



Islamabad POST

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EU, US will not accept breakup of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Borrell

Detailed News On Page-07

Pakistan least costly among 139 countries

Detailed News On Page-08



Amir Khan considering retirement

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Queen Elizabeth gets Covid

DNA

LONDON: Britain's 95-year-old Queen Elizabeth II tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday but her symptoms are "mild" and she intends to continue with light duties at her Windsor Castle residence, aides said. The news comes after Prince Charles, the queen's eldest son and heir, tested positive on February 10, two days after meeting his mother at Windsor. No information was given then on whether Queen Elizabeth — who this month marked 70 years on the throne — had taken any Covid tests herself. She resumed in-person audiences at the castle last week, but complained to one attendee of suffering from stiffness and was photographed holding a walking stick.

Fawad lambasts opposition

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Sunday took opposition to the task for selecting an inappropriate time to hold the so-called power show against the government in Rawalpindi where the Australian Cricket team would be playing the first test match of its tour against Pakistan. He, in a tweet, said Aussies and green shirts would be having the first cricket test series at Pakistan in 23 years. The whole nation was celebrating the revival of such cricket in the country, but it was only the "hodge-podge" opposition that felt uncomfortable and planning a so-called power show on 'rent,' he added. It may be mentioned here that the first leg of the Australian cricket team's tour to Pakistan would begin at the start of next month and the opposition has also planned a long march in the same days.

Fake news punishable offence now

Amendments in Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, (PECA) 2016, and the Elections Act, 2017 were signed by the president after the Cabinet approved them

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi signed two ordinances on Sunday making changes in the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, (PECA) 2016, and the Elections Act, 2017. Both laws were signed by the president after the Cabinet approved them. The changes made in the electronic crimes act have been made under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Ordinance, 2022. Under the ordinance, the definition of a "person" has been broadened to include any company, association, institution, organisation, authority, or any other. Furthermore, anyone found guilty of attacking a person's "identity" will now be sentenced to five years instead of three years. The ordinance also states the informant or the complainant shall be "aggrieved person, his authorised representative, or his guardian, where such person is a minor or a member of the public in respect of a public figure or a

PML-N, PPP slam PECA law

BUREAU REPORT

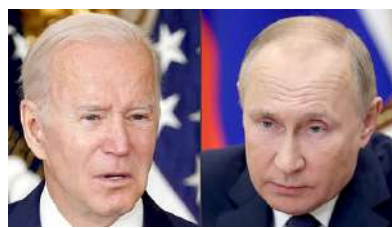
LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on Sunday rejected amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca). PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz tweeted that whatever laws the government was enacting, would be used against the government itself. "These laws are apparently being made to suppress the voice of media and opposition, but they will be used against Imran Khan and company," she said. "There should be no blame upon us for not

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Russia could attack Ukraine 'at any time'

Psaki said Biden was briefed on meetings at Munich Conference where Western representatives gathered



NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Russia could launch an attack on Ukraine "at any time," the White House reaffirmed Saturday, as Western politicians gathered in Munich to discuss the crisis. US Press Secretary Jen Psaki said President Joe Biden was due to hold a rare Sunday National Security Council meeting over Russia-Ukraine tensions, having said on Friday he was "convinced" Moscow planned to invade

Continued on Page 06

EU warns of information 'manipulation'

BRUSSELS: The EU is seeing stepped-up "manipulation" of information to support what looks like fabricated pretexts for military escalation in Ukraine, its foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned on Saturday. "The EU is extremely concerned that staged events... could be used as a pretext for possible military escalation," Borrell said in a statement on behalf of the bloc. "The EU is also witnessing an intensification of information manipulation efforts to support such objectives," he said.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed and Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noor ul Haq Qadri along with President of Religious Affairs Turkey Dr. Ali Erbas join a dinner hosted in his honor. Turkish Ambassador is also present on the occasion. — DNA

Media houses reject PECA

APNS, CPNE, PBA, PFUJ to challenge the law

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The media Joint Action Committee comprising of APNS, CPNE, PFUJ, PBA and AEMEND, issued a statement outright rejecting the draconian amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), stating it is a blatant move to stifle media independence, freedom of speech and dissenting voices. The statement further said that all media bodies will take any and all legal actions to challenge any attempt to curb media's independence and its right to raise voice against any steps to curb freedom of expression as guaranteed in the constitution. JAC will if needed oppose any and all such moves with the full might of its constituent bodies and individual members. It is evident that the Government is adamant to push through its ill conceived and draconian Agenda through various Presidential ordinances. All media bodies stand united to defend freedom of expression and peoples right to information.

'Opposition attempting for fresh deal'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Sunday said that the Opposition parties' announcement to present a no-confidence motion was another "attempt at a bargaining chip for

Continued on Page 06

5 terrorists killed, soldier martyred during IBO: ISPR

"The killed terrorists were involved in terrorist activities against security forces, target killing and kidnapping for ransom"

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Five terrorists were killed and a soldier was martyred after security forces conducted an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in North Waziristan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Sunday. According to the handout by the military's media affairs wing, security forces conducted the IBO on the reported presence of terrorists. Five terrorists were killed during "intense exchange of fire", the statement said. The ISPR identified four of the terrorists as Habib Nawaz, Waheedullah, Abdur Rehman and Muhammadullah. "Identification of [the] fifth terrorist is in progress," the ISPR

Continued on Page 06



Fazl, Zardari to discuss no-confidence motion



DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari will meet Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)

chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman on Monday (tomorrow) to discuss the no-confidence motion against the PTI-led government, well-informed sources have revealed. Sources privy to the matter said that the crucial meeting between the two leaders will be held at Fazl's residence. Matters related to the no-trust motion against the PTI government, contacts with the government's allied parties, and the country's overall political situation will be discussed in the meeting. Following the meeting, a dinner will be hosted by Fazl in honour of Zardari, the

Continued on Page 06

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LALAMUSA: Qamar Zaman Kaira PPP leader and former Information Minister, Nadeem Asghar Kaira former Chairman Municipal Committee Lalamusa and Sh. Tariq Mahmood discussing long march strategy. – DNA

UNRCO team calls on Addl Chief Secy Punjab

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHAN: The United Nations Resident Coordination Office (UNRCO)'s team headed by the Head of United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office in Pakistan, Mr Shah Nasir Khan along with Ms Mariam Iqbal and Laila Rubab Jaskani, Provincial Coordinator UNRCO Punjab, called on the Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt. (R) Saqib Zaffar here in his office. The Secretary Planning and Development South Punjab Syed Shoib Iqbal was also present in the meeting. Mr Shah Nasir Khan while briefing the Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab, said that on the request of the Government of Punjab, the United Nations Resident Coordination Office (UNRCO), has planned to facilitate a dialogue between the government and key development partners including country heads of the UN agencies and development partnership. He said the South Punjab deep dive session is aimed at bringing together the government officials of Federal, Punjab and

South Punjab and development partners for a discussion on administrative, development, and governance challenges being faced in South Punjab, and to chalk out that how development partners can provide technical and financial support for improving the development indicators of South Punjab. He said the objective and expected outcome of the session, will be aimed at discussing major challenges of South Punjab and a way forward required for addressing those challenges through the development and humanitarian interventions. Various aspects of the event management such as security and participants related matters were also discussed in the meeting. The Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab was also apprised that development partners will visit projects being implemented by the development partners or the Government for understanding of the challenges. The Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt. (R) Saqib Zaffar assured the delegation to provide all administrative support for the success of the deep dive session.



Police stations increased, yet crime rate on rise

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: The crime rate in Gujrat is on the rise, though with the approval of the Punjab government, two more police stations have started operating and total number of police stations in the district has reached 25. Street crimes such as robbery, burglary, mobile phone snatching and motorcycle theft are on the rise. According to a notification issued by the provincial home department on Jan 3, the Mangowal police check post of Kunjah police was upgraded to the police station after approval by the cabinet's sub-committee on law and order. Another police station has been set up in the Small Industries Estate

Phase-II covering most of the areas of Kunjah and Rehmania police stations. Tehsildar threatened in the court Police have booked three persons for threatening Tehsildar Kharian. It is reported that Tehsildar Kharian Mr. Mian Nazeer was conducting his revenue court proceedings on Saturday. One Ajmal Hussain resident of Pyara village and his two unidentified accomplices abused the revenue officer, attempted to snatch court files and threatened him of dire consequences. He called the police but the accused escaped from the occasion. On the complaint of Tehsildar Mr. Mian Nazeer Kharian Sadar police have registered a case against the three persons under sections 506, 186 and 228 PPC.

Kharian Press Club is a prestigious institution

Kharian Diary
Anwar Chohan

KHARIAN: Kharian Press Club has a global reputation not only in Gujrat District but also in the whole of Pakistan. For the last 25 years, this organization has been discharging its journalistic responsibilities in an efficient manner.



Proud people who are still highly educated and have professional skills are proud to be associated with this organization, whose names cannot be named individually. Some people have come to this field to patronize their illegitimate fog but I am not ashamed to say that Kharian Press Club is quite free from all these luxuries but the allegations are not surprising. I think Kharian It is important to unite the journalists of the Press Club on one platform and keep abreast of each other's journalistic activities. Everybody claims positive criticism but in practice Feeling we have 'Run out of gas' emotionally. In our Kharian Press Club, factionalism appears in the days of elections. There are usually traditions of working together. Or the individual cannot be blamed for it. Everyone has to make their own reforms which can make the environment better than before. The deployment of police in press clubs is becoming a rotten Perhaps this is also the fruit of democracy. Are doing enviable services and are playing an enviable role in conveying the voice of the people and especially the oppressed to the higher authorities. No journalist can play an effective role in his field till then Unless you can provide a better and healthier environment for your family, subscribing to Press Clubs in many other cities is a matter of honoring the journalist community and protecting their lives. There is no plot of land for the construction of the house. They are provided plots with the help of government and loans are provided on easy terms for its construction. Press Clubs are a very suitable platform to raise the voice of journalists. Kharian Press Club has been instrumental in cracking down on journalists and restoring their rights in the past and present. Has been playing and insha'Allah in the future will not only stick to its traditions but will play a better role than before.

Faisalabad Master Plan reviewed

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Master Plan 2021.41 has been sent to next forum for further approval after detailed consultation between Divisional, District administration and parliamentarians at Commissioner office today. Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain chaired a high level meeting with parliamentarians and after some recommendation the Faisalabad Master Plan was approved at this level. Earlier, Divisional Commissioner briefed the house about important points of draft of Master plan prepared by Usmani & Company and informed that all required industrial, residential and future required zoning. He said that the practical suggestions of parliamentarians would included in this plan and submitted to Punjab Govt for final approval. He said that this after implementation of master plan the durable and organized development of the city will be strong. Dr. Rafe gave detail of all aspects of master plan.

390 manholes covered during last month

ISHAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: As many as 390 uncovered manholes have been covered during last month besides 23 City Council's are being made zero open manholes. This was informed during the weekly review meeting regarding implementation on public initiatives. DC Ali Shahzad informed that Zebra Crossing/speed breakers have been made out side 133 govt and 52 private schools. He further informed that District Education Authority has been sensitized to educate teachers for safe road crossing to the school child and submitted report. He said that 2252 street lights have made functional and 5 bridges have repaired during the last four week. He informed that 337 closed drains cleared and 38629 ton waste transferred to dumping site and 18 transports stands and public buildings were white washed. Green belts and play grounds are also being making rehabilitate. DC informed that 746 vehicles impounded and 1.3 mn fine was imposed to smoke emitted vehicles.

