



Islamabad POST

Saturday, February 26, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Khadija Almakhzoumi becomes member Parliament of Somalia

Detailed News On Page-01

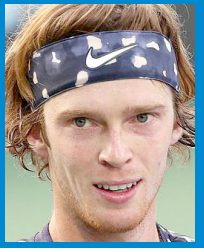
Rasheed warns allies against ditching PM

Detailed News On Page-08



Russian star Rublev pleads for peace

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

No-trust motion our right

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and Opposition Leader in National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that no one can stop them from using 'constitutional right' of no-confidence motion. Talking to media, the PML-N leader said that he was maligned in front of the nation as he was summoned in Saaf Paani case but arrested in Ashiana Housing scandal. "I was alleged of committing corruption of billions of rupees in Saaf Paani project. Everyone was acquitted but engineer Raja was detained and sent to jail," he told. Shehbaz Sharif said the court decision regarding Saaf Paani project is our victory, claiming that he had saved nation's money.

Long march to surprise everyone

DNA

MULTAN: Pakistan People's Party central leader Yousaf Raza Gillani has claimed that PPP long march will surprise its political rivals after watching some prominent people. Yousaf Raza Gillani, while talking to journalists in Multan Friday, claimed that PPP long march will surprise everyone after they see some [prominent] people there. The people of Multan will prove their association during the PPP long march, he added. The PPP leader said that the long march against the incumbent government will start on February 27 under the leadership of chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. "25,000 to 30,000 people will be travelling side-by-side with Bilawal [during the long march]."

Holiday Notice
The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.
- Editor

Inside...

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Europe, NATO have left us alone: Ukraine President

"We were left by ourselves. Who is ready to go to war for us? Who is ready to give Ukraine guarantees of NATO membership? Honestly, everybody is afraid," appeals for direct talks with Putin; Putin ready to send a delegation to Minsk for talks; Heavy fighting in outskirts of Kiev; Poland allows entry from all eight border crossings at Pakistan embassy request

NEWS DESK

KIEV: The Ukrainian president has said Kiev has been left to fend for itself as NATO is "afraid" to give it any guarantees. "I asked them - are you with us?" Volodymyr Zelensky said. "They answered that they are with us, but they don't want to take us into the alliance." "I've asked 27 leaders of Europe, if Ukraine will be in NATO, I've asked them directly - all are afraid and did not respond." "We were left by ourselves. Who is ready to go to war for us? Honestly, I don't see anybody. Who is ready to give Ukraine guarantees of NATO membership? Honestly, everybody is afraid," the president added. In an address on Friday, Zelensky



said he is open to talking about the possibility of a neutral status for Ukraine, but insisted that his country needs third-party guarantees, the report said. "We are not afraid of Russia, we are not afraid to talk with Russia, talk about everything: security guarantees for our country and a neutral status. But we are not in NATO now - what security guarantees will we have? Which coun-

Putin wants Ukraine army to topple govt

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin has urged the Ukrainian army to overthrow its leadership whom he labelled as a "gang of drug addicts and neo-Nazis who have lodged itself in Kyiv and taken hostage the entire Ukrainian people." Addressing the Ukrainian military in a televised address, a visibly angry Putin urged the military to "take power in

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Talks only when Ukraine surrenders

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: Russia will return to negotiations with Ukraine as soon as the Ukrainian armed forces surrender and lay down their weapons, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Friday, day two of Russia's military intervention in its smaller western neighbor. Russia's



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Germany says Vladimir Putin a liar

DNA

BERLIN: German Foreign Minister Baerbock while terming the attack on Ukraine illegal said "After months of preparations, of lies and propaganda, President Putin decided to follow up his threats with egregious actions. With the military attack



Continued on Page 06

tries will give them?" he said, before adding that there should be talks to bring an end to the Russian military offensive. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday that "neutral status and rejection of hosting (offensive) weapons systems" are Putin's "red lines" for Ukraine and that the ball was now in Kiev's court. Accusing the West of leaving Ukraine to face Moscow alone, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday he was not afraid to negotiate an end to the Russian "invasion", but would need security guarantees to do so. Speaking in the early hours of the morning from Kiev, Zelensky said he had reached out to "partners" in the West to tell them

Continued on Page 06

Khadija becomes member Parliament

Khadija Mohamed Almakhzoumi is currently serving as Somalia's ambassador to Pakistan; her husband is contesting for the President of Somalia



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Senior diplomat and Somalia's Ambassador to Pakistan Khadija Mohamed Almakhzoumi has won the

election of House of the People of the Somalia parliament. While talking to this correspondent from Somalia soon after winning the election, Ambassador Khadija said she was happy to have achieved yet another milestone in her career. She said she had to struggle hard in order to win this election adding she had an earnest desire to serve her people. Khadija Mohamed Almakhzoumi made her mark as Ambassador of Somalia to Pakistan by virtue of her hard work active diplomatic. She facilitated a high level delegation from Somalia during the recently held OIC conference in Islamabad. It may be mentioned here that her husband, who happens to be a seasoned politician and has served as the interior minister of Somalia, is vying for the coveted slot of President of Somalia. The much-delayed Presidential election is now expected to take place in next few months. The lower house and upper house of Parliament elected the new President therefore the once the composition of both houses is completed, election for the president will take place. The Pakistanis who know Ms. Khadija have congratulated her over this great success and wished her best of luck. She told that she will soon visit Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs a meeting on the overall economic situation. - DNA

Xi urges Putin to pursue talks



NEWS DESK

BEIJING: The Chinese president has urged Vladimir Putin to resolve the conflict with Ukraine "through negotiations" as the Russian army intensified its invasion. Xi Jinping told his Russian counterpart to use "balanced negotiations" in a phone call on Friday, the first publicised meeting between the two leaders since Putin's visit to Beijing during the Winter Olympics. The Chinese president reiterated

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Security tightened after attacks on Afghan polio workers

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: In the wake of recently deadly attack against anti polio workers in Northern provinces of Afghanistan, wide range unrest is fuelling amongst the volunteers and official of health department, engaged in ongoing anti-polio campaign at scattered areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Though the authorities concerned are making claims of comprehensive security arrangements but on Friday morning a police constable who was on duty with polio team has sustained injuries when came under attack of two motorcyclists in outskirts of Dera Ismael Khan city. In a period of four days

it was the second attack against policemen on polio duty in Dera Ismael Khan. On Tuesday morning, unknown militants have targeted police van with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). The International media reported that at least eight polio workers have been shot dead by unknown persons in four attacks in Northern Kunduz and Takhar provinces of Afghanistan. Deputy Secretary General of UN, Mr. Ramez Al Kabarov has denounced the attacks. Last year, at least 11 anti polio workers including women have been killed in terrorist attacks in different parts of Afghanistan. The spokesperson of Emergency Office for

Continued on Page 06

Russia visit successful, pre-planned: Qureshi

The foreign minister says various factors were considered before Moscow visit

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi asserted on Friday that the government's decision to go ahead with the recently concluded Moscow visit was correct, explaining that there had been a shift in the country's foreign policy towards geo-economics, which warranted progress on regional connectivity. "If we have to move towards geo-economics, a natural conclusion for this [to happen] is to make progress on [developing] regional connectivity [with] Afghanistan and beyond Afghanistan into Central Asian republics. And if we have to move towards regional connectivity, then Russia has an historical role ... in this region," he said while addressing a press conference in Islamabad. "Russia being onboard will fortify our [shift in] focus towards geo-economic regional connectivity." The foreign minister said this and several other factors were considered before it was decided to go ahead with the Moscow visit. "We went ahead and I am convinced after this visit that we did the

OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi addressing a press conference. - DNA

right thing in going ahead," he added. The visit coincided with escalating tensions between Russia and the West as the former launched an operation in neighbouring Ukraine. The timing of the visit has been questioned but top Pakistani government officials

termed it one of the rarest opportunities for the energy-starved country to make headway in energy and regional connectivity. Addressing the matter, Qureshi told media persons the before Prime Minister Imran Khan left for Moscow along with a delegation of ministers,

he had presided over a meeting to analyse the evolving conflict. He said the current foreign secretary and four former foreign secretaries, former ambassadors, including those who served in Moscow, and other senior officials were present at the meeting. "We consulted [them], we weighed pros and cons and then decided the way forward accordingly," the foreign minister said, dispelling the impression that the decision to visit Moscow was not well thought out. He emphasised the importance of "collective wisdom" in this regard, saying that he had been inviting former ambassadors and foreign secretaries for consultation and advice after assuming the role of foreign minister. "Institutional memory is of good use and we should benefit from experience," he said. "Using this collective wisdom, we concluded that the solid rationale for consolidation of our bilateral relations with Russia should not be lost sight of. In light of this, we decided to keep our plan for the visit unchanged." The foreign minister further said the objective of the visit was to "maximise the

diplomatic space for Pakistan". He described the visit as "satisfactory" and said, "I believe we made the right decision. Our diplomatic space has increased." Moreover, Qureshi said, the government saw the visit as an opportunity to take Russia into confidence on the issue of Afghanistan and the evolving situation in South Asia, particularly with regards to Indian-occupied Kashmir. "We saw [...] it as an important opportunity that should not be squandered." In apparent criticism of rival opposition parties, he said he saw some tweets during the visit by individuals who were "panicking". Refusing to name anyone, he said their tweets expressed worry. "But my prime minister, on the other hand, did not seem perturbed and was confident." Qureshi said one of the reasons behind this could be that PM Imran did not have accounts or assets in any Western capital. He revealed that the US administration had made a "high-level" contact with Pakistan before the Moscow visit. Qureshi added: "They (the US) asked us a masoomana (innocent) question and we gave them a respectful reply."

Pakistan Economic Conference will be a game changer

“They must undertake new, innovative and non-traditional projects instead of depending on the textile”

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Three-day Pakistan Economic Conference (PEC) will be a game changer for the expeditious, diversified, and innovative industrialization of Faisalabad in addition to the promotion of social, commercial and business activities, said Mian Javed Iqbal, a leader of the National Group (Corporate). He appreciated the aims, objectives and design of the proposed PEC and said that it is probably the first serious and well thought out effort to hold a conference in which policy making issues would also be discussed at the highest level. He said that generally cosmetic conferences are arranged but most of these failed to yield the required results. He quoted his participation in an energy conference in Karachi a few decades ago and said that it was his last participation as it was just a waste of time. About the PEC, he said that it has been premeditated with a focus on covering almost all segments of the economy identifying new and emerging investment opportunities that have a major attraction for the investors, young start-ups and other serious stakeholders. He said that the third generation of local industrialists is ready to enter into practical life.

“They must undertake new, innovative and non-traditional projects instead of depending on the textile”, he said and added that this conference would help them to enter into nontraditional fields of businesses with a renewed vigor, innovative ideas and out of box solutions. He termed industrial estates being established by FIEDMC in Faisalabad as a boon for this region. He disclosed that 90% plots in the industrial estate have been sold out to the investors from other areas who are establishing diversified industries that would play a key role in import substitution. He said that the emerging industrial landscape would project Faisalabad as a haven for investors in non-traditional and hi-tech industries. He particularly appreciated the health cards scheme inaugurated by Prime Minister Imran Khan just a week ago in Faisalabad and said that it has almost doubled the patient's pressure in private hospitals. Earlier these healthcare units were working only 65% occupancy. He said that now people are selecting hospitals on the basis of services and facilities available in the hospital. He said that it also provides a unique opportunity to the investors in the health care sector as they could provide MIR, CT SCAN and other costly machines to the private hospitals and earn a reasonable profit for their investment. He hoped that this decision

would make health as one of the biggest sectors of the national economy in the near future. He also quoted the Indian occupied Kashmir which is cultivating and exporting saffron to the entire world. He said that the climate in independent Kashmir is the same and investors could also cultivate this precious crop for the benefit of the local communities in addition to earning precious foreign exchange by exporting the same. He said that women are 52% of our population, hence instead of organizing separate meetings for them, females must be made part of the main conferences. He said that generally among top 90 students, 1-30 positions are won by the girls but our society prefers to exclude them from the mainstream of the national economy. He also appreciated the female talent in Baluchistan and other neglected far-flung areas and stressed the need to involve them in productive national activities. He appreciated the efforts of Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) and said that he is a visionary leader who has designed it in line with the future needs. He hoped that this conference would prove a total success and organizers would get at least 70% participants for the next year's event from amongst the participants of this conference.



PESHAWAR: An old man is selling and displaying colourful towels to attract the customer. – APP

Two persons including a teenage girl gunned down

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: Two persons including a teenage girl were gunned down in Village Harar near Karianwala Thursday evening. According to Ijaz Ahmed, first victim Neelum Ijaz's father, four persons including the slain Ahmed Raza allegedly first killed his daughter Neelum Ijaz and then the assailants including Abdul Ghaffar and two unidentified persons shot dead their accomplice as well. The motive of the murder is said to be an old enmity. It is reported that the victim Neelum Ijaz was student of a local college. Karianwala Police have registered a case and initiated an investigation.

Consul General of France calls on CS Sindh

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah said that Sindh government was encouraging local and foreign investment in the energy sector through public-private partnership. He said this during a meeting with Consul General of France in Karachi Christian Testot at Sindh Secretariat on Friday. Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah invited French public and private investment companies to come forward and take advantage of

investment opportunities in Sindh's energy sector and special economic zones (SEZs). During the meeting, French Consul General in Karachi Christian Testot said that he would bring a delegation of French investors to Sindh as French investors want to work in the province. Bilateral relations and other issues of mutual interest were also discussed during the meeting. The Chief Secretary Sindh also presented gifts of Shield, Ajrak and Sindhi Topi to the French Consul General.



