

had claimed that Shehbaz had embezzled funds provided by UK's Department for International Development (DFID) for the rehabilitation of the 2005 earthquake while he was chief minister of Punjab. It had quoted former accountability chief Shahzad Ak-

President Arif Alvi decorated the CJCSC and the COAS with the Nishan-e-Imtiaz (military) awards in recognition of their meritorious services, at a special investiture ceremony held at the

Chairman Imran Khan instructed the party's lawmakers and ticketholders to speed up their preparations for the next general elections. Talking to PTI lawmakers from Attock, Jhelum, Chakwal and Sialkot along with ticket holders of Gujranwala, who called on him here on Thursday, PTI Chairman said that they should devise a comprehensive political strategy and be fully prepared for the next electoral battle. Central and regional leaders of Tehreek-e-Insaf were also present in the meeting. During the meeting, they discussed the country's political situation, PTI's political strategy and future plan of action in detail. On the occasion, the members of the assembly full supported and endorsed the announcement of the dissolution of the assemblies and resignations from the houses. Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI) Chairman claimed the homecoming of Suleman Shahbaz, son of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, was a part of the "National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) She II". Talking to journalists at his residence

Punjab assembly by Dec 20

DNA ISLAMABAD: Punjab government spokes-

the revival of SAARC," he said. The SAARC Charter Day is observed every year on 8th December. On this day in 1985, SAARC Charter was adopted in Dhaka, during the first summit of the group.

among the countries of

South Asia. Shehbaz Sharif

pointed out that the people

of SAARC countries were

victims of these missed

opportunities. "Pakistan is

ready to play its part in

Imran deprived of legal right

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan



al Asad Umar said that PTI Chairman

Imran Khan did not get the legal right to lodge an FIR on the assassination attempt on his life in Wazirabad hitherto. However, he raised question that will the mother of a well-reputed Shaheed journalist Årshad Sharif get her legal right to file an FIR? In a statement on Thursday, Asad Umar said that Imran Khan was deprived of his legal right to register the FIR of the tragic incident till date. He said that now Arshad Sharif's mother also was trying to lodge an FIR of her son's brutal murder.

PM Shehbaz and suggested that the money under "investigation included a not insubstantial

Shehbaz titled "Did the family of Pakistani

politician who has become the poster boy for

British overseas aid STEAL funds meant for

earthquake victims" was published on July 14,

2019. The report was based on an investiga-

tion by National Accountability Bureau into

of whom were in an official position.

bar and a few other individuals - none

FM holds important meetings in Indonesia Pakistan, Indonesia agree to pursue mutually beneficial cooperation LEADERSHIP AND SOLIDARITY



News Desk/DNA

BALI: At the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, the Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari undertook an official visit to Bali, Indonesia. Foreign Minister held a meeting with his counterpart from Indonesia H.E. Retno Marsudi. The two Foreign Ministers reviewed the state of bilateral relations and agreed to further strengthen dialogue at all levels and pursue mutually

beneficial cooperation. They also signed a landmark MoU on the establishment of a Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) at the

Foreign Minister level. JMC will oversee mutually beneficial co-

operation and promote regular bilateral engagement. In Bali, the Foreign Minister also held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina H.E. Dr. Bisera Turkovic and expressed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen bilateral engagement

Continued on Page 06

man Senate Sadiq Sanjrani, Speaker of the National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, and the cabinet members and ministers were also present at the ceremony. Last month, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza replaced General (R) Nadeem Raza as the new CJCSC. He assumed charge of his office in an impressive ceremony held at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi. Two days later, on November 29, General Asim Munir took charge as the 17th army chief of Pakistan at a ceremony held at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

Aiwan-e-Sadr. Prime Minis-

ter Shehbaz Sharif, Chair

Foreign reserves at lowest since 2019

KHAYAM ABBASI ISLAMABAD: Foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) plunged to an alarming level after falling 10.45% to a four-year low. The foreign currency reserves held by the SBP were recorded at \$6,714.9 million as of December 2, down \$784 million compared with \$7,825.7

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

person Musarrat Jamshed Cheema on Thursday announced to dissolve provincial assembly till Dec 20. The Punjab government spokesperson in a statement on Thursday confirmed that PTI Chairman Imran Khan has taken a final decision on the matter of dissolution of the provincial assemblies of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Musarrat Cheema said Imran Khan has decided to dissolve both the provincial assemblies of KP and Punjab between December 15 and 20. Talking about the ministership of Khayal Ahmad Kastro, the Punjab government's spokesperson said he has become a minister for a week only. said Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi had talked to

Continued on Page 06

US welcomes steps to expand ties with Pak

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The US State Department Spokesperson, Ned Price says Washington welcomes opportunities to expand cooperation between Pakistan and the United States in areas of mutual interest. Addressing a regular news briefing in Washington, he said Pakistan is an important partner of the United States in a number of respects. To a question, he said United States has only interest in the interest of Pakistani people and Pakistan's constitutional system. Amid increasing cross-border attacks against Pakistan, the United States plans to work with Islamabad to deal with the threat

of terrorism in the region, especially from Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a State Department spokesperson said. "It is, of course, our broader goal to see to it that terrorists and others aren't able to use Afghanistan as a launch pad for attacks on Pakistan," the department's Spokesperson Ned Price said in response to a question about the rise of violence and the regrouping of terrorists in Afghanistan. The Taliban, he said, was either unable or unwilling to live up to the commitments that they've made in a number of areas, especially on counterterrorism. However, the US have capabilities when it comes to counterterrorism in the region that does not leave them entirely beholden to the Taliban, Price added.

Inside..

Revenue Dept occupies Press Club building - Page 02

Religious ministry plans to crackdown against fraudsters - Page 03 40 years of diplomatic ties between Pakistan, Korea - Page 04 Saudi Arabia and China linked by shared interests, a promising future – Page 05

Risk of nuclear weapons has diminished: Scholz

- Page 06

Romania, Bulgaria's Schengen dreams in significant doubt - Page 07 German envoy highlights cooperation with Pakistan – Page 08

Japan grants US\$ 3.87 m for polio eradication efforts

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan extended its support to the Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme by providing more than US\$ 3.87 million as a grant. The grant will be used for the procurement of essential oral polio vaccine, which will reach more than 18.61 million under five years old children in Pakistan living in endemic and outbreak districts. The notes of the grant were signed and exchanged between the Government of Japanand the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNICEF.Minister Abdul Qadir Patel, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination and other dignitaries were present during the signing event. "Pakistan has come a long way in the last 30 years. From thousands of children paralyzed by poliovirus in the 1980s and 1990s, we have managed to reduce the number of cases and affected communities drastically," said Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel.Referring to the commitment of the government to polio eradication, the Minister said, "TheProgramme has successfully restricted virus circulation to endemic districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; we are committed and optimistic about eradicating polio by 2023." The Minister extended his sincere appreciationfor the support of the Government of Japan and partners for their unwavering commitment to Polio eradication. The Government of Japan has been supporting the Polio Eradication

Programme in Pakistan since 1996. The long-standing partnerships have helped to reach millions of children with life-saving vaccines over the years.



The grant and loan contribution from the Government of Japan to date has amounted to more than US\$ 238.66 million dollars to support the Polio Programme in Pakistan through UNICEF. H.E. WADA Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan commended the Government of Pakistan and UNICEF for their tireless efforts in emergency vaccination campaigns in southern KP and establishing transit points in North Waziristan to limit the spread of Wild Polio Virus. He also reiterated his continuous support for eradicating poliovirus, by saying that "I would like to renew my commitment to achieve the polio-free world. Japan will continuously support the Government of Pakistan and UNICEF in this regard. I sincerely hope that the national and sub-national campaigns of the next year will be safe and successful.""It is very appreciative that polio program has supported the flood relief efforts in the flood affected districts. Health camps have been opened to provide basic clinical services, treatment of water-borne, vector-borne diseases and immunization for children and women of reproductive age. The Government of Pakistan, UNICEF and Japan has a strong target to achieve polio-free in Pakistan by the end of 2023. I would appreciate the continuous and unwavering leadership and commitment of the Government of Pakistan and UNICEF,

Continued on Page 06

NATIONAL

Revenue Dept occupies Press Club building

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ATTOCK: The district management of Attock seems reluctant to get the fully furnished building of Attock Press Club vacated by the Revenue Department in a peaceful manner despite repeated various orders of the higher authorities dragging the working journalists in the corridors of powers for protection of their constitutional guaranteed rights since last nine years. This was stated by the senior journalist and patron in chief of the Attock Press Club (Reg) Sved Raza Naqvi while narrating the agonized story to this scribe on Thursday. He said that the building of the Attock Press Club (Reg) was allotted to the working journalists for performance of their journalistic activities in pursuance of a resolution passed by the District Council Attock during the chairmanship of ex-MPA Attock Syed Ejaz Bokhari in 1985. The rent of the

building was also being contributed by the working journalistic community to the District Council Attock without any break. Meanwhile, different constitutional bodies of the office bearers were also elected to perform their day to day official business along with making arrangements of media projection of all provincial, federal visiting dignitaries, public departments, socio-political figures in all print and electronic media. Syed Raza Naqvi further said that suddenly the Revenue Department of Attock forcefully occupied the same building of the Attock Press Club (Reg) including furniture, fixture worth of rupees lacs without completing any codal formality. The unbridled management even did not bother to serve any legal notice or cancel allotment with the consent of the members of the Attock Press Club (Reg). He said that the aggrieved journalists also lodged a protest sit in before the office of the

DC Attock besides filing their appeals to the higher authorities for redressal of their genuine problems. But, the then Deputy Commissioner and Deputy Director Public Relations Department Attock concerned only called a formal meeting with the complainant journalists to discuss the entire but nothing could be heard till to date from any responsible quarter.

The journalist community of the District Attock led by senior journalist and patron in chief of the Attock Press Club (Regd) Syed Raza Naqvi demanded of the Chief Minister Punjab Chaudry Pervez Elahi, Director General Human Rights Supreme Court of Pakistan, Chief Secretary Punjab, Inspector General Punjab Police, Director General Public Relations Punjab and Commissioner Rawalpindi Division to interfere in the burning issue. Besides, initiating departmental and criminal inquiry against the delinquents involved in the crime.



ISLAMABAD: S ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Senator Ishaq Dar holds a meeting with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar. - DNA

Sports is a vital source of national unity

I will try to activate playgrounds of Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Waqar Zafar

Bakhtawari, a prominent

businessman of Islama-

bad, has said that sports

play an important role

in the unity, integrity,

and solidarity of the na-

tion in the present era,

we should focus on the

sports and play grounds .

of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Planning and Development Department have jointly launched a new development project worth \$1 million to provide training to farmers, improve irrigation systems, and increase household income in the province. "This US assistance will fund 200 training courses targeting approximately 4,000 farmers. with a special focus on women farmers," a US Embassy news release said on Thursday. It would also fund the construction of irrigation systems to reduce flood risk and improve water resource use, helping increase crop yields and improve economic livelihoods, the embassy added. This new assistance

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The US Em-

follows the successful completion of development projects worth over \$6 million, which have benefited over will provide important skills

KP farmers to get training

under US assistance project

training to women farmers in the newly merged districts, helping to increase crop yields and promoting economic opportunity in Mohmand, Bajaur, Khyber, and Torghar districts," he noted. Since 1988, Andrew Schofer said, the US government's crop control programme had invested more than \$80 million in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "This assistance includes construction of over 1200-kilometer roads, 1300 water supply and irrigation projects, and over 75,500 acres of demonstration plots for high-yield substitute crops, benefitting over 360,000 families." "Poppy cultivation in Pakistan has been reduced by 87% during this period, a powerful indicator of the success of our longstanding partnership," he added.

Islamabad **POST**

Friday, December 09, 2022

WOMENBIZ2022 paved way for Gender inclusion

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD : Women Business Network, have paved the way for delivering gender inclusion agenda for Pakistan at their recent event of WOMENBIZ2022 meetup in Islamabad club. The WOMENBIZ2022 meetup was held on 7th December 2022 as part of their efforts for policy advocacy and women empowerment series of networking events held throughout the year. The meetup brought together from Corporate, Government sector, Embassies and Women Chambers across Pakistan, to discuss the challenges and opportunities of Gender Inclusion in Pakistan and move from dialogues and talks to definitive actions and initiatives taken by government, various corporates, and women networks and building the future based on these initiatives to improve the representation and inclusion of women in economic

growth of Pakistan. The event was convened by WBN in partnership with the add major sponsor(s) here. Speaking at the event Ms. Sam Dada, Co founder of WBN <add other designations here>, said WBN is active in advocating for gender inclusion and mainstreaming the gender in business, facilitating women to network, policy advocacy and bringing together all stakeholders to collectively further the agenda of improving the Pakistan's image and ranking on the global index for gender parity." Add any designatory here, Designation from add org/embassy name, said the event made it possible for Pakistani Corporate, Women in business and gender champions to connect, to discuss challenges and identify opportunities. "The event has reminded me of the importance of collective power and partnership and really connecting between communities, at the national, regional and global levels and the influence that this can have."

Centre of excellence for youth inaugurated in Sindh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: While empowering youth and transforming technical and vocational training scenario in Pakistan, the European Union, Germany, and Norway handed over a modernized Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to the Government of Sindh. The Center has been upgraded with the latest technologies and training opportunities for youth and teaching staff in the province. The new facility is the result of an upgradation of an existing TVET centre

British Council announces winners of

which has been supported by a TVET Sector Support Programme and funded by the European Union (EU). the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Norwegian government. Addressing the participants of the ceremony, Saleem Raza Jalbani, Chairman Sindh TEVTA appreciated the efforts of development partners especially the European Union for supporting the skills sector in the province: "Our solemn responsibility is to offer adequate training to the youth of the province in emerging technologies with state-of-the-art facili-

port collaboration between Pakistan and the UK, were open for applications from October to November 2022, said a news release. The five winners included "The

ties that are available in this facility for both, teachers and trainees". This Centre will play a significant role in the region for a cascading model of teachers' training and imparting skills training for the youth. Modern lab facilities, career counselling and job placement services can now be found under one roof Mr. Ovidiu Mic, Head of Cooperation of the European Union Delegation to Pakistan said that the European Union considers TVET as a priority sector for the socio-economic development of Pakistan and has supported the TVET policy and reform process for over a decade. "The esmultilingual theatre musical

tablishment of the Centre of Excellence in Kotri, is one of the key achievements of our support. We expect that it will become the benchmark for all other institutes in Sindh, providing services at par with the international standards," he added. The Head of Development

Cooperation at the German Embassy, Dr Sebas-Paust, highlighted tian "the great potential in not only relying on jobs but entrepreneurship models in Sindh under the umbrella of the Centre of Excellence. Germany is strongly committed to continuing its work in the skills sector of Pakistan until 2026.