Industrialization is imperative for the economic growth

Prime Minister's recent visit to China has completed spadework for the fast track colonization of M3 and Allama Iqbal Industrial estates

ISHAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Accelerated industrialization is imperative for the sustained economic growth and in this connection the government is making serious efforts to attract maximum local and foreign investment for expeditious colonization of two well-planned industrial estates of Faisalabad, said Dr. Shahbaz Gill Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Political Communication. In a meeting with a delegation of the business community headed by Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he discussed in details the participation of Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan in scheduled "Pakistan Economic Conference" to be held from March 18-20, 2022 in Faisalabad. He said that industrial estates would play a major role in materializing the PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) manifesto of creating maximum job opportunities in addition to the economic revival which was facing a steep decline due to the loot and plunder and ill-conceived policies of the previous governments. He said that these industrial estates would not only attract local but also foreign investors to establish hi-tech industrial units to get maximum profit from their investment. He also underlined the need for the

relocation of Chinese industrial units under the second phase of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and said that in this connection, Prime Minister's recent visit to China has completed spadework for the fast track colonization of M3 and Allama Iqbal Industrial estates. He appreciated the idea of "Pakistan Economic Conference" particularly in the current global economic situation and said that it was an in-time step in the right direction which would also help to put the country on road to progress and prosperity. He admitted that the role of the private sector was imperative to achieve the ambitious economic goals and said that the Prime Minister is fully aware of the proactive and productive role of FCCI and is taking keen interest in the preparation of this economic event. He said that PM has already directed the concerned ministries, divisions and departments to actively participate in this conference and hopefully he (PM) would also participate in its concluding session as chief guest. He said that the ministries are already in touch with the FCCI and the concerned stakeholders while the recommendations of PEC would also help the government to formulate robust and proactive economic policies in this current domestic and global scenario. Earlier, President FCCI Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh explained in detail the fundamental aims and objectives of the

Pakistan Economic Conference along with comprehensive programs chalked to cover the problems of different sectors of the economy. He said that it is for the first time that such an economic event is arranged at Faisalabad which would not only accelerate the local economic, industrial and commercial activities but also help the government to formulate pro-industry policies in consultation with the stakeholders to catalyze the economic and industrial activities. He said that the importance of this conference has been further increased at this crucial stage as government departments have already started formulating budget proposals for the next federal budget for the financial year of 2022-2023. He said that during this conference the technical experts and economists would not only pinpoint the problems confronted by the business community but also suggest tangible and workable solutions to resolve the same within the given circumstances. During this meeting, the representatives of the Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers Association (PHMA), All Pakistan Textile Processing Mills Association (APTMA), All Pakistan Cotton Power Loom Association (APCPLA) and All Pakistan Bed-sheets and Upholstery Manufacturers Association (APBUMA) were also present in addition to the Senior Vice President Mr. Imran Mehmood and Vice President FCCI Rana Fayyaz Ahmad.



Firefighting training camp sets up in Faisalabad

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: The first civil defense firefighting training camp was set up in Faisalabad at Government Post Graduate Islamia College, Sargodha Road and training session for shopkeepers of LPG regarding the fire safety was given. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad was the chief guest on the occasion. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Qaiser Abbas Rind, Civil Defense Officer Rana Muhammad Abbas, Founder Chairman LPG Industries Association of Pakistan Irfan Khokhar, shopkeepers associated with LPG business besides Civil Defense, Rescue 1122 and other organizations were also present. During the function, the Deputy Commissioner distributed cheque worth Rs. 200,000 to the shopkeeper for the marriage of her daughter from the trust funds set up by the LPG Association and certificates to the participants of the training session. He also inspected the fire safety equipments at the stall. Addressing the function, the

Deputy Commissioner said that today is an important day in the history of the district when all the shopkeepers and officials of the association associated with the LPG business are expressing their commitment under one roof for using safety measures during working at shops. He also paid tribute to the efforts of the Founder Chairman of LPG Association and said that enforcement or roundup was not the solution to this problem. The Deputy Commissioner said that safety is a culture, lifestyle and a sense of responsibility which should be maintained at all times while the desired results can be achieved by compromising on SOPs. He emotionally referred to the tragic incidents due to LPG cylinders in some cities and said that shopkeepers should take responsibility for the use of LPG and adopt safety. The district administration would continue to patronize them. The vendors vowed to adopt safety and The Founder Chairman LPG Association thanked the Deputy Commissioner and other officers for attending the function.

Peshawar 79 corona patients under treatment

PESHAWAR: As many as 79 corona patients are under treatment in two major Peshawar Hospitals Khyber Teaching Hospital and Lady Reading Hospital, an official of the health department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said here Sunday. He said that currently 44 corona patients in Khyber Teaching Hospital and 35 corona patients at Lady Reading Hospital are under treatment. He said Khyber Teaching Hospital allotted 122 beds for corona patients. At Khyber Teaching Hospital, 28 ventilators are reserved for corona patients and four patients of Corona in Khyber Teaching Hospital are on intensive care and ventilators. – APP

Barrister Saif visits Elite Force Training Center

DNA

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif Sunday visited Elite Force Training Center and met with the Special Combat Unit consisting of commandos of the Elite Force. Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif was briefed about the performance of the Elite Force soldiers and their training sessions in different duration at the training centers. He was also briefed about the use of modern day weapons in a skillful way by the men and women commandos of the Elite Force. The officials of the Elite Force Training Center informed Barrister Saif that the soldiers are trained in different durations at the training center and Elite Force Special Combat Unit consists of men and women commandos. He was informed that 67 elite police personnel were martyred in the war against terror. He was told that the Rescue 1122 and traffic wardens are also being trained at the training center. On this occasion, the women commandos of the elite force demonstrated the use of heavy weapons. Talking to the soldiers, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said he was instructed by the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan to visit Elite Force Training Center and send his good wishes besides encourage police commandos. He was informed that world class training is being imparted to the youth at Elite Police Training Center, Nowshera. Barrister Saif while appreciating the soldiers of the Elite Force, KP for their bravery. He said, peace is restored in the province with the sacrifices of police personnel and Jawans of the security forces. He said, our security and defense is in strong hands. The people are standing with the police to suppress the enemy of the state and criminal elements, he said, adding, KP Police is one of the best forces in the world whose Jawans rendered matchless sacrifices in the war against terror.

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 Feb 06/ Uganda Army Day
 Feb 11/ Iran Revolution day
 Feb 16/ DPR Korea National Day
 Feb 16/ Lithuania National Day
 Feb 18/ Gambia National Day
 Feb 19/ Nepal Democracy Day
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De-silting of Khan Pur Dam

People asked to save water amid supply cuts

The Khanpur dam canal de-silting project started on Feb 14, would be completed till Feb 21 while the water supply to the residents would normalize during Feb 23 to Feb 25

DNA
 RAWALPINDI: The citizens have been asked to use water sparingly as the supply of water from Khanpur dam to Rawalpindi city and cantonment areas has been reduced due to ongoing de-silting project, leading to a shortage of water in many localities. The Khanpur dam canal de-silting project started on Feb 14, would be completed till Feb 21 while

the water supply to the residents would normalize during Feb 23 to Feb 25. Station Commander Rawalpindi and President Cantonment Board, Brig. Salman Nazar also visited Khanpur dam here the other day and inspected the ongoing dredging work of the Khanpur dam canal. On the occasion, Rawalpindi Cantonment Executive Officer, Imran Gulzar, Senior Engineer Attique, officers of Water and Sanitation

Agency, Capital Development Authority and other officers concerned were present. The Station Commander was briefed about the ongoing dredging work. Brig. Salman Nazar also visited Sangjani Filtration Plant. President Cantonment Board expressed satisfaction over the pace of the work and appreciated performance of the authorities concerned. Meanwhile, Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA)

Rawalpindi, Rawalpindi and Chaklala Cantonment boards urged the residents to use water judiciously in their daily routine to avoid shortage as water supply to Cantt and city areas from Khanpur dam has been decreased. According to RCB spokesman Qaiser Mehmood, the Khanpur dam canal de-silting project started on Feb 14, would be completed till Feb 21 while the water supply to the residents would

normalize during Feb 23 to Feb 25. He said the board was trying to meet water demand through tube wells. According to WASA spokesman, Rawalpindi was only being supplied four million gallons per day (MGD) of water instead of the regular supply of 9.40 MGD during the annual silt cleaning of the open water channel from Khanpur Dam which started from February 14. The project was creating a shortfall of 5.40 MGD

of water in Rawalpindi, he said and asked the citizens to use water judiciously as Rawalpindi was only being supplied four MGD of water instead of the regular supply of 9.40 MGD, 70% less. He urged the residents to avoid washing floors and cars, watering their lawns every day, and store water to avoid facing difficulties. WASA was taking measures to ensure supply from bowzers and tube wells to fulfill the needs of the locals, he added.

Admin conducts 5,224 raids in 7 tehsils

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration has conducted nearly 5,224 raids and imposed fines amounting to Rs 435,000 on 525 violators during last week. According to a district administration spokesman, the administration on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Noor Ul Amin Mengal had accelerated their ongoing operation against profiteers and hoarders. The raids were conducted in Gular Khan, Kahuta, Kalar Syedan, Kotli Sattian, Murree, Taxila, Rawalpindi City and Saddar areas. Five shops were sealed while five profiteers were also sent behind the bars, he added. The Commissioner had instructed the officers concerned that it was responsibility of the district administration to provide vegetables and other food items to the citizens at official rates. All the price magistrates were directed to remain in the field and take strict action in accordance with the law against profiteers to provide relief to the citizens. - APP



ISLAMABAD: A view of construction of district courts Islamabad. Chairman CDA visited the site on Sunday. - DNA

Holistic approach for sustainable agri growth

ISLAMABAD: In view of the increasing population and food items demand, the government is embarking on a holistic approach for sustainable agriculture growth to improve output of all major cash crops and save precious foreign exchange being incurred on their import. With special focus on enhancing per-acre yield of major crops like wheat, rice, sugarcane, cotton, maize, oil seeds and pulses; modern and innovative cultivation technologies are being introduced to maintain eco-system and depleting water and soil resources. The government has started the Prime Minister's National Agriculture Emergency Program (NAEP) worth Rs. 309 billion on cost sharing basis between the federal and provincial governments. It would transform agriculture sector with revitalizing farmers and help meet domestic food demand. "Under this program, the government has provided Rs1,514.855 million for wheat productivity enhancement, Rs313.763 million for sugarcane and Rs1,073.542 million for rice," said Javed Hammayun, Senior Joint Secretary Ministry of National Food Security and Research. "The government has also provided Rs. 482.665 million for national oil seeds enhancement program, Rs156.56 million for cage cluster development project, Rs. 486.151 million for promotion of trout farming in Northern Areas and Rs15.197 billion for different agriculture sector projects initiated under the PM NAEP," Hammayun told APP.

Over 200 open manholes covered

RAWALPINDI: The Campaign 'Maah e Safai' was in full swing here and all available resources were being utilized to make it a success while most of the faulty street lights were got repaired besides covering over 200 open manholes. According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, the authorities concerned were directed to cover all open manholes on priority basis, adding, Commissioner Rawalpindi Noor ul Amin Mengal had also directed the officers of government departments to hoist the national flag on all government offices and buildings with full respect and reverence. - APP

Furniture Industry needs to be transformed

ISLAMABAD: The furniture industry must vigorously be transformed from cottage or small scale industry to innovative industry through training, upgrading supplies and imports, establishing a wood work institute and testing laboratories of international standards. It was stated by Mian Kashif Ashfaq Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council here Sunday while talking to a delegation of hardware traders led by Ibrahim Kaleem.

