Minsk peace agreements. The agreements - backed by Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany in 2014-15 - aim to bring an end to the Russian-backed separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine, which continues today. – Source: BBC

Afghanistan: Taliban faced...

FROM PAGE 01
Al Qaeda and its affiliated groups to "flourish" in scattered areas of Afghanistan after evacuation of the former Soviet Union in the light of the Geneva Accord signed on April 10, 1988 last. So far neither Taliban rulers admitted the presence of Al Qaeda and other foreign militant groups in Afghanistan but Pakistani authorities and Afghan rulers are confirming the presence of banned Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan and other Pakistani groups and individual fighters across Afghanistan. Pakistan's Interior Minister after militants' attacks in tribal district Kurram, asked the Afghan Taliban to take action against banned TTP which is carrying out such deadly attacks. Afghanistan's Deputy Information Minister Zabih Ullah Mujahid in reaction said, "We are going to probe." He, however, made it clear that the Taliban regime wouldn't tolerate any one to use Afghanistan soil against any foreign country. Such type of conversation confirms that despite the empowering of Taliban, "mistrust between Islamabad and Kabul continues to hold," which may plunge both the neighbouring countries into irreversible situations. On the other hand, Pakistan's military establishment had failed in its reconciliation move with banned TTP after the empowering of Taliban in Afghanistan due to judiciary and civil society organizations reluctance. Soon after empowering of Taliban in Afghanistan on August 15th 2021, Rawalpindi-Islamabad through its "most trust worthy loyal Siraj Ud Din Haqqani's Haqqani network" initiated efforts for reconciliation with banned TTP and other independent groups like Shura-i-Mujahideen of Hafiz Gul Bahadar, Lashkar-e-Islam of Mangal Bagh, Jamaat Ul Ahrar of Abdul Wali Mohmand and others. But some people from civil society organizations have opposed the move, by staging protests and knocking at the doors of the judiciary in Islamabad. Pakistani authorities, despite facilitating the Taliban to get power at Kabul, had failed in materializing its dreams of getting recognition for Durand Line as a permanent border. Since August, skirmishes, exchanging of hot words and even erecting of fenced wires at different points of Pak Afghan border is a routine. Earlier, such incidents were common to Pak Afghan border in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but now escalated also to Baluchistan region. Now on one hand, banned TTP has intensified its

acts and actions in almost all of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and on the other, the Baluch separatists also accelerated its counter attacks in certain particular areas of Balochistan. The growing violence has not made uncertain common people from both the provinces of Pakistan as uncertain but made questionable "friendship between Pakistan's military establishment and Afghan Taliban." Media reports from across the border reveal that now Qandahari Taliban is dominating almost of the government organs in Afghanistan, thus minimizing influence of Haqqani network. Like successive democratic, progressive and nationalist minded former rulers, ministers and socio-political leaders, the Afghan Taliban are also reluctant to address wishes and expectations of Pakistan, especially "recognition of Durand Line as a permanent border" and framing its external relations in according to interests of Pakistan, especially "making limited bilateral friendships and relations with India." Internally, the Taliban leaders are yet to earn hearts of war-affected Afghans, who have no concern that who is governing and who is not in Afghanistan but desirous for peace and opportunities for survival. Throughout Afghanistan, all those who either remain against government offices or having blood relations with any former office holders fear threats to their lives. Most recently the UN also issued a report pertaining to Human Rights violations which was rejected by the Taliban. But target killing, detention and disappearance on political grounds is considered now routine in Afghanistan. And almost all people who are capable of affordable transportation are on a bid to flee the country for better survival in any foreign country, even in neighboring Pakistan, Iran, Central Asian Republic and others. As a result now Afghan refugees are dominating not only Pakistan and Afghanistan but almost all members of the International community.

In fact, Taliban regime on one hand is making its best to get recognition at diplomatic level which is necessary for combating the increasing financial and economic crises and on the other its leaders are under tremendous pressure of "militants-assembled from Pakistan, rest of Arab and Central Asian countries in scattered areas of Afghanistan." The only way-out is not "implementation of general amnesty, honoring proposals and advice of rival political leaderships in framing of internal and external policies and restoration of Afghanistan's non-aligned and independent status-declared by the former king in early 60s.



CANBERRA: Pakistan HC to Australia Zahid Hafeez meets with Deputy Secretary Immigration & Settlement Services Cheryl-Anne Moy. Both sides discussed issues pertaining to immigration and visas and agreed to further enhance cooperation between Pakistan and Australia in these areas. – DNA

Opp leaders will end up...