Zero tolerance policy on over pricing: Commissioner

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHAN: Commissioner Multan division Dr Irshad Ahmad said that Government of Punjab has adopted zero tolerance policy on over pricing and hoarding. Strict actions should be taken against such mafias. Price list display must be checked and any violation must be dealt with iron hand. He was chairing a meeting to review the performance of the districts. Giving directions to keep wholesale points of commodities and DC counters fully functional, Commissioner said that the Punjab government has started giving subsidy to certain 'keryana' stores under the umbrella of Ehsaas Roshan Riyat Programme. He ordered to cancel the quota of flour mills over any interruption in the supply of government flour. He asked the Deputy Commissioners to ensure supply in the market from grain and vegetable markets and special monitoring of demand and supply of tomatoes, potatoes and sugar. Dr Irshad Ahmad said that strict measures were being taken to provide urea fertilizer to the farmers. He ordered to make the Co-

rona vaccination drive successful to contain the spread of Corona virus while giving a briefing, DCs from Multan division said that price control magistrates carried out 21760 raids against profiteers in the division. More than Rs 4179100 fines, 37 FIRs registered and 74 illegal profiteers were arrested. Likewise, 367 agricultural fair price shops are functional in the division while 11128 shops were registered under Ehsaas Ration programme across the division. No case of dengue was reported in the division. 2210 anti-dengue teams have served 35 notices during surveillance while RED 3 vaccine target has been achieved. Later, Dr Irshad Ahmad paid surprise visit to fruit vegetable market to monitor the auction process. Mahe-safai campaign launched under the direction of Chief Minister Sardar Usman Bazzar is underway and the management of Multan Waste Management Company is mobilized to achieve hundred percent targets. CEO MWMC Muhammad Farooq Dogar has started cleanliness inspection in all the four zones of the city and cleanliness is also being checked in the narrow streets of the city.

Sania opens Ehsaas Center in Jamrud

PESHAWAR: Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar, SAPM inaugurated the Ehsaas Center in Jamrud Tehsil of Khyber Tribal District where Ehsaas payments, Ehsaas survey registration and Ehsaas School Stipends' enrollments are being delivered under one roof. Ehsaas Centers have also been opened in Bara and Landi Kotal Tehsils of Khyber. At the center, Dr. Sania spoke to women, listened to their concerns, and assured them full cooperation.

While in Khyber district, Dr. Sania also made a surprise visit to an orphanage, "Dar-ul-Ehsaas" and inspected the facility that houses one hundred deserving children. Earlier, Dr. Sania Nishtar inaugurated the newly built model Panagah at Charsadda Road, Peshawar. This new Panagah is the second in Peshawar and eighth in KP. In line with Prime Minister's vision of developing Pakistan as a welfare state, the model facility will provide one star plus bed and breakfast facility with meals, essentials, hygiene, and security standards.

"So far, we have opened 39 model Panagahs nationwide. As per PM's special instructions, each model Panagah not only provides boarding and lodging to daily wage earners but also a two-time meal for them, and all this is done with utmost dignity. Each 'Panagah' serves free meals to around 500 people and offers 100-bed facility for overnight stay," said Dr. Sania. Adding further, she said, "Today, Ehsaas is also opening 'Ehsaas Koye Bhooka Na Soye' truck kitchen service in five districts of KP; Mardan, Haripur, Mansehra, Malakand, and Dera Ismail Khan. – APP

Session court Jhelum hold plantation ceremony



KAMRAN GUJJAR

JHELUM: Judicial Plantation Day was celebrated under the spring plantation campaign in Jhelum District, a plantation ceremony was held in Session Court Jhelum organized by the Forest Department. Chief Guest of this ceremony was District and Session Judge Jhelum Zia Khan. In addition to him, additional session judge,

divisional forest officer Sudhir Ahmed, SDFO Waqas Shah and Farhat Kamal Zia attended and prayed for the success of the campaign after planting. District and session judge said that we all have a great responsibility to plant trees and protect them because where there are trees, the weather is pleasant and the air is clear and the people there are healthy, environmental pollution can be controlled by plantation.

Drug-trafficker gang busted

FAISALABAD: The police have busted a drug-trafficker gang, arrested its 14 members and recovered heavy quantity of narcotics from them. Addressing a press conference at Police Lines here on Friday, City Police Officer (CPO) Ghulam Mubasshir Mekan said that a four-member team, headed by Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP) Gulberg Saleem Haidar Shah, was constituted to check drug-trafficking in educational institutions. The team, after recce, arrested the ring leader Hafiz Akif alias Ali Lal, Yaseen and other traffickers. The police also recovered 17.42-kilogram charas, 3.925-kg Ice and 3.1-kg heroin from them. – APP

S.Bagh delegation expresses full confidence in President PTI AJK

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from South Bagh called on President of PTI Azad Kashmir, Most Senior Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan. In this delegation, Prof. Sardar Asif Khan Kothian Jaji, Iftikhar Mughal, Sardar Mukhtar Khan, Sardar Shiraz Khan Gahl, Chaparian Naseem Khan Dhakan, Sardar Asghar Khan, Sardar Akhlaq Khan Retired Headmaster Shah Mir Kashar, Raja Tayyab Saleem, Sardar Abrar Khan Hatala, Wasim Khan Bhatta and Raja Khalid Mahmood were present. On this occasion, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that South Bagh is our priority in construction and development. All promises will be fulfilled. On the occasion, the delegation expressed full confidence in the leadership of President PTI. Political Coordinator Sardar Iftikhar Rashid was also present



in the meeting. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan further said that we are committed to make the region a model state in the true sense of the word.

CGs from Indonesia and Iran start Consumer Products exhibition

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Counsel General (CG) of Indonesia, Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat, has said that convention of an international exhibition in Karachi post Covid would further promote the bilateral relations between two countries. He was speaking at the inauguration of the third three-day International Consumer Products Exhibition at Expo Center organized by Ecommerce Gateway on Friday. "A large-scale manufacturing facility will be setup in Islamabad soon, which will create employment opportunities for the local populace," Dr. Hadiningrat said. He mentioned that Indonesian Martial Art was being introduced at the exhibition, which is shown in Hollywood movies. Talking about the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between two brotherly countries, Dr. Hadiningrat said Indonesia had completed their end of the work. "Now Pakistan government would take it further to the closing." Speaking on the occasion, Counsel General of Iran in Karachi, Hasan Nourian said Iran was trying to develop trade relations with Pakistan. "Peace is the primary requirement for economic development across the world. We hope that the conflict would be resolved through dialogue." At third three-day International Consumer



Products Exhibition at Expo Center organized by Ecommerce Gateway, over 150 brands from Pakistan, Indonesia and Iran are exhibiting their products including cosmetics, beauty products, toys, office stationary, food & beverages and several other consumer products. A large number of visitors appeared at the exhibition, and SOPs prescribed by NCOC were observed to the letter. The exhibition will continue till Sunday, February 27, 2022.

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GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
(CDA)

WALK – IN – INTERVIEW

The Capital Development Authority has been tasked to operationalize the Metro Bus System to New Islamabad International Airport. To undertake the said assignment including Installation of IIT System and Construction of Bus Depot with allied Works following staff is required:

- 1.Site Engineer (Civil) (1-position)**
- 2.Site Engineer (E&M)(1-position)**
- 3.IT Technician(1-position)**

Job Location: Islamabad

Eligibility: For Serial 1 & 2 Graduate Engineer with min. 4-years of Experience in relevant field. For Serial 3 DAE (Electronic / Communication / IT) with 3-year of experience in supervision of equipment installation preferably IIT System.

Salary: Rs.60,000 to 90,000/Month (lump-sum) based on qualification and experience.

Duration: 8-months or till completion of the Project.

Email: career.brtilslamabad@gmail.com

WALK – IN – INTERVIEW – Time 11:00am to 5:00pm on 8th March 2022, in the office of DDG (Works), Old Naval Complex, G-6 Markaz, Islamabad.

Note: Please carry your Academic and experience Certificates in original along with your resume.

PID (I) No. 6018/21

National Days and Armed Forces Days

- FEBRUARY**
 Feb 04/ Sri Lanka National Day
 Feb 06/ N. Zealand National Day
 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
 Feb 23/ Uzbekistan National Day
 Feb 23/ Brunei National Day
 Feb 23/ Guyana National Day
 Feb 23/ Russia National Army Day
 Feb 23/ Tajikistan Armed Forces Day
 Feb 25/ Kuwait National Day



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

- Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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 TMA.....5770886
 Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PRCS, TRC to repatriate 3000 stranded Pakistanis

Abrar ul Haq says Turkish Red Crescent has always supported Pakistan Red Crescent Society as a reliable partner in case of any disaster, emergency and provision of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and Turkish Red Crescent have recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to facilitate repatriation of 3000 Pakistanis stranded in Turkey. PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq and Turkish Red Crescent President Dr Kerem KINK signed the MoU in Turkey. Both dignitaries also exchanged mementos on this occasion. As per the agreement signed, PRCS will coordinate with the Turkish Red Crescent, to facilitate repatriation of Pakistanis stranded in Turkey. PRCS in collaboration with TRC, will also provide livelihood and financial assistance to these Pakistanis upon their arrival in Pakistan. This is a first of kind and unique



initiative in the history of Pakistan under which the stranded Pakistanis, will be provided livelihood and financial assistance so that they can live a normal life again in Pakistan after their return to their homeland. Speaking on the occasion,

Chairman Abrar ul Haq said that PRCS is serving the suffering humanity to the best of its capability and without any discrimination. He said Turkey has always stood side by side with people of Pakistan through thick and thin. He also paid

rich tributes to the TRC for their generous support and long-term partnership with the PRCS in humanitarian interventions in the last decades. "The TRC has always fulfilled its commitment to support PRCS as a reliable partner in case

of any disaster, emergency or provision of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable communities," he said. Abrar ul Haq said that the PRCS raised the humanitarian concerns of vulnerable Pakistani migrants living abroad, and is in contact

with the relevant government authorities to address their situation and their repatriation to Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Turkish Red Crescent President Dr Kerem KINK said relations between Pakistan and Turkey are time-tested. He said PRCS-TRC relationship has a history spanning over decades. "With each passing day, the cooperation is getting stronger. With signing of this MoU, the bilateral collaboration will get a fresh boost," he added. Later, PRCS delegation led by Chairman Abrar ul Haq visited different departments of TRC including Disaster Management, Logistics, First Aid and Blood Donation and acknowledged the humanitarian efforts being undertaken by TRC. PRCS Secretary General and TRC senior officials were also present on the occasion.

Traffic plan finalized for 1st Pak-AUS match

RAWALPINDI: The City Traffic Police (CTP) on Friday finalized a comprehensive plan to ensure smooth flow of traffic on main roads adjoining the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium where Pakistan and Australia teams were scheduled to practice and play first test match from February 27-March 8. As many as 350 traffic police personnel would perform special duties during the practice and match days to divert traffic on alternative routes. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Naveed Irshad said the practice session between the two teams would start on February 27. According to the plan, the Stadium Road from 9th Avenue Chowk to Double Road on both sides would remain completely closed during the match days. However, the traffic coming from Islamabad would be able to use Expressway and Murree Road from Faizabad. While, the traffic coming from 9th Avenue to Double Road would enter Rawalpindi via IJP Road, Pandora Chowk, Katarian, Carriage Factory, Piwadhai Mor, Chak Madad. Traffic from Rawalpindi to Islamabad via Double Road 9th Avenue will be able to enter Islamabad from Faizabad. Traffic from Rawalpindi to Islamabad will be diverted from 6th Road to Saidpur Road. Traffic coming from Ghousia Chowk will be diverted to Farooq Azam Road, Kuri Road, he added. During the matches, awareness banners are being displayed on the major highways for the convenience of the citizens. Additional personnel have been deployed to keep the traffic flowing on the alternative routes. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Senator Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

President for paradigm shift in education sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has called for a paradigm shift in the education sector to promote cutting-edge research and online mode of learning in the country. He underlined the need for preparing the nation in the field of emerging technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Data Analytics, Cloud Computing, Robotics and Automation to cope with the challenges of the modern era. The President expressed these views during a briefing on the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Islamabad, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Rector NUST, Lt General (ret'd) Engr. Javed Mahmood Bukhari, briefed the President about the contributions of his institution in providing quality science

and engineering education. He highlighted that NUST had established a first of its kind inter-disciplinary research facility in Pakistan to equip the next generation of researchers with cross-disciplinary expertise and create new knowledge and technologies. He added that NUST had developed into a multidisciplinary university and was offering education in various disciplines such as Information Technology, Social Sciences and Humanities, and Arts, Design & Architecture. He apprised that the university had planned to offer two of its programs-MS Engineering Management and MS Peace and Conflict Studies-through the online mode of education. It was further informed that the university was catering to the professional needs of the country by offering flagship courses

and trainings in Cyber Security, Data Analytics, Cloud Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Finance, Management, and Marketing. Addressing the meeting, the President said that it was imperative to promote and encourage the online mode of education for increasing the number of graduates to meet the rising demands of the market. He urged the universities to focus on the skill development of students, particularly in the IT sector, to enhance the country's exports besides meeting the growing demand of IT professionals in the global market. He lauded the establishment of the National Science and Technology Park at NUST, saying that such projects needed to be replicated to promote innovation-led growth as well as attract foreign investment from Hi-tech companies in the country's IT sector.

Two-day crafts festival on March 5

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The management Serena Hotels in collaboration with Nomad Gallery would organize a two-day Crafts Festival from March 5, promoting arts and crafts of the country. Maleeha Lodhi likely to be the chief guest in the inauguration ceremony of two-day festival, said a Founder Director Nomad Gallery Nageen Hyat. The festival aimed to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Islamabad Serena Hotel and would celebrate the International Women Day. The festival would be held at Bazaar Court Serena Hotel. The visitors will see live craftsmanship of the local craftsmen and to buy handicrafts lovingly made ranging from regional textile, handmade jewelry, block printed items, arts and crafts.

