



Islamabad POST

Monday, December 05, 2022

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Japan is keen to strengthen ties with Pakistan: Envoy

Detailed News On Page-03

EU must act over US climate plan distortions

Detailed News On Page-07



Masood lauds services of Pak doctors in US

Detailed News On Page-07



Briefs

Canadian PM felicitates Sindhis

DNA

TORONTO: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Sunday extended his heartfelt greetings to everyone living in Canada on the day before Sindh Cultural Day. "This occasion deals a brilliant opportunity for Canadians of Sindh origin to share their rich cultural legacy with the community," Trudeau said in a letter. Trudeau, in his warm wishes to the Canadian Sindh community, said: "I am certain that many performances and activities planned for today's celebration have been enjoyed by everyone in the audience."

Govt working to strengthen economy

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal says government has taken solid measures to strengthen national institutions, foreign policy, economy, and governance. Talking to a private news channel he appreciated the tough decisions of the coalition government and said that government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is working round the clock to revive economic and business sectors. The Minister advised the Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran Khan to stop hatching conspiracy against the national institutions of the country.

Khokhar lambasts govt policies

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, who recently resigned as the party's senator, on Sunday lambasted the economic policies of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government. In his tweet, Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar said the country's economy is not well and Pakistan is heading towards default. Claims were made to bring down US dollar to Rs200, and on IMF demands.

Kabul Pak Embassy Islamic State responsible for attack

Pakistan expresses concern over the report; terrorism poses threat to peace in Afghanistan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic State KP has taken responsibility of the Pakistan embassy attack in Kabul. According to reports the IS-KP has claimed it had attacked the embassy. While more details about this attack are yet to come, Pakistan has strongly condemned the IS for taking the responsibility and attacking the Pakistan embassy in Kabul. According to official statement of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, the government is quite concerned and alarmed at the claim of the IS. The statement reads as, 'we have seen reports that IS-KP has accepted responsibility for the terrorist attack on the Pakistan Embassy compound on 2 December 2022. Independently and in consultation with the Afghan authorities, we are verifying the veracity of these reports. This notwithstanding, the terrorist attack

is yet another reminder of the threat that terrorism poses to peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region. We must act resolutely with all our collective might to defeat this menace. On its part, Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to combat terrorism', the statement conclude. The embassy came under attack on Friday and a Pakistani security guard was wounded by gunfire in what Islamabad called an attempt to assassinate its head of mission, who was unhurt. Islamic State claimed the attack was carried out by two of its members armed with "medium and sniper weapons" and was targeting the ambassador and his guards who were present in the courtyard of the embassy. Taliban authorities have said they are investigating the attack and that the embassy compound was targeted by gunfire from a nearby building. Police said they had arrested one suspect and recovered two firearms.

Imran's politics only to seek power, PM Shehbaz says

Says Imran Khan doesn't care if it undermines country's foundations

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Sunday castigated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan for aiming to seek power even if it means undermining the country's foundations. The PTI and coalition government are at loggerheads as the former presses on holding early elections. However, the ruling alliance has ruled out snap polls and vowed to not come under Khan's pressure. "Imran's recent diatribe against parliamentary democracy is the latest in a series of attacks that fly in the face of how democracy functions in modern nation-states," the premier said in a tweet. As the PTI chief speaks against state institutions and hurls abuses against the ruling alliance leaders, PM Shehbaz believes that his politics' sole aim was coming back into power through any means necessary. "His (Khan's) politics is aimed at making his way to power even if it means undermining foundations this country stands on," the prime minister expressed. The PM's statement comes after the PTI chief shared his willingness to halt the dissolution of the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies if the coalition government agrees to conduct elections by the end of March next year - another announcement to

'Khan will not risk dissolving assemblies'

STAFF REPORT

LODHHRAN: Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Vice Chairman and former prime minister Yousuf Raza Gillani Sunday said how can a chief minister, who cannot register a first information report (FIR), dissolve the assembly. The PPP leader's remarks came during a conversation with journalists in Lodhran as he took a jibe at Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi on authorising Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan with power to dissolve the provincial assembly. A day earlier, Khan said that CM Elahi has given him "full authority to dissolve the assembly" whenever he wills in an interview with a private news channel. He also shared his willingness to halt the dissolution of

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas speaking on the occasion of Germany Christmas Bazar held while in other pictures EU Ambassador Riina Kionka takes interest in handicrafts and Executive Chef Bala of Islamabad Serena Hotel trying to taste apple candy. - DNA

'Gen Bajwa showed us path to support PTI'

Pervez Elahi says we told Bajwa Sharifs cannot be trusted

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi has endorsed his son Moonis Elahi's statement that former army chief Gen (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa suggested that his PML-Q party should support PTI during opposition's no-confidence motion against Imran Khan in March this year. In an interview with a local TV channel on Sunday, CM Elahi said Gen Bajwa told him that going with Imran was a better option after he shared his reservations about joining PDM alliance as he "did not trust Sharif family". Elahi said he was wary of accepting the then opposition led by Sharif family's offer to become Punjab chief minister in return for supporting no-trust motion against Imran Khan. "I knew that they [Sharif] would not let me to continue [as chief minister] as they have betrayed me in the past," he remarked. The PML-Q leader said his son Moonis played a major role in convincing him to support PTI instead of joining Pakistan Democratic Movement alliance. Moreover, Elahi said the then army chief, Gen (ret'd) Bajwa showed "him the right path" to support PTI.

German Embassy holds a Charity Christmas Market

German envoy says with this bazaar we want to welcome the merriest time of the year

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Islamabad organized a Christmas Market in Islamabad today. The event featured authentic German delicacies, shopping, and fun to celebrate Christmas in the traditional German style including homemade cakes, cookies and wreaths made by the German Embassy Team. Around 30 stalls displayed an extensive range of Christmas articles, glassware, handicrafts, children's toys, candles, leather goods, met-

al ornaments, dry fruit, advent wreaths and other decorations. Several children choirs gave performances throughout the afternoon. The "Weihnachtsmann" (German Santa Claus) made an appearance to distribute sweets among children who have been good all year. The German Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Alfred Grannas, said on this occasion: "With this bazaar we want to welcome the merriest time of the year - especially for all those away from their homes. Christmas is all about sharing our joy. This is why the proceeds from this event will be donated to families in need."

PTI workers asked to get ready for elections

Fawad says Imran has issued directions

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry shared on Sunday the party chief Imran Khan has advised all party lawmakers to go back to their constituencies and prepare for elections. The PTI's senior vice president said that they will not waste any more time and call for elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The PDM would keep running from elections but they would not waste any more time, said Fawad. The former information minister added that Khan has advised all PTI candidates to go back to their constituencies and start preparing for elections. National Assembly elections would be held afterwards if the government does not call for general polls, but PTI would opt for polls in Punjab and KP as soon as possible.

In an interview with a private channel the PTI chief Imran Khan shared his willingness to halt the dissolution of the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies if the coalition government agrees to conduct elections by the end of March next year. Khan said, "If they are ready for elections by the end of March, then we won't dissolve the assemblies. Otherwise, we want to conduct polls by dissolving the KP and Punjab assemblies."

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Will Imran Khan's master stroke really work?

ANALYSIS

ANSAR M BHATTI



THE PTI Chairman Imran Khan has hinted at dissolving the assemblies before December 20 in order to pave way for the general elections. A day earlier he had offered the government to engage in talks with the PTI in order to determine a date for the elections however according to the former prime minister his offer was misunderstood by the government benches and construed as if the PTI were afraid of dissolution of the provincial assemblies. Therefore Imran Khan now has asserted that December was the deadline and if there were no agreement then he would call it a day. Realistically speaking Punjab and KP governments have turned out to be heavens for those who want to make money therefore these vested interests would never like Imran Khan to dissolve assemblies. If the country has reached the

verge of default and foreign exchange reserves have squeezed to record low levels it is not because the country is not producing anything or exports have slumped to minimal levels. The key reason that has brought us to such a pass happens to be the increased level of corruption and bad governance. It has been my consistent view that corruption and absence of rule of law are responsible for all our economic as well as political and social woes. Interestingly, there is no single department in Pakistan which we can say is corruption-free. Money makes the mere go dictum perhaps has been coined for this country. Even during the rule of champions of Risat-e-Madina, the PTI, corruption used to be the order of the day. The situation was even worse as the corruption rate had sky-rocketed during that time. Bad governance was yet another feather in PTI cap at that time. But, as Imran Khan would put it, their hands were tied and the epicenter of power rested somewhere else. He has openly admitted now that to give an extension to former army chief General Bajwa was his biggest mistake adding he would do away with the extension system if he comes to power again. The three and half year tenure of the PTI

proved to be an absolute disappointment even for the die-hard PTI workers. But then the Cipher issue appeared on the scene which instilled a new life into the PTI and the party once again turns out to be the only option people believe can set things in order. And frankly, the way this coalition government has ruled this country in past eight months, PTI men ostensibly appear to be the angles. People have forgotten what they had done during their tenure and thus ready to give them another chance. Country's economy would continue to reel under stress if this dispensation both at the provinces and federal level continues to hold ground simply because pulling the country out of crises has never been their priority ever since taking charge of the respective governments. When politicians take charge of the governments, both at the provincial and federal level, their immediate concern is how to secure the next elections. And we all know contesting elections in Pakistan is not every body's job. It needs hell of connections and money as well. Undoubtedly, Imran Khan has played a master stroke by announcing the dissolution of the provincial assemblies. It was an unexpected move for the government alli-

ance. Once taunting the PTI chairman for not dissolving the assemblies if he really wanted general elections in the country, the government and its allies now are literally begging him not to do so. Govt stance unequivocally shows its weakness and its unwillingness to go to the elections fearing possible defeat. Imran Khan intends to dissolve assemblies in this month. There are reasons behind Imran's delaying tactics. He would have dissolved assemblies in no time but by offering the government an olive branch, though laced with strings, he has rolled the ball into the govt court. There is complete consensus within the ranks of even the powers-that-be that elections are the only solution to rid the country of present crisis and uncertainty, but when the elections should take place that is a million dollar question. The Federal and Sindh governments are not ready to go for the early election simply because they have nothing in their credit to sell to the electorates and secondly these governments happen to be the gold mines for those at the helm of affairs therefore they want to extract as much as they can before their term comes to an end or they are forced into the elections. Imran Khan and PTI need to keep in

mind that PML N and PPP both are extremely good at political wheeling-dealing. There may be severe consequences if the PTI leadership delays dissolution of assemblies. If it really wants to do it then it has to do it sooner rather than later. PPP leader Asif Zardari has already kick started efforts to save both assemblies from dissolution. As the insiders would reveal, Punjab Chief Minister Pervez Elahi and KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan too want these assemblies to remain intact. Both of them perhaps know it very well that this is their last stint as the chief ministers. Especially Pervez Elahi is quite unpredictable. He is well known for changing loyalties at the eleventh hour. As regards PTI-Establishment relationship the PTI chairman has called upon his workers not to talk about any military official with a view to mending fences. It makes sense as the new leadership deserves to be given enough time to prove that it has no intention to meddle in political affairs as claimed by the outgoing army chief in his last speech. Nevertheless, keeping in mind Imran's temperament it is difficult to say that he will remain steadfast regarding his stance towards the establishment.

Three-day Food Festival to begin on Dec 9

ISLAMABAD :A three-day Capital Signature Food Festival will begin at F-9 Park on December 9, having stalls of delicious homemade food, traditional meals, and tasty food items from renowned restaurants. Talking to APP, the organizer of the event Maham Naem said that event was scheduled to be held from 2 December to 4 December but due to the long march of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, the new dates of the events have been issued. She said the dazzling event will have around eighty food stalls among which sixty percent of stalls would have homemade delicious food items. "After tasting the home-cooked food consumers place the orders online and that is a promotion for the new businesses", she added. Maham Naem said a preference has been given to those who are new to the business and offering home-cooked food. She said the event is an opportunity for young entrepreneurs and an attempt to empower women. She said that for the promotion of young talent the organizers hosted talent hunt programs in various universities and the selected vocalists, bands, and performers will showcase their talent in the event and represent their educational institution. She informed that RTP, Mustafa Zahid, Abdul Hanan will perform in the event while organizers are coordinating with Ali Zafar, Sahir Ali Bagga, and the Bayaan Band in the meanwhile. —APP

Medical student makes Pak proud

LAHORE: Pakistanis lauded and showered praise on MBBS graduate Muhammad Waleed Malik who set a new record by securing 29 gold medals in his medical journey. A student is required to secure at least 85 per cent marks in a subject or highest marks in a semester to win a gold medal. Waleed, while talking about his academic journey, said he was struggling in the beginning, but with the passage of time and continuous hard work managed to turn the tide.—DNA

Court Notice

In the Court of Afshan Younas Civil Judge 1st Class Gujrat Title: Muhammad Zaman Versus Muhammad Ramzan etc. Notice to: 37.Zafar Iqbal, 38.Jamshaid Iqbal, 39.Aurang Zaid, 40.Shoab Iqbal sons of Muhammad Ramzan Residents of Kalra Panwan, Tehsil & District Gujrat Suit for Divided of Land with permanent injection Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 05-12-2022, otherwise case will be decided ex party.

