



Islamabad POST

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Turkey's Erdogan visits United Arab Emirates to strengthen ties

Detailed News On Page-07

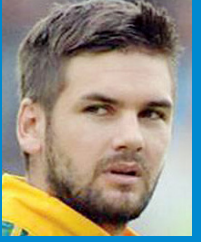
China dismisses India's remarks on border issue

Detailed News On Page-08



PSL is the best T-20 league in the world

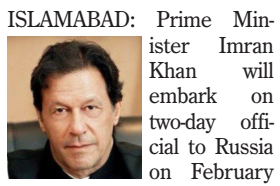
Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

PM to visit Russia on Feb 24

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan will embark on two-day official visit to Russia on February 24th on the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin, sources told. During the visit, Foreign Minister, Advisor on Trade and Advisor on National Security will accompany the premier. Sources told that agreements regarding railways, industries, energy and other sectors are expected to be signed between both sides. Pakistan desires cooperation with Russia in defence, security, trade and energy, sources added.

A good deal within reach in short time

NEWS DESK



TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said on Monday that a good deal is within the reach in a short time provided that the US and the three European countries - France, Britain and Germany - are serious in returning to their commitments under a 2015 nuclear deal (known as JCPOA). Amirabdollahian made the remarks during a joint press conference after a meeting in Tehran with his Irish counterpart Simon Coveney. The foreign minister said that instead of shock-based behavior, playing with the text and playing with the time, the western countries should play their real role and return to their commitments under JCPOA.

Fazl hints at changing march plan

STAFF REPORT



KHANPUR: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman has hinted at changing the long march plan if the opposition finalises the date of a no-trust move against PTI government, ARY News reported on Monday. Maulana Fazlur Rehman, while talking to journalists in Punjab's Khanpur city today, said that PDM long march would no longer be needed to be held if the date of the no-trust move is finalised.

PML-Q tells PM We don't betray our partners

"Tell PTI ministers ghabrana nahi hai," Moonis says, Prime Minister Imran Khan says he has "full faith" in key ally PML-Q

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The PTI-led government's ally PML-Q Monday assured Prime Minister Imran Khan of "complete support" as the Opposition seeks to oust the incumbent regime. Speaking at an international symposium on hydropower development in Islamabad, PML-Q leader and federal water resources minister Moonis Elahi turned down speculations of his party's inclination towards the Opposition and said if someone comes to their house, they would welcome them, as they were politicians.

The development came a day after PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif met PML-Q's Chaudhry brothers - allies of the PTI-led government - at their residence in Lahore after 14 years. However, Moonis was not present in the meeting. "Politicians build and maintain relations; we [plan to maintain]

Continued on Page 06

Moonis' statement increases opp. 'nervousness'

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Monday said the statement of Minister for Water Resources Moonis Elahi about recent political meetings had increased the 'nervousness' of the opposition parties, especially Shehbaz Sharif. The minister expressed these views on his Twitter handle while sharing a video clip of Moonis Elahi in which he explained the prevailing

Continued on Page 06

PM stresses early completion of border markets

While talking to Iranian minister, Khan expressed satisfaction over brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has emphasized on early completion and operationalization of border sustenance markets for economic uplift of people living on both sides of Pak-Iran border. Talking to Iranian Minister Dr. Ahmad Vahidi in Islamabad, he emphasized the importance of close bilateral collaboration to boost trade and regional connectivity. He expressed satisfaction over positive momentum in brotherly

Continued on Page 06

Pak-Iran soil not to be allowed for terrorism

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan and Iran have agreed that no one would be allowed to use Pak-Iran's soil for terrorist activities against each other. The understanding was reached in

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa called on Prime Minister Imran Khan ahead of his planned visit to the United States of America. - DNA

COAS calls on President, PM Imran Alvi paid tribute to security officials who sacrificed their lives

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed has vowed to eradicate extremist elements from the country in his meeting with President Arif Alvi on Monday after the security forces killed 20 terrorists in Balochistan's Naushki and Panjgur areas. The civil-military leadership's meeting took place at the President House, according to a statement, where the COAS briefed President Alvi on the operation against terrorists and the security force's professional readiness. The president paid a tribute to security officials who sacrificed their lives while carrying out operations in

Continued on Page 06

PM chairs meeting of Afghan Apex Committee

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chaired 4th meeting of the Apex Committee on Afghanistan. The Prime Minister stated that Afghan students studying in Pakistani Universities will help in playing a vital role for development of Afghanistan and continue to strengthen people to people contacts between the two countries. The Prime Minister directed that scholarships be continued and all necessary resources be made available. While discussing the potential of bilateral trade between Pakistan

Continued on Page 06

Three terrorists killed in search operations

A large cache of arms and ammunition was also recovered

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan security forces have killed three terrorists in different search operations. According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), on night 12/13 February 2022, based on information of presence of Terrorists in a Hideout in Palsni, Balochistan, Security Forces conducted an operation to apprehend externally sponsored enemies of peace in Balochistan. Once the troops started cordoning the area, Terrorists tried to flee their hideout and opened indiscriminate fire. A heavy exchange of fire ensued. Resultantly, Terrorist Commander Hidayat aka Balaach was killed in the operation. He was involved in firing and IED attacks on security forces in Gwadar and Palsni areas. In addition, a large cache of arms and ammunition was also recovered. In another intelligence based operation conducted in District Khuzdar, security forces

Continued on Page 06

Suicide attack at military post foiled

DNA

RAWALPINDI - Security forces on Monday foiled a suicidal attempt by a terrorist in Dossali, North Waziristan district, on Monday, said the military's media wing in a statement. According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the terrorists attempted to enter into a military post by



Continued on Page 06

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Inside...

PTI wants to escape from local body elections - Page 02

Afghan delegation arrives to explore trade opportunities - Page 03

Financial empowerment, education vital for women - Page 04

The AU should not be legitimising an apartheid state - Page 05

PSL is the best league in the world: Rossow - Page 06

There must be peace treaty between Armenia, Azerbaijan - Page 07

'Corrupt have united against democratic govt' - Page 08

Ukraine demands meeting with Russia over troop buildup

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has affirmed that Ukraine still wants to join NATO despite Russia's opposition

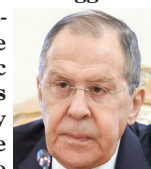
CENTRELINE REPORT

KYIV: Ukraine has requested an urgent meeting with Russia and dozens of other European states to explain Moscow's buildup of troops along the ex-Soviet state's frontier. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said late Sunday that Russia had ignored Kyiv's formal request to explain why Moscow had positioned more than 100,000 troops and advanced weapons around Ukraine. The 1990 Vienna Document requires the 57 members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to share information about their military forces and notify each other about major activities. "Ukraine is convening a meeting

Lavrov proposes continued diplomacy

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Lavrov has suggested to Putin that Moscow should continue along the diplomatic path in its efforts to extract security guarantees from the West. He told the Russian president during a televised meeting between the pair



Continued on Page 06

with Russia and all member states in the next 48 hours to discuss the reinforcement and movement of Russian forces along our border," he wrote on Facebook. The United States fears that Russia's buildup of forces could lead to an invasion of Ukraine "any day". On Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman did not comment on Kyiv's request but reiterated Russia's stance that Moscow was free to move troops across the country's territory. "Large-scale movements of Ukraine's armed forces are also carried out in the border zone on Ukrainian territory, moreover, in the area that borders on the territory of the self-proclaimed republics, which leads to escalation of the situation". - APP

Govt wants to escape from local body elections

The first task of any political party that comes to power in Pakistan is to dismantle the local bodies

ANWAR CHOCHAN

KHARIAN: PML-N MNA Chaudhry Abid Raza Kotla has said that the government is creating problems for the people by abolishing Municipal Committees and Union Councils. Will knock out new constituencies under black law is clear evidence of anti-people!

Not only the opposition but also the Tehreek-e-Insaf and its ally PML-Q have expressed reservations about the method of holding local body elections. If we get a vote of confidence

from the people then they will have some expectations from us in their respective constituencies.

Candidates for local body elections say that it seems that PTI is not sincere in giving powers to lower level like PPP and PML-N. One Justice is giving a new color in the name of change. Tehreek-e-Insaf Regional Prosperity is enslaving the elected local councilors to the chairman of this district council who himself will be powerless. In other words, the elected public representatives of the local bodies will be just rubber stamps. It seems that the government of in-

dependence, like the previous rulers, wants to escape from the local body elections but cannot ignore the orders of the Supreme Court. The government wants the new law on local bodies to be challenged in court and to continue its game by hanging it in the courts.

The first task of any political party that comes to power in Pakistan is to dismantle the local bodies. Legislation should be enacted on a permanent basis so that if any government comes to power, it will not be able to interfere in the local bodies and the local bodies will be able to complete their term.

Malaysian envoy to visit SCCI

SIALKOT: Chargé d'Affaires of High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan Dedy Faisal Ahmad will visit Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), here on Tuesday, Feb 15, 2022.

SCCI Public Relations Officer (PRO) Tajammul Husain told APP that the envoy would discuss matters of mutual interest with Sialkot exporters during a meeting scheduled to be held at the SCCI. — APP

SC rejects KP gov't plea to halt 2nd phase of LG polls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court Monday rejected the petition of the KP government which sought a halt to the second phase of local government elections scheduled to be held on March 31 saying that the court does not want to interfere in the elections affairs thus setting a wrong precedent. During the hearing, Justice Ahsan remarked that there was no reason that the apex court interfered in the polls affairs. He said that it was the duty of Election Commission of Pakistan to issue the polls schedule and hold elections. While rejecting the KP government plea seeking a halt to the second phase of LG polls, the Supreme Court ordered the ECP to listen to the stance of all parties including the provincial government and issue an appropriate order. Justice Ahsan said: "For personal interests, they should not shatter people's confidence in institutions." The ECP lawyer told the court that the KP government itself gave March 25 date for the polls and it was not even a party to the case in the Peshawar High Court. On this, the judge remarked now the provincial government itself was running from the schedule. "Now the KP government says that it will hold election after Ramadan. Tomorrow it will say that it will conduct elections after Eid-ul-Fitr. After that it will say Eid-ul-Azha is approaching.

Security lapse in Gujrat: handcuffed accused shot in courts' premises

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: Poor security in district courts premises has led to the assassination attempt on a handcuffed accused of murder Monday morning.

It is reported that one Hasnain Sadfar resident of district Jhang, an accused of a murder in jurisdiction of police station Dault Nagar was presented in a local magistrate Faisal Mehmood's court by local police.

When he was being taken back to Bakhshi Khana within the premises of district courts, he was shot by reportedly his opponent one Umer Sikandar resident of Sargodha. As a result, the victim fell down on the ground.

The gunman was just to fire the second bullet when brave police constable Sufyan caught him and snatched his gun.

The injured victim was rushed to Aziz Bhatti Shaheed Hospital.

He is said to be stable. Police have not told how an armed attacker entered the district courts



premises. They have not disclosed the names of policemen who are allegedly involved in helping the armed person to enter the sensitive area. Civil Lines police have registered a case.

Food Authority launches awareness campaign

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority Monday started a massive awareness campaign in various educational institutes throughout the province to ensure the provision of safe and healthy food to the students.

The campaign was started on the special directives of Minister Food Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Atif Khan and Secretary Food Capt. (Retd) Mushtaq Ahmad.

The Food Safety Authority officials visited various schools and colleges in district Mardan, where the hygiene condition of school canteens, water filtration, and water tanks were inspected. The officials provided basic information of food safety to the Management of educational institutes, students and food handlers working in the canteens. The canteen owners were told that the sale of unhealthy beverages, snacks and other unsafe food are strictly prohibited, and action would be taken against the violators.

Inspections were also carried out in Nishta Road and Mardan City, where improvement notices were issued to a number of school canteens. Similarly, in district Tank

and Hangu the food safety team sensitised students of various schools and colleges on basic food safety principles.

Director General KP Food Safety Authority, Shahrukh Ali Khan directed teams to further intensify the inspection of food providers in the educational institutions premises. He warned businesses involved in the sale of unhealthy and unsafe food products of strict consequences.

He said the teams are working round the clock to ensure provision of safe food to the people.

The Food Safety team also inspected a number of schools and colleges in district Lakkhi Marwat, the food safety team met with school principals, and asked them for cooperation in the matter. The management and canteen owners assured their full cooperation.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority also conducted awareness sessions in different schools in Lower Dir, and inspected school canteens. During the visits, the students and teachers were provided with basic information on food safety. — APP



ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Information Farrukh Habib flanked by Senator Faisal Javed and MNA Kanwal Shuzab talking to media. — DNA

White coats ceremony held at PMC

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Medical College (PMC) on Monday organized white coats ceremony to welcome the first year MBBS & BDS students into academics of their medical profession.

