



Islamabad POST

Thursday, February 17, 2022

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Detailed News On Page-08

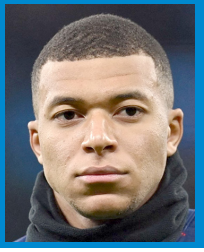
European Union should get rid of Russian gas

Detailed News On Page-06



Kylian Mbappe says he's happy at the PSG

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

PPP still believes in 'Marxism'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry Wednesday said that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had destroyed the national institutions by introducing wrong policies and it was still preaching 'Marxism.' Chaudhry took to Twitter and said PPP's senior leader Raza Rabbani was of the view that no airline other than Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) should be allowed to operate flights in the country. "These people [PPP leaders] are still stuck in Marxism."

IHC dismisses Vawda's plea

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Thursday dismissed former federal minister Faisal Vawda's plea seeking the revocation of his lifetime disqualification. An Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) bench on February 9 had announced the verdict in the PTI leader's dual nationality case, disqualifying him as a lawmaker. Justice Minallah said the date for being qualified to be a member of the Parliament was the date when the nomination papers were filed.

PoL price declined in int'l market

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) vice President Sherry Rehman said on Wednesday that the petroleum prices in Pakistan have been hiked despite the fact the price declined yesterday in the international market and now it is in interest of country as well as people that government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is sent packing. Senator Sherry Rehman, said that they reject this "petrol bomb". The PPP leader further said that in the past three years, this government raised the petroleum prices by 65 rupees per liter.

6 terrorists killed, arms recovered

These terrorists were involved in recent firing and attacks on security forces in District Kech



RAWALPINDI: A view of weapons recovered from the terrorists.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan security forces have killed six terrorists during intelligence based operation in Buleda, Ba-

loochistan. On 16 February 2022, based on information of presence of Terrorists' Hideout in general area Injirkan Range near Buleda, Balochistan, Security Forces conducted an operation to apprehend externally sponsored enemies of peace in Balochistan, according to an Inter-Services Public Relations press release. Once the troops started clearance operation in the area, Terrorists tried to escape from their camp and opened fire onto security forces. Six Terrorists have been killed in ensuing heavy exchange of fire. These terrorists were involved in recent firing and attacks on security forces in District Kech, the statement said. In addition, a huge cache of arms and ammunition has also been recovered. Operations to eliminate such perpetrators of terrorist acts in Pakistan will continue and they will not be allowed to sabotage peace, stability and progress of Balochistan. Earlier this week, Security forces gunned down a terrorist and foiled his suicidal attempt to enter into a military post in North Waziristan's Dossali tehsil, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Monday. The terrorist, before being shot down, fired small arms and also tried to lob a grenade, the ISPR said in a statement.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood giving souvenir to Kenyan HC Prof Bitok who paid a farewell call on him. FS lauded his valuable efforts for promotion of ties over past 7 years. - DNA

NATO skeptical of Russian troop pullback

Moscow said its withdrawal of forces near Ukraine was continuing for the second day, but Western powers remain skeptical

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday that it had finished military exercises in the occupied territory of Crimea and was withdrawing troops. The announcement comes a day after Moscow claimed it had returned an unspecified number of soldiers stationed

close to the Ukrainian border back to their bases. "Units of the Southern Military District, having completed their participation in tactical exercises, are moving to their permanent deployment points," Moscow's Defense Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday. Scenes shown on state television also

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. Chief Secretary and IG Punjab are also present. - DNA

PM Imran directs to facilitate people

-chairs high level meeting; reviews LB polls as well

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed Punjab government to take all necessary steps in providing prompt and efficient services to common man in the province. Talking to Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar in Lahore today, the prime minister emphasized taking stern action against miscreants, hoarders, and occupation mafia to protect the lives, property, and interests of the people. During the meeting, the issues related to civil administration and law and order in Punjab province were discussed, besides a detailed briefing on the progress of development projects. Later, Punjab Health Minister,

Continued on Page 06

Kenyan envoy pays farewell call on FS

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood received Kenyan HC Prof Bitok for a farewell call. FS appreciated his valuable efforts for promotion of ties over the past 7 years. The Foreign Secretary lauded efforts of Prof Bitok which he made to cement relations between the two countries. Prof Bitok is leaving Pakistan after completing his term. He was also Dean of the African Group.

Govt under fire for hike in POL prices

The government notified an unprecedented increase in the prices of all petroleum products by up to Rs10 to Rs12 per litre

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The historic hike in prices of petroleum products has drawn condemnation from opposition parties' leaders, with PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif accusing the PTI government of being "insensitive and heartless" to the sufferings of inflation-hit masses. The government notified an unprecedented increase in the prices of all petroleum products by up to Rs10 to Rs12 per litre for the next fortnight ending on Feb 28 "to pass on the impact of higher international oil prices" and application of additional petroleum levy, as committed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These are the highest-ever prices of all the

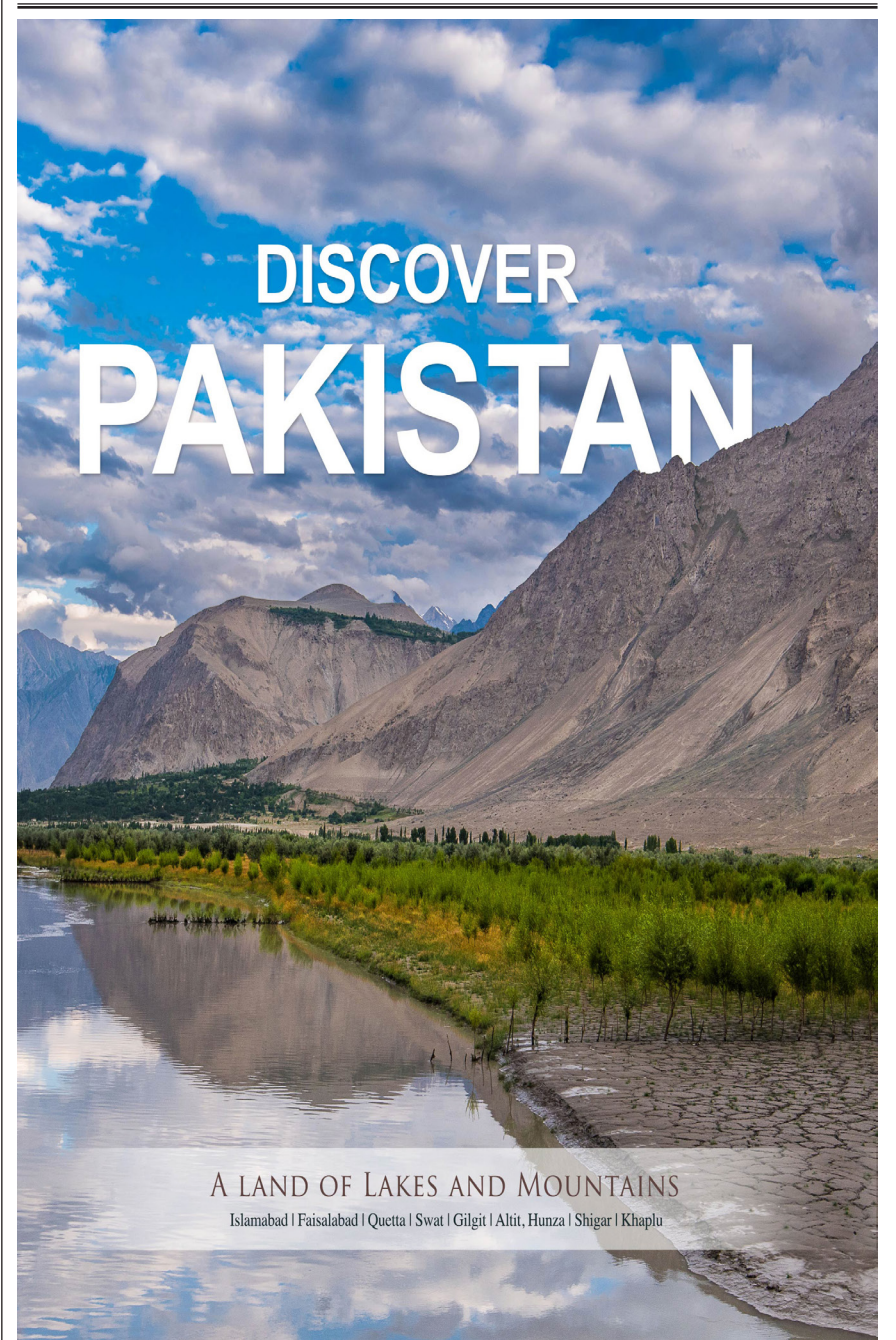
Continued on Page 06

Govt to introduce reforms

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister, Shaukat Tarin says government is committed to introduce reforms in various sectors to address structural issues and to attain sustainable and inclusive growth. Talking to Tariq H Niazi of Asian Development Bank in Islamabad on Wednesday, he said government has

Continued on Page 06



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Inside...

Nigerian HC Mohammed Bello Abioye visits Gujrat Chamber - Page 02

Zulfiqar's very first works displayed at Satrang Gallery - Page 03

Economic security is the core of national security: Moeed - Page 04

Point of no return - Page 05

EU, WB ink accord on assistance to Azerbaijan - Page 06

Ukraine marks Unity Day to defy Russia invasion fear - Page 07

Serena Hotels, EHL collaboration to promote hospitality sector - Page 08

Japan pledges US\$ 3.45m for border control

The Government of Japan is ready to support Pakistan in promoting peace and security: Ambassador WADA

MAHNOOR ANSAR



ISLAMABAD: The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad held a signing ceremony of Exchange of Notes for a USD 3.45 million grant project aimed at strengthening the operational capacities of border management authorities to contribute towards comprehensive migration management in Pakistan. The event - held at the IOM Office in Islamabad - was attended by WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Ms. Sarah Benazir, Section Officer - Migration Management Cell, Ministry of Interior of Pakistan,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

WASA to complete Jhang Road sewer line

FAISALABAD: Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) will complete Jhang Road sewer line project at an estimated cost of Rs 110 million.

Vice Chairman WASA Sheikh Shahid Javed said here on Wednesday that Jhang Road sewer line was very old and redundant which created problems for the residents.

He said the government had released funds after which WASA started work to lay down 54 diameter sewer line at Jhang Road from Motor Market so that sewerage related problem of the area could be resolved on permanent basis. He said that Rs 110 million would be spent on the 800 feet long sewer line, out of which, 500 feet line had already been completed while efforts had been accelerated to complete the remaining 300 feet line on war-footing.

Earlier, the WASA Vice Chairman also visited Masjid Wali Street in Gulberg-A and interacted with the residents to learn about their sewerage and water supply related problems.

He also assured them to complete all development projects before coming monsoon so that maximum relief could be provided to the people. — APP

IG prisons visits Central Jail Peshawar

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Prisons, Khalid Abbas Khan on Wednesday paid a surprise visit to Central Jail, Peshawar.

All the officers of Central Jail Peshawar were present during the visit of the Inspector General of Prison Khalid Abbas Khan. The Inspector General visited the entire prison and met with all the inmates. During the visit, he asked the prisoners about their problems. Necessary instructions were issued for the welfare of the prisoners and asked to fully implement them at the earliest.

The Inspector General promised the Afghan prisoners that their deportation issue would be raised by the government with the Afghan Consulate for timely verification and deportation. The Inspector General announced a two-month special pardon for convicted prisoners. Overall the visit was satisfactory while the inmates expressed satisfaction and had no complaints from the prison administration. The Inspector General Khalid Abbas appreciated the good efforts of the administration and directed to continue good governance and welfare of prisoners and staff. — APP

Over 7.3m people vaccinated in Faisalabad

DNA

FAISALABAD: Over 7.3 million (7,370,346) people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district.