He said hectic efforts must be made by promoting furniture exports by more regular participation in international shows. All this can happen if there is government will and a vision amongst furniture traders. So far, this remains to be seen he added. He said total world trade in furniture is estimated to be in the tune of \$23.2 billion, of which the share of wooden furniture is 77 percent, followed by metal furniture at 17 percent and plastic furniture at 6 percent.

He said Italy is the world's biggest exporter of furniture followed by Germany and Canada. United States is the biggest importer of wooden furniture followed by Germany and France. Mian Kashif said Pakistan's share in the international wooden furniture market is insignificant, despite the fact that the country has a history of craftsmanship and innovation in the field of wooden furniture. - APP

ANF seizes over 2784 kg drugs in 64 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan has seized 2784.293 kg drugs and 780 liters prohibited chemical worth US\$ 412.229 million internationally, arrested 59 culprits including three women, two foreign nationals and impounded 16 vehicles while conducting 64 counter narcotics operations throughout the country. According to an ANF spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 536.791 kg heroin, 1671.5 kg Hashish, 212 kg Opium, 7.12 kg Amphetamine, 258.823 kg Methamphetamine (Ice), 2.530 kg Cocaine, 491 Ecstasy Tablets (0.283 Kg), 134 Intoxicated Tablets (0.090 Kg), 95.156 kg Suspected Substance, 600 Liters Acetic Anhydride and 180 Liters Hydrogen Peroxide. ANF Balochistan recovered 760.09 kg drugs and 780 Liters prohibited chemical in 7 operations and arrested 3 accused including 2 women and seized 3 vehicle. The seized drugs comprised 495 kg Hashish, 215 kg Methamphetamine (Ice), 134 Intoxicated Tablets (0.090 Kg) and 50 kg Suspected Powder. - DNA

Tamanna Begum remembered

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: The legendary film actress Tamanna Begum was remembered on her 10th death anniversary on Sunday with tributes paid to her for rendering unforgettable services in entertainment industry. Tamanna Begum was born in Lahore and started her career from Radio Pakistan and did some theater plays as well, in the 1970s and 1980s, Tamanna Begum became very popular, reported a private news channel.

Health Card – a ray of hope for millions in Punjaba

DNA
 ISLAMABAD: Advanced healthcare, once considered to be a privilege of the affluent only, is now becoming common for all segments of society through pro-public and innovative health initiatives of the present government. With successful experience in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the government has decided to make it a nation-wide project, extending it to different cities of the Punjab province. After covering four divisions of the Punjab during first phase, the program has now been expanded to central Punjab. Prime Minister Imran Khan had recently dis-

tributed health cards among the people at Faisalabad to facilitate approximately 14.179 million persons at 2.21 million households in the division as the government desires that every resident of Punjab gets Health Card by end of March this year. "Around 110 million people in 36 districts of the Punjab will be provided health card by the end of March this year," said Punjab Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, Dr Yasmeen Rashid. "Health Card is one of our flagship programs and we are also planning to introduce outdoor services through this initiative as majority of people have expressed satisfaction with its' services,"

the minister remarked. She informed that poor people in rural and urban areas would benefit more from this facility and get treatment at hospitals of their choice amongst the provided list of health facilities. "Thousands deserving citizens have so far availed medical treatment through this facility as the dream of Prime Minister Imran Khan for providing best health facilities to people was coming true," the minister said. The second phase of providing health cards was initiated by the Prime Minister from Faisalabad a few days back where around 14 million people of over 2.5 million households would benefit from this facility.



SITUATIONS VACANT

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) intends to invites applications from suitable candidates against the following positions:

Position	Qualification & Experience
Oil Supply Chain/ Logistic Adviser	Master/Bachelor degree in Engineering/Finance/Economics/Accounts from HEC recognized University or abroad and registered with relevant academic council where required with at least 15 years of minimum relevant post qualification experience at higher positions in Oil Industry in Public/Private sectors. Experience in Pakistan's Oil Supply Chain and knowledge of matters related thereto is desired.
Refineries Adviser	Master/Bachelor degree in Chemical/Petroleum/Mechanical Engineering from HEC recognized University or abroad and registered with relevant academic council where required with at least 20 years of minimum relevant post qualification multidisciplinary experience at higher positions in Local & International Refineries, experience of Complex Refineries and Allied Operations, experience of Debottlenecking and Efficiency Improvement of Refineries, Refinery Economics, Downstream Petroleum Technologies, Oil Marketing and Environmental Studies.
LNG Adviser	Master/Bachelor degree in Engineering i.e Petroleum/Chemical/ Mechanical or relevant field from HEC recognized University or abroad and registered with relevant academic council where required with at least 15 years of minimum relevant post qualification multidisciplinary experience in LNG Technical Standards, Regulatory Compliance, Operations & Maintenance, Market Dynamics.
CNG Adviser	Master/Bachelor degree in Engineering i.e Petroleum/Chemical/ Mechanical or relevant field from HEC recognized University or abroad and registered with relevant academic council where required with at least 15 years of minimum relevant post qualification multidisciplinary experience in CNG Technical Standards, Regulatory Compliance, Operations & Maintenance, Market Dynamics.
LPG Adviser	Master/Bachelor degree in Engineering i.e Petroleum/Chemical/ Mechanical or relevant field from HEC recognized University or abroad and registered with relevant academic council where required with at least 15 years of minimum relevant post qualification multidisciplinary experience in LPG Technical Standards, Regulatory Compliance, Operations & Maintenance, Market Dynamics.
UFG Adviser	Master/Bachelor degree in Engineering i.e Petroleum/Chemical/ Mechanical or relevant field from HEC recognized University or abroad and registered with relevant academic council where required with at least 15 years of minimum relevant post qualification multidisciplinary experience in UFG Technical Standards, Regulatory Compliance, Operations & Maintenance, Market Dynamics.
Finance (Tariff) Adviser	ACA/ACMA from HEC recognized University/Institute in Pakistan or abroad and registered with relevant academic council with 15 years of minimum relevant post qualification experience in relevant field.

- Contract Term: 3 years on fixed lump sum monthly emoluments of Rs. 500,000/- to Rs. 800,000/- to be decided by the Authority on the basis of qualification & experience.
- Most suitable shortlisted candidates will be intimated/ invited for interviews, and selection will be purely on merit.
- No TA/DA will be admissible to the candidates for interview.
- The Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any application/scrap this process without assigning any reason, whatsoever.
- Please mark the envelope for the post applied.
- The applications should reach HR Department, Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority, 54-B, Blue Area, G-6, Islamabad by post/mail by **March 7, 2022.**

HR Department
 Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority,
 54-B, Fazal-e-Haq Road, Blue Area, Islamabad
 Ph: 051-9244248 **PID NO 5775/21**
 Public Service Message:
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Briefs

Six gamblers held during crackdown

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested six gamblers and recovered bet money Rs 37,000, 4 mobile phones, 2 motorcycles from their possession over fighting cock during crackdown here Sunday, informed police spokesman. Kalar syedan police conducted a raid and arrested five gamblers identified as Mohammad Afnan, Bilal Tariq, Mohammad Zahid, Umar Arshad and Mohammad Usman besides recovering Rs 35,000, 3 mobile phones from their possession. Similarly, Pirwadi police held IsrarAbbasi and recovered Rs 2,000 and a mobile phone from his possession. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. City Police Officer (CPO) Omar Saeed Malik appreciated the performance of police teams for arresting anti social elements adding that gambling is root cause of crime and strict action must be taken against such criminals.

41 beggars arrested during ongoing crackdown

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police, in its crackdowns on professional beggars, arrested 41 beggars to discourage the menace of begging and avoid risk of road accidents due to jaywalking of tramps. On the directives of the in-charge Beggars Squad, along with their respective teams, took action against the professional beggars, and detained them in different police stations of Rawalpindi city, said the Rawalpindi Police spokesperson. On this occasion, SSP Operations Waseem Riaz said the special beggar squad was working hard to overcome the increasing number of professional beggars. "The professional beggars stand on various highways and squares of Rawalpindi city and not only affect the flow of traffic but also increase risk of accidents. Therefore, the public is also requested that do not serve alms to them as discouraging such factors will not only improve the society but also the flow of traffic," he said. - APP

Two held for illegally filling gas cylinders

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Two persons were held for refilling gas here Sunday and seized filling instruments from their possession. According to detail, Jatli police conducted raid and arrested a person namely Azad Ahmed on the charges of filling gas illegally besides recovering instruments from his custody. Similarly, Mandra Police held ShamsulHasnain on same charges. Police have registered separate cases against both of them and started investigation. SP SaddarZanir Cheema has directed to launch crackdown against the illegal business of refilling gas cylinders adding that operation should continue against such criminals without any discrimination.

ICCI launches free ambulance service for members

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafqat said that the ICCI was a very vibrant trade body of the country and its services for the welfare of the business community are commendable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has launched a free ambulance service for the welfare of its members. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafqat along with President ICCI Muhammad Shakeel-Munir formally inaugurated the ambulance service during a ceremony at ICCI. ICCI Senior Vice President Jamshed Akhtar Sheikh, Vice President Muhammad Fahim Khan, Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik, MianShaukat Masood, Muhammad Ejaz-Abbasi, Zafar Bakhtawari, Baser Daud, Tahir Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Saif-ur-Rehman Khan, Raja Abdul Majeed, Sardar Tahir a large number of business community were present at the event. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafqat said that the ICCI was a very vibrant trade body of the



country and its services for the welfare of the business community are commendable. He said that the problems of board tax and trade license for traders would be resolved soon and double taxation was being abolished especially in trade license. He said that security cameras were being installed in the commercial centres to further improve the security situation, which would be linked to the Safe

City project. He said that during Covid-19 pandemic, the business community has fully cooperated with the district administration, which is commendable. He said that with the help of the business community, Islamabad has been saved from many crises. He appreciated the launch of free ambulance service for the members of ICCI and the chamber has set a great example for others by

launching this service. Expressing his views, Muhammad ShakeelMunir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that promoting the interests of the business community is the top priority of the Chamber. He said that ICCI has already obtained discounts for its members from PIA, hospitals, laboratories, schools, colleges and universities from which the members

were reaping the full benefits and launch of ambulance service was another great benefit for the members. He vowed that ICCI would continue its efforts to introduce attractive services for the benefit of its members. He thanked Deputy Commissioner Hamza Shafqat for attending the inaugural function as the chief guest and said that the business community would continue to co-operate with ICT

Administration in difficult times so that together we could take the economy out of crisis. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Chairman, Founder Group, in his address said that ICCI is playing an active role to facilitate its members and will continue to introduce new services for them in future as well. He thanked the members of ICCI for their cooperation to launch the ambulance service. He especially thanked the President of Gulberg Green Association Najib Malik, Secretary General Muhammad Naveed Malik, Executive Member ICCI Angr. Azharul Islam and other members of the association who donated a considerable amount for ambulance. Former Presidents ICCI Muhammad IjazAbbasi, Zafar Bakhtawari, Mian-Shaukat Masood, Baser Daud and others also spoke at the occasion and lauded the initiative of ICCI for launching a free ambulance service for its members.