Dean Health Sciences, PMC, Prof. Dr. Hafeez-ur-Rahman was the chief guest whereas heads and faculty of various departments were also present on the occasion.

It is worth mentioning that the white coat ceremony is a rite of passage for medical students, and was created by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation in 1993. During the ceremony, a white coat was placed on each student's shoulders, signifying their entrance into the medical profession and students learned about the power the white coat holds.

Meanwhile, addressing the ceremony Prof. Dr. Hafeez-ur-Rahman urged upon the newly admitted students to focus on their academic and co-curricular activities to emerge as competent ethical health and dental professionals of the future. He stressed upon them the need to study and treat human being as a bio-psychosocial whole considering their physical and mental health needs in a synergic way with their social situation, issues, and problems. — APP

Parents urged to get children vaccinated against polio

PESHAWAR: Commissioner Bannu Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai on Monday urged upon the parents to get their children vaccinated against polio to make the area free of the crippling disease.

Addressing the Grand Jirga for Polio Awareness for the dignitaries of Bannu Division, he said the people should take advantage from the anti-polio campaign so that future generations could be saved from permanent disability.

He said that anti-polio propaganda was based on mere lies, which need not be taken into consideration, adding that the people have carried out a lot of researches on polio vaccine and ultimately got rid of the crippling disease, but unfortunately we have not been able to eradicate it yet. Addressing the grand Jirga, Deputy Commissioner Lakkhi Marwat Iqbal Hussain said there was an urgent need to raise awareness about infectious diseases like polio. — APP

Masarrat Butt hails Arundhati Roy's narrative on Kashmir

DNA

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Chairman, Masarrat Aalam Butt has welcomed the impartial narrative, adopted by the world famous Indian author and intellectual, Arundhati Roy, regarding the indigenous and legitimate demand for right to self determination in Jammu and Kashmir.

Masarrat Aalam Butt, in a message from India's infamous Tihar jail in New Delhi where he is illegally detained, said it is an opportune time for international community, human rights organisations, civil society bodies and above all the United Nations to block the looming Hinduva fascism and imperialism fostered by India causing a grave nuclear threat to the world peace and prosperity. It is worth mentioning here that Arundhati Roy while speaking about Kashmir in her recent interview with Karen Thapar said, "Why should they want to be a part of India? For what earthly reason? If freedom is what they want, freedom is what they should have."

She also said, "Kashmir may not defeat In-

dia, but it will consume India" and added that the way India's values, principles, constitutional commitments are being undermined by its behaviour in Kashmir will eventually corrode and consume India itself."

The incarcerated APHC leader referring to the interview given by Arundhati Roy said that she has exposed the ruthless genocide, trampling of the fundamental rights, freedom of expression and liberal journalism, religious freedom, arbitrary arrests and invoking of draconian laws.

The APHC chairman denounced the heavy deployment of Indian troops to terrorize the freedom-loving people of Kashmir and tarnish the civilized concept of rule of law. He said that Kashmiris are engaged in a strong resistance movement which cannot be defeated by India.

"The tenacity, valour and zeal and zest against the Indian brutalities displayed by the people of Kashmir to achieve their inalienable right to self determination is a clear message to India to shun stubbornness and a logical appeal to the world conscience to break its silence and facilitate settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

KP Speaker visits Sindh Assembly

KARACHI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Speaker Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani paid a visit to Sindh Assembly here on Monday.

Leader of the Opposition in Sindh Assembly Haleem Adil Sheikh along with members of joint opposition welcomed the guest. PTI parliamentary leader in Sindh Assembly Khurram Shehzaman, MQM-P parliamentary leader Kunwar Naveed Jamil, GDA parliamentary leader Husnain Mirza, Muhammad Husain, Nand Kumar Gokani, Saeed Afridi, Shah Nawaz Jadoon, Shehzad Qureshi and other MPs were also present at the occasion.

Speaking at the occasion, Mushtaq Ghani said that it was his first ever visit to historical Sindh Assembly. He said that out of 145 members of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly 95 members belonged to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and opposition was given representation in all the 32

standing committees of the KP assembly.

He said the opposition in KP assembly was given inclusive opportunity to dispose of their constitutional responsibilities as 10 standing committees were headed by the opposition legislators while there were at least three members of opposition benches in every committee of the provincial assembly including the Public Accounts Committee.

On the contrary, opposition in Sindh Assembly was kept out of standing committees and PAC, he deplored and said that it was responsibility of the speaker to ensure participation of opposition, besides the treasury benches, in business of the assembly and they should be provided proportional representation in committees and equitable share in funds. The speaker also extended invitation to parliamentarians of Sindh to visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. — APP

French CG calls on Administrator

KARACHI: Consul General of France Christian Testot on Monday called on Administrator Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab at his office and discussed issues of mutual interest. Administrator Karachi said Pakistan had friendly relations with France and it could cooperate with Pakistan in various fields.

"Karachi is an international city and economic hub of Pakistan. We are improving Karachi's infrastructure to provide better civic amenities to its citizens," he added. Consul General of France said that they would consider in which areas France could further cooperate with Pakistan.

He also visited the historic building of KMC headquarters on the occasion and said that he was happy to see the historic building of KMC. "The historic buildings of Karachi are the heritage of Pakistan," he added. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan in a group photo with the experts of the International Symposium on Hydropower Development. — DNA



کیپٹل ڈویلپمنٹ اتھارٹی

لینڈ و بحالیات ڈائریکٹوریٹ

پبلک نوٹس

وفاقی کابینہ کے فیصلے مورخہ 11-11-2021 اور 12-02-2022 E-12 متاثرین کے مسائل کو حل کرنے کے لئے قائم کردہ کمیشن کی سفارشات کی روشنی میں سی ڈی اے نے E-12 کے ایسے متاثرین جنہوں نے ابھی تک بحالیاتی فوائده حاصل نہیں کئے اور سی ڈی اے لینڈ ڈائریکٹوریٹ میں درخواستیں جمع کروائی ہیں ان کو رہائی پلاٹوں کی الاٹمنٹ شروع کرنے کا فیصلہ کیا ہے جس کے پہلے مرحلے میں ایک قرضہ اندازی مورخہ 29 دسمبر 2022ء کو ہو چکی ہے اور اب باقی جمع شدہ درخواستوں کی قرضہ اندازی ایس او پی 26.07.2017 کے مطابق مورخہ 09 مارچ 2022ء بروز بدھ دن 3 بجے اولڈ ونڈو بلڈنگ میں منعقد ہوگی۔ مذکورہ قرضہ اندازی میں متاثرین کی طرف سے جمع کروائے گئے صرف وہ کیس زیر غور لائے جائینگے جن کی درخواستیں جمع ہو چکی ہیں اور جن کی ریویو ریکارڈ مورخہ پالیسی، اور قواعد و ضوابط کے مطابق جانچ پڑتال اور تصدیق کی جا چکی ہوگی۔

مذکورہ قرضہ اندازی کے نتائج مورخہ 09 مارچ 2022ء بروز بدھ کو شام 06 بجے سی ڈی اے کی ویب سائٹ www.cda.gov.pk پر اپ لوڈ بھی کر دیے جائیں گے۔

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Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....	1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Police.....	9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....	9222596
Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Enquiry.....	117
Railway Exchange.....	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....	5555489
CAA.....	9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....	5611111
MH.....	5611116
Cantt Hospital.....	9270907-11
DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.....	4603666



Departments

CDA.....	9221334-43
CDA.....	9208301-04
Met Office.....	9250360-6
RDA.....	5555864
TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3



Complaints

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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ISLAMABAD: Syed Yawar Bukhari, Minister for Bait-ul-maal along with others cutting a cake to commemorate 43rd anniversary of Victory of Islamic Republic of Iran. DNA

Afghan delegation arrives to explore trade opportunities

President, ICCI M Shakeel Munir told media that the visit of Afghan trade delegation to Pakistan was a good omen, which would have a positive impact on bilateral trade

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 19-member delegation of Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) arrived here on Monday to explore trade opportunities between the two brotherly neighbouring countries. The Afghan delegation, led by PAJCCI President, Khan Jan Alokzay, is scheduled to visit different industrial cities in the country and hold discussion with representatives of business community for promotion of trade. The delegation members include representatives of various chambers of Afghanistan and First Deputy of Afghanistan Chamber

of Trade and Investment M. Younas Mohamad, President Chamber of Industries and Mines, Sherbaz Kamzada and President Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock, Khan M. Farootain. Earlier, a high level delegation of Pakistan, led by Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security, Moeed Yusuf visited Afghanistan on January 29, 2022 and had meetings with representatives of various Afghan ministries, including the Ministry of Industries and Commerce, and discussed bilateral trade between the two countries besides outlining a future plan of action. Accordingly, under the action plan, the two countries would carry forward

negotiations to strengthen Pakistan's trade with Central Asian countries. The senior business leader said that the Afghan delegation would hold talks with the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce in Islamabad on February 17. Responding to a question, he said that trade with Central Asian Countries was very important and the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) between Pakistan and Uzbekistan was taking place and would be finalized on March 23. Meanwhile, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Muhammad Shakeel Munir told APP that the visit of Afghan trade delegation to Pakistan was a good omen, which would

have a positive impact on bilateral trade. He said the boom in regional trade was largely dependent on the ease of trade with Afghanistan, adding huge opportunities were available in promoting trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia countries, however stressed the need for tapping this potential with proper strategies. Shakeel Munir particularly mentioned the potential in mining, minerals and precious stone sectors of economy. It is pertinent to mention here that the government had already taken many initiatives to facilitated trade and promote economic relations with the neighbouring country.

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood informed that the Ministry of Commerce had allowed export settlement of 14 items in local currency of Pak rupee. These include poultry and products, meat, cement, pharmaceutical, textiles, fruits, vegetables, salt, rice and surgical instruments, the adviser said. The adviser said that queries have been received regarding export to Afghanistan in Pakistan Rupee (Rs). "We would like to clarify that to ease exports to Afghanistan; Ministry of Commerce has allowed export settlement of 14 items in Pakistan's local currency," he said.

Production of banana increases in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The production of bananas in Pakistan has increased during past few years after the successful experiments of tissue culture of Chinese imported plants. Talking to media on Monday, Fruit Leader of Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) Dr Alam Riaz said Pakistan produced 12 different varieties of bananas from Chinese plants that were imported in 2009. He said one million plants of these varieties were harvested on the left bank of Sindh province in 2012 and out of these two species provided extraordinary results which were approved by Sindh Seed Council for commercial growth. PARC named NIGAB 1 and NIGAB 2 of new varieties of bananas on the name of their research institute called National Institute of Genomics and Advanced Biotechnology (NIGAB) and it provided fruits only in 9 months that could be preserved up to 4 weeks in container. "Pakistan is producing 150,000 tons banana per year. Banana production will be increased to 700,000 tons in coming years as the PARC is producing 50,000 and private sector is growing 500,000 to 600,000 tissue cultured plants every year for commercial yield" he added.

Zawia, PAL's reference for Mumtaz Sheikh

ISLAMABAD: Literary organization 'Zawia', in collaboration with Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Monday organized a condolence reference in the memory of eminent writer, critic and poet Mumtaz Ahmad Sheikh. The conference was held at conference Hall of PAL which was attended by renowned scholars including PAL Chairman Dr. Yousaf Khushk, President of Zawia Mahboob Zafar, Akhtar Raza Saleemi, said a press release issued here. In his opening remarks, the PAL chairman paid a glowing tribute to the literary services of Mumtaz Sheikh. He said that PAL has initiated a series of seminars and references to highlight the contributions of prominent scholars and pay them tribute. - APP

IHC reserves decision on plea of ex-DG NAB

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday reserved its judgment on acquittal plea of former director general of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Subha Sadiq in a graft reference. A two-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan reserved the decision after listening arguments from both sides. It may be mentioned here that the trial court had dismissed the acquittal plea and Subha Sadiq had challenged the decision before IHC. - APP

Samina lauds Behbud Association's role for promoting art

ISLAMABAD: Begum Samina Alvi, the wife of President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday lauded the role Behbud Association of Pakistan for promoting the country's art locally as well as internationally. Addressing the opening ceremony of a cafe, established by a charitable organization Behbud Association at Behbud School in Saidpur Village, she said that she was always striving to promote the dying art of the country. She also urged the ambassadors' wives who were also attending the event, to play their role for promoting Pakistan's art in their respective countries. Samina Alvi said she always loved to see the women playing their role in the national development. She also spoke high of President of Behbud Association Abida Malik for her role to promote local art and establishing the cafe which would help fund the Behbud School in the locality. Samina Alvi, who also appreciated the tableau by the school students, took a round of the school, cafe as well as the Behbud Craft shop. In her welcome address, Abida Malik said that initially established for Saidpur Village's women in 1967, the Behbud School was now a secondary school and would soon be elevated to the girls' college. She said the besides a school, the Behbud Association was also extending family planning services to the local women. She said the cafe would prove to be a step towards sustainability of the school. The Behbud president also appreciated Samina Alvi for playing a remarkable role in creating awareness on breast cancer and other health and social issues.