Malpractices, quality issues hampering solar prosumage

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Quality issues in solar panels, procedural malpractices in integration methods, inadequacy in solar product imports and lack of technical inspection for solar installations amid net-metering is hampering the transition towards renewable energy in Pakistan, an IPS study concludes. Titled 'Assessment of Net-Metering based Solar Systems Installed at IESCO & LESCO', the study was carried out by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) with the support of GIZ Pakistan (German Agency for International Cooperation) and Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB), with active participation of National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO), Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), Renewable Energy Association of Pakistan (REAP), Solar Quality Foundation (SQF) and several solar vendors. The research analysis is based on assessment of 40 solar photovoltaic system located at different locations in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore. The study, which was carried out under the technical expertise of Dr. Hassan Abdullah Khalid, a post-doctorate in solar energy systems, and investigated and authored by Muhammad Hamza Naeem and Lubna Riaz under the Institute's Energy, Water and Climate Change program - demonstrates that there is significant number of solar PV systems being installed which are non-compliant with the defined regulations and procedures of quality assurance, technical integration and international codes.

Govt helps in uplifting deserving sectors: Farrukh

Habib eulogized the philanthropic services of the companies in the far-flung areas of the country that didn't have the basic necessities of life and infrastructure to carry out such work

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The present government has the intention to establish a centralized hub for letting the corporate organisations combine their resources and work together to carry out the uplift work in the sectors that urgently deserve development. This was stated by State Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Farrukh Habib, while speaking as the chief guest at the 14th Annual International CSR (corporate social responsibility) Summit and Awards-2022 organised by the National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH). He said that holding the

CSR summit by assembling under one roof representatives of leading companies was one major step towards providing a common forum to different key players in the corporate sector to connect with each other and strive collectively for the shared social uplift goals for the betterment of the society. The State Minister said that human resource development and capacity building of the youth should be one major area of focus by the corporate sector for doing CSR-related work. He said the companies whose profits maximised during the last one year and earned billions of rupees were under the obligation to increase their spending



for the progress and uplift of the backward areas. He said the present government gave value to and extend utmost support to the corporate sector entities doing efforts and spending their resources for the uplift of the downtrodden communities. He said that

Prime Minister Imran Khan also fully understood the importance of CSR owing to his extensive social welfare work in the fields of education and health. Habib eulogized the philanthropic services of the companies in the far-flung areas of the country that didn't

have the basic necessities of life and infrastructure to carry out such work. He said the present government initiated its Ehsaas flagship programme to implement its vision to transform Pakistan into a welfare state. He informed the audience of the programme that a massive allocation of Rs 260 billion had been reserved to carry out work related to 34 different initiatives related to the Ehsaas programme. The State Minister said that a major initiative of the Ehsaas programme stood for providing 92,000 scholarships to the students of deserving families to get higher education in the public sector universities. He said the universal

health insurance coverage was another major drive of the present government to fulfil the basic needs of the people. Also speaking on the occasion, Federal Railways Minister, Azam Khan Swati, appreciated the efforts of the corporate sector to serve humanity at large and lessen the miseries of the underprivileged communities. He said the work of the corporate organisations in the areas of health, education, environmental protection, and other social sector deserved special praise. He said the corporate entities through their CSR drive had become a partner with the present government's drive to transform the lives of common people.

Gifting plants a new thing in twin-cities

ISLAMABAD: Gift-giving trend has slightly changed this year in twin-cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad as people have started gifting plant saplings to their loved ones instead of traditionally given synthetic gifts. A recent happening in Islamabad strongly espoused this notion, as a resident of the capital city gifted a cactus plant to every guest at a walima reception hosted by him. "This man placed an order at our nursery to deliver 100 saplings of cactus and succulent plant. We were surprised to learn that he was buying these plants for his guests," informed the owner of Al-Fazl Nursery Usman Khan. He further told APP that nowadays Islolities preferred to take along beautifully packed plant saplings instead of fruits or sweets whenever they paid a visit to their friends and family. The owner of Islamabad Nursery, Shujat Awan narrated the same story. He said that majority of his customers pick indoor plants such as an olevera or a cactus pot for gift-giving. "Since the advent of spring, a demand for outdoor and flowering plants has also been increased as people are giving them as presents to their friends and relatives," he added. - APP

'GDP growth of 4.8% to be achieved'

ISLAMABAD: Despite considerable international geo-political downside risks and emerging commodities super cycle phenomena, the government on Friday said that Pakistan's economy would reach around the original National Economic Council (NEC) economic growth target of 4.8% for fiscal year 2022 (FY22). According to a Mid-year Economic Review (July-Dec 2021-22) issued by the ministry of Planning, the agriculture sector is expected to achieve envisaged full year growth target of 3.5% keeping in view impressive performance of Kharif crop and prospects of good wheat crop, however, agriculture growth is mainly contingent upon availability of certified seed and pesticides during the Rabi season. The industrial sector was projected to grow by 6.5% based upon Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) target of 6%. However, with the revised full year number of LSM for FY22, achieving targeted 6% growth is now unlikely. Construction sector is expected to post healthy growth due to the construction amnesty scheme and concessional credit availability for the housing sector, the report added. It said the services sector growth is mostly reliant upon performance of commodity producing sectors and imports. The expected revival in the commodity producing sector and higher than anticipated growth in imports will push services sector growth upward. Higher financial intermediation, and 38% growth in IT related services will also provide additional boost to the Social and Community services sector. - APP

Eat festival invites to enjoy int'l culinary

ISLAMABAD: The food lovers would be welcomed to enjoy variety of international culinary delights from Saturday in a two-day Islamabad Eat Festival organised in F-9 Park. The event, 7th in the series, has been arranged by CKO Events Architecture and will kick off at 12:00 p.m and conclude at 11:00 p.m on both days. Head of Public Relations East River, Mohsin Ahmed said while talking to APP, "Many debutants and start-ups will be exclusively coming to the festival". This food fest is a register to attend function and is set to feature a wide variety of delicacies and cuisines including Middle Eastern, Thai, Japanese, Chinese, Mexican, South Indian, and many others. "We received over hundreds of applications, from which we have shortlisted around 60 for the stalls" Mohsin added further. - APP

Briefs

IT exports increase by 32.65%

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Information Technology (IT) exports have surged at the growth rate of 32.65 percent in the first seven months of the current financial year. "ICT export remittances, including telecommunication, computer, and information services for the period July 2021 to January 2022 during Financial Year (FY) 2021-22 have surged to the US \$1.487 billion at a growth rate of 32.65% in comparison to the US \$1.121 billion during the same period in FY 2020-21, said an official of the ministry of IT and Telecom. He said that in January 2022, the ICT export remittances are the US \$185 million at a growth rate of 14.2% when compared to US\$ 162 million reported for the month of January 2021. However, \$66 million was lower than export remittances during the previous month December 2021. The net exports for the period July 2021 to January 2022 during FY2021-22 are US\$ 1.116 billion which is 75.05% of US\$ 1.487 billion in exports. - APP

Pak earns US \$282m from travel services' export

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$282.010 million by providing different travel services in various countries during the first six months of the current financial year 2021-22. This shows the growth of 25.82 percent as compared to the US \$224.140 million same services were provided during the corresponding period of the last fiscal year 2020-21, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the month under review, the personal travel services increased by 25.79 percent, from the US \$223.330 million last year to the US \$280.920 million during July-December 2021-22. Among these personal services, the exports of personal expenditure rose by 78.02 percent while the education-related expenditure increased by 5.35 percent. In addition, the other personal services witnessed an increase of 26.13 percent. Meanwhile, the exports of business services also grew by 34.57 percent, from the US \$ 0.810 million to the US \$ 1.090 million, the PBS data revealed. It is pertinent to mention here that the exports of services from the country witnessed an increase of 20.24 percent during the first six months of current financial year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The exports of services during July-December (2021-22) were recorded at \$344.96 million against the exports of \$284.15 million in July-December (2020-21), showing growth of 20.24 percent. The imports also rose by 38.80 percent by growing from \$3784.27 million last year to \$5252.45 million during the period under review. - APP

Atta Ur Rehman ruled hearts of readers, says Fawad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Husain on Friday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of senior journalist and Group Editor of Daily "NaiBaat" Atta Ur Rehman. In a condolence message, he prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the deceased's family to bear this loss with fortitude. Fawad paid tribute to Atta Ur Rehman for his services to journalism and said he had ruled the hearts of his readers for two decades through his column under titled "Tajziya". Atta Ur Rehman also fulfilled his responsibilities as editor of Daily NaiBaat in an effective way, the minister added.

Ethiopia to open embassy in Pakistan to promote trade ties

President, ICCI said that Pakistan has made a Look Africa Policy to explore huge untapped region of Africa for trade and exports and close cooperation between Pakistan and Ethiopia would help it in getting better access to African market

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Redwan Hussain Rameto, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia said that an Ambassador was being assigned to Pakistan and soon a full-fledged embassy would also be opened here to promote trade and economic relations between the two countries. He said this while addressing the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Redwan Hussain Rameto said that Ethiopia was considering providing a visa on arrival facility to Pakistani businessmen so that they could easily visit his country to explore business opportunities. He said that flight resumption between Ethiopia and Pakistan was also under consideration to improve people to people contacts and trade relations. He said that Ethiopia was importing 80% of pharmaceutical products and Pakistani pharmaceutical sector investors



should set up JVs in Ethiopia to meet the needs of its market and export to African countries. He said that Ethiopia was providing a 10-year tax holiday to investors in its SEZs and Pakistani investors should capitalize on these opportunities. He highlighted pharma, garments, textiles, cement, ICT as major areas of potential cooperation between Ethiopia and Pakistan. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir,

President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan has made a Look Africa Policy to explore huge untapped region of Africa for trade and exports and close cooperation between Pakistan and Ethiopia would help it in getting better access to African market. He said that Pakistan was producing high quality surgical and pharmaceutical products and stressed that Ethiopia

should facilitate Pakistani pharmaceutical companies for registration in its market by lowering registration costs that would facilitate export of our surgical and pharmaceutical products to Ethiopia and through it to other African countries. He said that Pakistan could export many other products to Ethiopia including marble & granite, cement, leather products, rice, sports goods and stressed that opening

of an embassy of Ethiopia in Pakistan was very important to promote trade and economic relations between the two countries. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Ethiopia should consider negotiating a preferential or free trade agreement to promote trade relations up to their actual potential. They said that

both countries should encourage regular exchange of trade delegations to explore all potential areas of mutual cooperation. Khalid Iqbal Malik Chairman Founder Group, Mian Shaikat Masud, Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Mqbool, Fatima Azim and others also spoke at the occasion and gave useful suggestions to improve trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia.



ISLAMABAD: Head of Mission of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Disad Senol presenting a souvenir to the Vice Chancellor of Quaid e Azam University. - DNA

Skolkovo Foundation, STZA sign LOI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The historic visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Imran Khan, to the Russian Federation, has paved the way for both nations to undertake cooperation in many areas including technology. Skolkovo Foundation and the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) of Pakistan have signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) to boost cooperation in the technology sector, establish closer business relations and foster strategic cooperation and exchanges between the Russian and Pakistani scientific and technological institutions and enterprises. The LOI was signed between Mr. Igor Drozdov, Chairman of the Board, Skolkovo Foundation and Mr. Amer Ahmed Hashmi, Chairman, Special Technology Zones Authority and was witnessed by the Prime Minister. The

Skolkovo Foundation is a non-commercial organization, founded in Moscow, in 2010. The goal of the Foundation is to support technological entrepreneurship in Russia and to commercialize the results of scientific research activities. The number of Skolkovo residents already exceeds 3,200 and the Foundation provides them with an array of services that are necessary to roll out developments into international markets. Located at Skolkovo Innovation Center is the Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (Skoltech), which is listed in the Nature Index "Top-100 Young Universities" list. The Skolkovo - STZA collaboration is the latest addition to STZA's portfolio of strategic partnerships, intended to collaborate on opening new doors for the leading Russian technology companies and organizations seeking to operate in Pakistan's Special Technology Zones.

Govt to establish centralized hub for combining CSR resources

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The present government has the intention to establish a centralized hub for letting the corporate organisations combine their resources and work together to carry out the uplift work in the sectors that urgently deserve development. This was stated by State Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Farrukh Habib, while speaking as the chief guest at the 14th Annual International CSR (corporate social responsibility) Summit and Awards-2022 organised by the National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH). He said that holding the CSR summit by assembling under one roof representatives of leading companies was one major step towards providing



a common forum to different key players in the corporate sector to connect with each other and strive collectively for the shared social uplift goals for the betterment of the society. The State Minister said that human resource development and capacity building of the youth should be one major area of focus by the corporate sector for doing CSR-related work.

uplift of the downtrodden communities. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan also fully understood the importance of CSR owing to his extensive social welfare work in the fields of education and health. Habib eulogized the philanthropic services of the companies in the far-flung areas of the country that didn't have the basic necessities of life and infrastructure to carry out such work. He said the present government initiated its Ehsaas flagship programme to implement its vision to transform Pakistan into a welfare state. He informed the audience of the programme that a massive allocation of Rs 260 billion had been reserved to carry out work related to 34 different initiatives related to the Ehsaas programme.

PM reiterates stance of resolving disputes through dialogue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib Friday said Prime Minister Imran Khan, during his visit to Moscow (Russia), once again presented Pakistan's "principled stance" before the world that the dialogue was the only solution to resolve disputes. "Russia and Ukraine should resolve the issue through negotiations," the minister said on his Twitter handle while commenting on PM Imran Khan's two-day official visit to Russia. Faurkh said the PM's visit to Russia had proven the fact that Pakistan was striving to achieve lasting peace, security and economic development in the region instead of conflicts. Keeping the national interests supreme, the minister said the visit helped Pakistan in strengthening its position at the diplomatic level. He said those who had been raising questions on the timing of the PM visit should be aware that "the PM is a big player of big match." During the visit, the minister said, wide-ranging talks were held between the leaders of the two countries on different issues including Kashmir, Afghanistan, in the energy sector, bilateral relations and Islamophobia. "By the grace of Allah Almighty, I bowed down [before anyone], nor he will allow Pakistan to bow down," the minister remarked.