District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im said on Wednesday that 4,368,616 citizens were injected first dose while 2,926,911 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He further said that 38,553 health workers were also given first dose while 36,268 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of coronavirus vaccine was available in the district.

He said that 37 vaccination centers and 20 mobile vaccination camps were operational in Faisalabad where registered people were being vaccinated. In order to facilitate the people these centers had been established in various areas of the city including Allied Hospital, District Headquarters Hospital, Government General Hospital, Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology, Government General Hospital Samanabad, Children Hospital, Sports Complex Samanabad, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Jaranwala, Samundri, Tandianwala, he added.

He further said that timing of these vaccination centers was 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. except Sports Complex Samanabad center which would remain open round the clock.



LAHORE: Former Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira meeting with the son of Dr. Tahirul Qadri Dr Hussain Muhiuddin Qadri during his visit to PAT head office, in Lahore. — DNA

Nigerian HC Mohammed Bello Abioye visits Gujrat Chamber

The High Commissioner visited three leading industries including Royal Fans, decent Furnishers and Hameed pottery and learnt about their manufacturing processes

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: High Commissioner of Nigeria met industrialists, international traders and corporate members of Gujrat Chamber of Commerce & Industry here on Tuesday.

His Excellency Amb. Mohammed Bello Abioye High Commissioner of Federal Republic of Nigeria in Pakistan visited Gujrat to meet the members of GTCCI on their special invitation. They exchanged ideas to promote economic ties between the two countries.

HE Mohammed Bello Abioye had an exhaustive discussion with the GTCCI members on different topics. President of GTCCI Mr. Naeem Imtiaz Gondal warmly welcomed the honorable guest and introduced him with the



executive body of GTCCI.

Later the High Commissioner visited three leading industries including Royal Fans, decent Furnishers and Hameed pottery and learnt about their manufacturing processes.

He also expressed his interest in trade between the two countries for products of different industries.

A Pakistani worker fell from high building in Greece Gujrat. An overseas Pakistani of district Gujrat was killed in an accident in Greece.

It is reported that one Musa Baig son of Younas Baig resident of Hazara Mughal village was working on the roof top of a high building. He reportedly slipped from the edge of the roof and fell down on the ground. He succumbed to injuries before any first aid.

Punjab chief secy orders early redressal of complaints

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: With the Chief Secretary of Punjab being active on social media, many problems are being solved immediately. Similarly, many administrative officers including Commissioner Rawalpindi, Commissioner Gujranwala, Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala, Assistant Commissioner City Gujranwala Deputy Commissioner Lahore, and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad are also active on social media. People are happy to be active on social media like this.

At present, social media is the only tool that has made the world a global village. Social media has made it much easier to reach out to executives who were difficult to meet. Administrative officers' engagements, meetings and visits prevented them from meeting. Now many officers have come on social media and bridged the gap with the public. Now people can take their problems to these officers with lightening speed.



Chief Secretary Punjab Kamran Ali Afzal has been active on social media and is in touch with the people of Punjab all the time. A person residing in any part of Punjab can take his issue to the Chief Secretary at any time and after that the Chief Secretary Punjab also informs him in reply about the position of his issue at present.

The Chief Secretary was not only present in Murree at the time of the Murree tragedy but also kept the people informed of the situation

at every turn. Someone ordered to solve any problem in any part of Punjab, big or small, very quickly and it was solved. Commissioner Rawalpindi Naw-ul-Amin Mengal, Commissioner Gujranwala Zulfiqar Ahmed Ghman, Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala Danish Afzal, Assistant Commissioner City Gujranwala, Deputy Commissioner Lahore Omar Sher Chatha are also social media activists who do a good job. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafiqat is not only active on social media but he has also kept all his subordinate administrative officers active on social media and shared their social media accounts on social media. So that there is no gap between the people and the administrative officers and they are always available to the public on social media.

If the Chief Secretary Punjab activates all the administrative officers in the whole of Punjab on social media in the same way as the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafiqat has done then it is more possible.

CBDL to promote culture of skyscrapers

FAISALABAD: Commissioner Faisalabad Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that Central Business District Lahore (CBDL) would promote a new culture of skyscrapers in Pakistan to further gear up the pace of economic growth with additional dividends of controlling environmental pollution and saving precious agricultural lands from horizontal expansion of existing cities.

He was addressing an awareness session for the auction of seven precious plots in Central Business District Lahore (CBDL) in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He underlined the importance of industrial sector in creating new job opportunities and generating much needed revenue for the national kitty.

"It is also important to establish an import substitution industry in the country to save precious foreign exchange", he said. The Commissioner said that currently Lahore was sprawling over approximately 75 kilometer of land and if immediate remedial and proactive measures were not taken, it would spread up to 100 kilometers by eating up precious agricultural lands around the provincial metropolis. He said that it was the first project in which 14 water treatment plants would be installed to recycle the used water and channelize it in a new river in addition to consuming it for irrigation purposes. About the possible impacts of this mega project on environment, he said that

he was proud to accord its sanction being secretary environment for this most innovative environment friendly project in the heart of thickly populated urban areas of Lahore.

He said that it would also usher a new culture of high-rise buildings to give a unique skyline to each and every city of Pakistan. The Commissioner appreciated the most impressive advocacy of local issues by FCCI President Atif Munir Sheikh. He said that on the special directive of Prime Minister Imran Khan and in line with the demands of the business community, he immediately started work on the proposed projects. He said that the issue of the master plan for Faisalabad was on top of the list.

"It was pending unfinished for the last many years", he said and added that work was restarted on it. — APP

DC visits vegetable market

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad on Wednesday visited fruit & vegetable market Sadr Jhang Road and reviewed the bidding process of various commodities.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Sadar Ghulam Mustafa Jatt and officers of market committee were also present on the occasion.

The DC went to different sheds and stalls and checked the availability of vegetables and fruits. He directed the market committee staff for regular monitoring of bidding to discourage unfair increase in wholesale prices.

He also inquired about terms and conditions of the bidding and said that unjustified price hike would not be tolerated. He also interacted with the commission agents and shopkeepers and said that the district administration was very serious to control the prices of daily use items. Therefore, regular visit of vegetables markets would be conducted in the morning as well as afternoon. — APP

Eight aid trucks dispatched to Afghanistan

PESHAWAR: Alhuda Foundation and Talha Mahmood Foundation Wednesday dispatched eight trucks carrying over 200 tons of edible items to Afghanistan.

Senator JUIF Talha Mahmood, Central leaders of JUIF Alhaj Shamsuddin Afridi, Kabir Khan, Additional AC Ashrafuddin, Tehsilidar Torkham Ghuncha Gul and representatives of Imarat Islami were present at Torkhan Border on this occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Senator Talha Mahmood said that Pakistan and its people cannot leave the Afghans alone in this situation. The people of two neighbouring countries share religious and cultural values and Pakistanis are always ready to support Afghans in this hour of need.

The Imarat Islami thanked Pakistan and Talha Mahmood for supporting Afghans who are facing challenging situation in their country. — APP

35 criminals arrested, contraband seized

FAISALABAD: Police claimed on Wednesday to have arrested 35 criminals and recovered drugs and illegal weapons from their possession in the district during the last 24 hours.

According to police, raiding teams nabbed 8 drug pushers and recovered 4.04 Kg hashish, 0.3 Kg heroin and 15 litres liquor from their possession.

In a crackdown against illegal weapons, the police arrested 9 persons and recovered 8 pistols, one rifle, one kalashnikov and a number of bullets from them. Meanwhile, city police held 18 kite sellers and recovered 35,345 kites and 20 string rolls from them. — APP



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan chairing a meeting of Live Stock Department with Religious Scholar Maulana Tariq Jamil. — APP

Secretary inspects vaccination drive

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHARAN: Secretary Livestock South Punjab Nasir Jamal congratulated Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Shoaib Ali on receiving honorary shield from CM Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar on achieving targets during Corona Vaccination Campaign and best performance. He appreciated the performance Health Department Lodhran on behalf CM Punjab and Health Department on door to door vaccination drive.

He expressed these remarks while reviewing the steps being taken to

achieve the targets of corona vaccination campaign at Deputy Commissioner Office's Committee Room. Secretary Livestock South Punjab Nasir Jamal said that Government of Punjab and Health Department is hard at work in making province corona free. He added that Health Department teams should make campaign successful by door to door vaccination. War against corona can only be won through complete vaccination.

While addressing with the meeting Deputy Commissioner told that throughout the district 10,10,164 persons have been administered first dose while 860722 have been

administered second dose. He told that on directions of Government of Punjab in the first phase of (RED) campaign from 25th October to 12 November 2021, 306455 persons were vaccinated. He added that during the (RED) campaign's first phase 117 mobile teams and 73 special teams were deployed for schools. He told that during the phase 1 teams achieved more than their set target of 102%. He added that in second phase of (RED) Campaign which ran from 1st December 2021 to 31st December 2021 286 persons were vaccinated. In phase 2 218 mobile while 73 special teams were

deployed for schools. He told that in the second phase teams achieved 101% of their set targets. Deputy Commissioner further told that during the (RED) campaign phase Two 143,181 persons were administered first dose while 239,105 persons were administered second dose. He told that throughout the district (RED) Campaign Phase three campaign which will continue from 1 Feb to 14 Feb during which 103,409 persons were administered first while 74,770 persons were administered second dose, in the campaign 85 fixed teams, 460 outreach teams while collectively 545 teams were deployed.

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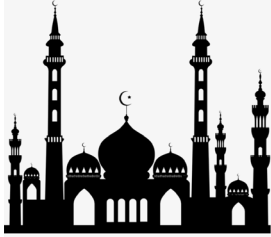
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Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance..	1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....	9222596
Rawalpindi.....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



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....	115
PIA Flight Info.....	114
PIA Cargo.....	9280979
Railway Inquiry.....	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
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Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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Zulfiqar's very first works displayed at Satrang Gallery

Asma Rashid Khan Director Satrang Art Gallery briefed the audience about the salient features of the exhibition; Zulfiqar's focus is on a particular stretch of the River Indus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Satrang Gallery on Wednesday organised - a solo exhibition of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto at Islamabad Serena Hotel.

Asma Rashid Khan Director Satrang Art Gallery briefed the audience about the salient features of the exhibition. Bera Paar is Zulfiqar's very first exhibition in Islamabad and the series of multimedia works in the exhibition are a result of the artist's long term research project Bulhan Nameh.

Zulfiqar's focus is on a particular stretch of the River Indus, in Sukkur, a particularly mystical area with significant shrines and temples. This series of work brings together the nuanced historical and cultural richness of Sindh. "Bulhan Nameh is a long term research based project that looks at a selection of sites on the River Indus between Sukkur and Rohri in Sindh, Pakistan.

Taking its name for the Sindh word for the Indus River Dolphin, bulhan, this series intends to look at how in this 10 km long stretch of river punctuated at one end by the British era Sukkur Barrage and at the other by the island shrine of Khwaja Khizr, known locally to Hindus and Muslims as Zinda



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Spain Manuel Duran and others witnessing photo exhibition at Satrang Art Gallery. - DNA

Pir. Here wildlife, history and spirituality collide with colonialism, capitalism, feudalism, as well as the ever more present modern state.

Nameh, is a Farsi, Urdu and Sindh word for diary - this particular diary is written through printmaking and textile. Cyanotypes, analog

photographs and archive are paired with traditional Sindh embroidery as a way to root this project within its current cultural landscape, as well as with memory, nostalgia and a sense of loss. Sukkur is the last place where the river is still full much like She was before the dams and barrages, it is the last refuge of the Indus River Dolphin and a site that evidences syncretic religious practices that still

carry on in modern Sindh. The Indus is personified as Sindhu Mata, a river that not only gave Sindh its name but also India, Hinduism and all derivatives of these words. In my research I do not intend to expose all elements of the river at this location but instead I hope to re-mystify the Indus and in so doing allow us to re-imagine Her as a living and ever changing entity rather than just an exploitable resource." - Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (b. Damascus, 1990) is an artist and curator whose work resurrects complex histories in the South Asian, South West Asian and North African region.