FROM PAGE 01
bellies to recover looted money have now joined hands," he said, adding that these politicians had been ruling the country for 30 years. "They are in hurry to topple the PTI-led government to escape from the jail," the prime minister added. Criticising the PPP leadership, PM Imran said that Asif Ali Zardari had emerged in the scene with a stolen cheque book to buy loyalties of the lawmakers of other parties. Taking a jab at PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, PM Imran said that a "heart patient" was surprisingly climbing stairs and visiting factories in the UK. "I want to tell you what the dramatist did in the last 5 years and what we have done in three and a half years," he added. Referring to the criticism of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto on the government's national health card scheme, he said his party in its tenure remained incapable of bringing development in Sindh. "He [Bilawal] now says that they will spend on hospitals rather than the health cards. But, who stopped them during their over 13 year rule to take such steps for the facilitation of common man," said PM Imran.

Country making...

FROM PAGE 01
the memory of senior journalists Hafiz Sanaulah and Rahimullah Yusufzai at the Peshawar Press Club, Chaudhry said that the country is taking loans to pay off old debts as Rs23 trillion were borrowed during Zardari and Nawaz's tenure. Calling the members of the Opposition "incompetent", the minister said that "a third party emerged in the form of Imran Khan which ended the dominance of two political families in the country.

Terrorist killed in...

FROM PAGE 01
Shewa, North Waziristan District, read a statement by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). During intense exchange of fire, terrorist Irfan @ Abu Darda got killed. Weapon and ammunition was also recovered from the killed terrorist, said the statement. The killed terrorist was involved in terrorist activities against security forces, target killings and kidnapping for ransom. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the area.

Qureshi holds talks with...

FROM PAGE 01
Arab Emirates, the Foreign Minister reiterated that such attacks pose a grave threat to the regional peace and security, and must be ceased immediately. Foreign Minister Qureshi congratulated the Government of the UAE on the successful organization of Dubai Expo 2020. Recalling his visit to the Pakistan Pavilion at the Expo 2020, His Highness Sheikh Abdullah highly appreciated the impressive design and display of the Pavilion. Meanwhile Pakistan has deplored the reprehensible act of banning Muslim girl students from wearing hijab in Indian state of Karnataka. The Indian Charge d' Affaires in Islamabad was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today and was conveyed Government of Pakistan's grave concern and condemnation on the deeply reprehensible act of banning Muslim girl students from wearing hijab (headscarf) in the Indian state of Karnataka.

Pakistan squad for Australia Tests announced

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan cricket selectors on Wednesday announced 16 players and five reserves for the three Tests against Australia, which will be played in Rawalpindi (4-8 March), Karachi (12-16 March) and Lahore (21-25 March). From the series against Bangladesh, three changes have been made in the national squad. Haris Rauf, who was in the side for the South Africa and Zimbabwe Tests in 2021,

has returned to replace off-spinner Bilal Asif, while Shan Masood, who last played in New Zealand in the 2020-21 season, has taken over from Abid Ali, who is completing his rehabilitation after being diagnosed with Acute Coronary Syndrome. Yasir Shah has been added to the reserve pool. Test players who are not involved in the HBL Pakistan Super League 2022 will assemble in Karachi on Wednesday, 16 February, for a training camp that will be held at the National Stadium. **Test squad:** Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Abdullah Shafique, Azhar Ali,

Faheem Ashraf, Fawad Alam, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Nawaz, Nauman Ali, Sajid Khan, Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood, Zahid Mahmood. **Reserves:** Kamran Ghulam (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Mohammad Abbas (Southern Punjab), Naseem Shah (Southern Punjab), Sarfaraz Ahmed (Sindh), Yasir Shah (Balochistan). Chief selector Muhammad Wasim said: "We have opted for consistency for the important home series against Australia and changes have only been made where absolutely necessary. This is to give the boys

confidence, reward them for their impressive performances in the longer version of the game in 2021 and continue to build the side for the future. "These are the best available, most talented and in-form players in the domestic circuit. I am confident they will put up an impressive performance against a formidable Australia side." Meanwhile, the Pakistan Cricket Board has confirmed Saqlain Mushtaq will continue as head coach for another 12 months, while it also announced the appointments of Shaun Tait as fast bowling coach for 12

months and Mohammad Yousuf as batting coach for the Australia series. **Player Support Personnel:** Mansoor Rana (manager), Saqlain Mushtaq (head coach), Shahid Aslam (assistant to head coach), Mohammad Yousuf (batting coach), Shaun Tait (bowling coach), Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Drikus Saaiman (trainer/strength and conditioning coach), Abdul Majeed (fielding coach), Emmad Ahmed Hameed (media and digital manager), Col (ret'd) Usman Anwar (security manager), Talha Ejaz (analyst) and Malang Ali (masseur).