ISLAMABAD: Begum Samina Arif Alvi inaugurating a café, established by Behbud Association, at Behbud School in Saidpur Village, Islamabad. - DNA

HEC, British Council hold workshop for ORIC Directors

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), in collaboration with the British Council, Pakistan has launched a three-day Research Capacity Building Programme for the management of Offices of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation (ORICs) of the higher education institutions. Around 75 Directors/Managers of ORICs established at different universities of the country are taking part in the programme being funded under Pak-UK Education Gateway project in collaboration with British Council. The capacity building programme has a holistic approach towards addressing the capacity issues at multiple tiers. In tier-1, training needs of ORIC offices will be addressed for making them more capable of research management and commercialization. In tier-2 of this programme, researchers and Principal Investigators of recent grants will be trained to develop quality research proposals, and lastly, reviewers will be trained so that they have the capacity to deliver a rigorous and transparent proposal evaluation and selection. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail said that research and development in higher education institutes has always been the priority of HEC. She stated that HEC is continuously struggling to strengthen the HEIs not only in the academics but also in research excellence, as it is committed to promoting innovation and technology transfer. She underlined various HEC programmes, including multiple R&D and PSDP grants, aimed at promoting quality education and research culture in the country's HEIs. She highlighted that owing to HEC's continuous efforts, the research output of Pakistani universities has significantly increased. She appreciated the British Council for its long-lasting partnership with HEC for unleashing the human capital potential of Pakistan. She advised the participants of workshop to strive for solving the problems of local industry, society and government by research projects or engagements of their students or graduates to help improve Pakistan's economy. - APP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) is commencing admissions in second phase of semester spring 2022 across Pakistan including all four provinces, AJK and GB. According to AIU, the programs offered during this phase include BA (Associate Degree), B Com, BS (ODL), B.Ed and MA. International students as well as overseas Pakistanis, residing in any country of the world, can apply to get admissions in these programs. All academic activities for international students will be conducted online ranging from submission of admission application form to the issuance of certificate/degree. Admission application forms and prospectuses for all these programs will be available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) on March 1, 2022. - DNA

AIU admissions in BA, B Ed, Master's from March 1

ISLAMABAD: Khalid Iqbal Malik, former President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry has taken oath as new Chairman, Founder Group of ICCI. Outgoing Chairman Founder Group Mian Akram Farid administered oath to the incoming Chairman during a ceremony held at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. After taking oath, Khalid Iqbal Malik thanked all

Khalid Iqbal sworn in as Chairman Founder Group

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Khalid Iqbal Malik, former President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry has taken oath as new Chairman, Founder Group of ICCI. Outgoing Chairman Founder Group Mian Akram Farid administered oath to the incoming Chairman during a ceremony held at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. After taking oath, Khalid Iqbal Malik thanked all

members of the Founder Group for giving him this important responsibility and assured that he would play a role to further strengthen the Group and take all major decisions in consultation with its members. He said that he would guide ICCI in promoting the interests of the business community more effectively. He lauded the services of Mian Akram Farid, outgoing Chairman Founder Group and said that he would benefit from his experience to make the Group stronger.

He said that according to a recent report of Asian Development Bank, Pakistan has just 30 percent trade-to-GDP ratio, which is one of the lowest in the world as our trade in limited items was focused on a few countries including USA, EU, China and Afghanistan. He urged that the government should focus on diversification of products and markets to enhance its trade-to-GDP ratio as Pakistan has tremendous potential to improve its exports.



Briefs

AJK Govt to establish model tourism spot

ISLAMABAD: The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir would establish model tourism spot along with Neelum river to enhance the beautiful scenic view of capital city.

An official source told APP here on Monday, that Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet had decided to formulate an authority of tourism to exploit its rich tourism potential for the social economics development of the area.

He said that AJK government investing million of rupees to uplift this sector, adding that a summary regarding the set up of new tourism authority would be presented in the next meeting of Azad Jammu and Kashmir cabinet for its approval.

To a question he said that tourism authority would establish its offices at district, tehsil and local level to promote this sector and generate the maximum revenue.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has a clear vision in this regard from day one. He wants Azad Kashmir to turn tourism into a key source of income for its people, particularly those inhabiting the areas with fascinating natural beauty," he said. - APP

Mother Languages Festival from Feb 19

ISLAMABAD: The two-day "Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival" will be held at the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in Islamabad from February 19 to 20. The event will have parallel sessions on both days. The festival would be organized by Indus Cultural Forum (ICF) in collaboration with Pakistan Academy of Letters.

The opening ceremony of the festival will take place at PAL in which the Federal Minister for National History and Literary Heritage Shafqat Mahmood is likely to be the chief guest, an official of Pakistan Academy of Letters Raza Mehmoood told APP on Thursday.

The well-known scholars and language experts would participate in two-day festival.

The festival aims to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and to preserve, protect and promote the languages of the country.

The festival will provide a platform for celebrating 70 plus languages of Pakistan and encourage language communities to take action for saving their languages from extinction.

The festival will feature various programs, i.e., poetry in mother languages, launching of new books and poetry recital sessions. - APP

IRSA releases 77147 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 77147 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 40522 cusecs. According to the data released by Indus River System Authority, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1423.11 feet, which was 31.11 feet higher than its dead level 1392 feet.

Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 18600 and 59000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1145.85 feet, which was 95.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded 7775 and 4000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 64790, 45820 and 28645 cusecs respectively.

Similarly, from the Kabul River, a total of 4500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 9647 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP

Financial empowerment, education vital for women

President Alvi stressed the responsibility of society in maintaining gender equality and mentioned that several cultural practices were contributing to discrimination against women in the country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said financial empowerment of women in Pakistan with their equal access to education and health services was vital in ensuring gender equality. "A financially strong, educated and healthy woman can act as a firm pillar of the society and also a symbol of real emancipation," he said in an event organized by Oxfam Pakistan, marking its 50 years of contribution relating to gender justice.

President Alvi stressed the responsibility of society in maintaining gender equality and mentioned that several cultural practices were contributing to discrimination against women in the country. He pointed out that by denying women their due rights, society was ignoring Islam's basic ethos of



enlightenment on matters including the inheritance of property. In view of the cases of domestic violence and honour killing, Dr Alvi said that shifting the 'burden of honour to women alone could not justify the exploitation against them. He said coordinated prevention and response initiatives at the levels of government, civil society, and individuals could address the issues of

gender inequality. Through advocacy on women's rights, society could be sensitized to adopting positive gender norms and ensuring public space for women. He said Pakistan already had several laws on women empowerment, however, said that further pro-women legislation would improve the situation. President Alvi proposed finding out tools to empower women such as incen-

tivization of education and their part-time engagement in employment in case they managed their families simultaneously. He said digital inclusion could bring about a big change in the life of a woman by helping her choose an online job, to earn a livelihood. He also urged the women to avail the financial opportunities offered by banks for startups and small businesses.

Charge d'affaires Australian High Commission Bryce David Hutchesson terming gender discrimination a global challenge said Australia was at the frontline in ensuring emancipation of women that remained under-represented at forums, particularly in the wake of the pandemic. He acknowledged the steps taken by President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan in ensuring the implementa-

tion of legislation especially relating to women's property inheritance rights, setting up of special courts for trial of rape cases, and appointment of Justice Ayesha Malik as the first woman judge of Supreme Court.

He said Australia was a longstanding partner of Pakistan on gender equality and also supported the country chapter of the Male Champions of Change besides training professionals on law and journalism regarding gender violence.

Executive Director Oxfam International Gabriela Bucher in a video message said Oxfam's 350,000 'agents of change' across Pakistan were a real force of change. She said to ensure an equal future for women, Oxfam was focusing on women's representation in the political arena, addressing issues of forced child marriages and workplace harassment.

Senate refers six bills to committees

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate of Pakistan on Monday witnessed the introduction of six bills which were referred to the relevant committees for further deliberations.

The bills included, the Limited Liability Partnership (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Payment of Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Control of Narcotic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2022, (Amendment of Article 61), the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2022, the Access to the Media (Deaf and Dumb) Persons Bill, 2022, and the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2022]. The house also allowed 60 more working days to committees of law and justice Communications and for submitting their reports in the house.

Fawad condoles over demise of Justice (r) Haji Akram

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Monday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of Justice (Retd) Haji Muhammad Akram Baitu.

In a condolence message, Fawad said he was shocked to hear the news of the death of Justice (R) Haji Muhammad Akram with whom his elders had a deep connection. "With his demise, we have lost one of our great elders," he remarked.

The minister said he equally shared grief with the bereaved family.

Fawad prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to members of the bereaved family to bear the loss with equanimity. - APP

Music, Arts classes in full swing at PNCA

ISLAMABAD: Music and Arts classes are going on in full swing at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) to explore and polish hidden talent of artistic souls of the young generation.

The new session of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) under the supervision of professional musicians and artists, said a news release issued here.

Various classes including singing, tabla, painting, calligraphy, photography, guitar, violin, rubab, keyboard, piano, flute, sitar, acting, and dance are being organized under the supervision of trained teachers to inculcate and encourage the new generation towards music and singing arts. - APP

WWF's housing schemes to be completed on priority

ISLAMABAD: All housing projects of Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) would be completed on priority to facilitate the beneficiaries ensuring their own home despite limited resources.

An official source told APP here on Monday that the government was also reviewing death and marriage grants, besides educational scholarships for registered workers.

He emphasized upon the process of disbursement of these grants which had been streamlined, adding, workers were being facilitated as this was the critical times of their lives.

He stated that educational scholarships would be expanded to maximize coverage and provide a better opportunity to the future generations of workers.

He said the Ministry was keen to promote Workers Welfare Fund to safeguard rights of each and every worker of the country. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chairing a meeting to review latest progress on mega corruption cases at NAB headquarters. - DNA

Traditional food outlet to be re-open next week

ISLAMABAD: A traditional food outlet would likely to re-open next week at the premises of National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage - LokVirsa for the attraction of food lovers to be able to experience a variety of food under one roof with tasteful recipes. According to a statement issued here, initially, traditional brunch would be served at a food outlet the prices would be reasonable and easy to access for everyone to be able to enjoy along with their family and children. Halwपुरi one of the most traditional food among the young generation would be served for two days Saturday and Sunday with the timings 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Food lovers and enthusiasts should visit and enjoy quality food with the perfect combination of nature and traditional cuisine. The menu included HalwaPuri, Paratha, Channey, Nihari, Payee, BBQ, French toast, Omelette, Fried Eggs, Boiled Eggs, Traditional Lassi and tea (Green tea, Doodh Pati, etc) LokVirsa, the premier national organization mandated to preserve, document, and promote the cultural heritage of Pakistan, has grown from "shambles" to a swelling pride over the last couple of years, with progress ranging from creating a sense of ownership among regional cultures as well as minority communities to developing international linkages and from unprecedented infrastructure development at the premises to financial streamlining of the institution. - APP

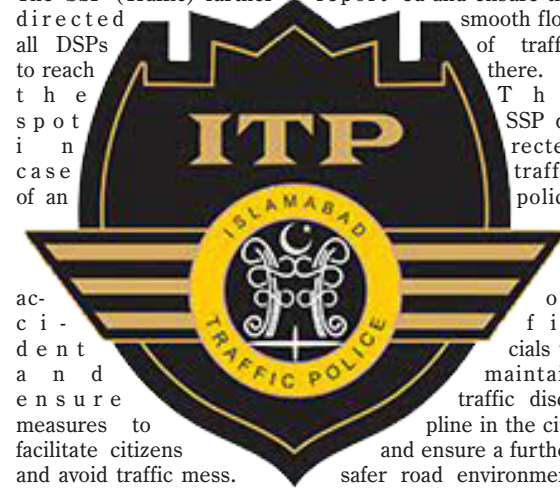
Minister directs to devise a strategy to control dengue

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Minister for Literacy and Non-Formal Education Raja Rashid Hafeez on Monday directed the officials to devise an effective strategy to control the spread of dengue. Chairing a meeting to review anti-dengue arrangements along with Deputy Commissioner Tahir Farooq, the minister directed the quarters concerned to implement anti-dengue SOPs issued by the Provincial government in letter and spirit. He said the strict action would be taken against those showing negligence in eradicating dengue larvae breeding. On the occasion, DC Tahir Farooq further directed the officials of the departments concerned to carry out surveillance in the under-construction buildings, garbage dumps and graveyards within the district limits. - APP

SSP reviews performance of traffic congestion response unit

ISLAMABAD: The traffic congestion response unit of Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) is effectively managing traffic flow during peak hours and ensuring a disciplined traffic system in various markets of the city.