In the process he unpacks the intersections of religion, storytelling, futurity and environmental degradation through a multi-media practice rooted in printmaking, textile and performance. Bhutto has shown work and curated exhibitions globally, as well as spoken extensively on the intersections of faith, radical thought and futurity at Columbia University, UC Berkeley, NYU, Stanford and the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture.

Bhutto is currently based in Karachi, Pakistan and received an MAH in History of Art from the University of Edinburgh in 2014 and an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2016.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador designate to US Sardar Masood Khan calling on Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. - APP

DC Abbottabad imposes ban on cutting hills

ABBOTTABAD: District Administration Abbottabad on Thursday while taking the notice of hill cutting and mining imposed a ban on cutting of hills in the district under section 144 keeping in view the unplanned housing societies that are destroying the natural beauty and environment of Abbottabad. According to the notification, the ban was imposed due to the negative impacts of cutting hills and mining to maintain the ecosystem of the area. DC Abbottabad while taking the notice of unplanned hill cutting for housing societies and dumping of construction material on roadsides imposed a ban under section 144 "the code of Criminal Procedure 1898) as immediate prevention and speedy remedy. The ban was also imposed on the dumping of solid waste and construction materials, on roadsides Nullahs, watercourses in the district, the order was immediately enforced for sixty days. It has been brought to the notice of the DC Abbottabad Tariq Salam Marwat that hill cutting/mining in district Abbottabad was being done in various areas particularly on the main road which has jeopardizing effect on environment and ecosystem besides devastation of the scenic natural beauty of Abbottabad. - APP

PPP long march not to turn into sit-in: sources

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) will not stage a sit-in at the end of its scheduled long march towards Islamabad from February 27 sources within the party said on Wednesday. According to sources privy to the plans of the party, the PPP's long march will culminate in a peaceful manner after reaching Islamabad.

"The PPP leadership is hopeful that the government will be dissolved before their arrival in Islamabad and therefore there is no need for a sit-in," they said while sharing clear directives being issued by party's Chairman Bil-

awal Bhutto Zardari to the leaders during a meeting on Tuesday.

It is pertinent to mention here that the PPP on Tuesday unveiled the schedule of its long march that is set to take place on February 27. According to the schedule, the long march would begin from the Quaid's mausoleum in Karachi on Feb 27 at 10:00 am and will reach the federal capital in ten days after passing through 34 major cities of the country. The protest rally will first reach Sindh's Badin district via Thatta and Sujawal. On Monday (February 28), the long march would be passing

through Hyderabad, Halla, Nawabshah and would end at Moro town. The participants of the long march would stay at Sukkur on March 1 and will be hosted by the PPP stalwart Syed Khurshed Ahmed Shah. The long march will stay in Rahim Yar Khan on March 2 night and will reach Multan on March 3. Former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gillani will host the march in Multan.

The long march procession will reach Chichawatni on March 04 as per schedule. After the night stay in Chichawatni, the march will proceed to Lahore and will stay over there on March 06. - APP

Shibli Faraz advises masses to use 'less fuel'

ISLAMABAD: Reacting to the increase in PoL prices, Federal Minister for Science and Technology Shibli Faraz has advised the masses to use 'less fuel'. Shibli Faraz said life cannot remain normal in tough times and masses should try to use less fuel as much they can. The government cannot provide subsidies on every item as it is focusing only to subsidize food-related items. The fuel prices are increasing in the international market and the government has not slapped any tax on petroleum products, the minister added. Terminating the price hike issue as an international issue, Shibli Faraz said his ministry is trying to minimise the use of electricity as it will ultimately minimise the import of furnace oil. It may be noted that the federal government Tuesday increased the prices of petroleum products by up to Rs12 per litre. According to the notification issued by the finance ministry, the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government increased petrol price by Rs12.03 per litre, high-speed diesel by Rs9.53 per litre and the price of light diesel was jacked up by Rs9.43. The price of Kerosene oil also increased by Rs10.08 per litre, according to the notification. - DNA

ICT police launches WhatsApp number for citizens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police Wednesday launched WhatsApp number, enabling citizens direct access to police related services on smart phones. The citizens will receive all information about police services after getting themselves registered by sending a simple message on WhatsApp number 03342874287, 033ICTP. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Muhammad Ahsan Younus, in his video message termed the step towards modern policing in the federal capital. IGP said the citizens through WhatsApp could get services in both English and Urdu languages.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM Gulshanabad, Major Masood Kayani, BB Shaheed, Rata, Race Course, Mangtal, Railway Colony, Rahara, PHA-1, Bahria Enclave, Pir Sohawa, Falcon, Jinnah Camp, Noor Muhammad, Al Noor Colony, Kurry Road, Khurrum Colony, Muslim Town, Bella Road, Lohi Bhair, Koral, AIOU, International School, H-8/2, I-8/2, Pindpran, Sangjani, Shahullah Dutta, Sarai Kharboza, Taxila, Hussainabad, Ahmednagar, Burhan, Sarka, Shadi Khan, Lakho, Kariala, Dhadiyal Express, Latifal, Dhadiyal City, Raja Sultan, TB Hospital, Bagh Sardar, Gulshanabad, Eid Gah, Dhanyal, UC Lakhani, Gulshan Saeed Feeders, Feeders, from 10:00 am to 04:00 pm, NCI (Toba), Lilla Town, Ahmedabad Feeders, From 09:00 am to 04:00 pm Beirut, Nimbai, Industrial, Pirudhai, Mangtal, Nomanpara, Charohi Feeders and surroundings.

ICCI slams hike in petroleum prices

M Shakeel Munir said that the petrol price has been hiked by about Rs.12, high speed diesel and kerosene oil by around Rs.10 and LDO by over Rs.9 per taking these prices to the record high level in country's history

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has slammed the government decision to make yet another hike in the prices of petroleum products taking them to almost highest level in the history of the country that would entail harmful consequences for business activities and unleash a new wave of record inflation for the common man.

He urged that the government should immediately withdraw this unwise decision to save the businesses and the people from dire consequences. He said this while addressing an emergent meeting of the business community that was called to discuss this burning issue. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that the petrol price has been hiked by about Rs.12, high speed diesel and kerosene oil by around Rs.10 and LDO by over Rs.9 per taking these prices to the



record high level in country's history. He said that the government has also increased petroleum levy by Rs.4/litre in these tough times and all these hikes were being made to appease the IMF, which has raised many questions on our sovereignty. He said that hike in petrol and diesel prices would make a manifold increase in the energy and transport costs due to which the cost of doing business would multiply. He questioned who would do business and invest in Pakistan at a time when the government was making frequent hikes in utility tariffs and POL products. He stressed that the government should make drastic cuts in all non-development expenditures and provide some relief to inflation-stricken people. He urged that in these difficult times, the government should avoid taking such harsh decisions and focus on promoting ease of doing business to steer the economy out of current challenges.

Briefs

NACTA organizes wall painting activity

ISLAMABAD: National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) organized a week-long Wall Painting Activity for students and youth to engage them in positive activities. A large number of students from colleges and universities of the capital from IMCG, NUST, Bahria University, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics and International Islamic University to participate in this amazing activity and spread the message of peace and tolerance, said a press release issued here Wednesday. Participating students painted slogans and murals on the theme of Peace and Tolerance. The concluding ceremony of the activity organized here at Islamabad Model College for Girls F-10/2. TV artist, Tousiq Haider was the chief guest while Member (Policy) and senior officers of NACTA attended the event. A large number of teachers and students of the college were present on the occasion. In her opening remarks, Sabah Faisal, Principal of IMCG F-10/2 said great enthusiasm was noticed among students when NACTA engaged them for wall painting activity. - APP

Ministers condole Akbar's demise

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain and Minister of State Farrukh Habib on Wednesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of Al-Akbar's Editor-in-Chief Ghulam Akbar. In their separate condolence messages, they said the deceased had a unique distinction in the field of journalism and was known for his professional skills and impartiality. Chaudhry Fawad said readers of the daily Al-Akbar always waited for Ghulam Akbar's column 'Aaj Ki Baat' to gain knowledge. Farrukh Habib said the deceased's role in strengthening democracy and the democratic process was not hidden from anyone. They prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with equanimity. - APP

PTA conducts QoS survey

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has carried out an independent Quality of Service (QoS) Survey in 18 Cities and 9 motorways, highways, inter-city Roads of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan in order to measure the performance and quality of Cellular Mobile Operators' (CMOs) services being provided to their customers. During the survey, the licensed KPIs of voice, network coverage, SMS and mobile broadband, data were checked using state of the art automated QoS Monitoring & Benchmarking Tools said news release issued here on Wednesday. The Drive test teams selected survey routes in such a manner to cover main roads, service roads and majority of sectors/colonies in surveyed areas. - APP

Economic security is the core of national security: Moeed

The National Security Adviser appreciated the public debate on the NSP but urged everyone to be constructive in their criticism with an aim to improve the policy

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: National Security Adviser Dr Moeed Yusuf termed economic security as the core of national security. He was speaking at an event to discuss the recently unveiled National Security Policy (NSP) at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Wednesday. Dr Yusuf termed the NSP as an overarching policy document about the policy direction with regard to national security. In that context, he added, the policy prioritized the security of its citizens for ensuring national security. He added that if the inflow of resources was lower than their outflow, an average citizen of the country could not be secured. The focus of the NSP, according to the National Security Adviser, therefore, was on increasing the national resource pie and taking the discussion away from the guns versus butter debate. Dr Yusuf maintained that



ensuring economic security of the country was only possible through leveraging Pakistan's geo-economic location for trade connectivity and developing true development partnerships with other countries of the world instead of looking for economic assistance. Responding to the criticism about the NSP being unclear on its implementation plan, Dr Yusuf shared that the implementation of plan of the NSP was in the classified

part of the document. The National Security Adviser appreciated the public debate on the NSP but urged everyone to be constructive in their criticism with an aim to improve the policy. Earlier, in his welcome remarks, President IRS Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz stated that the NSP put the right amount of emphasis on the prioritization of economic and human security. He added that instead of

diminishing the importance of conventional security, the NSP aimed to create a synergy between economic and conventional security. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Defence Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said that the NSP had provided a conceptual framework for the direction of the national security in days and years to come. He added that greater clari-

ty on the policy, its political ownership through the parliament, and its continuity could improve the chances of its implementation. Citing the examples of Pakistan's nuclear policy and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Senator Sayed highlighted the importance of continuity of policies for their success under various governments. Former Defence Secretary and Minister Lt Gen (Retd) Naem Lodhi said that when there was no codified national security policy, the criticism was not there but now with the unveiling of the NSP there was criticism. He emphasized the overarching nature of the NSP as a document that provided a basic framework and direction for other policies to be aligned with. Chairperson of the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) Ambassador Shafiq Kakakel highly appreciated the NSP for its greater emphasis on human security issues, especially climate change.

