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Recent corruption scandal is "very worrisome": Borrell

Detailed News On Page-01

Peru's leader moves to bring polls forward

Detailed News On Page-07



Babar Azam unhappy with criticism

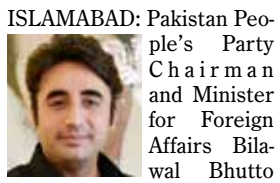
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Briefs

Bilawal denounces threats to ANP leader

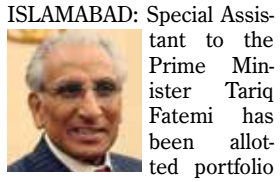
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party Chairman and Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the threats to Awami National Party (ANP) leader Aimal Wali Khan and assured him of full support and cooperation. In his statement, Bilawal said that threatening telephonic calls to ANP leader Aimal is equivalent to terrorism and terrorists will not be allowed to harm any democratic political leader, worker, or common man.

Fatemi given coordination portfolio

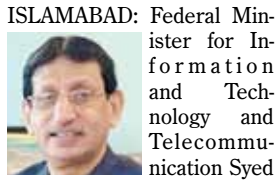
SAIFULLAH



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi has been allotted portfolio after months of waiting. According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division after getting Prime Minister's approval on Monday, Tariq Fatemi has been given the portfolio of coordination, eight months after his appointment. Tariq Fatemi's status will be equal to a minister of state. The prime minister had appointed Fatemi as special assistant of foreign affairs, but within hours of his appointment the portfolio was withdrawn.

Govt to end digital divide: Amin

STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque Monday said that the government is committed to end the digital divide between the urban and rural areas of the country. Effective measures are being taken for digitalization in the country and the Ministry of IT is taking every possible step for a better digital future, the minister expressed these views while addressing the inaugural ceremony of Pakistan-ITU Digital Inclusion Week, 2022 here.

PM conveys to Imran 'Ready to set aside all the differences'

"One hundred steps can be taken forward for Pakistan" he says

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday once again offered olive branch to PTI chief Imran Khan saying that he is ready to set aside all differences for the sake of the country. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad along with federal ministers, PM Shehbaz said Finance Minister Ishaq Dar recently held a meeting with President Arif Alvi, who belongs to PTI, with his permission. "One hundred steps can be taken forward for Pakistan. All differences can be set aside," he said. The prime minister also said the both parties - government and opposition-need to come forward in order to initiate dialogue. "He [Imran Khan] is very egocentric person who only cares about his personal interests and he can stoop to any level for his vested interests," the premier however remarked in the same breath. Speaking about British publication Daily Mail's apology, PM Shehbaz said that the unconditional apology by the newspaper was a vindication of the 220 million people of Pakistan "which also thwarted an anti-state conspiracy hatched by Imran Khan and his cronies". "Finally, after three years, they [Daily Mail] tendered an apology, not just to me but all of you. It was an apology to 220 million Pakistanis and to millions of those

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PM lauds OIC's stance on Kashmir

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: OIC Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Monday. The OIC Secretary General is visiting Pakistan on his first country visit since he assumed office in November 2021. Whilst highlighting the grim human rights and humanitarian situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appreciated OIC's principled position and consistent support for the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Welcoming the Secretary General's historic visit to AJK and Line of Control (LOC),

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Indian, Chinese troops suffer injuries in clash

In June 2020, Indian and Chinese troops were involved in a hand-to-hand combat that led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers

NEWS DESK

MUMBAI: Indian and Chinese troops suffered minor injuries in a clash in the Tawang sector of India's Arunachal Pradesh state on Dec. 9, the Indian army said on Monday, the first such incident since the deadly clash between the two neighbours in June 2020. Arunachal Pradesh is located on India's eastern tip and shares a border with China. "Both sides immediately disengaged from the area," the army said, adding that the incident was followed by its commander in the area holding a meeting with his Chinese counterpart to discuss the issue. An Indian foreign ministry spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment, while a defence spokesperson declined to comment on injuries sustained by Indian or Chinese soldiers during the skirmish. Neither the Chinese foreign ministry nor its embassy in New Delhi

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Deadly gun attack on Kabul hotel

NEWS DESK

KABUL: At least three attackers have been killed by Afghanistan's security forces after they opened fire at a Kabul hotel popular with Chinese nationals, according to a spokesman for the ruling Taliban. The unidentified armed men opened fire inside the multi-storey Kabul Longan Hotel in central Kabul on Monday, with witnesses reporting multiple blasts and several bursts of gunfire. The attack has now ended and no foreigners were killed, although two of them were injured while trying to escape the attack by jumping from

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif flanked by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and others addressing a Press Conference. - DNA

'Shelling: Afghan govt has apologized

Minister says Pakistan is a well-wisher of Afghanistan



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Monday that the interim government in Kabul has apologised to Pakistan for firing by Afghan Border Forces on the civilian population in Balochistan's Chaman district a day earlier, clarifying that the "matter is now resolved". At least seven people lost their lives and 16 others suffered injuries on Sunday in Chaman when it came under "unprovoked and indiscriminate" heavy gunfire and artillery shelling by Afghan border forces, according to the military's media affairs wing. The incident has been widely condemned across the political divide in Pakistan. Addressing the matter in a National Assembly session, Asif said that the "provocation at Chaman was from the Afghan side". "There was a portion of the fence damaged [...] our people were repairing it [...] they slammed the fence with a jeep [...] they took the stand that the reparation work should have been

Continued on Page 06

Imran Khan says Snap polls only solution to all economic woes

Says the judiciary will also "be answerable" if the economy further worsens; Punjab Assembly to be dissolved in first phase

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said Monday that the only solution to the ongoing "alarming" economic condition was holding early elections in the country. "This might be the biggest economic crisis that this country has ever witnessed [...] the media houses that had to inform the people about the ongoing economic crisis aren't doing their job," Khan said in an address to the nation via video. The ex-prime minister said he was not only addressing the nation, but he was also speaking to institutions as economic deterioration would affect entire country.

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Toshakhana: Court reserves decision on ECP's plea

ISLAMABAD: A local court of Islamabad on Monday reserved its decision on the maintainability of plea filed by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) seeking criminal proceedings against PTI's Chief Imran Khan with regard to the Toshakhana scam. District and Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal heard the case filed by District Election Commissioner Islamabad through Saad Hassan.

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'A disgrace that weakens Europe': Corruption scandal shakes EU

"An investigation is underway and we are following it up: Josef Borrell

DNA

BRUSSELS: The arrest and charging of four people in connection with an anti-corruption investigation involving members of the European Parliament and a Gulf state, said to be Qatar, could shake Brussels to its core. Some MEPs, including one of the parliament's vice presidents Eva Kaili who was held in custody on Sunday, have been accused of accepting large sums of money from a Gulf country reported to be World Cup hosts Qatar. Doha has denied the accusations. The EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell described the latest developments as "very worrisome" as he arrived for a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels on Monday. "An investigation is underway and we are following it up," he said. "These are very serious accusations." German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock

said the "full force of law" had to be brought to bear in the case. "This is about the credibility of Europe, so this has to trigger consequences in various areas," she said. "This is a scandal that we need to get to the bottom of so that we can make sure it doesn't happen again," Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said, calling for a "full and transparent investigation". The Greek government moved on Monday to freeze Kaili's assets, media reported. The Greek politician has also been suspended by the European Parliament's Socialists & Democrats and expelled from Greece's centre-left PASOK party. The co-president of the Greens group in the European Parliament, Philippe Lamberts, called for a parliamentary inquiry and for the issue of corruption to be brought up this week at the year's last EU assembly plenary session. The EU legislator was due to open on Monday in what promised to be a fiery session. It is sched-

uled to vote this week on a proposal to extend visa-free travel to the EU for Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Ecuador. Some lawmakers have suggested the debate and vote should be postponed. Niels Fuglsang, a MEP with the Danish Social Democratic Party, pointed to the damaging effect this scandal could have on the bloc. "If we can be bought, if members of the European Parliament and other politicians can be bought to say certain things, to vote in certain ways... it's a disgrace and it makes Europe weaker," he told Euronews. "So, it's in everybody's interest that we get to the bottom of this and adopt rules to make sure such things must never happen [again]... That [what happened] is very wrong, and we have a big reparation job to do." This affair is "shameful and intolerable" and "very seriously" damages the Parliament's reputation,

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SAY NO TO INVISIBLE CORRUPTION.

Sajid Turi inaugurates Labor Complex in Taxila

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi on Monday inaugurated 504 residential flats for labourers and industrial workers in Workers Complex. The Minister was accompanied by Minister of State Sardar Salim Haider and the inaugural ceremony was attended by representatives of labor unions, local political activists and dignitaries and a large number of workers, said a press release here. Workers of People's Party of Rawalpindi district enthusiastically participated in the event and shouted slogans. Addressing the ceremony Turi said that these moments were very contented, ecstatic and eminent for him to handover more than 500 flats to hard working class of our society. He said that the government was fulfilling a promise to provide houses for every laborer. He said that PPP and the workers' class of society had cordial relations as protecting labourers rights was part of its manifesto. —DNA

Clean & Neat Peshawar campaign starts

PESHAWAR: The district administration on special directives of Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has launched a week-long cleanliness campaign in the provincial metropolitan. In this connection an awareness walk led by Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Shafiqullah Khan was held in Qisa Khawani Bazaar and Board Bazaar. Besides, officials of the district administration, General Manager (Operation) WSSP Riaz Khan, President of Traders Peshawar City, Zafar Khattak and large number traders participated in the walk. Deputy Commissioner, Shafiqullah Khan appealed the people and shopkeepers to make the drive successful. During the clean and neat Peshawar campaign awareness walks would be held in the bazaars to sensitise the people to the harmful effects of pollution caused by plastic bags and the open dumping of garbage on streets. —APP

PCJCCI for Pak-China Cultural Exchange Programme

LAHORE: Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki Monday proposed setting up of Pakistan China Cultural Exchange Programme in both the countries to pave the way for Pak-China Cultural Corridor. The creation of Pak-China Cultural Corridor was a pre-requisite for sustainable success of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and One-Belt One-Road (OBOR) project. Ghurki expressed these views during a think tank session held here at PCJCCI Secretariat. He added that Pak-China collaboration on cultural aspects would not only strengthen the friendly relationship but also strengthen the economic relations on long-term basis. He promised to advocate the idea of Pak-China Cultural Corridor under a systematic culture exchange programme. —APP

Islamic architectural heritage of Hungary exhibited in Lahore

One year after the unforgettable exhibition in the Lahore Fort of the paintings of August Schoefft restored by experts from Hungary, on Friday the Hungarian Embassy was back with its brand new project in the cultural capital of Pakistan. This time the Embassy displayed the beautiful photo collection of the Islamic architectural heritage of Hungary. The venue of the event, the Grand Hall of the College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab had a symbolic meaning being just a few steps away from the Oriental College founded by the Hungarian professor Dr. Wilhelm Leitner



ALI HAMZA/DNA

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

exhibition is conceived with an idea of highlighting the architectural heritage from the 16-17th century Ottoman period of Hungary (Madjaristan). Speaking at the inauguration Béla Fazekas Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan, mentioned that there are hardly any European countries; apart

from Spain and the countries of the Balkans, in which Muslim memories complement the range of architectural styles. This rich Ottoman Islamic architectural heritage of Hungary is represented by well preserved and renovated mosques, minarets, tombs and hammams those were built by the finest

artists of the time. These are the northernmost examples of Ottoman architecture in a non-Muslim European cultural environment. In his opening remarks the Ambassador highlighted that, even if the large majority of your country belongs to one religion it does not mean that you can afford

the luxury of not taking care of the rich cultural heritage of the minority people. It is not only a generosity, but a great potential for the religious tourism." Béla Fazekas also mentioned that later on the Embassy was planning to take the exhibition to Islamabad and Peshawar as

well. Principal of the college Prof. Dr. Sumera Jawad, explained the students about the value and contribution of Muslim architectural art in Europe and precisely in Hungary. Teachers, students, journalists and people from different walks of life visited the gallery and appreciated the initiative.