It was stated by Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) RaiMazhar Iqbal while reviewing the performance of the unit comprising seven teams equipped with modern cars as well as bikes. He expressed satisfaction over its performance and gave directions to further improve it. He said the decision to establish these units was made by IGP Islamabad Mu-



hammad Ahsan Younus and its performance is quite up to the mark. The SSP (Traffic) further directed all DSPs to reach the spot in case of an accident and ensure measures to facilitate citizens and avoid traffic mess.

The SSP was told the teams of the unit rush to the area where traffic congestion is reported and ensure smooth flow of traffic there. The SSP directed traffic police officials to maintain traffic discipline in the city and ensure a further safer road environment with the implementation of traffic rules.

He said that education teams of ITP should continue visits to public and private organizations, trade, and transport unions, universities, colleges, and schools in order to inculcate road safety tips through road safety training. The SSP (Traffic) said that this system is linked with the safe city project and all teams of this unit are being monitored from it. He said that the traffic police force would be equipped on modern lines and a disciplined traffic system to be ensured in the Capital. - APP

Religious ministries' role vital for reforms in Muslim societies: Qadri

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Pir Noor ul Haq Qadri Monday said the religious affairs ministries had a big role in bringing reforms in the Muslim societies across the world. The religious ministries should present the Islamic teachings in such a way that could appeal to the young generation, he added. The minister was addressing the 13th Conference of Executive Council of Ministers of Islamic Affairs and Endowments of Arab and Islamic Countries in Cairo, said a press release. Qadri lamented that today, the world was facing ethical and social crises, including extremism, sectarianism and terrorism. The present method of educating and upbringing the young generation, he added, had failed to meet the modern-day challenges particularly posed by the social media. He urged the religious ministries and scholars to come up with a solid road-map to cope with such crises in order to attain peace and security across the Muslim world. They should educate the people about their social, political and religious obligations in proper manners, he maintained. Meanwhile, moderating a plenary session on 'The Contract of Citizenship and its Impact on Achieving Societal and Global Peace' at the 32nd Conference of Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs on Sunday, the minister said peaceful coexistence was the basic unit of 'Contract of Citizenship' setting aside the colour, race, religion, culture or language. He said Islam and Shariah did not contradict with that theory as in the Islamic society, people of all ranks equally enjoyed the legal rights. The ideology, he said, was based on 'give and take' relationship, which transformed the individual as a responsible citizen of the society. - APP

Shafqat inspects education ministry's performance

The Federal Minister reiterated his resolve to retain it and to improve progress. He advised all the heads of attached organizations to carefully workout on the targets given by ministry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture Shafqat Mahmood reviewed the performance and targets achieved by each organization under performance agreement signed last year on September 22. While chairing a weekly review meeting of the ministry and attached organizations here on Monday he said, the ministry was graded to 91.2 percent on the basis of qualitative and quantitative assessment indicators with fourth position among other ministries during a mid year review and awarded appreciation certificate from the Prime Minister on February 10. While terming it a big achievement for the ministry, the Minister congratulated



the whole team saying, he has taken all the targets seriously since the beginning which had resulted

in this milestone achievement. The Federal Minister reiterated his resolve to retain it and to improve

the progress. He advised all the heads of attached organizations to carefully workout on the targets

given by the ministry. Shafqat Mahmood said, many of the organizations of the ministry e.g. National College of Arts, Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design and National Skills University (which is the only university of the country recognized by UNESCO) etc. were not added in the Performance Agreement of 2021-23 and he instructed to get them added for next quarters.

Sharing his experience with the participants of the meeting, Shafqat Mahmood said, when he was assigned the portfolio of Education; few of his friends were not happy as they were expecting some other portfolio but today they all were happy and congratulating on our success. Shafqat Mahmood advised all the senior officers to maintain their performance for next quarters as the challenges would also be increased.

Stealin' Biden

IT'S been six months since the fall of Kabul but the miseries of Afghans have increased exponentially due to lack of basic necessities. While the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other global bodies are committed in providing necessary humanitarian aid, Washington chose to commit daylight robbery by not only seizing Afghan central bank assets worth \$7b but also splitting half of the amount to families of 9/11 Attacks victims.

The uproar in diplomatic, scholarly and media circles across the world was expected but interestingly even the families of the victims disapprove of this bizarre decision which should be a lesson for the Biden administration on why its actions are devoid of morality. Afghanistan has suffered a lot from decades of constant wars whose root cause remains the aftermath of the 1978 Saur Revolution. At least three generations bore the brunt and have witnessed nothing but warfare.

The Taliban may not be the rightful claimants of these assets but the people of Afghanistan are for certain. Such actions on part of a White House which claims to steer a foreign policy based on justice, equality and human rights as per its own secretary of state shows that actions speak louder than words. A large chunk of the American people had high hopes from this administration especially after enduring four years of Donald Trump but promises haven't really been fulfilled. Biden's inner circle is still stuck in the past and its Cold War mentality refuses to subside after miserably failing to outsmart the Russians in recent times. It also refuses to take on a fascist regime in New Delhi for short-term economic and security interests.

So, the question remains: What kind of future holds for the destitute in Afghanistan who are forced to rely on breadcrumbs just because the US president chose to act cruelly? Arm twisting never worked in history and stealing another country's assets would haunt Washington's power corridors.

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Cases decreasing

IT seems as though the fifth Covid-19 wave is starting to ebb as the national positivity rate drops down to 5.36 percent. Thankfully, our best line of defence—vaccinations—has worked well to enhance immunity against Omicron enough for the fifth wave to pass by without the need for taking drastic measures.

While the worst may be behind us, there is still potential for the climate to become critical as Punjab is still reporting a high number of cases. If the right steps are not taken, transmission could cross provincial borders once again and the matter may get out of hand.

Pakistan recently set a historic record of administering 5 million vaccines in 24 hours. The ferocity with which the authorities launched the inoculation drive aided in building strong immunity against the evolving Covid-19 virus. It was never going to be enough to prevent transmission altogether but it did well in reducing the number of critical cases. Most individuals recovered at home and suffered from fewer symptoms than those suffering from previous variants. If we are successful in vaccinating the remaining 35 percent of the population, there is no doubt that Covid-19 may be a minor inconvenience that we will have to live with—much like the flu—rather than a full blown-out pandemic.

This success story must be taken with a grain of salt however as Punjab is still suffering from a higher positivity rate of 7 percent, drastically reduced from the earlier 19 percent. 15,705 individuals tested positive in the month of February alone and this shows that there is still a long way to go. Certain areas are more susceptible to transmission due to overcrowding and the lack of adherence to protocols. It is within these areas that the government must revert its attention to because if neglected, the fifth wave could go on for longer than it has to. Enforcing social distancing, getting booster shots and practicing good hygiene is vital at this moment in time if we are to expect an end to our restrictive pandemic-stricken lives.

The AU should not be legitimising an apartheid state

Patrick Gathara

The Amnesty report cast Mahamat's original decision in a horrible light. Even worse is the fact that it is not the first report to brand Israel's treatment of the Palestinians as apartheid

FOR months now, the African Union has been twisting in the wind over the question of granting Israel observer status. In July last year, AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat controversially accredited the apartheid state, upsetting the continental organisation's two-decade-long policy of boycotting the Israeli state and sparking protests from a number of member states led by South Africa and Algeria. The issue was to be put to a vote at the annual Heads of State summit held earlier this week in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

However, despite unconfirmed reports attributed to the Algerian delegation that Mahamat's decision was set to be reversed, or perhaps because it was going to be, the vote was postponed to next year, which in essence meant his decision will hold at least till then. According to the AU's newly elected chairperson, Senegalese President Macky Sall, there was fear the issue would split the organisation, which prefers to do things by consensus. The optics were not good. The vote was scheduled just days after Amnesty International, one of the oldest and most credible international human rights organisations, confirmed Israel's status as an apartheid state, after investigating its treatment of Palestinians both citizens of Israel and those living under Israeli

military rule in the occupied territories.

African countries, which had for decades ostracised South Africa for its practice of apartheid against its Black majority and had stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the Palestinians in their fight against Israeli colonial oppression, publicly embracing an apartheid state to preserve dubious unity is clearly a step in the wrong direction.

The Amnesty report cast Mahamat's original decision in a horrible light. Even worse is the fact that it is not the first report to brand Israel's treatment of the Palestinians as apartheid. In fact, less than three months prior to the AU's abrupt U-turn, Human Rights Watch, another venerable global human rights institution, had too concluded that Israel was guilty of apartheid.

Defending his decision, Mahamat pointed out that most African countries had recognised Israel and established relations with it, and that a majority had requested such accreditation. He also argued that accrediting Israel would not only be in line with the AU's consistent call for a two-state solution in Palestine but would also provide it with a means of advocating for Palestinian rights.

The problem with his argument is that it ignores the damaging consequence of his decision – the acceptance of Israel whose founding rationale is, to quote former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, not to be "a state of all its citizens... [but] the nation state of the Jewish people". For the AU to confer legitimacy on an entity that both in declaration and in practice excludes a section of its own population and brutally occupies and steals the land of another, is a betrayal of Africa's own history of struggle against brutal colonial occupation and dispossession. Legitimation is the major consequence, as evinced by Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid's celebration of the accreditation as "strengthening the fabric of Israel's foreign relations".

Just as it would have been unthinkable for the AU's predecessor, the Organization of African Unity, to admit apartheid South Africa into its fold, so it should be with apartheid Israel.

While it is true that the OAU had actually accorded Israel observer status prior to its dissolution in 2002, the fact is that this was not the case for much of its history. In fact, the OAU was a staunch critic of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, comparing it to the situation in apartheid South Africa.

This was the case even more following the 1967 war and the subsequent occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands, which Africa condemned. For example, in 1986, the OAU Council of Ministers recommended "that Member States renew their firm determination not to establish or re-establish diplomatic ties with Israel" broken off, for the most part in 1973, and described Israel as "a natural and unconditional accomplice of racist South Africa".

For much of the Western world, the legitimisation of Israel is the touchstone of international respectability. One constantly is harangued about not delegitimising the world's only Jewish state and about acknowledging its "right to exist". However, states do not have rights, let alone a right to exist. One of the sine qua non of state existence is recognition by other states and a right to exist would necessarily mean a right to recognition, a right which – as the Palestinians, Somalilanders and Kosovars can attest – is rather hard to come by. Further, despite their pretensions at permanence, states are relatively recent political inventions and can be rather fleeting. Did the USSR have a right to exist?

But much more importantly, apartheid states should not be legitimised, let alone accorded a right to exist. While the international system of states is anarchic and there are plenty of disreputable and oppressive regimes, that should not mean that anything goes. The AU in numerous resolutions has already noted Israel's refusal to play according to established rules. Accrediting a serial violator of UN resolutions, a state with an official policy of ethnic cleansing and apartheid, one committed to indefinitely perpetuating a brutal colonial occupation, will remain a terrible stain on the AU's and Mahamat's record.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

IIOJK: A failure of peacekeepers?

Muhammad Akhter



5th August 2019, Indian troops martyred around five hundred Kashmiris' in India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Whereas, dozens of Kashmiri youth had been martyred under the guise of "fake encounters" by occupation forces

UNIVERSAL Declaration of Human rights (UDHR) 1948, urges to protect the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." On contrary to that, its signatory country India is committing gross human rights violations in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the people of India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have been subjected to the worst atrocities by Indian occupational forces in seven decades. The BJP regime under RashtriyaSwayamsevakSangh's (RSS) ideology has started a reign of state-sponsored terrorism and brutal killings to fulfill extremist ambitions.

Since, 5th August 2019, Indian troops martyred around five hundred Kashmiris' in India illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Whereas, dozens of Kashmiri youth had been martyred under the guise of "fake encounters" by occupation forces. In a fresh act of skyrocketing atrocities in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) five more youth had martyred under the guise of so-called cordon and search operation, and the number of extrajudicial killings goes at least around thirty in January alone.