Briefs

FM Qureshi speaks with counterpart from Chad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi spoke with his counterpart from Chad, H.E. Cherif Mahamat Zene, today. The conversation focused on deepening historic ties between the two countries and strengthening bilateral cooperation. The Foreign Minister underscored the importance accorded to fraternal relations with Chad and lauded Chad's substantive contributions to regional and international organisations including the UN, AU and OIC. The two Foreign Ministers expressed satisfaction over existing levels of mutual cooperation and identified new vistas for political, diplomatic, trade and defence collaboration. Foreign Minister Qureshi highlighted Pakistan's 'Engage Africa' policy and apprised of the steps taken to reinforce Pakistan-Africa relations. In this regard, he highlighted expansion of Pakistan's diplomatic footprint in the Continent and steps for closer trade and investment collaboration. The two Foreign Ministers concurred in establishing bilateral mechanisms for regular exchanges between their respective Foreign Ministries and continued opportunities for young diplomats from Chad to train at Foreign Service Academy, Islamabad.

WHO seeks \$16B from rich countries to fight Covid

GENEVA: The World Health Organization on Wednesday renewed its appeal to high-income countries to stump up \$16 billion for its program to give lower- and middle-income nations equal access to vaccines, treatments, and personal protective equipment. The ACT-Accelerator is asking donor countries to contribute \$16.8 billion of the \$23.4 billion total budget in immediate grant funding for October 2021 to September 2022, said the WHO. "The rapid spread of omicron makes it even more urgent to ensure tests, treatments and vaccines are distributed equitably globally," said WHO Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus in a statement. "If higher-income countries pay their fair share of the ACT-Accelerator costs, the partnership can support low- and middle-income countries to overcome low COVID-19 vaccination levels, weak testing, and medicine shortages." He said science had given the world tools to fight COVID-19, and if they are shared globally, the world can reach its goal of ending the pandemic as a global health emergency this year. WHO said only \$814 million of the \$16.8 billion has been pledged so far. The ACT-Accelerator initiative works to overcome vast global inequities by providing low- and middle-income countries with access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, vaccines, and personal protective equipment. The accelerator agencies urgently need new funding to scale up their work to develop and deliver the COVID-19 countermeasures essential to address the threat of omicron and prevent even more dangerous variants from emerging. WHO said a diverse group of governments has agreed on a new financing framework developed to support the ACT-Accelerator, making "fair share" requests to more affluent countries. – APP

HC holds virtual khuli katchehry

LONDON: High Commissioner Moazzam Ahmad Khan held the 13th virtual 'Khuli Katchehry' with the Pakistani diaspora in the UK on 8 February 2022. It was attended by a large number of community members. The High Commissioner redressed complaints pertaining to Consular Services and property matters in Pakistan. He also assured the community members that their complaints would be taken up with the concerned authorities in Pakistan. As per directions of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the High Commissioner holds the Virtual Khuli Katchehry every month. – APP

Azerbaijan rejects claims of distortion of Armenian heritage

Large-scale restoration and construction of two Christian churches in Azerbaijan's liberated Shusha city along with mosques can be mentioned as an example

WEB DESK

BAKU: Baku has rejected the Armenian Foreign Ministry's claim on the alleged falsification of Armenian cultural heritage by Azerbaijan. In a statement posted on the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry website on February 9, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Leyla Abdullayeva stressed that Yerevan intends to cover up Armenia's illegal actions by making false conclusions from the Culture Ministry's statement earlier made on religious sites on Azerbaijani territories liberated from occupation during the 2020 war with Armenia.

Large-scale destructions in her remarks also posted on her Twitter account as a reminder for Yerevan, she said: "The Armenian For-

eign Ministry turns a blind eye to the facts of large-scale destructions, uricide, culturecide and ecocide by Armenia in the Azerbaijani territories kept under occupation for 30 years." Armenia has wiped out nine Azerbaijani cities and hundreds of villages. Historical, cultural and religious monuments in these areas have been destroyed and looted, Abdullayeva said. UNESCO mission She added that for decades, Armenia prevented the UNESCO mission to visit the occupied territories to hide the purposeful destruction it had committed. This fact is clearly reflected in the activity report published by UNESCO in 2005.