Court Notice

In the Court of Afshan Younas Civil Judge 1st Class Gujrat Title: Parveen Akhtar Versus Administrator Union Council No.07 Ali Pur etc. Notice to: 3.Faisal Mehmood S/O Muhammad Hayat Resident of Gillanwala, Tehsil & District Gujrat presently residing in 7 rue roger Salengro 95140 garages les geneses France. Suit for Declaration Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendants are not served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendants will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 08-12-2022, otherwise case will be decided ex party.



RAWALPINDI: CEO Murree Brewery Ispghanyar Bhandhara posing for a picture with the members of the minorities community on the occasion a lunch he hosted for them. Detailed coverage shall be published in the December issue of Centreline magazine.—DNA

SDPI's 25th SDC kicks off today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 4th December 2022: The Silver Jubilee flagship annual sustainable development conference (SDC) of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on "Sustainable Development in Unusual Times: Building Forward Better" kicks off here from Monday as South-eastern version of the Economic Forum "This year, the SDC which will continue till 8th December is being hosted along-with the Sixth South and South-West Asia (SSWA) Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Government of Pakistan. This is our version of the World

Economic Forum with human, social, economic and environmental dimensions," said Dr Abid Qayyum Suleri, Executive Director of the SDPI while explaining highlights of the conference.

The Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Mr Ahsan Iqbal will inaugurate the conference and the President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi will be the chief guest at the closing of the conference. The Under Secretary General of the United Nations, and head of UNESCAP Dr. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana will be the chief guest. Deputy Planning Minister of Maldives, MoS Finance of Sri Lanka, and Vice Chair Planning Commission Nepal are also coming to Pakistan for this conference. The Speaker of the National Assembly

Raja Pervez Ashraf, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Commerce Minister Naveed Qamar, Climate Change Minister Sherry Rahman, Minister for Poverty Alleviation Ms Shazia Marri, Minister of States Aisha Ghuas Pasha, Romina Khurshid, Shaza Khwaja, and former cabinet members Asad Umar, Dr Moeed Yusuf, Dr Sania Nishtar, and Malik Amin Aslam are among the speakers of the conference. As many as 350 dignitaries/speakers/experts hailing from the United Nations, the Government, Academia, Civil Society, Media, and Private Sector from across the country and 16 other countries will speak in 11 plenary sessions and 35 panels. Organized annually, both the SDC and the SSWA Forum on SDGs have been

facilitating dialogue and deliberations among government officials, civil society, think-tanks, academia and subject experts, the private sector, UN and other development partners, and other stakeholders separately. This time both key events are taking place here together. Alongside the SDC sub-themes, this year's sub-regional forum will assess progress on the thematic SDGs of Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation); Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy); Goal 9 (Industry, innovation, and infrastructure); Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 17 (Partnership for the Goals). The overarching theme of the 25th SDC is Sustainable Development in Unusual Times: Building Forward Better.

Continuity of policies vital to strengthen Railways: Saad Rafique

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique has said that continuity of policies is essential to strengthen Railways or any other department in the country. Addressing a press conference at a local hotel on Sunday, he thanked Chinese Company CRRC, its staff and railway officials for completing the first phase of a project related to high speed coaches, manufactured by the CRRC. He said that 46 coaches had arrived in Pakistan and the project was conceived in 2017. He said that in this regard an agreement was signed in 2021, which should have been signed in 2018. Unfortunately, the project was delayed due to which its cost had increased by billions of rupees. He said all-out

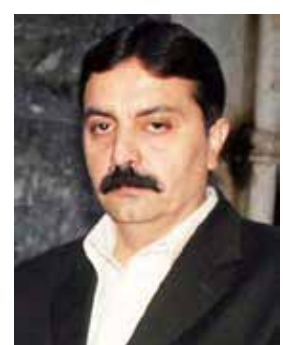
efforts were being made to tackle the issue. Railways minister said that the completely built unit (CBU) coaches were only 46, and the rest of coaches would be made in Pakistan at carriage factory Islamabad. Transfer of technology would also be carried out soon after which Railways would not obtain the CBU for such coaches, he added. Saad Rafique urged the Railways engineering department to fully benefit from transfer of technology initiative as it would be helpful for improving the CFI Unit of the department. He said that sincere efforts were being made for evolving a 10-year roadmap for Railways at the earliest. Khawaja said, "In 2018, the PSDP of railways was

Rs 43 billion and it only increased by Rs 4 billions in four years of the PTI government." He said that not a single locomotive had been included in a fleet besides no addition of any new coach. During the tenure of the PTI government, Railways was badly mismanaged, he said adding that now efforts were being made once again to streamline the things. He said that Railways land had been digitalised, which was a great step in the right direction. The minister said that land of civil aviation would also be digitalised and Railways Land Director General was providing assistance in this regard on the basis of his experience. He said that Railways land would have

to be utilised for generating revenue, adding that special focus was being made on branding. Regarding optic fibre, he said that all stakeholders should come up with revenue sharing formula. He said that dedicated efforts were being made to bring improvement in Pakistan Airlines besides wiping out cartels and mafias in aviation. He said that work on Main Line-1 project would be started again and he thanked the Chinese leadership in this regard. Saad Rafique said that all possible steps would be taken to uplift Railways, Aviation and Local Aviation industry, adding that national aviation policy was also being improved and soon it would be submitted to the federal cabinet.—APP

PBM to expand scope of education

ISLAMABAD :Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) has decided to launch a pilot project to facilitate orphan children accommodated in the Sweet Homes across the country to pursue their education up to graduation level. "Earlier, the PBM Sweet Homes (Orphanages) were catering to the educational needs of these orphan children till Matric level but now the pilot project is being launched to help them acquire education till graduation level", Managing Director PBM, Amir Fida Paracha said in an interview with APP. Presently, 51 Sweet Homes operating across the country were catering the needs of 4355 orphans in terms of their accommodation, education and well-being through adopting a modern welfare approach. Amir Fida Paracha also revealed that PBM, under his supervision, has planned to set up a technical school along with each Sweet Home so that those children who could not get education or lack the tendency to get formal education can be equipped with vocational and technical skills to become able to earn for themselves and their families. To address the issue of increasing child labour in the country, the MD PBM said that 159 Schools for Rehabilitation of Child Labours (SRCLs) across the country were working to withdraw children from their workplaces to bring them into the mainstream education through non-formal means of education. The children passing out from SRCLs are admitted to the government schools for education up to Grade-VIII through a PBM grant of Rs. 4,100, he said. About the Orphans and Widow Support Program (OWSP), the MD PBM said the program which is a Conditional Cash Transfer intervention was basically designed to provide finan-



cial assistance to widows with a focus on orphans, especially girls education. The OWSP provides Rs. 8000 per month and Rs. 16,000 per month to families having one child and more than one child respectively upon meeting compliance of 75 percent school attendance. "A total of 692 families have been paid an amount of Rs. 23.598 million since December 2020", he said. Amir Fida Paracha conveyed that the first phase of OWSP will be launched in Karachi next week as a pilot project while it will be launched in Lahore afterward to reach out to more families", he said. About the expansion of Women Empowerment Centers (WECs), the MD PBM said that around 163 WECs were operating across the country to provide free vocational training to widows, orphans and poor girls in modern trades like Dress Designing, Embroidery, Basic and Advance Computer Courses, Fabric Painting etc. with a stipend of Rs. 50/ per day on attendance basis through biometric system.—APP

ANF seizes over 82 kg drugs; arrests three

RAWALPINDI :Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting three counter-narcotics operations seized over 82 kg of drugs and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Sunday. He informed in an operation near Kot Abdul Malik Interchange, ANF intercepted a car and recovered 64.8 kg charras and 7.2 kg opium from secret cavities of the vehicle. Two accused including an Afghan national were also rounded up during the operation. ANF and ASF in an operation at Bacha Khan International Airport Peshawar recovered 946 grams of charras from a trolley bag of a passenger resident of Azad Kashmir going to Manchester. The spokesman informed that in the third operation in Panjgur Balochistan, ANF recovered 10 kg charras from an unregistered motorcycle. Separate cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations and further investigations are under process.—APP

Balochistan police summon Gill in sedition case

QUETTA: The Balochistan police on Sunday summoned PTI leader Shahbaz Gill in a sedition case. According to the police authorities, a case has been registered against Gill in Balochistan. They warned if Gill didn't appear before the police, then they would obtain his arrest warrants and bring him to Quetta after arresting him. On Saturday, a case was registered against Gill in Qila Abdullah for using vile language against state institutions. At present, Gill is on bail in a case that was registered against him for sedition and inciting people against state institutions. The former chief of security staff of Imran Khan was arrested on August 9 after he had called for 'rebellion' within the army and called on the officers to defy certain orders from the top military command during an interview with a private TV channel.—DNA



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

Swat University completes faculty staff hostel

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: The University of Swat under able and dynamic leadership of Honorable Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Hassan Sher, special support and interest of Chief Minister Mehmood Khan, and Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, achieved another outstanding milestone and has successfully completed the construction of Faculty Staff Hostel within a very short span of time. This Building was awarded on July 29, 2021 and was completed well in time. The completion cost of the Building is Rs. 102.686 Million. This package was funded by Higher Education Commission. The Building is 02 Storey and contains 32 well furnished Rooms, 06 different purpose Halls, Rest Areas and Stores.

Given the fact, the accommodation of Faculty was one of the top issue at the University and now by gracing of Almighty Allah and under leadership of Honorable Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Hassan Sher, the provision of safe and comfortable living space and state of the art Hostel has been made for Faculty, who striving for making the University of Swat as a top ranked in Research and Higher Education.

Quetta court grants Swati's five-day physical remand

QUETTA: —A judicial magistrate court in Quetta remanded PTI Senator Azam Swati into police custody for five days on Sunday. The PTI leader appeared before the court of Quetta Judicial Magistrate 10th. The police sought 10-day remand of Swati but the judicial magistrate granted 5-day remand. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Azam Swati was arrested by Balochistan police on Friday in a case of controversial tweets against the state institutions for the second time in two months.

According to the police sources, the PTI senator was on remand in the custody of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime cell. He had been handed over to Balochistan police after his remand ended. Balochistan police took Azam Swati to Quetta. Cases had been registered against him in Balochistan too.—DNA

National Days and Armed Forces Days

December	
Dec 01 / Romania	National Day
Dec 02 / UAE	National Day
Nov 07 / Russian Federation	Socialist Revolution
Dec 02 / Laos Republic	National Day
Dec 05 / Thailand	National Day
Dec 06 / Finland	Independence Day
Dec 07 / India	Armed Forces Flag Day
Dec 09 / Tanzania	National Day
Dec 11 / Oman	Armed Forces Day
Dec 12 / Kenya	Independence Day
Dec 12 / Turkmenistan	Neutrality Day
Dec 16 / Bahrain	National Day
Dec 16 / Kazakhstan	Independence Day
Dec 18 / Qatar	National Day
Dec 18 / Niger	National Day
Dec 23 / Philippines	Armed Forces Day
Dec 23 / Japan	National Day

Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

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
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Japan keen to further strengthen ties with Pakistan: Ambassador

Among others, polio eradication is one of the focused areas of Japanese as Since 1996, Govet of Japan together with other partners has been consistently assisting Pakistan to eliminate this disease JICA is very active in Pakistan as you know

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan WADA Mitsuhiro has said the relationship between Japan and Pakistan has been very close as "Deena Dost" and continues to spread through mutual co-operation based on shared values such as democracy, peace and sustainable development. Japan attaches immense importance to its relationship with Pakistan and is fully committed to further improving ties in all areas of mutual interest. It is clear that you are very important for materializing those shared values. The Ambassador further said, he was glad to say that both nations have been supportive to each other and that this year we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. 'Our diplomatic relation was established on April 28 in 1952. Pakistan was one of the countries which welcomed Japan back to the international arena after

the World War II. Pakistan helped Japan diplomatically by sending a delegation to participate in San Francisco Peace Treaty. Pakistan was the first country that started to export cotton to Japan in the 1950s, which played an important role for the Japanese post-war reconstruction. Japan processed raw cotton from Pakistan into yarn and cloth. Japan on the other hand exported machinery such as spindles to Pakistan. In this way, we helped each other particularly in the textile sector'. The ambassador said, during the first decade after Pakistan's independence, a number of Japanese business offices were set up in Karachi mainly for trading purposes. For example, the third overseas branch by the Bank of Tokyo in 1953 and the second overseas office by the Japan External Trade Organization (JET-RO). This portrays traditional friendship including business activity between the two countries. Today, we continue to make further efforts to promote



business relationship. We are working for more business friendly environment for activities of foreign companies in Pakistan, which will surely lead to mutual economic benefits. As for the Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan, Pakistan is one of the first countries, which Japan started to provide with since 1954. Japan remains one of the major bilateral development partners to Pakistan since 1954, extending assistance in multifaceted sectors of socio-economic development. The total value of

assistance has amounted to \$11.7 Billion, and 7,273 trainees have been accepted from Pakistan as of January 2022. This includes Japanese concessional loan, grant assistance, and technical cooperation, that have been utilized mostly for supporting infrastructure and social development, including assistance on creating roads, power generation / transmission / distribution, water and sanitation, agriculture, education, health, security, disaster management, climate change and human resources development. The Kohat tunnel,

Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), the construction of steel bridges near Fort Munro which connects Southern Punjab to Balochistan via N-70, Indus Highway, Weather Forecasting and Surveillance Radar System are a few examples of Japanese assistance. Among others, polio eradication is one of the focused areas of Japanese assistance. Since 1996, the Government of Japan together with other partners has been consistently assisting Pakistan to eliminate this disease. JICA is very active in Pakistan as you know. The video you are watching on the screen today is called "Weave Your Dreams" which is showing JICA's activity to support women empowerment through technical training. You will watch the success stories of female graduate from three garment related vocational training institutes in Faisalabad and Lahore. As a trusted partner, Japan has tirelessly been supporting Pakistan. It was at

the time of the devastating earthquake in 2005, countrywide floods in 2010 and 2022, The Government of Japan also offers academic scholarships to Pakistani students every year for higher studies in Japan. This academic scholarship started in 1963 in Pakistan and so far 820 graduates (470 Embassy recommended scholarship and 350 direct scholarship) have successfully completed their degrees from Japan. This scholarship is very popular and competitive due to good academic environment of Japanese universities as well as its fully funded program. Other type of scholarship even includes professional training courses such as the Teachers Training Course as well as the Young Leaders Program for the Government officers, aiming to provide an opportunity to learn modern knowledge and advanced skills in Japan. In 2018, Japan also started another human resource development scholarship called JDS, which is exclusively for young

Pakistani civil servants to acquire higher education in top Japanese universities with the purpose of nation building for Pakistan. People-to-people exchanges are the foundation of our friendship from a long-term perspective. In this regard, I actively support events and programs which encourage further interactions and deepen mutual understanding. This year Pakistani military musical band participated in the annual grand concert organized by the Japan Self Defense Forces in Japan. With the recent active participation by JSDF in AMAN 21, I wish to see such interactions will help further deepen the multi-layered cooperation between the two countries. 'On the occasion of 70th anniversary, we must renew ourselves to further develop our close ties for next 70 years as "Deena Dost". We should make a firm commitment to deepen our cherished ties which will amplify the welfare of both peoples', he concluded.

Pak-Uzbekistan can play key role for economic integration



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan could play a key role in regional economic integration. This he said in a meeting with Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Mr. Oybek Usmanov, who called on the federal minister, here, at Finance Division, said

a press release. Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar welcomed the ambassador and highlighted profound fraternal relations and deep-rooted cultural and historical linkages between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The finance minister and the Ambassador of Republic of Uzbekistan discussed measures to strengthen the relationship between the two countries. The ambassador of Republic of Uzbekistan shared their government's

keen interest in enhancing the relations with Pakistan on multiple fronts through the enhancement of trade, investment and business. The ambassador also invited the finance minister on behalf of his government to visit Tashkent in January 2023 for co-chairing a joint ministerial meeting. The finance minister shared that the government of Pakistan attaches great importance to strengthening bilateral relations.

Political instability in Pakistan

ZAIN ABBAS

Political instability has become a serious and threatening problem especially in developing and underdeveloped countries. It is creating massive problems and hindering the development of these countries. The theme of this article revolves around the problem of political stability in context of identity and legitimacy crisis in Pakistan. Political stability plays an important role in keep-

ing society integrated and in maintaining legitimacy within the state. It is a prerequisite for the economic development, social integration, and supremacy of law in a state. The stability of political system has direct effects on the processes of nation and state building. These both require stable political systems for their growth and flourishing. The development of nation and state without firm and organized system of politics is not possible and government becomes

only a tug of war amongst various interest groups. The instability of government, inefficiency of political parties, and weak political culture create the scenario for a politically unstable state. Political instability has become a serious problem especially for the developing and underdeveloped countries. It is imperative for all the parties to be unite so that the adverse conditions of state could be improved. *The writer is a student.*

AG report finds Rs14 billion irregularities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In Punjab auditor general's 2021-2022 report, financial irregularities of more than Rs14 billion were reported in five big departments of Punjab which included communication and construction, irrigation, local bodies, S&GD and energy. The report mentioned several cases of fraud. The auditor general has put recoveries worth Rs12 billion on these departments for the embezzlement found in these departments. According to the report, there was no production of record

of Rs110 million. It's related to expenditure but its record was not provided to the auditor general team. The Punjab auditor general team found fraud cases to the tune of Rs260 million in other cases. Overpayments of Rs670.95 million have been made to contractors in some cases. Irregular allotment in violation of PEPRAs rules have also been made. Illegal contracts worth Rs370.64 million were awarded in breach of PEPRAs rules. Besides this, the contractors were given relaxation of Rs980.5 million. The contractors were also given relaxation in toll tax and were

allowed to skip Rs140 million in toll tax which is a mandatory tax for them. The recovery shown under the head of toll tax was Rs100 million much less than the actual amount. According to the report, the Punjab departments have failed to show good performance in revenue mobilization, especially the communication and irrigation departments which are responsible for collecting toll tax. The report was sent to the Chief Minister House for its approval and after that it was presented to public order committee so that the concerned officers of these departments could be taken to task.

Charity Christmas festivity attract crowds

ISLAMABAD :The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Islamabad organized a colorful festivity of Christmas Market on Sunday. The event featured authentic German delicacies, shopping, and fun to celebrate Christmas in the traditional German style including homemade cakes, cookies, and wreaths made by the German Embassy Team. As many as 30 stalls displayed an extensive range of Christmas articles, glassware, handicrafts, children's toys.—APP

Joint Action Committee QAU releases fact sheet on land & Bhara Kahu Bypass issue

ISLAMABAD :Joint Action Committee Quaid-I-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad has released fact sheet on important issues pertaining to university's land and ongoing Bhara Kahu bypass. The Joint Action Committee (JAC) is comprising of relevant stakeholders ie Academic Staff Association, Officers Welfare Association, QAU Alumni Association, and Employees Welfare Association, a press release said. According to the Fact Sheet, Bhara-Kahu Bypass project has far-reaching implications for the university; it violates the sanctity of the only National University of the country, it bisects the campus into two noncontiguous barricaded parts, it separates the entire front of the university on Murree-road from rest of the main campus thus diminishing any chance of having a dedicated road access (from Murree-road) for the university, it is detrimental to the natural environment of the university area including extremely valuable Botanical Garden of the university, it violates the master plan of the university including sites reserved for National Research Centers.—APP

Master plan for four tehsils of Rwp to be prepared soon

RAWALPINDI : RDA has directed the private consultant to swiftly complete the work of determining the boundaries for construction and development in four tehsils of the district Rawalpindi at the earliest. Later, the recommendations prepared for this master plan would be presented to the governing body of RDA, said RDA spokesman here on Sunday. He said that RDA Chairman Tariq Mehmood Murtaza and Director General of RDA Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa, while chairing a meeting held here the other day.—APP

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AMAZON VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

Timings: 3 pm to 7 pm

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- Introduction to E-Commerce Market & Amazon
- Amazon Product Research Tools
- Order Management and Customer Support
- Sourcing, Logistics and Listing creation
- Cases, Reports Handling and Advertising
- Product Launch and Rank
- Working as a Virtual Assistant on Upwork and Other Platforms
- Business Ethics for Amazon Business

Duration	Day	Commencement of classes
2 Months	Sunday	December 11, 2022

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Timings: 10 am to 4 pm

Contents

- Foundations of HRM
- Personnel and HRM
- Job Analysis, Recruitment, Interviewing & Selection
- Orientation and Socialization
- Training and Employee Development
- Performance Management System
- Strategic HR Planning & Pay Plans
- Ethics, Justice & Fair Treatment
- Global Human Resource Management

Duration	Day	Commencement of classes
4 Months	Sunday	December 11, 2022

EVENT MANAGEMENT AND INTERIOR DESIGNING

Timings: 5 pm to 9 pm

Contents

- Introduction to events, role, and implications in today's world
- Types and classification of events
- Core Values and Phases of Event Management
- Knowledge Domains – Administration, Design, Marketing, Operations, and Risk
- Project management tools to manage events successfully
- Six levels of Event ROI
- Introduction to Interior Design and Decoration
- Elements of Principles of Design
- Functional and Decorative use of Color
- Lighting effects on color
- Decorating styles, Materials, Furnishings and Interior Planting
- Building systems and components

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3 Months	Saturday	December 17, 2022

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MICROSOFT OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

Timings: 10 am to 4 pm

Contents

- Microsoft Word 2019 (Basic to Advanced)
- Microsoft Excel 2019 (Basic to Intermediate)
- Microsoft PowerPoint 2019 (Basic to Advanced)
- Microsoft Outlook 2019 (Basic to Advanced)
- Microsoft Publisher 2019 (Basic to Intermediate)

Duration	Day	Commencement of classes
3 Months	Saturday	December 17, 2022

CERTIFIED MS EXCEL AND POWER BI PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

Timings: 10 am to 4 pm

Contents

- Fundamentals of Excel
- Advanced Excel Functions & Formulas
- Advanced Reporting & Dashboards with Pivot Tables
- Mastering Power Excel: Power Pivot, power Query
- Creating Macros & Functions
- Exploring Latest Version of Power BI Desktop
- Business Modeling with What-If Analysis Tools
- And Loads of Excel Tips and Tricks

Duration	Day	Commencement of classes
3 Months	Sunday	January 8, 2023

Briefs

Concern expressed over decline in forex reserves

Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Friday expressed concern over decreasing foreign exchange reserves. The export, remittance, and investment situation is also worrying calling for urgent measures to stabilize the economy to prevent further weakening of the rupee, he said. Talking to businessmen, he said that full focus on reducing the current account deficit alone cannot improve the situation. Atif Ikram Sheikh, who has also been the former chairman of PVMA, said that exports and remittances are decreasing due to the gas crisis, inflation, and recession in western countries. The reason for the decrease in domestic and foreign investment is political instability which is a great source of distress among businessmen. He said that to the decrease in foreign exchange reserves, the rupee continues to weaken, so the government will have to try to increase exports and decrease imports. Due to the ravages of floods, the government will have to import wheat, cotton, and other food items on a large scale, which will widen the current account deficit, he said. He observed that the textile industry earned nineteen billion dollars in foreign exchange last year and this year it needs cotton or its income will fall. He said that oil prices in the international market are gradually declining; however, the sitting government should pass on the benefit to the consumers. Oil price was \$94 per barrel in the first week of November and now it has reduced to \$74 per barrel.—APP

Shanghai Thar coal power plant connected with national grid

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The first 660-megawatt unit of Shanghai Electric 1,320 MW Thar coal-based power plant has been connected to the national grid. This was stated by Federal Minister for Power Khurram Dastgir Khan on Friday in a tweet, according to Gwadar Pro. The minister termed the addition of low-cost electricity from indigenous resources as a good news and added that it was the fruit of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative. Shanghai Electric is the sponsor of 2*660 MWs ultra-supercritical coal-fired power plants in Block-I of the Thar desert in Sindh province. The project also includes an integrated coal mine of 7.8 million tons per annum capacity. According to another tweet retweeted by the Federal Minister for Power, the other 660 MW unit will also be connected to the national grid on Monday (Dec 5) after which both units will collectively start contributing 1,320 MWs electricity to the national grid. At this stage, the power plants will start contributing electricity to the national grid for testing purposes before commencing commercial operations, a source said.

Efforts to establish institutional linkages between Ethiopia, Pak

Bilateral trade between two countries was minimal and amounted to 78million US dollars, however, he said adding his target was to take it to 300 million US dollars by end of 2023

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Jemal Bekir Abdula on Friday said concerted efforts were underway to establish institutional linkages between Ethiopia and Pakistan which were crucial to boost the already flourishing ties and bilateral trade between the two brotherly countries. Addressing the business community from across the country here at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry office, he said efforts were afoot to sign accords between the trading organizations of both countries to ensure bilateral trade under a legal system. "Our government is strongly looking forward to building a strong relationship with Pakistan, which is located in a very important region and has major economies in its neighborhood," he remarked. The bilateral trade between the two countries was minimal and amounted to 78 million US dollars, however, he said adding his



target was to take it to 300 million US dollars by the end of 2023. "We have identified the products which will be exported to my country from Pakistan. Pakistani business community can contribute to Pakistan's economic development by exporting rice, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, sports items and construction material to my country," he added. Moreover, the Govern-

ment of Pakistan, he said, could import agricultural products such as coffee, tea, pulses, oilseeds and vegetables from Ethiopia, which "will eventually help it meet the growing demand for edible items." He said his mission was planning to organize a visit of Pakistani business delegation to his country by the beginning of the 2023. "This visit is solely dedicated to Pakistan to help its businesspersons

explore, understand and connect with the business community of Ethiopia." "I can assure Pakistan investors that their investment in Ethiopia will be protected by the government and will also have an international guarantee as my country is a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency," H.E. Jemal Bekir said. "The government of Ethiopia is taking multiple steps to facilitate foreign investment in

our country. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed chairs a meeting of the Board of Investment every two months to address the challenges faced by investors in our country," the envoy added. He also announced that the Ethiopian Airlines would start its operation in Pakistan soon and it was likely that the first business delegation would fly to Ethiopia in its maiden flight to his country. The ambassador said Ethio-

pia had undergone a lot of reforms under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister H.E. Dr Abiy Ali Ahmed who has been working tirelessly and selflessly to make Ethiopia a symbol and beacon of prosperity in Africa. He said Ethiopia was all set to become manufacturing hub in Africa as 96.4 percent of energy was being produced from the cheapest source i.e. hydro energy. Ethiopia has already been exporting clean energy to Djibouti, Kenya and Sudan. Export of the cheapest energy to many other regional countries is underway advance interconnectivity through energy. "Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is another major sector in which Ethiopia is making strides with the development of a technology transformation road map, innovation ecosystem and conducive technology center," he added. On the other hand, the business communities from various Chambers under the auspices of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry expressed their commitment and readiness to explore and harness the available opportunities in Ethiopia-Land of Origin.