As a first step we will initiate activities from F7 and F8 for the promotion of sports and playground .He said that he will try to open the playgrounds in schools and colleges in both sectors for the public so that these grounds can be used in the best interests of the residents. Addressing the people who had gathered to clean the park of F81, and ideas "I cannot wait for Waqar Bakhtawari said the projects to get underway that work should be done so they can be shared more for the development and widely," She added. "Climate promotion of cricket. change is one of our main hockey and other sports. priorities at the British Councommittees will also be formed for the promotion of the sports in these areas. The youth have been appealed to contact him for the promotion of their relevant sports.Mian Amjad Mehmood , Arshad Raheem, Anam ullah khattak , Malik Haroon Umar Ali haider and sezhan Danial were aldo present on the occasion.

bassy and the Government 44,000 families from the Bajaur, Khyber, Mohmand, and Torghar districts since 2019. US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer, Director of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Lori Antolinez, Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Director General of Planning & Development Department KP, and Joint Secretary Economic Affairs Division Islam Zaib attended the project signing ceremony in Islamabad. Andrew Schofer lauded the longstanding partnership between the US and the KP governments for curbing illegal crop production in the province. "This investment

02

grants

ISLAMABAD: The British Council on Thursday announced as many as five winners of its Gender Ecologies Grant Project which was aimed at supporting the development and delivery of those projects which explored the intersection of women, climate change and arts. The grants, which sup-

and Legacy West Midlands, "Breaking the Waves: Stories of Women from the Indus Delta" by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Pakistan and Film London, "Understanding Indigenous Theory on Environment through the the Female Lens" by Marvi Mazhar & Associates and University of Westminster. "The River's Daughter" - a

(ERP) is being introduced, so

that the intervention of the

staff be brought to minimal.

Classification of fines is being

introduced. Food businesses

will not be raided to some ex-

tent, however inspection will

Cards will be issued for med-

ical now for the year and a

1223 helpline for complaints

has also been introduced.

Reforms and amendments

are also being brought un-

der which the right to appeal

against fines will be given, he

be notified.

Way We Ate" by SOC Films and Adrian's Croft. "The five winning grants

represent the best of Pakistan and UK collaboration and feature some extremely innovative ideas," said British Council Pakistan Head of Arts Laila Jamil. She said from a virtual 'Museum of Food' to theatre musicals and community kitchens teaching permaculture, there was a real diversity of platforms

by ALL4ONE Communica-

tions (Private) Limited and

Insaan Culture Club Limited,

and "Permaculture Gardens

of Resilience" by Appakam

cil as it is one of the most urgent global challenges we face, particularly affecting the Global South," she maintained. Through artistic engagement, she said the projects were aimed at communicating climate issues and promoting sustainable practices, highlighting the essential role women play in mitigating the impact of climate change.-APP

DG Punjab Food Authority visits RCCI

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Director General, Punjab Food Authority Mudassar Riaz Malik along with his team visited Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Thursday.

President RCCI Saqib Rafiq gave a briefing on the ongoing activities of the chamber in his opening remarks. He said that the efforts of Punjab Food Authority to improve food quality are commendable, the license and medical fees should be reduced and the amount of fines should be reviewed. The chamber's platform for awareness is available for policy advocacy. Group leader Sohail Altaf said that a representative of the chamber or association

should also be included in the said. He said that loose milk is a major cause of diseases, committee for inspection. He recommended taking stakeit will be banned and loose holders on board for policy remilk will be allowed to be forms. Director Punjab Food sold only in packaging. QR Authority Mudassar Riaz Macode is also being introduced lik said that Food Authority is to eliminate adulteration. He being developed on modern said that this is his first visit lines, software system, Ento any chamber, a food expo terprise resource planning

organized in January 2023. On this occasion Chamber President Sagib Rafiq, Group Leader Sohail Altaf Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Executive Committee Members. Chair-

will be organized next year man of Standing Committee and a tea festival will also be Muhammad Farooq, President of Anjuman Tajran Punjab Shahid Ghafoor Pracha, Chairman of Hotel and Restaurant Association Mumtaz Ahmed and members and officials of associations were also present.



MURREE BREWERY Open House for Diplomatic Missions

Murree Brewery Company Limited located in Rawalpindi is an icon reflecting the past and the present history of the subcontinent.

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We cordially invite diplomatic missions to visit us on any Saturday from 10 am to 1:30 pm to enjoy our hospitality and our products tasting. However, since, we are located in the Red Zone / Prohibited area and it will be mandatory to obtain No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs well in advance of the intended visit date. We look forward to welcoming you all soon.

For further information please contact the following. Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman Mobile: 0300 8553342

COMSTECH organizes foundation meeting of the alliance of Islamic Universities of Africa

ISLAMABAD: (COMS-TECH): COMSTECH organized foundation meeting of the Alliance of Islamic Universities of Africa at COMSTECH Secretariat Secretariat on Thursday. Vice Chancellors/Rectors of Muslim Universities from Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan participated in the meeting. Chairman HEC, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed was the chief guest of the meeting. He welcomed the delegates to the foundation meeting of Alliance of Islamic Universities of Africa and appreciated the efforts of Coordinator General COM-STECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, for organizing this much needed meeting to support our Muslim brothers/sisters, and young

minds of Africa in the fields of science, technology and higher education. Chairman HEC suggested that the collaborations, knowledge sharing, best practices, exchange of scholars, educational technology transfer, and joint programs among higher education institutions of Africa and Pakistan can help to overcome the challenges if initiatives like the Alliance of Islamic Universities of Africa are well thought -out and well executed in true spirit. Dr. Mukhtar pointed out that the one of the major developmental challenges in the African region is the limited number of skilled professionals and workforce and suggested that this issue can be addressed by improving their tertiary education system. Dr. Mukhtar

said that this initiative will

help us to build an ecosystem of collaboration and enable knowledge-based economic growth in the OIC member states, particularly in the African region. He said that the alliance will open avenues to share ideas, skills, expertise, and best practices to pool resources for mutual support and benefit for each institution. He, on the behalf of the Higher Education Commission, assured sustained and full support



to COMSTECH programs. The Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said that the idea of forming an alliance of Muslim Universities in non-OIC countries or in Muslim majority areas of OIC member states came out of discussion with Prof. Ismail, Vice Chancellor Islamic University in Uganda. He said the key motivation of this vision was to foster linkages between the Islamic universities of Africa and leading universities of the OIC region. Prof. Choudhary said that harnessing the creative potential of young African Muslims is the only way forward for the prosperity and development of Muslim communities in African continent. With this objective in mind, this alli-

ance is created under the leadership of Prof. Ismail Gyagenda. He said that this alliance in linkages with the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence member institutions will initiate: Exchange visits of senior Sabbatical management, and training visits of faculty and staff, Initiation of new academic and skill development programs, Joint research projects, Exchange of students, researchers and technicians, Workshops and training courses, and Special programs in emerging technologies. Prof. Choudhary concluded his remarks with the commitment to work closely with universities in Africa and Pakistan for a prosperous future of youth in African countries.-DNA



National Days and Armed **Forces Days**

December Dec 01 / Romania National Day

Dec 02 / UAE National Day

Dec 02 / Laos Republic National Day Dec 05 / Thailand

National Day Dec 06 / Finland Independence Day

Dec 07 / India Armed Forces Flag Day

Dec 09/ Tanzania National Day

Dec 11/ Oman Armed Forces Day

Dec 12 / Kenya Independence Day

Dec 12 / Turkmenistan Neutrality Day

Dec 16 / Bahrain National Day

Dec 16 / Kazakhstan Independence Day

Dec 18 / Qatar

National Day Dec 18 / Niger National Day Dec 23 / Philippines

Armed Forces Day Dec 23/ Japan

National Day

Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines TurkishAirlines......8494949





ISLAMABAD: Firefighters busy in operation to extinguish fire after yesterday's fire erupts in weekly bazaar at H-9 Peshawar Morr.-DNA

Religious ministry plans to crackdown against fraudsters

Ministry had no concern with such fake advertisements hiring people for Khuddam-ul-Hujjaj, Kaadmeen-e-Hajj, Emam, Naib Emam, Moazan, Khaadm-e-Masjid and other purposes

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Bureau of Immigration, Overseas Religious Affairs and Interfaith Employment Corporation and Harmony has decided to launch a Pakistan Telecommunication Authority on board to get rid of this massive crackdown against fraudcriminal activity and take the resters using the name of ministry for the employment purposes in sponsible to their logical conclu-Saudi Arabia, particularly on social sion. He categorically stated that media. Ministry's Spokesperson the ministry had no concern with Muhammad Umar Butt, in an exsuch fake advertisements hiring the people for Khuddam-ul-Huijai. clusive talk with APP, informed that Secretary of Religious Affairs Kaadmeen-e-Hajj, Emam, Naib Ministry Aftab Akbar Durrani had Emam, Moazan, Khaadm-e-Masdecided to keep Federal Investigajid and other purposes alerting the innocent people seeking job

opportunities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia not to approach such recruiting agencies or individuals allegedly involved in fraudulent activities on social media. He mentioned that these cheaters used WhatsApp numbers which were usually issued on someone else names. Mostly they suggested medical tests from some particular laboratories which charged them at highly expensive rates, he added. Giving the example of Aysha Lab which is situated

in Chandni Chowk Rawalpindi,

Umar Butt said when an applicant went there for some particular laboratory test on behalf of the fake recruiting agency, it cost him Rs 12.500 while the test's original rate was Rs 2,500 in the market. He said the recruiting agencies or individuals, in collusion with such laboratories, minted huge money from aspiring candidates seeking job opportunities in Saudi Arabia. "These laboratories are equally involved in this criminal activity as they are also helping the fraudsters by gen-

erating a huge revenue for them," he added. To overcome this social menace, he said the religious affairs ministry had launched awareness campaigns to educate the people through print, electronic and social networking applications from time to time. He said the ministry had also proposed the Bureau of Immigration and Overseas Employment Corporation to start public awareness drive at their end as the subject of hiring for foreign countries

pertained to them.-AP.

Envoy expects Pak-Vietnam trade value to reach \$1 bn

ISLAMABAD :Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan Nguyen Tien Phong on Thursday expressed the hope that the annual trade volume between Pakistan and Vietnam was likely to reach \$1 billion by the end of 2023. He said that the current annual trade volume between Pakistan and Vietnam was \$ 800 million, which can be easily increased to \$ 1 billion by the end of next year by developing it in more potential sectors. The Ambassador said this while addressing the roundtable on 'Vietnam-Pakistan economic and trade ties to realize prospects" hosted by the Center of Pakistan and International Relations (COPAIR), said a press release issued by the Center. The Ambassador said that the two countries had extensive economic and commercial cooperation in the textile, leather, surgical, fabric, and tourism sectors. He said that Vietnam was importing many products including cotton yarn, medicines, surgical instruments, leather products, fabrics, chemicals, meat and mutton products, pet food, fertilizer and Pakistan should enhance exports of these products to

Court Notice

Vietnam to take the bilateral

trade to over \$1 billion.-APP

In the Court of Mohsin Ali Civil Judge 1st Class Gujrat

Title: Muhammad Moazzam deceased Versus Muhammad Ashraf etc. Notice to:

3F.Ghulam Bashir S/O Allah Ditta Caste Rehmani Resident of Ward No.1, Moh. Sahaba Chowk Kunjah, Tehsil & District Gujrat Suit or Divided of Land with permanent injection Whereas in the above mentioned case it has peen proved to the satis faction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 21-12-2022, otherwise case will be decided ex party.

Emergency

Rescue (Police))15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services	Rawalpindi/
Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Am	bulance1122
& Rescue Servi	ices.4451122
Motorway Polic	e9266044
Motorway Police	e9270601-20
Women Polic	e Stations
Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115 PIAFlightInfo.....114 PIACargo......9280979 Railway Inquiry.....117 Railway Exchange9270831-5 WASA Rawalpindi..5555489 ..9281092 CAA......



Hospitals

СМН	5611111	
MH	561116	
Cantt Hospital.	9270907-11	
DHQ	5556311-4	
RGH	9290301-7	
Holy Family	9290322-7	
PIMS	.9261170-79	
Polyclinic	.9218300-09	
Shifa International.4603666		



Departments

CDA9221334-43	
CDA9208301-04	
Met Office9250360-6	
RDA5555864	
TMA5770886	
Cantonment Board 9270151-3	

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation......9209224 Potohar Town......9209224 RawalTown.....5773343

Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480 HEC to offer free training to youth and 3,400 Guided Projects on

dustry at Jinnah Convention

Centre, Islamabad, which will

continue up to Dec: 11, 2022.