Music, Arts classes in full swing at PNCA

ISLAMABAD: Music and Arts classes are going on in full swing at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) to explore and polish hidden talent of artistic souls of the young generation. The new session of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) under the supervision of professional musicians and artists, said a news release issued here. Various classes including singing, tabla, painting, calligraphy, photography, guitar, violin, rubab, keyboard, piano, flute, sitar, acting, and dance are being organized under the supervision of trained teachers to inculcate and encourage the new generation towards music and singing arts. - APP

2,163 citizens fined during last 45 days

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) issued 2,163 fine tickets to road travelers over violation of traffic signals during last 45 days, a police spokesman said. Following the directions of IGP Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younis, he said that special campaign was underway to check violations while various squads headed by Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Mazhar Iqbal were performing duties at main roads of the city and taking action against the violators. During the last 45 days, the police spokesman said that action was taken and 2,163 road travelers were fined over violation of traffic signals. The Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Mazhar Iqbal said that efforts are underway to ensure disciplinary traffic system in the city and he also appealed the citizens to follow rules. He said that ITP personnel have been directed to ensure implementation on traffic rules and regulation irrespective of status and rank and demonstrate patience and politeness while issuing traffic violation tickets to the road users. He said that ITP is utilizing all available resources to facilitate the general public. The force issues traffic violation tickets not as a punitive measure but the purpose is to ensure safe road environment in the Capital and secure the lives of the people. The SSP (Traffic) also appealed the citizens to cooperate with ITP in maintaining traffic discipline in the city. - APP

PMLTC employing Pakistani engineers

ISLAMABAD: Pak Matari-Lahore Transmission Co. Ltd. (PMLTC) is employing Pakistani engineers for smooth transfer of technology under the project agreement, CEO Zhang Lei said, according to Gwadar Pro. She was talking to Chairman NE-PRA Tauseef Farooqi during his visit of the converter station of Pakistan's first ever High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Transmission Line in Lahore. The transmission line is the first of its kind in Pakistan having a capacity of 4,000 megawatts at +660 kV from south to north, NE-PRA said in a statement. Lahore-Matari is the first transmission line project under CPEC to transmit electricity from power stations in Sindh to load centres in Punjab. - DNA

Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival concludes



ISLAMABAD: The two-day "Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival" was concluded at Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in Islamabad. The event had parallel sessions on both days. The festival was

organized by Indus Cultural Forum (ICF) in collaboration with PAL. The well-known scholars and language experts participated in two-day festival, said a press release issued here. The festival aimed at

promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and to preserve, protect and promote the languages of the country. The festival had provide a platform for celebrating 70 plus languages of Pakistan and encourage

language communities to take action for saving their languages from extinction. The festival had feature various programs, i.e. poetry in mother languages, launching of new books and poetry recital sessions. - APP

Tanzara Art Gallery solo exhibition in full swing



ISLAMABAD: Tanzara Art Gallery solo exhibition titled 'Life and some other beautiful things' is in full swing by Irfan Cheema aiming to showcase the hidden talent of artistic work. The exhibition will continue till February 23 under complete Standard operating procedures (SOPs). Tanzara Gallery takes pleasure in presenting 'Life and some other beautiful things' a solo exhibition by Shanghai based Pakistani artist Irfan Cheema who is known for his timeless still life paintings, said a press release issued here. He is a classical realist painter, but his paintings are more than an imitation of what is seen. He has the magic of capturing the essence of the vignette that he replicate sun canvas. His paintings which may all be described as beautiful make references to beauty in its various guises and attributes such as pattern and decoration nature and sensuality clarity of colour luminosity and convincing detail and to symbolic references of femininity and temporality. Beauty seems to be almost embedded within the very subject he paints. His work overall celebrates nature life and heritage of places. - DNA

NUST to install 55 modern air quality sensors in twin cities

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) is going to establish a network of modern air quality monitoring low cost sensors in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad to enhance capacity of the environmental watchdogs for gathering realtime air pollution data. Under the Duke University project, a total of 55 low cost sensors will be given to NUST for developing a network of air quality monitors in the twin cities to augment ambient air quality monitoring capacity of the two mega cities. The university has developed a state-of-the-art air quality monitoring station and become the only varsity in the country to possess such a sophisticated piece of latest equipment. The NUST through its indigenous and US embassy assisted initiatives managed to develop a locally made conventional air quality measuring gadget in collaboration with local technicians/engineers, also received latest low-cost sensors given by the US State Department under its project of the Duke University and imported Japan made air quality monitors worth around Rs50 million. Head of Department, Environmental Sciences NUST Institute of Environmental Sciences and Engineering (IESE) Dr Muhammad FahimKhokhar told APP that the endeavour was a decade long effort that started in 2012 and got accomplished in the ongoing year. "The effort has been started from a scratch that succeeded in establishing an international standard air quality monitoring lab at the varsity," Dr Khokhar said. He said that the lab had recently received certification of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA). - DNA

Traditional food outlet to be re-open at Lok Virsa next week

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

Europe existed as a conceptual construct long ago: Experts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The notion of Europe is very old. Europe existed as a conceptual construct long before geographers began arguing about total number of the continents in the world, said Prof Emeritus Aslam Syed here on Sunday. The ancient Greeks divided the world into three major units: Europe, Asia, and Libya, the last of which referred to the known northern portion of Africa. Those were the divisions that Ptolemy used when he laid out his map of the world in the 2nd century CE, observed Prof Syed while speaking at a Webinar on Discourse of History on History of Europe here. Prof. Emeritus Aslam Syed

has been serving the Centre for Religious Studies, Ruhr Universität, Bochum, Germany. He remained Chairman, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and also served the NIHCR as its Director. Responding to a question, Prof Syed said that other scholars have argued that the origin for the name Europe is to be found in the Semitic Akkadian language that was spoken in ancient Mesopotamia. They pointed to the Akkadian word erebu, meaning "sunset," and reason that, from the Mesopotamian perspective, the western-setting sun descended on Europe. As a corollary, they cite the Akkadian word for sunrise, asu, from which they

believe the name Asia derived. From a Mesopotamian ground zero, the eastern-rising sun would have ascended from Asia. The Webinar arranged online by the National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR), Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, was attended by over 700 participants ranging from students, teachers and researchers to have greater insights into the valuable views of the guest speaker. Replying a question, Prof Syed said that a competing theory locates the eponym for Europe in mythology, specifically in the many versions of stories about the goddess Europa, some of which date back millennia.

It was the 35th consecutive session on the Discourse of History, a brainchild of the NIHCR Director DrSajid Mahmood Awan. This activity inculcates interest to learn more and more about history not only among students, scholars and historians as well as among ordinary people belonging to any field of life to know about nations' ways of running their States in a journey from antiquity to modernity. Responding to a question, Prof Syed said that one of the oldest versions identifies Europa as one of the Oceanides, the 3,000 sea nymphs who occupied a lower tier in the hierarchy of Greek mythology. Europa was one of only 41 of these minor deities who were thought worthy of naming.

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Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165

Antidote to pain

FOR patients and their families, even more so when the patient is a child, there can be nothing worse than facing terminal illness and suffering the acute pain that often comes with disease, notably cancer. The best tool available to doctors to combat this pain and offer end of life care is opioid drugs such as morphine and fentanyl. But for many months, hospitals across the country have been unable to obtain these medicines, mainly because of bureaucratic hassles. At least five agencies are involved in the procurement, regulation and taxation process of these drugs. We are told that one of the reasons the shortage began some 20 years ago was because young doctors had begun to misuse the opioids and utilise them themselves. This led to severe restrictions on the procurement of opioids by hospitals, with patients ending up bearing the brunt. Now, federal and provincial departments have got together and worked out a plan under which hospitals can apply for further supplies of opioids once they are left with the stock of around 50 percent. The question is whether or not this will work. The misuse of the drugs, which led to the problem in the first place also leaves open the question of how well hospitals are regulated. In most countries, a strict check is kept on how opioids are handed out to medical staff and on what patients they are used. Clearly, such a system of checks and balances was lacking in our wards.

To make matters even more complicated, is the fact that opioid drugs are available quite openly on the black market for a price. Fentanyl is a widely misused narcotic in the country, as is morphine or other drugs which contain these materials. We can only hope that the new system put in place allowing hospitals to apply for the drugs before their stocks are depleted will work. Till now they have only been allowed to apply for further supplies of the vital drugs, when they have reached zero percent of stock level. We know there is a shortage of many medicines in the country. But a shortage in drugs which are so vital to the care of patients suffering severe illness, and possibly in the last stages of life is inhumane. We most hope that with hospitals even at the very top end of the private sector complaining that they face this problem, the issue will be solved not only for them, but for all hospitals that require these drugs for their patients and to prevent the suffering that they otherwise undergo due to their sickness.

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Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Karachi crime

WE know that crime in Karachi has been a problem for years. Some 20 years ago, a large number of people shifted out of the city towards Islamabad and Lahore because of the street crime they faced as well as terrorism and violent political and ethnic clashes in the city. We now appear to be moving towards a similar situation once again. On February 18, in the Nazimabad area robbers shot dead a journalist working with a private news channel. Forty-two-year-old Athar Mateen, a senior producer with Samaa TV, lost his life as he was returning home after dropping off his children to their school. This is the nature of crime that has once again become common, as hardly a day passes by without a citizen or two becoming victims of trigger-happy robbers. Though the Sindh government has recently appointed a new city police chief, such changes seldom produce the desired results. Crimes continue unabated despite frequent postings and reposting of top police officers. Karachi is not only Sindh's provincial capital, it is the largest metropolis of the country and its commercial and industrial hub as well.

If you look at the investigative branch and the operations wings of the police and rangers, there is an evident lack of alacrity in the operations. Dealing with crime requires much more alert and agile law-enforcement which the citizens of Karachi have not witnessed for long. The problem of street crimes is particularly alarming and needs immediate attention. Muggings, snatching of cars, and even murders in streets have traumatised Karachi's residents with a regularity not seen that often in other cities of Pakistan, though crime in Islamabad is fast catching up with that in Karachi. One way to maybe keep a stricter check on the city is to install more CCTV cameras.

The business community of Karachi has also been expressing its concern over growing incidents of street crimes which law-enforcement agencies have remained unsuccessful in dealing with. There is a need to take these crimes seriously and restore the writ of the government. Tackling this requires vision and patience, qualities that the Sindh government has not exhibited till now. Any cosmetic measures will only disproportionately affect the middle- and lower-income classes. The city of Karachi needs a firmer grip on the violence of street crimes, with all political stakeholders coming together on one page to deal with it.

Development projects in Sindh and Balochistan

Mumtaz Ahmed Bhatti



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

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 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 provinc-

es 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 the Thar Desert first. I went to the rural area a little beyond Umarkot and Mithi. There were huge RO plants from where people were filling water according to their needs. Donkeys were carrying water bottles on carts, donkeys, motorbikes and on foot. Small water supply schemes were also set up in some villages beyond Mithi and some were under construction. Most importantly, the pumps, motors, pipes and electric panels installed on water supply projects in Umerkot, Mathi 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. The huge canal 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. People of Larkana city and its adjoining villages, Dadu city and all the villages connected to it used water from this canal. Pets drank water from this canal. Due to the use of polluted water of this canal, the people and animals of the towns and villages connected to this canal were suffering from dangerous diseases.

The Sindh government has set up a major sewerage project to divert water from the entire city and the medical college through pumping stations and use it for agriculture, making it fit for cultivation after treatment. While Bilawal Bhutto, Murad Ali Shah and Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah have worked hard to standardize the quality

of work of development projects, the struggle of secretaries and engineers is also involved.

