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Pakistan’s Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

Common future is difficult with the terror supporters

Detailed News On Page-07

New Peru President vows to finish term

Detailed News On Page-7



Abrar Ahmed’s spin magic traps England

Detailed News On Page-06



Today’s Fixtures

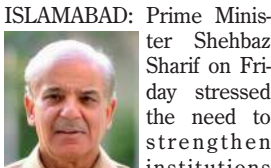


Morocco vs Portugal
8 pm
France vs England
12 am

Briefs

PM for rooting out corruption

STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday stressed the need to strengthen institutions for eradicating corruption from the country by following the golden principles of Islam and ensuring the supremacy of law. In his message on the occasion of World Anti-Corruption Day, the prime minister said the occasion marked the renewal of the pledge to root out this scourge considering it a major obstacle in the way of development and prosperity. PM stressed that corruption, in any country, could lead to economic and administrative destruction. He also emphasized the need for doing away with the practice of using corruption as a tool for political victimization. The prime minister regretted that the previous government jailed political opponents on the basis of frivolous corruption allegations. Terming corruption as a major national issue, he said instead of merely using it for political sloganeering and point scoring, serious efforts should be made for its eradication.

World needs to change its opinion: FM

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in an interview with a newspaper in Singapore emphasized on the world to change its opinion about Pakistan. According to a private news channel, Bilawal gave a special interview to “The Straits Times” during his visit to Singapore on Friday. Answering different queries, Bilawal said Singapore and other ASEAN countries can benefit immensely from the talent of Pak youth in Information and Technology (IT) related activities and other activities. Bilawal said many freelancers in Pakistan are providing services in IT, telecom, e-commerce, data analytics, financial services, music, and health. He said online commerce is on the rise in Pakistan as the Pakistani e-commerce market had expanded by 45 percent in 2021 and now it is expected to generate \$7.67 billion in revenue in 2022. FM said Pakistan is ASEAN’s oldest sectoral dialogue partner and wants to upgrade its full dialogue partnership with this platform. FM said Pakistan gives importance to its relations with Singapore bilaterally and in the context of ASEAN as there is a lot of potential for cooperation between Singapore and Pakistan in trade.

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

SC declares Reko Diq deal legal

CJP announces 13-page short opinion on presidential reference

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday declared an agreement signed between the Pakistan government and two international firms – Antofagasta PLC and Barrick Gold Corporation – in March for the revival of the long-stalled Reko Diq mining project as legal. The verdict was pronounced by a five-member SC bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, on a presidential reference that sought the SC’s opinion on whether a 2013 judgement by the apex court prevented the federal and provincial governments from entering into the implementation agreement afresh. In the 13-page short order, the court said: “The process for the reconstitution of the Reko Diq project has been undertaken transparently and with due diligence. The agreements are being signed by authorities duly authorised and competent to do so under the law.” It added that expert advice on financial, technical and legal issues was sought from local and independent international consultants to ensure transparency and fairness in the project. The court further observed that the agreements under which the terms for consultancy were settled were also constituted after “due deliberation and have not been found by us to be unconstitutional or illegal”. The court order stated that the

proposed Foreign Investment (Protection and Promotion) Bill, 2022 and any amendments to it would not violate the Constitution or the law, provided that the relevant resolutions were passed by the Sindh and Balochistan assemblies and by the National Assembly after following due process. “We also note that the proposed [bill] will not only pave the way for the implementation of the Reko Diq project in its present form but will also facilitate and encourage direct foreign investment in similar mining projects and other high capital-intensive industries in which direct foreign investment is required to be encouraged through guarantees assured by laws and regulatory measures,” the court order reads, adding that the bill was not rendered “person-specific” just because the Reko Diq project was the first to be identified as a “qualified investment” under its terms. Regarding the questions posed by President Dr Arif Alvi on the project, the court observed that while it was settled law that disposal of public assets through a competitive process was the ordinary rule, “it is not an invariable rule”. The order said the Constitution did not forbid the disposal of public assets other than through a competitive process as long as the alternative process had legal support and was rationally justified, pointing out that these conditions were met in the

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Dissolution this month at all costs, says Imran

Asks workers to get ready for elections

ALI HAMZA



LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has asked his workers on Friday to ready themselves for the general elections. In his video message, Imran Khan said that the country is destroyed when the powerful steal billions of rupees and send the country’s money abroad, which weakens the country. Talking about the white collar crime, Imran went on to say that with the NAB amendments, to cope with the challenges of white collar crime becomes impossible. Taking a jibe at the coalition government, the former premier said that the thieves had been imposed on the country, adding themselves obtained the license of plundering. Giving his take over the country’s progress, Imran Khan said the country continues to develop as long the rule of law exists, adding to expose the cases of big corruption will one pave way for country’s progress.

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Big blow to Imran in PM defamation case

DNA

LAHORE: Lahore High Court (LHC) has upheld the verdict of the lower court that had abolished former premier Imran Khan’s right to defend in a Rs 10 billion defamation case filed against him by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. The LHC dismissed the pleas filed by Imran Khan seeking nullification of the verdict of the lower court in Rs 10 billion defamation case filed against him by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. The lower court, in a verdict, had abolished Khan’s right to defend. In a hearing held today, the LHC Judge Justice Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal upheld the verdict of the lower court and dismissed Khan’s plea. In the plea, it was stated that Khan raised objections on the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif’s questions which were rejected by the court. The court abolished Khan’s right to defend upon his failure to answer the questions of Shahbaz.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of People’s Republic of China Nong Rong calls on President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr. – DNA

President hails CPEC as a strategic project

Chinese envoy calls on Dr. Arif Alvi

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said that the China Pakistan Economic Corridor was a strategic project having economic, financial, logistics and connectivity value for Pakistan and China as well as regional and other countries. The president, in a meeting with China’s Ambassador in Pakistan Nong Rong, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said Pakistan would welcome other countries to partner and benefit from this project. He said that full operationalization of CPEC and the

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Sindh police take Swati in custody

DNA

QUETTA: PTI Senator Azam Swati was handed over to the Sindh police in Quetta on Friday, his lawyer said, hours after the Balochistan High Court directed the police to quash all five first information reports (FIRs) registered against him in the province over his controversial tweets against top military officials and release him if he was not booked in any other cases. Swati’s lawyer Advocate Iqbal Shah confirmed the development. PTI leaders lashed out at the news with the party’s provincial president Qasim Suri saying the party was in the process of quashing the remaining FIRs against Swati after the BHC order.

PML-N ready to ‘welcome’ Nawaz Sharif

Rana Sanaullah challenges the PTI chief to dissolve Punjab Assembly

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Friday that the party has begun preparations to “welcome” former premier Nawaz Sharif, as his return would tip the results in the party’s favour if an election were to be held in Punjab. “We have begun preparations to welcome Nawaz from today,” the minister – who is also the PML-N’s provincial president – said at a press conference in Lahore alongside Punjab Information Secretary Azma Bokhari. Nawaz has been living in London since November 2019 after he was allowed to leave the country for medical treatment. Addressing press conference, Sanaullah challenged the PTI chief to dissolve the Punjab Assembly, saying: “We have decided to fight and prepare for the elections.”

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PoL prices may be reduced by up to Rs30

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: As global oil prices fall, petroleum product prices in Pakistan may also be reduced by up to Rs30, Petroleum Division sources revealed on Friday. According to the sources, petrol is currently being purchased at \$76 to \$77 per barrel. Levy charges on petrol are Rs50 per litre, while sales tax on all petroleum products remains zero. The current price of petrol in the country is Rs224.8 per litre. The price revision

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Croatia stun Brazil

Brazil’s World Cup dreams shattered even as Neymar makes history

SPORTS DESK

DOHA: Croatia on Friday defeated Brazil (4-3) on penalties to advance into FIFA World Cup Semi Finals. The game went goalless in normal time, with frustrated Brazilians making various attempts at goal. However, during additional extra time, both the teams scored to end the AET with 1-1 score.

He dropped down to midfield and played two excellent one-tuos the first with Rodrygo and then with Pedro at the edge of the area to break into the box. Neymar then held off Sosa before rounding the keeper and smashing it into the roof of the net to break the deadlock. Neymar was buried in a mountain of Brazil players and substitutes when he celebrated his goal, and was then individually hugged by everyone. The match took a dramatic turn in 116th minute when Croatia levelled the match after Bruno Petkovic’s goal. It was a special goal for Neymar as it brings his tally for the national team level with Brazilian great Pele. This win came as a huge shock as Brazil were the front-runner favourites of this World Cup. Croatia lost the final of World Cup 2018 to France.

Pakistan lauds US’ flood relief support

US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Horst visits Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Elizabeth Horst visited Islamabad December 8-9 to discuss U.S. support for Pakistan’s flood recovery with government leaders. She also spoke with members of Pakistan’s civil society to discuss initiatives to combat gender-based violence, as well as strategies to ensure underserved communities are represented in flood recovery efforts. The United States has provided more than \$97 million to support flood relief, food security, and disaster preparedness in Pakistan this year. PDAS Horst’s visit was part of an ongoing effort to explore further ways to support Pakistan’s flood recovery and resilience, including through the U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance. The U.S.-Pakistan Green Alliance is a framework to address shared challenges relating to agriculture, energy,



water, and other environmental issues; to strengthen climate resilience; and

to foster inclusive economic growth. These issues are even more critical in

the aftermath of the devastating floods. During her visit, PDAS Horst met with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar, Minister of Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Minister of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, and Chief of Staff of the National Disaster Management Authority Brigadier Naik Nam. Her discussions underscored the U.S. government’s commitment to working with Pakistan to support its flood recovery efforts, improve access to renewable energy, respond to climate change, and address challenges that stand in the way of expanding trade and investment between our countries.

PDAS Horst also held a discussion with civil society leaders with expertise on humanitarian relief, women’s rights, children’s rights, and minority rights. She stressed the U.S. position that humanitarian relief and flood recovery should be inclusive. For 75 years, the United States has valued our long-standing bilateral partnership with Pakistan.

As Pakistan continues to recover from the floods, our support for affected communities will remain steadfast. Earlier in October, the United States said it would give an additional \$30 million in humanitarian aid to Pakistan to support victims of recent catastrophic flooding in the South Asian nation. It brings the total disaster-related assistance from Washington to Islamabad this year to \$97 million. U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome announced the new funding during a trip to southern Sindh province, one of the country’s worst-hit regions. “We have been here for the people of Pakistan since the beginning, supporting the most vulnerable communities. With these new funds, the United States will expand upon its existing response, enabling USAID to reach more than 1.8 million people in Pakistan,” Blome said. Pakistani and United Nations officials say torrential seasonal rainfall, made worse by global climate change, has triggered floods across Pakistan.

Pak committed to achieve SCO's objectives: Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday said that Pakistan remained committed to upholding Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO's) development strategy objectives.

The minister expressed these views while addressing the 9th Ministers of Justice meeting of the SCO held here virtually. He said that SCO represented the ambitions of the Member States to build prosperous and sustainable partnerships for promoting common values, interests, and opportunities. The objectives of the SCO were in complete harmony with the foreign policy goals of the Government of Pakistan, which focus on peace, stability, and development, he added. Azam Nazeer said that Pakistan remained committed to upholding these shared objectives including playing an effective role in the promotion of cooperation in the field of law and justice. He said that SCO is also a dynamic platform to forge ties with regional partners and Pakistan would continue cooperation on forensic activities, legal services, and supremacy of rule of law in order to achieve the goals of this august forum. He said that Pakistan believed that the future of our region, and the world, would feature unprecedented interdependence and enhanced cooperation. Accord-

ingly, promoting friendly relations and strengthening regional cooperation through enhanced connectivity and people-to-people contacts would help us achieve and confront common objectives and challenges. The minister said that the coincidence of double hazards of floods and COVID was a challenging problem. Since the beginning of 2020, many regions around the World especially the SCO region had been experiencing this double hazard of serious flooding and the pandemic. Pakistan too was badly affected by COVID and the recent flooding. Around 33 million people, including approximately 16 million children, have been affected by this year's unprecedented heavy monsoon rains in Pakistan, which led to the destruction of homes, farms, and critical infrastructure including roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and public health facilities. He said it was imperative that the SCO Member States should forge partnerships, revise environmental legal frameworks and formulate combined strategies to effectively combat the crises caused by the pandemic and the environmental challenges.