Mirza Muhammad Afridi,

Deputy Chairman Senate

speaking at the occasion as

Guest of Honor said that con-

struction industry stimulates

the economy and empha-

sized that the State Bank of

Pakistan and the government

should make policies in con-

sultation with the private

sector to facilitate the bet-

ter growth of this important

industry. Iftikhar Ali Shall-

wani, Federal Secretary, Min-

istry of Housing and Works

said that it is the responsi-

the country.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As part of its ongoing commitment to equip Pakistani youth with the high-demand skills needed for jobs of the future, Higher Education Commission (HEC) has embarked upon the third phase of its partnership with Coursera through the Digital Learning and Skills Enrich-

Ahmed said that the objective of bilateral partnership is to ensure maximum utilization of the opportunity to provide ment Initiative (DLSEI). HEC Pakistani youth with online launched DLSEI in 2018 in certifications and courses partnership with Coursera to enhance their skills. He and the previous two phases vowed that HEC and Courof the programme witnessed a sera will strengthen the cumulative 0.25 million hours partnership by following a of online skilling across 12,000 building-blocks-mechanism learners. Some of the popular to gradually build upon their industry courses are in the achievements. "Let's work areas of Project Management, together for a common goal Data Analytics, Programming of benefitting mankind by and Social Media Marketing, equipping the youth with reland soft skills like negotiation, evant skills," he emphasized. communication, public speak-The Chairman said HEC ing and presentation. In the believes in employing edthird phase of DLSEI in 2023, ucation as diplomacy to HEC will sponsor skill develjointly solve the borderless opment opportunities for Paproblems facing the entire kistan's youth by offering free world. He urged local univeraccess to 5,300 online courses

courses and incentivise the course-picking students with Coursera across 11 domains in a view to rapidly deploy special credits.

high-quality digital and human Director of International skills training at scale across Governments at Coursera, Mr. Matt Klein said, "The youth today are graduating In his remarks about the HEC-Coursera partnership, into a new labour market Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar that demands new skills, reshaped by automation and the pandemic. Coursera is honored to partner with HEC to equip the next generation of talent in Pakistan with the skills and credentials needed to unlock their full earning potential in the digital economy." He maintained that it is gratifying to see that HEC, Pakistan is responding to the pressing trends by improving access to job-relevant education and skilling to deliver better outcomes for the country's youth. He asserted that HEC's vision and leadership will improve the lives of tens of thousands of students navigating the digital economy. He said it is Coursera's privilege to be the learning partner of choice to make this sities to adopt the Coursera vision a reality.

school DNA ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner, Dr Christian Turner CMG, visited Islamabad Model School for Girls, Jaba Taili, Islamabad on Thursday, to observe how an innovative approach to professional development of teachers is delivering improved learning outcomes. The High Commissioner visited classrooms where teachers are using tailored lesson plans, catering to the different learning levels of each student from underserved communities across Islamabad. These teachers, known as fellows, have been recruited and trained as part of a partnership between the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, UK, the Federal Directorate of Education, Islamabad and Teach for Pakistan. Director Academics, Ms Riffat Jabeen and Director Planning and Development, Inam Jahangir, of the Federal Directorate of Education.

British envoy

visits girls'

'Neither sympathy nor empathy, women need dignity'

ISLAMABAD: The persistence of harmful practices, pervasive gender stereotypes and a patriarchal mindset of society needs to be changed, said Mr Riaz Fatyana, Member National Assembly and Chairman, Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights, Pakistan on Thursday. He was speaking at a seminar on "Sympathy or Empathy: Elimination of Violence against Women at Academic Institutions." "Men should be taught to respect women and moral values right from their childhood. Society needs to change its perspective towards women. Students must be taught to respect women," Mr Fatyana said. The National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR), Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad organized the seminar in cooperation with the Parliamentarians Commission for Human Right, Pakistan here.

Mr Fatyana said without comprehensive efforts to address these issues in educational institutions, at the workplace, in the family, in the community and in the media, the elimination of violence against women remains a huge challenge. Unfolding objectives of the seminar, Mr Muhammad Shafique Chaudhry, Executive Director, Parliamentarians Commission for Human Right, Pakistan shared that it was high time that awareness regarding elimination of violence against women at academic institutions is inculcated among all the stakeholders of the society. Crimes against women happen due to moral degradation of society. The root of the problem runs deep in our conservative society that is having trouble adjusting to educational and economic advancement of women. Only real empathy of women's issues rather than rehearsed outbursts when the worst happens, can, and will make us all safe, Mr Shafique observed.Myra Imran, senior journalist covering gender issues, said that when an issue of violence against women arises in the society.-APP

Court Notice

In the Court of Mohsin Ali Civil Judge 1st **Class Gujrat** Title: Allah Ditta Ver-Nafees sus Notice to: Nafees S/O Fazal Hussain Caste Bhatti Resident of Aali, Tehsil & District Gujrat Suit for Permanent in-

jection Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 15-12-2022, otherwise case will be decided ex party. **Qaisar Warraich**

Court Reporter Gujrat

Sherry Rehman stresses climate resilient houses

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Climate Change urged that for the need of making conducive policies to promote flood and climate resilient houses in Pakistan. She said that the recent floods have brought huge devastation in Pakistan destroying millions of houses and causing loss of over PKR 1.2 trillion, therefore, it is very important that the government should focus on making new policies to promote environmental friendly and green houses in the country that should reduce floods and climate induced risks. She said that Pakistan was witnessing growing urbanization as in the future 60 percent of the population will be living in urban areas and it is very important that sustainable urbanization with

better municipal services in bility of the government to cities should be promoted provide affordable housing to people, but it needs the to reduce pressure on urban communities. She said this help of the private sector while addressing as Chief to achieve this goal. He Guest at the inaugural sessaid that organizing the sion of the 1st International 1st International Housing Housing EXPO 22 organized EXPO 22 in collaboration by the Ministry of Housing with Islamabad Chamber and Works by Islamabad of Commerce and Industry Chamber of Commerce & Inon a public-private partnership model is a right step in that direction. He said that the government intends to promote planned cities with focus on vertical housing and hoped that the various sessions being organized on the sidelines of the EXPO

proposals to help the government in materializing its plans of green and resilient housing. He hoped that the EXPO would be a key milestone achievement of the Ministry of Housing & Works and ICCI.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari,

ALL RESHAPING PAKISTAN

President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that CDA should allocate land to ICCI to build housing units, university and hospital for traders. He said that ICCI should be given permanent representation in the CDA Board to resolve the issues of the business community more effectively. He stressed that the government should fully cooperate with ICCI in establishing a new industrial zone in the region. He said that the Islamabad Citizen Club should be revived urgently and ICCI be given representation in its administration. He said that ICCI should also be given representation in the Islamabad Club to serve the cause of the business community. He further emphasized that a state-of-the-art Expo Centre should be constructed in Islamabad to promote business activities by organizing Expos of various sectors. He

said that the EXPO has provided a good platform to the local and international investors to display their housing products/projects and provide options of their choice to the visitors. Khalid Iqbal Malik Group Leader ICCI, Shahzad Nawaz Cheema Joint Secretary and Team Leader Ministry of Housing & Works, Faad Waheed Senior Vice President and Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI also spoke at the occasion and highlighted the importance of promoting housing sector to revitalize the economy.

H.E. Khazar Farhadov Ambassador of Azerbaijan, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia, representative of Spain Embassy, former Presidents ICCI, Executive Members, Exhibitor and members of business community were present at the occasion.

would come up with good

Speaking on the occasion,

04

TWIN CITIES

Islamabad **POST** Friday, December 09 , 2022

Briefs

FBISE competitions conclude

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) on Thursday organized a competition of embroidery, handicraft, and painting here Thursday. All directorates of educational institutions affiliated with the Federal Board enthusiastically participated in the competitions. According to details, Amna Laiq, a student of FG College for Women F-11 Islamabad, won first position in handicraft competition, while Syeda Ayesha of KRL Model College Kahota Rawalpindi, won the second and Nayab Kazmi from Islamabad Model School and College Charah, got the third position. Similarly, in the embroidery competition, Hiba Rehman from Naval Directorate secured the first position and Kashmala Afzal. C&G Directorate, got the second while the third position was shared by Ayman Ataria and Wajiha Fayyaz. However, Sakina Sveda won the first position, Ayman Azim won the second and Marwa Sajid won the third position in the Painting competition. On this occasion, Federal Education Board Director Fatima Tahira, Director Fawzia Maruf and their staff welcomed the teachers, children, parents and visiting dignitaries attending the ongoing competi-tions..–APP

Art show marks gender based violence

ISLAMABAD :UNHCRthe Un Refugee Agency arranged an art exhibition to mark 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence here on Thursday at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). Showcasing refugee-made products supporting refugees, the event focused on ending gender based violence against forcibly displaced and stateless women and girls. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives and pro tecting the rights of refugees. The event aimed at entertaining participants through a cultural experience and support refugee business. Diplomats from various Embassies, Heads of UN Agencies and Government Officials visited the Bazaar. The exotic display carried handmade jewelry, decoration pieces, interior decors, gift items and garments made by the refugees.-APP

40 years of diplomatic ties between Pakistan, Korea

His Excellency said that regarding regulations and ease of doing business, Pakistan is moving in the right direction

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Pakistan, organized a seminar on the theme "40 Years of Diplomatic Relations between Pakistan and Korea: Trade, Investment and human resources" at PIDE, Islamabad. Speaking on occasion, H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Suh Sangpyo, said bilateral relations between Korea and Pakistan are at a turning point as the two countries will celebrate the 40th anniversary of relations next year. His Excellency said that regarding regulations and ease of doing business, Pakistan is moving in the right direction. Small Korean companies face contract issues, but large companies have different experiences. "Korean companies are helping Pakistani companies to improve their quality and capacity," he added. Earlier, in his welcoming address, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of PIDE, said that the economic ties between Pakistan and Korea remain strong despite these difficult economic times. In this global village, both countries must work together.



There are lessons to be learned from Korea's economic strength, and PIDE is an excellent platform to strengthen ties between the two. During his presentation, Dr. Muhammad Zeeshan, Research Fellow, PIDE, said that Korean economy has an excellent balance between import and export, even though export volume is much larger than imports. He added that Korea's GDP is five times that of Pakistan. Pakistan needs to focus on maximising the volume of exports and reducing imports, Currently, Pakistan only export clothes, fish, and cotton to Korea and import automobiles from Korea. There is a dire need to increase our exports. Turning a trade deficit into a trade surplus is only possible by correcting our shortcomings.

"Our trade deficit is increasing because of our destructive policies and practices. Pakistan cannot

achieve a trade surplus with this performance; we can overcome the trade deficit through an enabling environment for local and foreign investors," he added. Mr. Asif Khan of the Board of Investment (BOI) has said that they are working on regulatory modernisation to remove regulatory bodies that are a trade barrier to direct or indirect investment. He added that the investment council had reformed 115 departments and 31

different sectors under PRMI (Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative) to bring FDI into Pakistan and help local investors. Mr. Nasir Kashani from the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) said that Korea had increased the work permit quota from 1100 to 2400 for Pakistan. Pakistanis are allowed to work in Korea through this system. Mr. Moon Young Kim, Managing Director of Korea Trade Investment Promotion Company (KOTRA), said that many Korean manufacturing companies are working in Pakistan. He suggested establishing an ombudsman office in Pakistan to easily access the Prime Minister's office. He also added that it was necessary to improve the accessibility of markets with other countries in Central Asia and Africa. According to Mr Kim, the laws in Pakistan are good, but implementation is an issue. The Board of Investment (BOI), the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), and the Korea Trade Investment Promotion Company (KOTRA) expressed interest in joining the joint collaborative initiative between PIDE and the Korean Embassy in Pakistan. A huge number of representatives

from different Korean companies

working in Pakistan have also par-

ticipated in the event.

PSF invites science enthusiasts

ISLAMABAD :Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), Ministry of Science and Technology has invited applications from talented students for the selection of the 6th batch of 500 young students under the project Science Talent Farming Scheme (STFS). According to an official of PSF, the talented students passionate about science education who wish to adopt a scientific career will be selected and trained to become future eminent scientists, under STFS.About the eligibility criteria, the official informed that students who have passed Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exam only from pure government sector schools with minimum 60 percent overall marks and 70 percent in four science subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology or Computer Science or a technical subject are eligible to apply for this program. The applicants have to sub-

mit attested copies of the SSC result card, CNIC/B-Form and domicile certificate. However, if the students' domicile is not available, the father's domicile is acceptable for the test only and shortlisted candidates will be required to present their own domicile at the time of the interview. The private, semi-government or any other type of schools are not eligible to apply for this program as per approved PC-I of STFS, the official added.

About the selection criteria, the official conveyed that the initial screening will be done on the basis of the score as per the eligibility criteria. The Science Aptitude in English, Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics (25 percent of each) at the SSC level of National Curriculum is required to be qualified.-APP

Pak scrabble association awaits affiliation

ISLAMABAD :Despite winning several laurels for the country, Pakistan Scrabble Association (PSA) was awaiting Pakistan Sports

Iran's SCO Membership to ensure stability: experts Studies (IRS). She said that operation. She said that the ical leverage to Iran which

although the prevailing per-

DNA

ception about the SCO in ISLAMABAD: While a the West was that of a fodetailed assessment of rum for economic coopera-Iran's membership of the tion, for Iran, the SCO was SCO had to wait till the more than that and served 2023, i.e., till the time the as an opportune forum to membership fully came pursue its security and ininto effect, it was agreeatra-regional trade interests. ble that the membership Infrastructural developbore incredible potential ment and integration of the for Iran, said Ms Silvia region were important for Boltuc, Managing Editor, Iran, she added, Moreover, Special Eurasia, Italy. She Ms Boltuc said that conwas addressing a webinar sidering the fact that most ly dealing with the threats titled Iran's Pivot to East: of the SCO members were Membership and Re involved in Afghanistan, gional Dynamics organized could also mean amicable by the Institute of Regional grounds for multilateral cowas imperative to balance the growing Western influence. Syed Fraz Hussain

Naqvi, Research Lead Iran Program at IRS remarked that Iran's membership of the SCO and its Look East policy was a reflection of its disappointment from the Vienna Talks. He said that the SCO could play a vital role in resolving the Afghanistan issue considering its resolve towards facilitating regionalism and a vital multilateral channel

PR handing over residential colonies to DISCOs

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is in a process of handing over its residential colonies to Distribution Companies (DISCOs) and Karachi-Electric for direct billing in order to minimize impact of difference of tariff and line losses on electricity bills. "It is estimated that a total amount of Rs1,800 million will be saved through this step which would help improve the financial position of the department," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said that Pakistan Railways was also taking several other measures to improve financial condition of the department including introduction of RAABTA which is an initiative towards enhanced custom-

er facilitation. The official said that RAABTA platform facilitate customers to plan their trip, check train status, choose seat, purchase seat, order car rental, meals and refreshment and book hotels. "Pakistan Railways is trying its utmost to improve the punctuality of trains through monitoring every

69,914 vehicles registered in last 6 six months

ISLAMABAD : The Excise and Taxation Department Islamabad has registered a total of 69,914 vehicles during the last six months from June to November 2022

Talking to APP, Director Excise and Taxation Department, Bilal Azam said during the last six months (June 01 to November 30) 69,914 public and private vehicles were registered in four main categories. "A total number of 68,049 vehicles were registered in private category, which includes 34,806 motorcy cles and 24,135 motorcars." "Moreover, 6305 jeeps, 2025 vans, 769 pick-up vans, 6 ambulance es, 2 wagons and a bus is registered in the E&T office during the last six months," he said.