AIOU to introduce BS degree in Dietetics

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Committee of Courses, Department of Environmental Design, Health and Nutritional Sciences of Allama Iqbal Open University was held yesterday. Chairperson Department of EDHNS Prof. Dr. Hajra Ahmed chaired the meeting whereas Vice Chancellor, Health Services Academy, Prof. Dr. Shehzad Ali Khan, Chairman Department of Human Nutrition, University of Peshawar, Dr. Zia-ud-Din, Director, Institute of Food Science and Nutrition, ARID Agricultural University, Prof. Dr. Asif Ahmed and all the faculty members, department of EDHNS, AIOU attended the meeting. All the members unanimously approved the introduction of a four-year BS in Human Nutrition and Dietetics program. Explaining the aims and objectives of the BS program, Dr. Zaheer Ahmed said that the new courses in the BS Human Nutrition and Dietetics program have been developed following the guidelines of the Higher Education Commission. Dr. Zia-ud-Din and Prof. Dr. Asif Ahmed believed that these courses are very useful for the students of Nutrition. Prof. Dr. Hajra said that according to the new HEC policy, the two-year BSc and MSc programs will be discontinued, so the introduction of BS (Human Nutrition and Dietetics) is a matter of urgency and this four-year degree program will consist of eight semesters and will be formally introduced after approval from other statutory bodies of the University. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Inauguration ceremony of Issuance of Commemorative Coin to mark the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Germany at State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). - APP

MoU for school meal program signed

Weight and height will be locked and will be assessed on annual basis based on the meal provisions



DNA

ISLAMABAD: An accomplished Trust signed an MoU with Ministry of Federal education to

start school meal program in 100 public primary schools with additional support of eye sight screening, dental screening and BMI monitoring. Weight and height will be

locked and will be assessed on annual basis based on the meal provisions. There will be a great logistics and distribution network with a dood menu card for all six days.

Oil price hike will increase inflation: RCCI

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has expressed deep concern over the rise in prices of petroleum products and demanded of the government to immediately review the prices. The price of petrol has been increased from earlier Rs147.83 to Rs159.86 a litre; high-speed diesel from Rs144.62 to Rs154.15 a litre, kerosene from Rs116.48 per litre to Rs126.56, and LDO from Rs114.54 to Rs123.97 per litre. In a statement, RCCI President NadeemRauf said that the business community was deeply concerned over the sharp rise in prices, adding that inflation was already in double digits and rising prices would lead to a storm of inflation. Petrol and diesel prices have a direct impact on transportation costs. The construction sector will be affected. Rising diesel prices will increase the cost of construction materials, he added.

No house-robbery case in capital since December

The IGP highlighting sacrifices of the police department said two police officials have martyred and 11 sustained injuries during terrorist incidents during the last two months

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Interior on Wednesday was apprised that not a single house robbery case has been reported since December 18, 2021 in the capital. Briefing the committee which met with Raja Khurram Shahzad Nawaz in the chair, about law and order situation in the capital, IGP Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas said street crimes and car lifting incidents witnessed 70 per cent decrease. He said documentation process of Afghan was under process and over 4,000 Afghan have already been registered. He said FIR has already been registered against four officials of Islamabad police who opened fire at three students of Matric. The accused police officials were behind the bar and departmental inquiry has also been initiated against them, he said. The IGP highlighting sacrifices of the police department said two police officials have martyred and 11 sustained injuries during terrorist incidents during the last two months. He said despite shortage of manpower, the police was making all out efforts to provide safe and peaceful environment to the citizen. He said over 5,000 FIRs have been registered during a month. However, he said that salary of Islamabad police was lower than Punjab and KPK police officials. He said martyrs of police were not yet given Shuhada Package in last three years. The committee recommended that salaries of Islamabad Police should be brought at par with Punjab and KPK police.

ITP holds 612 workshops in last 45 days

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) were striving to ensure traffic discipline and minimize violation of rules through educating road users and arranged 612 road safety workshops during the last 45 days. These traffic workshops were arranged for driving license applicants, volunteers, students of educational institutions and staff of government and non-government organizations. In a bid to educate motorists on the correct traffic procedures, SSP (Traffic) RiaMazhar Iqbal said that ITP is arranging such workshops and creating awareness amongst people about consequences of traffic rules violations, including over speeding, one-wheeling, inappropriate number plates, juvenile driving, lane-line discipline, zebra crossing, the use of helmets and so on. He said this effort is meant to infuse traffic discipline, which will help protect the lives and property of road users. The SSP (Traffic) said road safety workshops were being arranged in government and private organisations, including educational institutions, to sensitise road users about various traffic rules. The awareness campaign for the safety of road users is in full swing, he added. In this regard, special teams have been constituted to teach road users how to ensure their safety before travelling on roads, particularly motorbike riders were being advised how to take the left lane while travelling. The SSP (Traffic) Rai Mazhar Iqbal said that these teams were performing duties at various main roads of the city and briefing motorbike riders and other motorists about safety. Those motorbike riders driving without helmets and side mirrors or having defective indicators, headlights, rear lights and speed metres are being cautioned and urged to get their bikes and vehicles repaired. He explained that a number of motorbike riders suffer road accidents due to faulty lights or indicators.

Over 12,000 lawyers get 'Insaaf Sehat Card'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister and Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Zaheer ud Din Babar Awan on Wednesday distributed health cards among the lawyer community under the Sehat Sahulat Programme. Addressing the health card distribution ceremony, he said more than 12,000 lawyers of Rawalpindi division had availed the facility which would help them and their families get free health care facilities in the empanelled hospitals. Awan said the facility was extended to lawyer community on directions of PM Imran Khan. He said the prime minister had directed to ensure inclusion of every citizen in the programme. The health cards would be given to all the deserving citizens of the state without any discrimination, he added. President Lahore High Court Rawalpindi Bench Association Sardar Abdul Raziq and other members attended the ceremony.

Mother Languages Festival: 10 legends to be awarded

ISLAMABAD: A three-day literature festival to celebrate Pakistan's mother languages will be organised by Indus Cultural Forum (ICF) in collaboration with Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan. Niaz Nadeem, member Board of Governors ICF, shared while talking to APP, "Our mission is to seek equal recognition, respect and dignity of all languages of Pakistan." The organisers have prepared an elaborate programme for three days. It will start with an opening ceremony on 18th February followed by lifetime achievement awards ceremony in which 10 prominent legends of various languages of Pakistan will be awarded. Zahida Hina (Urdu), Darwesh Durrani (Pushto), Sheeraz Tahir (Potohari), Ghani Parwaz (Balochi), Parveen Malik (Punjabi), Dr. Nasrullah Nasir (Seraiki), Noor ul Huda Shah (Sindhi),

Asif Saqib (Hindko), Gul Bangulzai (Brahui) and Hassan Hasrat (Balti) are the award beneficiaries for their contribution in promotion of local languages. The cultural fair, the 7th in the series, will be celebrated on PAL's premises from February 18 to 20. Other partners who will grace the occasion include the Culture Department, Government of Sindh, Forum for Language Initiatives (FLI), ECO Science Foundation and others. The next two days will focus on a number of parallel and plenary sessions. The key highlight of the second day is the premier screening of a documentary titled 'Pakistan: Places, Faces, Voices' by UNDP Pakistan. Other activities of the day include launching of the books in over 15 languages comprising various genres including poetry, fiction, linguistics and non-fiction. A symposium on feminist literature in mother languages will also be part of the day.

Attractions of the last day will include dialogues on the role of literature festivals in promoting linguistic diversity, role of state and society in promotion of languages, and short stories in various vernacular languages of Pakistan. A multilingual music evening will set the stage for the closing ceremony on the final day. In addition to that, an exhibition of paintings on linguistic diversity will also be held. A number of book stalls of different languages will also be set up. ICF started the journey of honouring Pakistani mother languages in 2016. Since then six conferences have been conducted successfully, four of them at Lok Virsa and two at Pakistan National Council of the Arts. Chairperson of Indus Cultural Forum Munawar Hassan told APP that the festival has demonstrated excellent collaboration and cooperation between various government and civil society organisations like ICF. - APP

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11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165

Taliban's betrayals

PRIME Minister Imran Khan's interview with CNN's Fareed Zakaria is creating a lot of waves in relevant circles for indicating that the Afghan Taliban regime would eventually have to be recognised 'by everyone'. Further adding that stability should remain the long-term objective by trying to avert a larger crisis.

While it's true that the Taliban are the de facto rulers of Afghanistan after overthrowing the Ashraf Ghani regime, they have failed to uphold their commitments with the international community when it comes to human rights and women empowerment measures.

On the diplomatic front, their interactions with regional stakeholders haven't yet yielded much results. Although backchannel talks with the Europeans are occurring as well, the key problem remains a tainted history that led to the 9/11 Attacks. The world hasn't forgotten the brutalities of the past; and has good reason to fear more of the same. Indeed, the United States has its own fair share of follies but why should the Taliban be allowed to operate freely as if it doesn't matter for the global community?

Even when it comes to Pakistan, the Kabul-based regime is largely shying away from containing terrorist activities of the Pakistani Taliban which have increased in recent months. Islamabad's initial stance for peace talks was a grave mistake whose consequences are being witnessed. Talks and terrorism don't go hand in hand anywhere in the world and those who believe it have just not learnt the lessons of history.

Afghanistan must steer towards democracy rather than some theocratic authoritarian state that has no place in today's world. The Taliban's PR machinery might be getting some brownie points by acting holier than thou but the stark reality is the opposite.

Eventually, elections shall have to be held but it must be kept in mind that the people of Afghanistan shall continue to suffer unless humanitarian aid is amply provided. Collective efforts should be prioritised in this regard by friends and foes alike.

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

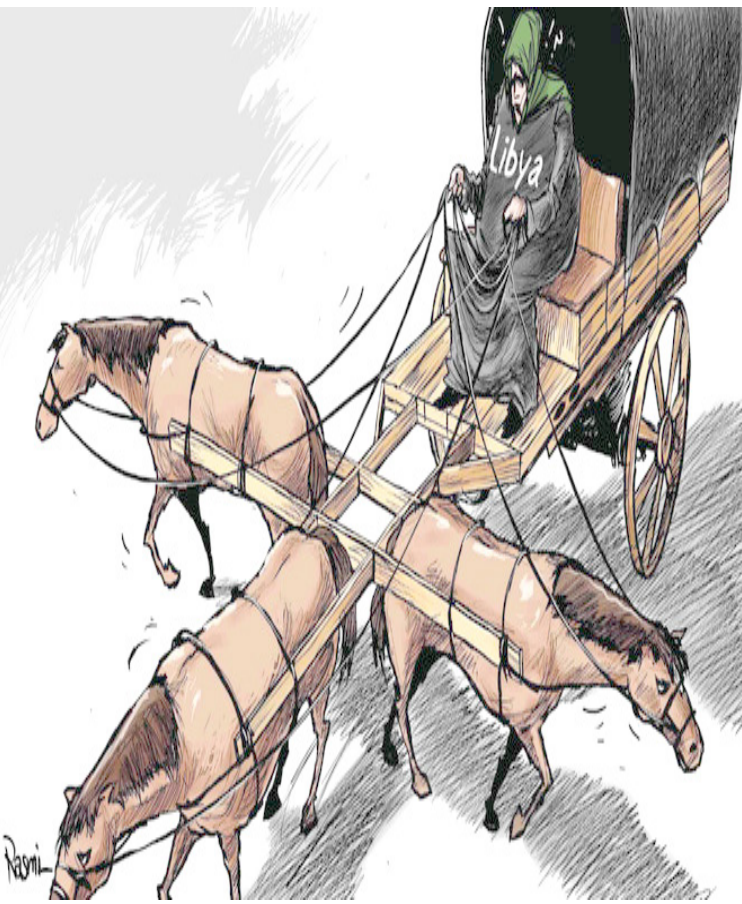
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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Strategic politics

In their recent round of activity, the opposition parties have come together and decided that a vote of no confidence against Prime Minister Imran Khan could and should be moved in parliament. While the three major opposition parties – the PML-N, JUI-F and the PPP – may have agreed on this strategy, the question is whether the opposition has any chance of succeeding at all and what the scenario would be if it does. The opposition is short of eight members in order to bring about a no-confidence motion in the National Assembly. It carries the embarrassing burden of repeated defeats in the Senate, where it holds a majority – something that has led to inevitable scepticism regarding just how far the opposition is willing to play the role of an opposition, despite all proclamations of overthrowing the government.