At the heart of this approach must be sustained education and communication, especially among the users of natural resources, about the laws and procedures that are needed and that

are set in place to facilitate effective enforcement and compliance. He said that forensic science had become a critical element of the criminal justice system as forensic scientists examine and analyze evidence from crime scenes and elsewhere to develop objective findings that could assist in the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of crime or absolve an innocent person from suspicion. He said that the development of the legal systems including legal education of the SCO Member States was also an important aspect and Pakistan looked forward to cooperating in the promotion and development of the Organization's legal system. Accordingly, Pakistan was actively participating in the activities of the Expert Working Groups on forensic activities and legal Services including the draft SCO Convention on Legal Assistance and Legal Relations in Civil Cases. He said that the last decade had seen an increase in respect for the rule of law. Pakistan is also determined to achieve the objectives of the SCO Development Strategy until 2025 through a series of actions that include increasing interaction with fellow SCO Member States, strengthening regional and bilateral cooperation, and establishing mutually beneficial contacts.—APP



ICCIA's 5th BOE event on green entrepreneurship held

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture (ICCIA) organized its 5th "Best of Entrepreneurship Pakistan (BOE)" round in partnership with Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD), Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry, FPCCI and hosted by Karachi School of Business and Leadership (KSBL). Under the theme of "Green Entrepreneurship in Pakistan: Challenges, and opportunities", the event aimed to highlight the opportunities the green economy presents for the future entrepreneurs as well as existing businesses and hear their challenges in realizing their plans. 21 speakers, representing national and international entities, shared their experiences, best practices, and highlighted challenges along their journey to enrich the discussion. These will provide a strong basis to develop policy recommendations that are needed to support the growth and investment in this extremely important area in Pakistan as well as within the inter-governmental bodies to contribute to the voice of the global south private sector that is the most affected area within the climate crisis. Highly informative presentations and lessons learned were shared with an audience that included entrepreneurs and professionals who are focused on sustainable and environment-friendly business practices. University students, aspiring entrepreneurs, and business enthusiasts

were also part of the event. The morning session of the event discussed two of the most important areas within the climate context: Energy and Plastic. In the Energy segment, green transitioning of the sector was discussed by a panel of multinationals as well as local businesses including Mr. Mujtaba Khan of Reon Energy, Mr. Zain Hak, Vice President/Global Head - of Agriculture & Forestry, Chairman of the Board SPL PLC, Shell, and Mr. Hashim Raza, CEO K-Solar. The second panel was dedicated to the Plastic consumption and how the businesses are moving towards reducing their contributions to our landfills, sea, rivers, and the environment at large. The panel included representation from Academia including Dr. Yasir Nawab, Associate Professor / Dean SET, National Textile University and Ms. Shiza Aslam, Head of Circular Plastic Institute, KSBL and the private sector including Mr. Khawaja Bilal Hussain, Senior Vice President, Head of Strategy, Sustainability and Business Development, Engro, Mr. Shariq Vohra, Former President, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry & Executive Committee Member of FPCCI and Mr. Waleed Bin Ayub, Sr. Packaging & Sustainability Development Manager at Unilever. The afternoon session of the day focused on entrepreneurial journeys to create interest in the university students and aspiring or new entrepreneurs so they understand what it takes to start and run a business. Speakers included Mr. Farhan Adil Mehboob, Director S.Mehboob & Co,

Mr. Ahmad Shabbar, Founder, Director and CEO of Garbage Can, Mr. Kumayl Khaleeli, CEO of Zephyr Power. All stressed on the need for perseverance, measurement of impact and the leadership that is needed from the youth to secure their future. Other notable personalities such as, Mr. Mubashar Hameed, Rector, Karachi School of Business Leadership (KSBL), Mr. Amjad Rafi, Senior Member FPCCI, Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, Chairman, Baig Group and Honorary Consul General of Republic of Yemen in Pakistan, Syed Muhammad Habibullah, Assistant Director Youth Affairs, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Government of Sindh, Mr. Hamza Nisar Kushtiwala (Author of BEHIND THE GREEN), Mr. Andeel Ali (Head of M&E department at the National Incubation Centre, Karachi), and Syed Muhammad Habibullah, Assistant Director Youth Affairs, Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Government of Sindh also spoke at the BOE.

ICCIA highlighted that the BOE series is a platform that has been designed to bring the relevant stakeholders together and will continue to enlighten, educate, and inspire young entrepreneurs to contribute to a greener Pakistan and the world through regular rounds and series to touch base on common challenges and needs. It is the platform to introduce the sectors of the future that Pakistan needs to consider as part of its strategic vision in building a resilient and sustainable economy.



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira and Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada addressing a press conference. —DNA

Turkish Ambassador calls on KP Governor

PESHAWAR: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Prof Dr Mehmet Pecaci here on Friday called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali. Honorary Consul General of Turkey in the province Salim Saifullah was also present in the meeting. They discussed the further strengthening of bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries, especially the people of KP. The Governor said, "Turkey is our brotherly Islamic country and people of both the countries are bound with each other in a strong relationship of love and friendship." He expressed the gratitude to the Turkish government and people for helping Pakistan during the recent floods and in the past. He emphasized on promoting trade activities between the two countries to benefit each others experiences and capabilities. "I myself have visited Turkey with a trade delegation and I recognize the potential for the development of industry in Turkey," the Governor said. He also suggested establishment of Pak-Türk medical and engineering colleges and universities in Pakistan as like Pak-Türk School.—APP

JSMU receives NOC from HEC for two new PhD Programs

KARACHI: Higher Education Commission has issued No Objection Certificate (NOC) to Jinnah Sindh Medical University for launching two new PhD programmes in Basic Medical Sciences and Dental Health Sciences. Professor Amjad Siraj Memon, Vice-Chancellor of Jinnah Sindh Medical University, expressed gratitude over the issuance of NOC by HEC and said that by starting new PhD programmes, the shortage of highly qualified healthcare professionals required in the health sector will be met. The Higher Education Commission said in the letters issued to the JSMU that HEC has no objection in starting a PhD in Dental Health Sciences and Basic Medical Sciences with the relevant faculty members including Professor Dr Syed Muhammad Kefi Iqbal, Professor Dr Muhammad Khalil Khan, Professor Dr Irfan Qamruddin, Professor Dr Syed Mehboob Alam, Professor Dr Saadia Akram and Associate Professor Dr Farah Jawed with effect from Spring 2023. In the letters, the University is advised to comply with the policies laid down by HEC regarding MS/ MPhil and PhD.—DNA

Govt. asked to establish Housing Bank to promote low costing housing in Pak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Many dignitaries visited the 1st International Housing EXPO 22 on its second day being organized by the Ministry of Housing & Works in collaboration with Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Saifur PNL-N leader and former MNA, H.E. Chakkrid Kraichaiwong Ambassador of Thailand, H.E. Nguyen Tien Phong, Ambassador of Vietnam, H.E. H.E. Khazar Farhadov Ambassador of Azerbaijan and H.E. Ms. Dilshad Senor, Ambassador of Northern Cyprus. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry

and Iftikhar Ali Shallwani, Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Works took the visiting dignitaries to various stalls put up for display in the EXPO. The visiting guests took great interest in the products and projects displayed in the EXPO and highly appreciated the Ministry of Housing & Works and ICCI for organizing such a wonderful EXPO. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari briefed the Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Saifur about the importance of establishing a new industrial estate in the region to promote industrialization and investment and he assured that ICCI should give him a proposal and he would try to get its approval from the Prime Minister of Pakistan. On the second day, panel discussions were also held

on the sidelines of the EXPO. The first session was held on "Low Cost Housing and Financing Frameworks with panellists Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar Vice President ICCI, Najeed Haroon Chairman PEC, Maj Gen (Retd) Amer Aslam Khan, Acting Chairman NPHDA, Dr. kamran Shams CEO Akhuwat Islamic Microfinance, Dr. Athar Mansoor, Consultant Public Policy Business School Hong Kong University of Science & Technology, Hassan Junaid, Head Islamic Business Pakistan Mortgage Refinance Company, Jamshaid Meher'homji CEO Trellis Housing Finance Company, Ch. Abdullah UPDL and Shoji Hasegawa DRR Expert JICA as Key-note Speaker.

Experts call for raising awareness about animal rights, protection

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will mark International Animal Rights Day (IARD) on Saturday by raising awareness about animals' rights, and persuading people to extend kindness and respect to all sentient creatures. Various departments, both public and private, especially animal rights organizations and activists will highlight the importance of the day while print and electronic media will disseminate messages regarding the IARD's significance. "We need to sensitize our youth and create awareness through digital and traditional media about the importance of animal's rights and protection of their natural habitat for safeguarding this planet and environment," noted Environment Activist and President Sustainable Tourism Foundation, Pakistan Rana Aftab while talking to APP. In connection with IARD being observed on December 10, Rana Aftab termed lack of awareness

about the animal's rights as one of the big reasons for the inhuman treatment meted out to animals across the globe. "These animals are part of our web of life and we need to protect them for the healthy environment and survival of human life." He urged the need of proper implementation mechanism of the rules and regulation and pointed out the need to disseminate the information about the animal rights in national language. "Unawareness make people kill many animals which are important to maintain the natural cycle of the ecosystem." He said that the departments working on wild life conservation, national parks and wilderness areas have very limited staff and cannot manage the proper preservation of wild life. "Due to this, illegal hunting of animals is carried out by influential while the situation is better in those areas where community is being involved for the protection of animals." The northern areas where local community pro-

vides protection to wild life has sufficient number of animals with their natural habitat, he said while urging to engage local communities along with the departments to protect the animal's life. He said that incentive-based programs like trophy hunting should be launched across the country which not only help generate revenue and discourage illegal hunting but also increase the interest of the local community through increasing their involvement. He told that the 70 percent of revenue of trophy hunting is shared with the local community while 30 percent share goes to government. Talking about the rights of the animals, Rana Aftab was of the view that both domestic and wild animals have rights and "we need to educate out masses about these rights. Provision of proper medical facilities, natural habitat, safety and food to the domestic animal including pet and those involved in labour are the basic rights, he added.—APP

World community should stop India from HR violations

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Human Rights Riaz Pirzada on Friday reiterated Pakistan's call to the world community to stop India from its blatant human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Addressing a news conference along with PM Advisor on Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira regarding the

International Human Rights Day on 10th December, the minister said that India should immediately stop gross human rights violations while withdrawing its troops from IIOJK and lift all restrictions imposed here. He expressed the resolve that Pakistan would continue its support with the Kashmiri people who are facing Indian atrocities.

Addressing the news conference Qamar Zaman Kaira said that the world must fulfill its responsibility to uphold the sanctity of law and human rights in the Indian Occupied Kashmir and Palestine. He said Pakistan stands steadfast with its Kashmiri brethren and will raise voice at all international forums.—Agencies

Role of teachers vital for democracy

The gatekeeping role of teachers - at different levels of education - to inoculate democracy against the threats from extremism, inculcate the democratic values of peace and harmony in youth as leaders of tomorrow, and develop their critical thinking skills as an inherent communal capacity against/ to refute extremist narratives, figured prominently in the discussions among Quetta-based faculty members. Representing different universities across Quetta, the faculty members converged at the Quetta Press Club for the Balochistan Chapter of Paving Pathways to Social Cohesion, an initiative by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS). The Center screened four original short films during the workshop, one each on i) Equality, Diversity and Tolerance Perspectives, ii) Women Rights and Empowerment, iii) Challenges to Peacebuilding, and iv) Rule of Law and

Accessible Justice. In the discussions based on the short-films, the participating faculty members noted that the differences, a difference of understanding, & misunderstandings, if not resolved timely and respectfully, can lead to devastating outcomes. No democracy can be successful without the socio-political ideals like equality, humanity and equal opportunities for all members of the society regardless of their socio-political, ethnic,

cultural, and religious backgrounds. The extension of acceptance and respect towards the minorities should not be determined by the choice of majority groups, instead, by the constitution and the milestones like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). We can be born to Muslims or to the believers of any other faith, that's not our choice, but we do have a choice to deal with the people from different back-

grounds respectfully. "We are making doctors, engineers, and honing and producing other expertise in the society in an effort to respond to the market needs, but are we creating good human beings as something that our society needs?", questioned participants. So many discriminatory attitudes living in the society are not merely because of religious differences, but happening in the cultural realm: the motivators are varied and diverse.—Agencies



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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- 2826211
Monal.....0334-5421812

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance..1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police....9266044
Motorway Police..9270601-20
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CMH.....5611111
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Cantt Hospital..9270907-11
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RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
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Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Int’l symposium on post-COVID higher education challenges

Prof. Choudhary said that science responded to the pandemic by deciphering the virus in just four months and providing vaccine in the shortest possible time to save lives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: (COMS-TECH): COMSTech, (COMSTech Consortium of Excellence CCoE), IUCPSS (The largest network of public universities of Pakistan), American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and The Hollings Centre for International Dialogue organized an International Symposium on Post COVID Higher Education Challenges and Way Forward at COMSTech on Friday. Vice Chancellors/Rectors of Muslim Universities from Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan participated in the symposium. The Coordinator General COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said in his welcome address that the topic of today's symposium is both relevant and important. He said that the COVID pandemic impacted the world very profoundly. He said that the pandemic has exposed the world that no one is out there to help to combat pandemic, one has to solely rely on one's own capabilities. Prof. Choudhary said that science responded to the pandemic by deciphering the virus in just four months and providing vaccine in the shortest possible time to save lives. He informed that the next pandemic is being predicted in just four years time, so we have to prepare for that in advance. Prof. Choudhary said that the education has been given least importance. We are technologically illiterate and our competency in the use of technologies is not at par. He said that we have to adopt new normal by learning and using new technologies. He said the idea of this symposium is to discuss, debate and understand the challenges faced by the higher education and find appropriate ways to mitigate them. Pro-Rector Superior University, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Nizamuddin said in his keynote address that we need to conduct study to find how higher education sector responded to the pandemic. He said that the quality of higher education delivery effected during the pandemic, because we were not prepared. He said in one aspect the higher education sector was benefited by the COVID pandemic and that was the initiation of hybrid system of education delivery and adoption of the technologies. Prof. Nizamuddin recommended to strive for technological advancement, building community centers and making access to higher education easy for everyone. He appreciated the online education system and recommended to adopt the online education system. The chief guest of the concluding session of the symposium was the chairman standing committee on foreign affairs, senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed. He said like other parts of the world, COVID-19 has severely affected higher education sector in South Asia, highly populated and unique geographical region of the world, which accounts for 25% of the world population having the highest proportion of youth under the age of 18 years. Mr. Sayed said, in Pakistan, about 47 million students have been affected including 2 million students enrolled in more than 230 universities and more than 120 sub campuses. He said that the universities across the region had to face multiple challenges during and post COVID period. He said that a dire need is being felt to bring higher education leadership/vice chancellors across the globe on one platform not only to deliberate on post COVID higher education challenges but also suggest solutions through learning from best regional and global practices in key fields of online teaching, assessment, mental health issues and required new skills & educational pathways for students. He appreciated the organization of this symposium as the objectives of this symposium are the need of the hour to achieve them as early as possible. National Coordinator IUCPSS, Mr. Murtaza Noor said that the purpose of today's symposium is to bring all stakeholder close together to discuss and find solutions to the challenges being faced by higher education sector after COVID.