He said a total of 742 commercial vehicles were registered which includes 647 pick-ups, 34 wagons, 26trucks/dumpers, 18 mini trucks, 08 trucks, 6 coasters and three tractors. "Meanwhile, in the government vehicles category, a total of 1122 vehicles were registered which includes 275 motor cars, 258 motorcycles, 260 pick-up vans, 96 vans, 93 buses, 47 jeeps, 32 tractors, 26 trucks, 12 wagons, 09 ambulances, 08 minibuses, 3 forklifters, 2 tankers and one crane. Whereas, only one tractor was registered in the agriculture category,' he said.-APP

the Middle East. He added that the SCO could serve as the portal to provide polit-

SCO and the North-South

Transit Corridor could be

linked together and the EU

could avail energy benefits

Dr Javad Heiran, Direc-

tor, Persian Gulf Studies

Group, was of the opinion

that the Iran's pivot to-

wards the East was focused

towards enhancing region-

alism and could add to its

own strategic value in the

region while simultaneous-

emerging from the West in

from this mechanism.

due to sanctions.

for Pak-Iran trade since bilateral trade was minimum

train and reviewing and rectifying every detention of train, her added. He said that to facilitate the passengers, a mobile application-Pakrail live has been launched for real time tracking of trains.-APP

ICRC, Theater Christmas to spread joy Wallay to present in cold wintry December stage play

ISLAMABAD : The International Committee of Red Cross and 'Theater Wallay' have joined hands to use stage drama 'Majboor Hum Ko Mat Kaho' written by Safeer Ullah Khan to raise awareness about issues faced by persons with disabilities (PWDs). Talking to APP on Thursday, writer and director of the play, Safeer Ullah Khan said that his play narrates the story of a journalist who is careless about persons with disabilities but during an essential assignment he gets a transformation of the mind. "The journalist learns about various issues of PWDs and the ways using which he could extend help", he added. He said the play does not only highlights the issues but also provides leads toward possible solutions. "Audience carry the message of the play and learn the ways to help PWDs", he said and informed that five performances had already been organized among which three were held in Islamabad and two performances were organized in Peshawar. He said that the audience encouraged the team to do more performances of the play and various requests have been received from various institutions including Khyber Medical University, Islamia College University, NGOs from Peshawar, and Fatima Jinnah Women's University Rawalpindi. Sharing past experience, Safeer said that every performance was followed by an interaction with the audience and many people acknowledged that the play changed their opinion about disability. He said the play was received really well and the audience remained glued till the very end of the play. He said the audience of the play 'Majboor Hum Ko Mat Kaho' include people from various walks of life including students, teaching staff of various universities, persons with disabilities, and policymakers. -APP

ISLAMABAD: Christmas is around the corner to spread joy in the cold wintry December with majority of Christian community in the federal capital like across the globe having started the initial preparations for celebrating this festival in a passionate way. The main markets and shops of the capital city have started displaying a variety of Christmas-related accessories for attracting the community while the sweet and flower shops are also ready to gain huge profits through selling their items on this occasion. Every year, the Christian community with the advent of December starts their preparations by buying all the stuff including dresses, shoes and other accessories to mark the occasion in a befitting manner. Those who cannot afford to shop for their family from the main markets and malls during

the prevailing price hike situation are also visiting the flea markets to buy second-hand clothes to become a part of this festival. Rizwana Masih, a mother of three school-going children said, "My husband is a cab driver and not earning much. We are hardly managing the educational expenses of our children and running the house-hold affairs". "Due to the price hike situation, it has become impossible to buy the new clothes and shoes of my children so I have decided to flea market for buying stuff for the occasion", she said. The festival proves to be a blessing for the shopkeepers who earn good business through selling the festival related essentials. "Christmas is the main festival during this winter season through which we can earn good profits through selling decorative ornaments.

chocolates, flowers and gift items in a bulk", Sajid Ali, a shop owner at F-7 Markaz said. Talking to APP, he said, "We are expecting good sale on this years' Christmas as most of the people prefer to buy gifts for their near ones to share the happiness of the festival". The festival would be marked through different activities ranging from community gatherings to cake cutting ceremonies while the main attraction of the Christmas celebrations is decoration of Christmas tree to welcome the arrival of Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas. The youngsters decorate the Christmas tree with different ornaments including baubles, small bells, painted gold or silver, stars of different shapes and sizes, pine cones, apples, candies, tinsel and balloons made from glass, metal, wood and ceramic. An angel and star

is often placed at the top of the tree representing the host of angels. "I always get excited to decorate the Christmas tree with different unique ornaments at my office, arrange a cake cutting ceremony and exchange gifts besides other celebrations", Asiya, a government employee said while talking to APP. She "Sharing happiness said. with others on such occasion gives a sense of joy and contentment and we should collectively pray for the safety of all the citizens and progress of our country during our visits to church". It has also been observed that a number of stalls have been set up outside the Katchi Abadis where the majoritv of Christian community reside. The stalls owners have started displaying the variety of decorative ornaments and dresses which is the source of attraction for the youngsters and children.-APP

Board's (PSB) nod for affiliation, as to make it a more vibrant body. Speaking about this year's achievements, PSA Director Youth Program Tariq Pervez said Pakistan's Moiz Ullah Baig won the Continental Scrabble Championship 2022 in Germany while Waseem Khatri was the runner up in Scrabble Player's Championship 2022 at Baltimore USA. "Two Pakistani players Ali Salman and Hasham Hadi were the champion and runner-up, respectively, of the World Youth Scrabble Championship 2022 held online,' he told APP.He said Hasham Hadi was the Champion of Asian Youth Scrabble Championship 2022 at New Delhi, India. – APP

IHC stops FIA from arresting Suleman Shehbaz

ISLAMABAD :The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday stopped the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from arresting Suleman Shehbaz and also instructed him to appear in person before the court on his return from abroad. The chief justice remarked that it was compulsory for a petitioner to appear in person to get protective bail. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the petition seeking protective bail of Suleman Shehbaz. Petitioner's lawyer Amjad Pervaiz presented the return ticket of his client before the bench and said that Suleman Shehbaz was coming back to Pakistan on December 11, through Saudi Airlines. He prayed the court to stop FIA from arresting his client so that he could appear before the bench.-APP

LOST & FOUND

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FIFA traffic force empowers Pak transport system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 traffic force empowers Pakistan's public transport system, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. Paul Zhang, Country Head of Yutong Yutong Bus, Mideast & Pakistan Market said that "one of the highlights of the Qatar FIFA is the use of electric buses, given that the country is one of the world's largest oil suppliers. "It gives me great pleasure to greet this in Qatar! My proudest moment is hearing Chinese brands gain popularity among millions of fans and tourists!" said Wang Enlong, a service engineer from Yutong Bus, Mideast & Pakistan Market. Wang is in charge of vehicle operation guarantee for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 in Doha. His responsibilities include daily vehicle inspections, emergency problem solutions during operations, and guidance for local drivers.

"During this World Cup, Yutong has served 30% of the passengers, and drivers and fans have been blown

traffic," Wang explained. Wang is one of 126 engineers dispatched by Yutong Bus to prepare for the spec-



away by the pure electric buses." Local drivers and passengers adore the Chinese manufacturer's quiet. smooth, and comfortable driving and riding experience. "They have the feeling that they are in future tacular debut of Chinese electric vehicles in Qatar. After extensive negotiations, organizers agreed to give fans something different to demonstrate that they were helping the environment and lowering

carbon emissions." Yutong is also collaborating with its Pakistani partner Master Motors on plans to construct a new plant in Sindh province for hybrid and electric intercity buses in order to improve Pakistan's public transport system. increase local production capacity, and create local jobs. According to Paul, the current market in Pakistan for buses is 560 to 600 per year. After the completion of highways and CPEC routes, the demand for passenger transportation will increase significantly. The bus market is expected to increase to over 2,000 vehicles per year. Various bus brands have flocked to the country in recent years, demonstrating the country's enormous attraction and potential. Yutong partnered with Master Motor Corporation (Pvt.) Ltd in 2014 for local assembly. To date, the company has delivered more than 2,060 buses in Pakistan and has maintained its number one market share for the past five years.

Yutong bus in a factory in Pakistan Mr. Samir Malik, CEO of Master Motors, stated that the main challenges facing the Pakistani bus industry are poor quality and inadequate safety standards "Another challenge is that buses in

Pakistan are very old and do not meet road standards, or even European standards, which is bad for the environment, people, and road safety," he added. "These necessitate strict policies and government compliance." "South Korea and Japan used to dominate Pakistan's bus market, and marketing and introducing Chinese buses was initially difficult." The Chinese bus brand's excellent performance over the years has instilled great confidence in Pakistan. "We are committed to continuously improving local product production capacity and quality standards, as well as contributing Chinese wisdom to the upgrading and green development of Pakistan's public transport system," Paul concluded.

05

EU must work closely with others

HILE officials from the United States and the European Union reportedly touched on other issues such as the spillover effects from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and a "joint road map" to assess trustworthy artificial intelligence technologies, it was the US' Inflation Reduction Act that dominated their trade discussions on Monday. The act, designed to accelerate the US transition to a low-carbon economy, contains around \$370 billion in subsidies for the green energy industry in the US, as well as tax breaks for US-made electric cars and batteries. This has had the EU up in arms. It says the act is "distortive" and that it will be forced to take action "to rebalance the playing field". Monday's meeting of the US-EU Trade and Technology Council, the third such talks, was part of a push to resolve the dispute and "to grow the bilateral trade and investment relationship", according to a statement from the US National Security Council.

But that looks far-fetched given the EU's concerns that the subsidies are a "job killer" and it will effectively decimate the green industries in Europe. The EU initiatives on the transition to a green and digital economy have made European industries more competitive, but that competitiveness will essentially be wiped out by the US subsidies. EU Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton did not even take part in the meetings, stating that they did not give enough space to issues of concern to many European industry ministers and businesses. Breton has threatened to take the matter to the World Trade Organization and take retaliatory measures if the United States does not drop the subsidies. The US has offered some olive branches. But asked about the potential "tweaks" to the act that US President Joe Biden mentioned as a possibility last week, a European official involved in the talks dismissed them on Monday, saying that the assessment was they would be "extremely difficult" to realize.

And although the EU's trade commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said after the meeting, that the EU was leaving it "slightly more optimistic" than it was on entering it, the EU should be aware that the US will expect a price to be paid for any concessions. The EU should look at the bigger picture. The world is made up of more countries and regions than the US and the EU, and if the two giants adopt subsidy policies that will only make it more difficult for the rest of the world. The EU should be working with other economies to make the world flatter for the benefit of all, not competing with the US to see which of them can build the biggest wall.

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Rightwing extremism in Israeli government

HE crisis in the Holy Land is once again at "boiling point", with blood being spilled on both sides. Tor Wennesland, the UN's peace envoy, did not mince his words to the security council this week. The rising death toll in the West Bank, the worst since 2006, is roiling the waters. Since January, about 140 Palestinians have been killed in this territory, nearly all by Israeli forces. Palestinian attacks targeting Israelis have left 30 dead. Days earlier, Mr Wennesland had been "horrified" by the fatal shooting of an unarmed Palestinian man during a scuffle with an Israeli border police officer. The macabre video of the killing revealed he was right to be alarmed. Yet rather than upbraiding the officer for a public execution, the incoming national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, from the far-right Jewish Power party, hailed him as a hero.

The Religious Zionism bloc, led by Mr Ben-Gvir and the Jewish supremacist Bezalel Smotrich, is now the third-largest group in the Knesset. Harbouring racists and homophobes, it was the big winner in last month's elections. The losers were Israeli democracy and the Palestinians. Yaakov Katz, editor-in-chief of the Jerusalem Post, has good reason to call Mr Ben-Gvir "the modern Israeli version of an American white supremacist and a European fascist". The proximate cause for violent extremists in Israel's government is Benjamin Netanyahu. On trial for corruption - charges that Mr Netanyahu denies - he seems willing to pay any price to end the cases against him. In return for an assault on Israel's justice system through new legislation advanced by his far-right and ultra-Orthodox allies, Mr Netanyahu appears to be reshaping government to their advantage - notably handing over virtually untrammelled powers in the occupied territories. He seeks to ride the radical wave surging through Jewish Israeli society. About 60% of such voters now consider themselves rightwing - up from 46% in 2019. Among young Israelis, support tops 70%. These trends should worry Israel. Since 1967, the country has given itself plausible deniability over deepening an illegal occupation in the West Bank by claiming the region was under an apolitical, military-administered legal regime that respects international law. This, said successive Israeli governments, was a temporary solution until a permanent deal was reached with the Palestinians. Putting Mr Smotrich's party in charge threatens to expose this as a charade, confirming that Israeli occupation is a form of apartheid. Mr Netanyahu appears to be betting the world will blink first. His friends in the Gulf are sticking by him. The Biden administration says it will judge the new government by its policies, not its personalities. But the far-right march to their

government by its policies, not its personalities. But the far-right march to their own drum. Mr Smotrich supports the annexation of the West Bank, the expansion of settlements and the demolition of Palestinian homes. Mr Ben-Gvir plans a provocative ministerial "visit" to Haram al-Sharif, site of the third-holiest shrine in Islam, under the pretence that Israeli Jews are struggling for their religious rights. If such words become deeds, then a Palestinian uprising – a third intifada – won't be far away. This is a dismal thought, but it seems to be where the unfortunate evolution of Israeli politics is heading.

Saudi Arabia and China linked by shared interests, a promising future

Ishtiaq Ahmed



China is the most attractive option in this respect, especially for the \$620 billion Public Investment es, tourism, technology and renewable energy. It seeks to make the Kingdom a hub of international trade, tourism and investment. While the post-pandemic economic recovery has geared up progress in Vision projects like NEOM city, integrating the Saudi economy with the Belt and Road Initiative is crucial to achieving this strategic goal. The comprehensive strategic partnership between Saudi Arabia and China, which began with Xi's last visit to the Kingdom in 2016, was preceded by steady growth in energy-centric relations. Each year since then has seen greater alignment between the Belt and Road and Vision 2030, as well as rapid progress in bilateral cooperation in trade and investment. Consequently, China is today the largest trading partner and crude oil customer of Saudi Arabia. Last year, it took 27 percent of Saudi oil exports.

