



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, December 20, 2022

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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Twitter users vote in favor of ousting Elon Musk as CEO

Detailed News On Page-07

Malaysian PM Anwar wins vote of confidence

Detailed News On Page-07



20m flood victims need urgent help

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Macron stirs critics with final role

DNA

PARIS: From leaping from his seat in the VIP box to consoling crestfallen players on the pitch, French President Emmanuel Macron delivered a wide-ranging performance at the World Cup final that was not to everyone's taste. The 44-year-old was an unmissable presence at the game at the Lusail stadium in Qatar on Sunday, even making an appearance in the team's changing room to deliver an emotional post-game pep talk. "You're an amazing team," Macron told the players, pounding his fist in his hand for effect.

No chance of elections in near future

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Q u a i d (P.M.L.-Q) President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain Monday confirmed that he is in contact with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Peoples Party Co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari but not with PDM. The development came after PM Shehbaz's meeting with Chaudhry Shujaat followed by Zardari's huddles with both leaders. Confirming his meetings with both leaders, Shujaat said that the meetings remained positive. "Political contacts and meetings will continue during the next three to four days," the PML-Q leader said.

Dar chairs meeting on energy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar chaired a follow-up meeting on reforms in Energy Sector in Islamabad on Monday. The meeting discussed in detail viable proposals presented by the relevant Ministries for introducing reforms in Power and Gas sectors aiming to bring efficiency in the system, minimize wastage of the energy and provide relief to the masses.

Bannu attack Talks with the TTP underway

Tense situation prevails in Bannu after militants seize CTD centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BANNU: Following a terrorist attack on the Counter-Terrorism Department's (CTD) compound in Bannu, talks between Pakistani officials and the leadership of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) are underway in Afghanistan, confirmed Mohammad Ali Saif, spokesperson of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, on Monday. According to a foreign news agency, Pakistani authorities opened talks to try to resolve a stand-off with the TTP who were holding several security personnel hostage after seizing control of a counter-terrorism facility in the country's northwest a day earlier. "We are in negotiations with the central leaders of the Pakistani Taliban in Afghanistan," said Saif. The spokesperson warned of strict action if the armed men do not surrender. Internet services have been suspended in Bannu and the roads leading to and from the Bannu Cantonment have been blocked. Miranshah Road and Jumma Khan Road are closed for all sorts of movements. The sources have claimed that the terrorists are demanding a safe air route to Afghanistan.

CTD Police compound is still in occupation of militants

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Alleged militants who were under detention are continuing occupation of Counter Terror Department (CTD) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police at Bannu on second consecutive day on Monday. Amidst stand-still in Bannu, reportedly a security forces convoy came under IED attack at Miranshah North Waziristan. There are reports of injuries but so far no any official statement or confirmation issued in this respect. The militants who were under arrest in

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Governor asks Elahi to seek confidence vote

Session convened on Wednesday

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Baligh ur Rehman on Monday sent a summary to seek no-confidence vote from Punjab Assembly to Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi. A delegation of PPP and PML-N lawmakers submitted on Monday night a no-confidence motion against Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi in the Punjab Assembly, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said. The confirmation from Sanaullah came after a delegation of opposition lawmakers, including PPP Parliamentary Leader Hassan Murtaza, PML-N's Khawaja Imran Nazir, and others reached the Punjab Assembly Secretariat. Earlier, in the backdrop of fast changing political situation in Punjab, a flurry of activity could be seen as the government appeared to have hammered out a line of action in face of PTI Chairman Imran Khan's plan to dissolve the provincial assembly. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired a huddle of the PML-N leaders at his Model Town residence in Lahore on Monday. The meeting deliberated on the next strategy of the government

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Imran victim of his own contradictions, says Ahsan Iqbal

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said Monday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan had become a victim of his own contradictions. "Imran Khan's politics has defaulted whether the assemblies are dissolved or not," he maintained. "Imran Khan has done the politics of spreading chaos in Pakistan. He has done the politics of making people fight each other. He has done the politics of putting people in jails by implicating them in false cases. He has done the politics of stealing gifts from Toshakhana," he deplored. "I wish he would have done the politics of fixing the Pakistani economy during his four-year tenure. He would not have seen this day if he had

Continued on Page 06

'Codal limitations' stopping Gen Bajwa to respond to allegations

General (ret'd) Bajwa is mostly blamed for keenly pursuing what is generally referred to as "Imran Khan project"

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Former army chief Gen (ret'd) Qamarjaved Bajwa has a lot to tell about Imran Khan, his rise and rise in politics and how he ran his government. Sources close to General (ret'd) Bajwa said that the recently retired former Army Chief could not respond in public to what PTI chairman alleges against him because of some codal limitations but it is insisted what Khan mostly says about Bajwa is untrue. Gen (ret'd) Bajwa is now the focused target of Imran Khan who not only sees the former army chief as the sole reason for all his failures in the government but also alleges that the general had removed his government as part of a US conspiracy. While Imran Khan says it was General (ret'd) Bajwa who was controlling NAB and deciding the arrest and release of politicians, the other side insists that Khan during his premiership was paranoid towards his



opposition and wanted to see all his key opponents behind the bars. These sources said when General (ret'd) Bajwa will speak, he would have no different tale to tell than what the former DG FIA Bashir Memon had alleged about the then prime minister Imran Khan. Like Bashir Memon, who had alleged to have been pressurised by the then prime minister to arrest his opponents, according to the sources the former premier had also been asking

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NATIONAL DAY OF BAHRAIN



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Chairman Senate Defence Committee Senator Mushahid Hussain, SAPM Faisal Karim Kundi, Ambassador of Bahrain Ebrahim M Abdulqader Ambassador and others cutting cake to celebrate the National Day of Bahrain. - DNA

Soldier, 2 civilians martyred in suicide blast

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A soldier and two civilians were martyred in a suicide blast in North Waziristan district's Miranshah on Monday, the military's media wing said. A press release from the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) identified the soldier as 33-year-old Naik-a-bid from Mansehra. The ISPR added that one civilian was injured in the incident too. Today's incident comes five days after a soldier and a civilian were martyred in a suicide blast in Miranshah on Wednesday. The deceased soldier was identified as 30-year-old Havaldar Muhammad Ameer. Moreover, nine civilians were injured as well, the ISPR had said. On Dec 5, at least five terrorists were killed and a soldier was martyred during an intelligence-based operation in JhallarAlgard area of North Waziristan.