PNCA organizes puppet show

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Friday showcased a Puppet Show aimed at entertaining the audience along with family and friends. The show featured folk dances, stories, theme-based speeches, and skits for children and adults the colorful puppet show revolved around current issues including gender disparity, contrariety in education, and environmental challenges and there will be an exclusive show for kids as well, which ensured infotainment according to the theme. Due to COVID-19, the puppet shows were being canceled, but the shows were scheduled four times a month as a regular feature by the National Puppet Theatre (NPT) of PNCA. Such events provide the required boost to puppetry and help people, especially the younger generation to become aware of it, said a press release issued here. The traditional art of puppetry was dying and PNCA has been struggling so long to revive this art adding that such events help in reviving this traditional art form the art of puppetry and puppet shows have long been a part of Pakistani culture. The importance of puppetry was such beautiful and colorful art and an effort to bring back this art form can be useful both for entertainment and education purposes. - APP

Various food items go down

ISLAMABAD: The prices of various food items went down during the week ending on February 24 as compared to the previous week, according to the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) data released by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) here Friday. According to the data, the food commodities that witnessed decrease in prices on Week-on-Week (WoW) basis included garlic and onions, the prices of which declined by 5.28 percent and 2.63 percent respectively. The other food products that witnessed decrease in prices included eggs (2.60%), potatoes (2.00%), pulse Moong (0.90%), LPG (0.76%), gur (0.75%), pulse Gram (0.27%), pulse Masoor (0.11%), pulse Mash (0.02%) and firewood (0.02%). On Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease in prices during the week compared to corresponding week of last year included chillies powdered (36.30%), pulse Moong (29.33%), sugar (5.36%), onions (4.04%), potatoes (3.71%) and eggs (0.61%). - APP

NUST honours its partners in nation building

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) celebrated the multitudinal impact of its friends and partners in nation building through the landmark NUST Endowment for Educational Development (NEED) initiative. The ambitious programme is aimed at making NUST accessible to deserving students from low-income backgrounds, and is bolstered by the university's own resources and external funding. Arranged at the picturesque NUST campus in Islamabad, the exclusive celebratory event was attended by industrialists, academicians and distinguished individuals from different walks of life, who have been the backbone of this initiative since its commencement in the year 2015. In addition, an overwhelming number of NUST partners virtually participated in the event from across the globe. In his remarks, Lt Gen (Retd) Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST, said that today we have gathered at NUST to celebrate and pay tribute to our partners, who have been generous in supporting financially challenged students to pursue their cherished academic goals at Pakistan's finest seat of higher learning. He highlighted that despite the fact that NUST has a very affordable fee structure as compared to other reputed national universities, over 50% of student populace, who manage to get enrolled at NUST purely on the basis of merit, hail from lower-income households. - APP

PNCA holds book launching ceremony of "My Tree Book"

Ms. Nigar Nazar, renowned cartoonist and Illustrator has authored this book and lauding her effort, Pakistan National Council of the Arts has organized the book launch ceremony-cum show at PNCA's Auditorium in collaboration with Gogi Studio and Ministry of Climate Change

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with Gogi Studios and Ministry of Climate Change has organized a book launching ceremony "My Tree Book" along with Mime & cartoon show at PNCA. The event was meant to enlighten youth and children about the negative impact of less tree environment on climate resulting in global warming and importance of trees and forests in controlling the rising temperatures and Glacier Lake outburst flooding. Ms. Nigar Nazar, renowned cartoonist and Illustrator has authored this book and lauding her effort, PNCA has organized the book launch ceremony-cum show at PNCA's Auditorium in collabora-

tion with Gogi Studio and Ministry of Climate Change. Mr. Zahir Shah, Director General PNCA welcomed the honourable chief guest Malik Amin Aslam, Federal Minister and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Mr. Jaudat Ayaz, Federal Additional Secretary (MOCC) and Project Director (Glof) and H.E Manuel Duran Ginenez-Rico, Ambassador of Spain Embassy in Pakistan. He also thanked Ms. Nigar Nazar, the first Pakistani female cartoonist to present such an informative book with interactive style of description and illustration through cartoons which will definitely help and encourage the audience and public to overcome environmental issues. Mr. Jaudat Ayaz, Project Director (Glof-IN/ Additional Secretary, Ministry of

Climate Change while recalling his childhood memories of seeing Gogi on TV and newspapers told the audience that Gogi was the popular cartoon character in 1970s & 1980, while going to school and college he eagerly used to see gogi cartoons on TV and in newspapers. He also thanked Ms. Nigar Nazar to present some information on awareness on Golf issue in her "My Tree Book". Golf (glacial lake outburst flooding) is a possible hazardous flood in northern areas of Pakistan leading to loss of lives, properties and livelihoods of the communities living in remote and impoverished areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan which can be handled through growing trees in areas besides taking other precautionary measures. Malik Amin Aslam, chief guest of the ceremony while talking

to the audience, highlighted the danger of pollution on environment through quoting an instance of piling up of plastic garbage equivalent to two mountains of K2 which he related with "kooraykajin" authored by Ms. Nigar Nazar in 2002 when he was State Minister for Ministry of Environment. He applauded consistent commitment of Ms. Nigar Nazar to create awareness on social & environmental issues through her comic and record books especially "Garbage Monster/ Koorayka Jinn" & "My Tree Book" emphasizing on impact of pollution, Glof & global warming on environment and climate and the presenting the ways out to cope up with these issues. PNCA & Gogi Studios also presented "My Tree Book" through a song "Aik Achaibhi Achiha", mime and cartoon show

which was highly applauded by the guests and students. Ms. Nigar Nazar while formally launching her book has eagerly and keenly 1 educated students through illustrations to clean the environment, not let the other children and elders to throw garbage on public places, grow trees and enjoy clean and cool environment. She in her record book, "My Tree Book" has illustrated and described the importance of tree in keeping the environment clean, presented information on process of planting seeds and growing trees, functions of trees to purify water and pollutants, unique trees in the world and steps taken to cope with Glof through Glog II project which will install automatic weather stations, build structures and plant trees to avoid glacier flooding.

Britain and Ukraine

BORIS Johnson was quickly out of the blocks when the news arrived from Ukraine before dawn. By 5am, a tweet was out in his name condemning Russia's military invasion and promising a decisive response. He spent the morning getting briefed and on the phone to other leaders, including President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv. At midday he broadcast to the nation, and in the early afternoon he took part in a virtual G7 meeting to coordinate sanctions against Russia with the US, the EU, Japan and Canada. By 5pm, he was spelling out the UK's new plans in the House of Commons. Mr Johnson is a prime minister on probation with his own party. His initial announcement of sanctions against a handful of Russian banks and oligarchs had been scorned, including by Tories, as underwhelming. So Thursday night's new package went further, as it should have done even without Russia's assault. Although the G7 failed to agree to exclude Russia from the Swift international banking system, the package they agreed is substantial. Mr Johnson announced new curbs covering banks, exports, the freezing of assets and a ban on the Russian airline Aeroflot. These were the easier bits. Warm words are Mr Johnson's comfort zone. But the invasion of Ukraine is not a verbal joust. It is a violent and dangerous fact. It will not be reversed by sonorous phrases. To do that requires serious planning, deliverable agreements, effective deeds, the building of trust with allies, and sustaining the effort over a long period, if necessary at some financial and human cost. This is the bit where Mr Johnson always falls down. Nevertheless, these leadership qualities are essential in the dangerous new world that Russia created this week. This is, as Keir Starmer said, a turning point. Mr Johnson talked some of the talk in his broadcast, with references to "our European continent", about Ukrainian "neighbours and co-workers", and about responding "in concert with our allies". He was quite right. But is he capable of turning words into consistent realities? To do so will demand a major change in approach from the government and the prime minister. In particular, it will mean working hard, consistently and reliably with the EU and allied European governments on big issues like defence, intelligence, energy, sanctions and the treatment of refugees. It will require an end to smug claims to be world-leading, to threats to break treaty commitments, and to public digs at neighbours and allies. It is a tall order.

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Counting people

MINISTER for Planning Asad Umar, who set up the National Coordination Centre for Census, which is to be conducted in August this year, has said that this first digitised census in the country will provide accurate data that could be used in the election next year. Asad Umar, along with Chief Statistician Dr Naeemuz Zafar have explained that the modus operandi of the census would be somewhat different to those conducted in the past, with every person counted on the basis of where he or she had lived for the past six months, and without the involvement of CNICs or permanent residential addresses. This is in some ways significant, given delimitations, and the planning of various cities. For example, in Karachi, while many people may hold domiciles which lie in other areas, the fact is that they live in Karachi, which means a census that counts the number of people currently living in Karachi or Lahore, or Faisalabad is immensely significant. A census is vital, not only for delimitations ahead of elections, but also for the allocations of resources to provinces, including finances and other assets required to run the province. Around 115,000 enumerators from various departments have been hired to survey 180,000 housing blocks with each enumerator to count two blocks every 30 days. Census and their accuracy has long been a problem in Pakistan with many disputes occurring over the manner in which they are conducted and whether the data put together is reliable. Politics comes into the picture with attempts made in the past to change figures in order to redefine constituencies in different manners based on the number and location of people who live there. We hope that this digitised census will give us a true picture of people living in the country, where they live, and what they do. Asad Umar has also said a census on the economic situation of people would also be coordinated with the national census. This too is immensely significant. Certainly, we need reliable data on the number of people in the country and where they live. Housing blocks have already been expanded from 168,000 in 2017, when the last census was conducted to at least 180,000 in 2022. This makes the task even more difficult in some ways, but nevertheless extremely important. We hope that the census, a pilot project for which will be run in May, goes ahead smoothly – and we welcome the fact that the census is being conducted within 10 years of the last such exercise, as is laid down within the constitution of Pakistan.

And so, Cold War II begins

Marwan Bishara

In his recent speeches, Putin has challenged Ukraine's right to sovereignty and independence, paving the way for greater Russian intervention in the country's affairs

THE Russian invasion of Ukraine has started in a blitzkrieg with incalculable ramifications for the two countries and the world. As Russia bombs its neighbour, it is actually targeting its strategic nemesis, the United States.

This is only the latest and most serious in a series of Russian force projections over the past two decades that are not dissimilar to some of America's own military adventures across the world. But the scale and scope of the Ukrainian invasion seems more like Moscow's menacing power projections during the Cold War, when the Soviet Union intervened in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Afghanistan in 1979.

And judging by President Vladimir Putin's rhetoric, Russia is only getting started. In his recent speeches, Putin has challenged Ukraine's right to sovereignty and independence, paving the way for greater Russian intervention in the country's affairs.

After recognising the two breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk earlier this week, the Russian president ordered the military to deploy into eastern Ukraine as "peacekeepers". He then launched a "special military operation" that has extended military action across Ukraine, including the capital Kyiv.

In response, Western powers have condemned the Russian transgression as a gross violation of international law, and imposed swift, crippling sanctions against Russia.

That may only be the beginning, as the West moves to totally break with and isolate Russia. But the Kremlin seems prepared and rather unfazed. If history is any guide, major powers like Russia are not dissuaded by sanctions, no matter how severe, when it comes to pursuing their core national security interests. By way of comparison, Iran, a far less significant power than Russia, has shown that punitive measures by the West may hurt a lot, but can change very little, except when used as leverage in negotiations.

If or when sanctions start to bite and Russia begins to suffer, expect Moscow to react radically, even erratically in Ukraine and beyond. Much will depend on China and its readiness to help Russia circumvent Western sanctions, as it did for Iran. During a visit to Beijing earlier this month, the Russian president and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, issued a joint statement against NATO expansion. After Russia launched the invasion, a Chinese government spokesperson refused to name it as such and called for "restraint" on both sides. The ramifications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine will inform China's own future moves to annex Taiwan. Putin's reference to Ukraine as an artificial state echoes China's own denunciation of Taiwan's statehood.

Intentionally, and perhaps as a form of geopolitical trolling, Putin has been echoing Washington's own past arguments to justify his ongoing violations of Ukrainian sovereignty. In recognising the breakaway regions, the Kremlin claimed that it was supporting their right to self-determination, just as the West did for Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and Bosnians during the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. And just as the US and its European allies used the UN-mandated "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) principle to justify their "humanitarian" interventions in other states, such as Libya, Russia is referring to it to justify its intervention in Ukraine, which supposedly aims to stop a "genocide". Russia supporters used to claim that R2P was invented by the Americans to launch wars, but it is used by Russia for preventing one.

Well, not any more. Russia's incursions in Ukraine in 2014 were only the beginning of what seems to be a wider invasion and a more

devastating war.

But even Putin's most outrageous claim about Ukraine's capacity to develop nuclear weapons and threaten Russia is no more farcical than Washington's claim about Saddam Hussein developing weapons of mass destruction, as a pretext to invade faraway Iraq, which Biden, then a senator, supported. Indeed, both Russia and the United States are like soulless casinos, willing to gamble and take the risk and the loss, as long as they control the game or are able to game the international system to their advantage. Some claim that equating American democracy and Russian autocracy makes for a false equivalence. As a liberal democrat, I concur: there is more accountability in a democracy than in an autocracy.