In its quest to get its numbers together, the opposition has taken to wooing current PTI allies, first meeting with the MQM and then calling on the PML-Q – a party that figures strongly when it comes to Punjab politics. It would no doubt be a most significant development were the PML-Q to switch sides, but for the time being it seems the opposition will not be getting the Q League on its side of the aisle. In a pointed statement, the PML-Q's Moonis Elahi has said his party is standing firm with the PTI government. But both the government and the opposition know very well that there are no permanent friends or foes in politics – and in Pakistan the political winds change course sometimes overnight. So, what are we to make of all this? The PML-N argues that a vote of no confidence can succeed in the National Assembly, possibly with the help of the MQM and disgruntled members of PTI. Whether or not this is based on accurate analysis of the strength of various parties in parliament is unknown. If a no-confidence vote does succeed, and there is argument over whether this is possible, there is also the question of whether the PPP would wish to seek a new election quickly. The party is in some danger of losing its hold on Sindh, and has not reclaimed lost constituencies yet in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PML-N argues that a vote of no confidence may not mean immediate elections although it is likely that if the central government falls, provincial governments would follow. There is also the possibility that a new candidate could be elected as prime minister, with mutual consensus, and a national government or caretaker government set up, or elections announced after an interim period. As such it is completely unclear precisely what the opposition strategy is and who is leading the games that are being played. In the background remains the ultimate nod of approval that plays the most important part in Pakistan's politics. With the opposition and the government both looking like they already have the prize in the bag, political observers wonder where exactly this showdown is leading to. Ideally, the best option for all non-political forces is to remain neutral and let a purely political process take its course but it is highly unlikely that anyone is leaving this factor to chance or benevolence.

Point of no return

Dr M Ali Hamza



In a common man's life, such points of no return are not very remarkable, unless one starts analyzing life minutely

A specific altitude, at a specific speed, beyond which the airplane cannot be saved and when the crash is imminent is called point of no return. This term is very well known to pilots and especially air force pilots. However, this term is not only limited to flying. In everyday life, during the course of making decisions, one often comes across the point of no return. Beyond a certain point in time, it becomes impossible for you to control the consequences. Once you commit your first crime, it becomes impossible to reverse time. In a common man's life, such points of no return are not very remarkable, unless one starts analyzing life minutely. But as far as states or corporations are concerned such points in time are easily identifiable. In early 1990's Americans came across one such point of no return. This was the time, when a decision had to be made about going to

war, or not going to war, in the middle-east, during the Iraq-Kuwait crisis. At that point of no return they opted for war and global hegemony. Unfortunately, for the Americans, and fortunately for the rest of the world, the Americans could not identify that point of no return, hence indulged in war and ever since the Americans have been fighting wars, endless wars, everywhere. The middle-eastern conflict, later turned into war in Somalia, and Serbia, war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Kosovan war, war against terrorism, the last war in Iraq, the war in Libya, Syrian war, war in Ukraine, and ultimately, maybe now, a full-fledge war in Europe, again under the guise of supporting Ukrainian "democracy". All of the aforementioned wars could have been avoided, and the Americans could have been in a leading position, had they not misread the point of no return in early 1990s during the Operation Desert Storm nonsense. As a result of missing that point of no return, today the Americans are facing an existential crisis, to be more specific; USA is engulfed in existential crisis. They have crisis of law enforcement, judicial and racial crisis, and now they even are facing economic crisis, despite the fact that so-called Bezoses and Muskus of this world call themselves "Americans". Today it is China and Russia, who are talking about a multi-polar world. In this non-imperialistic, multi-polar world, Americans, and their ancestors (the British), have no place. They can enjoy the back benches if they want, but they can never be in the leading position. And this is what is causing hysteria among the rulers of these opportunists. Now that they are on the sidelines of a multi-polar world, they are trying to, once again, fight their way in, by inflating the non-existent conflict in Ukraine. Though President Putin has repeatedly de-

nied any plans to invade Ukraine but USA and EU are accusing Russia, for assembling 150,000 troops on the Ukrainian border, preparing to invade its pro-Western neighbor. USA intelligence claimed that Russia will do a false-flag operation on or before February 16, but on the contrary Russia has sent some troops back after the military drills. Many observers are currently focusing on the last week of February; end of the Winter Olympics in Beijing. The simple reason for aggravating the situation is foreseeing the power shift, a power shift that is slipping from western hands to eastern ones. Only one thing can stop the swelling of eastern dominance in upcoming multi-polar world, and that is a decision of engaging countries into a huge destructive conflict. The westerners are still unable to recognize the fact in history that powerful countries at one point of time have to let others lead and meanwhile they rebuild themselves as Russia and China did in Post 1980's world. Since 1980s, Russia and China brought a total 180 degree shift in system and structure, a significant change in paradigm, and a classic example of resilience. Hence, the most important lesson to be learnt is, never underestimate the point of no return in your life, may you be an individual or a state. And as far as the dear Americans are concerned, they are more than 30 years beyond their point of no return. So it does not matter if they go to a new war in Ukraine or not. They are destined to crash. However, USA and EU can still eject the seat and save the world from the destruction. But, knowing the American psychology, and their hillbilly attitude, there are high chances that they will crash with a smile. A smile of an individual with lowest intelligence knowing not when not to smile.

Israel must rein in the far right to avoid repeat of violent clashes

Osama Al-Sharif



Jewish settler terrorism against Palestinians has been on the rise, especially since the openly racist Itamar Ben-Gvir, head of the Otzma Yehudit party, was elected to the Knesset last year. His party is directly linked to the outlawed Kach, the group formed by Jewish terrorist Meir Kahane

evictions for some time. However, in January, a court approved the eviction of the Salihiya family, whose house was immediately demolished. There was, like last year, an international backlash, with the EU and UK warning that evictions in occupied territory were illegal under international law. Israel, as usual, ignored the denunciations. Since East Jerusalem was annexed by Israel, a number of illegal settlements have been built to separate the city from the West Bank. A number of Jewish neighborhoods were also built on expropriated lands to surround Palestinian neighborhoods and cut them off from the Old City. While Jerusalem's Arab residents carry an Israeli ID card, they do not have the same rights as Jews. They are rarely given building licenses and, when they do build without permission, the authorities move quickly to demolish the new structures – at the owners' expense. Going to court almost never works for Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, who number more than 300,000. The laws are applied to achieve one main goal: To clear East Jerusalem of its Arab population – a straightforward war crime.

Like Sheikh Jarrah, other East Jerusalem neighborhoods are also in peril. These include the Silwan district, which is home to more than 35,000 Palestinians. Its proximity to the Old City and Al-Aqsa Mosque makes it a major target for Jewish settlers. The Israeli authorities want to raze the entire area and turn it into a biblical theme park. Under former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, far-right politicians and extremist settlers were allowed to implement their goal of clearing Jerusalem of its Arab population. Not only that, but in recent years and even under the current government, right-wing politicians and their followers have been allowed to breach Al-Haram Al-Sharif on an almost daily basis, provoking worshippers and leading to frequent clashes. After Sunday's clashes between Ben-Gvir's followers and residents of Sheikh Jarrah, the racist MK vowed to return to the area and set up his so-called office once more. He did so again on Monday and tensions rose to new heights. Hamas said it was watching the situation, while Prime Minister Naftali Bennett accused Ben-Gvir of seeking to score political points by inflaming the situation.

The reality is that the Israeli right will increase its political representation with each election cycle and, with that, it will push to provoke more encounters with the Palestinians, both in Jerusalem and in the West Bank. Since 1967, the Jewish settler population in East Jerusalem has grown from zero to more than 200,000. The piecemeal Jewish expansion in East Jerusalem will increase in the coming years and one major provocation will lead to a new cycle of violence. Since the Palestinian Authority can do nothing to protect the Arab residents of East Jerusalem, just as it has failed to stop settlement building in the West Bank, it is the international community – including Israel's new-found Arab friends – that are expected to put meaningful pressure on Tel Aviv to halt the evictions and settlement building. It must do so, if not for the sake of Palestinians, then for the sake of Israel, since the current path will lead to a repeat of last May's social strife within Israel itself, which could push toward the unraveling of the state.

—Courtesy: Arab News

Standard of development projects, Sindh first, Balochistan second

Mumtaz Ahmed Bhatti



Bilawal Zardari not only puts constant pressure on Sindh Chief Minister to improve the quality of development projects but also keeps a close eye on development projects

EVERY year, federal and provincial governments across Pakistan make development plans and start working on them at a cost of trillions of rupees. It is important to make development plans and start their construction, but maintaining the quality of development projects and bringing development projects to completion according to the set standards is a very important and difficult task. Completing development projects under construction on time is an even more difficult task. But unfortunately the set standards are not maintained and no development project is completed on time. Bureaucracy engineers, consultants and monitors play a vital role from the beginning to the completion of development projects. Above all, it is important for the rulers to have an understanding of about development projects. There was a time when there was an impression about Sindh and Balochistan that development projects

in Sindh and Balochistan start and end in files instead of being built on land. And the quality of the development projects that are made on the ground is so bad that they fall into disrepair shortly after completion. Bilawal Bhutto took note of this and nominated Syed Murad Ali Shah for the post of Chief Minister. Syed Murad Ali Shah himself is a civil engineer and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also showed seriousness in improving the quality of development projects which is why today Sindh is ahead of all other provinces in terms of quality of development projects. Once upon a time, Punjab was at the top in terms of quality of development projects. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari not only puts constant pressure on Sindh Chief Minister to improve the quality of development projects but also keeps a close eye on development projects. When I received the news that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is taking interest in improving the quality of development projects in Sindh due to which the quality of development projects is not only improving but also at the top among the provinces in terms of quality of development projects. So I went to all the provinces and made a program to visit and write on some development projects. First I went to Sindh and chose Thar Desert first. went to the rural area a little beyond Umarmot and Mithi. There were huge RO plants from where people were filling water according to their needs. Donkeys were carrying water bottles on carts. Most importantly, the pumps, motors, pipes and electric panels installed on water supply projects in Umarmot, Mithi and their rural areas were of high quality. The PPP provincial government has done a lot of work on development projects but unfortunately the Sindh government has not been able to publicize its development projects in the media. I will mention one project and I will write the rest of the projects in detail very soon. A huge Rice Canal flows from the city of Larkana. In this canal the sewage

water of the whole city was discharged into this canal and the sewage of the medical college of the same city was also discharged into this canal. The completion period set for development plans and the promises to release funds should be followed in the same way. At present, thousands of development projects across Pakistan are not being completed due to lack of funds. Development projects should be started as soon as the government has the resources. Delays in disbursement of funds to development projects lead to disaster. Excessive delays in disbursement of funds lead to revision of development funds which doubles or even increases their cost. This is also a national loss. In any project where evidence of corruption is found and corruption is proved, action must be taken against the engineer of the department but the consultant and the contractor should also be held responsible. Everyone knows that the salaries paid to engineers are insufficient. The fuel given to them for one year for movement is not enough even for two months. SDOs and sub-engineers do not have vehicles or motorbikes. To this day, no one has thought about how they would go to the sites. When you do not provide the necessary facilities and salaries to the engineers, then there will be claims to stop corruption but it will not stop corruption. If the quality of development projects in Sindh and Balochistan is improving then the governments of Sindh and Balochistan should pay full attention to development projects and take action against any bureaucrat or engineer who commits corruption without any discrimination so that the quality of development projects does not go down. The way Sindh and Balochistan have surpassed Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in terms of quality of development projects is just tremendous. Sindh is first and Balochistan is second. This is commendable.