District admin occupies Press Club building

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK(DEC): The district management of Attock forcibly occupied the Attock Press Club furnished building along with office equipment worth of rupees millions and handed over to the Revenue Department ignoring the strong protests of the local journalists. This was stated by the senior journalist and patron in chief of the Attock Press Club (Reg) Syed Raza Naqvi while narrating the indifferent attitude of the local administration to the media persons. He said that the building of the Attock Press Club (Reg) was allotted to the working journalists for performance of their journalistic activities in pursuance of a resolution passed

by the District Council Attock during the chairmanship of ex-MPA Attock Syed Ejaz Bokhari in 1985. The rent of the building was also being contributed by the working journalistic community to the District Council Attock without any break. Meanwhile, different constitutional bodies of the office bearers were also elected to perform their day to day official business along with making arrangements of media projection of all provincial, federal visiting dignitaries, public departments, socio-political figures in all print and electronic media. Syed Raza Naqvi further said that suddenly the Revenue Department of Attock forcefully snatched the same building of the Attock Press Club (Reg) including office equip-

ments, computers, furniture, fixture worth of rupees million in the absence of working journalists. The unbridled management even did not bother to serve any legal notice or cancel allotment with the consent of the members of the Attock Press Club (Reg). He said that the aggrieved journalists also lodged a protest sit in before the office of the DC Attock besides filing their appeals to the higher authorities for redressal of their genuine problems. But, the then Deputy Commissioner and Deputy Director Public Relations Department Attock concerned seem reluctant to get vacated the occupied building under one pretext of the other. The journalist community of the District Attock led by senior journalist and patron

in chief of the Attock Press Club (Reg) Syed Raza Naqvi demanded of the Chief Minister Punjab Chaudry Pervez Elahi, Director General Human Rights Supreme Court of Pakistan, Chief Secretary Punjab, Inspector General Punjab Police, Director General Public Relations Punjab and Commissioner Rawalpindi Division to get vacated the occupied building from the clutches of the district administration Attock. Besides, initiating departmental and criminal inquiry against the delinquents involved in the crime. Meanwhile, the Chief Officer, Zila Council Attock Mr. Bad Shah Khan in his version told to senior journalist Syed Raza Naqvi that the complete case will be put up to the Deputy Commissioner Attock as per available record.

Graduation ceremony held at PAF Finishing School



ISLAMABAD: Graduation Ceremony of the 52nd batch of PAF Finishing School was held at the Officers' Mess, PAF Complex Islamabad. Begum Mariam Baber President Pakistan Air Force Women Association (PAFWA) & Patron-in-Chief of PAF Finishing School was the chief guest on the occasion. The Chief Guest awarded certificates to the graduating students. She congratulated the students on successful completion

of their personality development programme. She also praised the standards of training at the institution and lauded the efforts of the faculty members in grooming the womenfolk of our society. Earlier, Director Finishing School Ms. Zeba Shaikat presented a report highlighting the main aspects of the training which are aimed at transforming young girls into useful members of society. Established in July 1996,

PAF Finishing School is the first of its kind in Asia, offering various courses in communication skills, languages, management, art of self-presentation, domestic sciences, general culture, cuisine, protocol art, child care, introduction to psychology and spiritual enrichment. The school is an initiative of PAFWA for the grooming of young girls and the promotion of education in the country. — APP

ACP holds Eco Hike to celebrate Int'l Mountain Day

ISLAMABAD: Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) on Sunday organized Eco Hike on Trail-5 of Margalla Hills Islamabad to celebrate International Mountain Day. A large number of youth from different alpine adventure clubs and educational institutions took part in the hike. Abu Zafar Sadiq, the president of ACP briefed the participants about the importance of mountains. Referring towards the theme of this year's International Mountain Day (IMD) 'Women move mountains', he noted that women play

a key role in mountains' environmental protection and social and economic development. They are often the primary managers of mountain resources, guard-

ians of biodiversity, keepers of traditional knowledge, custodians of local culture, and experts in traditional medicine. "There is a need for empowering Pakistani

women of remote regions as their livings are dependent upon mountains," he said. "Our youth should engage themselves in outdoor healthy activities, especially in hilly areas of Pakistan," he added. Karrar Haidri, Secretary ACP on the occasion said that rural mountain women were vital to biodiversity, conservation, water and food security. "Steps should be taken for their protection and empowerment because they are a vital part of the earth's ecosystem and biodiversity," he said. —APP



USAID to launch 'Green partnership' to support flood-affected growers

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and USAID/Pakistan Mission Director Mr. Reed Aeschliman after thorough discussions and deliberations agreed to launch a 'Green Cooperation' programme for flood-affected growers and work together for the reconstruction of damaged houses, and school buildings and strengthening healthcare in the flood-hit areas. The meeting was held here at CM House and was attended by Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, Chairman P&D Hassan Naqvi, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, CEO of Peoples Housing Project Khalid Shaikh. The USAID Country chief was accompanied by Acting Deputy Mission Director Mr. Xerses Sidhwa and Acting Consul General Mr. Liam O'Flanagan. The chief mini-

ster told the visiting USAID Pakistan Director that the unprecedented and devastating floods and rains killed 800 persons, injured 8,422, damaged 2,044,844 houses, perished 436,435 livestock, washed away crops standing over 3,777,272 acres, damaged 19808 school buildings, and 1045 health facilities and caused Rs95 billion losses and damages to the irrigation system. Murad Ali Shah said that the total financing needs for Sindh were Rs1,688 Billion (\$7.860 billion) which was 48.30 percent of the total needs estimated. He added that if cross-provincial estimates were truncated (only province-specific needs are considered), then Sindh's needs were 67.60 percent of the total province-specific needs estimates. The CM said that financing pledged by donors to date was about Rs. 379.56 billion which showed a financing gap of at least Rs. 1,308.44

billion. He added that the significant gap could not be met by the local resources in 'stressed' economic conditions. The USAID/Pakistan Mission Director Mr. Reed Aeschliman said that his organization was ready to help growers by providing them support for the purchase of seeds, pesticides, and urea so that they could start their cultivation. He also said that the water courses could also be repaired. The P&D dept and the USAID team would finalize the programme and it has been named 'Green Cooperation'. Mr. Shah said that the World Bank was providing \$500 million dollars and his government has spared Rs50 million and a similar amount is being given by the federal government. He said that the total cost to reconstruct the damaged houses would come to Rs570.167 billion. The USAID Pakistan chief told the chief minister that his team would sit together with the P&D and Hous-

ing project CEO to work out a plan to contribute to the reconstruction of the damaged houses. The CM said that according to an estimate Rs97.84 billion were required to repair and reconstruct 19808 schools. He added that the provincial government would not be able to bear such a huge expense, therefore donors would have to help the provincial government. Mr. Reed Aeschliman told the chief minister that USAID would support the Sindh government in the reconstruction of the schools. He added that the USAID and the Sindh government have a partnership in the health and education sectors. Murad Ali Shah told the visiting USAID team that Rs21.93 billion were required to repair 1045 damaged health facilities. The USAID Pakistan Director told the chief minister that they would help the provincial government to overhaul its healthcare system.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

December

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

Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 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



Hospitals

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....555489
CAA.....9281092



CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
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
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Senior PML N leader and a leading business figure Arslan Hafeez hosted dinner for the visiting Tajik delegation. Seen in the picture are Ambassador of Tajikistan Ismatullo Nasredin, Editor Daily Islamabad POST Ansar M Bhatt, CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani, Chairman Islamabad Stock Exchange Zahid Latif, Deputy Minister of Tajikistan Farhod Salim, Arslan Hafeez, CEO IDC, Imran Uppal and Director General Tajik MOFA and former Tajik Ambassador to Pakistan Sherali Jononov. — DNA

ADB approves flood assistance for Pakistan

The program partly contributes to the floods response given that a portion of the program beneficiaries are also flood victims

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A \$554 million financing package, including new and reallocated funds, has been approved to support recovery and reconstruction efforts in Pakistan following this year's devastating floods, and to strengthen the country's disaster and climate resilience. The financing, which includes a \$475 million loan and a \$3 million technical assistance grant from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and a \$5 million grant from the Government of Japan, will support the restoration of irrigation, drainage, flood risk management, on-farm water management, and transport infrastructure in the flood-affected provinces of Balochistan, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh, according to a statement issued by the Bank on Monday. ADB's Emergency Flood Assistance Project will also incorporate climate and disaster resilience measures into the design of the infrastructure. ADB has repurposed an additional \$71 million from existing loans to support the government's flood-response efforts. "This year's floods, which affected 33 million people and brought enormous damage to infrastructure and agriculture, are a devastating reminder of Pakistan's acute vulnerability to climate change," said ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov. "This project will help to rebuild critical infrastructure in affected areas and restore rural livelihoods." After unprecedented

heatwaves in April to June 2022, Pakistan suffered a prolonged and intense monsoon that led to the country's worst flooding in a century with glacial lakes bursting, rivers breaking their banks, flash flooding, and landslides. A post-disaster needs assessment conducted by the government and development partners, including ADB, estimated total damage and losses at more than \$30 billion and recovery and reconstruction needs at \$16.3 billion. The loan will reconstruct about 400 kilometers (km) of roads; about 85 km of the N-5, the country's busiest national highway; and about 30 bridges. It will also help to restore and upgrade irrigation and drainage structures including canals and on-farm water facilities to restore

livelihoods, and strengthen flood risk management structures to mitigate future risks to agricultural land, communities, and assets. "More people are expected to fall into poverty as a result of the floods and the food-insecure population is likely to double to more than 14 million people in the most affected districts," said ADB Principal Transport Specialist Zheng Wu. "In close coordination with the government and other development partners, this project will provide crucial support to restore agriculture and other priority infrastructure to support socioeconomic recovery from floods." Funded through the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific, the \$5 million grant will support staple crop cultivation

in Balochistan and provide at least 60,000 farm households with higher quality, certified rice seeds for increased productivity over 54,000 hectares of land. The grant will also support women's livelihoods in agriculture by providing farming equipment. The \$3 million technical assistance grant will support the implementation of the project and the preparation of an ensuing flood risk management investment. In October, ADB approved a \$1.5 billion loan to support the government's provision of social protection, food security, and employment to mitigate the adverse impact of cumulative external shocks. The program partly contributes to the floods response given that a portion of the program beneficiaries are also flood victims.

Secretary General of the OIC visits COMSTECH

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, H. E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, visited COMSTECH along with his ten-member delegation on Monday. Senior officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs accompanied the OIC delegation. The Coordinator General COMSTECH, H. E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, along with his team extended a very warm reception to the Secretary General and his team. Prof. Choudhary briefed the Secretary General about COMSTECH establishment, vision and

mission, past achievements, current programs and future plans. He also conducted an orientation visit of the delegation to the COMSTECH facility and briefed on the state of the art training facilities available at COMSTECH for the capacity building of OIC states. During the presentation of the COMSTECH report by the Coordinator General, the Secretary General of OIC discussed different COMSTECH programs and their impact on the development of the science and technology collaboration among the OIC member states. He also shared insightful thoughts and recommendations for the



inclusion in COMSTECH future plans. Mr. Taha appreciated the current COMSTECH programs: COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence, Palestine program, Yemen program, Africa program in health, fellowships program, COMSTECH-IFS

research grants program, COMSTECH-ICGEB co-operation program, COMSTECH-TWAS Science in exile program, Research fellowships for OIC LDCs program, and capacity building webinars, workshops, conferences and exhibitions.