The never-ending atrocities in Kashmir

According to a report, in the occupied valley, four hundred eighty-seven (487) people were injured as a result of "brutal use of force against protesters". While two thousand seven hundred sixteen (2,716) people including human rights activist Khurram Pervez were arrested in raids and crackdowns by Indian troops and police last year. Moreover, most of these arrests are charged under black draconian laws, the Public Safety Act (PSA), and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Additionally, Sixty-seven residential houses were subjected to Arson crimes by Indian forces in the occupied valley during 2021.

On the other side, the Indian fascist regime has been precluded the Muslims of the valley to perform Friday prayers at the historic mosque "Jama Masjid" in Srinagar from straight 46 weeks, including other religious activities. The Resistance leaders including second to none Dr Qasim Fakto (Asia's longest-serving prisoner) and SyedaAsiyandrabai are incarcerated in Delhi's Tihar Jail in "false cases". The repeal-

ing of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution is another darkest chapter in the history of the occupied valley.

It is worthy to mention here, that Stoke White, a London-based law firm, filed a petition with British police on January 18, 2022. Wherein, the firm demanded the arrest of the Indian Defence Minister, Army Chief and a few other Indian officials for their alleged involvement in war crimes. According to the law firm, it submitted conclusive evidence to the Metropolitan Police's War Crimes Unit, documenting how Indian forces under the command of General ManojMakand Nirvana and Interior Minister Amit Shah misused the power to overwhelm the voices in IIOJK. What is the future of such human rights violations?

It should be noted, for the last seven decades, the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir are demanding independence of the region from Indian illegal occupation, which is their birthright to choose whether they live independently or accession with Pakistan. But, on the contrary to that, The Indian occupying forces brutally martyred thousands of people, and most civilians to suppress the legitimate demands of the people of Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) instead of implementing the UN resolution. In this regard, for the first time the Fascist regime of India has been booked in the legal petition for the worst human rights violations (war Crimes) in India illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by Stoke White.

At present, Human rights violations by Indian occupying forces are extremely touching the sky, which is a serious threat to regional peace and stability. In these circumstances, it is very unfortunate that; international human rights organizations and leadership have kept a blind eye to Indian atrocities in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) for their economic or other interests with India. Unfortunately, due to the hypocrisy of world powers, innocent Kashmiris are being lived in the dark age of subjugation, the criminalized silence on Indian State-sponsored terrorism and war crimes like demographic changes are the most eye-opener evidence of the bigotry of world powers.

I propose three strands strategy
Firstly, Political cohesiveness must be on the Kashmir issue to take the case forefront of the global community. Secondly, Pakistan's moral support in the digital world like Twitter and other elite apps must be strong enough to reflect and convince the Kashmiris that they are not alone in their birthright struggle, the use of digital apps are undeniable modus operandi to resolve the issues in the modern world. This will keep the charge up the incarcerated Kashmiris in high spirits.

In conclusion, the time is running at the speed of the jet, Indian atrocities are touching the heights of the sky in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The issue is turning into a nuclear triggering spot between two nuclear-armed countries that can detonate anytime with the greatest debacle in the region. So, the world peacekeepers have to do TWO things on a priority basis. First, declare the use of the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 as "void" and unhuman. Second, revisit the situation to maintain world peace and stability. The world must act fast yes fast. Otherwise, in case of any misadventure, the repercussions would be not only in South Asian politics but as a whole.

– The writer is a freelance columnist. He Tweets at (@MAkhter_)

Understanding Qatar's designation as a major non-NATO ally

Giorgio Cafiero

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani became the first head of state from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to visit Washington since Joe Biden's presidency began

THE Gulf nation could help extend Washington's "diplomatic reach" as it continues its strategic shift away from the Middle East.

Late last month, Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani became the first head of state from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to visit Washington since Joe Biden's presidency began.

During the visit, Biden hailed Qatar as a "good friend and reliable partner" and promised to designate the Gulf country a major non-NATO ally. Qatar, now to become the third GCC state with the status, will benefit from special "defence trade and security cooperation" along with "military and economic privileges." This decision was not hasty - the Trump administration was also mulling the move. And even if the designation came later than some ana-

lysts may have expected, the decision sends a clear message about the value which the US places on its deep relationship with Doha, many years of close cooperation across several files, and three issues of particular concern to Washington. Since the Obama era, Qatar has been a useful conduit between Kabul and the West. Today the situation in post-US Afghanistan, nearly six months after the Taliban took control of the country, has led Washington to place increased value on its close relationship with Doha. Last year, Qatar helped the US' evacuation efforts from Afghanistan. Tens of thousands of Afghans left their country via Qatar in the aftermath of the Taliban's takeover. Building on its go-between position, by August 2021 the Qataris started playing a special role in Afghanistan on behalf of Washington. In November, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that Qatar would formally become the diplomatic representative of the US in Afghanistan via a US interest section in the Qatari embassy in Kabul.

From an energy standpoint, the crisis in Ukraine has raised major concerns in western countries which has put some attention on Qatar. There are fears that the Kremlin might weaponise Russia's energy supplies to gain greater leverage over EU member-states if there is a war or if new sanctions are imposed on Moscow. As a result, the US and Doha have been discussing possible diversions of Qatar's gas exports away from Asian customers so they can be delivered to Europe under such circumstances. "We have another geopolitical crisis, another potential crisis [in which] the US is

looking for help from its partners, and even though Qatar is far away from the geographical center of this crisis, Ukraine, it can make quite a substantial contribution by virtue of its gas reserves," Dr Tobias Borck, told TRT World. Regardless of the extent to which such a plan is practical for Qatar, its possibility – and Qatar's preparedness to respond positively – demonstrates the importance of the US for the Gulf nation. Considering all the controversies that have surrounded Qatar throughout the past two decades, this designation is a sign of how far Doha has come in terms of making the case to western countries that their relationships with Qatar are uniquely valuable.

Indeed, US officials have targeted Qatar for its ties to Hamas, the Taliban, and various Muslim Brotherhood offshoots over the years. Some voices in Washington have essentially tried to depict Doha as a sponsor of terrorism and extremism, rather than an Arab country worthy of close ties with Washington. "There were times when US institutions and US governments were questioning where Qatar was standing," explained Dr Andreas Krieg, an assistant professor at the School of Security Studies at King's College London, told TRT World. "Qatar has always been a fairly neutral player, engaging with all parties in a variety of different conflicts—that was usually seen as Qatar not being loyal, not predictable, or not reliable. I think the US, and other European partners, have now really understood the value of having this neutral country in the middle of a conflict-torn region."

– Courtesy: TRT World

Briefs

COAS calls on President, PM Imran

FROM PAGE 01 newly-merged districts of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to a statement by the President House's.

"The nation is proud of the armed forces' sacrifices [...] despite all the troubles, the security forces have defended the country's borders," President Alvi said during the meeting. Separately, COAS Bajwa called on Prime Minister Imran Khan at the PM's Office, according to a statement. Professional matters pertaining to Pakistan Army were discussed during the meeting, the statement said.

PM stresses early...

FROM PAGE 01 relations between Pakistan and Iran and said that vast potential exists for enhanced collaboration in diverse fields.

Underscoring that the Pakistan-Iran border was a border of peace and friendship, the Prime Minister underlined the importance of joint cooperation to address security issues. He thanked the Iranian Government and the Supreme Leader for steadfast support for the just resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Imran Khan expressed satisfaction over convergence of views regarding a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and underscored the importance of close coordination between the two countries.

He stressed the need for urgent actions by the international community to prevent humanitarian crisis and economic meltdown in Afghanistan and measures to enhance practical engagement, strengthen stability, and counter terrorism.

The Iranian Interior Minister conveyed cordial greetings of Iranian leadership to the Prime Minister and reaffirmed Iran's desire to strengthen bilateral relations in all aspects.

Lavrov proposes...

FROM PAGE 01 that the US had put forward concrete proposals on reducing military risks, but said responses from the European Union and NATO military alliance had not been satisfactory. Moscow wants NATO to guarantee that Ukraine will never be permitted to become a member and for the military alliance to cease all military activity in Eastern Europe. Those demands have been flatly rejected by both the alliance and the US.

Pak-Iran soil not to be...

FROM PAGE 01 a joint declaration issued after the meeting of 9-member visiting Iranian delegation led by Interior Minister Dr Ahmad Vahidi with his Pakistani counterpart Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, said a statement issued here Monday. Both the sides were also agreed that a joint working group would be formed to enhance bilateral relations. Markets would be set up on Pak-Iran borders besides increasing number of border terminals, it was further said.

Earlier, bilateral talks were held between Pakistan and Iran. Secretary Interior Yousaf Naseem Khokhar and senior officials of the Ministry were also attending the meeting.

Regional security situation, possible humanitarian tragedy in Afghanistan and other important issues also came under discussion during the meeting. Early completion of Pak-Iran border was also discussed in the meeting.

Various proposals regarding prevention of illegal human immigration and drug trafficking were also came under discussion. Both the sides also discussed exchange of prisoners and the provision of facilities to 'Zaireen', it was further said.

Iranian Interior Minister Dr. Ahmad Vahidi while strongly condemning recent terrorist attacks in Pakistan, stressed the need of joint cooperation to eradicate the menace of terrorism.



LAHORE: Players of Islamabad United celebrating after winning the match against Karachi Kings by 1 run in a PSL-7 match. — DNA

Anett Kontaveit captures St. Petersburg title



NEWS DESK

ST. PETERSBURG: Anett Kontaveit claimed her fourth straight indoor title by pulling off a comeback win over fellow Top 10 player Maria Sakkari in a nearly three-hour St. Petersburg Ladies Trophy final.

No.2 seed Anett Kontaveit of Estonia won her 20th straight indoor match, and her fourth consecutive indoor title, with a grueling 5-7, 7-6(4), 7-5 victory over No.1 seed Maria Sakkari of Greece at the St. Petersburg Ladies Trophy on Sunday. In a bruising battle between Top 10 players, 9th-ranked Kontaveit needed 2 hours and 57 minutes to overcome 7th-ranked Sakkari. Kontaveit was down a break in both the second and third sets before collecting her sixth career WTA singles title — five of which have come in the last seven months.

Kontaveit's 20-match indoor winning streak began with title runs last year at Ostrava, Moscow and Cluj-Napoca, a rich vein of form which propelled her to a Top 10 debut and a spot at the sea-

son-ending Akron WTA Finals, where she finished as runner-up to Garbine Muguruza. With yet another indoor title under her belt after this week's exploits, she becomes just the sixth player with at least 20 consecutive indoor wins since 1989. The others are: Kontaveit is the first player to hit that number in over a decade. Justine Henin was the last to do so, when she won 22 indoor matches in a row between Stuttgart 2007 and Stuttgart 2010. Kontaveit and Sakkari came into their latest clash with a hefty yet evenly balanced rivalry. The pair had faced off 12 times previously, each grabbing six wins apiece.

However, Kontaveit had won her two most recent battles, defeating Sakkari in the Ostrava final and in round-robin play at the Akron WTA Finals last year. Kontaveit made it three wins in a row and now finds herself ahead 7-6 in their head-to-head. It is also the 19th Top 10 win of Kontaveit's career. Sakkari came close to ending a title drought that dates back to her first WTA singles title, which came on the clay courts of Rabat in 2019, two years and nine months ago. However, the Greek

was denied a second title by an inspired Kontaveit, just as she had been in her only other final since 2019, at the aforementioned Ostrava last year.

Very little separated the pair, with both breaking serve four times and having nearly equal effectiveness returning first and second serves. Kontaveit led 5-2 in the first set, but she failed to serve out the set at 5-3, and Sakkari claimed two consecutive breaks of serve to lead 6-5. Sakkari then served out the set, firing winners from both wings to notch a fifth straight game. Sakkari extended that run to seven straight games as she moved ahead 2-0 in the second set, though Kontaveit pulled back on serve at 3-3. After Kontaveit saved two break points to hold for 6-5, the Estonian grabbed a set point in the next game, but Sakkari swiped that away and the duo moved into a tiebreaker.

In the breaker, a pair of unreturnable serves by Kontaveit gave her a 6-3 lead and three more set points, and the No.2 seed converted the second of that trio after a Sakkari backhand found the net.

Sakkari regrouped at the start of the third set, garnering a break for 2-0 and fending off three break points to stretch her lead to 4-1. Sakkari served for the match at 5-3, but her backhand let her down in that game with miscues as Kontaveit pulled back on serve once more. Kontaveit took her new opportunity with gusto, firing a forehand passing winner to earn a second straight break and lead 6-5. Kontaveit would not yield from there, as it was her turn to reel off five straight games and swipe the final set, keeping her indoor winning streak alive.