4 Iran security members killed in attack

TEHRAN: A terrorist attack killed four members of Iran's security forces in a southeastern region, official media reported on Monday. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps members were killed "during a terrorist act" in the Saravan region of Sistan-Baluchistan province, the state IRNA news agency said. - APP

Imran Khan slams govt over attacks from Afghanistan

says Gen Bajwa 'solely responsible' for prevailing political, economic crises

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Blaming the coalition government for the terrorist attack in Bannu, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan Monday said the "imported government" has failed to deal with cross-border attacks by "security forces of a 'friendly' Afghan government". Taking to his official Twitter handle, Khan said: "Apart from running our economy to the ground, this imported government has failed to deal with the 50% increase in terrorism in Pakistan with incidents from Chaman to Swat to LakkiMarwat to Bannu." "While our soldiers, police [and] local [people] are giving daily sacrifices with their lives, the worst

Continued on Page 06

Court extends Khan's bail

ISLAMABAD: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad on Monday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan till January 10 next. The Islamabad court had conducted the hearing on the bail plea of Imran Khan. The court also accepted Imran Khan's request for exemption from appearance on medical grounds. It is to be noted here that a case was registered against Imran Khan, under terrorism clauses, over protest against the decision of the election commission. - DNA

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Inside...

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Indonesia now open for Int'l tourists: Envoy

Talking about the tourism promotion, Ambassador Adam M. Tugio said that the Embassy will resume 'Familiarization Trip' programs for journalists, Dropbox travel agents, bloggers, content developers to explore the unique cultural beauty of Indonesia

DNA

HARIPUR: Indonesia is now open for international visitors and normal visa issuing process for different purposes has been resumed. This was informed by the Ambassador of Indonesia Mr. Adam M. Tugio while addressing a gathering of visa drop box travel agents in Haripur organized by the Indonesian Embassy to brief on the post pandemic new visa regulations. He said that the visa process now will take three working days upon the submission of application with complete docs. In addition, the government has also been developing five new superior tourism destinations other than Bali to welcome international visitors for enjoying the

multicultural beauty of the world's biggest Archipelago, said the Envoy. Responding to the possibility of starting direct flight from Pakistan to Indonesia to facilitate the increasing number of visitors, Ambassador Tugio informed the participants that the Embassy has been striving to meet this objective by approaching the national flag carrier of Indonesia and private airlines and hoped that direct flights would soon be materialized. "Initially, it was decided to start direct flights three times a week in 2020, but the pandemic forced the private airlines to reschedule it altogether", the envoy added.

Talking about the tourism promotion, he said that the Embassy will resume 'Familiarization Trip' programs for journalists, Dropbox travel agents, bloggers

and content developers to explore the unique cultural beauty of Indonesia.

On this occasion, a short video on the upcoming book of the Embassy "Indonesia Spice's Up Pakistan: Winning the Hearts and Minds Through Food and Flavors" was also shown. "We hope that this book on spices would pique the interest of travelers, tourists, food lovers and entrepreneurs as well as inspire the Pakistani friends to discover more innovative ways to further strengthen cultural connections with Indonesia", Ambassador Tugio remarked.

A live cooking demo on the famous Indonesian cuisine known as "bakso" or meat ball and noodle soup was also organized by the Embassy featuring Chef Bima Putra. The cooking demo was thoroughly enjoyed by the guests.



SIALKOT: Irena Gancheva Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Pakistan addressing to Business community at SCCI.—DNA

Pakistan-Bulgaria should focus on trade balance

She requested the SCCI to send proposal for single-country exhibition, so that the same could be forwarded to the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce & Industry for facilitation

DNA

SIALKOT: Bulgarian Ambassador to Pakistan Irena Gancheva said on Monday that both countries should focus on trade balance as the current figures about trade were not as per the existing potential. Addressing the business community at Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI), she said that Bulgaria had an important geographical location, which made Bulgaria a vital hub for entering to European market. She shared that Bulgaria would

definitely support Pakistan in getting the GSP+ status back, says a news release. She requested the SCCI to send proposal for single-country exhibition, so that the same could be forwarded to the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce & Industry for facilitation. She appreciated the role of Sialkot in economic development of the country. Speaking on the occasion, SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik welcomed the honorable guest and said that Pakistan and Bulgaria had been enjoying friendly ties built on mutual re-

spect and identical views on global and regional developments. He said that Pakistan attached extreme importance to Eastern European countries, especially Bulgaria and looks forward to further building upon friendly relations. Abdul Ghafoor Malik said: "We are thankful to Bulgaria which has always assured us of offering support to Pakistan for retaining the GSP+ status and has confirmed its backing to positively review Pakistan's GSP+ facility. He suggested a few measures to broaden the scope of trade between

the two countries which were: both countries should facilitate single-country trade exhibitions & encourage frequent exchanges of trade delegations; encourage Bulgarian businesses to explore joint ventures possibilities in Pakistan; signing of Memorandum of Understanding with prominent Bulgarian chambers of commerce & industry in order to promote B2B. SCCI Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir, Vice President SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh and Sialkot business community were also present on the occasion.

PTA hosts consultative workshop on gender inclusion strategy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), in collaboration with UNESCO Pakistan, hosted the third consultative workshop for the development of digital gender inclusion strategy. The workshop was held in Quetta. The workshop, organized at PTA's Quetta Zonal Office was the third of a series of five consultative workshops being held to gather multi-stakeholder experts' recommendations for a strategy

to reduce digital gender divide in Pakistan. The workshop was conducted by Ms. Sadaf Khan, UNESCO consultant. Experts from various stakeholder groups including government organizations such as State Bank of Pakistan, PTV and others attended the workshop. Representatives from Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), NIC Quetta, telecom operators, academia, women entrepreneurs, tech startups and non-governmental organizations such as Mer-

cy Corp, People's Primary Health Care initiative (PPHI), and Health Education and Environment Program Balochistan (HEEP) etc. also participated. Director Wireless PTA and the head of PTA's initiative for gender inclusion in ICTs informed the participants that PTA is committed to ensuring the provision of best quality of services to all citizens of Pakistan including women. PTA's gender inclusion strategy is being developed with support from UNESCO Pakistan.

It aims to recommend specific amendments and additions in policies that can help achieve gender parity in use of internet, mobile phones and digital skills in line with International Telecommunication Union's 2030 goals. This strategy will help PTA, along with other public and private sector stakeholders, to tackle various barriers to women's use of mobile and ICTs. The next workshop in the series is scheduled in Karachi on 22nd of December 2022.