Need to aware women at all levels to exercise their rights

ISLAMABAD, Dec 12 (APP): Action for Impact organized a webinar session here on Monday which was attended by a diverse group. Addressing the webinar, speakers and human rights activists stressed exercising the rights that the government of Pakistan has provided for women and young girls to decrease the ratio of violence and discrimination against women at all levels in the country. They shared 4,734 cases of women who have been sexually abused and over 15,000 cases of honor crimes were registered in Pakistan between 2004 to 2016 as per White Ribbon Pakistan. In addition, the cases of sexual harassment are also increasing in Lahore that there were 54 rapes in 2018, yet by the end of February 2020 this number increased to 73 incidents of rape, including five gang-rape cases. In 2019, no fewer than 3,881 cases of rape were registered just in Punjab with just a 0.3 percent conviction rate in the whole of Pakistan. A major type of violence against women that Pakistan is particularly struggling with is sexual harassment in the workplace. A survey on the harassment of women at the workplace mentions that nearly 93 percent of women working in the public and private sectors are alleged to have been subjected to sexual harassment. Private sector organizations appeared to be involved in more cases of sexual harassment due to the lack of job security and the absence of regulatory mechanisms. — APP

Sanjrani condemns unprovoked firing

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has strongly condemned the "unprovoked firing" from Afghan forces near Chaman border. Sanjrani expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious lives in the unfortunate incident. Senate Chairman urged the Afghan government to ensure the prevention of such incidents as it was the responsibility of both countries to protect the citizens living on the border. He prayed Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and give strength to their families to bear this irreparable loss with equanimity.—APP

'Sheesha' centre raided, 19 held

RAWALPINDI: Police have raided a 'Sheesha Centre' here in the jurisdiction of the Rawat police station and arrested 19 accused, informed police spokesman on Monday. He said that on a tip-off, Rawat Police carried out an operation and arrested 19 accused identified as Sajid, Afag, Tariq, Amjad, Khan Alam, Irfan, Owais, Toqeer and others. The police team recovered 'Huqqs' and other smoking items from their possession. Police have registered a case against them and started investigation. The spokesman said that anti-smoking drive had been launched in the city to ensure implementation of anti-smoking law, 2002.—APP

Medicinal products import drop by 66.70 % in 4 months

ISLAMABAD: The import of medicinal products witnessed a decline of 66.70 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan imported medicinal products worth \$447.701 million from July-October (2022-23) as compared to the imports of \$1434.613 million from July-October (2021-22), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, however, medicinal imports witnessed a surge of 46.06 percent, as the country imported 13,619 metric tonnes of medicinal products during the months under review as compared to the imports of 9,324 metric tonnes last year. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, medicinal imports into the country during October 2022 decreased by 63.31 percent, from \$287.090 million in October 2021 to \$105.337 million. On a monthly basis, medicinal imports during October 2022 also dipped by 37.71 percent when compared to the imports of \$169.095 million in September 2022.—APP

Book on life of Holy Prophet PBUH to be launched today

ISLAMABAD: The launching ceremony of a book titled "Muhammad in Modern Times" by renowned writer Uxi Mufti will be held at the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) on Tuesday. The ceremony will be organized in collaboration with the Literary Organization Zaavia. Renowned literary personality, Itikhar Arif will preside over the inaugural ceremony while Chairman PAL Dr. Muhammad Yousof Khushk will grace the occasion as a guest of honour. Prominent scholars including Dr. Khalid Masood, Justice Dr. Muhammad Al-Ghazali, Mohammad Hameed Shahid, Professor Dr. Najeeba Arif and Sara Shahab would express their views about the book. Talking to APP, the writer said that the teaching of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) is a beacon of light for humanity. Mufti said that the book will provide accurate information about the different aspects of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) to make their concepts clear.—APP

POWERCHINA promotes Chinese technology

DNA

LAHORE: POWERCHINA says it has vigorously promoted Chinese technology and Chinese standards, profoundly introduced the real situation of China and the powerful contribution of Chinese enterprises to local economic and social development. In a statement on Monday, POWERCHINA said it has also enhanced the understanding and recognition of China and Chinese enterprises by people from all walks of life at an international moot in Lahore. The exhibition also attracted many outstanding students of related majors to observe and learn about the high-quality construction capabilities of POWERCHINA. The exhibition will provide a boost to POWERCHINA's business in Pakistan according to a statement. The 16th International Conference on Geotechnical Engineering was held at the University of Engineering and Technology Lahore,



Pakistan (UET Lahore) from December 7 to 8 under the auspices of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE). The event attracted many famous enterprises to participate, and POWERCHINA, as the representative of Chinese enterprises, was the only Chinese company to exhibit on site. The exhibition was organized by Pakistan Geotechnical

Engineering Society (PGES) and co-organized by UET Lahore and National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK). POWERCHINA was invited by the organizer to participate in the exhibition as one of the top sponsors. This year's exhibition was held in a combination of online and offline modes, with 5 professional symposiums held in 2 days, which focused on the theme of "Geotechnical En-

gineering" and discussed extensively the development direction of various technical fields such as engineering field and laboratory research, design and numerical simulation, geotechnical engineering construction and equipment, materials and performance monitoring. The symposium attracted experts and scholars from all over the world and professionals in the field of design, construction and manufacturing. The conference was opened with an online speech by the Chairman of Water and Power Development Agency of Pakistan (WAPDA). After the opening ceremony, Mr. Amjad Agha, President of Pakistan Geotechnical Engineering Association, Dr. Tahir Masood, President of NESPAK, Dr. Ikuo Towhata, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo, Dr. Syed Mansoor Sarwar, Vice Principal of UET Lahore and other relevant experts and scholars visited POWERCHINA's booth one after another and expressed their appreciation for

their underground engineering design and construction capability and strength. During the exhibition, local owners, partners and other well-known companies in the industry, such as WAPDA, FWO, DESCOR, SIKKA, DOLSAR, also visited POWERCHINA's stage for communication, increasing their understanding of Chinese technology, Chinese wisdom and Chinese standards, and discussing potential opportunities for further cooperation. In the symposium, the first topic "Geotechnical Engineering Challenges of the Basha Dam Diversion System" was moderated by Mr. Amjad Agha, which received an enthusiastic response from the participants. As a global leader in the field of large-scale energy and infrastructure construction, POWERCHINA has long been familiar to the international industry. This time, with the help of the international academic communication platform for geotechnical professionals hosted by the top university in Pakistan.

Briefs

Uniformed regulatory regime for mineral-sector

ISLAMABAD :The Petroleum Division is in process of introducing a uniform regulatory regime for mineral-sector development across the country, under a project initiated to complete all the legal formalities required. Accordingly, the government has allocated Rs70 million in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23) for 'Legal Consultancy Services' to draft a Model Mineral Agreement and update the Regulatory Framework prepared by provincial minerals and coal departments. The project was launched during the last fiscal year with an initial allocation of Rs30 million against the total estimated cost of Rs100 million, aimed at ensuring best international practices in the development of the minerals sector, a senior official privy to the petroleum sector developments told APP. He said the consultant would work in close coordination with the project team and all the departments concerned for revision and updating the mining laws and rules/regulations concerning minerals concessions and occupational health & safety aspects.—APP

Solo show on unique calligraphic imagery

ISLAMABAD :A solo show art show featuring unique calligraphic imagery Fazil Hussain Mousavi is continued to attract art lovers here at National Art Gallery of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). As many as 20 art pieces are on display titled "Healing the Wounds" which carries calligraphy, text, figurative art, symbolism, and eye-catching images that have deep meanings and messages. These art pieces are created with the medium of print, watercolor, ink wash, tea wash and gold leaf on paper. Fazil Mousavi is an artist from Balochistan with a niche in visual storytelling. His work has been displayed in many exhibitions, the last being at Oxford University, UK. He is the founder of the Sketch Club in Quetta. The sketch club is an art initiative that expresses resilience through the arts. The Sketch Club has received a lot of attention through its international exhibitions in Sydney, Melbourne, and Los Angeles. Founded in 2009 in Quetta Pakistan the purpose was to give back to society by transferring skills and knowledge to the youth of the community. Fazil shares how the Hazara community responds to the different forms of stigmatization through creativity, said the organizers. The show continues till December 15.—APP

Colorful food, music festival concludes

ISLAMABAD :A colorful food and music festival Islamabad Taste - The Capital's Signature Food Festival concluded here late Sunday at F-9 Park after attracting crowds of youngsters and families. Supporting the culinary and music industry, the festival featured over 80 eateries, a music arena, various artist performances, and amusement activities during 3-day activity that was planned to give people a break from their usual daily routine and spend time in quality recreational activities. The signature food festival happening since 2019 nationwide was supporting the culinary and music industry of Pakistan, said the organizers. During the festival, musical performances by Bayaan, Sahir Ali Bagga, Zawar, Abdullah Sajid and many other singers enthralled the audience of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Bayaan is an alternative rock band hailing from Lahore, Pakistan. Bayaan is renowned for its lyrical prowess and experimentation alongside thought-provoking music videos. This festival is served as an opportunity to introduce new tastes and enjoy authentic traditional tastes in a cultural and festive environment as crowds of food lovers thronged the venue during this festival while musical performances added more color to the festivities of live food.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Mazhilis of Parliament of Kazakhstan Yerlan Koshanov inscribing his remarks in visitor book. Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf also present on the occasion.—DNA

Chinese Consul General awards 38 Pakistanis as "Friend in Pakistan"

China learned by doing and made a successful story as a trailblazer," he added

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The Chinese Consul General in Karachi Li Bijian has conferred 38 Pakistani nationals a special award "Friend in Pakistan 2022" in a ceremony held at the Chinese Consulate General in Karachi, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. Certificates of these awards have been given to Pakistani academicians, scholars and media practitioners in recognition of their services to promote deeper understanding of China. On the occasion Chinese Consul General in Karachi Li Bijian said that awardees are vanguards of China-Pakistan friendship as through their diverse medium of communication and expression, they are exerting their energies to sensitize the people of Pakistan about China's peaceful image, working style & relationship, philosophy and vision. Given the mind-polluting environment highly poisoned by misinformation and disinformation, they have joined hands with China to debunk the fake propaganda distinguishing false from truth, he added. "China never had a model of socialist governance system in the world to follow. China did not know about ups and downs of applicability and practicality of socialist political dispensation. China was also unaware of drawbacks and backlash that had to be incurred on social and economic life of billions of people in China. Almost everything from head to toe was unpracticed. But China learned by doing and made



a successful story as a trailblazer," he added. He said that all the credit goes to the multi-party system of China in which the Communist Party of China (CPC) is at its core guiding China to proceed with flying color. People-centric vision anchors each and every policy and strategy because people are the only stakeholders deserve to be served to make their lives better, progressive, smooth and peaceful, he added. He mentioned COVID-19 time as the worst period for China as global myriad vicious campaigns were launched to demonize Chinese fairness, honesty and credibility. Even now doomsayers are hell-bent to undermine China for their vested interests. He said categor-

ically that China will never succumb to any insidiousness as false is always destined to fall and truth triumphs over evil. On the occasion, awardees in their speech vowed to continue their fight against mischief mongers. They also urged upon increasing intensity of people-to-people contact besides improving media cooperation for healthy Pak-China working relationship and friendliness. German diplomats visit Gwadar assessing investment ventures Islamabad, Dec 12 (: As the number of foreign diplomats visiting Gwadar grows, German ambassador in Pakistan, Alfred Grannas and Consul General of German Consulate in Karachi, Dr Rüdiger Lotz paid a special visit to the city to assess

the ease of doing business and diverse investment opportunities. According to Gwadar Pro Director General of Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), Mujeeb ur Rehman Qamrani welcomed them in his office and gave them a comprehensive briefing of Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan 2015-2050. He informed them about various stages of development in terms of infrastructure, logistic patterns, business district, industry and tourism. He also discussed the progress of the New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA), which is expected to be completed next year, saying that the new airport will be a high-octane boost for investors and businessmen as more airways materialize. "Gwa-

dar has incredible ferry projects for Karachi, Iran, Oman and the other Gulf states. GDA intends to involve private partners who are looking for investment offers to get the project moving. German businesses are encouraged to research potential commercial opportunities", he added. He also drew German diplomats' attention to the upcoming fortunes of free economic zones and the central business district, which are enticed with tax breaks and lucrative investment opportunities. Later, Alfred Grannas, German ambassador in Pakistan, and Dr Rüdiger Lotz, Consul General of the German Consulate in Karachi, along with Christian Botzcher, First Secretary of the Embassy of Germany, visited Gwadar Free Zone. COPHC Chairman Zhang Baozhong briefed visiting dignitaries on the company's commercial and socioeconomic activities. He welcomed potential German investors to the Gwadar Free Zone and offered their investment to help promote the region's social and economic development. German diplomats also visited the Belt and Road Scientific Research Laboratory and appreciated the social services of COPHC. German ambassador in Pakistan, Alfred Grannas and Consul General of German Consulate in Karachi, Dr Rüdiger Lotz reviewed the infrastructure schemes and business plans. They termed the visit very productive and assured of discussing investment opportunities with German companies.