Briefs

Govt under fire...

FROM PAGE 01

products and also perhaps the highest-ever increase in their prices in one go.

The government had last increased the petrol prices by Rs 3.01 to Rs147.83 on Jan 15. Shehbaz, the PML-N president, hit out at the PTI-led government, saying "it is snatching people's right to live". He urged the masses to "teach Prime Minister Imran Khan a befitting lesson in the next general elections". Sirajul Haq, the Jamaat-Islami head, said his party "will not remain silent on this brutality", adding that the hike was another example of the government's "brutality" as he threatened a protest march towards Islamabad.

PPP chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari criticised the rate hike and said the days of the "selected government are numbered", adding that the citizens will not accept it at any cost. Bilawal also said the long march planned by his party on Feb 27 will hold the government accountable for its policies. PML-N's Ishaq Dar noted the rate hike was unaffordable for the public, saying it was the result of a "dictated devaluation in Pakistani rupee". Meanwhile, PPP's Nafisa Shah questioned how people would make their ends meet after the steep hike. Another PPP leader Naz Baloch, formerly a PTI member, said the price surge would directly result in a new high in inflation.

The decision for the unprecedented hike was announced yesterday by the Ministry of Finance after Prime Minister Imran Khan agreed to raise a levy on all petroleum products by Rs4 per litre to honour the commitment made with the IMF for smooth continuation of the ongoing Extended Fund Facility (EFF). However, the GST rate on all these products was kept unchanged at zero. Petrol and HSD are two major products that generate most of the revenue for the government because of their massive and yet growing consumption in the country. Average petrol sales are touching 750,000 tonnes per month against the monthly consumption of around 800,000 tonnes of HSD. The sales of kerosene and LDO are generally less than 11,000 and 2,000 tonnes per month, respectively.

NATO skeptical...

FROM PAGE 01

showed military units, including tanks and artillery, crossing a bridge from Crimea — the Ukrainian peninsula occupied by Russia since 2014 — to the Russian mainland.

Distrust from the West But observers and Western leaders remain skeptical of Russian claims and have warned that Russia could still invade its southern neighbor. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg warned at a press conference on Wednesday that "Russia retains the ability of a full-fledged invasion of Ukraine," and expressed skepticism about the mixed messages from Russia.

"What we see is a very strong Russian military presence at the border with Ukraine, but we also see a message from Moscow that they will give diplomacy a chance," he said. Stoltenberg also pointed out that the number of Russian forces at the Ukrainian border "continues to increase." He added that in the past, Russia has moved lots of troops and heavy equipment into an area and then withdrawn the soldiers, but not the equipment, leaving the option of a rapid return open. The sentiment was mirrored by EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday who accused Moscow of sending "conflicting signals."

"NATO has not yet seen signs of any Russian troop reduction" despite Moscow's announcements, she said, but added that "We saw signs of hope yesterday... now deeds have to follow those words." US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that US intelligence has yet to verify the claims of previous withdrawals. The UK's Defense Secretary Ben Wallace reiterated the doubt over Russian claims on Wednesday morning, telling Times Radio: "We haven't seen any evidence at the moment of that withdrawal."

EU, WB ink accord on assistance to Azerbaijan

The official emphasized that this program will run until 2024 and will address issues such as climate change, the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental protection, and others

NEWS DESK

BAKU: On February 16, the European Union (EU) and the World Bank (WB) signed a grant agreement for technical assistance to the Azerbaijani government in Baku. The document was signed by Sarah Michael, the World Bank's representative in Baku, and Peter Michalko, the head of the EU delegation to Azerbaijan.

The agreement has a three-year term and a cost of \$5.2 million. It establishes four priority areas of EU activity in Azerbaijan, as well as five national priorities for Azerbaijan.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Peter Michalko stated that for the first time in Azerbaijan, the World Bank and the EU have pooled their resources to support the country's government.

He noted that this document will be aimed at the technical support for the Azerbaijani government in accordance with its strategic priorities. "It will also contribute to the achievement of the Azerbaijani government's corresponding goals," he said, adding that "this initiative appears as a result of the long-term cooperation between Azerbaijan and the EU, and we



are confident that our cooperation will be positive and lasting."

The official emphasized that this program will run until 2024 and will address issues such as climate change, the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, environmental protection, and others.

It is also planned to support Azerbaijan in the business sectors, the creation of smart cities and villages, assisting women's busi-

ness, introducing innovations in the country and a number of other spheres, the head of the EU delegation to Azerbaijan added. Moreover, Michalko stated that all this work will help reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business and business sector, as well as increase competitiveness in the Azerbaijani market. "Our grant agreement serves the national development priorities of Azerbaijan

adopted up to 2030," he said. Michalko said that the EU has recently allocated two million euros for business development and inclusiveness in Azerbaijan. Michalko stated that the EU has allocated euros 2.5 million to Azerbaijan for demining of its liberated territories. He stressed that the EU will continue to support the Azerbaijani government in the demining of the liberated territories. "Besides, we

also provide support to Azerbaijan in raising awareness of the population about the mine threat," he said. The official added that the EU Delegation is working with the Azerbaijani government to secure additional funding. First Deputy Economy Minister El-nur Aliyev noted that the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and the EU exceeded \$20.1 billion in 2021.



LAHORE: A view of match between Multan Sultans and Karachi. Sultans won by 7 wickets — DNA

PCB impose fine on Cutting, Sohail for breaching code of conduct



SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Ben Cutting of Peshawar Zalmi and Quetta Gladiators' Sohail Tanvir have both been fined 15 per cent of their match fees for breaching a Level 1 offence of the HBL PSL Code of Conduct in separate incidents during their side's match in the HBL Pakistan Super League 2022 on Tuesday. Both the players were found to have violated Article 2.6 of the HBL PSL Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "using a gesture that is obscene, offensive or insulting during a PSL Match".

The incident involving Cutting happened in the penultimate over of Zalmi's innings

when the batter, after hitting the bowler for a third consecutive six, made inappropriate gestures using his fingers.

As regards Sohail, he made similar gestures after catching Cutting off Naseem Shah on the first ball of the final over.

Match referee Ali Naqvi: "Such type of inappropriate gestures have no space in this great sport. The players need to always understand and remember their on and off the field responsibilities as they are role models and behaviour like this sends out a wrong message to the younger generation of cricketers. The HBL PSL 2022 is being played in good, positive spirits and I would like to see the players continue to fight hard inside the field of play but at the same time to remain within the parameters of the spirit of the game." Both Cutting and Sohail pleaded guilty to the offences and accepted the sanctions proposed to be imposed by Ali Naqvi and, as such, there was no need for a formal hearing. The charges were levelled by on-field umpires Michael Gough and Rashid Riaz, third umpire Asif Yaqoob and fourth umpire Waleed Yaqoob.

All first-time offences of Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official warning and/or imposition of a fine of up to 25 per cent of the applicable match fee.

Foreign players frustrated with strict bio-bubble life

LAHORE: The foreign players part of the HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) season seven are now left frustrated with the strict protocols of bio-bubble set up by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Islamabad United's Alex Hales and Quetta Gladiators' Ben Duckett pulled out of the remainder of the HBL PSL 7 due to bubble fatigue. Others have asked to provide some more facilities in an open-air environment. Several Pakistan players are also unhappy that they are confined to the hotel and stadium and families

are also not allowed to stay with them. PCB has set strict bio-bubble protocols for HBL PSL 7 as they faced postponements in the last two editions of the league due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The entire hotel had been booked in Karachi while a separate wing of the hotel in Lahore is reserved for PSL. The tournament has been going smoothly thus far. Players took part in golf sessions in Karachi while Qalandars organised dinner in a safe environment, however, no activity has taken place in Lahore yet. — DNA



BEIJING: Pakistani athlete Karim Muhammad participating in Men's Slalom at Beijing Winter Olympics-2022. — DNA

EU should 'get rid of' Russian gas: EU chief

"We must diversify our energy sources, to get rid of the dependency of Russian gas, and heavily invest in renewable energy sources"

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: The EU must "get rid of" Russian gas, the head of the European Commission said on Wednesday. Speaking to a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, Ursula von der Leyen criticized Russia for "weaponizing the energy issue" in its conflict with Ukraine and the EU. Arguing that Moscow had tarnished its reputation as a credible energy supplier since Gazprom restricted natural gas supplies to Europe despite high demand, von der Leyen noted that the EU has since stepped up efforts to diversify its energy imports, securing more liquefied natural gas supplies from international partners. She also underlined that the bloc possessed enough gas reserves for the winter in case Russia disrupts the supply.

"We must diversify our energy sources, to get rid of the dependency of Russian gas, and heavily invest in renewable energy sources," she said, calling the bloc to draw lessons from the current crisis with Russia over Ukraine. Turning to the rising tensions between Russia on one side and Ukraine and the West on the other, von der Leyen said: "Ukraine today is a stronger, freer, and more sovereign country than in 2014. This is precisely why the Kremlin is threatening it again," she asserted.

Von der Leyen said Moscow has been sending "conflicting

signals" over the past two days by announcing the withdrawal of some of its troops from border regions, even as its lawmakers voted in favor of recognizing the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine as independent. She called on Moscow to de-escalate tensions with deeds and not just words. Charles Michel, the President of the European Council, also addressed EU lawmakers on the issue. He explained that EU and NATO officials were in daily con-



tact "working at a level of intensity and quality never seen before." Michel called on Russia to find the "courage" to choose diplomacy over conflict and warned that Moscow would have to face "massive consequences" in case of an invasion against Ukraine. Michel, who presides over the meetings of EU leaders, also promised that EU heads of state and government would discuss the latest security developments on the margins of an upcoming EU-African Union summit starting on Thursday and would "declare their support for the Ukrainian people." In 2014, Moscow began to support separatist forces in eastern Ukraine against the central government, a policy that it has maintained in the past seven years.

The US, with its European allies, has been warning since last November that Russia is preparing for aggression against Ukraine after having amassed over 100,000 troops and heavy equipment in and around its neighbor. Russia has denied it is preparing to invade and accused Western countries of undermining its security through NATO's expansion towards its borders. On Tuesday, Russia announced that some of its troops in the western and southern military districts have started returning to garrisons. The Russian lower chamber of parliament, the State Duma, voted on the same day for the recognition of Ukraine's separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent states.

Japan pledges US\$ 3.45m...

FROM PAGE 01

Mr. Qazi Saleem Ahmed Khan, Director HR & HA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Ms. Mio Sato, IOM Chief of Mission in Pakistan.

As a remittance-dependent economy and a country hosting some 3 million Afghans, migration continues to play a key role in Pakistan's development and constitutes a key priority for the Government in the forthcoming period, which is committed to strengthening overall migration management, as evidenced through various programmes and policies.

The support of the Government of Japan will enable IOM to contribute to the Government of Pakistan's efforts to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration, through implementation of efficient and effective border and migration management practices. Under the project, IOM will provide specialized and tailored capacity building support to immigration and border officials on effective management of borders, supplemented by the provision of document verification technology, and infrastructure and IT equipment at key points of entry. Efforts will also include training on identification, screening, and referral of victims of trafficking and vulnerable smuggled migrants.

"Migration is a multi-faceted issue in Pakistan, presenting a number of challenges and opportunities. It is only through holistic approaches that meaningful progress will be made towards comprehensive migration management in the country, efforts towards which IOM remains committed" said Mio Sato, IOM Chief of Mission in Pakistan. "I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Japan for its steadfast support for IOM's efforts in Pakistan, as well as the Ministry of Interior of Pakistan, with which we have enjoyed close cooperation for a number of years." "The Government of Japan is ready to support Pakistan in promoting peace and security through this project in partnership with IOM. We view a safe and secure environment as a fundamental requirement for anyone to enjoy prosperity and peace. Improving migration management and protection is key to achieving such outcomes, and we look forward to this collaborative effort with MoI and IOM," said H.E. Mr. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan.