Their annual bilateral trade volume was worth \$87.3 billion at the end of 2021, a more than 200-fold increase since the establishment of diplomatic relations more than three decades ago. Saudi Arabia is also the largest recipient of Chinese investments in the region, receiving nearly \$43.5 billion between 2005 and 2021. These investments are operational in diverse areas such as the development of seaport and transportation facilities, industrial complexes, 5G networks, artificial intelligence, emerging technologies and renewable energy. For its part, the Kingdom has invested in or is planning to invest about \$35 billion in refinery and petrochemical projects across China. This includes a major deal, inked this year, between Saudi Aramco and China's Sinopec for cooperation in carbon capture and hydrogen technologies. With nearly \$200 billion worth of investments, the Belt and Road Initiative has, over time, expanded to the entire Arab world. This serves the Saudi interest in leading an economically integrated region. China is also the GCC's largest trading partner. It has concluded strategic partnership accords with the UAE. Egypt and Algeria. Just last month, Beijing signed a landmark \$60 billion agreement for purchases of liquefied natural gas from Qatar over the next three decades. Xi is visiting Saudi Arabia after securing the leadership of the ruling Chinese Communist Party for a third term. He is expected to conclude a number of agreements with Arab counterparts in non-oil sectors, such as smart and green technologies. China is the most attractive option in this respect, especially for the \$620 billion Public Investment Fund and the \$190 billion Saudi Green Initiative. Indeed, a promising future awaits the Arab world as the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Saudi Arabia moves forward to consolidate the respective gains of the Belt and Road Initiative and Vision 2030. It is clear from the preceding course of this partnership that the premier powers of Asia and the Arab world are interested in harnessing economic opportunities and are not bothered about buying into the binary vision of world politics being advocated by the US.

the global order. Saudi Arabia and its Gulf and Arab allies have time and again been disappointed by successive US administrations on issues of domestic politics, regional security and global energy. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have, therefore, firmly resisted US pressure by not taking sides in the US-China rivalry or the Ukraine war and have not compromised on the recent production cuts by the OPEC+ group of oil-producing states, which includes Russia.

China, on the other hand, has emerged as a reliable partner, with a political and economic model idealized by Arab leaderships. It adheres to the principle of noninterference and does not, therefore, link its diplomatic and economic role with issues of democracy and human rights. It also has no imperial impulse to coerce trusted Gulf allies, as the US often does, over military support or security commitments to manage regional threats from Iran, Yemen and elsewhere. However, Saudi Arabia and China do have a shared interest in the continuing US security commitment in the Middle East. After all, Washington is a major reason for the festering regional conflicts. It also has the necessary military wherewithal to protect vital sea lanes in the Arabian Gulf. China, on the other hand, does not have the ability or the will to substitute the US security role. The Chinese military footprint in the region and defense ties with the King-dom are also minimal. The absence of a military alliance component in China's "partnership diplomacy" keeps it out of regional

rivalries. Saudi Arabia understands these geopolitical compulsions. It has not objected to the 25-year cooperation deal, worth \$400 billion, between Iran and China, which is also largely on paper. In order to supplant the declining US security role in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia will forge deeper defense ties with European powers, BRICS nations and even Turkiye to contain the danger from Iran and its proxies. Ultimately, the future of the Sino-Saudi strategic partnership and China's economic engagement with the Arab world will depend on the power trajectory of Beijing and Riyadh, which rests on progress in their respective strategic vision programs. Surplus capital and production capacity will help China to expand its Belt and Road footprint in emerging markets and replace the US as the leading world economy by 2030. This is also the deadline for Saudi Arabia to emerge as an economic powerhouse under Vision 2030. As China's strategic partner, G20 member and OPEC+ leader, the Kingdom will continue to seek stability in global energy markets and generate necessary revenue from energy trade, economic diversification and international investments to achieve this pivotal national goal by the end of the decade.

- Ishtiaq Ahmad is a member of the Planning Commission of Pakistan. A former journalist.

Fund and the \$190 billion Saudi Green Initiative

AUDI Arabia and China have shared interests in economic development, regional security and a multipolar world order. China's global Belt and Road Initiative and Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 reflect these mutual aspirations, which are expected to receive impetus during President Xi Jinping's forthcoming visit to the Kingdom. On this occasion, the Chinese leader will also attend the first ever Arab-China summit, which is likely to boost Beijing's economic relationships with several other Arab nations, particularly in the Gulf. It is, however, the expected progress of six years of Sino-Saudi "comprehensive strategic partnership" that will matter the most. There is already extraordinary synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and Vision 2030, both in spirit and scope. The two strategic plans represent major success stories of formidable socioeconomic development in a world gripped by a deep economic crisis, which has equally impacted the developed nations of Europe and North America.

China's initiative has extended the fruits of its development to well over 150 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America since its launch in 2013. President Xi's global vision of "shared destiny" seeks to meet their infrastructure and energy needs as a means to promote a global free trade regime that respects the diversity of local politics and cultures. Saudi Arabia's value to Belt and Road lies in its geographic location between Asia and Africa and its proximity to strategic sea lanes. Vision 2030, unveiled by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2016, has transformed Saudi Arabia socially and helped to diversify its economy away from oil through investments in other vital sectors, such as servic-

Beijing and Riyadh seek to deepen ties and advance a vision of a multipolar world in which the US no longer dominates he previously served as the vice chancellor at Sargodha University, Pakistan, and the Jinnah Chair at Oxford University in the UK.



Pakistan's Geostrategic significance: A potential to become a transit economy

Gul Ayesha Bhatti

The majority of Afghan trade, which includes everyday necessities and critical foods, passes through Pakistan. After the US and NATO withdrawal, Pakistan would unavoidably need help throughout the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase of Afghanistan Pakistan

Afghanistan. Pakistan practically continues to be the most practical choice for regional connection with Afghanistan, notwithstanding Indian investment or desire for alternatives like the Chahbahar Port of Iran

OST-Cold-war a shift is observed in the world pol-P itics and system. But the primary actor in the international system is still a state because all the activities of the world politics and affairs revolve around the state. To ensure its survival and security a state enhances influence and control over its neighbors and region through economic activities and military equipment. Today these activities and measures are creating highly complicated situation. The new trends of economic activities, mutual trade and the access to resources like coal, oil, gas, and coal as well as to control geo -economic instruments are being introduced The physical entrance into a certain region or state is referred to as routes, which are both a topographical and a tactical concept. The domestic growth impacts by routes or in area of security and development. Routes are also a key instrument for revealing the qualitative relationships between the states and for providing open doors to greater economic efficiency, safety, rural growth, and access to urban or international markets. Having easy access to market is the most important of all these benefits since without it, a state cannot maintain its economic and commercial events. The boundaries of Pakistan, particularly the province of Baluchistan, have historically been crucial for gaining control of influence, pursuing development, and attracting attention from the globe. In the contemporary world, the position of Gawadar is highly appealing to regional and global powers who are interested in the South, West, and Asia from a strategic and economic standpoint. Gawadar lies at the entrance to the Persian Gulf in the south while being adjacent to the Chinese region of Xinjiang in the north. The proximity of its harbor to the Hormuz Strait, a route for nearly 17 million barrels of oil per day, makes it the ideal location between three important regions: South Asia, the Persian Gulf (rich in oil), and Central Asia (resource-rich in oil and gas), which further increases its strategic value.

Moreover, powerful states like China, United States, Russia and regional states are willing in extending economic dominance in this region due to its terrestrial and strategic value. Gwadar stands out in the global maritime scene as an alternative to Dubai (beyond the Strait of Hormuz's choke point and shallow seas), due to its closeness to important SLOCs and its importance to the new great game as a member of the so-called String of Pearls. China is Pakistan's main partner in commerce, investment, and defense relations. CPEC, the centerpiece project of China's larger Belt and Road Initiative, is being vigorously pursued as it moves forward with economic projects in the area. China has an alternative for the Strait of Malacca because of Gwadar, which shows that all the participating nations may benefit strategically from using the coastlines of Gwadar and Makran owing to the access to the coastline that can provide economic and strategic goals in the region. It can increase access across the Hormuz Straits and the northern Indian Ocean, enabling admission to marine channels for China.

Furthermore, In comparison to Iran (4500 km) and Turkey (5000 km), Pakistan gives the CARs the quickest land route (2600 km via Afghanistan) to the Arabian Sea for trade. Additionally, the CPEC route has been operating since 2004 under a Quadrilateral Trade Agreement between China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. It also extends to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. TAPI (Termez, Kabul, Peshawar, Islamabad) is an alternative project of TAPI with a length of 750 km (almost half of TAPI: 1700 km) to reach Islamabad. TKPI (Termez, Kabul, Peshawar, and Islamabad) is an alternative project of TAPI with a length of 750 km (nearly half of TAPI: 1700 km).

The majority of Afghan trade, which includes everyday necessities and critical foods, passes through Pakistan. After the US and NATO withdrawal, Pakistan would unavoidably need help throughout the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase of Afghanistan. Pakistan practically continues to be the most practical choice for regional connection with Afghanistan, notwithstanding Indian investment or desire for alternatives like the Chahbahar Port of Iran.

The geopolitical interests of the main countries converge in Pakistan. Two Muslim and two non-Muslim states are positioned on either side of a vast body of water. It is situated between three nuclear-armed states and also possesses nuclear weapons of its own. Due to its geostrategic and geopolitical significance, it has been and continues to be the focus of the desires of the great powers. According to academics, the benefits of 21st-century economic progress are being felt throughout the Asian continent. The Asian continent may benefit from this evolution in terms of both affluence and the scope of power. However, some academics also assert that political instability and personal vendettas are promoted by economic development slogans. Political unrest results from economic growth because it disturbs regional and international power dynamics.

Stephen Cohen rightly stated that Pakistan's geography has been its greatest benefit. Owing to the fact that Pakistan can gain extreme economic benefits by utilizing its geographic location intelligently, however, Pakistan is facing internal and external security issues that give rise to a less productive economic environment for neighborhood states and superpowers. The government's role to deal with internal stability issues related to terrorism and insurgency, specifically in Baluchistan and in the north of Pakistan, is crucial. Furthermore, without comprehensive planning and infrastructure for international trade and transportation. it is almost impossible to achieve the benefits of our transit routes.On international level, Pakistan, being a littoral state, must develop positive relations with the rest of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. Rigorous efforts to meet international Maritime standards will further top our efforts in becoming a transit economy.

 The writer is a PhD scholar of International Relations (guleayeshabhatti@gmail.com)

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WORLD / SPORTS

Briefs

Imran instructs lawmakers to fully...

FROM PAGE 01

in Zaman Park, Khan said the new army chief should not carry his predecessor's policies forward. "I never called former army chief, General (retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa, 'boss' as I was the prime minister then," Khan said. Khan said he never wanted to appoint Lt General Faiz Hameed as chief of the army staff. "A propaganda was launched against him." On the audio leaks, Khan said those clips were leaked as part of a plan.

Dissolution of Punjab assembly ...

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan about giving only the ministry to Khayal Ahmad Kastro. Anyhow, the Punjab spokesperson said PTI Chairman Imran Khan reacted less but the rest of the leadership reacted more to giving the ministry to Kastro.

Foreign reserves at lowest since..

FROM PAGE 01

on November 25, data released by the central bank showed. It should be noted that the country's foreign exchange reserves have fallen below the \$7 billion level for the first time since January 2019. The current reserves stand at around 6.7 billion – almost equal to \$6.6 billion on January 18, 2019. Alarming: Foreign exchange reserves plunge to lowest since 2019 Overall liquid foreign currency reserves held by the country - including net reserves held by banks other than the SBP-stood at \$12,581.7 million.

Risk of nuclear weapons has diminished: Scholz

Russia's capacity to use nuclear weapons has come under increased scrutiny since it invaded Ukraine in Feb. In an address to the nation in Sept, Mr Putin said his country had "various weapons of destruction" and would "use all means available to us", adding: "I'm not bluffing"

FOREIGN DESK

BERLIN: The risk of nuclear weapons being used in the Ukraine conflict has lessened "for the time being", says German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. "Russia has stopped threatening to use nuclear weapons in response to the international community marking a red line," Mr Scholz said. On Wednesday, Russia's Vladimir Putin suggested that Moscow would only use nuclear weapons in retaliation. But the US denounced the comments as "loose talk".

Russia's capacity to use nuclear weapons has come under increased scrutiny since it invaded Ukraine in February. In an address to the nation in September, Mr Putin said his country had "various weapons of destruction" and would "use all the means available to us", adding: "I'm not bluffing." In an interview on Thursday, Mr Scholz said that his recent visit to China had contributed to "putting a stop" to the threat of nuclear escalation. He said that he and Chinese President Xi Jinping were in agreement that "nuclear weapons must not be used" and that the G20 countries had reaffirmed this position shortly afterwards.

The German chancellor's comment came the

day after President Putin said that the risk of this before the war, and this position has not nuclear war is "growing - it would be wrong to hide it". Speaking at a televised meeting of his human rights council, the Russian leader asserted that Russia would "under no circumstances" use the weapons first and would not threaten anyone with its nuclear arsenal. "We have not gone mad, we are aware of what nuclear weapons are," he said, adding: "We aren't about to run around the world

brandishing this weapon like a razor." Ukraine war: Could Russia use tactical nuclear weapons? In the interview, Mr Scholz also

addressed comments made by French President Emmanuel Macron that it would be necessary to provide "guarantees for its own security to Russia, the day it returns to the table" of negotiations. "The priority now is for Russia to end the war immediately and withdraw its troops," he said, adding that "of course we are ready

to talk with Russia about arms control in Europe. We offered

changed." Despite Mr Scholz's assessment that the risk has been lowered thanks to Western pressure, the US criticised Mr Putin's comments, which it said amounted to "loose talk" and "nuclear sabre-rattling".

"It is dangerous and it goes against the spirit of that statement that has been at the core of the nuclear non-proliferation regime since the Cold War," said a US state depart-

ment spokesman. Mr Scholz - who on Thursday marks one year since being elected chancellor - also touched upon the domestic defence issues that have been in the spotlight since the start of the war in Ukraine. Shortly after Russia invaded the country, he announced a major defence policy shift by committing to spend €100bn (£86.4bn) on the Germany army and ramping up defence

spending to above 2% Germany's GDP. Now Mr Scholz has said he hopes develop to missile defence shield in the next five years and signalled that the German government is already in talks with manufacturers of various defence systems "to get ready for concrete decisions". The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) says it has managed to visit prisoners of war held by Russia and Ukraine after months of obstruction, primarily from Moscow, and checked on their condition and treatment. It gave them books, blankets, warm clothes - and news of their families. On Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested that the Ukraine war could be a "long process", but insisted that Moscow's invasion had already yielded results as Russia had gained "new territories", referring to the regions it claimed to annex in September. Eleven Ukrainian civilians were killed and 17 wounded by Russian fire in the past 24 hours, said Kyrylo Tymoshenko from the Ukrainian presidential office. Ukraine is enforcing new emergency power cuts as it tries to repair energy infrastructure damaged in Russian air strikes. The governor of Zaporizhzhia region said there was a lack of energy nationwide and that currently the country only had "up to a third of [the energy] needed". Operator Ukrenergo said the situation was complicated by the weather, which lately has included frost, rain, snow and strong winds.