But historically, when it comes to foreign affairs, the behaviour of major powers on the world stage is driven mainly by the nature of geopolitical, strategic ambitions and necessities, not by the nature of their system of governance. But then again, the Soviet Union and its successor, the Russian Federation, have also been violent towards their neighbours. When asked what it means for Russia to be perceived as an "aggressor", a government spokesperson recently said that was an invention by the West whose reputation is "covered in blood". Sadly, since the end of the Cold War, both Russia and the US have led mostly by the example of their power and rarely by the power of their example, undermining in the process international peace and security.

They have deployed the wrong means to the right ends, and the right means to the wrong ends, launching devastating wars to establish peace and stability, and providing poor nations with economic and security assistance only to prop up dictators. They have wasted three decades, focusing primarily on advancing their own narrow interests just as they did during the Cold War, and in the process only paved the way for, well, another Cold War.

This will be a dark period for Europe and, indeed, the world.

—Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Jerusalem should be a beacon of peace, not the heart of conflict

Daoud Kuttab



Every avenue for a peaceful resolution of the conflict has been blocked by the Israeli government. Israel and its allies are doing precisely what they denounced the Arab world for doing after the 1967 Khartoum Arab League summit, in which leaders issued the "Three Nos" – no peace, no negotiations and no recognition of Israel

ANYONE interested in understanding the roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict need only visit East Jerusalem. There you can see all the major flashpoints. After four years of meticulous, exhaustive study, Amnesty International recently published a report showing that, in all areas under Israeli control, two very different systems exist: One that honors rights, equality and freedom for Israeli Jews; and one that denies rights, equality and freedom for Palestinian Arabs.

This racial discrimination is clear to see in Sheikh Jarrah. After the 1948 war, Palestinian refugees in this East Jerusalem neighborhood lived in squalid tents until the UN, cooperating with the Jordanian government, agreed to build homes for them. But since Israel occupied East Jerusalem in June 1967, it has honored undocumented claims by Jews who say that a particular plot of land belonged to their 19th-century ancestors, while denying Palestinians' claims to homes and lands that their parents and grandparents were forced to flee during the heat of the war. Making matters worse, Jewish settlers who have appointed themselves caretakers have increasingly succeeded in forcing Palestinian families from their homes, so that they can be turned over to Jewish families. These evictions, carried out with the help of the Israeli army, are clear violations of international law. When the Fourth Geneva Convention (on civilians) was drafted after the Second World War, its express purpose was to forbid precisely this kind of ethnic cleansing. Not far from Sheikh Jarrah is another hot spot. In 2014, a US-sponsored agreement between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and King Abdullah of Jordan demarcated Islam's third holiest mosque, Al-Aqsa, as a shrine where only Muslims may pray, but where all others may visit.

Now, the agreement is being violated daily as Israeli security forces allow Jewish extremists to visit the site to pray – a highly charged act that threatens to turn a political conflict into a religious war.

The offense is so great that King Abdullah – the head of the Hashemite family, which maintains custodianship over Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites – is yet to meet publicly with Israel's current head of state, President Isaac Herzog, or Prime Minister Naftali Bennett (though he did meet both leaders secretly last year). North, south and east of Sheikh Jarrah, Israel has built an eight-meter-high cement wall dividing Palestinian neighborhoods. It has provided separate roads for Jewish Israelis, while denying access to basic services for Palestinian residents, especially those living beyond the wall but under Israeli control. Some 100,000 Jerusalemites live in areas where Israeli services and security are absent, but Palestinian police are not permitted entry. In these legal twilight zones, violence, drugs and lawlessness are rife.

Israel's discriminatory policies are not only violations of international law, they are also being implemented with brute force and intimidation. Owing to the tensions in Jerusalem, the Occupied Territories have become a battle zone where hooligan settlers routinely attack Palestinians, who can defend themselves only by throwing stones. Israel frequently prevents Palestinians from engaging in even peaceful political activity and events as innocent as a puppet show can be shut down if they are funded by or through the Ramallah-based Palestinian semi-government. Last April, the Palestinian leadership had to cancel a general election because Israel barred Palestinians in East Jerusalem from using post offices there to mail absentee ballots – an open refusal by Tel Aviv to honor its commitments under the Oslo Accords.

The deteriorating situation in Jerusalem and the daily clashes between illegal settlers and Palestinians across the Occupied Territories reflect the absence of any political horizon in the conflict. The Palestinian government is unable to intervene because it is too weak to confront the Israeli occupiers. Palestinians are left to resist the occupiers on their own, without any source of hope for the future.

Every avenue for a peaceful resolution of the conflict has been blocked by the Israeli government. Israel and its allies are doing precisely what they denounced the Arab world for doing after the 1967 Khartoum Arab League summit, in which leaders issued the "Three Nos" – no peace, no negotiations and no recognition of Israel. Bennett comes from a far-right, pro-settler party and has made it clear that he has no intention of holding talks with the Palestinians. He boasts about his refusal to even meet with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and he remains staunchly opposed to the two-state solution. Jerusalem will always be a holy city for all three major monotheistic religions, and it remains the home of Palestinians and Israelis alike. But it has not served as the beacon of peace that many had hoped it would. Instead, it has become the center of the conflict. Without a serious effort to defuse the situation in Jerusalem and to provide political hope through a credible peace process, violence could easily spin out of control.

—Courtesy: Arab News

When will it be safe to take off our masks?

Frank Kane

The UK this week became the latest to declare victory over the virus with a splashy announcement from Prime Minister Boris Johnson that self-isolation in cases of infection would end on Thursday and free testing would stop at the end of next month

A health expert with a smattering of classical education recently quipped: "It's a long way from omicron to omega." She was talking about the likelihood that the omicron variant of the coronavirus would be its last serious manifestation. The World Health Organization began naming variants after letters in the Greek alphabet in May last year. Omicron is the 15th letter in an order that ends with omega in 24th place. So, on the face of it, we are well into the second half of the pandemic, with the end in sight. But there are still a

lot of letters to go in that sequence, which, of course, might not even end with omega. That has not stopped governments all over the world from effectively calling the end of the pandemic, or at least its transition into the endemic phase.

The UK this week became the latest to declare victory over the virus with a splashy announcement from Prime Minister Boris Johnson that self-isolation in cases of infection would end on Thursday and free testing would stop at the end of next month. With regard to masks, it was a matter of "personal responsibility" to wear them or not. Beleguared Boris has his own domestic political reasons for wanting to spread a feelgood factor around the UK electorate, but the ending of restrictions is also part of a global trend. Virtually every country has recently relaxed rules on the wearing of masks, social distancing and other measures brought in to counter the virus. Travel restrictions, in particular on air travel, have been steadily removed, although international passenger numbers are still way down on 2019 levels. At least a couple of times a week over the past two years, I have clicked on to the coronavirus page of The Financial Times website, which is about the best source of statistical data on global cases, fatalities and vaccination rates. An impressive recent addition to this coverage was an active timeline map illustrating "government response stringency" since the pandemic began. From light blue to dark purple, the map shows how locked-down the world was in the

various phases of the pandemic.

Pulsing dark red to purple during the savage infections of last year, the map is now mainly yellow to pink, showing that governments are progressively opening up again. The big question is: Are they justified in their belief that the worst is over and that omicron spells the end of the pandemic?

Anthony Fauci, the American public health official, recently said that, in the US, which has suffered the most fatalities in absolute terms with 937,000, "people are just up to here with COVID – they just really need to somehow get their lives back."

All the experts agree that the key is vaccination, both in terms of controlling infections and suppressing symptoms. Some 10.6 billion doses of the vaccine have been administered globally so far, implying that we are still some way off the minimum vaccination target of at least two shots per person. There are, of course, wide regional variations within that. The Gulf region has done particularly well in this respect. The UAE has the highest proportion of fully vaccinated people (at least two doses) in the world at 95.5 percent. Saudi Arabia, with its much larger population, has hit 70 percent, roughly the same as the EU. It is no coincidence that regional economies are also rebounding from the pandemic recession faster than the global average. The lesson seems to be: Vaccinate and – cautiously – get back to normal. But watch out for the letters toward the end of the Greek alphabet.

—Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Security tightened...

FROM PAGE 01

anti-polio in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that so far first phase of ongoing completed in six Southern provinces whereas in remaining will be commenced from Monday. "Over 42 thousands personnel of Police and Frontier Constabulary are escorting the polio workers whereas other military and para military troops in all respective districts are on high alert," spokesperson Aimal Riaz remarked. He informed that during current campaign to be completed on March 6th next over 7.2 million children below five years will be vaccinated. The police officials at Dera Ismael Khan informed that unknown saboteurs riding on motorbike have opened indiscriminate firing against a policeman who was security duty with a polio team at Qayoom Nagar in jurisdiction of University police station on Friday morning. The policeman sustained injuries and he was rushed to hospital whereas the attackers succeeded in escape. It was the second attack against policemen on polio duty Dera Ismael Khan during current week. Though authorities are hopeful of ending polio virus during current calendar year but Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries in world whereas the polio virus still exists. The unknown mysterious attacks against the polio workers are hindering global community's integrated efforts for eradicating polio virus of its roots throughout the world. Pakistan succeeded in making fruitful its efforts against polio virus after imposition of border and travelling restrictions against Afghanistan and its people.

Xi urges Putin...

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that Beijing respects all countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity, without elaborating on whether Russia's invasion of Ukraine violated these principles. Chinese officials have questioned whether Russia's invasion should be called "an invasion", while state media has said Putin is conducting a "special military operation" and reiterated the Russian president's claim that he had no plans to occupy Ukraine. China's refusal to acknowledge the all-out military assault and the attack on cities such as Kyiv, much less join in international condemnation of it, reflected the strength of Xi's relationship with Putin, according to experts.

Putin wants Ukraine...

FROM PAGE 01

it seems like it will be easier for us to agree with you than this gang of drug addicts and neo-Nazis. Putin further repeated his claim that the Ukrainian leadership had been engaged in "genocide" in the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine. We are fighting with nationalist groups that are directly responsible for the genocide of the Donbas and the bloodshed of peaceful civilians in the two republics.

Europe, NATO have...

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that Ukraine's fate was at stake. In a new video message on Friday, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky again called for direct talks with Russian leader Vladimir Putin. Speaking in Russian, Zelensky said: "I would like to address the President of the Russian Federation once again. There is fighting all over Ukraine now. Let's sit down at the negotiation table to stop the people's deaths." Zelensky returned to the theme of international sanctions against Russia, which he wants to be much tougher. Zelensky also made a direct appeal to the people of Europe. "Go out, go out on the squares. Demand the end of this war. It is your right. When bombs fall in Kyiv, this is happening in Europe and not just in Ukraine. When missiles kill our people it is killing of all, all Europeans."

UEFA moves UCL final from Russia to Paris

UEFA thanked French President Emmanuel Macron for "his personal support and commitment" to have the game moved to France at "a time of unparalleled crisis"

NEWS DESK

LONDON: The 2022 Champions League final will be played in Paris after Russia was stripped of the match following the nation's invasion of Ukraine. The final of Europe's most prestigious club competition was due to be played in St Petersburg on 28 May. UEFA said the match would not be held at the Gazprom Arena and would move to the Stade de France in Paris instead. Meanwhile, Russia's Formula 1 Grand Prix, due to take place in Sochi in September, has been cancelled. UEFA thanked French President Emmanuel Macron for "his personal support and commitment" to have the game moved to France at "a time of unparalleled crisis". It added: "Together with the French government, Uefa will fully support multi-stakeholder efforts to ensure the provision of rescue for

football players and their families in Ukraine who face dire human suffering, destruction and displacement." It is the third year running the venue of the Champions League final has been moved. In 2020, it was switched from Istanbul to Lisbon because of the coronavirus pandemic. The Turkish city was set to host the game last year instead but it was again moved to Portugal - this time, Porto - because of the pandemic. The decision to strip St Petersburg of the final has been criticised by Russian sporting and political officials. Russian Football Union (RFU) president Alexander Dyukov, who serves on the Uefa executive committee and is the chief executive of Gazprom subsidiary Gazprom Neft, said he "could not support" the move. "We believe the decision was dictated by political reasons. The RFU has always adhered to the principle of 'sport is out of poli-



tics," he said. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov added: "It's a shame that such a decision has been made. St Petersburg could have provided all favourable conditions to hold this festival of soccer." However, UK Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries welcomed "decisive action" by Uefa. "Russia must not be allowed to exploit sporting and cultural events on the world stage to legitimise its unprovoked, premeditated and needless attack against a sovereign dem-

ocratic state," said Conservative MP Dorries. Labour's Lucy Powell, the shadow culture secretary, agreed it was a "welcome step". At its emergency meeting on Friday, Uefa also ordered Russian and Ukrainian clubs and national teams to play their home matches away from the region. Spartak Moscow are the only Russian team left in European club competition this season and have been drawn against German side RB Leipzig in the last 16 of the Europa League. Spartak, along with other Russian and Ukrainian sides, will "be required to play their home matches at neutral venues until further notice," said Uefa. "The RFU also does not support the decision to transfer any matches involving Russian teams to neutral territory as violating the sports principle and infringing on the interests of players, coaches and fans," said Dyukov. Russia and Ukraine are both

scheduled to play 2022 men's World Cup play-off matches in March, with world governing body Fifa saying on Thursday it was monitoring the situation in the region. Russia are due to host Poland in Moscow on 24 March, while Ukraine travel to Scotland on the same day. In the statement announcing its decisions, Uefa did not mention its relationship with Russian state-run gas giant Gazprom. Gazprom is one of Uefa's major sponsors in a long-term deal worth about £30m, as well as holding the naming rights for St Petersburg's 68,000-capacity stadium. Gazprom is also the main sponsor of German club Schalke, who announced on Thursday the logo of the company would be removed from the club's shirts. Alex Phillips, a former Uefa executive and now an independent adviser to Fifa, said Uefa will have to "seriously revise who they accept sponsorships with".