"At the same time, Armenia has completely destroyed the Azerbaijani cultural heritage on its territory by violating international law,

including humanitarian law, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, as well as 1954 and 1970 UNESCO Conventions over the past 30 years," Abdullayeva said. The results of the above-mentioned vandalism of Armenia have been widely documented and covered by the international media and independent experts, she underlined. "However, the official body of the neighboring country forgets that, unlike Armenia, Azerbaijan does not discriminate against its historical and cultural heritage on religious and ethnic grounds. Azerbaijan is an example of tolerance and cultural diversity all over the world," Abdullayeva stressed. The spokesperson called on the Armenian Foreign Ministry to demonstrate good intentions and

deeds instead of fabricating false information. Armenia's erasure of Azerbaijani heritage. Meanwhile, Azerbaijani Consul General in Los Angeles Nasimi Aghayev shared the link of an article headlined "How Armenia looted and erased Azerbaijani heritage" (https://link.medium.com/UGisXULiunb) on his official Twitter account. "I have compiled names, dates, photos and videos of numerous Azerbaijani mosques and other cultural heritage sites destroyed by Armenia. Feel free to share," the diplomat said. Monitoring of cultural heritage in Karabakh In a statement published on February 8, the Culture Ministry said: "Azerbaijan always respects its historical and cultural heritage regardless of its religious and

ethnic origin. This approach also applies to the historical and cultural heritage in the Azerbaijani territories liberated from Armenian occupation." In its statement, the Culture Ministry pointed out that the Azerbaijani officials have reiterated that the historical and religious monuments located in the liberated territories belong to the Azerbaijani heritage and their protection is Azerbaijan's responsibility. "The large-scale restoration and construction of two Christian churches in Azerbaijan's liberated Shusha city along with mosques can be mentioned as an example. Azerbaijan, as opposed to Armenia, does not make religious and ethnic distinctions in its historical and cultural heritage and is committed to its obligations under international conven-

tions, including the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954 Hague Convention)," the ministry said. The Culture Ministry is currently monitoring the territories liberated from occupation. "As for the ancient Albanian heritage in the liberated territories of the country, a working group was created, local and foreign experts were involved to conduct the appropriate monitoring. In case of revealing falsifications, this will be indicated in the documents and presented to the international community consisting of international experts. The change in the ownership of the historical and cultural heritage, its origin is contrary to the provisions of the 1954 Hague Convention," the statement added.

Amb. Bilal calls on Pashazade Chairman CMO

DNA

BAKU: Ambassador Bilal Hayee called on Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, Chairman of Caucasian Muslims Office this afternoon. Ambassador praised the strength of the multi-cultural society of Azerbaijan in which people professing different faiths were living in great harmony. Ambassador briefed him on Pakistan's efforts domestically as well as globally to promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Ambassador also highlighted the challenges Muslims were

facing in many parts of the world due to increasing trend of Islamophobia. Expressing his great affection and respect for Pakistan, Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade shared his long association with many Pakistani friends. He lauded Pakistan's leading role in getting Azerbaijan into the fold of OIC after its independence. Reiterating Azerbaijan's support to the cause of Jammu & Kashmir dispute, Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade prayed for early resolution of the dispute and wished that people of Kashmir could live with dignity and peace.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Oybek Usmanov called on the federal minister of national food security and research, Syed Fakhar Imam at his office. – DNA

Bangladesh HC calls on Foreign minister Qureshi



ISLAMABAD: Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique called on Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Foreign Ministry. During the meeting, important issues including bilateral relations and promotion of bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest were discussed. The Bangladesh High Commissioner conveyed a message of goodwill from his leadership to the Pakistani leadership. On the occasion, Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that Pakistan attaches special importance to bilateral relations with Bangladesh.

Bilateral relations between the two countries are based on common beliefs and culture. Pakistan pursues an agenda of enhancing economic priorities and regional connectivity. Pakistan wishes to promote bilateral trade and economic relations with Bangladesh. The Foreign Minister emphasized the need to promote high-level ties to strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Rohul Alam Siddique thanked the Foreign Minister and assured that he would do his utmost to strengthen the bilateral relations. – DNA

China decries US arms sale deal with Taiwan

BEIJING: China on Wednesday criticized the US arms sale to Taiwan, saying it will take measures to defend the territorial integrity of the country. "The Peoples Liberation Army will take all necessary measures to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity, thwart external interference and secessionist attempts, and promote reunification," China's Defense Ministry said in a statement. Washington on Monday approved a fresh \$100 million sale of equipment and services to Taiwan aimed at upgrading the missile defense systems used by the self-ruled island nation. The deal will include engineering "services support, designed to sustain, maintain, and improve" the island nation's Patriot Air Defense System, according to the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). "The proposed sale will help improve the security of the recipient (Taiwan) and assist in maintaining political stability, military balance, economic and progress in the region," a DSCA statement said. Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian said: "There is only one China in the world, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory." "Taiwan's future lies in national reunification, and Taiwan's security depends on the joint efforts of compatriots on both sides of the strait under the one-China principle, not the US arms sales to Taiwan," he added. Zhao Lijian, spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry, told a news conference on Tuesday that the US arms sales "to the Taiwan region of China seriously violate the one-China principle." – APP