Japan grants US\$ 3.87..

Islamabad **POST**

Friday, December 09, 2022

FROM PAGE 01

with the highest respect to the frontline workers,"-saidKINOSHITA Yasumitsu, Chief Representative, JICA Pakistan Office. While polio remains a challenge for Pakistan, the country is facing extraordinary challenges due to recent floods. "Already these children and families have lost so much, it is imperative that we safeguard them from this deadly disease," said Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, highlighting the situation of children and families living in endemic and outbreak districts following the devasting recent floods. "Through the unwavering support and generosity of the people and Government of Japan. more children can now be immunized to prevent the devastation of paralysis and even death. We are now closer to securing a polio-free future for all." The programme has made concerted efforts, including working with families at the household level by engaging parents and caregivers and consistently focusing on persistently missed and refusal families. Over 339,521 trained and dedicated polio front-line workers go door-to-door during every national campaign and inoculate vaccines to eligible children. Despite challenges, the PolioProgramme has successfully limited the transmission of poliovirus to the endemic region of southern Khyber Pakh-

tunkhwa (KP), which is a substantial gain. Following the new risk categorisation. the next 13 months are critical for the Programme to sustain the gain and eradicate polio from Pakistan. The timeline for stopping all poliovirus transmission in the current global polio eradication strategic plan is the end 2023.

As a partner of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, UNICEF has been working with the Government of Pakistan, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, WHO and other partners to make sure the national polio eradication and vaccination programmes reach every ild in Pakistar Pakistan to get oil at discounted rate from Russia ISLAMABAD, Dec 8 (AP-

P):Minister of State for

Petroleum Musadik Ma-

lik said on Thursday that

Russia had confirmed

supply of petroleum prod-

ucts on "discounted rate".

Talking to a private news

channel Minister of State

said negotiations with

Russia regarding oil and

gas supplies had been

very positive. Russian

Messi's World Cup hopes heat up in quarterfinal tie



SPORTS DESK

DOHA: Lionel Messi has conquered every kingdom he has ever danced in but when Argentina play the Netherlands in Friday's quarterfinal at Lusail, he will have to contend with the cunning tactics of seasoned coach Louis van Gaal if he hopes to win an elusive World Cup. Messi, 35, once again carries his nation's hopes on his shoulders as he looks to crown an extraordinary career that includes seven Ballon d'Or awards and multiple club titles, but only one Copa America to show for his efforts with Argentina.

Messi can expect little in the way of sympathy from the 71-year-old Van Gaal, who is determined to give the Dutch their first World Cup title after runners-up finishes in 1974, 1978 and 2010. The coach's planning will primarily focus on containing Messi and catching Argentina on the break, as Van Gaal thumbs his nose at his critics by playing a brand of football at odds with the usual attacking Dutch approach. The tactical plan is key to his side's hopes of winning on Friday as the Dutch look to take revenge for their semi-final defeat in 2014 when Argentina beat them in a shootout.

Brazil hoping to dance past Croatia

DOHA: Brazil head into Friday's World Cup quarter-final against Croatia brimming with confidence after Neymar's return inspired a performance laced with swagger and arrogance in the last 16. Their eye-catching 4-1 victory against South Korea, which featured goals by Vinicius Junior, Richarlison and Lucas Paqueta as well as a Nevmar penalty, sent out an ominous message to their rivals in Qatar. The football, for 45 minutes at least, was free-flowing and full of joy, the players celebrating their goals by showing off their dance moves and even getting Tite, their 61-year-old coach, to join in. So thrilling were the Selecao at Doha's Stadium 974 that their performance drew comparisons in some quarters with the very best and most entertaining Brazil sides, from the 1970 team of Pele to the 1982 vintage led by Socrates.

Yet it was just one game, and it came after the five-time champions scored just three goals in three group matches and also lost to Cameroon, their first defeat in the opening round at a World Cup since 1998. Brazil will surely settle for a simple victory without the exhibition football when they take on 2018 runners-up Croatia at Education City Stadium, mindful of results at recent World Cups. Since they won their fifth title in 2002, Brazil have gone out each time to European opponents, including a 7-1 humiliation at the hands of Germany on home soil in 2014 and a defeat by Belgium four years ago in Russia. "We are dreaming of winning the title, that's obvious, but we have to go step by step,' Neymar said after the victory over South Korea. "This was the fourth game. There are three to go but we are prepared. Our minds are focused on winning the title." Neymar returned to the starting line-up for the last 16 after suffering an ankle injury in the opening 2-0 victory over Serbia, while the return of Danilo at left-back was almost significant. Tite has lost another full-back, Alex Telles, for the rest of the tournament but another. Alex Sandro, is training again and hopes to be back. If that is the case then Danilo will switch over to rightback and Eder Militao should drop out of the side. Croatia made it to the final four years ago after being taken to extra time in three consecutive matches and they required an extra half hour as well as penalties to get the better of Japan in the last 16 on Monday. The fear now is that this game might be a step too far for Zlatko Dalic's resilient side, who have much the same spine as four years ago and are still led by the 37-year-old Luka Modric. "I think everyone in the world knows the value of Luka Modric. He's our leader, our best player, and we're proud to have him on the field," said Mateo Kovacic. - Agencies

FM holds important meetings...

FROM PAGE 01

between the two brotherly countries. During his visit, the Foreign Minister participated in the 15th Bali Democracy Forum and International Conference on Afghan Women Education. At the Bali Democracy Forum, the Foreign Minister said that democracy is the foundation of an emancipated society and people of Pakistan always strived for a people-centric democracy. He called for reform of international financial institutions and underscored the importance of democracies in developing countries to collaborate in responding to common challenges. At the International Conference on Afghan Women Education, the Foreign Minister spoke on the importance of education for women and their participation in decision-making. He underlined the need for concrete and practical assistance programmes benefiting all sections of the society. Foreign Minister also reiterated Pakistan's strong support for the well-being and prosperity of the people of Afghanistan. After conclusion of his visit to Indonesia, the Foreign Minister will travel to Singapore for an official visit.

Qatar received only 765K visitors

DOHA: Qatar received just over 765,000 visitors during the first two weeks of the World Cup, according to an organisers' report obtained by Reuters, falling short of the country's expectations for an influx of 1.2 million during the month-long event. A huge surge in visitors at this stage is unlikely with only eight teams staying on in Doha, and eight games left out of the 64 in the tournament that began on November 20. Organisers had previously identified the peak period for international visitors to be November 24-28 during the busy group stage, when 32 teams were playing four matches every day. The December 7 report was prepared by the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC), which organises the tournament, and said that the first 17 days of the World Cup saw 765,859 international visitors, more than half of whom have now departed. The report registered 1.33 million match ticketholders and 3.09 million tickets sold across the eight stadiums in Qatar for the tournament that ends on December 18. A Qatari official, who did not wish to be named, confirmed the figures. The SC did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment. - APP

"We can surprise teams with our plan. We were also the better team then and Messi didn't see much of the ball," the coach told reporters this week. He can also point to a run of form that has seen the Dutch go 19 games without defeat since he returned to the hot seat for a third spell 15 months ago. Messi spoke briefly about the Dutch threat after Argentina's 2-1 win over Australia in the round of 16, where he marked his 1,000th career appearance by scoring and being named Man of the Match. "Another difficult one is coming," he said.

Messi can expect vocal support from Argentine fans in Qatar, who are set to vastly outnumber their orange-clad Dutch counterparts. On the losing side against Germany in 2014 final, where Argentina failed to add to World Cup triumphs in 1978 and 1986, Messi was grateful for the support. "These are incredible moments. We want to thank all the people who are here. The whole of Argentina would love to be here," he said. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni is still sweating on the fitness of Angel di Maria, who missed the Australia game due to a left thigh injury but returned to training on Tuesday.

Spain's boss Enrique

sacked following WC exit

young daughter, had his contract due

to expire at the end of the tournament

in Qatar, and it was confirmed on

He led La Roja to the semi-finals of

Euro 2020 last year, where they lost

on penalties to Italy, and to the 2020-

21 Nations League final, where they

were beaten by France. Spain's loss to

Morocco was their third straight tour-

nament exit on penalties, having also

suffered defeat by that method against

hosts Russia in the 2018 World Cup

last 16. Luis Enrique's side started

their Qatar 2022 campaign in style

with a thumping 7-0 win over Costa

Rica, which they followed up with a

creditable 1-1 draw against Germany.

However, a 2-1 loss to Japan saw them

finish second in Group E and they

Thursday he will not be staying on.

were unable to overcome a Morocco side 15 places below them in the latest FIFA rankings. Spain's failure to score a single penalty in Tuesday's shoot-out made them just the second team to do so in World Cup history, after Switzerland against Ukraine in 2006.

According to a statement from the Royal Spanish Football Federation, "Both the president, Luis Rubiales, and the sporting director, Jose Francisco Molina, have informed the coach of their decision." "The RFEF would like to thank Luis Enrique and his entire coaching staff at the helm of the absolute national team in recent vears," the statement read.

'The sports management of the RFEF has transferred to the president a report in which it is determined that a new project should start for the Spanish soccer team. "The aim is to continue with the growth achieved in recent years thanks to the work carried out by Luis Enrique and their collaborators." - DNA

delegation's visit was scheduled to take place in second week of January, 2023 to finalise deal, he added. The Minister went on to say that in addition to Russian private sector companies, government

also approached Russia's public sector companies for LNG imports. "Now there will be government-to-government agreements to have long term benefits", he elaborated. Shoaib Malik

responds to divorce rumours

WEB DESK

LAHORE: Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik and his Indian wife Sania Mirza remained in the headlines after their divorce rumors spread widely.

The couple, who tied the knot in 2010, didn't speak on this matter until Malik finally broke the ice in his recent interview.

Malik requested to keep his personal life away from all the gossips. "It is our personal matter. Neither I, nor my wife is answering this question. Leave it alone," he asserted. Rumors of Malik and Mirza's divorce widely spread on social media after which the couple remained the talk of the town. On Mirza's 36th birthday, Malik wished his wife but got no response in return. Their fans closely followed Malik's tweet as they were curious to know whether there was something

wrong between them.

MCS to host Test match after 16 years

MULTAN :The Multan Cricket Stadium (MCS) on Friday will host a Test match after 16 years as Pakistan faces England in the second game of the threematch test series. England lead the series 1-0. The last test match was played in MCS from November 19 - 23, 2006 between Pakistan and West Indies. The match remained undecided. Pakistan's batsman Muhammad Yousaf set a record of highest score in a match by scoring 56 and 191 runs in the first and second innings respectively. _APP

Team to overcome mistakes of previous game: Babar "The Rawalpindi Test was in our hands but due to our own mistakes we failed to win the Test match because back-to-back fall of wickets cost us the match," he said

MADRID: Following Spain's humiliat-

ing elimination from the 2022 Qatar

World Cup at the hands of stubborn

Moroccos in the round of 16 earlier

this week, La Roja's gaffer Luis Enri-

que was shown the exit door on Thurs-

day. Spain were beaten on penalties

by Morocco after a goalless draw on

Tuesday in an upset result after fail-

ing to turn their dominance in the

game into a victory. After the game,

the 52-year-old coach admitted that

he was to blame for the defeat as his

youthful and vibrant team was nothing

Former Barcelona boss Luis Enrique

who was first appointed Spain coach

in 2018, bar a four-month period in

2019 when stepping aside due to the

illness and subsequent death of his

short of potential and quality.

DNA

MULTAN: Pakistan Skipper Babar Azam has said that efforts would be made to play cricket game as per planning and conditions to win the second test match against England and mistakes of the previous game would also be overcome. Holding a press conference on Thursday at Multan Cricket Stadium, Babar Azam said that the pitch looks dry which would be helpful for spinners. He said that discussion was underway and processed

for the announcement of

the final eleven in the secinjury of Harif Rauf. ond test match. He said To a question, he said that that planning could not four main fast bowlers be changed after a single played the game of all three

match or inning but the team would play the game with full confidence. He said that players were committed and devoted to performing at their best by learning from the mistakes of the previous game.

"The Rawalpindi Test was in our hands but due to our own mistakes we failed to win the Test match because back-to-back fall of wickets cost us the match," he said. He said that the fast bowling combination was being discussed after the

formats but now we have decided to take care of the main bowlers by keeping in view the upcoming impor-



tant matches and series. He brushed aside the notion that he is under any sort of pressure ahead of the second Test against England in Multan. He reiterated that he doesn't have to prove anything to anyone, "I am under no pressure and always try to give my best on the field," he added.

"I don't have to prove anything regarding my credentials as a player as I always tried to enjoy my cricket and learn from my mistakes," Babar said. "I don't focus on what people say about me, my only aim was to help Pakistan win with my performance," he added.

Pakistan has made comebacks in the past and can do the same in the future as well," he said. The Pakistan skipper also spoke about the future of veteran batter Azhar Ali, who has struggled for runs in the recent domestic season.

"Azhar Ali is a senior player and I will support him as captain but it is up to Azhar Ali himself to decide his future," he said. He said that planning for all formats of the game was different and added that Pakistan would enter the ground with the best strategies and best playing eleven with an aim to win the match.

BUSINESS / WORLD



Boluarte

07

Briefs Romania, Bulgaria's Schengen dreams in significant doubt sworn in as Peru's new

DNA

leader

BOGOTA: Peru's Vice President Dina Boluarte was sworn in as the country's new leader Wednesday, replacing Pedro Castillo, who was removed by Congress earlier in the day. With the appointment, Boluarte became the first female president of the politically volatile nation. Hours earlier, police arrested Castillo after he attempted to dissolve Congress in the morning. Castillo said in a televised speech that he would demand congressional elections to approve a new Constitution, an announcement he made just hours before lawmakers voted to oust him from office. "Elections will be called for a new Congress with constituent powers to prepare a new Constitution within a period of no more than nine months,' he said. The move was immediately condemned by political forces, including the party that brought him to power, Peru Libre (Free Peru), and a series of Cabinet resignations followed. Vice President Boluarte "rejected" Castillo's decision to "perpetrate the breakdown of the constitutional order by closing the Congress,' while the nation's ombudsman called Castillo's at tempt to dissolve Congress a "coup." Following the chaos generated by Castillo's statement, local media reported that the president had gone to the Mexican embassy in the capital Lima to request asylum.