There are some complaints about the quality of work in some places but it is necessary to discuss with the engineers who are working on these places. It was also famous about Balochistan that development projects in Balochistan are not only on the ground but also in files and all the funds are distributed and eaten. But in reality it is not at all. I have also seen some projects in Balochistan whose quality of work is much better. We have seen highway projects in Quetta city and some areas near the city. The best projects in terms of quality have not been seen even in Punjab. Similarly, seeing the opportunity to see some public health engineering water supply projects in Sibi, Naseerabad, Jaffarabad, Sobatpur, it became clear that the quality of development projects has improved a lot and the quality is improving day by day. But there are also complaints of corruption in some areas. That, too, needs attention.

Much has been going on since the arrival of Abdul Qaddos Bizenjo's government. In the previous government, development funds were given to the uneducated people and the elected members were ignored due to which they became tolerant and joined Abdul Qaddos Bizenjo instead of Jam Kamal. During the three years of Jam Kamal's tenure, the targets set in the Provincial PSDP have not been met. It was not immediately clear who was at fault.

Non-provision of funds or something else. Now it is necessary to take a detailed look at what has improved during the rule of Abdul Qaddos Bizenjo. What the provincial governments and the federal government should pay the utmost attention to is that all the projects under construction which are not being completed due to non-availability of funds, should be completed as soon as

possible by releasing immediate funds for these projects.

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 indeed.

Food in Israel divides and unites as much as it shapes identity

James M. Dorsey

Food anthropologist Daniel Monterescu and food entrepreneur Yair Yosefi describe the transition as "the Orientalisation of food (that) prioritises North African and Arab dishes over Ashkenazi cuisine"

FOOD, far more than diplomatic relations with Arab states, could be turning Israel into a state rooted rather than implanted in the Middle East even if Palestinians are likely to continue to look at the Jewish state as an implant and usurper for generations to come. Israel's conversion is as much a domestic revolution as Palestinians perceive it to be an extension of the expropriation of their land to the alleged appropriation of the food of a people that is in the majority living under occupation or a block-

ade or in exile.

To be fair, the appropriation or culinary fusion may have happened irrespective of the occupation. Some 20 percent of the Israeli population is of Palestinian descent, and 44 percent of Israeli Jews identify as Mizrahim or Jews of Eastern, primarily Middle Eastern and North African origin. Palestinians assert on good grounds that Israeli repackaging of their food is part of a broader effort to minimise if not erase Palestinian national identity. Yet, at the same time, the appropriation argument ignores the fact that Palestinians and Mizrahim share similar culinary traditions. It also neglects that the notion of a national cuisine is ambiguous at best. "Every nation's culinary lineage is regionally specific and indelibly influenced by trade, migration, and conquest. ... I finally understand that even though national cuisine is a social construct, it can be a useful one," says Palestinian American cookbook author Reem Kassir.

For Ms. Kassir, the notion of a Palestinian cuisine was a way for the cookbook writer to remain connected to her homeland and give her British and US-born daughters a sense of rootedness. Yet, as she detailed the cuisine of her recent ancestors in her first book, Ms. Kassir realised that if she went further back in

history, she would not be able to delineate the precise origins of each dish. Food historian Alija Lakisic came to a similar conclusion when researching culinary traditions in Bosnia Herzegovina. Quoted by Bosnia-born food scholar Riada Asimovic Akyol, Ms. Lakisic argues that "in the end, one cannot speak of some pure national cuisine. ... it is very difficult to determine which are the authentic dishes of certain regions and peoples."

Ms. Kassir's and Ms. Lakisic's experience is no less true for Israel's Mizrahim, who together with Israeli Palestinians constitute a slim majority in Israel. Together, they have increasingly put their cultural stamp on Israel with music and food. In doing so, they have pushed to the margins cultural expressions of Ashkenazi European Jewish culture that dominated Israel's early years. It also reflects the coming out of a Mizrahi Jewish culture that was long looked down upon because of its Arab affinity.

Food anthropologist Daniel Monterescu and food entrepreneur Yair Yosefi describe the transition as "the Orientalisation of food (that) prioritises North African and Arab dishes over Ashkenazi cuisine." In analyzing the role of excessive spice in Israeli cuisine, Messrs. Monterescu and Yosefi argue that spice has become a

"unifying factor that defines a broad social common denominator. Mizrahim who eat spicy food confirm their Mizrahiness, but even Ashkenazim who eat spicy food reaffirm their nativeness."

In other words, orientalisation constitutes a rebalancing of identity both within the Israeli Jewish community and between Israeli Jews and Palestinians that goes beyond usurpation to some degree of commonality.

It is a far cry from the cookbook writing that exploded in the wake of the 1967 Middle East war in which Israel conquered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Cookbooks of that era defined Israeli cuisine as having "mainly Jewish and American or European values or practices or ideas in it. They were...creating a new identity and drawing in all the references that they could identify with an Israeli background. That way, they managed to claim that land," said historian Suna Cagaptay.

Messrs. Monterescu and Yosefi seem to suggest that despite orientalisation, Israeli usurpation of Palestinian food is an ongoing rather than an evolving process. "In the same way that the State of Israel swallows Arab space, Israelis devour what to them symbolises the Arab other. Spice food is a fantasy of imagined indigeneity,"

they wrote.

Israel's more recent focus on spiciness that is absent from Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese cooking and more prevalent in some North African cuisines reflects in their minds "the combustible combination of masculinity, ethnicity, militarism and indigenous authenticity."

Messrs. Monterescu and Yosefi quote Israeli chef Eitan Vanunu as saying: "There's a term among (Israeli) chefs: 'How's the food?' 'It shouts.' That's considered a compliment. After all, we lack any cultural mainstays. Muscles are our bread and butter."

Ultimately the two seemingly opposed views of an Israeli food culture that not only dominates the Jewish state's culinary scene but also is making waves internationally may be two sides of the same coin: an Israeli gastronomic culture that builds as much on the traditions of a multi-ethnic Jewish population as it does on the usurpation of Palestinian food with which significant segments of Israeli society have a cultural affinity. In the process, the identity of Israeli Jews becomes one that increasingly is associated with attributes that Mizrahim and Palestinians share rather than European and American cultural practices that offer less opportunity to find common cultural traits.

Briefs

Multan Sultans beat Islamabad United

DNA

LAHORE: Multan Sultans on Sunday easily defeated Islamabad United by 6 wickets. Islamabad United set 106-run target for Multan Sultans in the 29th match of the ongoing seventh edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. Sultans bowlers helped their side restrict United at 105 runs for the loss of 7 wickets. Multan will now require 106 runs to win. United made a slow start to their innings and lost opener Mohammad Hurrira and Liam Dawson within the powerplay. Hurrira was dismissed by Asif Afridi in the third over, while David Willey removed Dawson in the sixth over. By the time the powerplay ended United had made 41 and lost two wickets. Sultans continued mounting pressure on the United batters and by the halfway of their innings, they were 49/3.

Russia could attack...

FROM PAGE 01

its ex-Soviet neighbor within days. Psaki said Biden was briefed on meetings at the Munich Security Conference, where Western representatives, including Vice President Kamala Harris, gathered to discuss the mounting tensions. The president's national security team "reaffirmed that Russia could launch an attack against Ukraine at any time," she added. Western officials in Munich continued to raise the alarm about Moscow's intentions towards Ukraine, though Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy pushed back against Washington's dire predictions for an invasion, saying "we do not think that we need to panic." The United States and the European Union have said they believe Moscow is striving to create a pretext for an attack on Ukraine by falsifying violent incidents on the ground and having proxy outlets put out false information. — APP

EU warns of information...

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The warning came as Russian state media published unverifiable reports of violent acts in eastern Ukraine, parts of which are held by pro-Moscow rebels. The Russian media outlets accuse Kyiv of plotting an assault on rebel enclaves in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. "The EU sees no grounds for allegations coming from the non-governmental controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of a possible Ukrainian attack," Borrell's statement said. Given such disinformation efforts, Borrell said the EU fully supported the OSCE European security body which has observers deployed in Ukraine, adding they "play a key role" in verifying activity on the ground. "We commend Ukraine's posture of restraint in the face of continued provocations and efforts at destabilisation," he added. EU member countries and the United States have said they believe Moscow is striving to create a pretext for an attack on Ukraine by falsifying violent incidents on the ground and having proxy outlets put out false information. — APP

Fazl, Zardari to discuss...

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sources added. Earlier, PML-N President and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif and PTI's disgruntled leader Jahangir Khan Tareen had met secretly to discuss ousting of Prime Minister Imran Khan, sources had revealed. The credible source had told that the two leaders met a few days ago to discuss the fate of the incumbent government. Tareen, when contacted, did not offer any comment on this critically important meeting in the wake of the Opposition's announcement to move a no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan.

Gladiators still alive as they beat Kings by 23 runs

Quetta Gladiators have finished their 10 matches with four wins to join Islamabad United on eight points who will play their last match against Multan Sultans on Sunday evening

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: 2019 champions Quetta Gladiators defeated 2020 winners Karachi Kings by 23 runs in the 28th match of the HBL Pakistan Super League 2022 at the Gaddafi Stadium on Sunday. Batting first, Quetta Gladiators rallied around Jason Roy's 82 from 64 balls with 11 fours to reach 166 for four. In return, Karachi Kings, after an 87-run start in 10.5 overs between Joe Clarke (52 off 39 balls with four fours and two sixes) and Babar Azam (36 off 34 balls with three fours and a six), stuttered to 143 for eight. The result means Quetta Gladiators have finished their 10 matches with four wins to join Islamabad United on eight points who will play their last match against Multan Sultans on Sunday evening. Islamabad United prior to their last match have a net run-rate of 0.101, while Quetta Gladiators have ended their league match with a net run-rate of -0.708. While the Multan Sultans versus Islamabad



United on Sunday will confirm the fourth side to qualify for the play-offs, Monday's match between Lahore Qalandars and Peshawar Zalmi will decide which sides will feature in the 23 February Qualifier and 24 February Eliminator 1. If Lahore Qalandars beat Peshawar Zalmi, they will finish on 14 points and will meet Multan Sultans on 23 February, while Peshawar Zalmi will play in Eliminator 1 on 24 February. In the scenario of Peshawar Zalmi overcoming Lahore Qalandars, both the sides will be locked on 12 points apiece. Side with a better net run-rate will progress to the 23 February match with the other to feature on 24 February. Before Monday's match, Lahore Qalandars have a net run-rate of 0.852, while Peshawar Zalmi have a net run-rate of -0.381. Scores in brief: Quetta Gladiators 166-4, 20 overs (Jason Roy 82, James Vince 29, Iftikhar Ahmed 21 not out) Karachi Kings 143-8, 20 overs (Joe Clarke 52, Babar Azam 36; Khuram Shahzad 4-22, Naseem Shah 2-14).