Court extends interim bail of Buzdar

LAHORE: An accountability court on Monday extended pre-arrest interim bail of former chief minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar till January 5 in an illegal liquor licence case. Accountability Court Judge Naseem Ahmad Virk conducted the hearing on the bail application of the former chief minister. Usman Buzdar also appeared before the court on expiry of his interim bail. The National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) investigation officer submitted that the NAB regional board had recommended closing the inquiry into the illegal liquor licence case and the matter had been sent to NAB headquarters for final decision. —APP

2.8 mln people received free treatment through Sehat cards

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid said on Monday that providing better healthcare facilities to the people was top priority as in Punjab, more than 2.8 million citizens had received free treatment facilities through Sahat Sahulat card. She stated this while inaugurating the 42nd Annual International Scientific Symposium here at King Edward Medical University. The 42nd Annual International Scientific Symposium was organized at King Edward Medical University with the collaboration of KE Almanai, KEMKANA, KEMKA UK

and APNA. Dr Yasmin Rashid said: "a professor is a role model for children as transferring knowledge to someone is a great charity". She said that she got the opportunity to teach children in three government medical colleges of Punjab including Fatima Jinnah Medical College, King Edward Medical College and Rawalpindi Medical College. She said that delegates from different countries came for the symposium. It was very important to spread awareness in the symposium organized at King Edward Medical University, she added. Dr Yasmin said that 11 moth-

er and child hospitals were being built in Punjab. The opening of Mother & Child Block in Ganga Ram Hospital was the realization of a dream of many decades. By the grace of Allah, a mother & child block consisting of 550 beds in Ganga Ram Hospital was operational, she said. The provincial health minister congratulated Prof Dr Mahmoyaz and his team for organizing the international symposium. Provincial Health Secretary Dr Ahmed Javed Qazi said the Punjab government was utilizing all resources to provide better healthcare facilities to the people. "Through the seven medical universi-

ties of Punjab, we were providing high quality education to the children", he said. He said that world's first University of Child Health Sciences was located in Punjab. He paid tribute to the provincial health minister Dr Yasmin Rashid for her valuable services in the health department. Vice Chancellor King Edward Medical University Prof Dr Mahmood Ayaz said the graduates of King Edward Medical University were still brightening the name of Pakistan in the whole world. The main objective of today's international symposium was to provide awareness to the participants, he said.

Sehat Card Plus important achievement, says KP CM

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has termed the Sehat Card Plus initiative as a flagship achievement of the provincial government which, in addition to providing free healthcare facilities, is also playing an important role in providing social security to citizens by reducing burden of healthcare expenses and improving the standard of living. In a statement issued from the Chief Minister's Secretariat on Monday, the chief minister maintained that Sehat Card Plus had revolutionized the health sector in the province adding that the initiative had ensured provision of uniform healthcare facilities to all segments of the society irrespective of their social status due to which it had been wide-

ly appreciated at national and international level. According to details, a total of 1,058,797 patients have been admitted under Sehat Card Plus from January 2022 till November 2022 and Rs. 25,834 million has been spent on their treatment. During the same period, 73 kidney transplants and 49 liver transplants have been carried out at a cost of Rs. 102 million and 199 million respectively. As far as category wise admissions of patients is concerned, a total of 47,679 patients of cardiology, 146,840 of general surgery, 124,328 of Gyne, 142,615 of medical, 16,340 of neuro surgery, 52,481 of orthopedic, 37,384 of oncology, 42,914 of urology, 3,388 of cardiac surgery, 48,386 of throat, 55,229 of ophthalmology, 171,195 of

dialysis and 1,768 patients of peads cardiology have been admitted during the last eleven months. Keeping in view the utility and benefits of the Sehat Card Plus initiative, the government was taking pragmatic efforts to include treatment of diseases that are currently not covered in the Sehat Card. In order to provide legal cover and to ensure sustainability of the programme, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Universal Health Coverage Act 2022 has also been passed from the Provincial Assembly. Mahmood Khan concluded that the Sehat Card Plus was an important achievement of the incumbent provincial government towards establishment of an Islamic welfare state as per the manifesto of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf.—APP



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Delegation of ACWA calls on KP Governor

The delegation welcomed Governor Ghulam Ali's initiative to establish effective public relations

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Abbasin Column Writers Association led by Ziaul Haq Sarhadi on Monday called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali here at the Governor's House. The delegation presented proposals to the governor regarding close and effective communication between the columnists and the government and for solution of the problems being faced by masses. Speaking to the delegation, Governor Ghulam Ali said that columnists play an important role in highlighting public opinion and bringing out the problems hidden from the government. Opinions and suggestions of columnists regarding govern-

ment performance would be given importance, he said and assured the delegation that immediate steps would be taken to solve the prob-

lems being faced by them. The delegation welcomed Governor Ghulam Ali's initiative to establish effective public relations. The delega-

tion was comprising senior journalist and columnist Amjad Aziz Malik, Abed Akhtar Hasan, Saleem Afaqi, Wa-seem Shahid, Roshan Khat-

tak Khan, Syed Talha Saeed, Munawer Shah Munawer, Waqar Ahmed Awan, Saima Mehboob and other prominent columnists.



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
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Emergency

Rescue (Police).....	15
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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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President Alvi for further cementing Pak-Italy ties

The president said that a fairly large number of Pakistanis (approximately 200,000) were living in Italy and contributing towards the socio-economic development of the country and urged that the welfare of these Pakistanis should be the most priority

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday stressed bilateral relationship with Italy in the fields of defence, agriculture, animal husbandry and information technology. He made these remarks while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Italy, Ali Javed, here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. During the meeting, the president appreciated the idea of establishing manufacturing units by Pakistani diasporas in the industrial-free zone of Italy for manufacturing and exporting Pakistani goods and products in Italy and rest of the Europe. He said the avenues for exports of human intellect, knowledge and skills online to Italy by our IT professionals and related fields needed to be explored. This way, he said, the human resource would be retained in Pakistan whereas their skills and knowledge could be shared. He said the country needed a skilled workforce for industrial, agricultural and manufacturing development. The president said that the Ambassador and the entire ancillary staff in Italy should focus their energy on resolving the issues and problems faced by the Pakistani diasporas in Italy and provide them with the necessary support, and counselling services



online and at their doorsteps. The president advised the ambassador-designate to keep close linkages with the Chambers of Commerce in Pakistan and major industrial and manufacturing entities of Pakistan and explore the possibility of joint ventures with the Italian counterparts. He said that Italian investors must be encouraged to shift their

industrial units to Pakistan and benefit from the cost-effective labour, availability of raw materials, and investment-friendly policies in our country. The president said that there was a need to highlight the atrocities being committed perpetually by India in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), and

the increasing incidences of intimidation, harassment, and marginalization of minorities, especially Muslims, and the increasing trend of Islamophobia in India, which was putting the life and property of the Muslims of India in great danger.

The president said that Pakistan and Italy had a commonality of views on a number of regional and global issues, particularly reforming the UN Security Council and both countries should work closely on all issues of common interest. He said that the Strategic Engagement Plan signed between the two countries in 2013 provided an excellent framework to steer bilateral and multilateral cooperation forward in a holistic and sustained manner and expressed hope that the Ambassador-designate would work towards enhancing these engagements.