Indonesia, Australia discuss labor co-op

ANTARA

SINGAPORE: Manpower Minister Ida Fauziyah discussed labor cooperation with Australian Minister for Skills and Training, Brendan O'Connor, on the sidelines of

EU consensus on expanding Schengen in question ahead of vote

DNA

BRUSSELS: The enlargement of the passport-free Schengen Area to take in Romania and Bulgaria has been put in serious doubt ahead of a highly expected vote on Thursday. Austria and Netherlands continue to have concerns about admitting one or both of the countries. The opposition has been brewing for days but became patently clear on Wednesday after EU ambassadors met to discuss the topic.

Interior ministers from the European Union are expected to decide on the long-stalled candidacies today. A unanimous endorsement is required to admit new members into Schengen and abolish checks at all internal borders. "Austria is the main hold-out," an EU diplomat said on Wednesday afternoon, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue. "It's already clear that there is no unanimity," said another diplomat. "Those who don't agree will make their points of view heard during the debate."

Austria argues the new influx of asylum seekers through the Western Balkan route demonstrates that Schengen is unable to cope with migration management, even if Romania is not part of that route. The country says it has received 75,000 unregistered migrants this year, a number that poses a "security issue that we cannot wipe away," Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer said on Wednesday. Nehammer called for a five-point plan to strengthen Schengen and asked for the vote on the joint bid to be delayed "until next august.'

Austria's position, which for many came as a surprise, has infuriated Romania and Bulgaria, who countered their bids are unconditionally backed by the European Commission, the European Parliament and a vast majority of member states. "The current state of uncertainty cannot continue. We have all the arguments, very solid, that support our requests," Romania's Prime Minister Nicolae Ciucă said on Wednesday. "We basically can't talk about a real justification at this point." For its part, the Neth-

government since August after a series of inconclusive elections. However, both Austria and the Netherlands intend to support the

third outstanding candidate to join Schengen: Croatia, making its admission a foregone conclusion. "The few hesitations that remain are political, and they undermine two very simple facts that we are stronger, not weaker, through Schengen enlargement," European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas told reporters ahead of Thursday's meeting.

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"And secondly, that enlarging Schengen means more and better controls, not less." The Czech Republic, which currently holds the EU Council's rotating presidency, intends to organise two separate votes on Thursday: one on Croatia and a second one on Bulgaria and Romania. Despite the adverse circumstances, the Czechs still plan to move ahead with the votes, Euronews understands, although the agenda could change at the last minute. Diplomats admit that even if Romania managed to overcome Austria's opposiion, it would still be blocked from joining Schenbecause gen its bid has become politically and technically intertwined with Bulgar 'De

complicated for legal and

technical reasons. The Council would have to ask an opinion from the Europetion and become agreeable

EU 'stepping up pressure on Russia

Islamabad **POST**

Friday, December 09, 2022

DNA

BRUSSELS: The European Union is proposing to add around 200 more individuals and entities to its sanctions list and to introduce sanctions against three more Russian banks in an effort to step up pressure against Moscow over the war against Ukraine, the president of the European Commission said Wednesday. In a video message shared on Twitter, Ursula von der Leven said the EU's previous eight sanctions packages against Russia are "already biting hard" and the bloc is now "stepping up pressure on Russia' with a ninth package.

coupling is verv

an Parliament before being able to come back to the issue," an EU diplomat said. "That would not be really helpful." A negative outcome on Thursday would deal a political blow to both Romania and Bulgaria, as the duo has been on Schengen's waiting list since at least 2011 - years before Croatia. The European Commission and the European Parliament have concluded the two countries are ready to join the Schengen Area and urged member states to endorse their bids without any further delay. Over the last few years, France, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Belgium - countries that in the past opposed Schengen enlargement - have softened their posi-

Fresh protests in Mongolian capital after coal corruption arrests ULAANBAATAR: Protesters took to the streets of Mongolia's capital for a fifth day Thursday after the arrests of officials allegedly tied to a coal industry embezzlement scandal that has sparked public outrage. Since Sunday, thousands have marched in freezing temperatures in central Ulaanbaatar in a broad popular movement fuelled by

anger over corruption as well as the East Asian nation's struggling economy. Celebrities and social media influencers have joined calls for justice over claims that a so-called "coal faction" of lawmakers and executives had stolen billions of dollars from public coffers. "We are fighting against these crooks in government. They are stealing from our future," said protester Purevsuren Lkhagvasuren. "The minerals that come from our ground are sold by international pricing standards," she added. Implicated lawmakers are alleged to have leveraged their ownership of coal mines and transportation companies that move the fossil fuel across the border into China to make illegal profits. - APP

"First, we are proposing to add almost 200 additional individuals and entities to our sanctions list. This includes the Russian armed forces as well as individual officers and defense industrial companies, members of the State Duma and Fed-

eration Council, ministers, governors and political parties," she noted. Von der Leyen noted that they also propose to introduce sanctions against three

additional Russian banks, including "a full transaction ban" on the Russian Regional Development Bank.

"And third, we also want to impose new export controls and restrictions, particularly for dual-use goods. This includes key chemicals, nerve agents, electronics and IT components that could be used by the Russian war machine,' she said. She also announced that this package aims to cut Russia's access to all sorts of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), as they propose to ban direct exports of drone engines to Russia and exports to any third countries such as Iran, "which could supply drones to Russia.'

Ukraine faces 'significant' power shortages

DNA

KEIV: Ukraine enforced new emergency power cuts on Thursday as it tried to repair energy infrastructure from Monday's air

strikes. The national grid op-

erator Ukrenergo said the at-

tacks had caused significant

supply shortages amid freez-

ing winter temperatures.

"Because of damage caused

by missile strikes to power

plants and the high-voltage

network, the system has a

significant shortage of elec-

tricity," a statement read. DTEK, Ukraine's largest

private power producer,

also said there were now

emergency power cuts in

the capital Kyiv, the south-

ern region of Odesa, and in

Dnipro in central Ukraine.



BALI: Foreign Minister of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with other guests posing for a group photo during an international conference on Afghan women's educatio. - DNA

Indian law

Saudi, Chinese companies sign

the 17th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting of the International Labor Organization (ILO) on Wednesday. During the bilateral meet ing in Singapore, Fauziyah broached several areas of cooperation in the field of employment within the framework of the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership (IA-CEPA), Agreement whose progress has been delayed due to the COV-ID-19 pandemic and change in leadership in Australia. The cooperation includes a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Workplace-Based Training and an MoU on a Skills Development Exchange Pilot Project. "We would like to have further discussions with the Australian government, in particular, to facilitate the availability of information regarding the eligible sponsor list so that we can follow up on and implement the MoU on Workplace-Based Training," the Indonesian minister said in a statement released by the Manpower

Uzbekistan rejects political conditions for gas trade

Ministry on Thursday.

DNA

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan prioritizes its national interests and will never agree to political conditions in exchange for gas, the country's energy minister said. "We will never jeopardize our national interests," Jorabek Mirzamahmudov said on possible gas trade with Russia in an interview published by Uzbek news web site Kun on Thursday.

Any agreement for gas imports will only be "through commercial sales contracts' and Uzbekistan "will not allow any political conditions to be imposed in return," he asserted. He said Uzbekistan will take "other measures" if it cannot buy gas from other countries at a "reasonable" price. "Understand one thing: We have gas problems only in the winter. The rest of the time, we are able to fully cover our needs," said Mirzamahmudov. He said Uzbekistan is ready to take all necessary steps to address its energy needs, including additional investments and exploring alternative energy sources.

makers, poets criticizing Modi's barbaric policies

"Modi is a tea seller, who has no moral ethics and political norms," he maintained. Imran Pratapgarhi further said the Indian PM was involved in the massacre of innocent Muslims of Guirat and Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD: Indian parliamentarians, poets and columnists were criticizing and mocking at Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's atrocities and barbaric policies against minority communities particularly Muslims in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Indian revolutionary poet, Imran Pratapgarhi highlighted the Indian government's atrocities and tyranny against the oppressed Kashmiri people in his poetic verses such as 'I am Kashmir', he uploaded videos on YouTube and other social networking applications defending the right to self-determination of Kashmiris. He said the fascist Modi's government was perpetrating gruesome human rights violations against the minorities and Kashmiri Muslims. "Modi is a tea seller, who has no moral ethics and political norms," he maintained. Imran Pratapgarhi further said the Indian prime minister was involved in the massacre of innocent Muslims of Gujrat and Kashmiris. "Kashmiri students are detained and made missing persons from various universities of India." he added. All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief, Asaduddin Owaisi, slammed that Narendra Modi had violated all the constitutional norms by implementing hegemonic, autocratic and barbaric policies and laws to crush the voice raised against him. He expressed his commitment, "I will always oppose Modi and his draconian laws till last breath. Revoking article 370 move a breach of constitutional promise made by Nehru and Patel regarding Jammu and Kashmir." - APP

34 investment agreements partnership between the industries, housing and

RIYADH: Saudi and Chinese companies signed on Wednesday evening 34 investment agreements, within the framework of the visit of the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping to the Kingdom, in the presence of the Minister of Investment, Eng. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih. The agreements between

the two sides covered several sectors in the fields of green energy, green hydrogen, photovoltaic energy, information technology, cloud services, transportation, logistics, medical construction factories. On the occasion, the Minister of Investment confirmed that the agreements reflect the Kingdom's keenness under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and HRH Crown Prince to develop the Kingdom's relations in all fields including economic and investment with the friendly Republic of China. Eng. Al-Falih said that this visit reflects the keenness of the leaderships of the two countries to develop and strengthen relations and

Indonesian religious minister condemns suicide bombing

JAKARTA: Religious Affairs Minister Yaqut Cholil Qoumas condemned Wednesday's suicide bombing at Astanaanyar Sectoral Police Station, Bandung city, West Java province, and emphasized that the attack was against humanity. "We conveyed our deepest condolences for the incident at the Astanaanyar Sectoral Police Station, as it has resulted in many victims, damage, and even fear (among the public). It is clear that the suicide bombing is against humanity," he said here on Wednesday. He noted that the terror attack killed one policeman and left nine other personnel injured. In addition, a resident was also injured in the explosion, which occurred during the morning assembly of Asta-

two countries in all fields, including economic and investment, adding that the visit will contribute to raising the pace of economic and investment cooperation between the two countries. He also explained that the Kingdom and the People's Republic of China have solid relations and a close partnership that witnessed comprehensive development over the past years, especially after the mutual visits between the leaderships of the two countries. which resulted in fruitful cooperation that included

who are still using violence to express their different

views. The method is clearly not in line with the teach-

ings of any religion, which always prioritize respect,

politeness, and safety of community, he stressed. In

addition, all religions teach people to promote and car-

ry out dialogue to resolve social problems. - Antara

various fields. He further said that the Kingdom, in light of Vision 2030, offers unprecedented investment opportunities in various sectors including renewable energy, industry, communications, information biotechnolo technology, gy, tourism, building and construction, and others, expressing his aspiration to enhance investments between the Kingdom and China, calling on Chinese companies and investors to come to the Kingdom and benefit from investment opportunities with

"In all regions, there is a lack of energy - up to a third of what is needed," said Oleksandr Starukh, governor of the Zaporizhzhia region. rewarding returns. - APP Russia has increased attacks on energy facilities in naanyar Sectoral Police officers. "The Astanaanyar bombrecent weeks, saying strikes ing proves that acts of violence always harm many paron vital infrastructure are ties," the minister said. He lauded the quick response of militarily legitimate and dethe National Police chief, General Listyo Sigit Prabowo, nying allegations that it has who went directly to the location of the incident. The potargeted civilians. Ukraine lice also identified the perpetrator, who was confirmed has labelled the strikes a to have died at the location. Based on a fingerprint and war crime. Blackouts have facial analysis, the perpetrator was identified as Agus become frequent and the Sujatno, who was said to be affiliated with the terrorist Kyiv government has urged group Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD). "We support the residents to conserve enerefforts taken by the National Police chief to thoroughly gy by reducing the use of investigate this case and explore the possibility of other domestic appliances. perpetrators," Qoumas said. He further said that he is concerned with the actions of some people and groups

Survivors angered by release of Bali bombmaker

SYDNEY: Survivors of the 2002 Bali blasts were incensed on Thursday after one of the bombmakers was released from an Indonesian prison halfway into his 20-year sentence, with one Australian terming the re-

lease "laughable". Umar Patek was a member of an Al Qaeda-linked group that detonated two bombs outside a Bali bar and nightclub in October 2002, killing 202 people - including 88 Australians. Patek was released on parole Wednesday by Indonesian authorities. despite repeated pleas from the Australian government to keep him behind bars.

Australian attack survivor Peter Hughes, who spoke at Patek's trial in 2012, said the convicted extremist deserved to serve the "harshest sentence". "For him to be let out, it's laughable," he told Australian national broadcaster ABC. Indonesian authorities said they believed Patek had rehabilitated himself inside prison after completing a deradicalisation program. - APP

Afghan refugees; a disaster for Pakistan

MUNAZA KAZMI

EAR 1979, when Soviet forces invaded Afghan-istan. that resulted istan, that resulted in a huge amount of Afghan refugees crossing the border into Pakistan; same people who voted negatively at the time of creation of Pakistan. This influx started through Torkham border, hence a million of Afghan refugees entered the country. Till today the country is showing hospitality towards those Afghan refugees, nevertheless the number became swollen hugely in the past forty years. In the early years, Pakistan was

receiving a handsome support globally, including food assistance from World Food Program to feed those empty stomachs, nevertheless that assistance was withdrawn in 1995. Gradually that made theAfghan refugees to Afghan refugee's lives, but due to move from the camps and turn the recent global crises, mainly themselves to the urban areas of Syria, the focus of international

Pakistan, nevertheless this was in good favor of those Afghan refugees, but still local government put a strain of limited resources. If we contemplate the idea today then we could analysis how badly it turned for the country of Pakistan, first to let those Afghan refugees cross the border and then let them move to Pakistan's civil areas, today much of Pakistan's land is polluted with the whereabouts of these Afghan refugees. Later the donors, like UNHCR, USA, EU, KSA, and other Islamic countries that first supported Pakistan in feeding those Afghan refugees have also set back, backing the 9/11 terrorist attack, since there seemed a drastic ideological change among the communities worldwide regarding the region. Nevertheless, UNHCR somehow continued its support which assisted Pakistan in improving the

community had diverted, which made Pakistan single handed in carrying this never-ending burden. Over last four decades the Government of Pakistan and its populace is hosting millions of Afghan refugees. Currently there are 1.4 Million registered and God knows how many are wondering here and there undocumented.