Govt to allow prisoners to get medical education

ISLAMABAD :Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel on Friday directed the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) to make arrangements for the inclusion of young prisoners in the next admission test of medical and dental colleges. In a statement, the minister said that from next year these prisoners would also be allowed to get admission in nursing, allied health sciences, MBBS, and other disciplines of their choice. He said that all public sector medical universities and health institutions would be bound to give admission to those aspiring prisoners who are in jail as this is their basic right to get education. He said that instructions have been issued in this regard to the PMC. He said that the objective was to respect the rights of the prisoners and allow them to avail equal opportunities in education so that they could play a positive role in society.—APP

Craft show by women artists today

ISLAMABAD :Empowering women empowering communities - a two-day craft festival will start here on December 10 featuring a variety of arts, crafts, and poetry renditions on women's voices. The event is being organized by Nomad Gallery in collaboration with Serena Hotel under cultural diplomacy to mark December 10 as Human Rights Day. Nomad Gallery has been committed to the promotion of art and culture, crafts development, human rights, and peace. Based in the capital, Islamabad, many renowned and emerging, national and international artists have exhibited at Nomad which maintains a permanently represented collection. They work with various communities from all provinces of Pakistan and home-based workers producing handicrafts to showcase a versatile range of products. Nomad works to address social issues in the empowerment of Women and Youth which includes "minorities" rights and representation in addition to underprivileged communities under its 'Art and film for Social Change, Activism and Peace' programs focusing on Human Rights and Women's Rights through awareness-raising and economic empowerment, training, seminars, festivals, and workshops.—APP

Festival of women entrepreneurs today

ISLAMABAD :Wecamp is all set to kick off the two-day festival to support and celebrate women entrepreneurs through Art, Craft, and Food 100 women entrepreneurs here on December 10 and 11. The festival will take place at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) jointly organized by atncamp and wecamp in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), the Ministry of Commerce. The festival will help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses and expand their market outreach. This year, special focus has been paid to reaching marginalized communities of women. Accordingly, wecamp has partnered with The SEED Program to expand opportunities to twenty women entrepreneurs from KPK at the festival. The festival is open to all walks of life. Citizens of Islamabad and Rawalpindi must visit the festival to support and celebrate home-based women entrepreneurs. Laiba Ahmad - CEO and Co-founder of wecamp said while talking to APP. "I am incredibly proud of the work wecamp is doing to facilitate the financial empowerment of women in Pakistan. Our women entrepreneurs are beacons of inspiration for their resilience in business in face of all social norms and expectations. These women are immensely talented and I urge everyone to visit them at our festival; listen to their stories and share the pride they take in their work," she said.—APP

NIH asks health authorities to take measures

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Health (NIH) has asked the health authorities and other stakeholders to ensure taking preventive and control measures for seasonal influenza. According to NIH, health authorities have been advised for adopting measures encompassing preparedness to deal with the increased workload expected in the outpatient and in-patient departments during these days. The institute has also issued an advisory for the prevention and control of Seasonal Influenza in the wake of the expected upsurge of influenza cases in different parts of the country. The advisory discussed that Influenza or seasonal flu can spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing or can contaminate hands or other surfaces. It said that patients with chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, cardiac and lungs diseases, etc. and pregnant women, elderly people—APP

Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain chaired the launching ceremony of addition of supplementary reading material on animal rights module in curriculum for young children today. —DNA

IT Parks to expand Pakistan’s digital landscape

ZAHoor AHMED

ISLAMABAD: With digital growth going through a rapid revolution, the country is inching towards establishing a vibrant network of Information Technology (IT) parks to expand its digital landscape. As the modern-day electronic gadgets have influenced the entire lifestyle, these IT parks would provide young professionals a launching pad to execute their innovative ideas and contribute to economy more efficiently. The world nations including Pakistan felt the vitality of information technology more than all times during the COVID-19 epidemic with the people keeping in touch across the globe even when restricted to homes. People often, if not always, rely on IT tools in different walks of life from economy to banking, education to political campaigns, governance to healthcare and shopping to routine communication. "We need to be compatible to rest of the world in communication skills. Therefore, we especially our young generation needs to be well equipped with latest communication techniques," said Minister for Information technology and Communication Syed Amin-ul-Hasnat. "The IT parks, we are establishing would prove to be a launching pad not only for acquiring latest skills but also contribute towards narrative building to counter malicious propaganda against our motherland," he said. The minister remarked that software technology parks would not only generate employment opportunities for IT professionals but also attract millions of dollars in foreign exchange. "On completion, these parks would also boost IT industry and exports and pave way for an innovative future." Currently, work on Rs 41 billion IT parks in Karachi and Rs 13.72 billion in Islamabad is underway that would provide jobs to around 35,000 IT professionals from across the country. "The IT Park in Karachi is the largest of its kind in Pakistan aimed at benefitting not only citizens of Karachi and Sindh but also the IT professionals and companies across the country," the minister said. The Karachi IT Park was approved by ECNEC on June 4, 2021 at a capital cost of USD 186.658 million including USD 158.416 million from Korean Exim Bank as a loan and USD 28.242 million local share. This is an eleven-storey self-contained building with covered area of 106,449 square meters having capacity to provide office space to approximately 225 start-ups and small to medium enterprises besides ancillary facilities like testing laboratories, classrooms, industry-academia linkage centers and auditoriums. The government has invited private sector to actively participate and play a frontline role to make IT parks and other related projects "a big success story." "We are ensuring to equip these IT parks with latest infrastructure, technology and telecommunication tools for developing knowledge-based enterprises," said an official of the IT ministry. He said the range of services offered by the parks would not be limited to enterprises and tenants of the parks but also for companies outside the parks. "These parks would boost knowledge-based economy and entrepreneurship with the use of advanced technologies." The foundation stone of IT Park in Islamabad was laid in Chak Shahzad during May this year by the Minister for IT and Telecommunication under "Digital Pakistan Vision," to be completed in 30 months at a cost of Rs 13.72 billion. The park would help meet infrastructure requirement for IT sector and facilitate technology transfer through industry and academia linkages, support technology commercialization, links tertiary education and production and promote research and development besides enhancing IT exports and industry competitiveness.

Farhan Saeed to headline electrifying concert at Karachi

On work front, Saeed has been riding high on success for his much-loved film 'Tich Button

ISLAMABAD :Top-notch Pakistani artist Farhan Saeed, known for his multi-talented roles of singing, songwriting, and acting, gears up to make winters unforgettable for his Karachi fans with an electrifying live concert on Dec 10th, 2022. Turning to his official Instagram account, the 'Suno Chanda' sensation left netizens in awe as he shared a video message stating "Karachi come with your family and enjoy Soulfest because you don't have to miss it" Furthermore, the vocal powerhouse also treated his huge fan following with a captivating poster, revealing the schedule for his upcoming concerts along with the caption "December! Let's go" followed by a heart emoticon. According to the shared poster, the heartthrob will headline a concert at Soulfest Karachi on Dec 10th while on 13th and 21st Dec, Saeed will cast a musical spell on his international fans with live Dubai and Oman concerts, bringing a mix of his fascinating tracks along with much-loved Coke Studio performances. Ending 2022 with powerful vocals and vibrant energy, the all-rounder has marked Dec 24th and 26th for his Islamabad fans. Shortly after the announcement, fans started bombarding the comment section showing love and excitement for the highly-anticipated concerts while wishing the best of luck to the superstar. On the work front, Saeed has been riding high on success for his much-loved film 'Tich Button', as the blockbuster surpassed the 100 million mark at the global box office.—APP

APHC condemns upsurge in extra judicial killings

They said that the world community must put pressure on New Delhi to give the Kashmiris their inalienable right to self-determination

ISLAMABAD: In India Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has condemned the upsurge in systematic genocide, extrajudicial killings, denial of religious, social, and political rights, arbitrary arrests and torture of innocent Kashmiris by brutal Indian troops. The APHC spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar on the eve of Human Rights Day deplored that the oppressed people of Kashmir were not enjoying even a bit of this Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the 10th of December in 1948. He said the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not permit any member country to suppress the fundamental rights of the people, especially the right to self-determination. He stressed that the oppressor like India, involved in heinous war crimes against the people, demanding their inalienable rights, should face trial in the International Court of Justice and International War Tribunal. APHC leaders Zamrooda Habib, Yasmeen Raja, Farida Behenji, Bilal Siddiqi, Dr Musaab, Ghulam Muhammad Khan Sopori and Maulana Sajad Hussain Falahi in their separate statements in connection with the Human Rights Day, drawing attention of the world to continued human rights violations and illegal detentions of thousands of Kashmiris, including APHC Chairman Masarrat Aalam Butt, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Aasiya Andrabi, Nayeem Ahmad Khan and other political prisoners and youth languishing in different jails of India and IIOJK. They said that the unprecedented sacrifices of the Kashmiri people would never go waste but would bring positive results. The international community must now break the silence and play its due role in putting an end to human rights violations in IIOJK. Meanwhile, the illegally detained Chairman of the International Forum for Justice and Human Rights Jammu and Kashmir, Mohammed Ahsan Untoo in a message from Kot Bhalwal Jail, Jammu, said that Human Rights Day will be observed all over the world, tomorrow, but there seems to be no end to the Indian atrocities on people of occupied Kashmir. Expressing serious concern over the continued human rights abuses by the Indian forces' personnel he urged the world community to take notice of the brutalities by Indian troops in the occupied territory. Meanwhile, APHC-AJK leaders Syed Aijaz Rehmani, Shaikh Yaqoob and Syed Manzoor Shah in their separate statements said that denial of the right to self-determination to the Kashmiri people is the worst rights violation. They said India claims to be the largest democracy in the world but has deprived the Kashmiris of their democratic rights and has also not fulfilled its promise of holding a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir.—APP

Briefs

Dar efforts to reduce political tension commendable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's efforts to reduce the political temperature in the country are commendable. The political tension between different parties has turned into enmity and the current level of hostility is worrying for the people, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the political enmity is destroying the country's economy which is a cause of great concern. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that if the political conflict continued, the confidence of the business community will continue to decrease and the economy will sink. He said that the ruling party is trying to reduce political tensions in the country and in this context Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has met President Arif Alvi twice in seventeen days so that the government and PTI negotiations can be started. It will reduce tensions and the government will be in a better position to provide relief to the people, manage the economy, restore agriculture, help the flood victims and re-establish the reputation of Pakistan. He said that President Arif Alvi's attitude is also positive, but so far the opposition leaders are not showing positive signs. The government wants unconditional talks with the PTI in which pressure tactics will not be allowed.

Flour supplied to over 80 points in Rwp dist

WAH CANTT :District Food Controller Rawalpindi Sufian Asif Awan has said that over 80 truckers point has been established to supply flour to the masses on daily basis at their door steps in various markets and bazaars across the district. He was briefing newsmen about the anti-wheat smuggling activities by the food department at Brahma-Bhat tar toll plaza near here on Friday. On this occasion, Assistant Food Controller Abid Ijaz Khan office bearers of traders' association Rawalpindi district and Taxila chapter were also present. Ruling out paucity of flour or artificial shortage of the basic commodity in the district, Mr Awan has said that with the recommendation of the concerned assistant commissioners of the relevant tehsils, flour is being supplied to as many as 2200 shops on daily basis across the district.—APP

First ever literature-based museum on cards

ISLAMABAD :Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) is working on the novel idea of establishing the country's first ever literature-based museum on Pakistani languages with the aim to protect and promote the unique literary asset of all the regional languages of Pakistan. The "Literary Museum of Pakistani Languages" will provide information about all the regional languages being spoken in the length and breadth of the country in form of scripts, booklets, audios and video documentary display, said Asim Butt, Director PAL while talking to APP here Friday. He said that the Literary Museum will not only highlight the unnoticed narratives and history of multi-layered local norms and values of the country but would attract the scholars' and foreign guests to explore local culture and linguistics. Beside preservation and promotion of unique linguistic taste of Pakistani culture and linguistics, this museum will provide an opportunity to the visitors to seek information about scripts, history, alphabetical information, folk tales and prominent literature of the regional languages of Pakistan.—APP

Ethiopia for utilization of transboundary water

Ambassador said the NBI produced a draft agreement called CFA after a decade-long extensive negotiation among the riparian countries with the help of WB, UNDP, and other donors

DNA

ISLAMABAD" Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Jemal Bekker Abdula has said that his country fully adhered to the international rule of equitable and reasonable utilization of transboundary water. "As far as, the Nile River water is concerned, Ethiopia is determined to follow international rules, treaties and conventions, but we do not recognize any treaty to which Ethiopia is not the party," the ambassador said while delivering a lecture on international water law, hydro-politics and hydro-diplomacy at a workshop titled "Winter School for International Law". The "Winter School for International Law" was hosted by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in

collaboration with the Research Society of International law. At the outset of his lecture, the ambassador elucidated the terms of hydro-politics and hydro-diplomacy and shed light on this subject's evolution in the last couple of decades. He also informed the audience about the existing international water laws and treaties, the United Nations Watercourse convention, and theories regarding the use of shared transboundary water resources. Around the world, he said three-quarters of UN Member States shared rivers or lake basins with their neighbors. "There are more than 270 shared river basins, which provide freshwater for almost 40% of the globe's population, including the Nile, the Indus, the Ganges, the Euphrates-Tigris, and the Mekong." As regards the inter-state relations of the African continent in the context of



shared water resources, he said the Nile River was the longest transboundary river in the world whose water was shared among 11 countries including Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Egypt. The ambassador said during the last two centuries, several treaties were concluded in respect of the Nile River, which Egypt has been invoking to justify their 'right' to the use of the waters of the Nile River. He

said Ethiopia was not the party to any of these treaties, however, it directly and actively participated in the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) forum which was established in 1999 to "achieve sustainable socio-economic development through equitable and reasonable utilization of, and benefit from the shared Nile Basin water resources." The ambassador said the NBI produced a draft agreement called the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) after a decade-long extensive negotiation among the riparian

countries with the help of WB, UNDP, and other donors. The Comprehensive Framework Agreement entailed, reflected, and contained the international water laws and principles such as equitable, reasonable, and fair utilization of water, do no harm rule, the obligation to protect the ecosystem, the principle of cooperation, and the obligation to share information and exchange data that end the monopoly of Nile River and begin the new era of cooperation. He said the upper riparian countries of the Nile River including Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi had signed the CFA and agreed to utilize more of the Nile's water resources based on the international water laws, instruments, and principles mentioned above. To this end, Ethiopia has taken a decisive measure of confidence restoring by establishing an International Panel of Expert, and a National Inde-

pendent Scientific Research Group (Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan) to conduct scientific studies on the impacts of the Dam in which Ethiopia accept the outcome of the study. The ambassador said Ethiopia had built the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam in line with international water laws, the UN watercourse convention, NBI, CFA, and the Declaration of Principles (2015). It was the largest hydro dam in Africa and 10th in the world which would eventually generate 6500MW of clean energy. He said the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam would be a game changer for the entire African region as it would promote regional integration through the transfer of clean energy. It would also hold sedimentation in the countries such as Egypt and Sudan and also help avert drought and flood low riparian states with huge storage capacity while it also reduces evaporation.