Pak students shine in "Junior Cultural Ambassador"

ISLAMABAD: The award ceremony for the 2022 China Soong Ching Ling Foundation "Junior Cultural Ambassadors" contest was held virtually. The event was jointly sponsored by China Soong Ching Ling Foundation and China Cultural Centers abroad, and organized by China Soong Ching Ling Science & Culture Center for Young People, said a press release issued here. Two students Sukhen Fatima and Ali Shaheryar from the Millennium Confucius Classroom and the Confucius Classroom at Cadet College Petaro recommended by the China Cultural Center in Pakistan won the title of "Junior Cultural Ambassadors". All the contestants and some teachers of the Millennium Confucius Classroom and Confucius Classroom at Cadet College Petaro were invited to participate in the online award ceremony. The "Junior Cultural Ambassadors" activity was officially launched in June 2021, with the theme of "Build a Dream for 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics", inviting Chinese and foreign youth to carry out cultural exchanges online, which has attracted young people from all over the world to participate in the event. China Cultural Center in Pakistan, together with the Millennium Confucius Classroom and the Confucius Classroom at Cadet College Petaro, responded positively and enthusiastically participated in the event. Young people from 32 countries participated online and told their stories for Chinese historical civilization and Beijing 2022 through video sending best wishes for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. Among the 100 students selected for the primary selection, there are 6 students from Pakistan. — APP

Khan considering retirement after crushing defeat

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Amir Khan has admitted his loss to Kell Brook could well be his last fight, saying he fears taking more "harmful punishment" and wants to spend more time with his family. Khan was sensationally stopped by Brook in the sixth round to settle one of British boxing's most bitter rivalries. Speaking after the fight at Manchester Arena, 35-year-old Khan said he had "been in the game a very long time". "I've done more than I ever expected," he said. "Maybe I peaked too early. I was at the Olympics at 17, I won the world title at 22. I'm 35 now - I've been in the game a very long time. "I'm an old man. I want to spend time with my kids and my family." Brook had Khan on unsteady legs from the first round as he landed the bigger shots throughout the fight, and after two punishing right uppercuts followed a left hook in the sixth, referee Victor Loughlin waved off the contest. Bolton fighter Khan, who was heavily bruised, said retirement was "definitely" an option. Asked whether it could be his last fight, Khan said: "I'll sit down with my family but I think it could be. "I've always said I never want boxing to retire me, I want to retire from boxing." "I know I showed a big heart and took some big shots today, but sometimes too much of that [punishment] can be harmful in the future." After all of the heated build-up to a fight between former world champions that had been 17 years in the making, Khan praised his opponent's tenacity.



"Credit goes to Kell, he put on a great performance," Khan said. "No excuses - the better man [won]. He boxed out of his skin. I never expected that from him. "The training camp I had for the fight was the best training camp. I don't want to have anyone blame [his coaching team] because they did everything they needed to. "I put my hands up and take full fault. We didn't leave any stone unturned." Sheffield fighter Brook also did not rule out retirement, but said he would fight again if it was the right bout.

Fake news punishable...

FROM PAGE 01

holder of public office". Cases falling under PECA will be supervised by a high court and the trial court will have to conclude the case within six months. "The court shall submit a monthly progress report of any pending trial to the concerned high court and shall give reasons for the inability of the court to expeditiously conclude the trial," says the ordinance. Apart from sending the report to the high courts, copies of the progress report will be sent to the law secretary if the case is registered in the Islamabad Capital Territory. However, if a case is registered in a province, then the copies of the report will be submitted to the "provincial secretaries of prosecution departments, the prosecutor general or advocate general". The ordinance also authorises the high court to issue "fresh timelines" of a case if it finds the "reasons" given by the trial court "plausible" and beyond its control. The ordinance also empowers the high courts to summon federal or provincial government officers to remove any "difficulties, hindrances and obstacles" it finds in the case.

PML-N, PPP slam PECA...

FROM PAGE 01

informing you," she added. Also, Sindh Information Minister Saeed Ghani termed amendments to Peca a dangerous attempt, adding that it amounted to quashing the voice of the media. Talking to the media in Islamabad, the PPP minister said that the incompetent government would be sent packing with the arrival of the long march on February 27. Both laws were signed by the president after the Cabinet approved them. The changes made in the electronic crimes act have been made under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Ordinance, 2022.

5 terrorists killed...

FROM PAGE 01

said. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorists, including sub-machine guns, hands grenades and a large quantity of multiple calibre rounds. "The killed terrorists were involved in terrorist activities against security forces, target killing and kidnapping for ransom," the ISPR said. The military also identified the martyred soldier as 28-year-old Sepoy Shabbir Ahmed, a resident of Quetta. "[Ahmed] having fought gallantly and inflicting casualties upon the terrorists, embraced shahadat during [the] intense fire fight." The ISPR concluded the statement by saying that the Pakistan Army was determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism "and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve". Earlier this week, six terrorists, who were involved in recent attacks on military personnel in Balochistan's Kech district, were killed during an exchange of fire with security forces in Injirkan Range near the district's Buleda area.

Opposition attempting...

FROM PAGE 01

a fresh deal". He said that PTI legislators and their allies in parliament would collectively defeat such attempts by the Opposition leaders to evade accountability. The minister, who is also the vice chairman of the ruling PTI, quoted Prime Minister Imran Khan as saying that there is zero possibility for an NRO for the accused politicians. On his twitter handle, the vice-chairman wrote: "Announcement to present no-confidence motion is an attempt at a bargaining chip for a fresh deal. PTI parliamentarians & our allies will collectively defeat their attempts to evade accountability. As PM Imran Khan has consistently stated, the possibility of an NRO is zero."

Hannah Green becomes first woman to dominate male rivals

WEB DESK



SYDNEY: Former US LPGA champion Hannah Green made history Sunday by becoming the first woman to win a mixed-gender professional golf tournament with a dominant four-shot victory at the TPS Murray River event in Australia. The world number 30 overcame gusty conditions and a host of chasing male rivals to shoot a closing five-under-par 66 at Cobram Barooga Golf Club and clinch the title. It is the first time a woman has won a 72-hole mixed tournament on any major world tour at this level. "It's weird. I don't normally have golf dreams - very, very rarely - but I actually had one last night of me after winning," Green told reporters. "I didn't know how many I won by but for it to come true is really cool. "I feel amazing. I'm just so grateful that I came," she added, having won the Vic Open last weekend. "It actually wasn't my plan to play; I was hoping to go back to Perth. "Things happen for a reason so I'm really glad that I made it." Green, the 2019 US LPGA champion, started the final round in a four-way tie for the lead with Andrew Evans, Matthew Millar and Blake Collyer. But she charged clear when she chipped in for eagle on the par-five 10th hole and never looked back. The tournament was part of PGA Australia's innovative Players Series introduced in 2021, and sees women and men competing on adjusted tees but otherwise level terms for the same prize purse and one trophy. The previous best result by a woman was Su Oh's equal-third at TPS Victory last year.

Ostapenko caps statement week with Dubai title

DUBAI: Jelena Ostapenko capped a statement week in Dubai by lifting her first hard-court title since 2019 with a dominant 6-0, 6-4 victory over Veronika Kudermetova in the final on Saturday. The former French Open champion needed just 64 minutes to overcome Russian world number 31 Kudermetova and capture the fifth singles trophy of her career. It was a first meeting between the pair, and a first Dubai final between two unseeded players since 2016. Ostapenko reached the final by taking out four Grand Slam champions - Sofia Kenin, Iga Swiatek, Petra Kvitova and Simona Halep - and having come back from a set down in her three previous matches. The 24-year-old from Riga, who is set to return to the top 20 for the first time since 2018, seems to have recaptured the powerful and aggressive form that earned her a Roland Garros title four and a half years ago in Paris. "I think I played really well today. In general I'm really happy with the whole week because it was very tough opponents I had to face every round," Ostapenko said on court after the win. "I was fighting until the very last point, I was even down match point against Petra and every match was very tough. I was fighting, that was the main thing I was doing, because I had honestly no other choice. — News Desk



Akram inducted into PCB Hall of Fame

DNA

LAHORE: Former Pakistani cricketer and bowling legend Wasim Akram has been formally inducted into the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Hall of Fame, the PCB announced Sunday. The 1992 World Cup winner and former captain Akram, who took a total of 916 wickets and scored 6,615 runs in his international career from 1984 to 2003, was inducted into the PCB Hall of Fame by veteran West Indies cricketer Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards. Sir Vivian Richards, one of the all-time greats and an ICC Cricket Hall of Famer, presented Akram a commemorative cap and plaque before the beginning of the 28th match in the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL), played between Karachi Kings and Quetta Gladiators. Akram is now one of the eight Pakistan stalwarts who are members of the PCB Hall of

Fame. The others in the exclusive list are Abdul Qadir, Fazal Mahmood, Hanif Mohammad, Imran Khan, Javed Miandad, Waqar Younis and Zaheer Abbas, who will be formally inducted into the prestigious group in the coming days. The PCB quoted Akram as saying on the occasion that receiving the honour from Sir Vivian, and that at a "home ground" was a great privilege for him. "I feel privileged to have received this great honour from Sir Vivian Richards, one of the most iconic figures in cricket, and at a venue that remained my home ground during my playing career. I also want to compliment the PCB for launching this initiative to recognise and acknowledge the contributions of former cricketers," Akram said. He said that representing Pakistan in international cricket for good 18 years was an honour and every wicket and run he earned during his career was priceless. "I can't thank God Almighty



enough for providing me the opportunity to serve this great country at the highest level," the former cricketer added. Akram went on to say that he would like to thank all his fans who have been his "greatest strength", his family and friends for always standing by him during the incredible journey. "Their support has been invaluable," he said. On the occasion, Sir Vivian Richards expressed pleasure on getting the opportunity to induct Akram into the PCB Hall of Fame. "My first encounter with Wasim Akram was in 1985 in Australia and in the twilight of my career. I was happy I would not be facing him much. I clearly remember telling my junior partner that he will cause a lot of problems for his generation of cricketers and Wasim proved me right," he said. He said that Akram has been an outstanding cricketer and a great ambassador for cricket.

Briefs

PM following his vision to empower people

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Shaukat Fayaz Ahmed Tarin Sunday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan was following his vision to empower the people of Pakistan on the pattern of Riyasat-e-Madinah. A number of schemes have been launched for common man like health card, Ehsaas portal and other schemes, he said while speaking to Radio Pakistan's current Affairs Program. Prime Minister is an upright and transparent person unlike previous rulers who made money through corrupt practices, he mentioned. He further highlighted that Overseas Pakistanis have a special place in the eyes of Prime Minister Imran Khan and a number of incentives have been launched to facilitate them, including granting them right to vote, Roshan Digital Accounts and resolving their issues related to property on priority basis. He said prime minister with his commitment would transform the country into a true welfare state like the one established by Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) in Medina where justice was provided not only to the Muslims but also to non-Muslim minorities. - APP

Turkiye supports Libya's stability

TRIPOLI: Turkiye has reiterated support to Libya's stability and efforts aimed to achieve reconciliation in the war-torn nation. Turkish Ambassador in Tripoli, Kenan Yilmaz, met Saturday with Abdullah Al-Lafi, the deputy leader of Libya's Presidency Council, to discuss political developments in Libya, according to a statement issued by the Presidency Council. Al-Lafi hailed Turkiye's support to Libya over the past years, saying efforts will continue to enhance bilateral cooperation to serve the interests of the two nations. On Tuesday, Turkish President RecepTayyipErdogan confirmed that all kinds of support will continue to be given to Libya.

Erdogan said Turkiye prefers to help the Libyan people to hold an election for "a prosperous and peaceful future". "We want such an election that will bring a government the Libyan people really want and desire," he added. On February 10, the Libyan House of Representatives named former Interior Minister FathiBashagha to form a new government. Incumbent Premier Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, however, rejected the parliament's move, saying that he will hand over power only to an elected government. The UN said it still recognizes Dbeibeh as Libya's interim prime minister. - APP

With weak lira, Turkey woos foreign firms

ISTANBUL: There is a silver lining to Turkey's currency crisis and the global supply chain crunch: The country is becoming an attractive alternative at the gates of Europe for foreign firms. Turkey is seizing on its geographic advantage to woo companies as the skyrocketing cost of sea freight and pandemic-related disruptions to supply chains push some European companies to reduce their dependence on Asia.