Govt extends BISP cover to transgenders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move, the federal government on Saturday moved to provide support to the national transgender community, extending to include them in social welfare cover. This was announced by the Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety and Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Chairperson Shazia Atta Marri on Saturday in a video message. In the video, she said that for the first time, people who are transgender are being included in BISP. She said that people who are transgender would have to register with the program to benefit from it. Marri said that under this program, people who are transgender and are registered, would be able to draw a sum of Rs7,000 every three months. Like us, people who are transgender are also a part of our society and it is binding on the government to look after them.

FGEHA planning to launch eight new housing projects

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) is planning to launch new residential projects in eight major cities of the country, including the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. "The new housing projects will be started for federal government employees and the general public on the basis of the joint venture," sources in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP. They said the new residential projects would be launched in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Multan, Faisalabad and Karachi which would be included plots, houses and apartments. "The Expressions of Interest (EoI) have been sought from land owners, companies, and firms in this regard," the sources added. They said the applications were invited from land owners/developers/firms and eligible individuals for the supply of land for housing schemes (plots, houses and apartments) projects in major cities of the country.—APP

Chinese EV-buses fight to cut 43% pollution in public transport

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Taking advantage of robust China-Pakistan collaboration on electric vehicle (EV) ventures, Pakistan has launched a decarbonization plan in Public Transport Sector, as 43 percent carbon emission emitting from petrol-run transport vehicles on roads, Gwadar Pro reported it on Saturday. As part of the plan, Punjab government is gearing up to introduce 500 Chinese buses in the first phase in the province, house of more than 100 million people that are desperately in want of environment-friendly public transport. According to sources in Punjab Secretariat, in order to make it possible for running Chinese electric buses in Lahore, government has greenlighted Punjab Transport Company (PTC) and Punjab Mass

Transit Authority (PMTA) to proceed with administrative, technical and financial procedures and liabilities. Lahore, capital of Punjab, is one of the worst polluted cities in the world. The Chinese Electric Buses plying on roads will help mitigate environmental hazards especially smog that often keeps engulfing the entire city, said by Environmentalist Ayub Minhas. On the back of 2022 budget's major allocations on Electric Vehicle, Pakistan will switch over to 30 per cent electric vehicles by 2030 under the National Electric Vehicles Policy that will reduce the import bill by \$2 billion every year, cut pollution, fulfil "Clean Green Pakistan" and realize commitments on UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on environment. Talking to Gwadar Pro, Punjab Mass Transit Authority's (PMTA) General Manager

Syed Uzair Shah said that thorough deliberations to examine financial viability of electric buses is in full swing. After Punjab Transport Authority succeeds to launch them, PMTA will step forward accordingly, he added. On a query regarding the fleet of 500 buses, he said that in this regard plan is on go as it has been decided already in principle by Punjab government. In collaboration with BYD China, the world's largest producer of electric vehicles, Pakistan has already piloted the EV buses initiative in Lahore. Previously, the same bus did experimental trips in Islamabad. An electric bus with zero smoke emission has begun running on Lahore roads as a test project. Every day, the bus makes two trips from the Punjab Transport Company's (PTC) main station to

Valencia Town. Last month, Pakistan's first electric buses hit roads in Karachi, again credit goes to China-manufactured electric buses. The Sindh government conducted a test trial of electric buses. Talking to media after the test run, Sindh Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the buses will be available to commuters soon. Chinese buses can cover 240 kilometres on a single charge of 20 minutes. The electric passenger vehicles ran between Sindh Archive Complex and Sea View during the trial run. The Sindh transportation authority received a fleet of 50 electric buses. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement, the Pakistan government recently approved an ambitious National Electric Vehicles Policy (NEVP).

Khaqan sends Rs2bn legal notice to Gill

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has sent Rs2bn legal notice to PTI leader Shahbaz Gill for defaming him. Additional Sessions Judge Samina Hayat on Saturday issued a notice to Shahbaz Gill on behalf of Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. In the notice, Abbasi alleged that in a news conference on July 31, 2022, Gill had claimed to have unearthed three financial transactions worth Rs140 million between Abbasi and an Indian company while he was still the federal petroleum minister. He added that the transactions were claimed to have occurred via Faysal Bank and Mashriq Bank. Moreover, the notice said that Gill tried to substantiate his claims and "deliberately passed ridiculous remarks" to prove the connection and used the terms traitor and Indian spy for Abbasi. The notice accused Gill of willfully and maliciously making false allegations and misleading the public. He said that Shahbaz Gill as chief of staff of PTI chairman made baseless allegations against him in the media. Shahbaz Gill has seriously affected my reputation by making baseless accusations, a notice of Shahid added. Senior Vice President of PML-N Abbasi sought an amount of Rs 2bn for recovery of damages. "I have been a Member of the National Assembly, former Federal Minister and former Prime Minister," he said, adding that Gill blamed me for his own interest.—DNA

Tractor industry facing drop in production

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Association of Auto Parts & Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) Munir Bana has said that the recent heavy floods, hyperinflation, dollar's unprecedented appreciation, import restrictions on auto parts, and political uncertainty have severely affected the local tractor parts industry, which is facing a massive drop in production during the current financial year. In a hurriedly called meeting of the association held here today, the tractor parts manufacturers expressed deep concern at the major dip in tractor sales, as both tractor assemblers were

struggling with the drop in their orders, FBR investigations, and delay in refunds of sales tax refunds running into billions of rupees. This foggy scenario was considered most precarious by the 300 part-makers, who are dependent on sales turnover of Millat Tractors and Al-Ghazi Tractors. Delays in payments and sharp decline in orders have left the parts industry in a bankruptcy situation, with no improvement in sight. The sales of tractors for the rice and cotton season have also not taken place in Southern Punjab and Sindh, which faced the brunt of massive floods in the country. Therefore, sales of tractors during this financial year will barely touch 20,000 units as compared to the 60,000 units sold last year. PAAPAM's key office bearers, the Chairman, Munir Bana & Senior Vice Chairman, Usman Malik, presided over the meeting, which was also attended by former

chairmen, Mumshad All and Razaq Gauhar, as well as former SVC Irfan Qureshi, EC member Omer Abdullah, and members of Tractor Committee, Javid Hafeez, Shahid Dad and Moin Bajwa. PAAPAM was of the view that several steps would have to be taken by the assemblers and government to jump-start tractor sales, mainly long-term loans at low markup to farmers for procuring tractors, release of old sales tax refunds to assemblers to improve their liquidity and focus on export of tractors to Africa. If these actions are not taken, the 300 engineering SMEs involved in tractor parts production will close down in a matter of months. The Chairman PAAPAM, Munir Bana, stated that the government's latest policy of allowing duty-free imports of second-hand tractors would be the last nail in the tractor industry's coffin.

47,732 Coronavirus cases reported

RAWALPINDI: As many as 47,732 Coronavirus positive cases had been recorded, while 1,777 had lost their battle for life since the outbreak of the pandemic in the Rawalpindi district. CEO of District Health Authority Dr Ansar Ishaq told APP that among people who died from this fatal disease, 1,341 were residents of Rawalpindi, while 436 belonged to other districts. He informed that 46,380 patients had been discharged after recovery, with 42,750 belonging to Rawalpindi and 3,630 from other districts. The CEO added that 7,006,011 people, including 44,790 health workers, had jabbed themselves against the lethal Coronavirus (COVID-19) across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10, 2021.—APP

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ لِلرَّحْمَةِ وَالرَّحِيمِ



In loving memory of Begum Najma Hameed

Former member of the Senate of Pakistan, Ex-President of PML(N) Women Wing, and a kind and loving human being.

With profound grief and sorrow, we announce the sad demise of our beloved mother Ms. Begum Najma Hameed.

She was a caring wife, devoted mother, exceptional sister, affectionate elder Seasoned parliamentarian, committed politician and a selfless soul.

You will be dearly missed by all your children, grand children, sisters, nieces, nephews and innumerable loved ones.

As a born Muslim Leaguer, Ms. Najma Hameed witnessed important events of Pakistan's politics & history. She had a special bond with her leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and the late Begum Kulsoom Nawaz. With strict principles, strong ideological commitment, and clear vision, she untiringly fought for democracy all her life. She was a symbol of PMLN in Rawalpindi. Paying tribute to her selfless services for family, nation, party and people of Pakistan, we appeal to the people to pray for her forgiveness.

Namaz-e-Janaza:

Sunday, 4th December 2022, after Zuhr Prayers (1:30 pm) at "Aqsa Masjid" near her residence (877, F Block, Satellite Town) in Rawalpindi.

Dua-e-Qul and Prayers:

Monday, 5th December 2022, 11:00 am, at Siddique Shadi Hall, Satellite Town, Rawalpindi.

Deeply mourned by:

Hameed Akhtar, Rizwan Hameed, Ali Raza, Umar Hameed, Tahira Aurangzeb, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Hasan Aurangzeb
Contact: +92 321 5114777



Japanese DHM opens Haiku art illustrations

DNA

Mr. ITO Takeshi, Minister and Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Japan in Pakistan inaugurated the opening ceremony of the Haiku Poetry Art Illustrations Exhibition jointly organized by the Embassy of Japan and Pakistan-Japan Cultural Association held at COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad Campus on 30th November 2022. Mr. ITO greatly commended the efforts of the students and other artists participating in the exhibition for their artwork. "Art, literature or poetry are the significant bridge that help us understand different culture" he mentioned. While joining a tour of exhibition and campus, interacting with students and professors on this occasion, he

expressed his gratitude to the students and faculty of COMSATS especially Dr. Anjad Hassan, MAAP Vice

Chairman, KP Chapter, for their collaboration in organizing this beautiful exhibition. This exhibition in

Abbottabad marked another celebration on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic

relations between Japan and Pakistan as well as the 50th anniversary since the establishment of PJCA Islamabad.



Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 108

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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

US asking too much of European allies

THE United States Federal Communications Commission on November 25 announced a ban on new equipment from five Chinese tech companies, as it presses allies and partners harder to follow suit. Despite US State Secretary Antony Blinken's claim of "growing convergence" between his government and those of US' European allies, however, there is increasing evidence the US administration's unilateral approach won't play out well. Germany, for one, has a dissenting opinion. A spokesperson with the country's Economy Ministry stated on Friday that Germany wouldn't issue a blanket ban, as Washington requests, on Chinese telecommunications equipment makers. Instead, it would make its own decisions on a case-by-case basis. Nor will the Netherlands do as the US wants. Dutch Foreign Trade Minister Liesje Schreinemacher said in an interview with Dutch newspaper NRC: "The Netherlands will not copy the American measures one-to-one." Her government would rather make its own decisions based on its own assessment and consultation with partner countries, she said. The Netherlands and Europe "should have their own strategy", she argued. "Obviously we are weighing our own interests. Our national security interests are of the utmost importance." Obviously their views differ from those of Washington. A fundamental flaw with the US approach to throttling the Chinese semiconductor industry is its neglect of the interests of its allies and partners. Over the past more than four decades, closer economic and trade interdependence has grown into a solid economic reality, not only between China and the US. Many US allies, Germany and the Netherlands included, have benefited tremendously from thriving economic and trade ties with China. Close economic and trade ties over the decades have served both sides extremely well, and both sides are enthusiastic about preserving the fine momentum. In his meeting with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, Chinese President Xi Jinping urged the latter to refuse calls to "decouple" and the "politicization of economic and trade issues". The Dutch trade minister is clear-eyed about that. "In general we in the Netherlands are very positive and always have been about good relations with China. We do a lot of business with China. A lot of Dutch companies are working there." The relationship is "really giving a boost to innovation and trade which is fundamental to Europe," she pointed out. "We should cherish that also." Eleven percent of Dutch imports are from China, about 5 percent of its exports go to China. ASML alone had over 2 billion euros of sales, roughly 16 percent of its total, to China last year. The US request therefore means a significant blow to the country's economy. The US administration is whistling in the dark on this one.