Talks only when...

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goal is to free Ukraine of "external management" carried out by the US and "Nazis," Lavrov told a news conference in Moscow, echoing President Vladimir Putin's earlier statement saying the attack aimed at the "denazification" of Ukraine. "We're ready for negotiations at any moment as soon as the armed forces of Ukraine respond to our proposal, stop resisting, lay down their weapons, - nobody is going to abuse them, nobody is going to oppress them - let's return to our families and allow the Ukrainian people to decide their fate themselves," he said. Explaining Russia's motives, Lavrov said Moscow had tried for eight years to address the Ukrainian crisis peacefully, through promoting implementation of the 2014 Minsk agreement while, in his words, Kyiv "sabotaged the process with the support of the West." Lavrov said nobody even verbally called on Kyiv to fulfill the Minsk agreement but instead put pressure on Russia, and "motivated the Ukrainian government to persecute everything Russian in Ukraine."

Mexican Open: Medvedev to face Rafael Nadal



SPORTS DESK

MEXICO CITY: Incoming men's world number one Daniil Medvedev will face Rafael Nadal in a repeat of their epic Australian Open final after both reached the Mexican Open semi-finals. British number one Cameron Norrie also reached the last four with a 6-1 6-0 victory over Germany's Peter Goujczyk. Medvedev, who replaces Novak Djokovic as world number one on Monday, won 6-2 6-3 against Japan's

Yoshihito Nishioka. Nadal moved into the semi-finals with a 6-0 7-6 (7-5) win over Tommy Paul. The 35-year-old Spaniard won a record 21st men's Grand Slam title by beating Medvedev in a gripping Melbourne final last month. Medvedev, 26, is set to become the world number one for the first time after Serbia's Djokovic lost to Czech qualifier Jiri Vesely in Dubai. "It's not easy to play a match when you get this news during the day," said Medvedev, who found out he would

take over from Djokovic when he started receiving congratulatory messages earlier on Thursday. "The first goal for me was to still win today because I'm here to try to win every match I play. But it's definitely some great news." However, Medvedev's celebrations have been dampened by the more serious news of his home nation launching a full-scale invasion on neighbours Ukraine. "Watching the news from home, waking up here in Mexico, was not easy," Medvedev said. "By being a tennis player, I want to promote peace all over the world. We play in so many different countries; I've been in so many countries as a junior and as a pro. "It's just not easy to hear all this news. I'm all for peace." After dropping just 10 points in a dominant opening set against Paul, Nadal went a break down early in the second but there were five more breaks of serve on the way to the tie-break. Paul led it 2-0 before Nadal recovered to set up another meeting with Medvedev on Friday. "I think I played one of my best sets for a long time," Nadal said of the opening set against Paul.



Russian star Rublev pleads for peace

DUBAI: Russian world No 7 Andrey Rublev sent out a message for peace and unity after he advanced to his third semi-final in as many weeks with a 2-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory over American Mackenzie McDonald in Dubai on Thursday. In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Rublev posted a photo on Instagram of two characters featuring the colours of the two nations' respective flags hugging each other. He later told reporters in Dubai how tough it was to step on court in light of everything that was happening. "In these moments you realise that my match is not important. It's not about my match, how it affects me. What's happening is much more terrible," the Olympic gold medalist said. "You realise how important it is to have peace in the world and to respect each other no matter what, to be united. It's about that we should take care of our Earth and of each other. This is the most important thing." Rublev is one of many Russian athletes to receive verbal attacks online. "Of course I get some bad comments on Internet because I am Russian, so I get some aggressive comments like not in a good way. I cannot react on them because if I react on them, I'm going to show (I am) the same (as them)," he explained. - News Desk

Germany says Vladimir...

FROM PAGE 01

against Ukraine, the Russian Government is breaking the most fundamental rules of the international order before the eyes of the world. Russia alone has chosen this course. Over the past few months, we have spared no effort to try to find a peaceful solution to this Russia crisis through diplomatic channels. Russia did not respond to our offers of dialogue. The Ukrainians have done nothing that could justify this bloodshed. The aim of this war is to destroy one thing above all - the hope of the people in Ukraine that, after decades without freedom, they would have a right to democracy, a right to peace and a right to a better future without oppression. President Putin, you will never be able to destroy this dream. It is growing in Ukraine, and it is growing in your country, too. I am convinced that many people in Russia, too, will be ashamed at this attack and appalled that Russia's name will be damaged for decades by the unscrupulous murder of their brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

Klitschko brothers to take up arms and fight

WEB DESK

KYIV: Former heavyweight boxing champion Vitali Klitschko said he would take up arms alongside his brother and fellow Hall of Famer Wladimir Klitschko to fight in what is a "bloody war" following Russia's invasion of their country Ukraine. Russia launched its invasion by land, air and sea on Thursday following a declaration of war by President Vladimir Putin. An estimated 100,000 people have fled as explosions and gunfire rocked major cities. Dozens have been reported killed. Vitali Klitschko, who has been the mayor of Ukraine's capital Kyiv since 2014, said he was ready to fight. "I don't have another choice, I have to do that. I'll be fighting," the 50-year-old, known as "Dr Ironfist" dur-



ing his fighting days, told broadcaster ITV's Good Morning Britain. Vitali Klitschko said Kyiv was under threat and the main priority was to work with police and military forces to support critical infrastructure including the delivery of electricity, gas and water for its citizens. He added civilians were ready to defend Kyiv as soldiers. "I believe in Ukraine, I believe in my country and I believe in my people," Vi-

tali Klitschko said. Former heavyweight champion Wladimir Klitschko enlisted in Ukraine's reserve army earlier this month, saying that the love for his country compelled him to defend it. "The Ukrainian people are strong. And it will remain true to itself in this terrible ordeal. A people longing for sovereignty and peace. A people who consider the Russian people their brothers," he wrote in a post on LinkedIn on Thursday.

Qalandars to face Sultans in PSL final

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Lahore Qalandars have qualified for the final of this year's Pakistan Super League (PSL) after beating Islamabad United by six runs in the heart-stopping eliminator two clash at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. David Wiese's three sixes and one four in the last over have helped Lahore Qaland-

ars post a fighting 168-run total in the do-or-die eliminator two. Lahore after deciding to bat first, got off to the worst possible start as the in-form Fakhar Zaman was removed by Liam Dawson who bowled a brilliant new-ball spell. After that, Abdullah with Kamran Ghulam forged a crucial 73-run stand for the third wicket to steer the inning against a good bowling attack of United. Ghulam rotated the strike to keep the scoreboard ticking, while Abdullah took the attack against the opponent bowlers as he notched three sixes and four fours in a 28 ball knock. After Abdullah's dismissal by Waqas Masood, United got the dominant hand over Lahore as they made it difficult for their battles to carve out quick runs. They also displayed brilliant fielding as Harry Brook was run-out by a brilliant throw from Muhammad Wasim, and Samit Patel was caught by Muhammad Huraira who took a brilliant running catch. It was in the last over when Wiese went rampant against Waqas as he shamed three sixes and one four to take Lahore to a fighting total against a power-packed United batting line-up.

SITUATIONS VACANT

Applications from Pakistan nationals on prescribed proforma are invited to fill vacancies mentioned below:-

Sl. No.	Name of Post with BS	Qualification & Experience	Maximum Age Limit	No. of Posts	Domicile	Place of Posting
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.	Staff Car Driver (BS-05).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Pass; Valid driving license holder and well versed in the traffic rules. 	30 Years	06	Ordinarily on Local basis	Islamabad However, liable to serve anywhere in the country.

- Attested Copy of CNIC must be attached with the application form.
- Relaxation in age limit of five years over and above the prescribed age limit will also be admissible.
- Relaxation in upper age shall also be admissible as per Initial Appointment to Civil Post (Relaxation of upper age limit) Rules, 1993.
- Persons already in Government service must apply through proper channel.
- Applicants are required to apply through ECP's Online Recruitment System by visiting the link i.e. www.ecp.gov.pk or jobs.ecp.gov.pk till 24th March, 2022.
- Applicants who applied through the Online Recruitment System are also required to submit their applications in hard form, failing which candidates will fall in ineligible list.
- Hard copies of their applications on the following prescribed format alongwith attested photocopies of NIC, Domicile Certificate and other Educational Credentials alongwith experience certificates should reach through P.O Box No.1418 till 24th March, 2022.
- Applications after cutoff date will not be entertained. [Only shortlisted candidates meeting the qualifications/experience will be called for test / interview].
- Applications received through P.O Box No.1418 will only be entertained.
- No TA/DA will be admissible.

P.O Box No. 1418, GPO, Islamabad. Application for the post of Staff Car Driver (BS-05)

APPLICATION FORM

Application Reference No. (For office use only) Eligible Not Eligible

1. Name _____ 2. Date of Birth _____
 3. Father's Name _____ 4. E-mail _____
 5. Postal Address _____
 6. Permanent Address _____
 7. Religion _____ 8. CNIC # _____
 9. Gender _____ 10. Marital Status _____
 11. Nationality _____ 12. Foreign Nationality (if any) _____
 13. Domicile District _____ 14. Province _____ 15. Cell Phone No. _____

16. Station for test/interview: Islamabad.

17. **ACADEMIC RECORD** (Give Exact name in Examination Column). Starting from Primary School onwards in Chronological Order.

Primary/Matric/ O Level / F.A / F.Sc/A Level, B.A/B.Sc/M.A/ M.Sc etc)	Passing Year	Board/ University	Marks			Division/ Grade/ CGPA	Major Subjects of Study
			Obtained	Total	% age		

18. **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

Exact Name of Post	Organization Name	Enrollment	Total Experience (Days, Months, Years)

19. I certify that the information provided by me in this Form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that any misrepresentation or material omission made on Application Form or other document (s) requested by the Department may result in my disqualification for the test.

Dated: _____ Signature: _____

*Note:-
 i) Attested Copy of CNIC must be attached with the application form.
 ii) Partially filled / unsigned forms shall be rejected.
 iii) Stations for test / interview will be decided subject to number of candidates. However, option given by the candidate shall not be binding on office.

Briefs

Ukraine reports higher levels of Chernobyl radiation

KYIV: Ukraine's nuclear agency on Friday reported a rise in radiation levels from the site of the defunct Chernobyl nuclear plant. The State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine said in a statement that increasing radiation levels were recorded at "a significant number of observation points". The authority also said it is "currently impossible to establish the reasons for the change in the radiation background in the exclusion zone because of the occupation and military fight in this territory." Higher Chernobyl radiation was reported a day after Russia seized the power plant. On Thursday, Ukraine said it lost control of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the country's north after a fierce battle with Russian forces. The International Atomic Energy Agency expressed "grave concern" over the situation at the power plant after Ukraine's announcement. Following a months-long buildup of troops and equipment around neighboring Ukraine's borders, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday announced a military intervention in Ukraine. The attack has been met by international condemnation and announcements of new sanctions by Western countries. — APP

US incomes edge up as inflation accelerates

WASHINGTON: Americans saw their incomes climb slightly in the first month of 2022, but the gain was overtaken by rising prices, which increased at their fastest rate in 40 years, according to government data released Friday. Rising energy prices continue to be a key factor driving inflation and global oil prices have been moving steadily higher in recent days following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which could disrupt supply. The end of the monthly Child Tax Credit payments provided to American families during the pandemic was expected to result in lower personal income in January, but instead incomes rose \$9 billion, or less than 0.1 percent, the Commerce Department reported. Meanwhile, spending on goods and services rebounded after a drop in December, with personal consumption expenditures (PCE) jumping 2.1 percent, a bigger increase than economists had forecast. The gain in incomes again was surpassed by inflation, as the PCE price index rose 0.6 percent compared to December. Energy prices surged nearly 26 percent compared to January 2020, pushing the price index up 6.1 percent in the latest 12 months, the fastest pace since February 1982, the report said. Even excluding volatile food and energy prices, the index gained 5.2 percent. The PCE price index is closely watched since it is the preferred inflation measure of the Federal Reserve, which has signaled plans to begin raising interest rates next month for the first time since the pandemic began to tamp down rising prices. — APP

TRC to send first relief convoy to Ukraine

ANKARA: Turkish Red Crescent (Kizilay) will send humanitarian aid to Ukraine in response to a call for support by the Ukrainian Red Cross to assist those affected by the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. "We are sending a humanitarian relief convoy to Ukraine to address urgent basic needs, coordinating with Red Cross Ukraine," Kerem Kinik, the head of the charity, said on Twitter. "Our teams are being deployed to the region with warehousing tents, family-type tents and mobile catering vehicles for evacuees and IDPs (internally displaced people)," Kinik added. Stating that he is concerned about a possible refugee crisis, Kinik said all humanitarian leaders should act more actively to prevent this. "We are ready for all kinds of humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian Red Cross," said Kinik. — Agencies

Azerbaijan urges Armenia to apologize for Khojaly

"Mass graves have been discovered in Kalbajar district's Bashlybel village, the vicinity of Shusha, and Khojavand's Edilli village," Bayramov added