Devcom honours sixteen professionals with 3rd PAMPA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As many as 16 were awarded 3rd Pakistan Mountains Pride Awards on Monday, the grand finale of 12th Pakistan Mountain Festival, a flagship event by Devcom-Pakistan. The 12-day long advocacy festival was organized in collaboration with NRSP, PPAF, PNCA, National Heritage and Culture Division, Fatima Jinnah University, Rawalpindi Women University, SZABIST Islamabad Campus, Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) Comsats University CS Adventure Club, and GBC Council to commemorate International Mountain Day that falls on December 11. The guests of honour included Country Head of Italian Cooperation Development in Pakistan Emanuela Benini, chairman Rural Support Programmes Network Shoaib Sultan Khan, Pakistan's renowned mountaineer Nazir Sabir, EvK2CNR Senior Scien-

tific Advisor Ashiq Ahmed Khan, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) Group Head Institutional Development, Innovation and Integration Irshad Khan Abbasi, Pakistan's globally celebrated mountaineer Sarbaz Khan, Director General PNCA Ayub Jamali. Sifat Gul, Garamchashma (Chital), Sakina Bi Ibrahim from Shigar (Baltistan), Gul Begam from Ghizer, Nusrat Yousuf from Rawalakot, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) won the Shoaib Sultan Khan Mountain Community Development Awards. Mariam Majeed Dar belongs to Forward Kahuta (AJK) and Rashida Khanam from Chitral was given the Agostino Da Polenza Mountain Conservation Award. Pakistan celebrated women mountaineers Sameena Baig and Naila Kiani got Nazir Sabir Mountaineering Award. Ustad Mir Afzal, sitar player, was conferred upon the Ustad Jan Ali Mountain Music Award. Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund

launched 'PPAF SMEs Award' under the banner of Pakistan Mountain Awards. This year's award winners included Nazia Hussain (Chitral), Nasreen Moosa (Skardu), Karim Salman (Hunza), and Samiullah (Swat). Gilgit-Baltistan Music Group and maestro sitar player from Swat Mir Afzal created a fusion of mountain music, performing together. PNCA National Performing Arts Group (NPAG) presented Kalash dance and Sndhi jhoomar. A young vocalist from Rawalpindi Women University Laiba Khan sang Paharo ki qasm chalay aao. A seasoned filmmaker Khalid Mahmood showed his documentary about the Pakistani climbers who summited K2 during 1977-2022. Talking about the objectives of the Pakistan Mountain Festival and Pakistan Mountains Pride Awards, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said: "Pakistan Mountains Pride Awards (PAMPA) were launched in 2019 to

recognize the services par excellence of the individuals who have rendered their services to mountain conservation and uplift the communities over the decades, mountaineering, sustainable mountain tourism and for the promotion of mountain music. Before PAMPA, there was no system of recognition and encouragement to the marvelous people of mountains. The PAMPA was launched to fill the void, initially with five categories. PPAF has added four SMEs awards from this year that makes a total of sixteen awards." Speaking on the occasion, Nazir Sabir said: Some Pakistani women are showing courage in mountaineering, more shall join the flock. Sameena Baig, first and Naila Kiani both are internationally acclaimed mountaineers. Naila Kiani has become the first Pakistani woman to scale three peaks of over 8000 meters, as she climbed Gasherbrum 1 peak in August 2022 morning. Gasherbrum is the 11th highest mountain peak in the world.

Imran must learn to do politics sans 'crutches': Sherry



ISLAMABAD :Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Monday said Imran Khan wanted to sit outside the parliament and come to power with the help of institutions as he had been accustomed to the 'crutches' but he would now have to learn and do politics without others' support. In a series of tweets on her official Twitter account, the Federal Minister lambasted the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief for his appeals to the new Army Chief to intervene in politics. Sherry Rehman wrote, "Imran Khan's appeal to the new army chief to interfere in political matters is condemnable. No democratic politician invites institutions to interfere in politics. He has been asking institutions to intervene in his favour. Imran Khan should keep the new army chief out of his political narrative." She mentioned that the political parties come to power by popular vote and exercise popular authority in the parliament. "Imran Khan is stuck at a dead end. Now neither his members of the National Assembly want to resign nor his allies and party are in favour of dissolving the assemblies." The Minister further said during his worst period of four years, Khan's focus was on the cases against the opponents and not on the governance. "If he had paid attention to the government, this prevailing situation of the country and the economy would not have happened."—APP

Two more tested positive for dengue virus in RWP

RAWALPINDI: Two more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 4,766. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Monday said that two patients were admitted to the city's allied hospitals, including one each to the District Headquarters, and Holy Family Hospital. He informed that both patients arrived from the federal capital area. In

collaboration with allied departments, the health officer added that the district administration had registered three FIRs, sealed two premises, issued challans to 17, notices to 513, and a fine of Rs 189,000 imposed on violations of anti-dengue SOPs from December 5 to date. During indoor surveillance, Dr Sajjad informed that 1,261 anti-dengue teams checked 33,299 houses in the last 24 hours and found dengue larvae at ten homes. — APP

NPO to organize webinar

ISLAMABAD :The National Productivity Organization (NPO) will conduct a training course on "Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)" on December 13 (Tuesday). The aim of ERP is to optimize the speed and volume of critical assistance delivered immediately after the onset of humanitarian emergency, according to NPO. ERP is a tool to develop a common understanding of risks and a system to monitor those risks, ensuring that early action is taken when required. The objective of the webinar is to prevent fatalities and injuries, reduce damage to building, stock and equipment, and protect the environment and the community. The workshop will also provide information related to purpose methodology, legislative requirements, roles and responsibilities, emergency preventive measures, emergency response measures, and site specific EPR management system.—APP

Kazakh delegation head plants saplings

ISLAMABAD :Head of the visiting Kazakh parliamentary delegation, Yerlan Koshanov, on Monday planted a sapling of Mongolia grandiflora in the lawn of the Parliament House. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, members of visiting delegation, top officials of National Assembly Secretariat were also present on the occasion. Earlier, Speaker and Deputy Speaker along with top officials of National Assembly Secretariat welcomed the delegation at Parliament House. Later, special prayer was offered for the development and prosperity of the two brotherly countries, unity and solidarity of the Muslim Ummah.—APP

FGEHA seeks applications for new projects

ISLAMABAD :The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) would receive applications for expressing interest for companies to launch new residential projects in eight major cities of the country by December 22. "The Expressions of Interest (EoI) have been sought from land owners, companies, and firms in this regard," official sources in the Ministry of Housing Works told APP. 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. The applications for acquiring the land for the projects and their selection would be done as per Joint Venture Regulations 2020, they added. To a question, they said the authority was 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," they added.—APP

Colorful festival by women entrepreneurs ends

ISLAMABAD :A colorful festival by as many as 100 women entrepreneurs who brought their handmade products, including arts, crafts, decor, and food for fun lovers concluded here late Sunday at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). The event attracted crowds of families and youth to help women entrepreneurs grow their businesses and expand their market outreach. Jointly organized by atomcamp and wecamp, in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) - Ministry of Commerce, the two-day festival supported and celebrated women entrepreneurs through art, craft, and food. CEO and Co-founder of wecamp Laiba Ahmad told APP that this year, special focus has been paid to reaching marginalized communities of women.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani presiding over a Senate House business advisory committee meeting at parliament house.—DNA

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Communication vital to get Sino-US ties to normal

IT is encouraging to see that high-level channels of communication between China and the United States have been reactivated despite the frictional differences that exist between them. US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Kritenbrink and National Security Council Senior Director for China Affairs Laura Rosenberger visited Beijing on Sunday and Monday. They will also visit the Republic of Korea and Japan during a four-day Asian trip. That the senior US officials' visit to China comes shortly after an in-depth and candid meeting between President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden in Bali, Indonesia, last month on the sidelines of the G20 summit, indicates that respective diplomatic teams are wasting no time in implementing the consensus reached between the two leaders, which provides guidance for the future development of bilateral relations. At their meeting, Xi told Biden that China and the US share many common interests, and it is in both sides' fundamental interest to try to prevent conflict and confrontation and achieve peaceful coexistence. The visit by Kritenbrink and Rosenberger can certainly help to serve that purpose, as face-to-face consultations between the two countries' decision-makers will help to dispel misunderstandings and misconceptions, and create opportunities for them to deal with issues of mutual concern and explore areas of cooperation. Their visit will reportedly also prepare for the trip of US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken to China early next year. As the world's two largest economies and permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the US and China share the common responsibility to maintain a constructive bilateral relationship. That's not only because the unprecedented challenges the world now faces such as climate change will by no means be adequately addressed without their close collaboration, but also because the ramifications from any confrontation or conflict between them go far beyond their borders. The US-initiated trade war and technology war against China, for example, have hurt international trade and disrupted global industry and supply chains. China has repeatedly stressed that it does not seek to change the existing international order, and has no intention to challenge or displace the US. For China and the US to get along with each other and bring bilateral ties back to the track of healthy and stable development, the US also must respect China's core interests, and honor its commitments with concrete actions when handling its relationship with China. Hopefully, the visits to China by senior US officials will help turn a new page in China-US interactions, as both countries will be better served by dialogue and win-win cooperation, rather than zero-sum competition or confrontation.



Scholz's Germany: reading the signs of new times

LAST December, on becoming Germany's first SPD chancellor for 16 years, Olaf Scholz asked aides whether there was a plan B for energy should Russia turn off the gas. The answer, Mr Scholz wrote in an essay published this month, was "no". So began a year during which the assumptions underlying decades of German prosperity were tested to destruction. Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion of Ukraine, and his weaponisation of energy supplies, obliged Germany to simultaneously end its dependency on Russian gas and rethink a self-consciously low profile as a military power. Under Mr Scholz, Germany has become the third largest donor of aid, including weapons, to Ukraine. At the same time, it has held a necessary line on keeping Nato out of the war. At home, the government has effectively dealt with what Mr Scholz calls a *zeitwende* (turning point) by spending exceptional sums to deal with extraordinary circumstances. As the country has accessed alternative sources of gas at breakneck speed, and tried to speed up the transition to renewable energy, €200bn has been borrowed to subsidise high energy bills. About €100bn more is to be invested in boosting the capabilities of a more high-profile German army. This enormous amount of borrowing has been classed as an emergency fund – allowing it to be placed off the books. That, in turn, has permitted Mr Scholz to pursue some of the centre-left agenda that helped get him elected: the minimum wage has been raised, along with welfare payments and the state pension; a popular subsidised public transport pass will be reintroduced in 2023. The coalition government is also making it easier for immigrants to apply for naturalisation and citizenship. Nevertheless, after a traumatic year described by one SPD member of parliament as "absolutely insane", the future looks just as challenging for Mr Scholz and his coalition partners. In the polls, as the cost of living crisis bites, the SPD is running well behind the CDU opposition. In the east, resentment at the cost of supporting Ukraine's resistance to Mr Putin is rising. Police raids across the country last week, which thwarted a far-right plot to overthrow the state, confirmed the threat posed by fringe extremists radicalised in an age of permacrisis. On the energy front, impressive rhetoric on the need to accelerate the green transition is not being matched by facts on the ground. And on vexed European issues such as oil price caps and energy subsidies, other EU leaders have accused Mr Scholz of lacking solidarity and taking a "Germany first" approach. The Franco-German relationship, in particular, is in need of repair. Most fundamentally, Mr Scholz is tasked with finding an updated business model for Europe's most powerful economy. Having grown rich through export-led growth in an era of high globalisation and economic interdependency, Germany must now navigate a multipolar world in which both the US and China are erecting barriers. Mr Putin's actions have consigned the doctrine of *Wandel durch Handel* (change through trade) to history. Having successfully averted possible disaster during his first year in office, Mr Scholz's premiership will be defined by his ability to find a way to preserve German economic strengths in transformed times.

Netanyahu's far-right govt tests US-Israeli relations

Yossi Mekelberg

Under the current circumstances – in which the Israeli electorate has opted for a full-on right-wing government, the Palestinians are fragmented and their leaders increasingly authoritarian, and the US administration and the wider international community are either not interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or believe that reviving it amounts to no more than flogging a dead horse – any Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement is little more than a pipe dream. However, there is a genuine worry in Washington that the new Israeli government will ignite another outbreak of full-on hostilities with the Palestinians. This would result in many casualties and make any future peace agreement even more difficult to obtain, while also destabilizing relations between the Jewish state and other Arab countries

A SPEECH last week by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to the pro-peace, liberal Jewish American organization J Street encapsulated the dilemma the Biden administration is facing following the general election in Israel last month. During the course of nearly 75 years since the inception of the Jewish state, the two countries have established one of the strongest alliances in world politics, built on common interests and values. Despite severe challenges over the years, it is an alliance that has never been in doubt. Since 1967, the US has been Israel's main political and military ally, backing it with unparalleled financial support, notwithstanding periodic disagreements between the two countries on how best to ensure Israel's security and well-being. Whereas Israel overemphasizes military might and retaining occupied land over diplomacy, successive administrations in Washington have perceived both Israel's long-term survival and prosperity, and the maintenance of US interests in the Middle East, as requiring a diplomatic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and also a settling of Israel's differences with its neighbors in the region. It would be utterly disingenuous to argue that the policies of the new Israeli government-in-the-making will be a complete departure from those of its predecessors. As a matter of fact, they will be the product of the ill judgments of previous Israeli – and US – administrations. Construction of Israeli settlements began nearly 50 years ago and has expanded under every Israeli government, as have the harsh measures of the occupation. Successive US administrations have been very reluctant to make their opposition to the settlements, and support for a two-state solution, count. Yet, despite Israel always having been a struggling democracy there was enough of a commonality of values and a strong affinity with different segments of American society. As Israel evolved into a major regional military and later economic power, and with the US losing Iran as an ally after the 1979 revolution and the rise of radicalization in the region, the bond between the two countries was built also on common interests.