Earlier on Sunday, the St. Petersburg Ladies Trophy doubles championship was decided with Anna Kalinskaya of Russia and Caty McNally of the United States defeating Alicja Rosolska of Poland and Erin Routliffe of New Zealand 6-3, 6-7(5), [10-4].

Mbappe future in focus as PSG face Real Madrid

NEWS DESK

PARIS: As Paris Saint-Germain prepare to face Real Madrid in the Champions League, the French club hope a victory in the tie could yet help convince Kylian Mbappe to stay rather than move to the Spanish capital.

The clock continues to tick down on the World Cup-winning striker's contract in Paris which expires in June, five years after he joined his hometown team from Monaco in a 180 million-euro (\$204m) deal. It is understood PSG turned down an equivalent offer from Real last August to keep Mbappe for at least one more season and team him up in attack with Lionel Messi and Neymar.

That seemed to prove money is no object for the Qatar-owned club, but it appears that all the money in the world may not be enough to convince Mbappe, now 23, to stay at the Parc des Princes.

Real's pursuit of the France star goes back to when he was a young teenager and they invited him and his parents to take in a game at the Santiago Bernabeu, having Zinedine Zidane meet him at their training ground.

He opted to sign for Monaco then, and he chose PSG in 2017 despite again being linked with Real, yet an eventual move to Madrid has always seemed inevitable.

Mbappe has been the top scorer in Ligue 1 in the last three seasons and despite the arrival of Messi, he has remained PSG's most decisive player by a distance in this campaign.

On Friday, he scored the winner against Rennes to move on to 21 goals for the season, more than Messi, Neymar, Angel Di Maria and Mauro Icardi put together.

"He is already one of the greatest players in PSG's history," captain Marquinhos told broadcaster TF1. When asked if he had tried to convince Mbappe to stay, he added: "Of course." In Paris, they are clinging to the hope Mbappe could change his mind if Mauricio Pochettino's team beat Madrid in their Champions League last-16 tie, with the first leg at the Parc des Princes on Tuesday to be followed by the return in Spain on March 9.

"I have not made my decision," Mbappe told Amazon Prime last week. "The fact we are playing against Real Madrid changes a lot of things."



Liverpool close gap on Manchester City

WEB DESK

LONDON: Liverpool kept the pressure on Premier League leaders Manchester City as Fabinho sealed a 1-0 win over Burnley, while Tottenham's top four bid suffered a fresh blow in a 2-0 loss to Wolves on Sunday.

Fabinho struck late in the first half at wind-swept Turf Moor to give Liverpool their fourth successive league victory.

Liverpool are nine points behind City with one game in hand as the Reds refuse to let the title race become a prolonged coronation for Pep Guardiola's men. City made it 14 wins from their last 15 league games on Saturday as Raheem Sterling's hat-trick inspired a 4-0 win at lowly Norwich.

But Guardiola is convinced Liverpool will push the champions all the way to the finish line and the way they ground out a hard-fought success against bottom of the table Burnley suggests he is right not to count them out.

"It is nine points and then it is 12 points because most of the time City play before us. These are really difficult games. That is why we don't think about the title race," Reds boss Jurgen Klopp said. After a shaky

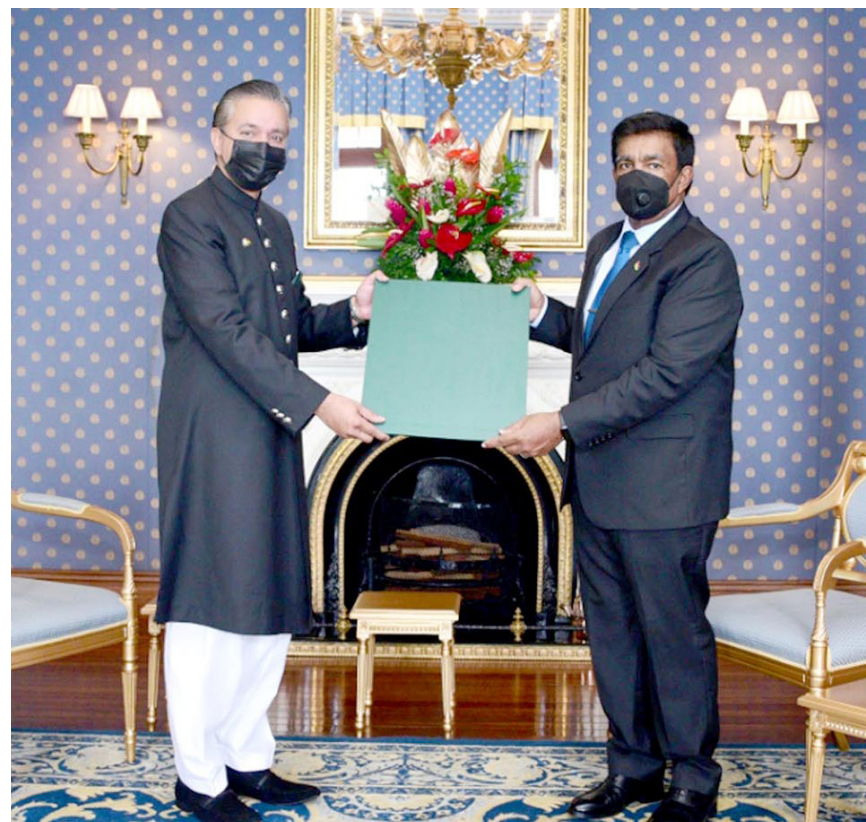
start, during which Burnley threatened a shock opener, Fabinho restored order five minutes before half-time.

The Brazilian poked home a fifth goal in his last seven games after Mane headed on Trent Alexander-Arnold's corner. "A perfect afternoon. Raining and windy," Klopp said. "Everything today was set up to be a banana skin for us. We played the circumstances rather than suffered from them."

In north London, Tottenham lost a second successive home game as Wolves followed Southampton's victory on Wednesday. Antonio Conte's side, loudly booed off at full-time, dropped to eighth place, five points adrift of the Champions League places.

"We created chances but in the end we are talking about another defeat. We have to work and to know it won't be easy for us. It's difficult to explain the way we started," Conte said. Raul Jimenez gave Wolves the perfect start in the sixth minute, the Mexican volleying home after Tottenham keeper Hugo Lloris weakly spilled Leander Dendoncker's effort.

In the 18th minute, Lloris was involved again with a woeful pass to Ben Davies, prompting the startled defender to gift possession to Wolves.



PORT LOUIS: Newly appointed High Commissioner of Pakistan, Muhammad Arshad Jan Pathan, presented his credentials to the President of Mauritius, Prithvirajsing Roopun today at the State House, in Réduit Mauritius. — DNA

PSL is the best league in the world: Rossow

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: South African cricketer Rilee Rossow, who is playing for Multan Sultans in the seventh edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), has said that the PSL is the best league in the world.

In an exclusive interview to local channel, Rossow said that Pakistan Super League is on top among all the leagues he has played in, and the professionalism one sees in PSL is second to none.

"If I had to rate all the leagues I've played in, I would probably put the PSL right on top. It is probably the best league in the world, without a doubt. The talent you've got in this league also shows why Pakistan is one of the best teams in the world. The determination and professionalism is second to none in this competition. And, it's definitely one that is the best competition

in the world," said Rilee Rossow, who has also played in the Indian Premier League (IPL), Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), The Vitality T20 Blast, Big Bash, and Mazansi Super League.

"It amazes me every single year that I come back to the PSL, and there are always three or four guys that pop up, blowing at 140k an hour. We've got two slingers now coming up on the scene who have done fantastically well for the teams, respectively. So, it's amazing to see the talent and the growth that is coming through the PSL.

"It's good for cricket in general because if you can develop and you can bring guys with that young age and that great talent through the ranks to play International Cricket is just going to improve cricket as a whole," he mentioned.

Rilee Rossow said that he is honored to be part of the group of cricketers who traveled to Paki-

stan when the country was trying to bring cricket back through the Pakistan Super League (PSL). Rossow had missed the final for Quetta in 2017 but traveled to Lahore and played play-offs in 2018, and since then, he has become a regular visitor to the country to play PSL matches.

Rilee admitted that he was skeptical at first but later decided that



it was worth coming to Pakistan.

"In the beginning, I was very skeptical because I was on edge, and it's not just me, but there's a lot of cricketers on edge," he recalled. "Eventually, when they decide to listen that we're going and we took that leap of faith to say like, we're going to go and we're going to try and start rebuilding cricket in Pakistan. I'm so thankful that I did do that. It's an honor for me to be involved in this to bring cricket back to Pakistan and show the world that it's a safe place, and there is nothing going on," the South African cricketer said.

The 32-year-old added that Pakistan could be the safest place in the world especially with all of the security protocols and the way PCB puts everything in place for PSL.

Rilee added he was delighted to be part of the PSL every single season, saying it's a great honor to be in this tournament.

"We couldn't ask for more," he said when asked about the start Sultan's have got in the PSL 7. "We've had a fantastic start. The team environment is fantastic, and when a team is winning, it's even better. And fortunately for us, we've been on a serious run. Hopefully, we can continue this into the next stage of the tournament," he said.

Talking about his teammate Shahnawaz Dahani, the South African cricketer said he is a "special character".

"His persona and his personality that he portrays, it's ginormous, it's huge, it's fun, it's exciting and energetic, and that's something that you need in a team. The team needs someone like that, who keeps on giving that positive energy to the team, which is actually phenomenal, and he doesn't ask for anything in return, which is fantastic," he said about his colleague at Multan Sultans.

We don't betray our...

FROM PAGE 01 relations with you," Moonis told PM Imran Khan, who was also present on the occasion. "Tell PTI ministers ghabrana nahi hai," Moonis advised the prime minister. Prime Minister Imran Khan said that he has "full faith" in his government's key ally PML-Q as he termed the opposition alliance's recent attempts to woo veteran politician Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain a sign of their fears. Reacting to the development while addressing the International Symposium on Pakistan's Hydropower Development in Global Perspective today, PM Imran appeared unfazed by the opposition's activities.

"[PML-Q leader and Federal Minister for Water Resources] Moonis Elahi said we shouldn't worry about the meetings," the premier said, adding that PTI workers had become "battle-hardened" because of the difficulties they had gone through in the last 25 years.

Moonis' statement...

FROM PAGE 01 political environment and the meetings to Prime Minister Imran Khan during an international symposium.

"I have a request to you sir, these days there is a strange political environment, but there is nothing like that... a show/fun is being run... whatever talks are taking place... we are political people... our job is to meet people... to welcome guests at home. But, the most important thing to understand is that political people make relations and honour them, as we have made with you to keep it intact," Moonis said.

Farrukh Habib said the accused of the Ramzan Sugar Mills case would be charge-sheeted on February 18 on depositing the plundered Rs 16 billion in employees' accounts. He said PML-N leader Shehbaz Sharif would also have to answer the Rs 4 billion account of Peon Maqsood. — APP

PM chairs meeting...

FROM PAGE 01 and Afghanistan, the Prime Minister said that Pakistan accords top priority to business-to-business relationships and communication projects and will provide full facilitation from the Government side. He stated that Pakistan will support hospitals Pakistan helped build in Afghanistan as well as work to build even greater road and rail connectivity with Afghanistan.

Earlier, National Security Advisor Dr. Moeed Yusuf provided a detailed briefing to the Apex Committee regarding Afghanistan.

The Prime Minister directed relevant Ministries to fast-track the projects and commitments announced for aid of Afghan people.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers including Shoukat Fayaz Tarin, Fawad Ahmed, Shafqat Mehmood, Azam Khan Swati, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, National Security Advisor Dr. Moeed Yusuf, Advisor Commerce Abdul Razaq Dawood, SAPM Dr. Faisal Sultan and senior civil and military officers.

Suicide attack at military...

FROM PAGE 01 firing small arms and also tried to lob a grenade.

"Own troops being alert and prepared for the situation, initiated a prompt response and effectively engaged the terrorist. Resultantly, the terrorist got killed," ISPR said. Weapon and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorist, it added. The killed terrorist was identified as Sharif, who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces.

3 terrorists killed...

FROM PAGE 01 apprehended two Terrorists Niaz and Muhammad Jan alongwith 2 x SMGs and large quantity of ammunition. Operations to eliminate perpetrators of terrorist acts in Pakistan will continue and they will not be allowed to sabotage peace, stability and progress of Balochistan, the statement concluded.