Food festival at PC Rawalpindi
DNA

ISLAMABAD: In celebration of the vibrant Pearl-Continental culture, Pearl-Continental Hotel Rawalpindi is going to host a three-day event called PINDI EATS from the 16th-18th of December 2022 from 03:00 PM-11:00 PM. After the great success of the Bukhara Grand Food Festival held in 2021, this year, we will be offering the best variety of delicious cuisines and appetizing dishes to our diners from the specialties of Pearl-Continental Hotels. The beautiful outdoor setting, coupled with delicious food offerings from our acclaimed restaurants includes Dumplings, Kashmiri Cuisine, Khyber Hujra, Tai Pan, Jason's Steakhouse and Bukhara. Along with food offerings, a variety of kids activities such as jumping castle, face painting, magic show, etc. will also be a part of this three-day event. Other activities will include live music, a lucky draw and kiosks catering to ethnic products.

One more infected with dengue virus in Rwp

RAWALPINDI :One more dengue case was reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 4,764. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Friday said that six patients were admitted to two city hospitals, including four to the Holy Family Hospital (BBH), and two to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ). He informed that out of the total admitted patients, three belonged to Rawalpindi, two to Islamabad, and one from Abbottabad. From December 2 to date, the health official said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had registered seven FIRs, sealed one premise, issued Chalan to 18, notices to 433, and a fine of Rs 186,000 imposed on violations of anti-dengue SOPs in various areas of the district. During indoor surveillance, Dr Sajjad informed that 1,261 anti-dengue teams checked 33,350 houses in the last 24 hours and found dengue larvae at 34 homes. Similarly, he added that 512 teams, during outdoor surveillance, inspected 14,880 spots and detected larvae at two places.—APP

ANF seizes over 23 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI :Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting four counter-narcotics operations seized over 23 kg drugs, 400 litres of prohibited chemical, 634 intoxicated tablets, 51 heroin-filled capsules and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He said that ANF recovered 634 intoxicated tablets during an operation near Zeroline Torkham Border. In another operation at Faisalabad Airport, ANF recovered 51 heroin-filled capsules from the possession of a passenger resident of Swabi, going to Bahrain on flight no GF-791. ANF and Sindh Rangers in a joint operation managed to recover 1.7 kg heroin, 14 kg charras, over one kg ice drug and seven kg weed. In the fourth operation, ANF seized 400 litres of prohibited chemical, concealed in bushes from Winder area in Balochistan. Separate cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations and further investigations are under process.—APP

AIOU announces results of Matric, FA

ISLAMABAD :Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the results of Matric, FA and I.Com programs offered in the spring semester 2022. According to controller examinations, results have been uploaded to the CMS portal of students. It is pertinent to mention here that university has denied the false and baseless news on social media regarding the admissions of MA/MSc programs and stated that as per the policy and guidelines of the Higher Education Commission, admissions in MA/MSc programs is halted. Moreover, admissions for the spring semester 2023 will start from January 15, in which candidates who have passed BA (Associate Degree) are eligible for admission in the fifth semester of B.S.—APP

Police arrest two POs

RAWALPINDI :The Rawalpindi Police on Friday arrested two proclaimed offenders (POs) wanted in different cases registered in Dharmial and Rwp Cantt Police Stations. According to a police spokesman, two POs namely Wahab and Kamran were sent behind the bars. Meanwhile, Murree police rounded up two accused namely Waqas and Abdul Mateen over violation of the sound system act. He said that Rawalpindi district police were taking stern action in accordance with the law against the lawbreakers, adding, the operations would continue and all the POs would be sent behind the bars.—APP



ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar in a meeting with the newly appointed Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majid.—DNA

64th "Gwadar Day" celebrated to mark merger of Gwadar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 64th "Gwadar Day", an epic memory of the transfer of Gwadar from Oman to Pakistan, was celebrated with traditional fervor, offering people to refresh the watershed moment that is now changing the physical layout of Gwadar from a small fishing town to a rising logistic hub in the region, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. People commemorate Gwadar Day every year on 8th December to mark the merger of Gwadar with Pakistan by holding various functions and events in Gwadar. In the historical context, Gwadar was formally handed over to Pakistan in 1958 by Oman. Initially, a naval platoon led by then Lt Ifthikhar Ahmed Sirohey of the Pakistan Navy landed at Gwadar and unfurled Pakistan's flag. Various activities

were held at Gwadar under the auspices of the Pakistan Navy and Commander Coast (COMCOAST). Earlier, the day began with an impressive flag-hoisting ceremony held at PNS Akram, Gwadar. The Gwadar Day celebrations were aimed at rekindling awareness about the history of Gwadar among the masses. A large audience, including civil dignitaries, military officials, and local notables, also witnessed the activities. Gwadar is a Balochi word that means "The Door of Wind". Though located on the southwestern coast of Balochistan, the area is on the convergence of three strategically important zones of the world which are oil-rich Middle East, Central Asia with surplus natural resources, and South Asia having greater economic potential. Gwadar is situated on a natural hammer-head shape tombolo



peninsula forming two almost perfect, but naturally curved, semi-circular bays on either side. Historically before Gwadar was recognized as part of Pakistan, the area was in possession of Oman from 1783 to 1958. The strategic value of this location as a deep water port was identified by the United States Geological Survey when the territory was still under Omani rule. Pakistan bought the area of Gwadar from Oman while Oman previously was also under British rule. British had concluded an agreement with the Sultan of Oman on March 20, 1891, in which the final pledge was, "never to cede,

sell, mortgage or otherwise give in occupation any of his dominions or dependencies to the British government". However, the Pakistani Government continued to raise the issue with the British. In 1958, after learning that the Indians are also trying to acquire Gwadar land, the Government of Pakistan intensified its efforts and succeeded in concluding an agreement with the British Government on August 1, 1958. At this time, the British Government was already under pressure in a move by UNSC where it was blamed for armed aggression by the UK against the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the Imamate of Oman. The Sultan of Muscat was also in dire need of funds to continue his campaign against the Imam.

2-day "China's intangible cultural heritage exhibition" held

ISLAMABAD: The two-day exhibition of China's intangible cultural heritage held in Lahore's art gallery, where a large number of art enthusiasts gathered, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. The Chinese Consulate in Lahore organized the exhibition, which was themed "Chinese Culture and Traditional Crafts." On the occasion, Zhao Shiren, Chinese Consul General in Lahore, stated that "the exhibition is a stater of promoting deeper cultural harmony among the peoples of Pakistan and China because the more we are integrated knowing each other's heritage, craftsmanship, culture, as well as intangible intellectual wealth, the better we will be doing in lockstep." In order to strengthen such a cultural bond between Pakistan and China, the consulate will continue to hold such thematic exhibitions in the future, he added. He stated that next year will be the China-Pakistan Year of Tourism and Exchanges, and that China will host the Gandhara Art Exhibition in Beijing. "I hope that this small exhibition will serve as a good starting point for the China-Pakistan Year of Tourism and Exchanges, and that our people's hearts will beat together," he said. "Cultures are diverse, and civilizations differ. They are not, however, designed for conflicts or confrontation. Cultures and civilizations' ultimate goal is dialogue, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, harmony, and shared growth.—DNA

HEC calls for applications for Innovator Seed Funds 2022

ISLAMABAD :The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has called for applications for Innovator Seed Fund (ISF) - 2022 from Pakistani students under the initiative 'Turn Your Entrepreneurial Idea into a Successful Enterprise'. HEC, in that regard, has invited innovative startups owned by students, alumni, and/or faculty members/researchers (from Public & Private Sector Universities/Degree Awarding Institutions) to apply for the Innovator Seed Fund (ISF) Grant. According to official sources from HEC, ISF, envisioned for the development of innovation and startup ecosystem in Pakistan, is a flagship initiative of HEC under the Higher Education Development in Pakistan Project (HEDP). The sources said that ISF is anticipated to support the development of fledgling startups having innovative ideas through the provision of seed funding grants, to transform them into successful and sustainable enterprises. The grant package includes up to USD 35,000 in seed funding, stretched over startups' proposed budgetary requirements for activities including but not limited to entrepreneurial training, legal/financial / marketing training, and support, among other services, they added. As per eligibility criteria, the lead applicant must either be a student, alumni, and/or faculty member/researcher of the Higher Education Institutions (public and private). He/She must have endorsement from one of the HEC Established 35 Business Incubation Centers across Pakistan. The candidates must also have an SECP-registered business concept, ensuring the legal status and promising potential of the startup.—APP



KARACHI: Ms Shazia Marri Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety presiding over a meeting with officers at DG office Central Zone Benazir Income Support Program.—DNA

Harry and Meghan

Faced with the Duke and Duchess of Sussex's six-part Netflix documentary series, many will dismiss them as a distraction at a difficult time for the nation. In one perspective, that is a completely fair response. If you weigh the anger and hurt felt by two exceptionally wealthy and entitled people living in California against the struggles and deprivation facing millions of underpaid Britons grappling with a daunting cost of living crisis and unable to afford a Netflix contract, there can only be one conclusion. It is the underprivileged many who have the deeper grievances against contemporary Britain, not the super-privileged few like Harry and Meghan. The disjunction between the world of the royals and ex-royals on the one hand and the world of ordinary people on the other feels particularly glaring and cruel this week. The documentaries are being launched in a battered-down, battered country in which 3 million families cannot afford to heat their homes as the winter weather turns Arctic across a continent blighted by war. It is a country in which more than 7 million people are waiting for treatment from the National Health Service. It is one facing prolonged industrial disruption over low wages.

And yet it is not as simple as that. As in the past, the royal family is still a looking glass in which Britain can see itself. The picture it sees is often distorted. But it is almost never irrelevant. The picture is also changing after a long period of predictability. That has been particularly obvious this year, following the Queen's death and funeral, and the succession of Charles III. The documentaries say a lot about the Sussexes' views of the royal family and its failings. At their core is a critique of the monarchy's reactionary and conservative attitudes to women, foreigners and minority women in particular, embodied by its inability to accept Meghan in all three respects. The critique is sometimes a bit light on direct evidence. Its editing techniques are likely to be attacked. But the recent scandal triggered by Lady Susan Hussey's comments was evidence that the Sussexes' critique rings true. But the monarchy and the royals are not the only target of the documentaries. Much of the Sussexes' anger and indignation is focused on the British media, which they view with implacable hostility and contempt, often with very good reason. The royals have to live with constant media intrusion, including phone hacking. Meghan is surely right to say, at one point, that she was, in effect, left to be the prey of stalkers, as Diana, Princess of Wales, whose tragedy looms over this series, was before her. It is not just the royals who need to be compelled to learn from these films. So do the media, too much of which remains blind to its own failings as well as to its role in the sad personal stories that these documentaries ultimately reveal.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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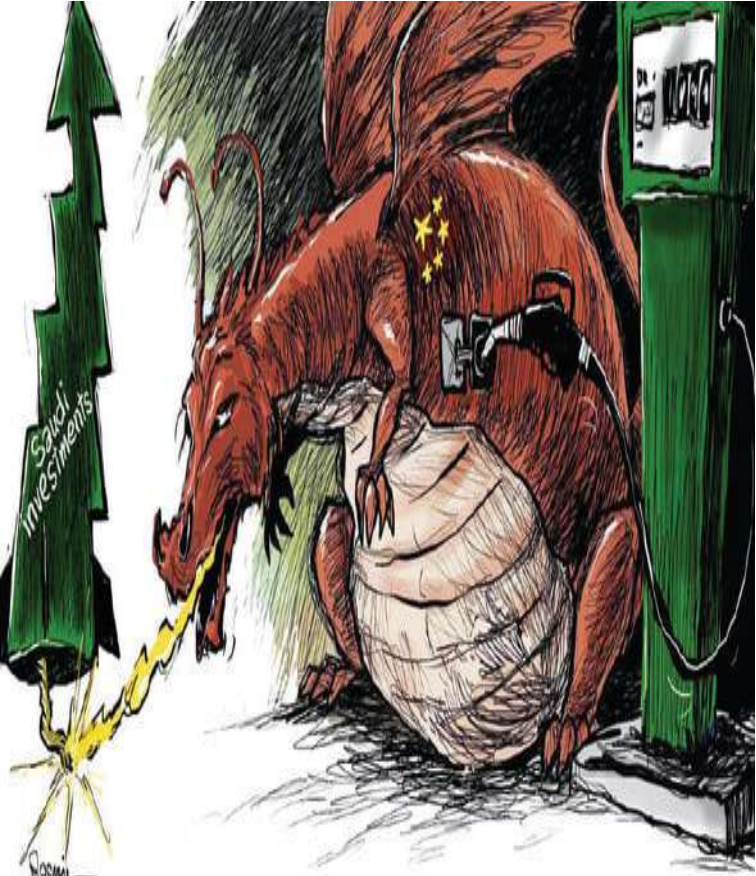
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US must be clear-eyed of risks

The meeting in Bali, Indonesia, between Chinese President Xi Jinping and United States President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the G20 Summit was significant in that it provided an opportunity for the two countries' leaders to clarify their respective government's positions and bottom lines in dealing with bilateral relations. That the meeting took place at all revealed a shared interest in avoiding misjudgment and instilling stability and predictability into the recently volatile relationship. Yet, just as the Chinese leader told his counterpart, it takes efforts from both sides to maintain constructive engagement.

What is happening in Washington regarding Taiwan, however, clearly goes against the kind of healthy, manageable China-US interaction the two leaders expressed they aspired to in Bali. During their face-to-face talks, the Chinese president reiterated to his US counterpart that Taiwan stands at the core of China's core national interests, constitutes the foundation of the political foundation of China-US relations, and is thus the first redline that must not be crossed. Citing Biden's repeated claim of commitment to not supporting independence for Taiwan, he urged the latter to honor his words with deeds.