Australia, Lithuania to unite in countering China pressures

CANBERRA: The foreign ministers of Australia and Lithuania agreed Wednesday to step up cooperation on strategic challenges, in particular pressures from China. Lithuania's Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis and his Australian counterpart Marise Payne met Wednesday at Parliament House. Australian exporters have lost tens of billions of dollars to official and unofficial Chinese trade barriers covering coal, wine, beef, crayfish and barley that have coincided with deteriorating relations with Beijing. Lithuania, a country of 2.8 million in the Baltic region, more recently drew Beijing's ire after breaking with diplomatic custom by agreeing that Taiwan's office in its capital Vilnius would bear the name Taiwan instead of Chinese Taipei, a term used by other countries to avoid offending Beijing. "For quite a while, Australia was probably one of the main examples where China is using economy and trade as a political instrument or, one might say, even as a political weapon." – APP

Japan, Canada reaffirm support for Ukraine amid Russia crisis

ISTANBUL: The prime ministers of Japan and Canada on Wednesday expressed support for Ukraine amid heightened military tensions with Russia. In a phone call, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Canadian counterpart Justin Trudeau said their governments "continue to monitor the situation in Ukraine with grave concern." "The duo confirmed their consistent support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and concurred to continue close coordination between them," the Japanese Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Tensions in Ukraine have been increas-

ing for months after Russia amassed tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's border, which the West says is preparation for war. Both NATO and the EU have warned of severe consequences if Moscow invades its neighbor. Russia has repeatedly denied that it plans to attack Ukraine, insisting that its troops are there only for exercises. Kishida and Trudeau also discussed bilateral and regional affairs, including China and North Korea, in their phone conversation, which lasted for approximately 30 minutes. "They shared serious concern about North Korea's frequent nuclear and missile

activities," the statement said. Kishida hailed Canada as an "important, strategic partner for Japan in the Indo-Pacific region." Trudeau responded by saying that he was looking forward to "further strengthening the cooperation between Japan and Canada to address various challenges facing the international community," according to the statement. The two sides "shared the view to advance further cooperation and collaboration on the concrete aspects of the six priority areas of cooperation toward the realization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific," it added. – APP

Slovakia approve military treaty with US

BRATISLAVA: Slovakia's parliament on Wednesday approved a defense military treaty with the United States. The Defense Cooperation Agreement passed 79-60 in the 150-seat legislature in a vote split between lawmakers from the four-party ruling coalition and the opposition. The treaty allows the U.S. military to use two Slovak air force bases – Malacky-Kuchyna and Sliac – for 10 years while Slovakia – a NATO member – will receive \$100 million from the U.S. to modernize them. The deal was signed by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Slovakia's defense minister, Jaroslav Nad, on Feb. 3 in Washington. It still needs to be ratified by President Zuzana Caputova, who supports it. The vote took place amid fears that Russia will invade Ukraine. Moscow has massed more than 100,000 troops near Ukraine's borders, but insists it has no plans to attack. Slovakia borders Ukraine. The treaty has been supported by the government of Prime Minister Eduard Heger, who said it will "significantly enhance our security." But the agreement is fiercely opposed by the opposition, which claims it would compromise the country's sovereignty, make possible a permanent presence of U.S. troops on Slovak territory and even enable a possible deployment of nuclear weapons in Slovakia. The Slovak and U.S. governments have rejected those charges. – APP

Japan considers supplying LNG to EU

TOKYO: The likely impact of Russia-Ukraine tensions on energy supplies has led Japan to consider diverting its liquefied natural gas (LNG) reserves to Europe. "Japan plans to provide part of its LNG reserves to Europe as simmering tensions between Russia and the West over Ukraine undermine energy security in the region," Japanese government sources told Tokyo-based Kyodo News on Wednesday. The sources said Tokyo will "secure enough supply for domestic needs before assisting European countries that are facing the threat of disruptions to Russian gas supply in the event of an incursion by Moscow into Ukraine." While Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government is discussing the volume and timing of diverting LNG to Europe, it may also seek cooperation from Japanese companies involved in the LNG business for the giant move. Tensions in Ukraine have been increasing for months after Russia amassed tens of thousands of troops near Ukraine's border, which the West says is preparation for war. Both NATO and the EU have warned of severe consequences if Moscow invades its neighbor. – Agencies

Danish Queen, Spain's King tests positive for Covid-19

WEB DESK

COPENHAGEN: Denmark's Queen Margrethe has tested positive for coronavirus but is only showing mild symptoms, the royal court said in a statement on Wednesday. The 81-year old Queen, who has sat on the throne for half a century, had cancelled her planned winter holiday in Norway which should have started on Wednesday and was isolating in a wing of the Amalienborg Palace in the heart of Copenhagen, the court said. Spain's King Felipe tested positive for COVID-19 earlier on Wednesday after displaying mild symptoms overnight and will remain in isolation for seven days, the Royal Palace said in a statement. "His Majesty's general state of health is good and he will keep up his institutional activities from his residence," it said, adding that Queen Letizia and their daughter Princess Sofia showed no symptoms.