Yet all this time, the US has ignored the fact that democratic status has not been bestowed in full on Israel's Arab citizens living within the Green Line, and even less so on those living under occupation in the West Bank or blockaded in Gaza. Inevitably, an Israeli government dominated by

the far right will immediately challenge the commonality of values and interests between the two countries. Wisdom should dictate that the Biden administration become a somewhat more introspective and critical ally, and distance itself from an Israeli government that will include antidemocratic, racist, homophobic and misogynist elements hell-bent on confrontation not only with the Palestinians but also with the wider Muslim world in their attempts to challenge the status quo of Haram Al-Sharif. Blinken's decision to share the administration's views on political developments in Israel at a J Street conference was, in itself, a powerful message that the US is siding with the liberal elements in Jewish society and, in the specific case of J Street, with that organization's strong commitment to a two-state solution. But let us not confuse support for the principle of a two-state solution, something that many would argue is no longer viable, at least for now, with a readiness to embark on a US initiative to resume peace negotiations.

Under the current circumstances – in which the Israeli electorate has opted for a full-on right-wing government, the Palestinians are fragmented and their leaders increasingly authoritarian, and the US administration and the wider international community are either not interested in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or believe that reviving it amounts to no more than flogging a dead horse – any Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement is little more than a pipe dream.

However, there is a genuine worry in Washington that the new Israeli government will ignite another outbreak of full-on hostilities with the Palestinians. This would result in many casualties and make any future peace agreement even more difficult to obtain, while also destabilizing relations between the Jewish state and other Arab countries. That would include those with which America has diplomatic relations, and would therefore affect US relations with other countries in the Middle East and force it to confront Israel. Blinken was careful not to prejudice the US administration's stance on the new Israeli government, and not to be seen as interfering with the free and democratic decision of the country's voters, let alone criticizing them. His assertion that the Israeli government will be judged "by the policies it pursues rather than individual personalities" was a case of not rushing to pass

judgment on the new government but, rather, putting it on probation.

Respecting the democratic will of the Israeli people does not equate to accepting its consequences. It is vital for a US administration to reassess its relationship with a government if the foundations of those relations are undermined. From what has emerged so far from the current negotiations to form a coalition authority, that is precisely what is happening in terms of harm to Israel's democracy, its pluralism and its relations with the Palestinians. For now, as Blinken's speech made clear, the Biden administration is at great pains to profess its commitment to Israel in all spheres of relations between the two countries, while at the same time signaling its concerns about what looks like being an inevitable confrontation with the new Netanyahu administration. No one doubts America's friendship with and commitment to Israel. It is Netanyahu and his potential partners in government who are displaying a careless attitude that is likely to affect the country's single most important relationship with a foreign country, and undermine its own interests. Netanyahu's sole aim, to sabotage his corruption trial, has opened the door for the extreme right to hold him to ransom.

If there is any country in the world with the clout to contain, or at least mitigate, the damage caused by an extremist Israeli government, it is the US. The multi-layered nature of the bilateral relationship means that the action of one affects the other. But also, the near-blank-check support Washington provides – including the supply and financing of advanced weaponry and cutting-edge technology, and the US defense of Israel within international organizations such as the UN Security Council and the International Court of Justice – means it has the power to discourage Israel from measures that would empty Israeli democracy of meaning, compromise any hopes for future peace, violate international law and conventions, and in the process also harm US interests. For too long the US has not only been an unconditional ally of Israel but also an enabler of the very types of policies that it opposes. The current circumstances might be an opportunity not to completely withdraw from this alliance, but to shift it toward a more nuanced partnership in which Israel benefits from a true, but also a more critical, ally.

– Courtesy: Arab News

The G20 risks becoming irrelevant

Laura Carvalho

Bridgetown Agenda also proposes the expansion of multilateral lending to governments to \$1 trillion and suspending debt and interest payments for the already debt-distressed nations. It seeks to formalise new mechanisms for climate financing like the new funding for loss and damage proposed at COP27 and longer-term funding for clean energy in the Global South. The G20 should also look into making progress on tax justice and it can start with overhauling an initiative it has already backed

THE global economy is besieged by soaring inflation and mounting debt, fuelled primarily by the climate emergency and Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The need is urgent: the United Nations has identified 54 countries in need of debt relief which are home to nearly a fifth of the global population. More than half of them are the poorest nations in the world and the most vulnerable to climate change. But instead of aiding emerging markets, the central banks of advanced economies are raising interest rates while international financial institutions are failing to provide sufficient relief, liquidity, or climate financing. Repetition of failed policies is causing turmoil in the Global South, but the group of the world's 20 biggest economies, known as the G20, appears too paralysed by geopolitical disagreements to take concerted action. At the latest G20 meeting in Bali, there was supposed to be one positive development: the official launch of the global pandemic preparedness fund hosted by the World Bank. This facility – funded by G20 members and other states – is intended to help governments and international organisations improve their readiness to tackle future pandemics and establish solid coordination mechanisms.

But the initiative has already been criticised for its limited scope and the inadequacy of funding – it has received just \$1.4bn so far. Other global challenges – including the climate, food and economic crises – saw little action from the G20 in Bali. It is increasingly hard to justify perpetuating the existing multilateral approach if the system cannot deliver for the most vulnerable. Why are these life-and-death decisions being put in the hands of the G20 if their summits conclude with so little to show? To stay relevant, this intergovernmental forum must demonstrate that it is able to tackle the growing crises the world faces today. One way to

do this is to support UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's proposed stimulus package to address the deteriorating situation for developing countries. It includes boosting debt relief and restructuring, enhancing lending from multilateral development banks (MDBs), bolstering liquidity support to counter capital flight and currency depreciation, and aligning financial flows with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change. Another important initiative the G20 should back is the Bridgetown Agenda put forward by the prime minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley. It calls for high-income countries to immediately make available \$100bn of unused Special Drawing Rights, which are international assets reserved for times of global economic hardship to boost the liquidity of low-income countries. The Bridgetown Agenda also proposes the expansion of multilateral lending to governments to \$1 trillion and suspending debt and interest payments for the already debt-distressed nations. It seeks to formalise new mechanisms for climate financing like the new funding for loss and damage proposed at COP27 and longer-term funding for clean energy in the Global South. The G20 should also look into making progress on tax justice and it can start with overhauling an initiative it has already backed. Last year, it announced its support for the "Inclusive Framework" plan by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for a global minimum corporate tax of 15 percent.

The initiative was endorsed by 132 countries and jurisdictions and marked an important paradigm shift, but ultimately lacked the ambition to make a real difference. It failed to curb profit shifting effectively and generate substantial revenues for lower-income countries most affected by corporate tax abuse. The substantial carve-outs afforded to multi-

nationals and low-tax jurisdictions – combined with the exclusion of most developing countries from the decision-making process – did nothing to dispel the notion that the multilateral system is rigged against the poorest. The G20 can change that. A good start would be the creation of a secretariat for the Inclusive Framework that would better represent developing countries and emerging markets and their needs and concerns. Furthermore, different stages of the decision-making process should be subjected to votes and proceedings open to the public. Increased scrutiny is vital and should limit wealthy nations from making decisions about developing countries above their heads.

The G20 cannot avoid addressing key structural issues and should listen carefully to these ideas emanating from other fora. Debt relief is important, but it amounts to a mere sticking plaster without tackling climate change and tax justice, which act as an anchor for developing countries' finances.

The group also has to be more inclusive, representing the interests of not just big economies. Importantly at the meeting in Bali, some member states endorsed the candidacy of the African Union to become part of the G20 – a much-needed and important step. In 2023, the G20 "troika" (comprised of the current, former and future hosts) will be India, Indonesia, and Brazil. In 2025, South Africa will host. This unprecedented succession of emerging market economies holding the G20 presidency could present a valuable opportunity to amplify the voice of the Global South. It would be a powerful symbol if countries with recent experiences of debt and poverty could set the agenda on addressing social and climate challenges. But it would be the ultimate shame if the most powerful economies bequeath a system as fractured and sluggish as now.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

'Ready to set aside all the differences'

FROM PAGE 01 mothers and children who were benefiting from DFID projects to support their food and health," the prime minister said. Appraising the media of the allegations levelled by the previous government through the Daily Mail article, the prime minister said the onslaught was only meant to defame him, Nawaz Sharif and the Pakistani Muslim League-Nawaz. "He (Imran Khan) was so callous that he never thought that it will not only malign Nawaz Sharif or Shehbaz Sharif rather it will damage Pakistan's reputation," he remarked. The newspaper also published its apology in Sunday's print edition, he added. He told the media that DFID project's amount of 600 million pounds was spent transparently and the allegations were also contradicted by the DFID itself. "Consequently, the country was mocked and a message was conveyed that Pakistan should not be given aid or grant," he said. He said despite the passage of three years, Imran's accountability czar Shahzad Akbar failed to produce documents to substantiate his allegations which also led to his (Shehbaz Sharif) vindication by the NCA.

PM lauds OIC's stance on Kashmir

FROM PAGE 01 the Prime Minister underscored that his visit would send a strong message of support from OIC to the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for the right of self-determination. The Prime Minister also renewed unwavering support of the People and Government of Pakistan to the Palestinian people and the cause. He reiterated that any solution of the Palestine issue must be based on pre-1967 border with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. While recognizing that the OIC has stepped-up its engagement with Afghanistan since the Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Islamabad in December 2021, the Prime Minister encouraged the Secretary General to accelerate efforts for addressing and alleviating the humanitarian challenges faced by the people of Afghanistan.

Deadly gun attack on Kabul hotel

FROM PAGE 01 the hotel balcony, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said. Kabul's Emergency Hospital, run by an Italian non-profit near the attacked hotel in the Shahr-e-Naw area, reported receiving 21 casualties - 18 injured and three dead on arrival. While the firing was continuing inside the hotel, a fire broke out on one of its floors, sources told the Reuters news agency. A video posted on Twitter by a journalist in Kabul, verified by Reuters, showed smoke billowing out of the building. The attack took place around 2:30pm local time (10:00 GMT) when armed men targeted the hotel where "common people were staying", Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran said, adding that forces were trying to secure the area.

'Shelling: Afghan...

FROM PAGE 01 referred in the border security committee. "When the matter escalated, they opened fire. In the first round of fire, no casualties occurred. But later when they used heavy ammunition [...] because of that five of our civilians were martyred and two passed away on the way to Quetta," he detailed. In response, Asif said, Pakistan fired on the Afghan post which resulted in casualties of eight to nine Afghan soldiers. "After that, the border security committee met again and it was agreed that Afghanistan was at fault [...] we believe that there was no motive behind this [...] there is no evidence of any planning behind the attack." The minister revealed that the Afghan authorities had admitted their mistake and promised that such incidents won't happen in the future.

England beat Pakistan to win 2nd Test, seal series

Saud's overnight partner Faheem Ashraf was dismissed by part-timer Joe Root. The right-arm spinner put Faheem in trouble after which the left-hander edged the ball into the first slip to walk off early on day 4

SPORTS DESK

MULTAN: Saud Shakeel's maiden Test hundred dream was shattered by a controversial decision followed by Pakistan's loss from a winning position in the second Test in Multan on Tuesday. Agha Salman struck Mark Wood for consecutive boundaries in an over after which Ollie Robinson targeted the last batter Mohammad Ali and bagged him successfully to hand England 26-run victory. The English side sealed the series 2-0, their first-ever in Pakistan after 2000-01. Last time 17 years ago, Pakistan beat England 2-0 in three-match series. Agha fought hard after Nawaz did his job with a quick 45 runs off 62 balls. His 31-ball 20 couldn't work for Pakistan as Ali was the last and easy target for England to register series victory. Abrar, who bagged 11 wickets on his Test debut, smashed four boundaries to score 17 off 12. Nawaz boosted confidence in Pakistan's camp with his quick knock but clever England bagged him to leave the hosts' stomachs with lots of butterflies as both teams walked out for lunch on day 4. Nawaz alongside already set Saud Shakeel raced Pakistan's score after they were supposed to get 145 runs when he arrived. Saud's overnight partner Faheem Ashraf was dismissed by part-timer Joe Root. The right-arm spinner put Faheem in trouble



after which the left-hander edged the ball into the first slip to walk off early on day 4. Pakistan were 291-7 at lunch, needing 64 runs to win the second Test. Root, who remained wicketless in the first Test after bowling 22 overs, took his time to make a chance for England to take an early lead on the fourth day. Pakistan resumed with a defensive approach at an overnight score of 198-4. Saud Shakeel (54*) looked in solid touch but Faheem remained shaky, ending up with a dismissal off Root. The left-handed batter managed to score just 10 runs before Zak Crawley took a comfortable catch in the first slip. Nawaz took hold alongside Saud and released the pressure off him so rightly. The left-handed batter smashed seven boundaries during his stay at the crease. Mark Wood, with the new ball, provided breakthrough for England. The right-arm pacer created an angle from round the wicket to deceive Nawaz who was caught behind the wickets. Saud, later on, lost his wicket to a controversial catch decision given by the third umpire. Wicket-keeper Ollie Pope dived to carry an edge that went too low but he managed to put his hands underneath it. After scoring fighting 94 off 213 balls, Saud had to walk off. Wood, who returned after injury, took four wickets while James Anderson and Robinson took two wickets each. Jack Leach and Root shared a wicket apiece.