President RecepTayyipErdogan, whose policies have contributed to the lira's plunge, has promoted a new slogan for exports: "Made in Turkiye", using the country's language instead of the internationally-known "Made in Turkey". But his vision must overcome concerns about Ankara's complicated relationship with the European Union, the independence of the judiciary and political uncertainty ahead of elections next year. Nevertheless, Turkey's exports reached a record \$225.4 billion last year, with a target of \$300 billion in 2023. "Many international companies are taking action to supply more from Turkey," BurakDaglioglu, head of the Turkish presidency's investment office, told AFP.

France ready to impose sanctions on Russia: FM

Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian held a telephone call with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, warning him of the "consequences" for "contravening commitments made under the recently held Normandy format talks"

FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: The exceptional number of cease-fire violations in eastern Ukraine is highly concerning and any further attacks will lead to massive sanctions, France warned Moscow on Saturday. The warning came as the two sides exchanged views amid escalating military action on the eastern borders of the European region. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian held a telephone call with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, warning him of the "consequences" for "contravening commitments made under the recently held Normandy format talks."

France, which currently holds the presidency of the European Council, will "assume responsibility" in case Moscow further attacks

the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

In a separate interview with BFMTV news, ministry spokesperson Anne-Claire Legendre also reiterated the enforcement of sanctions in the event of an escalation of the armed conflict. "The sanctions are thought out and considered so that they have an unprecedented impact on the Russian economy," she said, adding that the unprecedented concentration of Russian troops is evidence that "Moscow is prepared to lodge an offensive against Ukraine."

Legendre denied France would send troops to Ukraine, saying Paris support for Kyiv would be reflected only through sanctions. Paris has, however, offered to send its military to Romania to fight alongside NATO allies, she told BFMTV news.

EU cannot offer 'olive branch' to Russia

BRUSSELS: The European Union cannot offer an "olive branch" while Russia continues to amass troops along the Ukrainian border, the president of the European Council said on Sunday. "We cannot forever offer an olive branch while Russia conducts missile tests and continues to amass troops," Charles Michel said in a speech at the Munich Security Conference. He said that Moscow's actions reflect a "paradox" since they showed signs of seeking a dialogue with Western allies while continuing with a military build-up. Michel, who presides over the meeting of EU heads of states and governments, stressed that "our unity has been cemented, both within the EU and across the Atlantic" in face of the Russian threat. Michel said the Russian attempt to "weaken Western and European support for Ukraine is a miscalculation." He said the EU approved a 1.2 billion (\$1.3 billion) macro-financial assistance package for Kyiv. He also recently proposed an international donor conference to support Ukraine. Tensions have risen dramatically in eastern Ukraine this week, with reports of a growing number of cease-fire violations, multiple shelling incidents, and evacuation of civilians from the pro-Russian separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. - Agencies

France emphasized the need for de-escalation through dialogue. Le Drian maintained, "it is up to Russia to choose such a dialogue if it has the sincere will. Today, Russia's deeds and words are out of step."

But Lavrov contended that the West's accusations of a potential invasion of Ukraine were unfounded. He accused Kyiv of drumming up a military campaign in the Donbas region and carrying out armed provocations.

"Under the passive eye of Paris and Berlin, who are parties to the Normandy talks, Kyiv is blatantly refraining from its commitments under the Minsk Package of Measures," according to a statement from the ministry, quoted in the Russian news agency TASS. "The West's disregard of Russia's rights in the field of security affects

stability in Europe and the world in general."

Lavrov said all states should comply with the legally binding security guarantees in Europe to ensure there is "equal and indivisible security based on the balance of interests of the sides."

Paris, Berlin, Moscow and Kyiv, are part of the Normandy format initiative to amicably resolve the crisis at the eastern borders.

Leaders and diplomatic advisors of the four sides have met multiple times to discuss political solutions since the initiative was first established in 2014 when Russian forces invaded the Donbas region and annexed the Crimean peninsula.

France and Germany have maintained that the Minsk agreement reached in 2015 to implement a peace plan and end fighting is the only way to settle the crisis.

Germany urges citizens to leave Ukraine

BERLIN: The German Foreign Ministry on Saturday stepped up its travel and security warning for Ukraine, urging all of its nationals to leave the country due to the risk of a possible military confrontation.

The ministry had already asked German citizens to leave Ukraine, but the latest warning is more urgent. "German nationals are urgently requested to leave the country now," the ministry's website now says.

"A military confrontation is possible at any time."

"Travel out of the country in a timely manner," said the advice. "If there is a Russian attack on Ukraine, the options for assisting German nationals are very limited."

Earlier in the week, the ministry said most staff members have left the German embassy in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv. Family members and seconded employees not urgently needed for business operations had mostly left the country, the ministry said. Germany's national carrier Lufthansa on Saturday said it was stopping all flights to the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, and the coastal city of Odessa as of Monday. The flights will be suspended "for the time being until the end of February," the company announced.

France on Saturday also recommended to all its citizens that they should leave Ukraine. For those in the most exposed areas "in the oblasts of Kharkiv, Luhansk and Donetsk," as well as in the region of Dnipro, Paris advises them to move away "without delay." - APP

Ethiopia starts electricity production at Nile mega-dam

GUBA: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed officially inaugurated electricity production from the country's mega-dam on the Blue Nile on Sunday, a milestone in the controversial multi-billion dollar project.

Abiy, accompanied by high-ranking officials, toured the power generation station and pressed a series of buttons on an electronic screen, a move that officials said initiated production. "This great dam was built by Ethiopians but not only for Ethiopians, rather for all our African brothers and sisters to benefit from," an official presiding at the launch ceremony said. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is set to be the largest hydroelectric scheme in Africa but has been at the centre of a regional dispute ever since Ethiopia broke ground there in 2011.

Ethiopia's downstream neighbours Egypt and Sudan view the dam as a threat because of their dependence on Nile waters, while Addis Ababa deems it essential for its electrification and development. - APP

Shanghai Electric employs 7,000 Pakistani workers

BEIJING: Shanghai Electric has employed around 7,000 Pakistani workers in its coal mine and power plant projects in the Thar district of Sindh. This was stated by Senior Directors of the company, Yao Fujun, and Gan-Yongchao, the company said in a statement.

Shanghai Electric is the sponsor of Thar Coal Block I Integrated Mining and Power Plant projects through its subsidiaries, Sino-Sindh Resources Ltd. (SSRL) and Thar Coal Block I Power Generation Co. (TCB-I). SSRL is a 9.8 million tons per annum open-pit lignite mining project, which unearthed the first layer of a 3 billion tons deposit on January 31. The integrated project also includes 1,320 megawatt mine-mouth coal-based power plant owned by TCB-I, which will power 4 million households. The projects are being executed under CPEC, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. The Shanghai Electric directors in a briefing on the projects, their background, construction progress, CSR activities, and employment of the local workforce, said that as many as 7,000 Pakistanis were presently working on the projects' sites. - Agencies

Pakistani Kinnow festival held in Minsk



MINSK: The Embassy of Pakistan, Minsk in collaboration with Pak Trading House Belarus organised a Kinnow Festival at one of the largest Shopping Malls in Minsk on 19 February 2022. The event, part of Mission's Public/Economic Diplomacy efforts attracted huge response from the general public as record number of visitors hovering around 6000 visited the booth during the festival which lasted for four hours. Several items including fresh orange juice, Ice Cream and orange gift were presented to the visitors. - DNA

Agritourism to play vital role in Karabakh

BAKU: State Tourism Agency head KananGasimov has said that agritourism will play an important role in the development of Azerbaijan's liberated territories. He made the remarks during the seminar on "the creation of a national system of agritourism", Trend has reported. "Agriculture and tourism play an important role in Azerbaijan's current development. Agritourism combines these two important spheres. It will also play an important role in the development of the liberated territories," he said. Noting that Azerbaijan has great potential in the field of agritourism, he stated that it will be of great benefit to agriculture as well as tourism. Gasimov added that one of the most important elements in the development of agritourism is to improve the knowledge and skills of workers in this field. Small and Medium Business Development Agency chairman OrkhanMammadov has stated that agritourism will soon receive an additional incentive for its development, as part of the Great Return to Karabakh. "Moreover, businessmen have the opportunity to take advantage of our Agency's grant programs, which provide financial support to each businessman in the amount of up to AZN 20,000 (\$11,760)," he said. - APP



TABRIZ: Ali Alizadeh, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Iran, meets with the Consulate General of Azerbaijan in Tabriz within the framework of his trip to East Azerbaijan Province. - DNA

Arab Parliament stands against foreign interference

Arab Parliament Speaker Adel bin Abdul-Rahman Al-Assoumi emphasized the need for "an Arab strategy to address foreign interference that affects the stability of Arab countries"

WEB DESK

CAIRO: The Arab Parliament underlined the need to confront foreign interference in regional affairs and called for a comprehensive strategy to deter the threats of Iranian policies in the region. At the conclusion of its meeting on Saturday at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, the Fourth Conference of the Arab Parliament and the heads of Arab Councils and Parliaments approved a document entitled, "A Parliamentary Vision to Achieving Security and Stability and Advancing the Current Arab Reality." During a press conference, Arab Parliament Speaker Adel bin Abdul-Rahman Al-Assoumi emphasized the need for "an Arab strategy to address foreign interference that affects the stability of Arab countries." He described Iranian interference in the region as "dangerous", as it "contradicts international norms and laws and supports

terrorism," calling for "the development of an integrated Arab plan to confront this threat." The document, which presented the Arab vision towards various affairs, including in Palestine, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Lebanon, underlined the need



to curb foreign interference in the affairs of Arab countries, combat terrorism and extremist ideology, and address issues of water and nuclear security. It also touched on women and youth empowerment, education development, promotion of inter-religious

and intercultural dialogue and investment in modern technology.

"The decline of the Arab role in resolving the crises facing the region has created a vacuum that has been exploited by terrorist and sectarian organizations, and by regional and international parties, to control the capabilities of our peoples and drag them into sectarian and ethnic conflicts," Al-Assoumi said. He warned of the escalation of cybercrime, which he said threatened the digital economy and vital infrastructure in Arab countries. He noted that the Arab parliament "intends to organize the first parliamentary conference on protecting and enhancing cyber security in the Arab world, in partnership with a number of regional and international institutions." Arab League Secretary General Ahmad AboulGheit told the meeting that challenges facing the Arab countries "require vigilance to plots aimed at dividing societies on sectarian, ethnic, religious or regional basis."

Briefs

Israel sees Iran nuclear deal 'shortly'

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said on Sunday that Iran may "shortly" agree to a new nuclear deal with major powers but warned it will be weaker than the original 2015 agreement.

Bennett was speaking ahead of a cabinet meeting following indications that the outline of a deal was taking shape at talks in Vienna. "We may see an agreement shortly," Bennett said, adding that the deal that appeared to be in the making "is shorter and weaker than the previous one".

The 2015 Iran nuclear agreement offered Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme, but the United States unilaterally withdrew in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump and re-imposed heavy economic sanctions. Talks on reviving the initial pact, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), have been held in the Austrian capital since late November, involving Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia directly and the US indirectly.