The president said that Italy was one of the largest trading partners of Pakistan in the EU and among the top ten globally. There was great potential for expanding bilateral trade and investment due to the complementarities between the two countries' economies, he added. He further said that the existing trade of around US\$ 1.3 billion did not represent the true potential on both sides and there was a need to make concerted efforts to increase the volume.

Virgin Atlantic's investment to boost Pakistan's economy

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Senate Committee on Aviation, Faisal Saleem Rahman on Monday said that Virgin Atlantic's, a British airline, investment in Pakistan's aviation industry would boost the country's economy. "Virgin Atlantic plays an important role in Pakistan's aviation industry, connecting the country's businessmen to global markets", he said while addressing an event to mark the second anniversary of its operations in Pakistan. Senator Faisal said that Pakistan's business class, students and tourists were benefiting from Virgin Atlantic's travel facilities. He said, "I would say that Virgin Atlantic has played a very important role in the economy of Pa-

kistan. Our best wishes are with them on their second anniversary". Senator Ayaz, on the occasion, said that Virgin Airline was one of the major airlines of the world, which was providing excellent services in Pakistan as well. In his message on the occasion, Alex McEwan, Virgin Atlantic's Country Manager, South Asia said, "In these two years the airline provided travel facilities to 330,000 passengers, and has lifted 13 million kg of cargo". "The past two years were very challenging, but we continued our operation even during this time", he added. He further said that the situation in Pakistan after the flood was improv-

ing, adding "we have also provided aid for the country's flood victims." On the occasion, Munir Siddiqui, Vice President of Gerrys Group Airline Division said, "On behalf of my entire team, I want to sincerely acknowledge the efforts of those, who came forward and contributed to the success of this event". "We have something to celebrate today, because of the strong relations that exist between GSA, Virgin Atlantic, The Travel Trade and the local authorities in Pakistan", he added. He said that the challenges in the aviation industry were immense and "we, working together, have proven that we can overcome any, and all obstacles in the path to success". - DNA

Muslim Hands ED briefs NDMA chair

ISLAMABAD: Executive Director Muslim Hands, Pakistan Syed Javid Gillani called on the Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik here on Monday and apprised him about the progress of the construction of climate-friendly houses in areas of Mastung and Jafarabad, Balochistan. He also invited Chairman NDMA to inaugurate the newly built houses upon completion in January 2023 and briefed him on the working scope of his organization in the country, a news release said. Chairman NDMA acknowledged the relief efforts by Muslim Hands during Floods 2022 and its active participation in the ongoing rehabilitation phase. He emphasized laying out a comprehensive humanitarian response model for donors and international as well as local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for well-coordinated and tangible outcomes of the relief and rehabilitation process. He highlighted the upcoming NDMA's public declaration to indicate the contours of the future Disasters Management Plan in Pakistan after consultation with all key stakeholders. - APP

Two POs arrested during crackdown

SP *Saddar appreciated performance of police teams on arrest of the accused and said that arrested accused will be produced before court with solid evidence*

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested two proclaimed offenders wanted in murder cum robbery cases here on Monday, informed police spokesman. According to details, Kahuta police nabbed Chan Mehboob, who was wanted in murder cum robbery. During the robbery attempt, Mehfooz bibi was killed and Muhammad Riaz got injured due to indiscriminate firing. The case was registered in April 2021. Similarly, Mandra police have arrested proclaimed offender Ajmal who had opened fire along with other colleagues due to old enmity and injured Muhammad Iqbal. The case was registered in Mandra police station in September 2020. SP Saddar Muhammad Nabil Khokhar appreciated the performance of police teams on the arrest of the accused and said that the arrested accused will be produced before the court with solid evidence. - APP

Tractors' sale drops 52% in 5 months

ISLAMABAD: The sale of tractors in the country dropped from 22,003 units during July-November (2021-22) to 10,498 units during the corresponding period of current fiscal year, showing a decrease of 52 percent. On yearly basis sale of tractors also plunged by 73 percent from 4,617 units in November 2021 to 1,240 units in same month of current year, according to latest data released by Pak Automotive Manufacturing Association (PAMA). - APP

Police launch operations in various areas

RAWALPINDI: Police conducted search and combing operations in different areas here on Monday. The police spokesman said that the search operation was carried out on the direction of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Shahzad Nadeem Bukhari to maintain law and order situation.

These operations were conducted in different areas of Saddar Abroni, Ganjmandi, Bani, and Sadiqabad. He informed that a heavy police contingent, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and Ladies police along with officials conducted search operations. A total of 116 houses, col-

lected data of 48 tenants, 25 shops and 393 suspects were questioned during the operation. According to spokesman, the search operations to net criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly being conducted under National Action Plan in different areas of the district. - APP

Canals closure to commence from Dec 26: Spokesman IRSA

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has decided to close down canals for annual maintenance and de-silting between December 26, 2022 to January 30, 2023. According to Director Operation and Spokesman IRSA Khalid Idrees Rana the Mangla command canals would be closed from Dec 26 till January 13 in stage wise, and Tarbela command canals would remain closed from January 13 to 30, 2023. Under the canal closure programme, he said Punjab's lower Jhelum and Rasul Qadirabad Link would remain closed from Dec 26 to

Jan 12 while Qadirabad Baloki Link from Dec 29 to Jan 15, central Bari Doab canals from Dec 27 to Jan 13 and Lower Bari Doab, Baloki, Sulemanki Link from Dec 29 to Jan 15. Similarly, Upper Pakpattan canal, and Eastern Siddiqui canal would remain closed from Dec 30 to Jan 16, while Upper Jhelum canal from Jan 12 to 29 and Lower Chenab canal (except Jhang branch), Upper Bahwal canal from Jan 13 to 30. Jhang Branch canal to close from Dec 27 to Jan 13, while Upper Bahawal would remain closed from January 13 to 30. - APP

The ANF and ASF recovered 1,200 narcotic pills from the accused who was going to Manchester. At Lahore Airport, the ANF and ASF seized over one kg of ice from the bag of a woman resident of Narowal who was going to Bahrain

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Narcotic Force (ANF) has recovered a huge quantity of

ANF seizes huge quantities of drugs

drugs during a nationwide crackdown against smugglers of contraband items. According to a spokesperson of an ANF, the force has recovered 516 grams of ice and 104 grams of heroin from the sandal of the accused at Islamabad International airport. The accused was going to Bahrain. In another operation, the ANF seized 704 grams of hashish from the trolley bag of the accused who was going to Qatar. The accused is a resident of Hangu. The ANF and ASF recovered 1,200 narcotic pills from the accused who was going to Manchester.