Humanitarian calamity in the making

A GRIM warning from the United Nations last week that a record 339 million people will need some form of emergency relief in 2023 is a reminder to Britain and European countries that Ukraine is not the only crisis zone in a world beset by extreme climate change, unprecedented food shortages and numerous other conflicts. This is not to minimise the acute distress caused by Russia's illegal invasion. The UN says nearly half-a-million Ukrainians needed direct winter assistance in recent weeks. Millions more are displaced or lack electricity, heating and water following Russian missile attacks. There is no league table of suffering, no World Cup of misery. The UN's predictions speak to a shared trauma transcending national boundaries. The figure of 339 million is 65 million up on 2022, affecting 68 countries. It is roughly the population of the US – or 4% of the population of the planet. Five countries – Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan – are already experiencing "catastrophic hunger". To meet this and similar challenges, the UN and partners are seeking \$51.5bn (£41.5bn) in 2023 donor funding, up 25% year on year. They will be lucky to get half of that. Only 47% of UN-requested 2022 relief funds materialised. A global downturn is not the best time to seek additional cash. The effects of the pandemic continue to cause serious economic dislocation, as in China. Entrenched poverty in least developed countries is a longstanding problem. So, too, is the sort of selfishness that led the Tories to slash Britain's overseas aid budget in 2020. But such factors do not excuse inaction. Nor are they the fundamental cause of today's accelerating humanitarian crisis. Manmade climate change and avoidable conflicts are primarily to blame. This year's extreme flooding in Pakistan, for example, was hardly the product of normal weather cycles. The UN chief, António Guterres, said he had "never seen climate carnage on such a scale". The droughts, extreme heat, creeping desertification and crop failures in the Horn of Africa and poorer countries in Africa and Asia are likewise principally attributable to global warming – triggered, initially, by the countries of the wealthy north. So, more than ever, it is their responsibility to fully fund the UN's 2023 appeal, especially in the light of the Cop27 "loss and damage" agreement. War and conflict are other big drivers of this global emergency. Yemen provides a tragic example. One of the world's worst humanitarian crises, its long-running civil war appeared close to ending earlier this year. But a truce collapsed in October and intermittent fighting has resumed. Yemen's plight has been exacerbated by climate factors. But it is worsened by external actors, principally Iran and Saudi Arabia. The same holds true in northern Syria, where another Turkish invasion is threatened. Numerous foreign interventions in Syria since 2011 have contributed to food insecurity affecting 60% of the population. The development minister, Andrew Mitchell, visiting war- and drought-hit Somalia last week, said the world's neglect of the Horn of Africa was "unacceptable". He announced £14m in new humanitarian and security aid. But this a drop in a desiccated ocean. Despite their own problems, Britain and its wealthy friends can and must afford to do more.

The String of Pearls

Dr. Abdus Sattar Abbasi

According to Junaid Ashraf from Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad "The pearls are a metaphor for the Chinese seaports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Maldives. In Pakistan, China is building infrastructure at the Gwadar port, which is strategically located only 240 miles from the Straits of Hormuz. In Sri Lanka, the Hambantota port is of great significance as it is approximately 6 nautical miles away from the major Indian Ocean's east-west shipping route. China is also interested in upgrading the Chittagong port facility and to establish its link to Yunnan province in China via Myanmar. Myanmar has great strategic location as an ocean outlet, which would facilitate the flow of resources (oil in particular) to China, without passing through the vulnerable waters of the Malacca Strait

DESPITE inhuman characters of Lovett and Todd the phrase 'string of pearls' is still an attractive metaphor probably because of the culmination of Johanna and Mark's romance. Perhaps it is the same while using this phrase for strategically located seaports in Indian Ocean region. I think there is no need to consider the phrase as a cunningly coined term to maliciously defame China's strategic contribution to uplift the region through connectivity and economic progress. There is no doubt that all locations on the string carry significant importance for connectivity and trade. In my opinion the most precious pearl in the string is Gwadar; Hambantota and Chittagong are also important to keep the entire string operative even under toughest global circumstances. Efficient connectivity across Indian Ocean from The Babel-Mandeb (Gate of Lamentation) to The Strait of Malacca can bring significant prosperity to the Indian Ocean countries. According to some estimates two third of world's oil reserves, thirty-five percent of world's gas wealth, sixty percent of uranium, forty percent of gold and eighty percent of diamond reserves are owned by Indian Ocean countries.

According to Junaid Ashraf from Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad "The pearls are a metaphor for the Chinese seaports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Maldives. In Pakistan, China is building infrastructure at the Gwadar port, which is strategically located only 240 miles from the Straits of Hormuz. In Sri Lanka, the Hambantota port is of great significance as it is approximately 6 nautical miles away from the major Indian Ocean's east-west shipping route. China is also interested in upgrading the Chittagong port facility and to establish its link to Yunnan province in China via Myanmar. Myanmar has great strategic location as an ocean outlet, which would facilitate the flow of resources (oil in particular) to China, without passing through the vulnerable waters of the Malacca Strait. Furthermore, the Maldives is an island nation that is roughly around 1,190 coral islands, grouped in double chain of 2 atolls oriented north-south off India's Lakshadweep islands, between Minicoy Island and Chagos Archipelago, where the American base of Diego Garcia, is located, making it strategically an important country."

We need to comprehend a dual dimension of 'string of pearls' theory coined by western countries to delineate strategic depth of Belt and Road (B&R) initiative of China. On one side B&R brought enormous opportunities, which we couldn't capitalize so far, for Pakistan in the shape of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on the other it led to innumerable challenges for Pakistan from both conventional friends & allies and traditional enemies. In case of enemies, it is quite evident and convenient to conceive that they will try their best to undermine the CPEC through every possible mean utilizing our weak areas. However, it is little complex to understand apprehensions of friends. As for as allies are concerned, they express their anxieties every here and then and continuously trying to sabotage the project. But it is difficult for friends to explicitly take position against CPEC. However, we can safely determine that interventions from all these international players do converge and shaping a huge threat for the safety and prosperity of Pakistan. If we remain unable to proactively address all pertinent aspects of the situation, we will probably in a havoc in near future. We need to ponder on two important facets, first the strategic importance of Gwadar being the most precious pearl in the string and second, our people on the route especially in Baluchistan and Gwadar. The 20th century naval flag officer, strategist and historian, Alfred Thayer Mahan, had predicted that the future of the 21st century would be determined on the waters of the Indian Ocean in these words "whoever controls the Indian Ocean, dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas in the 21st century, the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters."

Junaid Ashraf further argues, "More than 50 per cent of the world's maritime oil trade is carried out in the Indian Ocean, which itself is believed to be rich with energy reserves. The Indian Ocean is the hub of most important strategic chokepoints in the global maritime trade, making maritime security and access to water vital to a state's power and progress. The Straits of Hormuz and Malacca are also among such chokepoints through which 32.2 million of barrels of crude oil and petroleum are transported every day." Under this scenario significance of CPEC goes manifold for

both proponents and opponents of the project because CPEC liberates China from the clutches of these chokepoints to fulfill exceptional energy needs and also facilitates Chinese businesses to connect to the rest of the world in a most efficient manner.

It is a responsibility of both China and Pakistan to make sure that people the most important stakeholders in the project on the route of CPEC remain happy and satisfied to make this strategic initiative a real success. Deprivation, poverty, lack of development & opportunities and absence of basic necessities such as education, clean drinking water, amenities and social security can easily lead them to accept any temptation to spoil the project. We can't ignore instances such as arresting Kulbhushan Jadhav from Baluchistan who was involved in terrorism and spying activities in the province. We have to address all reasonable concerns of our people instead of inhibiting their voices and curbing their demands to help them avoiding any enticement to become a tool in the hands of international players to create unrest in the Country. It is the responsibility of governments of Pakistan and China to objectively analyze both hard and soft aspect of the project through four-pronged strategy. Completing proposed projects efficiently should remain one prong of the project. The other and probably most important is the satisfaction and prosperity of people along the route of the project. The third should be to engage evident opponents helping them comprehend the economic impact of the CPEC and the social uplift of local communities which project can ensure through growth & expansion activities by providing employment and other relevant facilities such as health and education to the least developed segments across the route. Finally, we should not ignore friends to join the benefits of the project, otherwise they can be even more harmful than obvious rivals of the project through their silent penetration in the society and creating chaos from within which will be exceptionally challenging to handle.

– The writer is Associate Professor Management Sciences Head, Center of Islamic Finance COMSATS University (CUI) Lahore Campus
Email: drabdussattar@cuilahore.edu.pk
Tweets @drabdussattar

China's protests are a warning to Xi Jinping from youth

Chen Gang

Lessons from the protests: China's early success in curbing the spread of coronavirus won praise from home and abroad, but increasingly, the economic and social cost of its draconian zero-COVID policy has become unbearable. Anger against the seemingly unending chain of lockdowns has spread like wildfire and public unhappiness at travel restrictions has reached boiling point. Throughout the year, people have expressed frustration over access to medical care and complained about difficulties buying food as delivery...

FRUSTRATION and grievances over China's zero-COVID policy have led to large protests in more than a dozen cities, on a scale unseen since the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in 1989. These youth-led social protests involved open calls for a change not just in COVID-19 policies but in governance and politics as well. The big message from the scenes coming out of China: The suppression of policy debates in an increasingly centralised bureaucracy can ignite social unrest overnight despite intensified censorship and security enforcement. For the moment, the Chinese Community Party has responded by moving to ease some virus restrictions despite high daily case numbers, signalling softened positions in the face of mounting protests. But the key test for President Xi Jinping lies ahead: What has he really learned from the outpouring of anger on China's streets, in its universities and at its factories?

Different politics: After the student-led Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, which were triggered by the death of pro-reform leader Hu Yaobang, the ruling CCP drew lessons from the incident by adopting a collective leadership model that was more open towards policy debates in government and in society. The Chinese leaders who followed, including Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, moved away from strongman politics towards a power-sharing model at the top. More broadly, the CCP underwent a thorough shift – what was labelled "re-institutionalisation" – led by senior leaders like Zeng Qinghong (China's vice president under Hu Jintao), Li Yuanchao (vice president during the early years of Xi's rule), and political theorist Wang Huning. This move towards a semblance of inner-party democracy encouraged policy debates at various levels and pushed forward a decentralisation process that empowered local officials to promote economic development. Some observers described the process as an example of the CCP's "authoritarian resilience", in which a single leader could not dominate policy-making in all realms and had to share power with other colleagues in the Politburo and its Standing Committee – the party's top bodies. The political game was transformed from the conventional winner-take-all model to a power-balancing model, in which all of the Politburo Stand-

ing Committee members were vested with almost equal political authority, resulting in more power-sharing and high-level checks and balances. The regime's authoritarian nature was lessened by fragmented policy enforcement, relatively subdued censorship and abundant policy debates. Xi became a game changer in 2012, when he replaced Hu Jintao as CCP general secretary and started a "re-centralisation" process that consolidated his power as the core leader of the party. Facing a disgruntled society vexed by yawning income disparity and corruption, Xi borrowed from Mao Zedong's tactical playbook and urged civil servants and military officers to reconnect with the common people – while tightening limits to discussions of ideas such as democracy and freedom of speech. With the ruling party's tightening control of the media and the rectification of ideology, opinion leaders in China have appeared more cautious than before about voicing different views over public policies or human rights. This has brought the move towards more robust policy debates within the CCP under Jiang and Hu to a screeching halt. The result: increased risks from policy blunders, since there are fewer checks and balances in place.

Lessons from the protests: China's early success in curbing the spread of coronavirus won praise from home and abroad, but increasingly, the economic and social cost of its draconian zero-COVID policy has become unbearable. Anger against the seemingly unending chain of lockdowns has spread like wildfire and public unhappiness at travel restrictions has reached boiling point. Throughout the year, people have expressed frustration over access to medical care and complained about difficulties buying food as delivery services were overloaded. Some reported poor conditions in quarantine centres and questioned why those who tested positive must be locked up in these facilities even when they were asymptomatic. Others have voiced anger at the policy of separating COVID-positive babies and young children from their parents. The recent protests suggest that all of these sentiments are now coming together. These are the first nationwide demonstrations in decades, spanning university students, small business owners and common Chinese citizens. It was triggered by a fire in Urumqi, Xinjiang, that killed 10 people who were allegedly in a building that was

in lockdown. This also followed a recent accident in Guizhou province, where 27 bus passengers were killed on their way to a quarantine facility. The government should have heeded the zero-COVID fatigue and grievances. But that would have been possible only if policymakers were more responsive towards complaints on social media and more consultative with public health professionals and social groups. Tightened censorship in a year of power transition – the CCP held its 20th party Congress in October – has blunted officials' sensitivity towards the boiling anger in society towards lasting lockdowns and testing. After mass protests against COVID-19 restrictions in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States, Chinese authorities should have been aware of the risks associated with stringent quarantine and lockdown measures. However, no serious debates over COVID-19 policy were conducted in the public realm due to intensified censorship and surveillance. If Xi wants further evidence of the dangers of the path he has adopted, he need look no further than the aftermath of the recent death of Jiang. The former CCP chief and Chinese president has been mourned by many Chinese. Jiang was no Hu Yaobang – in fact, he came to power in the aftermath of the brutal crushing of the Tiananmen Square protests. Still, he is viewed by many to have represented a bygone era when China was perceived to be relatively freer and more tolerant of different opinions. By now it should be clear to the Chinese leadership that it is unrealistic to hope to eliminate COVID-19 entirely through lockdowns and repeated testing, given the Omicron variant's high transmissibility and the large number of asymptomatic cases. The recent protests themselves have not dented Xi's political authority, but unless it adapts, the government may encounter a growing political backlash against its COVID-19 policy. There is also a broader lesson here: The public demonstration of anger has sent a clear signal to the leadership that public policy debates – where a range of views is allowed – are vital to understanding the pulse of the masses. It is a motto Xi himself has emphasised many times. Now he knows the risks of not translating those words into action.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

Imran's politics only to seek power, PM Shehbaz says

FROM PAGE 01
pressurise the coalition alliance. In an interview with a private news channel, Khan said: "If they are ready for elections by the end of March, then we won't dissolve the assemblies. Otherwise, we want to conduct polls by dissolving the KP and Punjab assemblies." He added that his party won't agree on a date after March and assemblies will be dissolved this month [December] if the government disagrees.