Doha's Islamic Art museum hosts World Cup visitors



WEB DESK

DOHA: As Qatar is on the world's agenda with the World Cup, it also hosts a diverse collection in Doha's Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), offering a peek into diverse aspects of Muslim heritage. An emerald inscribed for a Mughal emperor. A Safavid-period

knotted wool carpet. An Ottoman-era curtain, intricately embroidered with metal threads, which was part of the covering of the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure in Mecca that Muslims consider the metaphorical "house of God." In a capital where so much is new, the museum showcases a variety of the old and historic. And with soccer fans from

around the world descending on Qatar, the story that the museum tells now has more listeners. On a recent day, visitors - some wearing soccer jerseys or scarves - stopped to snap photos, inspect an object, read a label or browse shelves lined with books and souvenirs. Qatari officials say they hope the tournament will help provide visi-

Deschamps inspires France to brink of another final

DOHA: France's World Cup run is turning into a triumph for coach Didier Deschamps, who has won over those who felt he had stayed in charge too long and is within touching distance of another final. Victory over England on Saturday means France now face Morocco in the last four on Wednesday, and whatever happens there, Deschamps will be free to decide if he wants to extend his 10-year spell in charge. "The ball is in my court and I will decide. I will be here for the semi-final and then we'll see. One thing at a time," said Deschamps after fulfilling the objective set out for him by French Football Federation president Noel Le Graet. "The president is happy. Lots of people are happy. But I want to savour being back in the last four. I am thinking about Wednesday, not about other things." Deschamps was appointed in 2012 and some felt he should have bowed out on a high after France's 2018 World Cup triumph. What followed was a disappointing performance at Euro 2020, when they lost in the last 16 despite a return for Karim Benzema from the international wilderness. With Zinedine Zidane available and seemingly ready to become France's next coach, the World Cup in Qatar has arguably been Deschamps' greatest challenge yet. The holders appeared diminished by injuries coming into the tournament, deprived of starting midfielders Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante and then of Benzema before a ball had been kicked. Many wondered if France would go the way of the past three reigning champions, Italy, Spain and Germany, who were all knocked out of the next World Cup in the group phase. "We'll admit that we had doubted Didier Deschamps a little bit. We wondered if he hadn't stayed too long, if he still had his mojo," said the daily Le Parisien in an editorial on Sunday. "He came to Qatar surrounded by some doubts. Those have been swept away. It is as if nothing could stop this France team. A France that wins. Deschamps' France." Olivier Giroud has stepped up spectacularly in the absence of Benzema, with the veteran striker scoring four times in Qatar, including the winner against England. - DNA

Butler confident of slaying Inoue

YOKOHAMA: Paul Butler said he "fears no one" as the underdog prepares to face Japan's unbeaten Naoya Inoue in Tokyo on Tuesday to become undisputed bantamweight world champion. WBO champion Butler will attempt to do what no other boxer who has faced Inoue has managed so far - beat one of the sport's best pound-for-pound fighters and take his WBC, WBA and IBF belts. "Monster" Inoue has won all his 23 fights, 20 by knockout, and became the first Japanese boxer to top The Ring magazine's pound-for-pound rankings as the best fighter across all weight divisions earlier this year. Butler (34-2 with 15 KO's) said he was not daunted by the prospect of facing Inoue on home turf and was happy with his preparations after making the weight on Monday. "He's a man - he's a man with two arms and legs," the 34-year-old Englishman told AFP. "What he does in the ring is what he does, but I fear no one. It's a thing I'm looking forward to, getting in there and challenging myself." The winner of Tuesday's bout will become first undisputed bantamweight world champion since the four-belt era began in 2004. "It's a massive achievement so it would mean a lot," said Butler. "It would mean a lot to do it in front of my fans who have all travelled to Japan. It would be a great accomplishment." - APP

Croatia's mental strength has deep roots: Petkovic

DOHA: Croatia striker Bruno Petkovic says the team's mental strength that has propelled them to two penalty shoot-out wins at the FIFA World Cup 2022 has deep roots in the country's struggle for independence. Petkovic scored a late equaliser to cancel out Neymar's opener for Brazil in the quarter-finals, before Zlatko Dalic's team held their nerve to win on spot kicks. They also beat Japan on penalties in the previous round. It is a familiar pattern for Dalic's men, who four years ago reached the final via three extra-time wins in the knockout stage, two of them after shoot-outs. "I think one of the reasons (for this mentality), is that we are a small country," Petkovic said on Sunday. "Even though as players we are young, we know how our country was made and gained independence in the 1990s. "We learned about this from our parents. We learned you fight, you work hard and you don't get anywhere without that," added the 28-year-old, who has become a national hero since his equaliser broke Brazilian hearts. Some of the older players in the team have strong connections to the conflict in the Balkans in 1990s. Veteran midfielder Luka Modric was displaced as a youngster



and defender Dejan Lovren was forced out of his childhood home. Croatia featured in their first World Cup as an independent nation in 1998 and reached the semi-final, where they lost to hosts and eventual winners France. France also ended Croatia dreams four years ago in Russia, winning the final 4-2, but the country of four million people has its team back in last four again and looking full of belief. "I think we have improved with each game, as opponents got stronger, we got better and better," said Petkovic. - DNA

Babar Azam unhappy over criticism

"We made mistakes when we could have won. We didn't finish again against England. We should have finished well. The dismissal of the two best batters in succession today made the difference," he added

DNA

MULTAN: Pakistan skipper Babar Azam has responded to the critics after his side lost to England by 26 runs in the second Test at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Monday. In order to finish their second-highest successful run chase and tie the series, the hosts needed 157 more runs when play resumed on day four. However, England claimed their final six wickets within two sessions on day 4 to earn a series win. While responding to his critics, Babar referred to

his innings against Australia in March 2022, where he played a match-saving 196-run knock in Karachi to help Pakistan salvage a draw in the second Test. In a press conference after losing the match, Babar said: "If I perform well, they say that I did it in an easy situation. If I don't perform, they say he didn't do anything in a tough situation. I was the one who played the innings against Australia." He scored 75 runs in the first innings while managing only one run in the second innings. Babar lost his wicket to Ollie Robinson twice in the game. In the second in-



nings, he was clean bowled after leaving a delivery that jarred horribly off the ground. The batter declared Saud Shakeel's controversial departure and Mohammad Nawaz's dismissal the turning point of the match. "Saud's dismissal was expensive for us. We felt that the ball had touched the ground. But the decision of the umpire has to be accepted as the final decision. As professionals, we have to accept the decisions and rules of the umpires. We got out because of our own mistakes, and we are responsible," he said. "We made mistakes when

we could have won. We didn't finish again against England. We should have finished well. The dismissal of the two best batters in succession today made the difference," he added. Moreover, the 28-year-old heaped praise on spinner Abrar Ahmed, who claimed 11 wickets on his debut. "Abrar Ahmed performed well and completely changed. I am happy that the young cricketer got wickets," he concluded. The third and final Test of the three-match series will be staged at the National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi from December 17 to 21.

'A disgrace that weakens...

FROM PAGE 01

EU Economy Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni said on Sunday. French left-wing politicians have lambasted the "very serious scandal", with MEP Manon Aubry (The Left) demanding a debate on the issue and criticising "aggressive lobbying" by Qatar. On Friday, Belgian police staged 16 raids across Brussels. Around €600,000 in cash was seized, in addition to computer equipment and mobile telephones. They came amid investigations into months-long suspicions of "substantial" money payments made by a Gulf state to influence MEPs. The Belgian federal prosecutor's office did not name the country, but a source close to the issue confirmed to media that it was Qatar, which other media outlets have also reported.

Snap polls only solution...

FROM PAGE 01

Khan said when the PTI government rolled out the National Security Policy (NSP), it mentioned that despite Soviet Union's armed forces being the strongest in the world, it could not save the state from collapse due to the economic condition. The ex-premier said the judiciary should play its role as they will also "be answerable" if the economy further worsens. "Also, I am surprised at the business community's silence." Khan said that amid the ongoing crisis, small and large-scale businesses were the most affected. He added that exports were also declining gradually. "The business community should ask why aren't the overseas Pakistanis sending remittances. On my tenure, remittances, textile exports, tax collection, all were at a record high," he said. The former prime minister said even farmers were happy as four major crops registered record yields.

Toshakhana: Court reserves...

FROM PAGE 01

The petitioner's lawyer argued that it was a common opinion that Imran Khan had sold out the gifted watches after receiving these from the Toshakhana. "According to the media, Imran Khan had stated that he had spent this money for the construction of a road," he added. The lawyer said that the former prime minister could get the Toshakhana gifts after paying 20% of its cost till December 18, 2018. After this, new rules were introduced according to which it was compulsory to pay 50% payment of the total value of any gift. The lawyer further said that the value of the said watch was estimated as Rs 85 million. Imran Khan had failed to tell that against what price this watch was sold out, he contended. The case was not about the said watch instead it was about the assets details filed by the former prime minister, the lawyer added. Imran Khan and his wife had received 58 gifts worth Rs142 millions from the Toshakhana. - APP

Indian, Chinese troops...

FROM PAGE 01

responded to a request seeking comment. The un-demarcated 3,800 km (2,360 mile) frontier between the Asian giants has stayed largely peaceful since a war in 1962, before the clashes two years ago sent relations nose-diving. In June 2020, Indian and Chinese troops were involved in a hand-to-hand combat in the Galwan Valley of Ladakh, abutting the Chinese-held Tibetan plateau. The incident led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers, while China suffered an undisclosed number of casualties. The two sides agreed to disengage from the disputed area along the Himalayan border in September this year. For long, troops on both sides have adhered to long-standing protocols to avoid the use of any firearms along the de facto border known as the Line of Actual Control.