At Lahore Airport, the ANF and ASF seized over one kg of ice from the bag of a woman resident of Narowal who was going to Bahrain. The force has recovered 5 kg of hashish from a woman who was going to Karachi from Quetta. While in another operation, the force recovered over 97 kg of hashish and 2 kg of opium in Quetta. The ANF seized over 4 kg of hashish and suspicious material near Chaman Bypass. Cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act. - APP

SNGPL disconnects over 15 gas connections

ISLAMABAD: Special Task Force of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) on Monday launched a crackdown against users of illegal compressors in the Islamabad Region, who were involved in depriving other consumers of gas in the peak winter season and putting people's lives at risk.

During the operation, SNGPL inspection teams visited different localities including Bhara Kahu, Taxila, Margalla Valley and Koth Hathia and disconnected more than 15 connections after they found the users involved in illegal activity of compressor installation.

"The operation will continue unabated till bringing the illegal activity to a complete end," spokesman for the SNGPL Islamabad Region Shahid Akram told APP.

He said it was unfair that some elements deprived other consumers of smooth supply of gas by installing electronic/sucking devices to manage better pressure for themselves.

He said the SNGPL vigilance teams and special task force were busy in conducting a detailed survey of all sectors, societies and other localities, within the Islamabad region including capital territory, Murree, Kahuta, Attock, Fateh Jang and Taxilla to take legal action against compressor users. The SNGPL spokesman said domestic consumers had appreciated the operation against this illegal activity and urged the local administration to take appropriate measures for preventing the sale of illegal compressors and other devices used to increase the gas pressure. - APP

New year discounts attract women buyers

ISLAMABAD: As the new year is knocking on the doors, the discounts being offered by different brands in the federal capital are attracting customers especially women who were waiting for these sales to buy dresses and other accessories at maximum discounts.

Different brands are offering 50 to 70 per cent discounts on this important event due to which a huge rush can be witnessed in markets. Most of the women can be witnessed purchasing winter stuff for this season as well as keeping good stock for next year.

Sales always remain a big attraction for shopping lovers and most of my friends prefer to buy stuff during sales to save money, Shazia Khatoon, a customer said while talking to APP. She said that due to the recent inflation, it has become difficult to buy stuff at regular prices. She added that such sales provide them with an opportunity to buy the branded stuff at affordable rates.

Aslam Khan, a salesman at a noted brand store, said that sale on such occasions is a perfect time for the brand owners to earn good business by selling more items.

He said that December remains a busy month for us due to the continuous sales on Christmas, Qaid-i-Azam day and New Year celebrations. - APP

COMSTech seeks applications for COMSTech Awards 2023

Best Research Paper awards are given for the best paper published in an impact factor international journal during the last two years (2021-22) in fields of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTech bestows biennial awards to distinguished researchers of OIC member states for their important scientific contributions. The COMSTech life time achievement awards in basic sciences are given in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. This year's nominations are sought for the awards in the fields of Physics and Mathematics. In this category each award consists of a certificate,

shield of honor, and cash prize of US\$8000. The COMSTech Awards for Excellence in Science & Technology are classified in four categories: COMSTech Young Researcher Award (under 40 years), Best Scientific Book (Authorship) - published by an international publisher during the last two years (2021 & 2022), Patent - the patent must have been registered during the past five years (2018-2022). Each of the above three awards carries a certificate, shield of honor, and cash

prize of US\$4000. The Best Research Paper awards are given for the best paper published in an impact factor international journal during the last two years (2021 & 2022) in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics. The best research paper award in each discipline carries a certificate, shield of honor, and cash prize of US\$2500. The deadline for application submission is 31st March 2023, citizens of all 57 OIC states are eligible to apply for the COMSTech Awards.

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Briefs

28.43% increase in export, Rs2.66 trillion in 5 months

ISLAMABAD :The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 28.43 percent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. Exports during July–November (2022-23) totaled Rs. 2,661,304 million as against Rs. 2,072,145 million during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 28.43%, according to provisional data released by PBS. On year-on-year basis, the exports increased by 5.89 percent in November 2022 to Rs.531,599 million against the exports of Rs.502,009 million during November 2021. On month-on-month basis, the exports increased 1.10% in November when compared to the exports of Rs. 525,831 million in October 2022. The main commodities of exports during November 2022 were knitwear (Rs. 88,974 million), ready-made garments (Rs. 72,620 million), bed wear (Rs. 49,457 million), rice other than Basmati (Rs.10,252 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 34,140 million), towels (Rs.20,597 million), fish & fish preparations (Rs.11,382 million), rice Basmati (Rs.10,252 million), cotton yarn (Rs.9,533 million) and surgical goods & medical instruments (Rs.8,343 million). On the other hand, imports during July – November (2022-23) totaled Rs. 5,841,359 million as against Rs. 5,532,271 million during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 5.59%. On YoY and MoM basis, imports into Pakistan during November, 2022 amounted to Rs. 1,152,054 million (provisional) as against Rs. 1,039,036 million in October 2022 and Rs. 1,366,681 million during November 2021 showing an increase of 10.88% over October 2021 but a decrease of 15.70% over November 2021.—APP

Ongoing USF projects to be completed by next June

ISLAMABAD :Over seventy connectivity projects worth Rs 65 billion under Universal Service Fund (USF) to connect the far-flung areas would be completed by June next year. “28 million people would get broadband facilities after completion of these connectivity projects,” an official of the Ministry of IT told on Monday. He said, since its inception, the USF has awarded 123 projects worth approximately Rs. 124.8 billion in subsidy under its flagship programs and empowered more than 26 million people living in over 12,000 mauzas, thereby covering over 120 districts across Pakistan. The USF has also successfully laid more than 12,000 km of Optical Fiber which has connected more than 600 Tehsil Headquarters (THQs), Union Councils (UCs) and major towns of Pakistan and is paving the way for 5G technology.—APP

4th Shuhada Police shooting competition starts

ISLAMABAD :A three-day National Shuhada Shooting Competition, an initiative of National Police Bureau (NPB), started here on Monday. An inaugural ceremony was held in Police Lines Headquarters Islamabad. Dr Najaf Quli Mirza, Director General NPB was the chief guest of the event while CPO headquarters, Islamabad Malik Awais Ahmad, CPO Safe City Rommel Akram, officers from NPB, Punjab, FC, Sindh and GB Police also participated in the event. Shooters of 10 teams from all over the country, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), were set to blow away their targets in the competition organized to improve skills of the participants. Prominent among the competitors were policewomen competing with handguns on the range.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Faisal Karim Kundi Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation briefs delegation of Ex-FATA Parliamentarians on Benazir Income Support Programme.—DNA