'Khan will not risk dissolving assemblies'

FROM PAGE 01
the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies if the coalition government agrees to conduct elections by the end of March next year. "Imran Khan will not take the risk of dissolving assemblies. He knows that if he does so, elections will only take place in two provinces," Gillani said asserting that Khan should hold unconditional talks with coalition leadership.

Yemen foreign minister meets Italian counterpart

SANA'A: Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed bin Mubarak, met on Sunday with the Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antonio Tajani, and discussed the political, security and humanitarian situation in Yemen. Tajani affirmed Italy's support for efforts being made to resume negotiations to reach a peaceful resolution and end the conflict, stressing the importance of renewing and extending the armistice. Mubarak thanked the Italian government for its firm and continuous political support of the Yemen's internationally recognised government in its endeavor to establish peace, restore state institutions and end the Houthi coup, state news agency SABA reported.

Mubarak touched on the repeated Houthi attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure, and oil installations. Mubarak also discussed his government's decision to classify the Houthi militia as a terrorist organization, and called for support from the international community to implement that decision. Mubarak spoke about the Houthi militia ties with the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Lebanon's Hezbollah, and their smuggling of Iranian weapons and drones. - APP

Israeli fighter jets attack Gaza amid rising tensions

NEWS DESK

OCCUPIED WEST BANK: Israeli warplanes have attacked sites in the Gaza Strip after a rocket landed in southern Israel and as tensions reach a boiling point in the occupied West Bank, where 10 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces since last week. The Israeli military said the air raids in the early hours of Sunday targeted a weapons manufacturing facility and an underground tunnel belonging to Hamas, according to the Associated Press news agency. "The strike overnight continues the progress to impede the force build-up", the Israeli army said in reference to Hamas, AP reported. No group has claimed responsibility for the rocket, reportedly the first fired in a month, which the Israeli military said landed in an open area near Israel's separation fence on Saturday evening without causing casualties or damage to property. The air attack on Gaza follows outrage over the shooting at point-blank range of a young Palestinian man, Ammar Mufleh, 23, by an Israeli soldier in broad daylight on Friday, which was captured on video. The harrowing footage has sparked widespread anger among Palestinians and calls on social media to escalate resistance against the Israeli occupation.



ISLAMABAD: Cyclists take part in cycling Sunday to support campaign against "Femicide" 16 Days of activism. - DNA

Pakistan needs 263 runs to win Rawalpindi Test

Joe Root who went unlucky in the first innings (23 runs), stood firm for the visitors and went on to score 73 runs off 69 balls including 6 4s. But he was cut short by Zahid Mahmood who took him in the 29 over

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan needs 263 runs to win the first Test against England at Pindi Stadium Rawalpindi when the final day game resumes on Monday. England set a 343 runs target for Pakistan after scoring 264 for 7 in their second round of play against Green-shirts before declaring the innings at Pindi Stadium Rawalpindi on Sunday. England started the day with Ben Duckett going on a duck in the very first over of their second innings, followed by Ollie Pope for 15 in the 6th over. Naseem Shah took Duckett while Mohammad Ali downed and Pope. England were 46 for 2 at lunch. Crawley was 24 and Joe Root was at 4. Crawley who scored a half century (50 off 48 balls including 7 4s) was sent to the pavilion in the 14th over. It was Ali again who displayed his top notch and dismissed Crawley. Joe Root who went unlucky in the first innings (23 runs), stood firm for the visitors and went on to score 73 runs off 69 balls including 6 4s. But he was cut short by Zahid Mahmood who took him in the 29 over. Zahid took his second wicket in the form of Ben Stokes who was



also out on a duck. Agha Salman didn't lag behind to contribute his share as he bagged Will Jacks wicket when he was on 24 runs. This was the sixth wicket for England. Pacer Naseem Shah also proved his mettle in the absence of Haris Rauf, who was injured

due to a strain in his right quad, as he bold Harry Brook when he was just 13 runs away (87) in scoring his second century of the first Test. Brook's innings included 11 4s and 3 6s. England were 264 for 7 having a 342 runs lead over Pakistan when they declared the

innings at tea. Meanwhile, Agha Salman (10) and Zahid Mahmood (1) were batting at the end of third day's play when Pakistan were 499 for 7 in their first innings against England. England bowler Will Jacks shinned on day four as he bagged last three of Pakistan

Salman (5), Zahid (33) and Haris Rauf (12) on day four. Pakistan scored 579 for all in 156 overs. Pakistan was opened by Abdullah Shafique and Imam-ul-Haq in their second innings when the opening stand couldn't last long and Shafique was dismissed by Ollie Robinson providing just a 20-run partnership to the first wicket. Then came in Azhar Ali, who was unluckily hit on hand by the ball in the same over and was retired hurt. Azhar was hit on the tip of his right index and was currently under observation of the medical staff. Skipper Babar Azam was unable to carry on his first innings performance and was gone for 4 in the 6th over. Babar tickled a bouncer to the keeper who was appealing straight away for an edge. Thus, Ben Stokes got his opposite number which was a huge moment in this Test. Pakistan reached 50 in the 13th over while reached 80 runs when it was stumps for the fourth day. Imam stands just 7 runs short (43) in scoring his half century while Saud Shakeel is on 24. They provided a 55-run partnership to fourth wicket. - APP

Mehidy powers Bangladesh to ODI win over India

DHAKA: Mehidy Hasan Miraz hit an unbeaten 38 and put on a record tenth-wicket stand as Bangladesh edged out India by one wicket in a thrilling opening one-day international on Sunday. Chasing 187 for victory, the hosts fell to 136-9 before Mehidy and Mustafizur Rahman put together a 51 run partnership - Bangladesh's best ever for the final wicket - to achieve their target with 24 balls to spare in Dhaka. Bangladesh lead the three-match series 1-0 with the second match on Wednesday at the same venue. Mehidy, coming in to bat at number eight, hit four fours and two sixes and survived a dropped catch by wicketkeeper KL Rahul on 17 to turn the match on its head. Mehidy hit the winning runs in his 39-ball knock to trigger wild celebrations as the players came running onto the field and the home crowd erupted. Mustafizur scored 10 off 11 balls as he and Mehidy stood firm to record a memorable win. Shakib Al Hasan set up victory after his impressive bowling figures of 5-36 helped bowl out India for 186 in 41.2 overs despite Rahul's 73 after Bangladesh elected to field first. Bangladesh collapsed after a few good partnerships including a 48-run stand between skipper Liton Das and Shakib, who made 29. Spinner Washington Sundar got Das out for 41 and then Shakib to a stunning one-handed catch at extra cover by Virat Kohli. Bangladesh suffered a double blow in successive balls when Mahmudullah Riyad and Mushfiqur Rahim fell after a 33-run stand for the fifth wicket. Bangladesh looked to be cruising at 128-4 in the 35th over, but lost their way after Mahmudullah fell lbw to Shardul Thakur and then Mohammed Siraj bowled Mushfiqur. Debutant fast bowler Kuldeep Sen came back to pick up two wickets in the first over of his second spell to send back Afif Hossain and Ebadot Hossain. Siraj snapped up Hasan Mahmud for his third wicket but Mehidy, who also got one wicket with his off spin, did unthinkable with Mustafizur for company. - APP



Qatar 2022 witnesses highest attendance in FIFA history

ISLAMABAD: Fifa on Sunday announced that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar has already proven to be a grand success with record attendances witnessed during the group stage. The tournament in Qatar set a record as teams from all continents advanced to the round of 16 for the first time ever. Also for the first time, three teams from the Asian Football Confederation (Australia, Japan, and South Korea) reached the knockout stages. The biggest positive was the number of fans who witnessed matches at the eight venues in and around Doha. Fifa said the cumulative attendance of over 2.45 million spectators - which translated into 96 per cent occupancy - for the first 48 matches of the group stage was the second highest after the 1994 tournament in the United States, Wam-Emirates news agency reported. - APP

Ronaldo draws focus, but Fernandes is Portugal's heartbeat

DOHA: Cristiano Ronaldo's shadow looms large over Portugal at the World Cup, but away from the flash of camera phones and rolling headlines, Bruno Fernandes has taken the reins. Fernando Santos' team are synonymous with their leading man, a black hole for media attention and fan admiration, reducing his colleagues to a supporting cast, inadvertently or not. However in Qatar playmaker, Fernandes is emerging as the team's true creative leader, sealing qualification for the last 16 with a game to spare. With several changes but Ronaldo still leading the side, Portugal fell to a 2-1 defeat by South Korea on Friday but finished top of their group and face Switzerland. Fernandes was rested, wrapped in cotton wool, and without him Portugal failed to create many clear chances. Still, supporters swooned over veteran striker Ronaldo - save some Korea fans who instead chanted for "Messi" - even as the all-time record international goalscorer floundered up front. Instead it is Fernandes, no longer a club team-mate of Ronaldo after his dramatic departure by mutual consent ahead of the World Cup, who has been the beating heart of the side this year. It was Fernandes who picked up the pieces in Portugal's press conference ahead of their opening game against Ghana, fielding questions on the Ronaldo drama. Then on the pitch he was a quiet mastermind, providing two assists in the 3-2 win, even as Ronaldo basked in the limelight after winning a soft penalty and dispatching it to open the scoring. The former Real Madrid forward became the first man to score in five separate World Cups, at 37 years old. It's an age where most players would have retired by, but Ronaldo chugs on, having pledged to play until 40, at least. So that shadow stretches further, but under it, Portugal have a lot of younger, dynamic talent, itching for a chance to break through. - APP

Indonesia's Mount Semeru erupts, thousands flee

One resident described the panic when ash clouds descended on their village

LUMAJANG: Indonesia's Mount Semeru erupted Sunday spewing hot ash clouds a mile high and rivers of lava down its side while sparking the evacuation of nearly 2,000 people exactly one year after its last major eruption killed dozens. The burst from the highest mountain on Indonesia's main island of Java, around 800 kilometres (500 miles) southeast of the capital Jakarta, prompted authorities to raise the alert status for the volcano to the highest level. Villages around Semeru were being battered by a mix of volcanic ash and mon-

soon rains. Videos shared with AFP by a local rescue group showed a huge black cloud rising from the volcano, engulfing the sky and blocking the sun. One resident described the panic when the ash clouds descended on their village. "It was dark, I could not see anything. It was raining water and ash," the person, who did not want to be named, told AFP. "I didn't know where to take shelter. I had to flee." "Hot avalanches" triggered by piles of lava at the top flooded down the 3,676-metre (12,060 feet) moun-

tain, said Abdul Muhari, a spokesperson for Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB). A spokesperson for Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation Centre (PVMBG) told broadcaster Kompas TV that the higher alert level meant local villages were in danger. However, no casualties or injuries were reported on Sunday after the PVMBG warned nearby residents not to travel within eight kilometres (five miles) of the crater. The geological agency said that by evening Semeru was

"still in the eruption phase" though the size of the ash clouds was decreasing. "Overall the activity is still very high," it said in a statement. The internet in the area was down and phone signals were patchy after the eruption, according to an AFP journalist. The BNPB said 1,979 people had been taken to 11 shelters, with at least six villages affected by the eruption. Local administration official Indah Amperawati Masdar said residents would only be allowed to return home when the hot clouds had

dissipated. Residents were also told to avoid a south-eastern area 13 kilometres (eight miles) along a river in the direction the ash was travelling. The majority of residents in the two villages most at risk had been evacuated, said Patria Dwi Hastiadi, a spokesperson for the Lumajang Disaster Mitigation Agency. Locals fled on motorbikes, some three at a time with their belongings, while others helped the elderly evacuate safely. One resident was covered in mud that had rained down on him as a mix of rain and ash.

Japan's weather agency had earlier warned that a tsunami could be triggered by the eruption affecting southern islands in the country's Okinawa prefecture. Kyodo news agency reported. But Japan's meteorological agency later said no significant tidal changes were observed. Semeru last erupted exactly one year ago, killing at least 51 people and damaging more than 5,000 homes. That disaster left entire streets filled with mud and ash that swallowed houses and vehicles, forcing nearly 10,000 people to seek refuge.

Mbappe, Giroud fire France into next round

DNA

DOHA: France maintained their dreams of winning back-to-back World Cups after beating Poland 3-1. Olivier Giroud became France's outright all-time top scorer and Kylian Mbappe scored two brilliant goals before Poland got a consolation goal from a Robert Lewandowski penalty in the final minute. France dominated the first half as they pushed for an opening goal and the deadlock was broken when Mbappe played a pin-point ball through to Giroud, who hammered it past a diving Wojciech Szczesny to claim a record 52nd goal. The defending champions continued to press after the break and doubled their lead when Mbappe fired a shot from just inside the penalty area that shot into the top corner in the 74th minute. But Mbappe was not done, adding a second goal in stoppage time with another screamer to seal the win and take his total for the tournament to five.