Briefs

Israeli troops kill Palestinian in West Bank

JERUSALEM: Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian during clashes in the occupied West Bank late Sunday, hours after police fanned out in a tense east Jerusalem neighborhood trying to contain violence between ultra-nationalist Jewish activists and Palestinian residents. Early Monday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said Akram Abu Salah, 17, died from a gunshot to his head. The clashes erupted after Israeli forces rolled into Silat al-Harithiya village near Jenin to destroy homes of two Palestinian detainees accused of opening fire at a car traveling near a West Bank settlement outpost and killing a settler in December. Earlier in Jerusalem, unrest took place in Sheikh Jarrah, a flashpoint neighborhood where clashes last year helped spark an 11-day war between Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. Dozens of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah and other east Jerusalem neighborhoods are at risk of eviction by Jewish settler organizations, and tensions between the sides often escalate to violence. The latest unrest erupted after a settler's home was torched over the weekend. Itamar Ben-Gvir, an ultra-nationalist lawmaker, responded to the fire by setting up a makeshift office early Sunday near the home of a family facing possible eviction. Palestinians moved in on Ben-Gvir's tent, throwing plastic chairs in the afternoon and scuffling with his supporters. — APP

Fire erupts at military base in Iran

DUBAI: A fire erupted at a military base in western Iran, state-linked media reported on Monday, the latest in a series of blazes and other mishaps affecting the country's infrastructure in recent months. The fire broke out at a warehouse full of engine oil and flammable materials at a base belonging to Iran's powerful paramilitary Revolutionary Guard in the western province of Kermanshah, the Iranian website Nournews reported. The blaze damaged a shed but did not cause any casualties. Investigators were looking into the cause and details, the report added. The day before, unconfirmed reports proliferated online about several explosions heard in northern Kermanshah, a strategic location in Iran with various missile and military sites. Sensitive military and nuclear sites have been the target of attacks in the past years, which Iran has blamed on Israel. The fire broke out as Iran remains on edge about negotiations over its nuclear program continuing in Vienna this week. The 2015 deal that granted Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program collapsed nearly four years ago when former President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the accord and re-imposed crushing sanctions. — APP

French police kill knife-wielding man

PARIS: French police killed a man who attacked them with a knife at the Gare du Nord train station in the capital Paris on Monday, officials said. "This morning around 7 a.m., a police patrol was threatened by an individual armed with a knife in the Ile-de-France region," tweeted Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin. "The police used their weapon, thus removing any danger, for themselves and for the travelers," he added. According to the Le Figaro newspaper the man attacked two police officers with a 30-centimeter (12-inch) knife with ACAB (All Cops Are Bastards) written on the blade. Transport Minister Jean-Baptiste Djebbari told RMC Radio that the incident was not thought to be terrorism-related, and that the police officers received minor injuries. Gare du Nord, located in the center of Paris, is one of Europe's busiest train stations where crime incidents are a rare occurrence. The Paris Police Prefecture in a tweet paid tribute to the "courage" of the officers who reacted to the "cowardly attack." — APP

There must be peace treaty between Armenia, Azerbaijan

Aliyev noted that very good conditions have been created for businesses and entrepreneurs in the country. The president emphasized that the future development of Aghdam includes, first of all, the construction of residential buildings and job creation

NEWS DESK

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has urged Azerbaijani businessmen to invest in Aghdam and other lands liberated from Armenian occupation in 2020. He made the remarks while viewing the progress of restoration work carried out by the HeydarAliyev Foundation at AghdamJuma Mosque, during his visit to the Aghdam region. Aliyev noted that very good conditions have been created for businesses and entrepreneurs in the country. The president emphasized that the future development of Aghdam includes, first of all, the construction of residential buildings and job creation. "Therefore, Azerbaijani entrepreneurs should come to the liberated lands and build enterprises and create jobs here. Only in this way can we revitalize the liberated lands. Of course, the state is taking and will continue to take the necessary steps," he said. The president stated that there must be a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. "This peace agreement must be signed on the basis of mutual recognition of the territorial integrity of the countries, on the basis of the norms and principles of international law," he said. The president stressed that very important steps have been taken for the future development of Aghdam. "The comprehensive measures we are taking to restore Aghdam



region will allow us the opportunity to rebuild and create a new Aghdam in a short time. Very important steps have been taken for the future development of Aghdam today," he said. The head of state noted that the first residents of the industrial park in Aghdam laid the foundation stone of new enterprises to be commissioned in the near future. "There are already five residents and they are starting to work. Thus, the

first enterprises of the Aghdam Industrial Park, which will be built on an area of 190 hectares, are already taking their first steps in this area. This is a very important event," he said. Stating that two substations were opened in Aghdam, Aliyev noted that the number of substations commissioned in the liberated lands has reached nine. "As a result of the operation of the Aghdam-1 and Aghdam-2 substations, the whole

region will be provided with stable electricity," he said. The president also noted that the foundation of a hotel, which will start operating in about two years, was laid in Aghdam. He added that the residential complex, the foundation of which was laid during the visit, comprised of six buildings will be constructed in about a year and a half to two years, and will contribute to the comprehensive development of Aghdam. Noting that the foundation of the Aghdam Central City Hospital was laid on the same day, the president recalled that the foundation of school No.1 was laid during his last visit to Aghdam. "So I want to say again that comprehensive measures are being taken—electricity supply, a project of laying gas lines to Aghdam is being developed, drinking water supply, including the repair of the Khachinchay reservoir, which is included in this year's investment program, residential buildings, hotels, jobs. In other words, all this means comprehensive development," he said. Aliyev also noted that the road and transport infrastructure of Aghdam is being completely reconstructed. He stated that the Barda-Aghdam highway and railway are under construction. "I believe that the highway will be ready in about a year. On my instructions, the implementation of the project to build the Fuzuli-Aghdam highway has already begun," he said. He noted that this road will connect the Fuzuli and Aghdam cities, as well as Aghdam with Fuzuli International Airport.

Attacks against Muslims spread in France

BRUSSELS: A Brussels-based human rights watchdog warned on Monday EU institutions and member states on the attacks against Muslims and the spread of far-right ideas in France. The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) denounced in a statement "the escalation of attacks against Muslims and civil society organizations who work against racism and anti-Muslim hatred in France." "The country is showing marks of a growing far-right within its institutions," the watchdog said. According to the organization, Europe should be concerned by the French government's "increasingly divisive discourse and strategies" that are based on far-right ideology and target Muslims and civil society organizations. ENAR finds it alarming that "under the guise of national security, civil society organizations have been dissolved, mosques have been raided, and schools and Muslim-owned businesses closed" contrary to the principles of the rule of law. The watchdog also noted that fundamental rights "of racialized people in France, and Muslims in particular" are severely endangered in France. They asserted that the freedom of expression and association is particularly threatened, citing a recent report from the French Observatory of Associative Freedom that documented 20 abusive sanctions against NGOs without legal or factual bases over the past five years. ENAR stressed these actions have a "chilling effect" on Muslim communities and civil society because they are "considered guilty until proven innocent." — APP

Poland to accept Ukrainian refugees

WARSAW: Poland, the largest European Union nation to border Ukraine, is making preparations to accept Ukrainian refugees in the event of another Russian attack on that country. But the Polish government hopes that worst-case scenario can be averted. Similar preparations are being made across the region, particularly in those nations which share borders with Ukraine. As other countries draw down their diplomatic missions in Ukraine, Poland says it is for now keeping its diplomatic operations in place in case they are needed to facilitate a large-scale exit of Ukrainians. Poland, which has welcomed large numbers of Ukrainian economic migrants in recent years, particularly after Russia's incursions into Ukraine in 2014, has been making plans for weeks to accept refugees if it comes to that, said Marcin Przydacz, a deputy foreign minister. While Poland has an image of being staunchly anti-refugee, that opposition is largely based on not wanting to take in large numbers of people of different religious and racial backgrounds. — APP

Philippines logs 2,730 Covid cases

MANILA: The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) reported 2,730 new COVID-19 infections on Monday, pushing the number of confirmed cases in the Southeast Asian country to 3,639,942. The DOH said 164 more people died from COVID-19 complications, bringing the country's death toll to 55,094. The number of patients ill with the highly contagious disease dropped to 76,609 from Sunday's 81,394. The country's positivity rate also dropped to 10.7 percent from 11.7 percent the previous day. Metro Manila will remain under COVID-19 restriction alert level two on a scale of five until the end of the month, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said. The DOH classified Metro Manila as moderate risk. Businesses, including restaurants, can operate, ranging from 50 percent to 70 percent. Nograles added that a coronavirus task force has decided to retain the alert level in seven areas to three due to high COVID-19 cases. The Philippines has seen four COVID-19 waves since the pandemic began in January 2020. — APP

Situation on Ukraine-Russia border 'very very dangerous'

DNA

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson described the situation on Ukraine-Russia border "very very dangerous" on Monday. Speaking in Scotland, where he is on a visit, Johnson said the evidence of an imminent invasion is "pretty clear." "You've got about 130,000 troops massing on the Ukrainian border. There's all sorts of other signs that show that there are serious preparations for an invasion," he said. "And we've got to, we've got to respect that we got to get to realize that this is a very, very dangerous, difficult situation," Johnson added. Underlining that "we are on the edge of the precipice," Johnson said "but there is still time for President [Vladimir] Putin to step back and what we're urging is for everybody to engage in dialogue for a conversation to take place and for the Russians to avoid ... a disastrous mistake



for Russia." Quoting US President Joe Biden, Johnson said the signs for an invasion are there and that "as you've heard from President Biden that they're least planning for something that could take place as early as in the next 48 hours." The British prime minister also warned that everything should be

done for the Russian president to understand "the economic consequences, the political consequences of doing this, and I think what needs to happen is that the world needs to learn the lesson of 2014." He added that Europe must reduce its energy dependency on Russian resources, and find alternative sources of energy. "We need to get ready to impose some very, very severe economic consequences on Russia," he said. Johnson said it is "very important that the West should stand united." "What I'm saying is that it's important for the West to stand together and I think I think the Defense Secretary [Ben Wallace] is absolutely right to say it is very important that we get to be strong." Responding to a question whether he could go to Moscow for diplomatic efforts to prevent any conflict in the region, Johnson said he is "going to be doing everything I can to help the diplomatic process and I'll be talking to various leaders including Joe Biden, very soon."

17,000 mines defused in liberated lands

BAKU: The Azerbaijani army's engineer and sapper units have so far defused over 17,000 mines and unexploded munitions in lands liberated from Armenia's occupation in November 2020, the Defence Ministry reported on February 14. In a statement posted on its website the ministry said: "To date, more than 13,868 hectares of territory have been cleared of mines by engineer-sapper units in the liberated territories. In total, 6,092 antipersonnel mines, 2,159 anti-tank mines, and 9,012 unexploded ordnances have been detected and neutralized." The engineer and sapper units demined over 374 hectares on the liberated territories from February 1 to 14. "The main efforts are aimed at demining settlements, sowing plots, roads, and infrastructure facilities in the liberated territories," the ministry said. Furthermore, it was stated that the Engineering Troops are clearing roads of snow and mines to ensure the safe movement of vehicles, units, and subunits in the liberated lands. The Engineering Troops are also responsible for the construction of new supply roads for Azerbaijani military units stationed in mountainous and difficult terrain. Demining of sown areas is also underway, the ministry said. "Other necessary activities on detecting and neutralizing mines and unexploded ordnance, as well as an engineering support continue in the liberated territories," the report concluded. Armenia submitted to Azerbaijan all mine maps of Azerbaijan's liberated territories as a result of talks held through the Russian Defence Ministry's mediation on December 4, 2021. — Agencies

Ambassador Bridge reopens after police remove protesters

The blockade disrupted the flow, and Canadian PM Justin Trudeau and US President Biden were concerned about damage to the economies and job losses in their countries

ONTARIO: The Ambassador Bridge at the main international border that links Canada and the US reopened late Sunday following anti-coronavirus protesters who had occupied the crossing for almost a week, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has reported, citing the country's Border Services Agency. "Today, our national economic crisis at the Ambassador bridge came to an end," Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens said in a statement on Sunday. Dilkens added: "Border crossings will reopen when it is safe to do so and I defer to police and border agencies to make that determination." Earlier, a Canadian judge granted a court order to remove protesters blocking the bridge. The Ambassador Bridge is the main conduit for hundreds of millions of dollars in back-and-forth goods, particularly auto parts, carried daily by trucks. The blockade disrupted the flow, and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and US President Joe Biden were concerned about damage to the economies and job losses in their countries. Dilkens had said earlier that the bridge closure resulted in a CAN\$ 400 million (US\$ 314 million) negative impact daily on the Canadian economy. The protesters were part of a large movement demanding an end to various coronavirus health regulations, including mandated vaccinations. They began blocking the bridge a week ago, and other border crossing points in Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta have also seen blockades. — APP