PM Imran directs to...

FROM PAGE 01

Dr. Yasmin Rashid called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. During meeting, issues regarding construction of new hospital in province were discussed while briefing was given about great response to Naya Pakistan National Health Card in province. Prime Minister directed to speed up implementation on all ongoing projects for ensuring provision of best possible health care facilities to public.

He also directed to create public awareness about benefits of Health Card and their effective use.

Meanwhile, Punjab Minister for Local Government Mian Mahmood-ur-Rasheed also called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Lahore today. Strategy for forthcoming local bodies elections was discussed during the meeting.

Govt to introduce...

FROM PAGE 01

taken steps to improve revenue collection through broadening of tax base, capturing retail sales, single window operations as well as track and trace system.

He said efforts are being made to complete the remaining prior actions under the capital markets development programme. Speaking on this occasion, Tariq Niazi said Asian Development Bank is extending full technical support to Pakistan for successful implementation of various programs. He appreciated Pakistan's efforts for improvement in social and economic sectors. He re-affirmed Bank's commitment to continue support for the implementation of structural reforms in future.

Briefs

Sudan summons 4 envoys over participation in protests

KHARTOUM: Sudan has summoned four ambassadors over the participation of their diplomatic vehicles in protests in the country, according to local media on Wednesday. Al-Sudani newspaper said the foreign ministry summoned the ambassador of an Arab country and three western envoys, without identifying them. The ministry informed the ambassadors of its protest over the participation of diplomatic vehicles belonging to them in demonstrations in the capital Khartoum. The newspaper pointed out that the Arab ambassador apologized to the Sudanese government, after he explained that one of the drivers in the embassy had used the car without their knowledge. There was no immediate comment from the Sudanese Foreign Ministry on the report, but on Jan. 27, the ruling Sovereign Council considered that the activities of some diplomatic missions in Khartoum "contradict diplomatic norms and violate the country's sovereignty." Since last October 25, Sudan has witnessed protests in response to exceptional measures taken by army chief Gen. - APP

Anger in UK over Prince Andrew's settlement

WEB DESK

LONDON: Disgraced British royal Prince Andrew was urged Wednesday to "live out his retirement in ignominy" after reportedly settling a sexual assault lawsuit for a whopping £12 million (\$16.3 million, 14.3 million euros). The lawyer for US accuser Virginia Giuffre said on Tuesday that both parties had settled out of court, sparing Andrew the public humiliation of a trial. The details were not revealed.

Giuffre, 38, has said she had sex with Andrew when she was 17 and a minor under US law, after meeting him through US financier Jeffrey Epstein. He took his own life in prison while awaiting trial for sex crimes.

The prince, 61, has not been criminally charged and has denied the allegations. Mark Stephens, a media specialist at law firm Howard Kennedy, told AFP that Andrew had "preserved some measure of dignity for the wider royal family" by agreeing to settle. But, Stephens added, "he's not going to see the light of day in public service ever again". The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that Andrew was to pay £10 million to Giuffre and £2 million to a charity for victims of sex trafficking. His team told AFP they would not comment on the contents of the deal.

The deal raised questions of who is footing the bill for the perennially cash-strapped prince, who is said to be selling a Swiss ski chalet at a knockdown price to help meet his US legal bills.

18 killed in Brazil

BRASILIA: At least 18 people were killed in mudslides and floods in Brazil as torrential rains swept through a mountainous region of Rio de Janeiro, emergency officials said. Rio de Janeiro's Fire Department said in a statement that over 180 soldiers were engaged in a search and rescue mission in the city of Petropolis, north of Rio de Janeiro.

At least 25.8 cm (10.1 inches) of rain fell in Petropolis on Tuesday in what corresponds to the same quantity that fell within the past 30 days combined. The heavy rains left "a high number of incidents and victims," according to the Petropolis city hall. Authorities are concerned that fatalities will rise significantly in the area, which witnessed hundreds of deaths from heavy rainfall in 2011, according to a report in Sky News. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who is on an official trip to Russia, said on Twitter that he has instructed the delivery of immediate support to the affected communities. "May God comfort the family members of the victims," he added. - APP

Ukraine marks Unity Day to defy Russia invasion fear

In a televised address, Zelenskiy said Ukrainians were united around a common desire "to live in peace, happily, in a family, children with parents"



KYIV: Ukrainians raised national flags and played the country's anthem on Wednesday to show unity against fears of a Russian invasion that Western powers have said could be imminent. The yellow and blue banner fluttered outside schools, hospitals and many shops to mark "Unity Day," a holiday President Volodymyr Zelenskiy created this week after Russia massed troops near Ukraine's borders. Russia has denied it will invade, but has warned it could take unspecified "military-technical" action if its security demands, includ-

ing restrictions on NATO, are not met. On Kyiv's main Khreshchaty boulevard, where flags decorated government offices, it was business as usual for many. "Just a normal day, but these flags are here for a purpose, to show we fear no one. They did not scare us," said Mykola, who operates a small coffee stand in the capital. A loudspeaker at a local government office blared patriotic songs, while television and government YouTube channels broadcast speeches and rousing reminders of Ukraine's nationhood.

"Everyone wants to scare us and we are here to stay," said Ludmila, a pensioner, who wore a tiny Ukrainian flag in the lapel of her coat. At Kyiv's Olympic stadium, dozens of people unfolded a 200-meter-long Ukrainian flag, waving it to the beat of patriotic music. In a televised address, Zelenskiy said Ukrainians were united around a common desire "to live in peace, happily, in a family, children with parents." "No one can love our home as we can. And only we, together, can protect our home," he said. Zelenskiy



was later due to inspect military drills in Rivne and fly to the eastern Donbass region to meet with serving troops. Zelenskiy, himself an active social media user, called on Ukrainians to post pictures and videos of the Ukrainian flag and add hashtags. On Instagram, users posted under #UnityDay. "Today we have proved, that we Ukrainians are a united nation, united people," said Pavlo Horin, an official with the state Institute of Family and Youth Policy. Zelenskiy has long said that, while he believes Russia is threatening to attack his

country, the likelihood of an imminent invasion has been overstated by Western allies, responding to Moscow's efforts to intimidate Ukraine and sow panic. Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Zelenskiy's chief of staff, said this week the president had chosen Feb. 16 as the patriotic holiday partly ironically, in response to media reports an invasion could happen on Wednesday. The Russian defence ministry said it was returning some troops to their bases after exercises. The United States however, said there were signs more

troops were on their way. U.S. President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that more than 150,000 Russian troops were currently deployed near Ukraine. Hours after Moscow's announcement of a withdrawal, Ukraine said defence ministry online networks and two banks were overwhelmed by a cyber attack. Hackers were still bombarding the defence ministry websites on Wednesday, the ministry said. Although Kyiv did not name who was behind the incident, a statement suggested it was pointing the finger at Russia. - Agencies

Vietnam to re-open to tourists after two-year closure

WEB DESK

HANOI: Vietnam will re-open to international tourists on March 15 after a two-year border closure due to the pandemic, the government said Wednesday. The Southeast Asian nation of 97 million people largely closed itself in March 2020 - a move that clobbered its burgeoning tourism sector which was worth \$32 billion a year before Covid. Authorities said in a statement Wednesday they would begin issuing visas and accepting foreign arrivals from the middle of next month. The announcement comes a day after the communist country lifted all restrictions on international flights. The government has slowly eased pandemic curbs in recent months, with visitors trickling back in since November under a bubble arrangement to play golf at resorts. Tourists must be fully vaccinated and produce a negative coronavirus test before departure and upon arrival. Each traveller must also buy Covid-19 medical insurance coverage worth \$10,000, the government statement said. It is unclear whether people entering Vietnam will have to abide by the country's three-day quarantine rule in hotels or homes.

Sri Lanka aims to boost imports

COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan government has appointed special committees to boost imports from China, Japan and the Middle East to get essential food items, raw materials required for export-oriented industries and industrial goods into the country, local media reported Wednesday. Cabinet spokesman and Mass Media Minister Dulas Alahapperuma was quoted by the media as saying that suggestions were made to appoint separate committees to hold discussions with the key import countries in a collective manner. Alahapperuma said Foreign Minister Gamini Lakshman Peiris has been appointed to head the committees. Trade Minister Bandula Gunawardena, Minister of Industries Wimal Weerawansa and Ministers Ramesh Pathirana were instructed to discuss import matters with China.

Azerbaijan, Pakistan eye strengthening energy co-op



DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov and Pakistani ambassador Bilal Hayee have discussed the opportunities for

strengthening energy co-operation between the two countries, the Energy Ministry has reported. During the meeting, the parties emphasized the special importance of developing bilateral cooperation

and expanding partnership. They talked about mutual investment opportunities in the energy sector as well as supplying liquefied natural gas and petrochemical products to Pakistan. Renewable energy sources

in liberated territories, as well as wind energy potential in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea, were also discussed. Moreover, Pakistani companies were invited to participate in renewable energy projects. They also noted the importance of the joint working group for the development of energy cooperation within the framework of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission on Cooperation. Azerbaijan and Pakistan cooperate in various fields of economy. The relations between the two countries date back to 1991. Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. The trade turnover between the two countries totaled \$11.7 million in 2021.

Bappi Lahiri: King of Bollywood disco dies at 69

NEW DELHI:

Indian music composer Bappi Lahiri, who was known for his groovy disco tunes and eye-catching fashion style, has died at the age of 69. Lahiri, who recovered from Covid in April last year, was in hospital for the past month. He died on Tuesday. His funky, foot-stomping music had Indians fall in love with disco and had an entire country dancing to his tunes. Politicians, cricketers and Bollywood stars have mourned his death, with many remembering their favourite songs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was saddened by Lahiri's death. "His demise leaves a big void in the world of Indian music," Mr Modi tweeted. "Bappi Da will be remembered for his versatile singing and lively nature." Fondly known as "Bappi Da", Lahiri is credited for getting the disco ball spinning in India. His music from the movie Disco Dancer introduced a new form of freeform dancing in Bollywood. It also turned actors like Mithun Chakraborty into icons, whose groovy moves to the bouncing synths, immortalised him as a dancing legend. Lahiri composed songs for several other hit Bollywood flicks such as Himmatwala, Sharaabi, Adventures of Tarzan, Dance Dance, Satyamev Jayate, Shola Aur Shabnam, among others. - DNA



AMSTERDAM: Pakistan ambassador to Netherlands Suljuk Mustansar Tarar met with Director Protocol and Host Country Affairs at Dutch MFA Dominique Kuhling and discussed Pakistan-Netherlands relations and recent high level interactions between the two countries. - DNA

UK's tough balancing act on Russian curbs

NEWS DESK

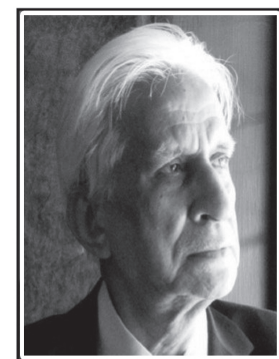
LONDON: If President Vladimir Putin invades Ukraine, Russian oligarchs will have "nowhere to hide," British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss warned earlier this month, adding that the Kremlin would pay "a heavy price" for an invasion. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has called for new powers to sanction individuals and entities linked to the Kremlin. For years, however, critics have been unsuccessful in trying to root out Russian investors and Putin allies from the British capital. Dubbed "Londograd," it's where Russian oligarchs have long sunk their billions

and become closely intertwined with the financial world. 'Moscow's gold' A 2018 report by the Foreign Affairs Select Committee on Russian oligarch money was aptly called "Moscow's Gold. Russian Corruption in the UK." It came to the conclusion that for the government to ignore "London's role in hiding the proceeds of Kremlin-connected corruption risks signaling that the UK is not serious about confronting the full spectrum of President Putin's offensive measures." "We have again to address the issue of the dirty money in the UK," said committee chairman and conservative lawmaker Tom Tugendhat, a popular interview partner these

days, in an interview The Guardian in January. He plans to put the issue back on the agenda in the House of Commons and wants to know why the government hasn't taken any action. In an interview with the BBC, he stressed that "Britain has a responsibility to act because of London's global role in money laundering." Those comments haven't endeared Tugendhat to members of his Conservative Party. Since Boris Johnson took office in 2019, the Tories have received about 2.4 million (\$ 2.7 million) from Russian donors, according to official figures. Changes in legislation, which would have allowed for more transparency in real estate purchases in

order to make money laundering more difficult, have stalled for years. Real estate worth up to \$2 billion has been financed with dubious Russian money, according to Transparency International, an anti-corruption organization. A UK documentary showed how unscrupulous brokers in London purchased properties worth millions with suspected slush money. Russia expert Ben Judah, a journalist who worked on the documentary "From Russia With Cash," said he wanted to "expose how easy it is to launder money in London" and also to show the corrosive impact on Britain's elites, who are turning a blind eye to the corruption.