PBM to launch nationwide Thalassemia awareness drive

ISLAMABAD :Managing Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Amir Fida Paracha on Monday said that PBM has planned to launch a nationwide awareness campaign on prevention of Thalassemia among the children soon. According to a report, approximately 100,000 patients are suffering from Thalassemia in Pakistan and every year 5,000 babies are born with this deadly disease. These patients need regular blood transfusion and iron chelating agent after consultation with a qualified Hematologist along with regular diagnostic investigations on monthly basis which is unaffordable by the poor families in Pakistan. Talking to APP, Amir Fida Paracha said, “Thalassemia is a disease which can be controlled through educating people about its prevention.” He mentioned, “The reason of

transmission of this disease to the next generation is basically the marriage of two Thalassemic patients which can be avoided through spreading awareness.” “Both the parents, if are Thalassemic patients, may not face the severe consequence of this disease but their child has to suffer for the rest of his life and depend on blood transfusion,” he observed. The MD PBM said, “Thalassemia awareness campaign will be run with the help of the universities.” “Higher education institutions are the best platforms from where we can initiate our campaign by educating the young minds and engage them to further spread information about the causes and prevention measures of this disease,” he said. Referring to the example of Turkey, the

MD PBM said that Turkey has controlled over this disease through making a separate section in marriage certificate for the verification of the marrying couple if any of them are Thalassemic patient. During last three years, Amir Fida Paracha conveyed that the PBM has provided financial assistance to more than 3000 Thalassemic patients. Keeping in view the importance such centers and to cater the patients in Pakistan, PBM in financial collaboration with a private company had established a state of the art Thalassemia Center in F-9 Park to provide free of cost medical treatment facilities to the patients. “The main objectives behind creating this facility are to extend quality medical care free of cost, increase life expectancy and improvement in the quality of life for those inflicted by

this daunting disease and provide a ray of hope amidst miseries of the children with neglected backgrounds and orphans and less privileged who cannot afford the cost for the treatment of this serious disease,” he informed. Thalassaemia is a blood disorder passed down through families (inherited) in which the body makes an abnormal form of hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen. The disorder results in excessive destruction of red blood cells, which leads to anemia. Anemia is a disorder in which your body doesn't have enough normal, healthy Red Blood Cells (RBC). This disease is inherited, meaning that at least one of the parents is a carrier of the disease. It is caused by either a genetic mutation, or a deletion of certain key genes.

China-Pak-Belt LUSAIL stadium hosts final

DNA

ISLAMABAD: LUSAIL stadium on Sunday 18th December successfully hosted the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 Final. An event that secured its place in football and architectural history. China Railway Construction Corporation Ltd (CRCC), the main contractor, with the collaboration of more than 3000 Pakistani Engineers and Workers, spent 4 years constructing this “Shiny Golden Bowl”, said the Chinese Embassy Islamabad in a tweet, according to Gwadar Pro

on Monday. Lusail Stadium received a five-star rating on 16 August 2022 for its design and construction from the Global Sustainability Assessment System GSAS. The iconic stadium entertained 80,000 fans who came together for the World Cup Final played between Argentina and France. According to the Qatar football Association, the stadium is expected to be reconfigured into a 40,000-seat stadium. Excess seating will be removed, and other parts of the building will be repurposed as a community

space with shops, cafés, athletic and education facilities, and a health clinic. The design is inspired by the handcrafted bowls found throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds during the rise of civilization, while light interplays are reminiscent of the region's fan lanterns. The golden exterior will fade over time, replicating aged metal handicrafts to create a venue alive with cultural character. The procurement process for the stadium conversion began in 2014. The stadium was built as a joint venture by HBK Con-

tracting and the China Railway Construction Corporation. Like the other stadiums planned for the 2022 World Cup, the Lusail Stadium is cooled using solar power and is claimed to have zero carbon footprint. Construction began on 11th April 2017. Completion of the stadium was originally scheduled for 2020. It was then to host three friendly matches until the 2022 World Cup, but as the completion of the stadium was postponed, it subsequently hosted 10 games including the final.

CDNS obtains Rs 700 billion through fresh bonds

ISLAMABAD :The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) on Monday obtained the target of issuing Rs 700 billion fresh bonds in the current fiscal year 2022-23 from July 01 to December 10, 2022. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.3 trillion for the current financial year (2022-23) which will promote the savings culture in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP. In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target has been set to further improve the savings culture, he said. Replying to a question, he said the CDNS surpassed its annual target in the previous fiscal year 2021-22 and set a historic record of Rs 1,250 billion in savings till June 30, 2022. For the first time in its history, CDNS crossed Rs 1,000 billion in fresh deposits and achieved the target of Rs 1,250 billion by June 30, 2022. He said the CDNS had attained the target of issuing Rs 1,250 billion in fresh bonds from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. It had set an annual gross receipt target of Rs 980 billion from July 1 to June 30 of the previous fiscal year 2020-21 to promote savings in the country.—APP

IESCO issues power suspension schedule

ISLAMABAD: On 20th December, From 08:00 AM to 04:00 PM, 132KV Grid Station Kotli. Sattian, From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Bani Gala, Imran Khan, CDA Flat, PM Staff Colony, ISI, Pandorian, Ghori Garden, Simli Dam, Lohi Bhir, F-8/3, G-10/2, I-8/1, I-8 Center, I-10/2, G-13/4 Ext, Dargah, Bhara Kahu, Kaldna, Bahrain, Patriata, Upper Topa, Pir Suhawah, Anguri, Shahpur, Shahdara, Mangyal, Disto, T&T, Tit, Bhara Kaho To, Golf City, Bhara Kaho, NIH, Athal, NCP, Daman Koh, Quaid-e-Azam University, Punjab House, Bri Imam, Mandla Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Bank Road Two, Sir Syed Road, Makka Chowk, Madina Town One, Mohra Nagyal, Murree Brewery, Major Riaz, 502 Workshop, Rajar, Garja One, Cantt, Mansoor Shaheed, Lahtrar One, Kallar Syedan, Ghazan Khan, Hamid Jhangji, Pind Jatlan, Sukhu, Syed Kasran, Chak Baily Khan-2 Feeders, Attock Circle, Jalala, Bohi Gher, Haru, Dharek, Valley, Purmiana, Garhi Afghanistan, Hassan Abdal, Colonel Sher Khan, Pathargarh, Maskinabad, Attock Cantt, Tim Mela, Bagh, Neelam, Shah Dir, Shamsabad, Hattian, GBHP, Qaziabad, Soni, Karpa, Bhatiyot, Qutbah, Chhab, Fateh Jang, Lanivala Dharmal, Khore, Bohi Gher, Salargah, Haru, Ghori, Mushtaq Shaheed, Jalala, Nawababad Feeders, Jhelum Circle, F-9 Chak Daulat, M Major Riaz Shaheed, Dina-1 Bakrala, Dumeli, Khali Kholi, Mumtaz Shaheed, Ward 8, Jermot, Nai Khanqah, Baba Shaheed, Chhappar Sharif.—DNA