UNSC's non-permanent seats crucial: Pakistan

"The regional distribution of 11-12 non-permanent seats proposed by the UfC (Uniting for Consensus group led by Italy and Pakistan) would ensure 'equitable representation' of each region," Ambassador Munir Akram said as the long-running IGN Baimed at reforming the 15-member Council resumed the process

DNA

NEW YORK: Pakistan, which firmly opposes additional permanent members on the UN Security Council, has reaffirmed its call for equitable representation of regional groups on the 15-member body by adding more non-permanent seats to it. "The regional distribution of 11-12 non-permanent seats proposed by the UfC (Uniting for Consensus group led by Italy and Pakistan) would ensure 'equitable representation' of each region," Ambassador Munir Akram said as the long-running Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) Baimed at reforming the 15-member Council resumed the process on Tuesday. "The reform of the Security Coun-

cil should redress the existing imbalances in the regional representation – adding to the representation of the under-represented regions and at least not adding to the representation of the over-represented regions," the Pakistani envoy said. "The UfC's proposal – to add only non-permanent members, which are elected periodically by the General Assembly – is also more democratic," he said, adding that it was fundamentally different from that of Group of four – India, Brazil, Germany and Japan – whose members claim permanent seats as a matter of right – a right borne out of a sense of self-entitlement. He described the G-4 claim as contrary to not only the UN Charter's precept of the sovereign equality of member states, but also "undemocratic."



About references made to the "new realities" during the debate on Tuesday and the claims by some to be in the Security Council because they have greater "capacity" and willingness to contribute to international peace and security, Ambassador Akram said the contributions of small and medi-

um states have been much more sizable than the "self-interested positions and policies of those ambitious to achieve permanent membership". He also said, "Any state which stands in violation of the resolutions of the Security Council for over 50 years does not deserve to even claim the right to any membership on the Council." Full-scale negotiations to reform the Security Council began in the General Assembly in February 2009 on five key areas – the categories of membership, the question of veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Security Council, and working methods of the council and its relationship with the General Assembly. Despite a general agreement on enlarging the Council, as part of the UN reform process, member

states remain divided over the details. The Security Council is currently composed of five permanent members – Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States – and 10 non-permanent members elected to serve for two years. In his well-reasoned remarks, Ambassador Akram said while the existence of permanent members and the veto was the underlying cause of the Security Council's paralysis, the addition of members in the permanent category would reduce the number of seats available to the rest of the UN's membership. "If 6 new permanent members are added, as has been proposed, this would leave only 4/5 additional seats for the rest of 182 members of the UN General Assembly from all 5 regions," he said.

Briefs

SC suspends
PHC's verdict
on Phase-II
of KP LB polls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday suspended the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) decision to postpone the second phase of local body (LB) elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and issued notices to the parties concerned. A two-member bench of the apex court, consisting of Justice Ijazul Ahsan and Justice Ayesha A. Malik, heard the appeal filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against the high court's verdict.

Speaking on the occasion, counsel for the ECP Anfar Kareem Kundi said that the Abbottabad bench of the PHC had given the verdict without listening to his client as the notice issued for the hearing on February 1 was received at the ECP's office on the following day, on February 2. "And by the time the ECP received the notice, the PHC had already put off the second phase of the LBs polls in the province," he regretted. Justice Ayesha A. Malik remarked that the court ought to have listened to the election commission's arguments before pronouncing the verdict. "Whether the weather conditions in KP could impede polling on March 27, the date proposed for the elections, has not been verified as yet," she added. Justice Ijazul Ahsan, on the other hand, said that the ECP, and not the PHC, was supposed to listen to the weather report. He asked why was the court in a hurry to give the decision? The court then adjourned the hearing of the case until February 14 (Monday). The Peshawar High Court (PHC) had on February 4 postponed the second phase of local bodies' elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) that were originally scheduled to be held on March 27. During the hearing, the court remarked that people faced problems in casting their votes due to heavy snowfall. "The respective district governments should announce a new schedule for the polls," the judge had directed.