DNA

BAKU: Presidential aide Hikmat Hajiyev has urged Armenia to apologize to Azerbaijan for the genocide committed in Khojaly town in Karabakh in 1992. He made the remarks at a conference commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide. Hajiyev stressed that the city of Khojaly was occupied as a result of a military operation and the genocide was committed there. "Armenia must be held legally responsible for the murder of people in Khojaly and other massacres. The Armenian society must apologize for this black page in its history," Hajiyev added. He described it as a tragedy for the entire international community. Speaking at the same event, Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov said that the only reason for the murder of Khojaly residents was their ethnicity and this clearly demonstrated Armenia's racist policy. Bayramov stated that a thorough

investigation of the Khojaly tragedy by Azerbaijan's law enforcement agencies proved it was genocide. "To date, the national legislatures of 17 countries and 23 US states have strongly condemned the genocide and adopted appropriate decisions and resolutions. Unfortunately, despite this, the perpetrators of this crime have yet to be brought to justice," Bayramov said. He stated that 37 people have been killed and over 200 people have been injured as a result of mine explosions since November 2020. Furthermore, the fate of the 3,890 Azerbaijanis who went missing during the first Karabakh war remains unknown. Following the second Karabakh war, Azerbaijan set an example for Armenia by returning back to Yerevan the remains of 1,711 Armenian servicemen discovered on the liberated territories. Azerbaijan discovered several mass graves on the liberated lands after gaining control of them, the minister said. "Mass graves have been dis-



covered in Kalbajar district's Bashlybel village, the vicinity of Shusha, and Khojavand's Edilli village," Bayramov added. Meanwhile, the minister added that the 44-day Patriotic War, as well as the tripartite declarations signed by Baku, Moscow, and Yerevan, opened up new regional opportunities, Bayramov said. "Despite the severity of the past, Azerbaijan is working to improve relations with Armenia. However, the crimes committed during the 30-year occupation have not stopped, and we are still dealing

with the painful consequences," he continued. The minister recalled that Armenia had not transferred mine-field maps to Azerbaijan for a long time, only doing so in December 2021, a year after the Second Karabakh War, under international pressure and the threat of an international tribunal. Armenia committed genocide against the 7,000-person population of Azerbaijan's Khojaly town on February 26, 1992. As a result of the Khojaly genocide, 613 peaceful Azerbaijanis were killed, including 63 children, 106 women, and 70 elderly people. Simultaneously, 487 civilians were seriously injured, and 1,275 people were kidnapped. The fate of 150 hostages remains unknown, including 68 women and 26 children. During the genocide, 56 people were killed with extreme cruelty, with their heads peeled off, various limbs severed, eyes removed, and pregnant women's bellies pierced with bayonets. As a result, eight families were utterly destroyed, 25 children lost both

parents, and 130 children were orphaned. Relevant documents adopted by the parliaments of Mexico, Pakistan, the Czech Republic, Peru, Colombia, Panama, Honduras, Sudan, Guatemala and Djibouti recognized the Khojaly massacre as an act of genocide. The parliaments of Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Jordan, Slovenia, Scotland, and Paraguay, as well as the executive and legislative bodies of 22 U.S. states, have strongly condemned the Khojaly tragedy as a massacre. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation recognized Armenia as an aggressor and the Khojaly tragedy as genocide. Every year on February 26, the victims of the Khojaly genocide are remembered at the initiative of national leader Heydar Aliyev. This heinous act was preceded by a slew of others. Armenians set fire to around 20 buildings in the Baghanis-Ayrim village of Gazakh region, killing eight Azerbaijanis. A family of five, including a 39-day-old newborn, were all burnt alive.

Greece recovers stolen antiquities

ATHENS: Greece has recovered more than 50 antiquities, most of them seized from the collection of a billionaire US art collector and philanthropist, the culture ministry said Friday. Culture Minister Lina Mendoni, who attended a handover ceremony in New York on Wednesday, said in a statement that 47 items came from the collection of philanthropist Michael Steinhardt. "This is a day of great happiness for Greece," she said, adding that the restitution sent a "resounding message...that sooner or later, illegal transactions will be uncovered." Another eight items came from illegal digs in the central Greek region of Thessaly, the ministry said. US Justice Department officials in December said that Steinhardt had returned 180 works of art and antiquities stolen from around the world that are estimated to be worth \$70 million (\$62 million). — APP

Somalia extends deadline for polls

BAIDOA: Somalia announced another extension in parliamentary elections, pushing the deadline to complete the vote to March 15. Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble made the announcement after a virtual meeting with leaders of five federal member states late Thursday. After multiple extensions, the parliamentary elections were decided to be completed by Friday. The National Consultative Council acknowledged that lawmakers failed to meet the deadline because of drought, escalating security tensions in some constituencies, and a lack of funding, the prime minister's office said in a statement. The parliamentary ballot began last November to elect members who, along with 54 senators, will choose a new president. So far, 184 out of 275 seats in the lower house have been filled. — APP

UN envoy voices concern over violence

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, has expressed concern over the persisting violence against Palestinians in the occupied territories, arguing that it would undercut prospects for a two-State solution. Briefing the UN Security Council, Wennesland underlined the need for "firm action" that will enable Israelis and Palestinians to re-engage on the path to meaningful negotiations. "There is no substitute for a legitimate political process that will resolve the core issues driving the conflict," he said. Wennesland reported on ongoing worrying trends that he said are increasing the territorial fragmentation of the West Bank, undermining the Palestinian Authority, and further eroding prospects for peace. "Across the West Bank, daily violence continues; tensions in East Jerusalem and the refugee camps are mounting and settler violence remains a serious concern. Illegal settlements and planning processes are steadily advancing, alongside demolitions and evictions, including in and around Jerusalem," he told the 15-member Council. — APP

Plastic treaty would be historic for planet

NAIROBI: The world has a rare opportunity to clean up the planet for future generations by uniting behind an ambitious treaty to tackle plastic trash, the UN environment chief told AFP. Inger Andersen said a global plastics treaty being negotiated in Nairobi "holds the potential and the promise of being the biggest multilateral environmental breakthrough" since the Paris climate accord signed in 2015. "This is a big moment. This is one for the history books," the executive director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) told AFP in an interview. — APP



LAHORE: Pakistan ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee along with a trade delegation from Azerbaijan attended the 1st Engineering and Healthcare Show being organised by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP). — DNA

Turkey urges NATO to take decisive stance on Ukraine crisis

"It should not turn to be into a mere array of condemnation, NATO should be more determined," Erdogan said, referring to the NATO summit

ANKARA: NATO should have taken a more determined step, Turkey's president said on Friday, as the Russian military intervention in Ukraine unfolds. Recep Tayyip Erdogan criticized the Western stance on the Russian attack on its neighbor, saying it still gives advice as it has offered "plenty of advice until today". Speaking to reporters after Friday prayers in Istanbul, the president said: "The European Union, as well as all the other Western conceptions, unfortunately, have not taken a serious and resolute stance at the moment (in Ukraine)." On Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's remarks that they were left to fight "alone," Erdogan said that the West's advice and failure to show a determined stance "does not comply with friendship or solidarity." Earlier Friday, Zelenskyy said in a video message shared on social media: "This morning we are defending our state alone ... The world's most powerful forces are watching from afar." Later in the day, NATO will hold a virtual meeting of heads of state and government of the alliance to discuss consequences of Russia's attack on Ukraine, with the Turkish president set to attend. "It should not turn to be into a mere array of condemnation, NATO should be more determined," Erdogan said, referring to the NATO summit. Defying threats of sanctions by the West, Moscow officially recognized Ukraine's regions of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent states earlier this week, followed by the start of a military operation in Ukraine on Thursday. Tensions started escalating late last year when Ukraine, the US and its allies accused Russia of amassing tens of thousands of troops on the border with Ukraine. They claimed that Russia was preparing to invade its western neighbor, allegations that were consistently rejected by Moscow. — APP

Spain evacuates its ambassador, 100 citizens from Ukraine

Speaking from Brussels, Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez said Friday that the sanctions will inflict severe economic pain on Putin's govt and are commensurate with the dramatic Russian attack

OVIEDO: Spain is in the process of evacuating its ambassador to Ukraine and the remaining Spanish citizens in the country, the Spanish foreign minister said on Friday. As Russian forces advanced to Kyiv, around 100 Spanish citizens, including embassy staff, are being escorted out by authorities. Jose Manuel Albares said, adding another 100 Spanish citizens in Ukraine have refused to leave. "We've offered them

the possibility to leave, but they are strongly rooted in Ukraine and they preferred to stay," he said in an interview with broadcaster Antena 3. This could be Spain's last action on Ukrainian soil for a while. On Friday, Spanish Defense Minister Margarita Robles told the press that "there will be no NATO troops in Ukraine." Instead, she said Spain is helping NATO reinforce its presence in member states like Bulgaria and Romania,

which Spain will defend in the case of Russian aggression. Spain's leadership has robustly condemned Russia's attacks and has pledged to stand in solidarity with Ukraine. Meanwhile, a top Ukrainian diplomat in Spain asked for fewer words and more direct support. "We need bullet-proof vests, helmets, and other items that can improve the country's defensive capacity," said Dmytro Matushenko in a speech on Thursday. Spain's foreign minister said the government is still "exploring" the possibility of sending defensive materials. Spain has teamed up with the EU to impose harsh sanctions on the Russian regime. Speaking from Brussels, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Friday that the sanctions will inflict severe economic pain on Putin's government and are commensurate with the dramatic Russian attack. — Agencies

Senior Iran cleric demands removal of banking, oil sanctions

DUBAI: A senior Iranian cleric said on Friday ending Iran's economic isolation by lifting banking and oil trade sanctions was Tehran's most important demand in talks on reviving its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Iran on Wednesday urged the West to be "realistic" in the talks, as its top negotiator returned to Tehran for what might be final consultations ahead of a possible accord following months of indirect talks with the United States. "Our negotiators... do their best to ensure the nation's interests, and know that the final point is the lifting of all

sanctions, especially on banking and trade," Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami said at Friday prayers in Tehran. "If these sanctions are not lifted, it is as if there were no talks," state media quoted him as saying. The general content of sermons delivered at Friday prayers is set by the office of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on Iran's nuclear policy and all other matters of state. After 10 months of talks in Vienna, progress has been made toward the restoration of the pact to curb Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief, but both Tehran and Washington have cautioned that still there are some significant differences to overcome. A majority of Iran's hardline-led parliament demanded in a letter last week that the United States should guarantee that they would not abandon a restored agreement. The assembly has not voted on the letter. — APP

Ukraine war feels distant in Taiwan

The critical question for Taiwan is whether the United States, which is not sending troops to defend Ukraine, would intervene if China invaded. The United States has no official ties with Taiwan but has historical relations and sells Taiwan billions of dollars worth of weapons

TAIPEI: The Russian attack on Ukraine has put a spotlight on another place that could face an invasion by its larger neighbor, as some analysts draw quick comparisons to China's threats to assert its control over self-ruled Taiwan. While similarities exist and Taiwan is a democracy that has defied a more powerful authoritarian government, the differences are much greater. And for many on the island, the war in Ukraine, and war in general, feels far away. "I think our situation is not very similar to Ukraine's, whether it's political or in terms of connections," said Ethan Lin, a 40-year-old who works in the service industry. "China has many exchanges with Taiwan in several areas, so I don't think it's that dangerous."

Taiwan, an island of 23 million people about 160 kilometers (100 miles) off China's eastern coast, is self-ruled, but claimed by China. The decades-old issue has grown more intense since independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen took the helm in Taiwan in 2016, and China stepped up military pressure on the island, sending ships into nearby waters and fighter jets in its direction. On Tuesday, China's People's Liberation Army's Eastern Command announced it had recently conducted landing drills in an undisclosed location in the East China Sea. The critical question for Taiwan is whether the United States, which is not sending troops to defend Ukraine, would intervene if China invaded. The U.S. has no official

ties with Taiwan but has historical relations and sells Taiwan billions of dollars worth of weapons. It is also bound by its own law to ensure Taiwan can defend itself. Taiwan is also a dominant player in the production of semiconductors that are used in everything from smartphones to cars. "Taiwan's economy and technology is important to the U.S., and perhaps the U.S. will value Taiwan more, but we have to see how the conflict plays out," said Kao-cheng Wang, a professor at the Graduate Institute of International Affairs and strategic studies at Tamkang University in Taiwan. Taiwan announced Friday it would join global sanctions against Russia, although it did not provide details on what those measures

would be. "We can't sit on the sidelines while a big power bullies a small neighbor," Wang Ting-yu, a lawmaker from Tsai's ruling Democratic Progressive Party, wrote on Twitter. China and Taiwan split during a civil war in 1949. The U.S. cut formal diplomatic relations with Taipei in 1979 in order to recognize Beijing. While China's President Xi Jinping has stressed that "peaceful reunification" is in the best interests of both sides, China's Cabinet-level Taiwan Affairs Office routinely issues angry threats to crush moves by Taiwanese politicians to continue pushing for an independent country, although it's been left with only 14 diplomatic allies. China has not ruled out force if necessary to achieve reunification, but

for now, military action remains unlikely and outside events will have relatively little effect on Beijing's calculations, said Li Minjiang, a Chinese international relations expert at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. "External influences on China's decision over Taiwan are minimal," Li said, adding China would continue to use information campaigns and peaceful inducements to influence public opinion on Taiwan. Russian President Vladimir Putin is different from Xi and has previously used force against other countries, such as neighboring Georgia, said Wang, the Tamkang University professor. "Xi Jinping is rather strong, but he increased military activity, rather than starting a war." — Agencies

Briefs

World Covid cases continue retreat, except in Asia

AGENCIES

PARIS: The Covid-19 pandemic continued its strong retreat this week around the world, with the number of cases cut by half since their peak a month ago. But in Asia the number of cases remained stubbornly high, increasing by a fifth. The average number of global daily cases dropped for the fourth week in row, by 16 percent to 1.66 million, according to an AFP tally to Thursday. Over a month the decrease in cases is more spectacular: they have been cut by half since they soared to peaks of 3.37 million in the week of January 21, due to the highly contagious Omicron variant. The confirmed cases only reflect a fraction of the actual number of infections, with varying counting practices and levels of testing in different countries. This week, only Asia saw a deterioration in its situation, with one fifth more cases. But in all other regions of the world the pandemic waned. There were 39 percent fewer cases in the Middle East, 37 percent fewer in the United States-Canada zone, down 24 percent in both Africa and the Latin America-Caribbean zone, a fifth fewer in Europe and 12 percent less in Oceania. Hong Kong saw the biggest increase in new cases this week, with the number increasing by 331 percent compared to the previous week, prompting it to tighten its testing and social distancing requirements. New Zealand followed with 187 percent more, South Korea with 85 percent more, Vietnam plus 71 percent, while cases were up 36 percent in Singapore. Kosovo saw the biggest drop of the week with 61 percent fewer cases, followed by Azerbaijan with minus 55 percent, Slovenia minus 52 percent, and Paraguay and Peru each with 51 percent fewer. Germany overtook Russia to record the highest number of new cases, with an average of 164,600 infections a day, which was still a drop of nine percent.