Solo show on contemporary art concludes at PNCA

ISLAMABAD :A solo show of contemporary art paintings by Natasha Malik concluded here Monday at Khas Art Gallery featuring “The Life of an Image” – a multimedia series through which Malik explored the introspective artistic process, its challenges, complexities and outcomes. The body of work examined the creative process of art-making and interprets the life of the work once it leaves the artist's studio. The artwork exists and interacts within a multitude of systems, which often operate entirely independent of the artist, each with its own vision and purpose. Ultimately, these systems determine the life of the work in terms of how it is perceived, where it will be viewed and by whom, and how it is contextualized. These thematic concerns culminate in Artscape,

a four-player board game the artist has created which enables its players to experience the art world. The four players are The Artist, The Gallerist, The Critic, and The Collector. Playing cards guide each player throughout the game which consists of discussions, making choices, answering riddles, and monetary exchanges. Various dilemmas are presented to each player in the game which impacts his/her success and relationship with other players. The game examines the relationship between creative practitioners, art production, and the art market. It addresses power structures such as Patriarchy and Capitalism, specifically drawing attention to ethical art practices. The role of the artist as a creative individual contending with these power structures is a central theme, said the

organizers. Natasha Malik is an artist and the founder of The Creative Process - an artistic platform working across the intersections of site-specific curatorial projects and activism from a feminist point of view. Currently based out of Islamabad, Pakistan, she is interested in the synthesis of art making and curation in the context of regional education, history, censorship and social justice. As an artist, Malik explores female identity developed within the constraints of patriarchy. Her multi-disciplinary practice includes painting, installation, film, printmaking, and photography. Visceral reactions to tensions experienced under oppressive patriarchal structures are processed and reimagined through her visual vocabulary.—APP

Naek lauds Bilawal for taking up Kashmir issue

ISLAMABAD :Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has done remarkably well in not only bringing Kashmir issue in the global limelight but also rightly exposing to the world the true fascist face of India, said Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Senator Ferooz H. Naek. According to a press release, he said Bilawal has effectively highlighted the hitherto unresolved issue of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by minding no words in loudly recalling Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as ‘The Butcher of Gujrat’ at the UNSC. He said he fully endorsed the foreign minister's statement wherein he stated that, “He (Narendra Modi) was banned from entering this country (the United States). These are the prime minister and the foreign minister of RSS, which draws inspiration from Hitler's SS.” The former Senate Chairman also commended the foreign minister on very pertinently reminding the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to fulfil its obliga-



tion vis-vis an agenda item that had been left unaddressed – the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Senator Naek said Bilawal Bhutto, while speaking on open debate ‘Maintenance of International Peace and Security – Reformed Multilateralism’ in the UNSC, had dexterously used the forum to urge the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to

implement its resolutions on the Kashmir issue and deliver its commitment to peace in the region and “prove that multilateralism can succeed”. He was also appreciative of the fact how the foreign minister made use of the UN platform to show to the world that India, ‘the so-called biggest democracy and a secular state’, was actually an extremist RSS-led mobocracy following a myopic, intolerant and terror-driven ultra-nationalistic Hindutva philosophy that considered the whole of India as an essentially Hindu state that had no room for religious and ethnic minorities and progressive elements. The Senate Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman also demanded the immediate release of Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik and all other Kashmiri leaders and people incarcerated on trumped-up charges. He said Yasin Malik and other political prisoners were victims of draconian Indian Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA) was black law that aimed at

targeting political opponents. India's malfeasant attempts to fallaciously implicate and incarcerate Kashmiri leadership in fabricated cases will neither dampen their (Kashmiris') morale nor dent their legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination, Senator Naek said. The historic struggle being waged by valiant people of the IIOJK for their rights is indigenous and cannot be hampered by the draconian strong-arm tactics of the Modi-led Indian Government, he said. Senator Naek also urged the international community to take cognizance of India's atrocities and highhandedness on Muslims in general and Kashmiris in particular and impress upon New Delhi to stop its human rights violations and excesses against minorities, especially Muslims. He also called upon the international community to help Kashmiris exercise their right to self-determination as espoused under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and as per their own wishes.—APP

ANF seizes over 115 kg drugs, 1200 intoxicated tablets

RAWALPINDI :Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized over 115 kg of drugs and 1200 intoxicated tablets and arrested five accused including two women during seven counter-narcotics operations throughout the country, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday. He said that the ANF in an operation at Islamabad International Airport recovered 516 grams of Ice drug and 104 grams of heroin from the possession of a passenger resident of Khyber who was going to Bahrain. 704 grams of charras was also recovered from the trolley bag of another Bahrain-bound passenger resident of Hangu.

In a joint operation at the Islamabad International Airport, ANF and ASF seized 1200 intoxicated tablets and held an accused resident of Mirpur who was going to Manchester. The spokesman further said that ANF and ASF recovered 1933 grams of Ice drug at Lahore Airport from the possession of a Bahrain-bound female passenger resident of Narowal. ANF Balochistan in an operation recovered five kg of charras from the possession of a woman going to Karachi from Quetta. In another raid, ANF Balochistan also seized over 97 kg of charras and two kg of opium from Quetta. In a raid conducted near Chaman Bypass, ANF seized 4.8 kg of charras and 10.7 kg of other suspected material.—APP

The closing se Sheesha centre raided, three held

RAWALPINDI :Police on Monday raided a Sheesha Centre in the limits of the Rata Amral area and arrested three accused besides recovering arms and weapons from their possession. The police spokesman disclosed that on a tip-off, the Rata Amral police carried out an operation and arrested three accused identified as Faraz, Zakir and Aqib. The police team recovered ‘sheeshas’ and other smoking items from their possession. It is pertinent to mention here that anti-smoking drive has been launched in the city to ensure implementation of Anti-smoking Law, 2002. sion will be held on Dec 22 where winners will be given awards.—APP

Railways to restore Fared Express from December 22

ISLAMABAD, Dec 19 (APP):Pakistan Railway is all set to restore the operation of the Fared Express passenger train from Lahore to Karachi to facilitate the passengers of the area from December 22. “The train operation is halted due to the flash floods washed away the tracks at various places in the country which now have been restored,” an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said that Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique had directed the concerned officials to resume the operation of Fared Express with maximum facilities for the passengers. The official said that as many as 18 coaches would be added to the Fared Express while the train would start its journey from Lahore, through Pakpattan to Karachi railway station. He said that Pakistan Railways had started advance booking of Fared Express and on the direction of the Minister for Railways, the department had taken special care of occupancy, cleanliness, and punctuality of the trains in all stations. The official said the train would run under the management of a private company Ms. S Jamil & Co and the department had allowed the company to start reservations for the train.