Bennett has been a staunch opponent of the JCPOA and repeatedly warned any revenue Tehran sees as a result of new sanctions relief will be used to purchase weapons that could harm Israel. "This money will eventually go to terrorism," he reiterated on Sunday. Bennett has said Israel will not be bound by a restored agreement and will retain the freedom to act against Iran. "We are organising and preparing for the day after, in all dimensions, so that we can maintain the security of the citizens of Israel on our own," he told his cabinet. - APP

Rs6.10 per unit increase likely in electricity tariff

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Electricity rates are likely to be jacked up by Rs6.10 per unit after a request for the same by Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) has been made to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). The request to approve an increase of Rs6.10 per unit in electricity prices on account of Fuel Charges Adjustment (FCA) for January 2022, will be heard by NEPRA on February 28.

"In January, the reference fuel cost was about Rs 6.51 per unit," the CPPA said. The request is for all consumer categories of distribution companies, except for lifeline and K-Electric consumers and if this is approved it is expected that it would have an impact of around Rs60 billion, including GST.

The most expensive electricity was generated from high-speed diesel. The cost of the electricity generated from diesel was Rs25.98 paise per unit while the cost of power generation from coal was Rs14.10 per unit, the application added. In the petition it was said that a total 8,420.73 GWh electricity, costing Rs107.2 billion was generated during January.

US donates 4.7 mln more vaccines to Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: US Embassy in Islamabad has announced that another 4.7 million doses of anti-corona vaccines has arrived from the United States as donation. According to a press release, it is informed that this shipment of 4.7 million Pfizer vaccines brings the total number of doses to donated by the United States to Pakistan to almost 57 million.

To date, the United States has donated over 453 million vaccines around the world, the released said. The United States is happy to partner with Pakistan to end the COVID-19 pandemic because Pakistan turns vaccines into vaccinations. "We congratulate Pakistan on administering over 205 million vaccine doses so far," it added.

Covid-19 death toll exceeds 30,000 mark

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan logged 33 new COVID-19 deaths during the last 24 hours, which took the country's total death toll to 30,009, the National Command and Operation Centre's (NCOC) data showed Sunday morning. Meanwhile, Pakistan's overall case count since the start of the pandemic also went past 1.5 million as 1,644 new COVID-19 infections were detected after 49,866 diagnostic tests were conducted. However, the daily case count was relatively low during the last 24 hours due to which Pakistan's COVID-positivity rate fell to 3.29%.

Somali leaders reject oil deal with US company

Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Abdirashid Mohamed Ahmed and Coastline Exploration Ltd had announced on Saturday seven production sharing agreements (PSAs) covering deep water offshore blocks

NEWS DESK

MOGADISHU, Feb 20 (AFP/APP):- Somalia's president and premier have declared null and void a deal signed by their energy minister with a US company to explore for oil and gas off the coast of the troubled Horn of Africa nation. Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Abdirashid Mohamed Ahmed and Coastline Exploration Ltd had announced on Saturday seven production sharing agreements (PSAs) covering deep water offshore blocks. Ahmed hailed it as a "huge moment" for Somalia, one of the poorest countries in the world, which is in the grip of a political crisis over long-delayed elections and also battling a jihadist insurgency. "Recently completed seismic programmes indicate that Somalia has the potential to become a significant oil and gas producing country," he said in a statement.



The PSAs "will have an immediate positive effect on the country", he said, and are expected to generate tens of millions of dollars for federal and state coffers. But both Somalia's president and prime minister - who are often at loggerheads - swiftly denounced the deal late Saturday. The office of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, better known by

his nickname Farmajo, said it flouted a decree that bans the signing of any agreements with foreign governments or entities during the election period. "Therefore the agreement which the minister signed is null and void," it said in a statement. Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble also dismissed the agreement

as "illegal, unacceptable" in a post on Twitter, saying he would "take all appropriate measures to protect our national resources". Somalia is plodding through an election process that is more than a year overdue and has been marred by violence, including an attack Saturday in the central town of Beledweyne that killed 14 people on the eve of a round of voting for parliamentary seats there. Coastline, which is based in Houston, Texas, had hailed the deal as a "defining moment" for Somalia, which has so far not produced oil or gas although exploration started in the 1950s before being derailed by the civil war. "Somalia contains the largest remaining unexplored set of basins situated in warm waters in the world," Coastline chief executive W. Richard Anderson said in a statement. There was no immediate response from Coastline to requests for comment about the Somali leaders' reaction to the deal.

Pak Army organizes education expo

RAWALPINDI: An Education Expo was organized under overall arrangements of Panu Aqil Garrison in IBA Sukkur. Prominent Universities including NUST, COMSATS, UET and Bahria University participated in the Expo by establishing educational stalls. Students from all over Sindh visited the education expo and appreciated the efforts of Pakistan Army for organizing the event. Garrison Commander Pano Aqil Garrison visited the expo 2022 and interacted with students where he highlighted the importance of education and role of youth in nation building. - DNA

Pakistan ranks least costly among 139 countries: Tarin

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin on Sunday shared a cost of living index highlighting how Pakistan is least costly among 139 countries globally. Taking to Twitter, Shaukat Tarin shared the cost of living index graph showing Pakistan as the least costly country, ranking last out of 139 countries being assessed for their living expenses. He shared that a four-member family would need Rs171,783 for their living expense-minus rent in Pakistan, a 71.52 percent lower expense than

a family would require in the United States. Even rents are 90.64 percent lower than in Pakistan as compared to United States, the finance minister shared and further added, Karachi is 79.35 percent cheaper as compared to New York as rent in the former is also 95.26 percent cheaper than the latter. In August 2021, Pakistan was ranked the most economical country to live in with a cost of living index 18.58 while Afghanistan 24.51; India 25.14; and Syria 25.31 trail respectively. As per the report on the cost of living index compiled by GoBankingRates Company, Pakistan is termed the cheapest country to live in.

Several organisations in the past and at present as well, have used indicators and a bunch of statistics to ascertain the countries based on their affordability for those living and earning there. One of these companies is GoBankingRates and the company uses four metrics to determine which countries are the most affordable. The indicators used in the study include inflationary matrices including, rent index, local purchasing power index, consumer price index, groceries index and the information compiled, compared to the cost of living in New York City, one of the most expensive cities in the world.

Kite flying ban being implemented: Police

DNA

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Umar Saeed Malik has said that no one would be allowed to violate the kite flying ban and Rawalpindi District Police were taking strict action in accordance with the law against the kite sellers, flyers and those involved in the aerial firing. He said that the officers concerned had been directed to utilize all available resources to net the kite flying ban violators and kite sellers. He said, the kite flying ban violators were being dealt with an iron hand and no one would be allowed to violate the law and indulge in kite flying and selling.

According to a police spokesman, the ban on kite flying was being strictly implemented, adding, police were making all-out efforts to net the violators. The use of metal string for kite flying results in the loss of human lives therefore, all-out efforts were being made to stop the kite flying, he added and said special awareness campaign is also being run to control the ban violation. He said that special teams had also been constituted to control kite flying and aerial firing. A monitoring system had also been developed in this regard besides taking surety bonds from the owners of several buildings. He informed that Inspector General of Police Punjab, Rao Sardar Ali Khan had issued orders to speed up crackdown against kite flying and aerial firing

NAB's EBM on Wednesday

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB will chair NAB's Executive Board Meeting on February 23, 2022 at NAB Headquarters in which various inquiries, investigations and references are expected to be authorised after due diligence as per law.

NATO moves Ukraine staff from Kyiv

BRUSSELS: NATO is relocating staff from Ukraine's capital Kyiv to Lviv, in the west of the country, and to the Belgian capital Brussels for their safety, an alliance official said Saturday. "The safety of our personnel is paramount, so staff have been relocated to Lviv and Brussels. The NATO offices in Ukraine remain operational," the official told AFP, without giving numbers. Ukraine is not a member of NATO, and the alliance does not have any forces there. But since the late 1990s it has maintained two offices in Kyiv: a NATO Liaison Office and a NATO Information and Documentation Centre. Several Western countries have already moved diplomats from Kiev to Lviv, located near the border with Poland, in anticipation of Russian military action. Brussels hosts NATO's headquarters. "Every indication indicates that Russia is planning a full-fledged attack against Ukraine," NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said Saturday. "We all agree that the risk of an attack is very high," he told German broadcaster ARD on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference. Stoltenberg has previously said that the alliance will not deploy any forces into Ukraine to defend it from any Russian aggression. But NATO members have sent forces to neighbouring countries which are alliance members, and Stoltenberg has said NATO member countries will vigorously react to any Russian action in those territories, under its collective defence pact. The United States dominates NATO, and US President Joe Biden on Friday said he was "convinced" Russia was going to invade Ukraine within the week, and have its forces target Kyiv. - Agencies



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi distributing shields among donors on the occasion of Presidential Initiative Artificial Intelligence and Computing (PAIC) Grand Entrance Exam 2022 organized by Salyani Welfare International Trust at National Stadium. - DNA

Poland readies for possible refugee influx amid crisis

MONITORING DESK

WARSAW: The Polish town of Przemysl is located in the country's far southeast, a mere 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) from the Ukrainian border. Picturesque, recently refurbished houses surround the market square. The charming town of 60,000 once belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On this sunny February day, several locals are making the most of the mild temperatures at a local

roadside cafe. Taking in this idyllic scene, it is easy to forget that only a few kilometers away, across the border, Ukraine is looking at the very real prospect of a Russian invasion. Chatting to residents of Przemysl, however, it quickly becomes clear that many here are also concerned by the danger of war.

If tensions escalate, leading to open war between Ukraine and Russia, refugees may head for nearby Poland. Przemysl, situated right by the frontier, could see

a major influx of Ukrainians fleeing the fighting. Mayor Wojciech Bakun, meanwhile, says he does not expect "growing unrest" and doubts Ukraine and Russia will become embroiled in all-out war. "I hope nothing bad will happen; I think Russia is more interested in striking fear in others than actually attacking," Bakun told DW. The Polish government has requested that all Polish mayors pinpoint building suitable as possible refugee shelters.

Government, TTP reach accord?

Elders in both the Jirga also held successful talks with Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud who is leading banned TTP

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: At last the government and banned Tehrik-e-Takriban Pakistan reached on what the tribal elders claim a 'Peace Accord'. The accord between the two sides was materialised by the Haqqani network with help of traditional tribal elders Jirgas from North and South Waziristan. The tribal sources informed the media about a possible peace accord on Sunday. In accordance to first initiatives, the government had freed 100 militants associated with banned TTP. However,

the tribal sources said that TTP is demanding immediate release of 112 persons including hard core militants, included some of them convicted by courts in terrorist cases. The tribal sources informed that the Mehsud tribal elders jirga already returned from Khost whereas the North Waziristan traditional jirga of elders is still across the border in Afghanistan and had visited Governor House Khost on Sunday. The Jirga held talks with leaders of banned TTP. The jirga members confirmed an agreement between the government of Pakistan and TTP. So far the government has

neither confirmed nor contradicted the reports regarding the peace agreement. The talks between two sides is being facilitated by Haqqani network. Habib Ullah, a top commander of Haqqani network, has represented Afghanistan interior minister Siraj Ud Din Haqqani. Elders in both the Jirga also held successful talks with Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud who is leading banned TTP. Efforts for reconciliation between the Government and banned TTP was commenced soon after the empowering of Taliban in Afghanistan on August 15th last year through Chief of Haqqani network. As a result, Taliban had declared ceasefire in November. Later, the banned TTP alleged violation of ceasefire on December 9th 2021. During this period, judiciary and civil society members have denounced peace accord. It is believed that like the past people from civil society organisations, judiciary, progressive democratic and nationalist minded political forces will oppose reconciliation with taliban.



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