CONDOLENCE



APNS expresses profound grief over the sad demise of veteran publisher and senior colleague

Mr. Ghulam Akbar

Publisher and Chief Editor

Daily Al Akhbar and Daily National Herald Tribune.

May Allah the Almighty rest his soul in eternal peace

and grant courage to the family to bear the loss.



All Pakistan Newspapers Society

Briefs

FM inaugurates 8th meeting of the Istanbul Process

STAFF REPORTER



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Mahmood Qureshi inaugurated the 8th meeting of the Istanbul Process, themed "10th anniversary of UN Human Rights Council resolution 16/18: Looking Back and Moving Forward."

The meeting is being hosted on a virtual platform by Pakistan from Geneva. In his key-note address, the Foreign Minister highlighted that securitization of state policies, deployment of incendiary rhetoric by public office holders, and misuse of social media platforms as the main drivers of the growing incidents towards religious intolerance, discrimination and violence worldwide.

The Foreign Minister also presented a three-pronged preventive and action-oriented strategy as a way forward to prevent and counter these contemporary menaces: (a) reviewing discriminatory state laws, policies and practices; (b) promoting inter-faith harmony, tolerance and peaceful co-existence, while building legal deterrence against hate speech; and (iii) concluding an international instrument that prohibits dissemination of ideas and expressions which incite acts of religious intolerance and hatred leading to violence.

The Foreign Minister of Turkey, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary General, the United Kingdom Minister of State for the United Nations (UN), the United States Under-Secretary for Democracy and Human Rights, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, President of the UN Human Rights Council, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and High Representative for UN Alliance of Civilizations also delivered remarks during the opening segment.

Pakistani-American appointed US special rep

WASHINGTON: Dilawar Syed, a Pakistani-American businessman and entrepreneur, has been appointed US State Department's new Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs, the department's spokesman announced.

"Special Representative Syed brings a strong background in business and entrepreneurship, having built global enterprises in the fields of technology, healthcare, and business services," the announcement read. Syed immigrated to the United States from Pakistan as a college student to attend the College of Wooster in Ohio. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in economics and computer science from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Business Administration from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. Syed has been an entrepreneur for 20 years; he has built and run companies in the fields of software, consumer, and now health care and artificial intelligence. - APP

Journalist Mohsin Baig arrested

ISLAMABAD: Journalist Mohsin Baig was arrested following a raid by the Federal Investigation Agency's (FIA) cybercrime wing, Geo News reported on Wednesday, citing his son. The journalist has been critical of the government's policies and used to appear on TV talk shows as an analyst. The FIA cybercrime wing raided the journalist's house in the federal capital today, along with the police, and took him into custody. Speaking to Geo News, Baig's son said that FIA officials in plainclothes came to their house earlier today and arrested his father.

"Initially, we thought that they (FIA personnel) are thieves and opened aerial fire, but later they introduced themselves as law enforcers. We also asked them to show arrest warrants but they didn't have any. Meanwhile, a police party also came to our house." The FIA reportedly "faced resistance" during the raid and "dragged" the journalist to a van. According to a press release issued by the investigation agency, the FIA raided Baig's house in F8 on the complaint of Minister for Communications Murad Saeed. The statement further mentioned that the FIA conducted the raid after obtaining a search and seizure warrant from court. "During the raid, Mohsin Baig and his son and servants directly fired at the FIA team and made two officials hostage," the press release said. It added that Baig was arrested after he ran out of bullets and was taken to Margalla police station where legal proceedings are underway. - APP

Serena Hotels, EHL collaboration to promote hospitality sector

Ambassador of Switzerland Benedict de Cerjat says this collaboration ensure world class training; Aziz Boolani thanks the Swiss ambassador

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland Benedict de Cerjat has said EHL was founded in 1893 and is considered as the first hospitality management school in the world. The ambassador termed partnership between Serena Hotels and EHL very important. The ambassador expressed these views on the occasion of a dinner he hosted for the visiting faculty members of the EHL. Ambassador Cerjat said Serena Hotel is one of the best hotels adding he had visited almost all properties country wide. The partnership between Serena Hotels and EHL will not only bring world class standard in hospitality training in Pakistan but it is also in line with the government vision to promote tourism and service sector in Pakistan. Aziz Boolani CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia while speaking on the occasion thanked the Swiss ambassador hosting the dinner. Aziz Boolani said only a few people knew that Serena Hotels was a Swiss company registered in Switzerland. He said, Serena Hotels Pakistan collaboration with EHL is the right step to develop talents at the middle and senior levels. Jochen De Peuter, a Consultant at EHL, expressed his gratitude to the Ambassador of Switzerland for hosting him and his colleague. He added, "Today people are using their screens more and more. Be it mobile phones or surfing the Internet, streaming or holding teleconferences on Zoom. So, what we did, we added digitalization in the module of this session hence now e-tourism makes much more sense as compared to two years ago. At EHL we always think from the customer's perspective and this is a part of our philosophy."



Bilawal urges restoration of student unions

Says hatred and extremism on the rise due to the absence of students unions

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari Wednesday demanded the restoration of student unions across the country after Sindh passed a bill to restore the bodies. "A new leadership will emerge through this nursery [...] as student unions played an integral part in ending the dictatorship. The role of students in the struggle against (dic-

tator) Zia-ul-Haq was historic," he said while addressing an event in the provincial capital. Emphasising the need for students unions, he said hatred and extremism were on the rise in society and this was due to the absence of students unions - which were banned during former dictator Gen Zia's tenure, almost four decades back. Bilawal said fees were increasing in educational institutions across the province and harassment of stu-

dents was also on the rise. The PPP chairman said that with the revival of these unions, whenever harassment incidents would be investigated, students would have their say in the matter and when an educational institution would consider a fee hike, they would have to ask the students first.

The provincial assembly unanimously passed the Sindh Students Union Bill, 2019, last week, which gave representation to students in educational institutions' syndicate, senate, and anti-harassment committees.

The bill mentioned that no student would be allowed to use or keep weapons on campus, adding that educational institutes will decide the rules and regulations related to the union two months after the bill is passed.

Turning his guns on the government, Bilawal said an "illegitimate, inept, and incompetent" regime had been "forced on the people", which had caused a crisis of poverty, unemployment, and inflation.

"An attack was launched on Pakistan's economic prosperity," the PPP chairman said. Bilawal added PPP would march to Islamabad from Karachi on February 27 in its bid to oust the incumbent PTI-led government.



US and Pakistan break ground on US Education Foundation Headquarters

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Wednesday marked a new milestone in the 75 years of the U.S.-Pakistani relationship with the groundbreaking of the first permanent headquarters for the U.S. Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP). U.S. Embassy Islamabad Chargé d'affaires Angela P. Aggeler noted: "Today's ground-breaking is just the next step in the tremendous work of USEFP and each of you who are dedicated to bringing our people together through education, and eager to watch it continue for decades to come." In 1950, the United States and Pakistan officially formed a bilateral commission - now known as USEFP - to exchange Masters' and PhD students. Today, USEFP manages a wide range of educational and professional exchange programs, including the largest Fulbright Program in the world, between Pakistan and the United States, and many thousands of alumni of those programs are leaders throughout the country. Rita Akhtar, Executive Director of the USEFP, added that the Capital Development Authority's land donation to this project and the participation of iconic architect Nayyar Ali Dada were further indications of how favorably Pakistan views the opportunities afforded by U.S. higher education. The new headquarters will serve as a state-of-the-art facility for managing U.S. government-funded exchange programs, such as the Fulbright program, and for the Islamabad advising center of Education USA, the official U.S. government resource for all students interested in pursuing education opportunities in the United States. - DNA



'Property laws vital for women empowerment'

The president, addressing the launching ceremony of an Awareness Campaign on Enforcement of Women Property Rights Legislation in Pakistan, said the financial inclusion of women was also equally essential for their empowerment and self-dependence

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Wednesday said the true implementation of laws on women property rights across the country was inevitable for their empowerment, by doing away with the cultural traditions contradicting the Islamic injunctions.

The president, addressing the launching ceremony of an Awareness Campaign on Enforcement of Women Property Rights Legislation in Pakistan, said the financial inclusion of women was also equally essential for their empowerment and self-dependence.

Emphasizing the encouragement of women to go into business, the president said in today's era of modern technology, the women could also establish their businesses while being at home. He repeatedly emphasized the role of media and Ulema to help change the society's attitude towards the provision of women property rights which

had been guaranteed under Islam as well Pakistan's constitution.

The president said by incorporating awareness messages in their dramas and other programs, the media could contribute to aware the women about their rights and the tools available for their protection. Similarly, the Ulema

could also utilize their pulpit to convey the message effectively and rectify the cultural traditions depriving the women of their rights. Referring to the lynching incidents in Sialkot and Mian Channu, the president said the perpetrators of such incidents were in fact nave to the teachings of Islam which never al-

lowed the mobs to hold courts on the roads and kill even a mentally deranged person on charges of blasphemy. President Alvi said though Islam had guaranteed women property rights 1400 years ago but it could not be materialized in our society for being influenced by the cultural traditions.

The president spoke high of Balochistan High Court's verdict of not allowing the transfer of women inherited property to anyone prior to her ownership. He also committed to taking up the matter with the Balochistan chief minister to adopt the women property laws being implemented in Islamabad, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said the awareness campaign would also guide the deprived women approach the ombudsmen offices for their rights and the number of such women could be in millions. President Alvi also urged the Ombudsmen to publicise their decisions which would aware the women about the remedies available for their property rights.



Iran calls for US 'political statement' on nuclear deal

TEHRAN: Iran urged the US Congress on Wednesday to issue a "political statement" that Washington will stay committed to a possible agreement in Vienna talks to restore the 2015 nuclear deal. The accord offered Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme, but then US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from it in 2018 and reimposed heavy sanctions. Iran's FM Hossein Amir-Abdollahian urged the US guarantee on the so-called JCPOA in an interview with the Financial Times published on his ministry's website. "As a matter of principle, public opinion in Iran cannot accept as a guarantee the words of a head of state, let alone the United States, due to the withdrawal of Americans from the JCPOA," he said. He stressed to propose to Western parties that "at least their parliaments or parliament speakers, including the US Congress, can declare in the form of a political statement their commitment to the agreement and return to the JCPOA implementation". - DNA