Hence, the Government of Pakistan has reflected a very flexible conduct in handling the Afghan refugees' issues and has allowed them to live with freedom, the liberty of moving, the luxury of education, food and safety. Even Pakistan have went so far in providing them with POR card from which they could open accounts in any bank. Moreover, several different programs had been initiated by private public partnership to provide the Afghan refugees with skills so that they could earn their livelihood. Even though Pakistan been so generous that the country has allowed the Afghan refugees to have higher education, encouraged them to join the national sport teams and domestic cricket tournaments.

But the sole purpose of hosting the Afghan refugees was to provide them with "asylum" until the situation easy in Afghanistan, which was a sign of humanity. But unfortunately, these Afghan refugees have rooted them selves which the wish of living in the heaven of Pakistan forever, as theses Afghans seem reluctant to go back to their country. It has been more than forty years that Pakistan is under the liability which never belonged to it. Today Pakistan have much more Afghan refugees spreading everywhere, which I believe was one of the biggest mistake Pakistan ever come across. While the country remained a generous host till all those years, the continued presence of Afghan refugees marked a burden on our precious resources.

Moreover, with the advancement

of Taliban in Afghanistan, the government of Pakistan in 2021 however for the cause of humanity had taken a costly and foolish decision of allowing a huge number of refugees to reenter in Pakistan. Nevertheless, this was for a few months, but these few months had been turning into year, which is a disastrous sign, since the whole country is infiltrated with Afghans, our every business of life is being cruelly disturbed. Let's say the rental values of homes have been climbed drastically, once the minimal cost of commodities of everyday use have surmounted, along crime rate, drugs mobility and a lot more. Moreover, it's a threat to our culture, our language and our tradition, this's basically against the national interest. As we have been their host for

a long long time, instead of go-

ing back, herds of refugees had

come once more. I wonder what

stakes the government is having

by allowing such a disaster.







Briefs 241 out of 9,133 missing persons found dead

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A report compiled by the Commission on Missing Persons has been submitted to the Supreme Court on Thursday, According to the report, 81 people have reached their homes. There were complaints about 9,133 people who went missing. The commission found the whereabouts of 5,574 people, and 3,743 reached their homes. The report says that 974 missing persons are in detention centres and 616 are in jails. It further reveals that as many as 241 dead bodies of missing persons have been found. So far, 6,926 cases of miss-

ing persons have been disposed of. Till November 30, the number of missing people cases which are sub judice is 2,207. The commission received 98 cases in November, and 101 cases have been disposed of, the report concluded.

IHC seeks final arguments in Imran Khan case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Seeking final arguments in PTI Chairman Imran Khan's disqualification case, the Islamabad High Court has adjourned the hearing of the case till December 13. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq on Thursday heard the petition filed by former prime minister and PTI Chief Imran Khan challenging his disqualification by the Election Commission of Pakistan in Toshakhana reference.

Imran's lawyer Ali Zafar, ECP lawyers and PML-N leader Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha along with his lawyer appeared before the court. At the outset of the hearing



Photo Exhibition launched in Islamabad's National Art Gallery to highlight local governance in Pakistan's Merged Areas

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The week-long exhibition is showcasing the efforts of integrating the Merged Areas into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the region's rich culture and potential as well as Germany's support to its Pakistan counterparts in local governance, health and education. To mark the development cooperation between Pakistan and Germany, GIZ Pakistan and the Embassy of Germany in Islamabad jointly launched a photo exhibition on the Merged Areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Islamabad. The exhibition is being held at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) from the 8th to 13th of December. Some 150 representatives and officials of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Government and its line departments, the German Embassy, the European Union, donor agencies, Members of KP's Provincial Assembly, implementing and development partners, academia as well as the media attended the inaugural ceremony of the photo exhibition.

Various photographers have contributed to this photo exhibition, most notably Mr. Abdul Majeed Goraya of Peshawar and Mr. Alamgir Khan of Mohmand in the Merged Areas. Their pictures show people following their trades, earning their livelihoods and striving to provide their children with a better future. The photographs also illustrate an emerging local governance system, community development initiatives, women standing up for their rights, and improve-

ments in the education and health sectors. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, guest of honor, Mr. Shahram Khan Tarakai, Minister of Elementary & Secondary Education of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa expressed his gratitude to the German Government and the European Union for their support to the province in various fields of development.

"The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is highly valuing the partnership with GIZ Pakistan and the joint work in areas such as good governance, education and health. This has lead to major changes in the lives of the people in the Tribal Districts and has contributed to reduce the development lag. Our cooperation has also enhanced public trust in government institutions and has helped to improve public services." Among the important achievements, he listed improved school curricula, the training of

FO concerned

over Indian

state sponsored terrorism

ISLAMABAD: Foreign

Office Spokesperson

expressed



over 5,000 members of Parent's Teacher Councils, capacity development for over 3,000 managers in the health and educations sectors, as well as training of several hundred officials of the Local Government Department.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Alfred Grannas, highlighted that "the photo exhibition and its catalogue not only offer vibrant insights into the regions' history, its rich and diverse culture and traditions, but also into the lives of the of the people and their development needs." He pointed out the long-standing and successful development cooperation between Germany and Pakistan over a period of 60 years during which countless development projects have been implemented. This cooperation has over the decades been continuously adapted to meet new challenges and changing social, economic and ecological conditions, he said. "The FATA Development Programme is also an example of joint European efforts in the field of development. Over the years the program with its budget of almost 40 million Euro was co-funded by the Government of France, the Government of Switzerland and currently by the European Union." In his address to the audience, Mr. Karim Kettani, Head of the Finance and Audit Section at the European Union Delegation to Pakistan, outlined that the European Union's programme "Aid to Uprooted People", which has been implemented by the GIZ's FATA Development Programme since 2017, has supported the KP Education Department in improving education for internally displaced and host communities in Merged Areas.

Death toll in nationwide Iran protests rises to 458

TEHRAN: The death toll from the ongoing protests in Iran sparked by the death of a young woman in police custody has risen to 458, according to a Norway-based rights group. "At least 458 people including 63 children and 29 women have been killed in the ongoing nationwide protests in Iran," the Norway-based Iranian Human Rights said on Wednesday. The most deaths were reported in Sistan and Baluchistan, Kurdistan, Western Azerbaijan, Tehran, Mazandaran and Kermanshah provinces, according to the nongovernmental organization. "Authorities have also reported death sentences being issued against five protesters, bringing the total number to 11 people," the rights group said. "Iran Human Rights considers the execution of protesters to be in violation of all human rights laws and standards, and calls on the international community to react appropriately," it urged.Iran has seen widespread protests in recent months following the death of a 22-year-old woman, Mahsa Amini, in the custody of Iranian morality police. Thousands of people have been detained, according to human

"Iran Human Rights considers the execution of protesters to be in violation of all human rights laws and standards, and calls on

SC wants report on Arshad's killing in two weeks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan Thursday ordered the newly formed Joint Investigation Team to immediately start its probe into the killing of journalist Arshad Sharif and present its progress report within two weeks. The Supreme Court said that the JIT would devise its method of the investigation itself. Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial directed that the probe team should investigate the murder of Arshad Sharif without taking any pressure from any quarter. If the JIT confronts some problem, it must immediately file a plea, the CJP said.

A five-judge larger SC bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar heard the case. At the outset of the hearing, Additional Attorney General Aamir Rehman submitted the notification of a new special Joint Investigation Team (JIT) formed by the government to the apex court.

The AAG told the court that the new JIT was comprised of five officers of BS-20 including Awais Ahmad (Islamabad Police DIG Headquarters), Sajid Kiyani (Intelligence Bureau DIG), Wagarud Din (FIA), Muhammad Aslam (ISI), and Murtaza Afzaal (Military Intelligence).

Kremlin sees 'risk' of Ukraine attacks on Crimea

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said Thursday that the Moscow-annexed Crimean Peninsula was vulnerable to Ukrainian attacks after officials said they had shot down a drone near a key naval base. The latest drone attack comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin recently visited the only bridge connecting Crimea with the Russian mainland to survey work to repair the key artery damaged in a blast Moscow blamed on Kiyv. "There are certainly risks because the Ukrainian side continues its policy of organising terrorist attacks. But, on the other hand, the information we get indicates that effective countermeasures are being taken," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. The Moscow-appointed governor of Crimea Sergei Aksyonov said last month that Russia was strengthening fortifications on the peninsula in the wake of recent attacks. The governors of two Russian regions bordering Ukraine have said they inspected the construction of defence lines days after Ukrainian drones struck key military airfields. - Agencies

PTI lawyer requested the court to stop the election commission from taking any action in this regard.

Italian airline kicks off operations in Pakistan

DNA

LAHORE: Another foreign airline has commenced its flight operations in Pakistan as Italian airline Neos Air announced to operate four charter flights from Milan to Lahore.

One way ticket from Lahore to Milan will cost 400 euros. Neos Air will operate two flights in a month from Lahore airport. On the other hand, SalamAir has shifted its flight schedule to Lahore airport due to the closure of Sialkot airport.

From now onwards till December 20, SalamAir will operate its Musqat-bound flights from Lahore airport. Lahore airport administration has completed all arrangements in this regard.



notice of this reality. Replying to a question regarding allegations by some foreign countries about presence of terrorist outfits in Pakistan, the Spokesperson said we completely reject such accusations. She said Pakistan is the country that has suffered enormously from terrorism for the last several years. She said the instability in Afghanistan and in our region has created a situation, where many people of Pakistan, including personnel of security agencies, have lost their lives. She said Pakistan is a victim of terrorism.

She said there have been undeniable proofs of India's direct involvement in the state sponsored terrorism inside Pakistan and the global community should take notice of India's approach of pointing fingers at others. Answering another question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch condemned the atrocities being perpetrated in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. She said India is continuing with repression of Kashmiris without any consideration of international human rights laws and norms. She called upon the international community and human rights organizations to pay attention to the deteriorating human rights situation in IIOJK. Regarding import of gas and oil from Russia, the Spokesperson said we are in touch with Moscow to import crude oil from Russia. She said Prime Minister's Special Assistant Musadik Malik recently paid a special visit to Russia to discuss matters related to the import of gas and oil from Russia. - DNA

the international community to react appropriately," it urged

rights groups, while more than 200 people have died, as acknowledged by the Iranian Interior Ministry last week. On Thursday Iran executed a prisoner convicted for a crime allegedly committed during the ongoing nationwide protests, the first such death penalty carried out by the country, according to local media. The execution was ordered for Muhsin Shikari, who according to the Mizan News Agency, affiliated with Iran's judiciary, "threatened citizens with a cold weapon and injured a security guard during protests on Sattar Khan Street." - APP

Huge Wirecard fraud trial opens in Germany

MUNICH: Germany's mammoth Wirecard fraud trial opened on Thursday, with ex-CEO Markus Braun and two former executives in the dock over their roles in the country's biggest-ever accounting scandal. The trial in Munich comes two and a half years after digital payments firm Wirecard collapsed in spectacular fashion after admitting that 1.9 billion euros (\$2 billion) missing from its accounts didn't actually exist. Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who was finance minister at the time of Wirecard's implosion, described the scandal as "unparalleled" in Germany's post-war history. The first day of the high-profile trial, held in a high-security courtroom inside Munich's sprawling Stadelheim prison complex, will mainly consist of prosecutors reading out the 90-page indictment. Notably absent from the trial will be Wirecard's former chief operating officer Jan Marsalek, a

shadowy figure with ties to foreign intelligence agencies. Marsalek evaded arrest in 2020 by staging a daring escape from Austria by private jet. He was reported earlier this year to be hiding out in Russia. Wirecard's veteran CEO Braun, in custody since July 2020, faces charges of commercial gang fraud, breach of trust, accounting fraud and market manipulation. The 53-year-old denies the allegations and claims to be a victim of the fraud, painting Marsalek as the mastermind. His co-accused are ex-accounting boss Stephan von Erffa and Oliver Bellenhaus, the former head of Wirecard's Dubai subsidiary. Bellenhaus has admitted wrongdoing and will act as a key witness for the prosecution. If found guilty, the trio risk lengthy prison sentences. The court has scheduled 100 trial dates for the complex case. – $\ensuremath{\mathbf{APP}}$

US groups flay State Dept's failure to confront Modi govt crimes

WASHINGTON: The Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) and Hindus for Human Rights along with their allies have expressed disappointment over the US State Department's failure to follow the recommendations of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and designate India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC), a label reserved for the world's most egregious violators of religious freedoms. Despite being recommended as a "Country of Particular Concern" by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom for three consecutive years, India was left off the CPC list for 2022.

For the past three years, USCIRF has recommended that the State Department, headed by Secretary Antony Blinken, designate India as a CPC due to exponential rise in violence and discrimination against Muslims and Christians in the country

The USCIRF in a statement expressed its "outrage" over the State Department's failure to list India as a CPC and said that there was no justification for the government body ignoring the USCIRF's warnings about steep decline in human rights under the BJP government. "USCIRF is tremendously disappointed that the Sec-

retary of State did not implement our recommendations and recognize the severity of the religious freedom violations that both USCIRF and the State Department have documented in [India]," said USCIRF Chair Nury Turkel. "The State Department's own reporting includes numerous examples of particularly severe religious freedom violations in [India]." "Over and over again, the Modi regime has demonstrated how hateful it is towards religious minorities by restricting their citizenship, spreading hate speech against them, encouraging Hindu vigilante groups to physically assault them, allowing riots in their neighborhoods and bulldozing their homes when they protest," said Rasheed Ahmed, Executive Director of IAMC. "Repeated failure to designate India as a

CPC will only encourage the Indian government to double down on its persecution of religious minorities," he added.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations across the globe have expressed their concerns regarding India, especially as countries noted the Modi government's mistreatment of minorities at India's Universal Periodic Review at the United Nations in November. - DNA

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