Yet just weeks after saying that the US government is committed to the one-China policy, it does not seek to use the Taiwan question as a tool to contain China, and hopes to see peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits, the Biden administration signed off on the sale of a fresh package of arms worth more than \$425 million to the island, mainly spare aircraft parts for Taiwan's military. This may not seem like such an "escalation" in US arms sales to Taiwan that the package itself would result in a conspicuous blow to the already frayed ties. No matter how Beijing protests, Washington will continue insisting there's no change to its "one-China policy". But as it is outright interference in China's domestic affairs at a sensitive time, it is damaging to overall bilateral ties. More important, this is only a small token of US military support for the island compared to what is to happen. The "Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act", which is included in the National Defense Authorization Act the US Senate and House Armed Services committees just unveiled, is expected to be approved by Congress and signed into law this month. This will mark a conspicuous escalation in US military intervention in Taiwan affairs, which will deal a heavier blow to the two countries' relations. The proposed legislation promises up to an annual \$2 billion in military grant assistance for Taiwan from 2023 to 2027 to boost the island's military capabilities. At a time when Western politicians are creating a hullabaloo about an imminent mainland "invasion" of Taiwan, and independence seekers on the island are becoming increasingly bold in their efforts to push the envelope, the US moves are adding fuel to the fire. If Washington is serious about crisis management, it must see the dangerous potentials of such stunts and practice restraint. The "China challenge" they are clamoring about may blind them to the truth on the ground and lead them onto a perilous track of confrontation that is in neither country's interest.

World Cup 2022: Palestine beats Israel on football's big stage

Dima Khatib

Morocco's players raised the Palestinian flag on the pitch to celebrate defeating Canada and making it to the round of 16 and then again when they scored a historic victory against Spain to qualify for the quarter-finals. Moroccan fans have also been seen celebrating at Doha's iconic Souq Waqif, singing the famous Rajawi chant: Our heart is sad for you Our eyes have been tearing for you for years, Oh beloved Palestine Where are Arabs

The FIFA World Cup in Qatar is still underway, but there is already one early winner: Palestine. It is scoring in the hearts and minds of fans from across the world. Looking at the abundant number of Palestinian flags, seeing the Palestinian armbands and bracelets, and hearing the "free Palestine" chants at the stadiums, fan zones, in the streets and on social media, one may think that Palestine is among the 32 countries whose teams have participated in this World Cup. Indeed, some Latin American media outlets have branded it the "33rd country" at the tournament. But the Palestinian national team is not playing, so why is Palestine so ubiquitously present? It is because the World Cup is much more than a sporting event. It is a huge gathering of people from around the

world coming together to share their passion for football and celebrate diversity and human solidarity. This year's edition of the World Cup is the first one ever to be held in an Arab country. Hence, it has been more accessible – geographically, logistically and culturally – to people from the region than any previous World Cup. It has also given people from the region space to gather in large numbers without the usual fear of repression.

As a result, Palestine has automatically taken centre stage, uniting Arabs in a joyful and celebratory atmosphere and reaffirming their commitment to the Palestinian cause. In this rare Arab vox populi moment, supporting Palestine appears to be an expression of freedom, a symbol of resistance not only against the continuous occupation of Palestine but also against the neo-colonial order of repressive Arab regimes. It brings memories of powerful moments during the attempted revolutions from more than a decade ago when Arabs also flew the Palestinian flag and chanted "free Palestine" alongside their demands for freedom and dignity. Indeed, the Palestinian flag is a sign of Arab political agency and has been a constant feature in the stands at football matches. We saw a big one unfurled at the Tunisia-Australia match on November 26 and then another one at the Morocco-Belgium match a day later. The giant flag kept coming back in subsequent matches.

At the Tunisia-France game, a Tunisian fan waving the Palestinian flag ran onto the field and did a few flips in the air before being forcibly escorted out by security; his feat inspired "Palastin, Palastin!" (Arabic for Palestine) chants in the audience. Morocco's players raised the Palestinian flag on the pitch to celebrate defeating Canada and making it to the round of 16 and then again when they scored a historic victory against Spain to qualify for the quarter-finals. Moroccan fans have also been seen celebrating at Doha's iconic Souq Waqif, singing the famous Rajawi chant: Our heart is sad for you Our eyes have been tearing for you for years, Oh beloved Palestine Where are the Arabs, they are sleeping Oh, the most beautiful of all countries, resist May God protect you... A number of matches have also seen Palestinian flags raised at the 48th minute, accompanied by pro-Palestinian chants, to remind the world of the Nakba (catastrophe) Palestinians experienced in 1948 when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were dispossessed and turned into refugees for life. But it has not been

just Arabs expressing their support for Palestine. "Free Palestine, Free Palestine", Brazil fans were heard chanting on the Doha metro, as they headed to their match against Cameroon. Fans from all over the world have been happy to accept and wave Palestinian flags given away by Palestinians in the streets of Doha. Israeli media and citizens were allowed to attend the World Cup under FIFA requirements, although Israel and Qatar do not have formal diplomatic ties. The Israeli government probably thought the tournament was an incredible opportunity to demonstrate once again that it is able to overcome the decades-old Arab policy of not engaging with the Israeli colonial state. But it did not turn out that way. Fans have overwhelmingly rejected Israeli media. Dozens of viral videos have circulated on social media showing Israelis trying to talk with fans and utterly failing. Lebanese, Saudi, Moroccan, Egyptian, Jordanian, Qatari, Yemeni, Tunisian, Palestinian, but also Japanese, Brazilian, Iranian, and other fans have been caught on camera adamantly refusing to engage. "You are not welcome here", a Saudi Arabia fan tells an Israeli journalist in one video. "Even though this is Qatar, it is still our country. There is no Israel, only Palestine." In another video, a few England fans line up behind an Israeli reporter appearing ready to talk. He asks them "is it coming home?" "It is coming home," they respond. "But more importantly Free Palesteeeee!" one of them shouts into the microphone before they walk away. Apparently, it got so bad for the Israeli media that some of its reporters started to pretend they were from other countries, like Portugal, Germany and Ecuador. Others continued to try. "We have peace, huh? You signed peace, you signed on the peace agreement," implored one Israeli journalist, desperately trying to convince Morocco fans to talk to him. As they walked away, they shouted: "Palestine, no Israel." Indeed, in 2020, Morocco, along with Bahrain, the UAE and Sudan, signed agreements to normalise diplomatic relations. That allowed Israelis to travel to the UAE – among other things – where they had a warm reception. This experience may have misled them to think they would be welcome in the region, but that is not the case. The Israeli media has been busy talking about Israelis feeling like persona non grata in Qatar, being kicked out of restaurants and taxis as soon as they say they are from Israel. There seems to be a growing realisation in Israel that normalisation efforts may not be

as successful as they may have thought. Arabs have known it all along: normalisation and peace deals are only valid on paper with governments that do not represent the people. Their hearts remain with Palestine until Palestinians become free, which will only happen when the rest of the region is also free. The survival of the Israeli apartheid state is essentially dependent on dictatorial anti-democratic regimes that turn a deaf ear to the voices of their people on all things freedom, including Palestine. The viral videos of Israeli misadventures in the World Cup seem to have receded. Israeli diplomats have reportedly expressed discontent with how Israeli citizens have been treated and called on FIFA and Qatar to ensure the safety and comfort of its journalists.

Complaints from the Israeli media have been received with mockery, with some pointing to the long list of Palestinian journalists Israel has abused, arrested and killed, including Al Jazeera's reporter Shireen Abu Akleh. Her portrait could also be spotted at the tournament. This strong Palestinian presence, growing day after day in the World Cup, has served as a reminder to the global community that the situation in Palestine is intolerable and cannot be ignored. As the World Cup proceeds, Palestinians are being killed, displaced, deported, intimidated and arrested with no solution on the horizon. A coalition of far-right parties has taken over the Israeli government, threatening to escalate apartheid violence against the Palestinians even more. In the World Cup, the Palestinians have also seen an opportunity to strengthen their Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS). While Ukraine and its supporters have managed to get FIFA and UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) to suspend the Russian national team and football clubs from competing in their tournaments over Russian aggression, the Palestinian efforts to get the same treatment for Israel over its occupation of Palestinian land have so far failed. Still, Palestinians and their allies have succeeded in making this boycott happen at FIFA's biggest event in their own way: from the bottom up. While it remains to be seen how this powerful show of solidarity will translate into political action, this World Cup will definitely be remembered for a clear-cut historic victory: Palestine vs Israel 1-0.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

What does Xi's Saudi Arabia trip mean for the region?

ENGİN KOC

Xi's travel confirms that China's influence is growing in the Gulf and allows MBS to show the US that Riyadh has a confident superpower supporter and is not desperate for Washington's largesse. Much is at stake for the Crown Prince, and Xi's trip could help Saudi Arabia gain respectability and credibility on the global stage. In July, Biden undertook his first trip to the Middle East to attend the 'Jeddah Security and Development Summit'

Chinese President Xi Jinping's three-day official trip could have a significant bearing on Washington and Riyadh's strained ties. Chinese President Xi Jinping will be in Saudi Arabia on a three-day official trip from December 7, his first visit to the world's biggest crude oil exporter since 2016. The trip will see him attend bilateral meetings with Saudi King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman – a summit with the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council and the much-talked-about China-Arab summit. Coming just a few months after US President Joe Biden toured Israel and Saudi Arabia, the timing of Xi's trip and the signals from it contain a lot for Saudi Arabia and China as well as the entire region. As relations between Saudi Arabia and the US continue to deteriorate, Xi is anticipated to receive a bells-and-whistles welcome designed to strengthen ties between Beijing and Riyadh and boost China's status as a strategic ally of the kingdom. Additionally, this visit will send out a strong message to key players in global politics. The visit is timely and significant because Saudi Arabia got a massive critique over its de facto role in OPEC+ and the group's decision to cut oil production. It was the last straw on the camel's back vis-a-vis Saudi-US relations. Beijing has always considered the Middle East a unique region that provides ample resources and opportunities – from crude and natural gas reserves to high-income financial markets and important ports for international logistics, technological investments, and arms sales. At the same time, Beijing has also found a level playing field to develop its own geopolitical influence in the region. From the 25-year cooperation agreement with Iran, the strengthening of strategic energy ties with the Gulf states, the China-GCC free trade agreement, and technological investments in the Gulf, the region has indeed turned

out to be a cradle to nurture China's growing global ambitions. Moreover, the Middle East has an unchallenged location in Xi's pet project, the ambitious One Belt One Road initiative. Not to mention the fact that due to Beijing's increased domestic demand and rapid industrial reforms, its position changed to a net oil importer. Being dependent on Gulf oil, China has different policies towards the region than the US. During this visit, China may try to sign energy agreements with Saudi Arabia and other oil-exporting Arab countries under more favourable terms. Xi may also reach agreements involving the sales of strategic weapons like drones that will give Saudi Arabia an advantage over Iranian influence in the Yemen conflict. Riyadh has numerous reasons to have stronger relations with Beijing related to regional and global politics. China is the top buyer of Saudi Arabian oil, and the country has purchased Chinese weapons such as drones and warplanes. Saudi Arabia, which surpassed Russia as the largest oil exporter to China, accounted for 87 billion dollars worth of bilateral trade in 2021. Xi's travel confirms that China's influence is growing in the Gulf and allows MBS to show the US that Riyadh has a confident superpower supporter and is not desperate for Washington's largesse. Much is at stake for the Crown Prince, and Xi's trip could help Saudi Arabia gain respectability and credibility on the global stage. In July, Biden undertook his first trip to the Middle East to attend the 'Jeddah Security and Development Summit'. The US President laid out his vision for the trip by writing a piece in the Washington Post and declared that "the main aim of this visit was to reorient – but not rupture – the long-term partnership with the Kingdom". He added that it aimed to counter Russia's aggression and "put ourselves in the best possible position to outcompete China through the exclusionary approach".

But Riyadh did not share Washington's enthusiasm. During Biden's visit to Jeddah, MBS even did not join the official welcoming ceremony for the US President. Instead, he sent the Mecca Governor to the airport to welcome Biden and his team. In comments at the end of the summit, Biden told a press conference, "We will not walk away and leave a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia or Iran ... We will seek to build on this moment with active, principled, American leadership." But the Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Adel al Jubeir, criticised Biden's arguments on China. "We build bridges with people; we don't see one (China) as exclusive of the other," the minister said during an interview with CNBC. "China is our largest trading partner. It's a huge market for energy and a huge market in the future. And China is a big investor in Saudi Arabia – the United States is, of course, our number one partner when it comes to security and political coordination, as well as investments and trade between the two countries."

The mistrust Riyadh had for Washington had never been so pronounced. In contrast, the warmth between Saudi Arabia and China has only gotten more intense in the recent past. And Xi's visit will significantly impact regional politics, particularly the icy relations between Saudi Arabia and the US. The escalating rivalry between the US and China for geopolitical dominance in the Middle East and worldwide also enables Saudi Arabia to benefit from its relationships with both countries without losing either one. Though the trip might not be a watershed moment, it will still impact regional political dynamics in the Middle East. Undoubtedly, US policymakers will closely observe the trip's outcome as it could determine the future of bilateral ties between Riyadh and Washington.

– Courtesy: TRT World

Briefs

SC declares
Reko Diq
deal

FROM PAGE 01

Reko Diq project. The order further stated that provincial assemblies alone had the exclusive legal competence to deal with mines and mineral development, therefore, they were "competent to alter, amend or repeal any existing law" regarding these areas. The court said that the Balochistan cabinet had approved the decision to enter the project agreement and an apex committee headed by the prime minister and involving relevant stakeholders had negotiated the agreement terms. "Prima facie, the agreements cannot be faulted for lack of due diligence on the part of state authorities," the order said, adding that the agreements were backed by the law. "We have also been informed that the provincial assembly of Balochistan was given a detailed in-camera briefing and was taken into confidence regarding the entire project and the terms and conditions of the proposed settlement between the parties were accepted without any objections being raised." The court further remarked that it also had been assured that the agreements contained no exemptions from environmental laws and required Barrick to act in accordance with both international environmental standards and domestic laws.