Trump's call for 'termination' of constitution condemned

WASHINGTON: The White House has condemned former President Donald Trump after he called for the "termination" of the US constitution. Mr Trump made the comments in a post to his Truth social network on Saturday while repeating his false claim that he won the 2020 presidential election. He also accused "Big Tech Companies" of colluding against him with Democrats. White House spokesman Andrew Bates said Mr Trump's comments were "anathema to the soul of our nation". "You cannot only love America when you win," Mr Bates said in a statement. He added that Mr Trump's comments should be "universally condemned" - seemingly a pointed jab at senior Republicans who have so far avoided criticising the former president's outburst. Other senior Democrats also challenged Republicans - including Rep Eric Swalwell who questioned how the party's members could continue to refer to themselves as "Constitutional conservatives" if they didn't condemn the comments. In the post, Mr Trump referred to vague allegations of "massive & widespread fraud and deception" and asked whether he should be immediately returned to power. "A Massive Fraud of this type and magnitude allows for the termination of all rules, regulations, and articles, even those found in the Constitution. Our great 'Founders' did not want, and would not condone, False & Fraudulent Elections!" he said. - Agencies

South African leader leaves future in party hands

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has said his fate is in his party's hands, in his first comments since an official report on a scandal over money stolen from his farm. Opponents have called for his resignation after a panel of legal experts concluded he may have broken the law. On Saturday, Mr Ramaphosa's spokesman suggested he would fight on. The president has now said the party top brass should decide his next move. The leaders of the governing Africa National Congress (ANC) are currently meeting in Johannesburg to discuss the findings of the report. Speaking outside the venue for the meeting, the president said that his fellow members of the National Working Committee had given him permission not to attend "so that they're free to express themselves as openly and as thoroughly as possible without any form of fear or favour". On Monday, the ANC's larger decision-making body, the National Executive Committee (NEC), will also be meeting. "It is up to the National Executive Committee, which I am accountable to, to take whatever decision," Mr Ramaphosa told journalists.

Briefs

Masood lauds services of Pakistani doctors in US

DNA

WASHINGTON: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan has lauded the generous support of the doctors' community working in the US at every difficult hour in Pakistan especially during calamities and natural disasters. He was addressing Annual Gala 2022 of Association of Physicians of Pakistani-Descent of North America (DMV Chapter) in Washington. The Ambassador paid tribute to the services and contributions of the doctors community both for the United States as well as Pakistan. He said the presence of nearly 20000 doctors of Pakistani descent in the United States was not only a matter of great pride for Pakistan but was also a strong link between Pakistan and the United States.

Protesters storm governor's office in Syrian city

AMMAN: Dozens of demonstrators angry over worsening economic conditions in Syria stormed the governor's office in the southern city of Sweida on Sunday and set fire to parts of the building amid a heavy exchange of gunfire, the authorities and witnesses said. Earlier, more than 200 people had gathered around the building in the centre of the Druze-majority city, chanting slogans calling for the overthrow of Syrian President Bashar Assad, they said, amid spiralling prices and economic hardship. Syrian state media said tens of "outlaws" stormed the governor's office and burned files and official papers. Three witnesses told Reuters the governor was not in the building which was vacated before protesters stormed the offices. "The governor's office was burnt completely from the inside," said Rayan Maarouf, a civic activist and editor of Suwayda 24, a local website that covers the southern region, who said several people were wounded in the exchange of gunshots. "There was heavy gunfire," Maarouf told Reuters, saying it was not clear from where the shooting came in the heavily policed area. A source in the city hospital said one civilian who was being treated had died from gunshot wounds while another was still in hospital after being shot.

Gunmen in Nigeria kill a dozen people

WEB DESK

MAIDUGURI: Gunmen in Nigeria killed a dozen worshippers, including an imam, and kidnapped several others from a mosque on Saturday night, local residents said on Sunday, in the latest attack by armed gangs in the north of the country. Armed gangs, known as bandits, attack communities where security is stretched, killing people or kidnapping them for ransom. The gangs also demand villagers pay protection fees to be allowed to farm and harvest their crops. Lawal Haruna, a resident of Funtua, in President Muhammadu Buhari's home state of Katsina, told Reuters by phone that the gunmen arrived at Maigamji mosque on motorbikes and started shooting sporadically, which forced worshippers to flee. About 12, who were attending night prayers, were caught in the gunfire and killed, including the chief imam, said Haruna. "They then gathered many people and took them to the bush. I'm praying that the bandits release the innocent people they abducted," said Abdullahi Mohammed, another resident of Funtua. Katsina state police spokesman Gambo Isah confirmed the attack and said state-backed vigilantes, with the support of some residents, had managed to rescue some worshippers. Katsina is among several states in the northwest of Nigeria which share a border with neighbouring Niger, allowing the gangs to move freely between the two countries.

International Day for Persons with disabilities celebrated

Children with Disabilities showed their hidden and special talent by performing different tableaux / plays and speeches and entertained the participants. participants of this celebration appreciated the performance of children with Disability

DNA

ISLAMABAD: International Day for Persons with Disabilities was celebrated by Directorate General of Special Education at National Library Islamabad on 3rd December 2022. The Federal Minister for Ministry of Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada graced the occasion as Chief Guest. This event was made successful by the active participation of Persons / Children with Disabilities, teachers, therapists working for the disability, the renewed NGOs, Social Workers, Religious scholar, Civil Society and representatives of Ministry of Human Rights. The Chief Guest Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Federal Minister of Human Rights was delighted on celebration of this event by DGSE and appreciated the performance of PWDs. Mr. Pirzada talked about on the current year theme of international day for PWD's. "Transformative solutions for inclusive development: The role of innovation in fuelling an accessible and equitable world". Due to the current technological advancement in the 21st century, every field of life has changed which has equally swap the life of PWD's. He therefore, emphasized on the incorporation of technological advancement in the field of disability to make PWD' and CWD's inclusive and participative in the society. He said that Persons with Disabilities are the precious asset of this country, if they are provided with opportunity of education and rehabilitation; they can prove themselves even better than the persons without disability. They have proved in every field of life from sports to



professional skills and have raised the name of nation and Pakistan in the world. Government of Pakistan is facilitating the Persons with Disabilities and will further enhance the resources for the betterment of disability related issues. At the end of event, the Chief Guest

commingled with the special children and other participants of event. Sheikh Azhar Sajjad, Director General of Special Education, in his well come address, said that the Directorate General of Special Education & its affiliated Institutes are engaged in reha-

ilitation, education & training of Persons / Children with Disabilities. The graduates of these prestigious institutes are giving their due contribution in all fields of life. The Director General (SE) said that, Directorate General of Special Education is contributing

in the training & capacity building of the professionals, teachers and supporting staff in the field of Special Education. He emphasized the need of technological advancement and incorporation in the educational and rehabilitative needs of CWD's. The

children with Disabilities showed their hidden and special talent by performing the different tableaux / plays and speeches and entertained the participants. The participants of this celebration appreciated the performance of children with Disability.

TBTP: recent monitoring report shows big question mark on performance

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme (TBTP) is a major project in the history of Pakistan. To check its transparency, for the first time a monitoring team from Ministry of Climate Change MOCC went for monitoring which reported on the performance of TBTP in some areas. In which the performance of several for-

est divisions was described as extremely disappointing and the report wrote that the progress reports provided by the forest departments are fake and the ground realities are completely different from it. The forest departments of all the four provinces and AJK expressed strong displeasure on this report. And raised questions on the capacity and inexperience of the monitoring team. On this, many journalists including me published reports in which it was written that the monitoring of a big project like TBTP should not be done by inexperienced people. This monitoring report was rejected. After that, an order came from the Government of Pakistan to conduct a special audit from the Auditor General of Pakistan AGP. When a special audit was conducted, the performance of several forest divisions was declared worst in the report of AGP. On the

report of AGP, the point of view of the forest departments was that AGP has prepared the report out of its domain and mandate. I also wrote articles on the point of view of the Forest Departments. MOCC was facing criticism in this regard and it has been written many times by the media that the monitoring of TBTP should be done by experienced and international experts. So MOCC contracted with a consortium of three international organizations (IUCN, FAO, and WWF) for independent third-party monitoring and assessment. The Ministry of Climate Change through the National Strategic Support Unit (NSSU) is continuously monitoring and coordinating the TBTP activities implemented by the Provincial/Territorial Forest and Wildlife Departments. At the regional level, the National Strategic Support Unit (NSSU) is supported by the Regional Strategic

Support Unit (RSSU) in monitoring and coordinating program activities across all provinces and federal units. When the monitoring report prepared by WWF, IUCN and FAO came out, this report is also not different from previous reports. If the recent monitoring report is based on facts then it is a serious matter and if the ground realities are distorted in this report then it is a very serious matter. There will be negative effects on TBTP in both respects. MOCC is considering the recent monitoring report based on facts while the forest departments are considering it against the ground realities. Is the recent monitoring report factual or based on assumptions? Or the point of view of the forest departments is correct that the data given in the monitoring report is completely wrong. I will write a detailed and investigative report on it very soon. Whenever NAB, FIA or Anti-corruption

conducts an investigation on this monitoring report, our investigative report can also help them.

I have written several articles on Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan and AJK. Got a chance to see TBTP work up close. Excellent plantations are being done in Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan and AJK, beautiful nurseries are being established. But it is also a fact that corruption is happening in TBTP. A few forest officers in Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan and AJK are involved in corruption which is causing notoriety. Now it is the responsibility of the media to expose those faces working in TBTP who are involved in corruption and malfeasance. A few corrupt forest officers are not only causing disrepute to the forest departments but also creating problems for the honest forest officers who are busy day and night in the struggle to make TBTP successful.

'Islamic Banking taken off in Pakistan, surpassed 20% Share'

DNA

KARACHI: Senior Economist Faiz Ul Haq has apprised that as per international standards, Islamic Banking has taken off in Pakistan; as its market share has surpassed & sustained above 20 percent successfully - both in terms of assets and deposits. As per banking industry sources, he apprised that, market share of Islamic Banking in terms of assets stands at 20 percent and 21 percent in terms of deposits. It is a major milestone in the history of Islamic Finance in Pakistan and it is, in fact, no less than a psychological barrier for any product category in any industry or sector. Renowned Economist Faiz Ul Haq articulated that there are three very significant developments on legal, policy and regulatory landscape of Pakistan; which every banking & finance professional would have to take into account to understand the future of banking in Pakistan: (i) Federal Shariat Court (FSC) has ruled that the government has to make Pakistan an interest & riba-free country by the end of year 2027, i.e. December 31, 2027 (ii) In an astounding and far-reaching decision, now incumbent federal minister for finance & revenue, Senator Ishaq Dar, has decided to take back the appeals against the aforementioned FSC decision file by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) (iii) SBP will be setting up a special wing for transition to interest-free banking in a week's time from now.

Flash flood kills nine at church ritual

JOHANNESBURG :Flash flooding that followed heavy rains has killed nine people taking part in religious rituals in Johannesburg, emergency services said on Sunday. A group of 33 worshippers had joined church rituals on the banks of the Jukskei river when the flooding struck, said Robert Mulaudzi, spokesman for the City of Johannesburg Emergency Management Services. "Two people were swept away and confirmed dead on the scene," he said. "We continued the search this morning and have recovered seven other bodies," he added on Sunday. Rescue workers and firefighters are still searching for missing people.—APP

Chinese cities ease zero-COVID curbs

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: More Chinese cities including Urumqi in the far west announced an easing of coronavirus curbs on Sunday as China tries to make its zero-COVID policy more targeted and less onerous after unprecedented protests against restrictions last weekend. Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang region and where the protests first erupted, will reopen malls, markets, restaurants and other venues from Monday, authorities said, ending strict lockdowns after months. There was no sign of any significant unrest this weekend, although police were out in force in the Liangmagiao area of Beijing and in Shanghai around Wulumuqi Road, which is named after Urumqi. Both

sites saw protests a week ago. A deadly fire last month in Urumqi sparked dozens of protests against COVID curbs in over 20 cities after some social media users said victims had been unable to escape the blaze because their apartment building was locked down. Authorities denied that.

The protests were an unprecedented show of civil disobedience in mainland China since President Xi Jinping took power in 2012. In the days since, numerous cities have announced the easing of lockdowns, testing requirements, and quarantine rules. Vice Premier Sun Chunlan, who oversees COVID efforts, said last week the ability of the virus to cause disease was weakening - a change in messaging that aligns with what many health authorities around the world have said

for more than a year. China is set to further announce a nationwide easing of testing requirements as well as allowing positive cases and close contacts to isolate at home under certain conditions, people familiar with the matter told Reuters last week. For the time being, steps to ease restrictions have varied across the country. People in Zhengzhou, the central city home to the world's largest iPhone plant which was last month rocked by violent unrest, will no longer have to show COVID test results to take public transport, taxis and to visit "public areas", authorities said on Sunday.