MALAM JABBA: Breathtaking view of a busy road. — APP

President Erdogan visits UAE to strengthen ties

"Turkish construction companies in the UAE have so far undertaken 141 projects worth \$13 billion"

FOREIGN DESK

ABU DHABI: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan embarked on an official two-day visit to Abu Dhabi on Monday, the first in nearly a decade, to open a new page in relations between Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after years of tensions. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ) welcomed Erdogan upon his arrival in Abu Dhabi with an official ceremony. Dialogue and cooperation between Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is important for the peace and stability of the entire region, Erdogan underlined prior to the trip. "We do not consider the security and stability of all brotherly countries in the Gulf region separate from our own," he told a news conference at Atatürk Airport in Istanbul before departing on his first visit since recovering from COVID-19 after testing positive early February. "We aim to improve the momentum to bring back our relations to the level they deserve. During my visit, we will take steps that will shape the next 50 years of our

friendship and brotherhood with the UAE," he said. Noting that he last visited the UAE in 2013, Erdogan said the countries ushered in a new era in bilateral relations with MBZ's visit to Ankara last November. "The complementary nature of the two economies points to a potential far beyond the current figures. The purpose of our

visit is to quickly realize this potential," Erdogan said, adding that he believes Ankara and Abu Dhabi "will go a long way in this direction." With the volume of trade approaching \$8 billion (TL 108.55 billion), the UAE is among Turkey's leading trading partners, he said. "The UAE is the 10th largest market of the overseas contracting

sector in Turkey," he said, noting that the UAE also makes "significant contributions to the dynamic investment environment" in Turkey. "Turkish construction companies in the UAE have so far undertaken 141 projects worth \$13 billion," he added. Ahead of the president's visit the Turkish flag and the phrase "hoggeldiniz," meaning "welcome" in Turkish, were projected onto the Burj Khalifa, the tallest building in the UAE. During the visit, all aspects of bilateral relations will be discussed, including opportunities to enhance cooperation and regional and international developments. Erdogan is also expected to visit EXPO 2020 Dubai, where Turkey's national day will be celebrated. Erdogan and MBZ will attend a signing ceremony for a dozen agreements following one-on-one meetings between the delegations. The agreements will cover an array of fields, including investment, defense, transportation, agriculture, health and media. Ahead of the visit, a top foreign policy adviser to UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Sunday proclaimed that Erdogan's trip would turn a new page in bilateral relations



Briefs

Opposition makes futile efforts, says Sheikh Rashid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Monday said that the opposition parties were wasting their time by doing futile exercise to present 'no confidence motion' in the Senate. Opposition parties have no strategy, he said while talking to a private news channel. Interior minister said they were doing media politics only, Pakistan Muslim League Q is our partner in the government and will not leave the coalition with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. He said opposition parties had not that much strength to move for 'no confidence motion'. He strongly rejected speculation about PTI member and said they were firmly standing with their party. He said PTI took great initiative in the country history who introduced 'Health Card' which was covering health insurance upto one million annually, the accountability process would be continued till the last looter of the country, he vowed.

Zahir Jaffer submits defence evidence before court

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Zahir Jaffer, the main accused in Noor Mukadam's murder case, Monday submitted a written statement and evidences before the court of Additional District & Sessions Judge Muhammad Atta Rabbani to defend himself. The evidences submitted by the accused's lawyer included a USB, news clippings, Zahir's ticket for the United States, and his medical report. Zahir claimed in his written reply that he and his parents were innocent, and had been falsely roped in the case. The accused, while denying murdering Noor, said he got out of senses after consuming a large quantity of drugs during the party "forcibly thrown by Noor" at his house. "After the hours when I got senses, I was in a tied up condition ... and I came to know that Noor has been murdered by someone among the participants of the drug party." It may be added that Zahir was given a 25-point questionnaire under section 342 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) during the last hearing. Advocate Basharat Ullah, who was representing Zahir's father Zakir Jaffer, in his final arguments, prayed the court to acquit his client as there was no evidence against him. The case was adjourned till February 16.

German delegation meets Energy Minister

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Germany on Monday held a thorough discussion to promote bilateral cooperation in the energy sector, especially in RE resources and clean energy technologies. A high-level German delegation, led by State Secretary Jochen Falsbarth, held an extensive meeting with the Pakistani delegation that was headed by Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar, a news release said. During the meeting here, the minister encouraged the GIZ, a German company, to undertake pilot projects based on Biofuels and Renewable Energy (RE) resources.

'Corrupt have united against democratic govt'

Chaudhry said that the PTI government fulfilled the promises it made to the people of this constituency, regretting that Pind Dadan Khan Tehsil had been kept deprived of development for 70 years



DNA

PIND DADAN KHAN: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Monday took a swipe at the Opposition once again, saying that those who deteriorated the country's economy are now complaining about the inflation rate, media reported. Speaking at a ceremony in Pind Dadan Khan, the minister said that "people will not forgive Nawaz Sharif and his family until they

Opposition faces division within its ranks: FM Qureshi

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Monday said the Opposition was faced with division within its ranks and the incumbent government was fully prepared to combat no-confidence move. Talking to media persons here, he said, "To present no-confidence motion is the prerogative of the Opposition and we will fight it politically." The divided opposition, he said, will be defeated and there were two factions in the PML-N as well. Qureshi said that PPP did not want early elections but PML-N was insisting on early polls. Foreign Minister strongly criticized the indecent remarks against Murad Saeed on a private TV channel. Journalism was a sacred profession and it should set high moral standards said Qureshi, adding the administration of the TV-Channel should itself take notice of such objectionable remarks. Foreign Minister said the role played by the Foreign Office in evacuating the people trapped in Afghanistan was being appreciated by the whole world. The United States has also acknowledged Pakistan's role in this regard. To a question he said, new standards have been set for performance evaluation so that each ministry can demonstrate its performance. The prime minister has praised the Foreign Ministry many times, said Qureshi. The recent visit of the prime minister to China remained highly successful and the European Union has also invited him, he said. The Foreign Minister said that Foreign Ministers of all Muslim countries would also participate in the national parade ceremony to be held on March 23. To another question about tragic incident in Tulamba, Qureshi said that incident of killing of a person by mob in Tulamba was reprehensible. - DNA

return the country's looted money," adding that the country faced inflation due to the acts of the former rulers. Chaudhry said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is following the politics of his father by "using children of religious seminaries for politics with the help of Maulana Fazlur Rehman," adding that he should instead follow the politics of his mother and grandfather. Speaking about the Opposition plan to bring about a no-confidence motion against the PTI-led government, the minister said that the "corrupt have united against the democratically elected government, however, they are bound to fail in their designs." During the ceremony, he further said that the "PM has no personal dispute with the Opposition, he just wants to recover the money that the Sharif family looted from common people, workers, and businessmen of Pakistan." "Nawaz Sharif made a \$1 billion property in front of Hyde Park in London, and billions of rupees were illegally transferred to Shahbaz Sharif from fake accounts," he said.

President summons NA session on Feb 18

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Monday summoned a session of the National Assembly on February 18. The president summoned the session under Article 54 (1) of the Constitution, a press release said. The session would be held on Friday at 10:30 am. - APP

JUI-F bags most seats in KPK LB elections

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The first phase of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Local Body Elections has completed. According to the unofficial results JUI-F has surpassed PTI in the elections with the highest number of 23 seats. As per the unofficial results of re-polling in KPK, elections were held for 5 city councils and 61 tehsils in 17 districts. The unofficial results revealed that JUI has marked the lead with a total of 23 seats along with three City Mayor seats. PTI made it to the second place in the elections with one City Mayor seat and a total of 19 seats. While nine Independent candidates ranked third. The political party ANP was on fourth number with seven tehsil chairmen seats including one City Mayor. Jamaat-e-Islami and Tehreek-e-Islah won two seats. While according to the unofficial results the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) won one seat in the election.

China now hosts over 60% of global 5G network

ISLAMABAD: As of the end of 2021, China set up a total of nearly 1.43 million 5G base stations, China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) said on Monday. Currently, about ten 5G base stations serve every 10,000 people in China, almost double that of 2020, accounting for more than 60% of the global total, according to MIIT, CGTN reported. Last year the government's investment in 5G reached 184.9 billion yuan (approximately \$29 billion). The ministry added that China aims to expand 5G services and gigabit fiber-optic networks in 2022, with its 5G users expected to exceed 560 million by 2023. By that estimate, more than 18 base stations would serve every 10,000 people in the country. - Agencies

Govt about to drop 'petrol bomb' on nation

Price of petrol may go up by Rs 8.50 per liter, and that of diesel by Rs 5.50 per liter

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government is about to drop a petrol bomb on the people as the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Monday forwarded the summary to the Petroleum Division for a hike in petroleum products' (POL) prices. According to sources, price of petrol may go up by Rs8.50 per liter, and that of diesel by Rs5.50 per liter. Sources disclosed that the OGRA had proposed an increase on the basis of current levy, adding that if the levy was increased, the prices will also increase. However, they added that the government planned to further reduce the levy, rather than increasing it. The new prices will take effect day after tomorrow, (Wednesday, February 16).



ISLAMABAD: Director General ANF presenting souvenir to Ambassador of Russian Federation during his visit to the ANF headquarters. - DNA

China dismisses India's remarks on border conflict

BEIJING: China on Monday dismissed Indian external affairs minister's remarks about China-India border conflict and said that the responsibility for the border conflict rested with the Indian side. "As to the China India relations, the merits of the matters are very clear and responsibility does not rest with China," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing here in response to Indian External Affairs Minister S.Jaishankar comments about China-India relations. Indian external Affairs Minister, during his visit to Australia criticized China's economic activities towards Australia. Separately, he mentioned the clash between India and China on the border had been discussed during the Quad meetings. Another time, he put the blame on China for the ongoing border

conflict. The spokesperson said, "On the ins and outs of China-Australia relationship, we already talked a lot about that on different occasions. I am not going into details." He however rejected S. Jaishankar remarks on China India relations and border conflicts and said that the responsibility for the border conflicts between the two countries rested with the Indian side. "Now, the two sides are in communication on improving the border management and the measures to building trust, we hope the Indian side will abide by our agreements, do not issue irresponsible remarks and to uphold the peace and tranquility along the border region with concrete actions," he added. In response to a question about amassing troops along the disputed areas in disregard to the agreements between the two countries, he said. - APP

New dams to double water storage capacity: PM Khan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday said the new under construction mega dams would eventually double water storage capacity of the country and help address issues related to the climate change. Speaking at a seminar on hydro power development, he said China had constructed 5000 dams but Pakistan had only two dams, built in the 1960s. "Due to this negligence, Pakistan suffered losses. As Pakistan is using imported fuel for electricity generation, whenever petrol prices go up in the international market, electricity prices also rise in Pakistan, thus en-

hancing burden on the public. "If we had generated hydro electricity, we would not have faced the present price hikes, triggered by increase in fuel prices," he added. Pakistan had great potential for hydro electricity but it was generating half of its electricity from oil, he said. Unfortunately due to lack of long term planning, Pakistan was facing the current problems, he added. The Prime Minister noted that China was making rapid progress and its biggest strength was long term planning. "They do not think in terms of elections after every five years. I am proud that our government is making long term planning rather than thinking about elections."

"Today we are celebrating the decade of dams. We need water storage," he said while observing that there were specific problems between provinces on account of water issues. Imran Khan said: "As our population is increasing, we have to cultivate more land. If there is no storage, how can we cultivate land?" "We have fertile land in DI Khan and we need only water. If we arrange water for land in DI Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will not need to get food or wheat from other provinces. Balochistan has millions of acres of uncultivated land and if we can arrange water, we can export cotton and other crops. Land is also available in Thar."

Pakistan, Iran discuss border management

Terming Pak - Iran Border as border of peace and friendship, he said that enhanced cooperation between the two brotherly neighbours is vital



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa has called for collective efforts to deny any space or liberty of action to be exploited by miscreants along Pak-Iran Border. He was talking to a delegation led by Interior Minister of Iran Mr Ahmad Vahidi in Rawalpindi on Monday. Terming Pak - Iran Border as border of peace and friendship, he said that enhanced cooperation between the two brotherly neighbours is vital for peace and

stability in the region. Besides, geo strategic environment particularly regional security situation and bilateral cooperation in defence and security domains were discussed during the meeting. They also exchanged views on Pak - Iran Border Security mechanism including Border Markets. The visiting dignitary while acknowledging stability in Afghanistan as collective regional responsibility, appreciated Pakistan's efforts for peace and stability, particularly humanitarian assistance being rendered to mitigate challenges faced by people of Afghanistan.

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