President
hails CPEC
as a

FROM PAGE 01

planned Special Economic Zones (SEZs) was an important milestone and urged the Chinese IT sector to invest in SEZs and benefit from Pakistan's cost-effective human resources, liberal investment regime, and cyber data protection policy and tax incentives. During the meeting, the president emphasized the need to fully operationalize road linkages between China and Gwadar port in all weather conditions, around the year, to fully utilize their capacity and achieve their fullest potential. He further said that Pakistan had taken tangible steps to ensure the safety and security of Chinese workers and nationals who were contributing to the development of various strategic projects.

PML-N ready
to 'welcome'
Nawaz...

FROM PAGE 01

Sanaullah further said the PML-N supremo's return would decide the results of the election in Punjab and predicted that the PTI would face defeat. "We are democratic people and are in favour of letting assemblies complete their tenure. But we are not afraid of PTI's harmless threats." With regard to the party's election campaign, the PML-N leader said the party has divided the nine divisions of Punjab into three parts, adding that committees have been formed to meet party leaders and nominate two candidates in each constituency within two weeks. "The committees will consist of senior PML N parliamentarians. They will meet the sitting MPAs and those interested in contesting the election. They will finalise every constituency and visit two candidates from each constituency within two weeks." The committees will then forward their recommendations to the party higher-ups who would then make a decision on the candidacies, he said. He further said that committees would also be formed at the union council level for Nawaz's return. "PML-N workers, under the union council name and banner, will reach Lahore to welcome Nawaz Sharif. "This welcome will also decide the fate of the election. When the election is announced, Mian Nawaz Sharif will return back to lead the party in the [Punjab] elections." The minister asserted that general elections would take place in October 2023. "But if one assembly or both are dissolved, the provincial elections will take place within 90 days".

Pak dominate 2nd Test
after Abrar's spin magic

Pakistan skipper took just 57 balls to reach his fifty and has already stroked nine fours and a six.

SPORTS DESK

MULTAN: Pakistan reached 107-2 on the opening day of the second Test against Pakistan in Multan on Friday. At stumps, the home side trailed by 174 runs with Babar Azam and Saud Shakeel unbeaten on 61 and 32 runs respectively. The Pakistan skipper took just 57 balls to reach his fifty and has already stroked nine fours and a six. On his home ground, Imam fell for a duck on the second ball he faced after edging one to wicketkeeper Ollie Pope on the bowling of veteran pacer James Anderson. Imam's fellow opener Abdullah Shafique also went back to the hut after scoring 14 runs. The right-hander nicked one to Pope, on the bowling of spinner Jack Leach, after looking to defend with a straight bat. Earlier, England were dismissed for 281 in their first innings after deciding to bat first. Ben Duckett (63) and Ollie Pope (60) scored brisk fifties for the touring side, who

are 1-0 up in the three-Test series. For Pakistan, mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed bagged 7-114 on his remarkable Test debut. The 24-year-old became the 13th Pakistan cricketer to bag a five-wicket haul on Test debut. England, who won the first match in Rawalpindi by 74 runs, are on their first Test tour of Pakistan since 2005. Pakistan have made three changes for the second Test as they look to level the series. The hosts are already without pace spearhead Shaheen Afridi, who misses the series following an appendicitis surgery, and further injuries have forced them to make three changes. Fast bowlers Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf are out, along with top-order batter Azhar Ali. The home side have replaced them with all-rounders Mohammad Nawaz and Faheem Ashraf and uncapped spinner Abrar Ahmed. England had announced their playing 11 on Thursday, bringing in fast bowler Mark Wood for injured all-rounder Liam Livingstone. The final Test is scheduled in Karachi from December 17. Lineups:



England: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (captain), Will Jacks, Ollie Robinson, Jack Leach,

Pakistan: Imam-ul-Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam (captain), Saud Shakeel, Mo-

Moroccan fans scramble
for World Cup flights

WEB DESK

RABAT: Moroccans scrambled on Friday to get seats on the seven additional flights that state carrier Royal Air Maroc (RAM) has announced to help soccer fans get to Qatar for the World Cup quarter final against Portugal. Morocco, the last African country left in the tournament and the first Arab country to ever reach the quarter fi-

nals, has been gripped by excitement at the team's World Cup performance, with victories over highly ranked Spain and Belgium. A source at Morocco's soccer federation said it had agreed with RAM that fans seeking tickets on the additional flights should have tickets for the Saturday match and a Hayya card - Qatar's temporary entry visa for World Cup visitors. However, several fans at a RAM office in Rabat said they were able to get air tickets

with only the Hayya card and hoped to buy match tickets on arrival in Doha. Ousama Ouadich, waiting outside the Rabat RAM office in the rain on Thursday night, said he had managed to buy a ticket for the match but did not yet have a flight. "It's frustrating. We need more airplanes," he said. At home, the main fan zones with big screens are at a Casablanca stadium and in Marrakech, where a screen has been put up in the Jmaa al-Fnaa square, a UNESCO world heritage site. During the match against Spain, the Jmaa al-Fnaa was hung with flags and throbbed to the chants of 30,000 fans, said Abdelmakiel El Mansouri a member of the city council.

"We are expecting a similar or higher number of fans during the game against Portugal," he said. Fans attending the Casablanca stadium zone need to get there three hours early for a place, one of the organisers said. Across the country, shops and stalls are doing a roaring trade in flags, national team shirts and T-shirts. "Looking at how many T-shirts I have sold, I wish the World Cup lasted forever," said Zouhir Sabir, a shop keeper in the old centre of Rabat. The price of clothes with national symbols had risen about 30% due to high demand, he said.

Western states incite
violence in Iran: FM

TEHRAN: Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has once again decried Western double standards regarding human rights and women as well as interference in the domestic affairs of the Islamic Republic, saying those actions have provoked violence and terrorism in the country. Amir-Abdollahian made the remarks in a phone call with Dutch Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wopke Hoekstra on Friday, referring to the riots across the country following the death of a young Iranian woman in police custody in September. Efforts by certain Western officials and circles, the Iranian minister said, to incite the Iranian youth and women and the instrumental use of the media are diplomatically "unconstructive." The Iranian foreign minister said rioters and perpetrators of the acts of terror and those who used weapons against the police forces would undoubtedly face justice in accordance with the judicial law of the Islamic Republic. Protests broke out in several Iranian cities after the September 16 death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who died at hospital three days after she collapsed at a police station in Tehran. An investigation attributed her death to her medical condition, dismissing allegations that she had been beaten by police forces. Despite Iranian officials' clarification on the circumstances surrounding her death, violent street protests ensued, culminating in attacks on security officers and acts of vandalism against public property and sanctities. - Agencies

France coach warns
England of Mbappe threat

WEB DESK

DOHA: France coach Didier Deschamps is confident Kylian Mbappe can still make the difference in Saturday's World Cup quarter-final showdown with England even if the opposition put their focus on stopping the superstar forward. Mbappe is the top scorer at the tournament with five goals in four games, including a brace in the 3-1 win over Poland in the last 16, and England will need to find a way of countering the Paris Saint-Germain striker. But Kylian has the ability to make the difference," Deschamps told reporters on Friday ahead of the clash at Al Bayt



mann all impressing in Qatar too. "I imagine England will take measures like our four previous opponents did but Kylian has the ability to make the difference," Deschamps told reporters on Friday ahead of the clash at Al Bayt

Stadium in the desert north of Doha.

"Even in the last game, when he wasn't at his best like in the first two, he was still decisive, but if we can share around the danger that stops too many precautions being taken against Kylian. "But Kylian will always be Kylian, with the ability to be decisive at any moment." The pressure is intensifying for both sides, but Deschamps has won the World Cup as a player and a coach and the 54-year-old encouraged France not to let the occasion get the better of them. "As is the case for us and all teams who reach the knockouts, you don't have a second

chance," he admitted. "The further on you go the greater the quality, but the demands are higher too and so is the excitement." This is the next stage but there is no stress, no need to hold back. It is magnificent to play a World Cup quarter-final." While France are the defending champions, England appear to be growing as a team on the back of their run to the semi-finals in Russia four years ago and the final of Euro 2020. France goalkeeper and captain Hugo Lloris - who has spent nearly a decade in the Premier League with Tottenham - was full of praise for Gareth Southgate's England.

China has become 'more assertive': PM Ardern

Ardern said. "Our relationships in the Pacific region are family relationships because we are family, we are of the Pacific." She said those relationships were built at a community level

AGENCIES

WELLINGTON: Reflecting on her five years as New Zealand's leader, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said China has undoubtedly become more assertive in the region over that time, but cautioned that building relationships with small Pacific nations shouldn't become a game of one-upmanship. In a joint interview Thursday with The Associated Press and the Australian Associated Press, Ardern said China has changed in recent years under President Xi Jinping. "I think if I stand back and look at the region as a whole and some of the changes that we've seen within our region, you do see a more assertive China," Ardern said. "And look, there'll be a whole host of reasons for that. Their integration into the regional economy, the growth of China, the growth of its middle class, a whole range of reasons," she said. "But you have also seen a more assertive approach on a number of different issues and relationships. So that undoubtedly has changed over my

time in office."

China this year made some bold geopolitical moves in the Pacific, first by signing a security pact with the Solomon Islands and then attempting - without success - to get 10 Pacific nations to sign a sweeping agreement covering everything from security to fisheries. Those moves have deeply worried some Pacific nations and Western democracies including the United States. But Ardern rejected criticism that New Zealand didn't make its presence felt enough this year as Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi toured Pacific nations courting influence. "I think if you take a measure of a relationship as solely being: When was the last time you had a politician visit? That is not the measure of a relationship," Ardern said. "Our relationships in the Pacific region are family relationships because we are family, we are of the Pacific." She said those relationships were built at a community level. "So I think we have to be really cautious about treating our relationships as if it's somehow one-upmanship," Ardern said.

"You've got to be consistent in your presence, and New Zealand has been." Asked if she was recommending that farmers and other exporters find markets



outside of China, which buys more than one-quarter of New Zealand's exports, Ardern said it was a question of resilience. "We've actually, from the moment we came into office, been focused on what has been previously characterized as diversification, but what I would say is resilience," Ardern said. "We saw through COVID that actually, regardless of the reason, if you see change in

a marketplace where you've had a dominant market for any goods or services, that can be problematic," she said. "If you have a supply chain issue, then it can cause a whole range of issues. So this, for us, is about resilience." New Zealand's Indigenous Māori continue to be disproportionately represented in negative statistics ranging from child poverty to incarceration rates. Asked about her record with Māori, Ardern said her government has been making progress. "We've just come through, or are in the middle of, an enormous economic crisis, and yet we've got some of the lowest Māori unemployment that we've seen," Ardern said. She said Māori wanted good healthcare, decent educational opportunities and housing for their communities - all things that her government was working on providing. But Ardern also acknowledged she has faced backlash on some contentious Indigenous issues. Those include everything from settlements negotiated under New Zealand's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi, to a push to teach

more Māori history and language in schools. "Change is always difficult," Ardern said. "Change will always bring opposition. But actually, I'm proud of what we've done. It is always important to try and keep bringing people with you. And every time you do make those steps, there will be those who disagree with that." Ardern faces a general election next year as she seeks a third term in office. She has gone from winning a landslide victory of historic proportions two years ago to now being behind her conservative rivals in the polls. "Politics is all about fixing problems. We've had a few more problems than most that we've needed to fix," Ardern said. She said she expects the election race will be focused on the economy, as recessions hit nations around the world. "Right now, people feel a sense of anxiety. They feel a sense of anxiety about the unknown of what's in front of us," Ardern said. "I do think it's important that we acknowledge: Yes, it has been challenging and it will be.

Pol prices
may be
reduced by
up to

FROM PAGE 01

of petroleum products will occur on December 15. According to officials, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) will complete its proposal by December 15 and will then forward the national fuel requirements to the Petroleum Division. The premier and finance minister will then debate OGRA's recommendations.

Dissolution
this month
at all ...

FROM PAGE 01

PTI chairman Imran Khan said on Thursday that he was the prime minister and never called former army chief retired General Qamar Javed Bajwa his boss and the new army chief should not follow the policies of his predecessor. Speaking to the YouTubers at Zaman Park on Thursday, he said that he had never thought about appointing General Faiz Hameed as the Army Chief but propaganda was hatched against him. The former prime minister said that Punjab Chief Minister Parvaiz Elahi has fully entrusted him and will do as he want.

PM lauds
efforts by
NFRCC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday appreciated the fabulous teamwork by the National Flood Response and Coordination Center and other institutions for relief and rehabilitation of millions of distressed flood-hit people across the country, by utilizing all available resources. The prime minister, addressing a ceremony held to acknowledge the efforts by the NFRCC and others during the flood relief operations, appreciated the leadership of Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal and NFRCC's head Major General Zafar Iqbal. He said the Center had made efforts for the suffering flood-hit people who had lost around 1700 of their dear ones, houses and crops to the floods which also damaged the road and power supply infrastructure. He said many villages had lost road connectivity but the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, National Disaster Management Authority, provincial authorities and governments carried out the uphill task of supplying ration to the stranded people and restoring their access. The prime minister particularly appreciated the role of former NDMA Chairman Lt. General Akhtar Nawaz, Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman, Poverty Alleviation Minister Shazia Marri, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and provincial chief ministers. He also spoke high of the "remarkable job" by Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb for highlighting the catastrophic situation within Pakistan as well as internationally, by capturing the "critical moments" which impacted international viewers.

Air Marshal
Ghumman
calls on IT
Minister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, National Aerospace Science and Technology Park (NASTP) Air Marshal Abbas Ghumman called on Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque here on Friday. During the meeting, they discussed matters related to IT and establishment of the center of excellence for gaming and animation in NASTP Sierra, Karachi. Air Marshal Abbas Ghumman apprised the minister that the gaming and animation technologies were extensively employed in aerospace sector for development of flight simulators, tactical simulators and training. He said the NASTP Sierra was giving preference to the IT companies working in the gaming and animation domain to develop a flourishing ecosystem inside Sierra Park.