KP govt
launches
portal for
businessmen

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has launched Chief Ministers Business Complaint Portal with the aim to facilitate businessmen and investors to the maximum. Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan formally launched the portal in a ceremony held here on Wednesday. Besides Federal Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain and Provincial Cabinet members Atif Khan and Barrester Muhammad Ali Saif, the event was attended by Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Information, Secretary ST&IT, Managing Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board and other concerned officials. Businessmen and investors can register their online complaints related to any government department on the portal. Such complaints would be forwarded to the concerned departments and entities for quick redressal. The Chief Minister's Business Complaint Portal will be a dedicated online avenue for the businessmen to register their complaints which will be directly followed up by the Chief Minister's Secretariat. Speaking on this occasion, the chief minister reiterated his government's resolve to facilitate the business community and investors and said that his government was taking all the possible steps to extend maximum facilitation to the business community and to ensure a conducive environment for business activities in the province. Mahmood Khan said that the provincial government had already launched One Window Business Portal to facilitate the business community and other private sector investors.

Noor Murder
trial nears
conclusion

ISLAMABAD: The trial in Noor Mukadam murder case is nearing its conclusion as the Islamabad session court on Wednesday handed over a 25-point questionnaire to the defence regarding role of Zahir Jaffer and others in the case. The court headed by additional session judge Ata Rabbani while seeking answers from defence handed over the questionnaire. The questions in the questionnaire included, have you heard and understood evidence submitted against you, did you murder Noor Mukadam in the evening of 20 July 2021, did you abduct Noor Mukadam from 18 to 20 July.

It further asked the suspect regarding his defence over the rape of Noor Mukadam and if he would want to submit any evidence in his favour. During the last hearing, the court rejected three petitions filed by Zahir Jaffer, the prime suspect in the Noor Mukadam murder case. - APP

Japan, UNODC boost ANF
counter narcotics capacity

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Mitsuhiro Wada, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Pakistan, Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam, Federal Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control and others

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Today, at a joint inauguration ceremony held at the Ministry of Narcotics Control, Government of Pakistan, Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Narcotics Control, in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) under the Japan-funded Border Security Project, offered his gratitude to the Government of Japan for its continuous official development assistance in Pakistan, as an old-time friend and a strategic partner in the Asia-Pacific region.

The inauguration ceremony was focused on prefabricated buildings donated to the Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, as well as body scanners which were already operational at the Multan, Sialkot, and Faisalabad International Airports. These facilities and equipment have been provided to the ANF under a UNODC project funded by the Government of Japan, entitled 'Strengthening border security against illicit drug trafficking and related transnational organized crime (April 2016 - December 2021).



The inauguration ceremony was attended by Mitsuhiro Wada, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Pakistan, Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam, Federal Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control, Dr. Jeremy Milsom, Representative of UNODC Country Office Pakistan (COPAK) and senior officials from the Ministry of Narcotics Control, ANF, the Embassy of Japan, and UNODC COPAK.

While welcoming the delegates, Dr. Milsom thanked Federal Secretary Imam and Ambassador Wada for their presence at the gracious occasion and their understanding in conducting this important event at the Ministry following strict SOPs, due to the prevailing COVID situation in the country. He also recognized ANF's whole-hearted counter-narcotics operations efforts and reiterated his utmost respect for

all the ANF personnel who had laid down their precious lives in the fight against drugs and illicit crime in various parts of the country. Dr. Milsom reiterated that "UNODC well recognizes ANF's leading counter-narcotics role, and it will always remain our crucial partner in Pakistan."

We also believe that multi-dimensional roles and cross-cutting mandates of various national stakeholders can be used as a force-multiplier, to address risks and challenges of drug trafficking in Pakistan". Mr. Saqib Khan - Programme Officer (Border Management) of UNODC COPAK highlighted the specificity of the ANF prefabricated facilities and the three body-scanner, which have already been operationalized by the ANF.

Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam, Federal Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control, thanked the Embassy of Japan and UNODC COPAK for successfully implementing the capacity-building activities under the 5-year project that commenced in April 2016. He also highlighted the emerging misuse of the internet for drug peddling and money-laundering, a predicate crime and a growing challenge for the rule of law and socio-economic development.

US donates
over 50m
Covid-19
vaccines
to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: US donations of COVID-19 vaccines to Pakistan surpassed 50 million doses this week, as Washington continues its commitment to deliver life-saving vaccines to the people of Pakistan. "With the shipment of an additional 4.7 million Pfizer vaccine doses this week, U.S.-donated vaccines to Pakistan have now reached over 52 million," said U.S. Embassy Islamabad's Chargé d'affaires Angela P. Aggeler.

The United States delivered the most recent tranche of 4.7 million Pfizer vaccine doses to Pakistan late last week, bringing the total to over 52 million U.S.-donated COVID-19 vaccine doses to Pakistan.