IHC declares PML-N's petition inadmissible

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday has declared the petition of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) against Prevention from Electronic Crime Act (PECA) Amendment Ordinance 2022 as inadmissible. During the hearing, IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah disposed of the plea, stating that political party approaching the court is disrespect to the Parliament. The CJ remarked the Parliament should be made important and directed to not bring unimportant applications to the court. Earlier, PML-N spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government tortures those who expose its real face. Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan wants to use this 'black law' against his opponents, she added. Marriyum Aurangzeb further pledged to take every possible step to protect the Constitution.

Nigeria's Buhari approves amended election law

ABUJA: Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on Friday approved an amended electoral law that will introduce electronic vote transfer during the 2023 presidential elections. Ballots in Nigeria have, at times, been marred by electoral fraud claims and court challenges since the country returned to civilian rule in 1999. Buhari, who was first elected in 2015, had initially rejected the new law over its inclusion of primaries to choose candidates, claiming it would infringe on party bylaws and lead to insecurity during the polls. "There are salient and praiseworthy provisions that could positively revolutionise elections in Nigeria through the introduction of new technological innovations," Buhari said during the signing of the bill. "These innovations would guarantee the constitutional rights of citizens to vote and to do so effectively." He asked the national assembly to delete one provision in the law which would have barred political appointees from running in elections. Buhari, a former military ruler, will step down after serving two four-year terms, and political leaders are already manoeuvring for position before the February 2023 ballot. No clear candidate has yet emerged to replace Buhari, but the ruling APC party already has several hopefuls, including influential former Lagos governor Bola Tinubu. - APP

Govt working for safety of stranded Pakistanis

All Pakistani students have been asked to reach "as soon as possible" at Ternopil, the FO said. The Pakistan embassy's focal person is also available for facilitation of Pakistani students in Kyiv (Cell No +380681734727)

DNA

KIEV: Pakistan's Ambassador to Ukraine Dr Noel Israel Khokhar has said that the government is working to ensure the safe evacuation of all Pakistani nationals stranded in Ukraine, Radio Pakistan reported on Friday. The ambassador said in a statement that 1,500 Pakistanis, including 500 students, are residing in Ukraine and have been asked to relocate to safer regions. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Embassy in Ukraine announced in a tweet that Ukraine's airspace is closed while the Embassy is communicating with Pakistani students who were unable to leave earlier than advised. In a tweet, the Pakistan Embassy in

Ukraine stated that it is fully functional from Ternopil, Ukraine and provided contact details of the embassy. The embassy can be reached on parepkyiv@gmail.com, while following are the mobile numbers the embassy can be contacted on.

- +380636965523
- +380636968264
- +380638282984
- +380664944004

All Pakistani students have been asked to reach "as soon as possible" at Ternopil, the Foreign Office said. The Pakistan embassy's focal person is also available for facilitation of Pakistani students in Kyiv (Cell No +380681734727). The details of focal person in Ternopil are Dr. Shahzad Najam (Cell No. +380632288874 and

+380979335992. The trains are functioning and tickets are available from Kharkiv to Lviv/Ternopil. In cities where public transport is not available at the moment, all students are informed that embassy has tasked concerned Honorary Education Consultant for arranging transportation and bringing students to Ternopil. Meanwhile, Pakistanis studying in Ukraine have demanded the government for a safe exit from the country as tensions between Kyiv and Moscow escalate. Two Pakistani students, Aqeel-ur-Rehman and Shooab Najam, who are residing in Kyiv, have said that they are out of cash and were stuck in the capital due to the continual crossfire. "More than 20 Pakistani students have currently sought shelter in a bunker in

Kyiv [...] and they have run out of money," Rehman said in a video message alongside Najam. He said they were stuck in the capital as flights were suspended and airports were nonoperational. "Our money is kept in banks and ATMs are closed, we need help." Russia launched its invasion by land, air and sea on Thursday following a declaration of war by President Vladimir Putin. An estimated 100,000 people fled as explosions and gunfire rocked major cities. Dozens have been reported killed. U.S. and Ukrainian officials say Russia aims to capture Kyiv and topple the government, which Putin regards as a puppet of the U.S. Russian troops seized the Chernobyl nuclear power plant north of Kyiv as they advanced along the shortest route to Kyiv from Belarus to the north.

German envoy visits Skill Development Center

DNA

QUETTA: German Ambassador to Pakistan, Bernhard Schlagheck Friday visited Skill Development and Livelihood Center managed by Taraqee Foundation (TF) and supported by UNHCR. According to a statement issued here, German ambassador was briefed about various activities of the center including Hand Embroidery, Machine Embroidery, Tailoring, Carpet & Gillum being made by the women beneficiaries of the project. It stated that women are also involved in making dry fruits products through solar energy. Statement maintained that it is hoped that the visit of the German ambassador will open new windows of opportunities for the women. Following the visit other German development organizations will also come forward to support this important project that will be expanded and scale it up in Quetta and other remote districts of the province. At the end the German Ambassador planted a tree in the center and joined tree plantation campaign of Taraqee Foundation.

Biden to pick first Black woman on Supreme Court

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden is set to pick Ketanji Brown Jackson as the first Black woman in US history to serve on the nation's highest court, media reported on Friday. Jackson, 51, was appointed to the federal bench in 2013, and was backed by three Republican senators last year when she was elevated to the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, seen as a staging ground for aspiring Supreme Court justices. With one liberal justice replacing another the announcement, reported by CNN and NBC, will not reshape the ideological make-up of the court - but it is a huge moment for Biden personally and politically. White House officials hope it will provide a few days of positive news coverage ahead of the president's State of the Union address on Tuesday. The pick presents an opportunity for the administration to pivot from a spate of bad news in recent months, with Biden's domestic agenda stalled amid runaway inflation and plummeting poll numbers. The announcement is also another chance for Biden to show the Black voters who rescued his floundering 2020 primary campaign that he can deliver for them following the recent defeat of voting rights legislation. "Ketanji Brown Jackson is an intellectual heavyweight and highly regarded jurist who has dedicated her life and career to the service of others," said Mondaire Jones, one of the first Black openly gay congressmen.

62 fresh Covid cases reported in capital

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Health officials on Friday said that 62 new coronavirus cases were reported in the federal capital during the last 24 hours. According to an official of the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), as many as 119 cases were reported on Thursday while 52 cases were reported on Wednesday. He said so far 134,169 cases were reported from the federal capital and 1,009 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) while 132,565 patients had been recovered completely. He said that the government has already waived off the booster shots fee for those visiting abroad, and now they can get a free booster while showing their documents. This booster was free for the general public, he added. He said that on the direction of the Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued surveillance of different areas of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. They also started taking action on a violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to the coronavirus while visiting marriage halls, markets, and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration had been asked to take action on the violation of SOPs at shops, workshops, and restaurants. The inspection teams had been directed to issue notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops in case of violation of SOPs. Commenting on the situation, an official of the Ministry of National Health Services said that several local-level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. He advised the citizens to continue to follow social distancing, use of masks, and other precautionary measures to stop the increasing transmission of COVID-19 in the city.

CM receives delegates

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Two separate delegations of elders from Chitral and Tehsil Khaal Dir Lower called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan on Friday and discussed with him public issues of their respective areas and matters related to preparations for the upcoming local bodies elections. The delegation of Dir Lower was led by member National Assembly Sahibzada Sibghatullah whereas delegation of Chitral was led by the Special Assistant to Chief Minister for Minority Affairs Wazirzada. On this occasion, independent candidate for Tehsil Chairman from Tehsil Khaal, Shah Khalid announced to abdicate in favor of PTI candidate Akhoun Zada Ishfaq ur Raheem. Similarly, candidate of Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party for Tehsil Chairman from Drosh Lower Chitral, Zia-ud-Din has announced to abdicate in favor of PTI candidate Sardar Hakeem. Talking the delegates, the chief minister said that PTI would contest the second phase of local bodies election with full preparations and would achieve great success with the support of public. He said that mistakes made in the first phase of the local bodies elections would not be repeated. He thanked the candidates who abdicated in favor of PTI candidates and said that their decision was absolutely right for the well-being of their areas. The chief minister said that his government was working for the uniform development of all the districts of province adding that during the last three and a half year uniform development activities have been carried out across the province including merged areas.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah exchanging views with Ambassador of Netherlands Mr. Willem Wouter Plomp. - DNA

CM seeks Dutch support in waste-to-energy projects

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has invited Netherlands to companies to establish waste-to-energy projects in Karachi and use latest technology to depollute Manchar. This emerged on Friday when Ambassador of Netherlands Mr. Willem Wouter Plomp along with his Trade Advisor Hammad Raza and Trade Counsellor Yasir Farooqui called him here at CM House on Friday. The meeting was attended by CM Special Assistant on Investment Syed Qasim Naveed and Principal Secretary to CM Fayaz Jatoi. The visiting ambassador told the chief minister that their companies were interested in investing and establish 'Waste-to-Energy' project in Karachi. "We have one of the top companies

in the world working in the waste to energy sector," he disclosed. At this the chief minister said that over 11000 tons of waste was generated in the city and it could produce 200 MW energy. The chief minister directed Minister Energy Intiaz Shaikh to meet with the team of Netherlands and finalize the modus operandi for the proposed project. Meanwhile, he also directed Special Assistant on Investment Syed Qasim Naveed to hold a separate meeting with the investors of the Netherlands so such a project could be moved forward. The Netherlands diplomat also offered investment and operation of a waste management project in the city. He said that the Netherlands companies have expertise in waste management and their expertise is known all over the world. At this the chief minister said that his special assistant on In-

vestment would also discuss waste management projects with their team. The Chief Minister said that Manchar Lake, located in his constituency, Sehwan, was one of the largest lakes of the world. He added that due to disposal of saline water and some other issues the entire lake has turned polluted. Hundreds of fishermen used to fish in the lake have become jobless. "If the lake is depolluted hundreds of fishermen would return to their jobs and its water could be used for drinking and irrigation purposes," Shah said. The ambassador told the chief minister that he would send experts to visit the lake and would give technical advice so that a project could be made to clean it. The meetings between the Netherlands investors and experts are being fixed with the concerned officers to finalise the project.

Bilawal assures support to JAC against PECA



KARACHI: Office bearers of the Joint Action Committee of Pakistan's media met with the Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at Bilawal House Karachi to share their concerns

about the draconian laws being promulgated by the PTI government to gag social, electronic and all media through the PECA and other laws that severely curb the fundamental right to freedom of expression of all citizens in the country. The PPP Chairman assured the members that his Party will stand by its manifesto commitment to freedom of the press in all forms and content, and directed the PPP team to challenge the laws in the courts as well as all forums of political, parliamentary and social expression. He also assured the JAC of his own unwavering support as well as the party's complete solidarity in the joint endeavour to fight for the inalienable fundamental, constitutional and democratic rights of the people of Pakistan. Members included senior representatives of the CPNE, APNS, AEMEND and PBA. Those who attended the meeting included Sarmad Ali, Nazafreen Saigol, Dr Jabbar Khattak, Taher A. Khan, Shakeel Masud, Shahab Zuberi, Athar Qazi, Zahid Mazhar, Ijaz Ul Haque, Amir Mehmood, Hafiz Tariq, and Shahab Mahmoud. From the PPP, Sherry Rehman, Shazia Marri and Faisal Karim Kundi attended. - DNA

Fawad urges collective efforts for media reforms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Friday said he 'fully' supported the implementation of the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) as 'toying with public dignity' was being committed on social media. He, in a tweet, invited critics to bring improvement in the PECA but opposing the law's existence or implementation in total was unjustified. "This is not a political but a social issue, and political parties should come together for media reforms," he said.

Rasheed cautions allies against ditching PM

The coalition of the three major opposition parties - PML-N, PPP and JUI - has recently tasked the PPP co-chairman Asif Zardari to deal with the govt's allies regarding the matter

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad on Friday cautioned the joint Opposition against horse-trading as their efforts to gather ruling PTI's allies' support for bringing a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan continue to intensify. The coalition of the three major opposition parties - PML-N, PPP and JUI - has recently tasked the PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari to deal with the government's allies regarding the matter. "Nawaz Sharif has assigned horse-trading to Asif Zardari," Rasheed

said while addressing a press conference in Lahore. The minister warned that all the Opposition's efforts will go in vain and those engaged in horse-trading will get nothing. He also advised the Opposition to prepare for the next election instead as there is only one year left for it. "I'm



witnessing a political turmoil [...] these people are going to dig their own grave," the minister said. Speaking about the no-trust motion that the joint Opposition is trying to bring against the incumbent government, Rasheed said that all the "materialistic elements" are coming together out of fear.

"PM Imran Khan would get even stronger after the failure of the no-trust motion. You will see that Imran Khan will face this game with valour," he added. Rasheed went on to say that he is seeing PM Imran Khan successfully completing his term as the premier as he knows when to decide what, adding that "all the institutions are standing with the government." He said that Pakistan currently needs a democratic government, adding that he hopes that the entire PTI leadership will stand by PM Khan. The minister further said: "I would suggest PM Khan have talks with Jahangir Tareen, even if PTI gets upset with my suggestion."