Briefs

Gangs control about 60% of Haiti's capital

NEW YORK: Close to 60% of Haiti's capital is dominated by gangs whose violence and sexual attacks have caused thousands to flee their homes, the U.N. humanitarian chief in the Caribbean nation said Thursday. Ulrika Richardson said that has left nearly 20,000 people in the capital facing "catastrophic famine-like conditions" as a cholera outbreak spreads throughout Haiti. Richardson painted a grim picture of a country in a downward spiral, with half its population in urgent need of food assistance as the number of cholera deaths has risen to 283. She said close to 12,000 people have been hospitalized with the disease since Oct. 2, and there are now a total of more than 14,000 suspected cholera cases in eight of the country's 10 regions. She said all but 1,000 of the 20,000 Haitians facing starvation are in the capital, Port-au-Prince, mainly in the Cite Soleil slum controlled by the gangs. Richardson said insecurity has led to "massive displacement," especially in the capital, where 155,000 people have fled their homes. She said at a news conference that the gangs are using "very terrifying levels of sexual violence as a weapon" to keep people under control, instill fear and punishment. She said gang battles over territory and their criminal actions are tearing society apart and escalating insecurity. —APP

Power cuts hit several Paris districts

PARIS: Several districts in the French capital Paris plunged into darkness due to a power outage, local media reported Thursday. Citing public energy supplier Enedis, the BFMTV news channel reported that many streets in Paris's 1,3, 4 and 5 arrondissements were affected by power cuts around 11 p.m. local time (2200GMT), and the central district of Paris was left in darkness. The mayor of Paris Centre, Ariel Weil, confirmed the general breakdown on Twitter. "Power cuts have just taken place in the 4th and 5th arrondissements," he said. Later, Weil added: "I confirm a general breakdown but @enedis confident of a rapid return to normal everywhere." According to broadcaster Franceinfo, Paris firefighters confirmed that citizens had contacted them due to the power cuts in the four regions. Noting that the incident seems to be related to a transformer failure on Enedis' side, firefighters signaled that the situation was improving. Around 125,000 households were affected at the height of the incident, the RTE Group, the manager of the electricity transmission network, said on Twitter.

Google 'must remove' inaccurate information

BRUSSELS: Europe's top court said Thursday that Google must remove all data that is proven to be false by users. "The operator of a search engine must deference information found in the referenced content where the person requesting dereferencing proves that such information is manifestly inaccurate," said the Court of Justice of the EU. In the judgement, the court stated that proof regarding the content removal do not require a judicial decision against the publisher of the website. "The Court points out that the right to protection of personal data is not an absolute right but must be considered in relation to its function in society and be balanced against other fundamental rights, in accordance with the principle of proportionality," it added. The ruling was related to the case in which two managers of a group of investment companies requested Google to de-reference results of a search made on the basis of their names, which provided links to certain articles criticizing that group's investment model. —DNA



TOKYO: Pakistan's Ambassador to Japan Raza Bashir Tarar in a meeting with visiting delegation of Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Ambassador-designate, Raza Bashir Tarar emphasized the importance of finding indigenous solutions to energy, waste management & water treatment challenges faced by business communities in Pakistan.—DNA

Romania blasts Austria for 'inexplicable' move

BUCHAREST: Romanian President Klaus Iohannis has blasted Austria for single-handedly blocking his country's accession into the EU's passport-free Schengen Area, calling the move "inexplicable," "regrettable" and "unjustified." "A single member state chose to ignore these realities and block European unanimity, in an inexplicable way that is difficult to understand for the entire European Union," Iohannis said in a reaction statement, a translated copy of which was shared with Euronews. "The regrettable and unjustified attitude of Austria in (Thursday's) meeting risks affecting European unity and cohesion, which we need so much, especially in the current geopolitical context," he added, referring to Russia's war in Ukraine. In a high-stakes meeting of interior ministers in Brussels, Austria was the only

country that opposed Romania's - and Bulgaria's - admission into the Schengen Area, which has abolished border checks between the vast majority of EU member states. The Netherlands endorsed Romania's bid but was against Bulgaria's over rule-of-law concerns. Admitting new Schengen members requires a unanimous vote. On the other hand, both Austria and the Netherlands approved Croatia's candidacy, a country that entered the European Union six years after Romania. Croatia will join Schengen as of January 2023. Thursday's negative outcome was a heavy political blow for Bucharest, which had gathered strong support from the European Commission, the European Parliament and most EU countries, including the bloc's two heavyweights, Germany and France. The Commission has re-



peatedly insisted Romania is ready to be part of Schengen after having fulfilled all technical and legal conditions, including border management and police cooperation. "The citizens of Bulgaria and Romania deserve to be fully part of the Schengen area," Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for home affairs, said on Thursday. But none of this was enough to overcome Austria's veto. Vienna argues that a new influx of asylum-seekers

through the Western Balkans route is a reason strong enough to postpone Schengen enlargement. The country says it has received 75,000 unregistered migrants this year, a number that poses a "security issue that we cannot wipe away", according to Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer. "The European asylum system has failed," Nehammer said last month. "The Schengen expansion will not take place like this." In the days prior to the

vote in Brussels, President Iohannis and other Romanian officials tried to counter Austria's arguments, saying there was no "uncontrolled" flow of migrants passing through the country and that Romania was well prepared to defend Schengen's external borders. Iohannis and Nehammer, who belonged to the same political family, the centre-right European People's Party (EPP), met as recently as Tuesday, during an EU-Western Balkans summit in Tirana, Albania. "(The) lack of consensus regarding Romania's accession to Schengen, due to Austria's opposition, is profoundly unfair for our country and for Romanian citizens," Iohannis said on Thursday, after the negative outcome. "Romania deserved to receive a favourable vote." In his reaction statement, Iohannis thanked all the member states who

backed his country's long-stalled Schengen bid and vowed to act "responsibly" to strengthen the EU's internal security. "Dear Romanians, Romania does not stop here!" the president wrote. "Schengen accession is our strategic objective and we will not stop until we achieve it." It's unclear when a new vote on Schengen will take place, as Austria's concerns touch upon a broader issue of shortcomings and failures within the area rather than upon Romania's and Bulgaria's own readiness. Sweden will replace the Czech Republic at the helm of the EU Council's rotating presidency in early January and will be tasked with setting the agenda of ministerial meetings. Schengen enables cross-border travel without the need to carry a passport or pass through border controls. It currently encompasses 26 countries, including 22 EU member states. —Agencies

US keeps eye on China's space activities

BEIJING: The U.S. is closely monitoring Chinese activities that potentially threaten American assets in space as debris rapidly accumulates in low Earth orbit, the head of United States military operations in space said Friday. Commander of U.S. Space Command Army Gen. James Dickinson also cheered the overwhelming passage in the United Nations of a resolution that countries not conduct direct-ascent antisatellite tests that create vast fields of space debris, which endanger satellites and space stations. Of the four countries that have conducted such ASAT tests, the United States was the only one that voted in favor, while China and Russia voted no and India abstained. "We can't continue to contribute to the debris that we find in the space domain," Dickinson said in a telephone news conference with reporters in Asia. Most of that debris lies in crucial low Earth orbit, which has become "congested, competitive and contested," he said. Even tiny shards of metal can pose a danger and the number of objects is growing rampantly. Space Command is now tracking more than 48,000 in near Earth orbit, including satellites, telescopes, space stations and pieces of debris of all sizes, up from 25,000 just three years ago, Dickinson said. —DNA

Bill to strip Harry, Meghan of titles

LONDON: A UK Conservative Party politician has said he is planning to introduce legislation that could potentially strip Prince Harry and Megan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, of their royal titles. Bob Seely, an MP for the Isle of Wight, told the PA news agency he considered tabling a bill early next year to amend the 1917 Titles Deprivation Act. If passed by parliament, the resolution would grant the Privy Council the right to demote the royal couple's status. The Tory MP's statements come after the release of a new Netflix documentary, Harry & Meghan, in which the royal couple chronicle their relationship from the moment when Markle - an American national of mixed racial heritage and a former actress on the popular TV series, Suits - started dating the prince in London six years ago. The Sussexes made a variety of controversial claims throughout the series, such as branding the Commonwealth "Empire 2.0." —APP

UK sanctions 10 Iranians

LONDON: Britain on Friday announced wide-ranging sanctions against 30 targets worldwide, including officials in Iran accused of pursuing "egregious sentences" against anti-regime protesters. The sanctions against the 10 people connected to Iran's judicial and prison systems came after the clerical regime's first execution of one such protester, which has triggered global condemnation. "This includes six individuals linked to the Revolutionary Courts that have been responsible for prosecuting protesters with egregious sentences including the death penalty," the government in London said. Two of the Iranians now subject to a UK travel ban and assets freeze are former directors of the notorious Evin prison in Tehran: Ali Chaharmahali and Gholamreza Ziaei. The sanctions, timed to mark world days for anti-corruption and human rights, hit individuals across 11 countries - "the most that the UK has ever brought together in one package", the foreign ministry said. They include five people from Russia and Russian-held Crimea amid the ongoing invasion of Ukraine, which has attracted successive waves of UK sanctions against Moscow. Others on the list, accused of violating human rights, are from Nicaragua, Pakistan and Uganda. The UK also highlighted orchestrated sexual violence in sanctioning two local officials in South Sudan, one jihadist group in Mali and three junta entities in military-ruled Myanmar. —APP

New Peru president vows to finish term

LIMA, Peru: Peru's first female president is pushing to cement her hold on power, saying she expects to complete the term of her ousted predecessor and buck the trend of presidential failures blighting the Andean nation. Yet, even as Dina Boluarte made the call Thursday, some politicians already were calling for early elections in an indication of continued political rancor. Boluarte, who was elevated from vice president to replace leftist Pedro Castillo as the country's leader Wednesday after he angered many by trying to dissolve the legislature before an impeachment vote, said she should be allowed to hold the office for the remaining 3 1/2 years of his term. "The constitution is the magna carta that all

Peruvians must obey," and it calls for the presidential term to run until July 28, 2026, she said at her first news conference, held a day after Castillo was voted out of office and arrested on charges of rebellion just 17 months into his term. After being sworn in as president Wednesday, Boluarte called for a truce with legislators who dismissed Castillo for "permanent moral incapacity," a clause of the constitution that experts say is so vague it allows the removal of a president for almost any reason. It was also used to oust President Martín Vizcarra, who governed in 2018-2020. "I know that there are voices that are calling for early elections. That is democracy," Boluarte said. But she added that there is a

need for stability in Peru, a strongly polarized country that has had six presidents in the last six years. "In coordination with all organizations, we will be looking at alternatives to reorient the country's course," she said. Seeking to avoid being added to the list of canned presidents, Boluarte quickly began to show herself in public working as Peru's new head of state. She met with groups of conservative and liberal lawmakers at the presidential palace. Before that, she danced an Andean dance after watching a Roman Catholic procession of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. Analysts, however, predicted a tough road for the new president, a 60-year-old lawyer and political neophyte. Jorge Aragón,

a political science professor at Peru's Pontifical Catholic University, said a Boluarte government "is going to be very complicated, if not impossible." Noting that Boluarte has no legislative base of support, Aragón said she faces the hard task of trying to forge ties with numerous blocs in a fractious Congress. A poll by the Institute of Peruvian Studies in November suggested most Peruvians might want a ballot before 2026, with 86% of those surveyed saying they preferred early presidential and congressional elections if Castillo should be removed. But Patricia Zárate, head of the institute's opinion studies area, said Thursday that Boluarte might be able to hold on if members of Congress don't want to risk early elections. —Agencies

Violent attacks threaten Nigeria's upcoming 2023 elections

ABUJA, Nigeria: Violent attacks targeting Nigeria's election commission offices are raising concerns about the security of the West African country's upcoming elections in February. In the latest attack, assailants in southeastern Imo state set fire on Sunday to an office of Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission. Nearly 50 of the commission's offices already have been destroyed since Nigeria's last election in 2019, according to local reports compiled by The Associated Press. Nigeria - Africa's most populous nation with more than 210 million people - is confronted by several security problems including an Islamic extremist insurgency linked to the Islamic State group in the northeast, rebels in the northwest, and secessionists in the southeast. The security threats are expected to be obstacles to peaceful elections on Feb. 25, say analysts. "It is going to be the election that is most challenged when it comes to security in Nigeria's recent history," Bulama Bukarti, a senior fellow with the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, told The Associated Press. "It is a high-stakes election: a make-or-meat election for Nigeria and its neighbors." Electoral violence including protests challenging official results has often hit Nigeria's elections. At least 800 people died in post-election violence after the 2011 polls. In the southeast, where most of the attacks on election infrastructure have occurred, violent separatists want to create an independent state of Biafra, more than 50 years after a rebellion failed to achieve a separate state. Authorities have accused members of the leading pro-Biafra group known as the Indigenous People of Biafra of killing security forces and sometimes their own people from the Igbo ethnic group, Nigeria's third-largest. —APP

Common future difficult with support of terror

ANKARA: It is difficult for Türkiye to establish a common future with countries that secretly or openly support the terrorist groups that Türkiye is fighting, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said Friday. Ankara has the potential to play a key role in resolving the issues that Europe faces, Erdoğan said, adding, but, first of all, Europe needs to change its approach towards Türkiye in all matters in line with the spirit of alliance and partnership. "It is clear that it is difficult for us to dream of a common future with a Europe that protects the terrorists, takes sides against us in every issue and secretly and openly supports the terrorist groups which Türkiye is fighting against. Not to mention the implicit embargoes imposed on us," Erdoğan told the TRT World Forum 2022 in Istanbul. "We

are a country that preferred to walk with Europe after World War II. Despite all the sacrifices we have made, we will never forget that we were left alone in our fight against terrorist groups that threaten our unity. Thousands of trucks of weapons and ammunition were sent to terrorist groups in northern Syria. The country that sent it is a NATO ally." The PKK is a designated terrorist organization in the United States, Türkiye and the European Union and Washington's support for its Syrian affiliate, the YPG, has been a major strain on bilateral relations with Ankara. The U.S. primarily partnered with YPG terrorists in northeastern Syria in its fight against the Daesh terrorist group. On the other hand, Türkiye strongly opposed the PKK/YPG's presence in northern Syria. Under the pretext of



fighting Daesh, the U.S. has provided military training and given truckloads of military support to the PKK/YPG, despite its NATO ally's security concerns. Underlining that one cannot support one terrorist group to defeat another, Türkiye has conducted its counterterrorism operations throughout, removing a significant number of terrorists from the region. Türkiye did not tolerate

those who supported Greece in the Aegean and Mediterranean and encouraged their provocative actions, Erdoğan also said. "We are together in NATO, but you are arming the Greek islands with weapons and aircraft, and we still have not worked out the F-16 (fighter jets) issue with you," he added. Erdoğan said Türkiye will not give up on dialogue so that the Cyprus issue can be resolved on a fair basis

with new and concrete steps. Türkiye and Greece are at odds over several issues, including competing claims over jurisdiction in the Eastern Mediterranean, overlapping claims over their continental shelves, maritime boundaries, airspace, energy, the ethnically split island of Cyprus, the status of the islands in the Aegean Sea and migrants. Türkiye, a NATO member for over 70 years, has complained of repeated provocative actions and rhetoric by Greece in the region in recent months, including arming islands near Turkish shores that are demilitarized under treaties, saying that such moves frustrate its good faith efforts for peace. "No one can any longer afford to turn a blind eye to the problems in any part of the world, withhold their support or postpone their contributions to the solution.