Chargé Aggeler said the United States, as the single largest contributor in support of COVAX efforts, continues to work with Pakistan to improve infection prevention and control and enhance patient care and is also supporting Pakistan to expand its capacity to deal with diseases in the future. "This shows our important partnership with Pakistan to improve this country's national health infrastructure," she said. "I especially congratulate the Government of Pakistan for administering a record-breaking 2 million vaccines in one day and 187.9 million vaccines overall," she added. "With these remarkable efforts, the United States and Pakistan can make real progress together in addressing the scourge of COVID-19 across the globe." - APP

PPP hits Imran over
Bilawal allusion

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: While reacting to Prime Minister's derisive allusion to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's broken Urdu, the PPP chairman's spokesman has retorted that Imran Khan could find a good role in theatre.

The spokesman on Wednesday said that the mocking 'selected premier' could get a role in some theatre. He is an expert juggler who has failed to provide basic necessities of life including health and education to people, he added. Prime Minister Imran Khan while addressing people during Sehat Card launching ceremony in Faisalabad earlier today mocked Bilawal's Urdu without mentioning his name.

Bilawal's spokesman derided that when it rained, more water descended and when Imran came, more inflation came. When Imran comes, prices of petrol, medicines, flour and sugar go up, he said adding that when Imran came, poor people died of poverty. Spokesman Zulfikar Ali Badr further said that Pakistan's economy was constantly on the slide since the day Imran took reins of power. He said had Imran taken care of people as Bilawal had done, the inflation would not have gone out of control. He said that those who were sitting on the right and left side of the premier, they were all looters. What would be the future of a country whose rulers would put their money collected through foreign funding in gambling, he added.

Fawad, Firdous plead for
unconditional apology

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain and former special assistant to PM Firdous Ashiq Awan on Wednesday pleaded for unconditional apology in contempt hearing in Peshawar High Court over a press conference on sentencing Pervez Musharraf. A high court bench comprised of Justice Roohul Amin Khan and Justice Arshad ordered them to submit a written affidavit in the court. "We will issue an order after submission of your affidavit in the court," Justice Roohul Amin said. "You people are lawmakers, when responsible people will use this language what a common man will do," the bench questioned. "Visit the grave of the learned Judge to which you have hurt, and pray there," Justice Roohul Amin said. "First go to the grave of the late Judge and then come to us," Justice Amin said. The court was hearing a petition with regard to alleged contemptuous remarks over a judgment of a special court that had awarded death sentence to Pervez Musharraf for high treason. - DNA

KP to launch Digital
Skills Training Program

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: As an important step to ensure employability of young graduates, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has accorded approval to launch a Digital Skills Training Program. Under the initiative, initially, 100,000 young graduates of different categories would be imparted Advanced Digital Training through Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board. This approval was accorded in a meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board held here on Wednesday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair. Members provincial cabinet Atif Khan and Barrester Muhammad Ali Saif, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Science & Technology and information technology Matuallah Khan, Secretary Information Arshad Khan, Managing Director KP IT Board Ali Mahmoud and other concerned high ups attended the meeting. Briefing about various aspects of the initiative, the forum was informed that the Digital Skills Training Program would be implemented with an estimated cost of Rs. 5 billion under which different digital skills courses of three to six months durations would be arranged for graduates. It was further informed that under the

program, youth would be imparted digital training in accordance with the needs of local and international markets in the different sectors of Information and Communication Technology to enhance their employability in the online markets. Besides offering Employment Opportunities, Scholarships and Nano Degrees would be awarded to the successful candidates. Briefing about the three different levels of the program, it was told that under the Intermediate Level Digital Skills, 60 thousand youth would be trained whereas 20 thousand youth would get training under advanced level Digital Skills. Similarly, rest of the youth would be imparted training courses in the third level of the program named Nano degree. Under the Intermediate Level Digital Skills, training in Web Development, Graphic Designing, Animation, Digital Marketing and E-Commerce would be imported whereas under the Advance Level Digital Skills, youth would be trained in Block Chain, Data Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, Computer Networking, Cyber Security, Business Intelligence and Cloud Computing. Briefing about the Youth Employment Program, the participants were informed that 13,700 youth (29% female and 71% male) have been trained under Medium Level Digital Skills. Similarly, more than 1600 youth (15% female and 85% male) have been trained under advance digital skills.

Governor Sindh felicitates
French CG on appointment

NAZIR SIYAL



KARACHI: The newly appointed Consul General France H.E. Christian Testot called on Sindh Governor Imran Ismat at Governor House. The Governor of Sindh congratulated the Consul General on his appointment. On the occasion, during the meeting, bilateral trade and diplomatic relations and other important issues were discussed in detail. Governor Sindh said that diplomatic, political, economic, tourism and educational relations have been established between Pakistan and France for many decades. He further said that youth development, education, health and good governance are among the priorities of Pakistan. Governor Sindh said that Pakistan is committed to protect the human rights of its citizens without any discrimination. Talking to the Governor of Sindh, the Consul General France said that lasting peace, prosperity and protection of common interests could be made possible through effective diplomacy he added.

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