Karaoke bars, beauty salons, internet cafes and other indoor venues can reopen but must check for a negative 48-hour COVID test result. In Shanghai on Monday a negative COVID

test will no longer be required to take public transport and visit parks, authorities announced on Sunday. Elsewhere both Nanning, capital of the southern region of Guangxi and Wuhan, the central city where the pandemic began in 2019, on Sunday cancelled a requirement for a negative COVID test to take the subway. Guangzhou's Haizhu district, which experienced violent clashes last month, said Sunday that henceforth it advises people with no COVID symptoms not to get tested for the virus unless they belong to certain special groups such as frontline workers, or those with a red or yellow code. On Saturday in Beijing, authorities said the purchase of fever, cough and sore throat medicines no longer required registration.

EU chief says bloc must act over US climate plan 'distortions'

BRUSSELS :EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said Sunday the bloc must act to address "distortions" created by Washington's \$430-billion plan to spur climate-friendly technologies in the United States. The European Union must "take action to rebalance the playing field where the IRA (Inflation Reduction Act) or other measures create distortions", von der Leyen said in a speech at the College of Europe in the EU countries have poured criticism on Washington's landmark Inflation Reduction Act, seeing it as anti-competitive and a threat to European jobs, especially in the energy and auto sectors. The act, designed to accelerate the US transition to a low-carbon economy, contains around \$370 billion in subsidies for green energy as well as tax cuts for US-made electric cars and batteries. Von der Leyen said the EU had to work with the US "to address some of the most concerning aspects of the law". She said that Brussels must also "adjust" its own rules to facilitate public investment in the environmental transition and "re-assess the need for further European funding of the transition". French President Emmanuel Macron seized an opportunity on a state visit to Washington for talks with US President Joe Biden last week to air deep grievances over US-EU trade. The White House touts the IRA as a groundbreaking effort to reignite US manufacturing and promote renewable technologies.—Agencies

Iran executes 4 over links to Israel

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: Iran on Sunday put to death four people accused of working with Israel's intelligence service, the judiciary said. "This morning, the sentences of four main members of the gang of mobsters related to the Zionist intelligence

service were executed," the judiciary's Mizan Online website reported. Iran carried out the sentences four days after its supreme court upheld the penalty of capital punishment for "their intelligence cooperation with the Zionist regime (Israel) and kidnapping", Mizan Online said. There was no recourse to appeal after Wednesday's decision, it added. Mizan identified the men as Hossein Ordoukhanzadeh, Shahin Imani Mahmoudabad, Milad Ashrafi Atbatan and Manouchehr Shahbandi Bojandi, without elaborating on their backgrounds.

Govt should take steps to keep rupee stable

LAHORE:—Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf said that fluctuations of dollar created

uncertainty in export sector and the federal government should take concrete steps to address this issue on exigent basis. He expressed these views while addressing a review meeting regarding the difficulties faced by the hand-woven carpets industry in exports. Chairman of Carpet Training Institute Pervaiz Hanif, Senior Central Leader of the Association Abdul Latif Malik, Senior Member Riaz Ahmed, Saeed Khan,

Major (Rtd) Akhtar Nazir, Shahid Hasan, Akbar Malik, Ejazur Rehman and others were also present on this occasion. Usman Ashraf further said in the current situation, manufacturers are reluctant to enter into any kind of contracts with foreign buyers, which is likely to reduce exports. He said that dollar smuggling, rumors and political instability among other factors play a central role in the fluctu-

ations of the dollar, which needs to be addressed. He said that the federal government and the State Bank should make a strict policy in this regard so that there is no instability in the dollar market. "Due to fluctuations in the dollar, there is severe difficulty in securing contracts with foreign buyers, which is having a very negative impact on the hand-woven carpet industry," he added.—DNA

Briefs

PML-N's Wasim Ahmad Khan joins PTI

DNA

LAHORE: Former advisor to Punjab Chief Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Wasim Ahmad Khan on Sunday announced to join Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He announced this during a meeting with PTI Central Vice President (VP) and Senator Ijaz Ahmad Chaudhry. The senator welcomed the newcomer with PTIs muffler. PTI leaders, including Sajid Sardar Joiya and Asif Bhai were also present at the occasion. Chaudhry, while talking to the media, said the PTI was the most popular party in the country, adding that only Imran Khan possessed the ability to steer the country out of crises. Taking a dig at the ruling coalition in the center, the VP said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) had journeyed Pakistan to the brink of disaster, adding that the movement would face defeat in the face of a no-confidence motion against Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi.

China takes steps to counter India's plans in Ladakh

DNA

LADAKH: China is taking steps to counter India's hegemonic designs along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the border between India and China in Ladakh region of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China has recently built more than 200 new shelters in the strategic area between Aksai Chin and the Siachen glacier, Indian media reported. These shelters have been built for the purpose of providing support to the Chinese soldiers present there in winter. As per the Indian media, the PLA has built pre-fabricated shelters for the soldiers sitting about 15 to 18 km, like the Indian army has been installing in Siachen glacier. These shelters control the temperature and the soldiers can survive even in the bitter cold. There are military bases in the depth area to support these soldiers and provide them the military equipment. Most of these camps have been set up after Xi Jinping was elected president for a third term in October.

OPEC+ to keep output unchanged in uncertain climate

VIENNA: Major oil-producing countries led by Saudi Arabia and Russia agreed Sunday to maintain their current output levels in a climate of uncertainty and ahead of fresh sanctions against Moscow coming into force next week. The representatives of the thirteen members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) led by Riyadh, and their 10 allies headed by Moscow, decided to stick to their course agreed in October of a production cut of two million barrels per day until the end of 2023. Sunday's widely anticipated move was no "big surprise" given that the economy has been "slowing somewhat, pushing oil prices below \$90, despite the lower production levels," analyst Hans van Cleef with ABN AMRO said. Collectively known as OPEC+, the alliance said Sunday that its October decision to cut output was "purely driven by market considerations", adding that it had been the "necessary and right course of action towards stabilizing global oil markets". The OPEC+ output reduction in October represented the biggest cut since the height of the Covid pandemic in 2020, a move denounced by the United States as a concession to Moscow. - Agencies

National Day of the Kingdom of Thailand

Ties between Pak, Thailand moving in upwards direction

The ambassador also touched upon various aspects of the bilateral relations and hoped these relations will further be strengthened in coming days. The guests were served with traditional Thai cuisines

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Ms Shazia Marri, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety & Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has said that bilateral relation between Pakistan and Thailand are moving in upward trajectory. She said in her speech on the occasion 95th National Day of the Kingdom of Thailand where she participated as chief guest in Islamabad. While addressing the diplomatic community present on the occasion she noted that bilateral relations are marked with cooperation and convergence of perspectives on multitude of regional and multilateral issues. She said that 110% increase in bilateral trade between the two countries is a clear indication that they enjoy good and cordial relationship. She highlighted the cultural and historical similarities of the both countries and emphasised that like Thailand Pakistan also supports and promotes multilateralism and regional cooperation. She also stressed upon the importance of people to people contact to further boost the bilateral relations between two countries. Ambassador of Thailand Chakkrid Krachaiwong in his remarks thanked the guests for attending the reception. He also thanked the chief guest for gracing the occasion despite her busy schedule. The ambassador introduced Thai artists who came all the way from Thailand to perform in the reception. The ambassador also touched upon various aspects of the bilateral relations and hoped these relations will further be strengthened in the coming days. The guests were served with traditional Thai cuisines. The mesmerizing performance of the Thai cultural troupe left the audiences spell-bound. The cultural dances highlighted various aspects of Thai culture and social life. Guests praised the dance performances and appreciated Thai embassy efforts to promote especially cultural linkages between Pakistan and Thailand.



ISLAMABAD: Shazia Marri, Chairperson BISP, Ambassador of Thailand and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Thailand. - DNA



PTI leads in second phase of AJK LG polls

PTI managed to secure a majority in Bagh district council by securing 12 seats followed by PPP and MC by securing five seats each; PML-N got two seats while four seats were won by independent candidates

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) held the lead by securing 229 local council seats followed by independent candidates securing 199 seats in the second phase of local government (LG) elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) held on Saturday. According to official results announced by the AJK Election Commission on Sunday evening, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) managed to take the third position by securing 129 seats, while Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) got 104 seats in the Poonch division of AJK. Jammu Kashmir Peoples' Party (JKPP) got 28 seats, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim

Conference (MC) 22, Tehreek-e-Labaik (TLP) seven, while Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam (JUI) and Jamat-e-Islami (JI) won four seats each in the LG elections. Out of 29 district council seats in Poonch district, PML-N won 10, followed by PTI which bagged seven, and six each by PPP and JKPP, while PML-N and PPP secured five seats each in district council Haveli and PTI won only two seats. PTI managed to secure a majority in Bagh district council by securing 12 seats followed by PPP and MC by securing five seats each; PML-N got two seats while four seats were won by independent candidates. PTI held lead in district Sudhanoti (Palandri) by securing nine seats out of 16, (PML-N got four seats, JUI one while three seats were won by independent candidates. PPP could not win any district council seat from the district. The majority seats in Municipal Corporation Rawalakot were won by JKPP while in Municipal Corporation Palandri, PTI won first place. PTI also held lead in municipal committee Bagh while PML-N won a majority in Haveli. Independent candidates will play important role in elections on special seats in these bodies and elections of their heads and deputies like chairman, vice chairman, mayor, and deputy mayor.

Iran top legal cleric says morality police shut down

DUBAI: Protesters in Iran called on Sunday for a three-day strike this week, stepping up pressure on authorities after the public prosecutor said the morality police whose detention of a young woman triggered months of protests had been shut down. There was no confirmation of the closure from the Interior Ministry which is in charge of the morality police, and Iranian state media said Public Prosecutor Mohammad Jafar Montazeri was not responsible for overseeing the force. Top Iranian officials have repeatedly said Tehran would not change the Islamic Republic's mandatory hijab policy, which requires women to dress modestly and wear headscarves, despite 11 weeks of protests against strict Islamic regulations. Hundreds of people have been killed in the unrest which erupted in September after the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman who was detained by the morality police for flouting the hijab rules. Protesters seeking to maintain their challenge to Iran's clerical rulers have called for a three-day economic strike and a rally to Tehran's Azadi (Freedom) Square on Wednesday, according to in-



dividual posts shared on Twitter by accounts unverified by Reuters. President Ebrahim Raisi is due to address students in Tehran on the same day to mark Student Day in Iran. Similar calls for strike action and mass mobilisation have in past weeks resulted in an escalation in the unrest which has swept the country - some of the biggest anti-government protests since Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution. - Agencies

Isaac Herzog becomes first Israeli president to visit Bahrain

WEB DESK

MANAMA: Israeli President Isaac Herzog arrived Sunday in Bahrain, the first visit by an Israeli head of state to the small Gulf kingdom since the two countries normalised relations in 2020. Herzog, whose role is largely ceremonial, was greeted at the airport by Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif al-Zayani, according to pictures posted to his Twitter account. He said on Twitter he planned to meet King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, as well as Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, who is the crown prince and prime minister. Accompanied by an economic delegation, Herzog said he would discuss "ways to strengthen our economic cooperation" along with climate change and security issues. Herzog said he would then travel to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. In 2020, the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco became the first Arab states in decades to normalise relations with Israel, following negotiations spearheaded by the administration of former US president Donald Trump. The Jewish state had earlier reached peace treaties with neighbouring Egypt and Jordan.

Three killed, five injured in Torkham road mishap

LANDIKOTAL: Three persons were killed and five Afghan nationals among security personnel sustained injuries in a road mishap near Zero Point, Torkham Border here on Sunday. According to details, a loaded container fell on the passenger van due to brake failure near Zero Point. As a result, three persons were killed and five others got critical injuries. The teams of police, security forces and Rescue-1122 reached the spot and started rescue activities. The injured were rushed to Landikotal Hospital. The deceased were identified as Sadiq, Janat Gul and Hidayat while the injured included an employee of Chitral Scouts Sabir and Afghan nationals Ashman, Tawab, Mudasar, Said Habib and Habibur Rehman. Meanwhile, the bodies of deceased Afghan nationals were dispatched to their native town. Soon after the incident, Commandant Khyber Rifles Col. Nauman Mehmood visited Landikotal Hospital and inquired about the health of injured. He directed paramedic staff to provide best healthcare facilities to the injured persons.

Gen Bajwa appears Pindi Stadium to watch match

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Former army chief Gen (Retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa on Sunday saw the ongoing first test match between England and Pakistan at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. The former four-star general who commanded one of the most powerful armies in the world for six years remained in the stadium for some time among the spectators to view the game. At the end of the fourth day of the test match, Pakistan further need 263 runs to win the match tomorrow, the fifth and last day of the match while England require eight more wickets to turn the game in its favor. Pakistan have lost the wickets of Babar Azam and Abdullah Shafique in their chase of 343 runs. At stumps on Day 4, Pakistan reached 80/2, still needing 263 runs to win on the final day. Earlier, Harry Brook and Joe Root blasted quick-fire fifties as England set Pakistan an imposing 343-run target to win the opening Test.

JAZZ MUSIC NIGHT AT THE SWISS EMBASSY



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland Georg Steiner organized a JAZZ music night at his residence. Renowned artist from Switzerland had flown all the way from Switzerland to perform in Pakistan. The trio consisted of clarinet, guitar and bass and presented different styles of jazz including swing, blues bossa nova and many more. The musicians will perform at the PNCA and then in Lahore as well. (More coverage in the coming issue of Centreline magazine). - DNA