Briefs

Macron postpones French pension overhaul

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said Monday that he was pushing back his presentation of a major pensions overhaul denounced by labour unions, citing recent leadership changes at two opposition parties. Both the Greens and the right-wing Republicans have elected new chiefs, and Macron said he would consult with them before unveiling details of the major reform on January 10, instead of Thursday as planned. "This will give a few more weeks for those... who have taken over to discuss some of the key elements of the reform with the government," Macron said during the latest gathering of his so-called "national refoundation council." Macron says the retirement age needs to be extended to 64 or 65, from 62 currently - one of the lowest ages in the EU - in order to finance the pay-as-you-go system as more people live longer and enter the workforce later. The system is likely to have a surplus of 3.2 billion euros this year, according to a September report from the government's pensions advisory board (COR), but is forecast to fall into structural deficits in coming decades unless new financing sources are found. Macron has also promised to streamline the country's 42 separate pension regimes, which offer early retirement and other benefits mainly to public-sector workers.—APP

German consumers urged to save more gas

BERLIN: Germany's energy regulator on Monday urged citizens to save more gas as the temperature fell below 0 degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit) in large parts of the country. "Currently, the total savings are only 13%," Klaus Muller, chief of Federal Network Agency (Bundesnetzagentur), told daily Tagesspiegel. He said households must reduce gas consumption by 20% to avoid shortages in the coming months. "It's important that we don't let up on our savings efforts and stick them out throughout the winter," he said. Germany is facing a severe energy crisis due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, which led to disruptions in the gas supply and pushed energy prices to record highs. Although the country has managed to fill gas storage facilities to 95% capacity as of last week, experts are warning that this does not guarantee there will not be rationing of gas or power cuts in the colder winter months. The storage facilities also need a continuous flow of gas from the pipelines to maintain sufficient pressure. The Nord Stream 1 pipeline, Germany's main source of Russian gas, was destroyed following an explosion in September, and the country is currently importing no gas from Russia. Before the start of the war in Ukraine, Russia was supplying 55% of Germany's natural gas.—APP

4 terrorists surrender to Turkish forces

ANKARA: A group of PKK terrorists cornered in an air-backed Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) operation in northern Iraq have turned themselves in, footage shared by Türkiye's National Defense Ministry revealed on Monday. The four terrorists were preparing for an attack in the region, the ministry informed. The video shows Turkish soldiers positioned in rocky terrain and communicating via radio link as they lead a coordinated effort from the ground and air to corner the terrorists. While the troops surrounded the group, a squadron on a helicopter fired along escape routes to block off the group. Turkish commandos took delivery of the terrorists as they laid down their weapons and came down from their hiding spots. The ministry's video also shows the pilot and the commandos congratulating one another over the radio before the helicopter leaves the scene.—DNA

Japan, Pakistan Economic, cultural association formed

Purpose is to strengthen business, cultural ties; Takeo Kawamura and Mirza Asif Baig as Co-Chairman while Ijaz A. Khokhar and Jawwad A. Chaudhary nominated as Vice-Chairman and Senior Coordinator respectively

DNA

LAHORE: The Japan, Pakistan Economic & Cultural Association (JPECA) has been established to facilitate the business and cultural activities between Japan and Pakistan, also having the objective of bringing both countries' business leaders, social organizations, chambers of commerce, and industrial associations on a united platform. The two countries' new joint association, in a ceremony held here today, announced its office-bearers, appointing Takeo Kawamura and Mirza Asif Baig as Co-Chairman while Ijaz A. Khokhar and Jawwad A. Chaudhary were nominated as Vice-Chairman and Senior Coordinator respectively. JPECA Co-Chairman Mirza Asif Baig, while addressing the ceremony, observed that our key endeavor and thrust is on easing

barriers for Pakistani businesses in Japan, as we seek a flourishing and prosperous Pakistan with sustained economic growth ensured through effective and continued policies. Mirza Asif Baig said that the JPECA's mission is to provide the best platform for two countries' public-private sector dialogue on the role and needs of business in achieving inclusive, resilient and sustainable development. The Association has already held its launching ceremony in Japan, where it attracted participants from business, government, academia and civil society from Japan as well as Pakistan. Mirza Asif Baig briefed the audience about this Association, which is registered and incorporated in Japan, aiming to strengthen the social and economic values between Japan and Pakistan. He said that JPECA would collaborate to develop a framework of coopera-

tion and undertake actions aimed at strengthening bilateral trade and cultural activities between Pakistan and Japan. JPECA Vice Chairman Ijaz A. Khokhar, who is also the PRGMEA former chairman, addressing the ceremony, said that JPECA has recently signed a MoU with PRGMEA to open new avenues for Pakistan value-added apparel industry for liaison with Japan buyers and other leading brands. Ijaz A. Khokhar said that the JPECA has been formed with a view to cover a wide range of activities for collaboration between Japan and Pakistan such as exchange of information on trade and culture, co-hosting seminars, exhibitions and business delegations, and advocating for enabling business environment and creating soft image among each other countries. JPECA Vice Chairman said the promotion of

mutual trade and investment between two countries was needed to ensure the synergy between the two countries is strengthened. He said that the new organization would be emerged as the leading voice of the private sector through a sustained public policy advocacy, stakeholder engagement, trade and cultural promotion activities both locally and internationally. Ijaz Khokhar said that this Association would address major issues being faced by the industry of Pakistan and bring those issues to limelight, including compliance, gender training and exchange of delegation. "JPECA will pursue the goal of promoting cooperation between Pakistan and Japan cultural societies to realize common development of both countries," he added. Our aim is to find how we get SMEs introduced in Japanese market, by promoting Pakistan's

soft image there, he said and added that at the first stage we are planning to take a high powered delegation to visit Japan to interact with the business community of Japan where we would visit Different Chambers. "We will also invite Japanese counterparts to Pakistan so that we could show them manufacturing of different products in our factories. We will also expand the JPECA activities to the other parts of country. JPECA also plans to start a membership campaign of different product manufacturers produced in Pakistan while its Japan side will provide us the list of items being imported in Japan from different countries which will give an idea to Pakistani manufacturers to focus these items for exports to Japan. Our ultimate goal is to get extraordinary concession which Japan is already offering to our regional competitors like India and Bangladesh.

Pakistan embassy participates in int'l food festival in Vietnam



HANOI: Embassy participated in the International Food Festival 2022 arranged by the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sumptuous Pakistani cuisine and melodious Pakistani music were presented at the Pakistani pavilion, which was admired and enjoyed by the Vietnamese and other international guests. Pakistan ambassador to Vietnam, Mrs Samina Mehtab also present at the occasion and interacted with visitors and briefed them about Pakistani cultural aspects.—DNA

No German commitment yet to send tanks to Ukraine

BERLIN: There is no German commitment yet to deliver tanks to Ukraine, the Ukrainian foreign minister said on Monday. "Such a decision has not yet been made. There are no promises. But we are working on it, quite openly," Dmytro Kuleba told German ARD public broadcaster. According to him, Ukraine does not understand why Germany is supplying artillery but not tanks. "As of now, there are projects from Germany, that's the delivery of the Iris-T systems, that's anti-aircraft weapons," Kuleba said. The Cheetha tanks are also anti-aircraft weapons. "But at this moment, as far as I know, tanks are not included in this list. That's too bad," he added. Previously, Ukraine's Ambassador to Germany Oleksiy Makeyev said that he had received promises in Berlin for further arms deliveries. In an interview with the German weekly Welt am Sonntag, Makeyev said that an announcement will be made by both sides "in due course" as to what sort of German weapons will be sent to Ukraine. He pointed out that more air defense systems, self-propelled howitzers, Gepard tanks and ammunition were urgently needed at the war front. "We are also still in talks about the delivery of Marder and Leopard tanks. However, the decision on this lies with the federal (German) government," said the ambassador. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has so far refused to supply Leopard 2 combat tanks on the grounds that no other NATO country has made such tanks available. The US signaled on Friday that they see no obstacle in this. But it was Germany's decision, US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman told journalists during a visit to Berlin.—DNA

Baku urges Russia to let it probe 'illegal mining' in Karabakh

BAKU: Azerbaijan has sent a diplomatic note to Russia concerning the "illegal exploitation" of natural resources in the liberated Karabakh territory after a group of its officials were barred from entering the region, the country's Foreign Ministry announced Sunday. Baku has repeatedly appealed to the command of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in the region to prevent "illegal exploitation" of natural resources and eliminate its negative impact on the environment, but to no avail, the ministry said. "According to the information obtained by Azerbaijan, illegal exploitation and looting of natural resources ... is observed, especially in the Kyzylbulag gold and Demirli copper-molybdenum mines," it explained. "By the agreement reached, it was again called upon to ensure Azerbaijan's rep-

resentatives' unhindered access to the mentioned mines." The communique noted that negotiations were held between the two sides, and an agreement was reached on Saturday, but still, officials from Baku were prevented from visiting the area. "Because the Russian peacekeeping contingent did not take any action, a pre-planned action by residents prevented the visit," it said. Moreover, Azerbaijani ecologists representing non-governmental organizations (NGO) early on Monday protested the said illegal activities on the Lachin-Shusha road. The activists have set up tents and are refusing to leave until they are permitted to enter the region where two mines are located, Azerbaijani state news agency AZERTAC reported. The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry's statement said that Baku's note emphasized it was "unacceptable to obstruct

Sunlit Greece seeks to lure Europeans amid winter energy crisis

ATHENS: With most of Europe struggling with soaring energy costs, Greece has launched an initiative to put its mild winters to good use and attract sun-seeking travellers all year round. The Mediterranean nation recorded November temperatures comfortably exceeding 20 degrees Celsius (68 degrees Fahrenheit) - quite a draw for Europeans eager to save on heating bills that have rocketed in the wake of the war in Ukraine. The Greek government has earmarked 20 million euros (\$21 million) for a poster campaign targeting mainly European pensioners that could boost an economy where the travel sector represents 25 percent of annual output. "Wanna feel 20 again?" says the poster featuring an elderly pair nibbling watermelon and sipping drinks on a yacht. "With warm winter temperatures up to 20 degrees Celsius, Greece is the place to be," it adds. Tourism Minister Vassilis Kikilias, fresh from a tour of several European capitals including Paris and Berlin to promote the initiative, told AFP the government was working "on a plan to campaign for Greece 12 months per year". With northern European countries facing much longer and bitterly cold winters, "energy-wise there are many more needs than here in the south where the winter is mild" and shorter, he added. "You live a great one or two months here enjoying your vacation and spending less than you would have spent staying at home," Kikilias said. The Florida of Europe? "In Greece, no German has to freeze," top-selling German daily Bild wrote in September, while business daily Handelsblatt suggested the country could become "the Florida of Europe". Kikilias said there was a "tradition" among northern European travellers to winter in Spain and Portugal, but he urged holidaymakers eager for sun, sea and sand to "take a look at the eastern Mediterranean (too)". After two years of economically painful travel restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, arrivals in 2022 could finish near the all-time high of 33 million tourists recorded in 2019. By the end of September, 23.7 million people had holidayed in Greece, and the number of French, German and British visitors even topped 2019 levels. TUI, the world's largest tourism operator, earlier this year brought forward the launch of the tourist season because of high demand. But tour operators have yet to take the plunge in the winter months.—APP

Snow disrupts travel in the UK

LONDON: Heavy snowfall has been causing massive travel disruption across the UK since Sunday afternoon as flights and trains were canceled. Gatwick and Stansted airports have suspended flights to clear the runways from snow, which has reached as thick as 10 centimeters (3.9 inches). The snowfall is the heaviest the capital has seen since 2013. In a statement, Stansted Airport said that "passengers are advised to check with their airline for current status of their flights." The runway at Stansted was reopened at 3 a.m. local time (0300 GMT).

More than 40 flights have been canceled at London's biggest airport Heathrow too. Delays to flights at Heathrow and Gatwick continued Monday morning. Met Office has issued a yellow warning until Monday morning for northern and south-western Scotland, Northern Ireland, north-eastern England, the Midlands and southwest and the southeast, including London. South Eastern Railways has warned passengers "not to travel" unless necessary Monday morning. More disruption is expected nationwide as a strike by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers is also expected to bring the train lines to a halt from Tuesday until next Monday.—Agencies

Iran carries out 2nd execution linked to protests

TEHRAN: Iran on Monday executed the second person convicted over the killing of two security personnel in the northeastern city of Mashhad in November amid months-long country-wide protests. Majid Reza Kahanavard was hanged in public in his hometown Mashhad in the wee hours of Monday on charges of "moharebeh" (waging war against God), judiciary-affiliated Mizan News Agency said. The accused was charged with stabbing to death two security personnel, identified as Hossein Zeinalzadeh and Danial Rezazadeh, on Har Ameli Street in Mashhad on Nov. 17. He was also accused of injuring four security forces before fleeing from the scene, according to the news agency. The incident came after protesters called on shopkeepers at Har Ameli Street to down their shutters in response to a three-day protest call to mark the third anniversary of the November 2019 unrest. CCTV footage released by the police after the incident showed a knife-wielding man stabbing one of them before striking the other amid a violent scuffle. The accused was arrested by law enforcement agencies two days later while trying to flee the country, Mizan News Agency said, citing officials. On Nov. 24, Kahanavard was handed the death penalty on charges of "waging war against God", which has been widely used in Iran since the 1979 revolution. It is the second execution linked to nationwide protests in less than a week.—APP

Britain stuck on recession path

LONDON: Britain's economy remains on course for a long-lasting recession on fallout from the highest inflation in decades, analysts said on Monday, even if official data showed growth in October. Gross domestic product rebounded 0.5 percent in the month, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said. GDP had dropped 0.6 percent in September, in part owing to businesses closing for the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. ONS director of economic statistics, Darren Morgan, said the economy was helped in October especially by car sales which "rebounded after a very poor September, while the health sector also saw a strong month".