All must share the burden for the welfare of humanity's common future. In this spirit, we work to sincerely fulfil our responsibilities regarding regional and global issues," Erdoğan also said. Türkiye continues its efforts to solve the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, Erdoğan also said, adding that toward this end he will soon hold talks with his counterparts on both sides of the conflict. "In order to resolve this crisis, I will have talks with (Russian President Vladimir) Putin on Sunday. Likewise, there will be one with (Ukrainian President Volodymyr) Zelenskyy," Erdoğan told the TRT World Forum. Erdoğan said Türkiye wants to further strengthen the grain corridor deal Türkiye helped forge this summer. —DNA

Briefs

Police remain most corrupt in Pak, survey shows

ISLAMABAD: A fresh survey Friday revealed that police continue to occupy the top rung of the corruption ladder in the country followed by tendering & contracting, judiciary, and education –which climbed to 4th since the last poll carried out in 2021. These are the findings of Transparency International Pakistan's (TIP) National Corruption Perception Survey (NCPS) 2022. The NCPS 2022 released at 01:00 am on Friday also showed no confidence in anti-corruption entities including National Accountability Bureau (NAB). At the national level, the majority of people considered anti-corruption institutions' role as "ineffective" in curbing corruption in Pakistan, the report said. 01: The provincial breakdown of the three most corrupt sectors reveals the following: In Sindh, education remained the most corrupt sector, police was seen as the 2nd most corrupt, while tendering and contracting was the 3rd most corrupt. In Punjab, police remained the most corrupt sector, tendering and contracting were seen as the 2nd most corrupt, while the judiciary was the 3rd most corrupt.—DNA

Rupee depreciates for fifth straight session

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee Friday registered losses against the US dollar for the fifth straight session in the interbank market as the central bank-held foreign exchange reserves fell over 10% week-on-week. The local unit closed at 224.40 against the greenback after losing 0.01% compared to Thursday's close of 224.37, data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) showed. The development comes after 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 on November 25, data released by the central bank showed. The reserve crisis has raised fears that the country might not be able to meet its foreign debt payments, however, SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad believes that Pakistan can repay its debts. In the latest episode of the SBP podcast series, Ahmad reiterated that all debt repayments were on track and that country's foreign exchange reserves were expected to increase in the second half of the current fiscal year.

Spain, France Hydrogen pipeline to be ready 'by 2030'

ALICANTE: An ambitious underwater pipeline to bring green hydrogen from the Iberian Peninsula to the rest of Europe will be completed by 2030 and will cost some 2.5 billion euros, the leaders of France, Spain and Portugal said Friday. The H2Med project comes as Europe is scrambling to reduce its dependence on Russian energy following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. It is also seen as helping Europe transition away from fossil fuels to cleaner energy. The pipeline between Barcelona and Marseille – also known as BarMar – will carry two million tonnes of hydrogen per year, or 10 percent of European consumption, once it goes online, said Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. "It is going to be the first major hydrogen corridor in the European Union," Sanchez said. The project will cost around 2.5 billion euros (\$2.6 billion), he said at a joint press conference with French President Emmanuel Macron and Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa.—DNA

Lahore: Islamic architectural heritage of Hungary exhibited

Ambassador Bela Fazekas says during the Turkish Ottoman times there were around 300 Turkish words used on a daily basis by Hungarians, and even today, there are around 70-80 words in the Hungarian language from Ottoman times



ALI HAMZA/DNA

LAHORE: Embassy of Hungary organized an exhibition on Islamic Architectural Heritage of Hungary in collaboration with the College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab, at their historic Grand Hall. The exhibition is con-

ceived with an idea of highlighting the architectural work of the 17th century by Ottoman Turkish Empire, that is well preserved till today. Speaking at the inauguration Bela Fazekas: Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan, mentioned that there are hardly any European countries; apart from Spain, in which Muslim memories comple-

ment the range of architectural styles. This is why special attention is paid to these works of art. "Today Turkey and Hungary are having very cordial relations and a huge number of tourists come from Turkey and around the world to see mosques, minarets, tombs, and hammams those were built by the finest artists of the time, and

Hungary has well maintained the art", he said. Mr Fazekas continued saying that "during the Turkish Ottoman times there were around 300 Turkish words used on a daily basis by Hungarians, and even today, there are around 70-80 words in the Hungarian language from Ottoman times. Most of these words are connected to

clothing, food, warfare and place names". Principle of the college Prof. Dr. Sumera Jawad, explained the students about the value and contribution of Muslim architectural art in Europe and precisely in Hungary. Teachers, students, journalists and people from different walks of life visited the gallery and appreciated the initiative.



'Audio leak an attempt to mask economic failures'

RAWALPINDI: Former interior minister Sheikh Rashid said on Friday controversial audio leak were spread deliberately to divert public attention from the economic crisis in the country. The AML chairman issued the statement a day after an alleged audio of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi and PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari leaked online wherein they discussed the prospect of selling a watch received by Mr Khan during his tenure as the premier. Saying the PDM government was unable to run the country, Mr Rashid warned that issues being faced by the country continued to deepen. He said early elections were the only solution to the political and economic instability. "How can a poor person survive when prices of onions and potatoes have soared to Rs300 and Rs200 per kilogramme in the country?" he asked. He also warned of looming food crisis in the country. —DNA

Google registered as company in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: American tech giant Google has registered itself as a company with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), official documents stated. The tech giant has registered itself with the SECP as in line with the "Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguards) Rules, 2021", social media companies had to open offices in the country.

Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Aminul Haque said following the registration of the American multinational technology company, other social media platforms will also establish offices in Pakistan. "TikTok will soon set up its office in Pakistan. Companies remain reluctant due to the lack of trust and inconsistent policies," he said while maintaining that his ministry will offer complete support to foreign companies. Pakistan's government, as per social media rules, has made registration mandatory for companies and Google registered itself as a company in this context.—DNA

PML-N top leaders term Imran Khan liar, fraudster

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Rana Sanaullah has termed former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Imran Khan as a fraudster. The minister said that Khan is a watch thief but he used to publish fake news of corruption against Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. An apology from the British tabloid "Daily Mail" is proof that Khan was the mastermind of that propaganda. He said that Khan used Daily Mail to blackmail Shahbaz, adding that Khan is unable to show his face to anyone after this humiliation. It has been proved that Khan is a liar, he said.

He said that according to the constitution a liar and thief cannot become a leader. He suggested the PTI leaders should remove Khan from the seat of chairman and appoint any noble person. On the other hand, former prime minister and PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said that PTI chief Imran Khan is a liar. He said that an apology from the British publication "Daily Mail" has confirmed that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif was not involved in any corruption, adding that it has also revealed Khan's propaganda. He said that Khan labeled others as thieves to hide his robberies. He said religious scholars should give a statement on it whether a liar can be a leader. He said that Khan always claimed that he struggled for 22 years but, in reality, he just practiced the politics of lies and accusations.—DNA

New UN rights chief vows to engage Beijing on Xinjiang

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: United Nations human rights chief Volker Turk says he is determined to engage with China on a damning report published by his predecessor that alleged government mistreatment of the Uighurs and other mostly Muslim groups that may amount to crimes against humanity. Turk made the comments during a media briefing in Geneva on Friday, referring to the report released by Michelle Bachelet just minutes before her tenure ended earlier this year. "The report that was issued on 31 August is a very important one and has highlighted very serious human rights concerns," said Turk, who took over the role in October. "I will personally continue engaging with the authorities. I'm very determined to do so," he said, adding that "hope springs eternal". The remarks were Turk's first public comments on the matter. Before the long-delayed report's release, Bachelet had said she faced "tremendous pressure to publish or not to publish", includ-

ing "substantial input" from Beijing on the report in the waning days of her tenure, as well as a letter signed by countries including North Korea, Venezuela and Cuba that called for publication to be halted. The findings brought UN endorsement to long-running allegations from advocates, campaigners and survivors who have accused Beijing of detaining more than one million Uighurs and other Muslims in camps and forcibly sterilising women, among other charges. The report highlighted "credible" allegations of widespread torture, arbitrary detention and violations of religious and reproductive rights. It called for the world to give "urgent attention" to the human rights situation in the Xinjiang region in western China. For its part, Beijing broadly rejected the findings and accused the UN of becoming a "thug and accomplice of the US and the West". China, one of the five veto-wielding permanent members of the UN Security Council, also indicated it would cease cooperation with the UN human rights office in the wake of the report's release. Beyond China, Turk referenced several other human rights challenges facing his

office during Friday's news conference. He decried "the continued systematic exclusion of women and girls from virtually all aspects of life" by the Taliban government in Afghanistan, which took control of the country in August 2021 amid the withdrawal of US-led foreign troops. He called the Iranian government's announcement of the first publicly known execution related to continuing protests in the country "very troubling". Anti-government unrest has persisted in Iran following the death in police custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who was arrested by the country's morality police in capital Tehran for allegedly not adhering to the government's dress code for women. The rights chief also said he was "appalled" by a massacre last month in which the UN said at least 131 civilians were killed by M23 rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He said the DRC was on his list of countries to visit next year. The DRC government has put the death toll of the November attack at about 300. Meanwhile, Turk called the Russian invasion of Ukraine, from where he recently returned after an official visit, an ongoing "human rights emergency".

Griner back in U.S. as Russia's Bout lands in Moscow

WASHINGTON: Basketball star Brittney Griner landed in the United States on Friday after 10 months in Russian detention following a prisoner swap with arms dealer Viktor Bout who flew home hours earlier to embrace his family on the airport tarmac in Moscow. "They say she's in very good spirits, appears to be in good health," White House spokesman John Kirby told MSNBC in an interview citing U.S. officials on the ground in San Antonio, Texas, where she arrived just before dawn. Securing Thursday's swap, after months of painstaking negotiations, was a rare instance of U.S.-Russian cooperation after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, although the Kremlin was quick to say it did not show improving relations. Russia's state media trumpeted the swap as a win for Moscow, after the release of a man who the U.S. Department of Justice has described as one of the world's most prolific arms dealers who had sold weapons across the globe to terrorists and America's enemies for decades. Bout always denied the charges. U.S. President Joe Biden, in announcing her release on Thursday,

said the swap ended what he described as months of "hell" for Griner, 32, a two-time Olympic gold medalist and star of the Women's National Basketball Association's Phoenix Mercury. "So happy to have Brittney back on U.S. soil. Welcome home BG!" U.S. Special Presidential Envoy Roger Carstens, the chief U.S. hostage coordinator, said in a post on Twitter. WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert, in a CNN interview, credited U.S. negotiators, adding: "Brittney really deserves to be home. She was wrongfully detained and we're happy that she's reuniting with her family today." Griner, who flew into San Antonio before dawn on Friday, had been arrested on Feb. 17 at a Moscow airport after vape cartridges containing cannabis oil, which is banned in Russia, were found in her luggage. As Griner flew back home, Bout arrived in Moscow and hugged his mother and wife after stepping on to the tarmac, television images showed. He said it was difficult to describe his feelings in an interview with the state-run news outlet RT. He also said he had not encountered much anti-Russian sentiment during his imprisonment in the United States.—Agencies

Finland mulls arms exports to Turkey

"There have been some discussions with Finnish industry about exports from Finland to Turkey. There are some preliminary talks. I'd say it would be possible in the near future to have some exports," he added.

NEWS DESK

HELENSKI: Finland's defence minister Antti Kaikkonen on Thursday expressed hope that Turkey would promptly ratify his country's NATO membership, claiming that Helsinki would consider granting arms export permits to Ankara on a case-by-case basis. In an interview with Reuters after meeting his Turkish counterpart Hulusi Akar in the Turkish capital, Kaikkonen said he was unable to predict a timetable for Turkey's ratification of Finland's NATO membership application. Nevertheless, a leading politician from Turkey's ruling AK party said that the country was in "no rush" to ratify Sweden and Finland's NATO bids, and that ratification depended on when they met Ankara's requests. Both Nordic countries asked to join NATO following Russia's in-



vasion of Ukraine in February, but long-time member Turkey refused to support their request until a certain demands were met, including a tougher stance against Kurdish militants and removing a ban on arms sales. "In the memorandum of understanding signed in Madrid, it's written that there's no arms embargo (on Turkey) and that is the state of play at the moment. We make decisions on a case-by-case basis," Kaikkonen said. Earlier this week, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu claimed that Finland must lift an arms embargo on Turkey as a condition to securing the country's support. "There have been some discussions with Finnish industry about exports from Finland to Turkey. There are some preliminary talks. I'd say it would be possible in the near future to have some exports," he added.