Despite the rebound, Britain's finance minister Jeremy Hunt spoke of "a tough road ahead". "High inflation, exacerbated by (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's illegal war, is slowing growth across the world, with the IMF predicting a third of the world economy will be in recession this year or next," he said in a statement.—APP

Chinese students briefed on Pak economy

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan's Trade and Investment Counsellor in China briefed the Chinese students in Qingdao University about Pakistan's economic situation, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. To promote economic and cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan and to enliven the academic atmosphere, Qingdao University has invited the Pakistan's Trade and Investment Counsellor to deliver an online lecture. About 100 faculty and students attended the lecture. On the occasion, the counsellor detailed Pakistan's economic environment, trade and investment policies, energy and sustainable development, and Pak-China eco-

nomical collaboration. Given its resilient and young population, economic endowment, strategic location and cultural diversity, Pakistan offers immense potential and opportunities. Despite the potential, unrest in the region has put adverse impact on regional peace and security. Over the years, Pakistan's economy has struggled to maintain a sustainable path, following a cycle of frequent booms and busts, with trade deficit being the primary reason. The counsellor highlighted that during the initial years, between FY2015-2018, its GDP growth increased from 4.1% to 5.5% due to better law and order situation, improvement in energy supply and foreign investment, especially under the landmark project China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The counsellor underscored that CPEC had led to unprecedented foreign investment aimed at building infrastructure and spurring industrial growth. The construction of CPEC has helped alleviate and improve Pakistan's debt problems, improve local energy structure, alleviate power shortage woes, improve infrastructure construction, and promote rapid economic development. According to the counsellor, development is Pakistan's most active area of engagement and Pakistan strongly defends the embedded rights of developing countries to avail special and differential treatment. On specific issues, Pakistan is active in areas of agriculture, e-commerce, technology transfer, raw materials and renewable energy, where Pakistan and China have huge

potential for collaboration. Pakistan focuses on clean energy to protect the environment: Energy Minister BEIJING, Dec. 12 (): Federal Minister for Energy Khurram Dasgir Khan said that the government's priority of transition into clean energy was in order to save costs and protect the environment. According to Gwadar Pro on Monday, he was addressing an "International Forum for Energy Transition 2022" held in Beijing, with wide participation from across the world, adding that Pakistan is affected by climate changes in the shape of the recent floods which destroyed many areas. The Minister spoke at length about "Pakistan's vulnerabilities to climate change and enhanced focus on effective climate mitigation and

adaptation". He briefed the audience on the 10,000 MW solar initiative by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the initial bidding for which will be opened in a few months. In the forum, the Chinese government was represented by Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng who delivered remarks at the event. Chinese Vice Premier Han Zheng underlined the need for efforts to accelerate the transition into clean and green energy and highlighted China's achievements in promoting the green and low-carbon energy transition and addressing global climate change. Clean energy also remains a priority area of China-Pakistan bilateral cooperation including China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Briefs

Court postpones indictment of Gill in sedition case

ISLAMABAD: A lower court on Monday postponed the indictment of PTI's leader Shahbaz Gill and others in a sedition case. Additional District and Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra heard the case. During the hearing, public prosecutor Raja Rizwan Abbasi appeared in the court. Accused Imad Yusuf said that the program was aired from Islamabad, adding that he had no connection with the matter. Imad Yusuf and Shahbaz Gill prayed to the court to grant them exemption from appearance before the court. Rizwan Abbasi opposed the exemption request and said that it was based on lies. He said the court should reject this fake and false application. He said Shahbaz Gill made a board and submitted the medical report of a government hospital, adding that the accused should have appeared if he was ill. The court should conduct a medical analysis of the accused from the PIMS Hospital. After listening to the arguments, the court accepted the request for exemption from the appearance to the accused. Meanwhile, the accused objected over the appointment of Special Prosecutor Rizwan Abbasi in this case and gave references to various decisions. The court, however, rejected the objections of the defence side and instructed the accused to appear on the next hearing for indictment. - APP

Imran's shooter sent on 10-day remand

DNA
GUJRANWALA: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Gujranwala on Monday granted police another 10-day physical remand of Naveed, the suspected shooter of PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The court also ordered the police, which presented the interim challan of the accused, to bring him back to the court on December 22. The investigative officer told the court that they had recovered the weapon and the motorcycle which the accused used in his plan to target the PTI chief. More time was needed to interrogate the accused, the officer told the court. On November 29 last, the court had granted police a 13-day remand of the prime suspect in the Wazirabad assassination attempt on Imran Khan. On November 3 last, the PTI chief had survived an attempted assassination attack on him after Naveed allegedly shot him from the left side of the container amidst the long march and tried to escape. However, he was intercepted by a PTI supporter.

Defence Attaches collect Rs 0.6 mln for flood affectees

Pakistani authorities have thanked the COSA for its goodwill gesture adding their generous support would for sure help mitigate sufferings of the flood affected people



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Corps of Services Attaches (COSA) has collected a handsome amount of Rs 0.6 million for the flood affected people of Pakistan. The collected

amount was handed over to the concerned Pakistani authorities during the gala event arranged by COSA at a local hotel. It may be mentioned here that the COSA has actively been engaged in promotion of defense relations between Pakistan and the respective countries. Like COSA, COSALA,

which consists of spouses of the defence attaches, has also been active in strengthening the bilateral relations. Pakistani authorities have thanked the COSA for its goodwill gesture adding their generous support would for sure help mitigate sufferings of the flood affected people.

After the devastating floods that had hit the country hard, the response from the international community has been forthcoming. It is because of this response that the situation on ground has improved a lot and the affected people have already started returning homes.

Saudi Arabia issues 4 mln Umrah visas in 5 months

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has announced that 4 million Umrah visas have been issued for pilgrims coming from around the world since the start of the Umrah season of 2022. The high number of Umrah visas was possible because of the ministry's efforts to facilitate the arrival process via electronic means in partnership with several departments and agencies working in the Hajj and Umrah system, Saudi Gazette reported. The pilgrims were able to submit their visa applications through the ministry's website or the Nusuk platform. Muslims from anywhere in the world with any type of visa that enables them to enter Saudi Arabia such as visit visas, tourist visas, and others, are allowed to perform the Umrah and visit the Prophet's mosque after registering for an appointment through Nusuk app. Saudi Arabia has extended the validity of Umrah visas from 30 days to 90 days, and pilgrims are allowed to enter the Kingdom through any of its airports, seaports, and land crossings. The Nusuk app helps foreigners who have obtained a visa register for an appointment to perform Umrah and visit the Prophet's Mosque. - APP

SECP register 2,380 new companies in November

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 2,380 new companies in November, 2022, indicating an increase of 10% as compared to corresponding period last year. Total capitalization (paid-up-capital) of the newly incorporated companies is PKR1.9 billion. The total number of registered companies now stands at 182,598. Among the newly incorporated companies, about 59 percent were registered as private limited companies, 39 percent as single member companies and 2 percent were public unlisted companies, not for profit associations, trade organizations and limited liability partnership (LLP). About 99.9 percent of companies were registered online. In November, the SECP also registered three investment companies / micro finance companies with paid-up capital of Rs.255 million. In November, the real estate development & construction sector took the lead with incorporation of 407 companies followed by the information technology with 347 and trading with 300 companies subsequently, services with 258, food & beverages with 87, education with 82, tourism with 81, corporate agricultural farming with 76, e-commerce with 70, marketing & advertisement with 63, engineering with 62, textile with 57, pharmaceutical with 50, healthcare with 43 and 102 companies in other sectors.

Peru's leader moves to bring elections forward

Interpreting the will of the citizens... I have decided to take the initiative to reach an agreement with the Congress of the Republic to advance general elections to the month of April of 2024

LIMA: New Peruvian President Dina Boluarte announced Sunday that she would seek to hold elections two years early, while also declaring a state of emergency in certain areas after protests following the arrest of her predecessor left two dead. Demonstrators across the country - notably in northern and Andean towns - had been calling for fresh elections, along with a national strike and the release of leftist former president Pedro Castillo, who was removed from office on Wednesday for attempting to dissolve Congress and rule by decree. "Interpreting the will of the citizens... I have decided to take the initiative to reach an agreement with the Congress of the Republic to advance general elections to the month of April of 2024," Boluarte said in a televised address, noting that a bill on moving the poll forward from 2026 would be submitted in the coming days. She added that, "with the same patriotic sentiment," she was declaring a "state of emergency in areas of high social conflict in order to peacefully" restore order. Boluarte, a former prosecutor who had served as Castillo's vice president, was quickly sworn in to replace him following his impeachment and subsequent arrest last week. On Saturday, she introduced her new cabinet, a group with an independent and technocratic profile and including eight women. She named former prosecutor Pedro Angulo as prime minister. On Sunday demonstrators in cities across the country's interior - including Cajamarca, Arequipa, Huancayo, Cusco and Puno - demanded Castillo's release. New clashes broke out between protesters and police in the southern city of Andahuaylas, leaving two dead and at least five injured - including a police officer - as demonstrators attempted to storm the city's airport, authorities said. In her address, Boluarte expressed regret for the protesters' deaths. Riot police were deployed to the airport to contain the thousands of demonstrators in Andahuaylas, which lies in Boluarte's home region of Apurimac. - APP

Pakistan to host summit of Central Asian leaders soon



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that Pakistan would soon host a summit of the leaders of Central Asian states that would focus on connectivity through road and rail links to boost regional trade and investment. The prime minister, in a meeting with a nine-member parliamentary delegation of Kazakhstan led by Chairman of the Lower House (Mazhilis) of the Parliament, Yerlan Koshanov here, underscored the need to establish and strengthen bilateral cooperation in the energy, transport, and transit trade and logistics sectors. Welcoming the delegation, he highlighted the special nature of Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations which were deeply rooted in history, religion and culture.

He underscored that Pakistan is keen to further deepen cooperation with the Central Asian states, particularly Kazakhstan. Recalling his meeting with Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on the sidelines of the CICA summit in Astana and SCO Summit in Samarkand, the prime minister said both sides had fruitful discussions for boosting ties. Prime Minister Shehbaz said he was looking forward to the Pakistan visit of the Kazakhstan president. He informed that Pakistan would soon be hosting a summit of the leaders of Central Asian states that would focus on connectivity through road and rail links to boost regional trade and investment. Yerlan Koshanov updated the prime minister about the meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group which was held during the ongoing visit of the Kazakhstan parliamentary delegation. He underlined the need for exchange of parliamentary delegations that would further promote people-to-people exchanges between the two brotherly countries. Chairman Yerlan Koshanov informed that Kazakhstan can benefit from the huge Pakistani market and showed keen interest in bilateral trade and cooperation in connectivity, pharmaceuticals industry and surgical and sports goods. He informed that current bilateral trade was only \$ 95 million which is not commensurate with the huge trade potential between the two countries. He said the bilateral trade could be easily doubled within a short span of time. On behalf of the people and Government of Kazakhstan, the chairman of the Mazhilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan expressed deep condolence and sincere sympathies for the victims of recent catastrophic floods in Pakistan. National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf, Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik, and Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Coordination Syed Tariq Fatemi also attended the meeting. - DNA

Fighting rages in east Ukraine as Europe agrees extra mily aid

DNA
KYIV: Russian forces pounded targets in eastern and southern Ukraine with missiles, drones and artillery, Ukraine's General Staff said on Monday, while millions remained without power in subzero temperatures after further strikes on key infrastructure. European Union foreign ministers agreed to put another 2 billion euros (\$2.1 billion) into a fund that has been used to pay for military support for Ukraine, after it was largely depleted during almost 10 months of the war. The EU ministers were also due to discuss a ninth package of sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, while Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was set to address an online gathering of Group of Seven (G7) leaders about the war. There are no peace talks and no end in sight to the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War Two, which Moscow describes as a "special military operation" and Ukraine and its allies call an unprovoked act of aggression. Russia does not yet see a "constructive" approach from the United States on the Ukraine conflict, RIA news agency quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin as saying on Monday. U.S. President Joe Biden told Zelenskyy on Sunday Washington was prioritising efforts to boost Ukraine's air defences, the White House said. Zelenskyy said he had thanked Biden in the call for the "unprecedented defence and financial" help the United States has provided. Asked about security guarantees that Moscow is seeking from NATO, Polish President Andrzej Duda said the alliance could guarantee that it would not treat Russia in the same way Russia is treating Ukraine. Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa on Monday resumed operations suspended after Russia used Iranian-made drones on Saturday to hit two energy facilities. Power is slowly being restored to some 1.5 million people, but the situation remains difficult, national grid operator Ukrenergo said on Monday. Zelenskyy said other areas experiencing "very difficult" conditions with power supplies included the capital Kyiv and Kyiv region and four regions in western Ukraine and Dnipropetrovsk region in the centre of the country. The Kyiv region administration said 14 settlements there still had no power and 37 more were partially without power.

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