It is pertinent to mention here that, the passengers had also demanded Pakistan Railways authorities of resumption of Fared Express, the only train which runs between Lahore-Karachi-Lahore via Vehari-Burewala. They said that the locals, who wished to travel by it to Lahore or Karachi, have been facing inconvenience for over two months as it is the only train on this track.—APP

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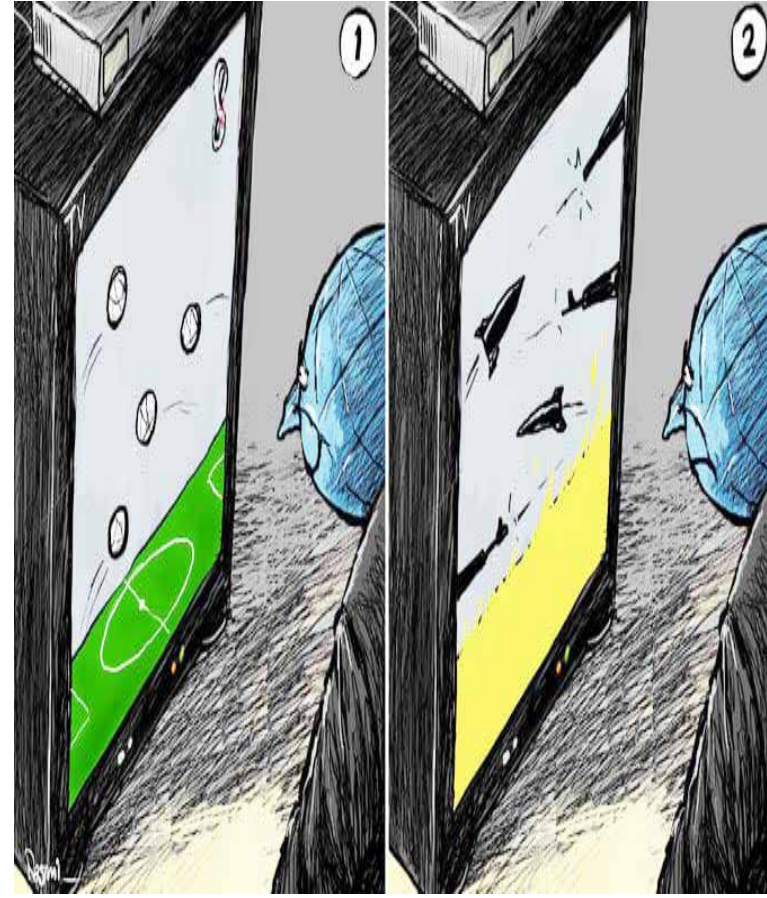
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US running rogue with abuse of export controls

While the United States government may remove some Chinese companies from the so-called Unverified List, according to Western media reports, it is expected to add 35 Chinese firms, including YMTC, to the Entity List, which may actually cut them off from critical US supplies. YMTC, or Yangtze Memory Technologies, is the largest memory chips manufacturer in China. Its blacklisting certainly will be a sign of the US escalating its attempts to strangle the country's semiconductor industry, and further damage bilateral trade ties as well as the overall relationship. In October, the US Department of Commerce put YMTC and 30 other Chinese technology firms on its Unverified List, claiming the US could not prove they were not supporting the People's Liberation Army. They were given 60 days to prove their business activities did not put US national security at risk. Failure to do so would result in themselves being added to the notorious Entity List, a trade blacklist that denies them access to US technology and equipment unless with a special license from the US government. As is evident from what happened to Chinese firms such as Huawei, such treatment makes life very difficult for any company on technology's cutting edge. That is exactly why Washington has resorted to its export control regime against China. The White House makes no secret of its whole-of-government approach to strangling Chinese technological and military advances. The Chinese Foreign Ministry decried the approach again on Wednesday, condemning it for politicizing and weaponizing economic cooperation and disrupting global supply chains, and promised to take moves to protect the lawful rights of Chinese companies. Washington's repeated broadening of the concept of national security and abusive application of export controls are "naked economic coercion and technological bullying", a spokesman said. China has filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization about US-imposed trade controls, arguing they disrupt global trade. The usually protracted WTO dispute resolution process notwithstanding, even if there is a ruling in Beijing's favor one day, it may hardly make a difference. After all, as the successive legislations the US Congress has kept churning out, the National Security Strategy the Joe Biden administration has published, and the increasingly bipartisan consensus against China indicates, suppressing Chinese tech progress has actually become a core US national strategy. Washington would not accept the latest WTO ruling against US duties on imported steel and aluminum products, so there is no chance a core US national strategy will change because of a WTO verdict. They should be aware that by abusing its export control measures in this way to impede China's development, the US is taking a wrecking ball to the global trade rules and the international trade order and global industry chains, and consider whether they really want to be a party to that. History will judge that to be a mistake as it will only reinforce the divisions the US is trying to cement in place.

Tough talk can't mask past failures

The UK's backlog of asylum claims, which currently stands at about 140,000, has been building up since 2013. The government, and specifically the Home Office, bears responsibility for this. Try as he might to present himself as a new broom, sweeping away old cobwebs and cleaning up a scrappy system, Rishi Sunak must take his share of responsibility for the current dysfunction – and the acute suffering it leads to. In the House of Commons on Tuesday, the prime minister sought to present his five-point plan as a blast of bold, fresh thinking. His ambition to drastically reduce the backlog next year, and promise of new resources including extra, specialist caseworkers, sound like constructive steps. But it is doubtful whether these aims will be met, and the rest of the announcement gave more reason for alarm than relief at the direction of travel. Last month an accommodation centre at Manston airport in Kent was emptied out after unacceptable conditions including disease outbreaks were exposed. But ministers seem as determined as ever to avoid the expense of hotels, and Mr Sunak claimed in parliament that vacant holiday camps and army barracks will soon provide beds for 10,000 people. Citing his close working relationship with the home secretary, Suella Braverman – who should have resigned in October for breaching the ministerial code – Mr Sunak also signalled his support for the policy of deporting asylum seekers to Rwanda. And he promised new legislation that will – if passed – make it impossible for people arriving in the UK on small boats to submit asylum claims at all. A reasonable case can be made for fast-tracking returns to Albania, as some EU countries are already doing, and for an enhanced role for the National Crime Agency in combating trafficking. But it is wrong to present such measures in militaristic rhetoric about "boots on the ground" patrolling French beaches. Whatever the reasons for the shift in demographics of small-boat passengers, the reality of life for most asylum seekers of all nationalities is a level of hardship difficult for people living settled lives to imagine. The government's cruel and wasteful Rwanda scheme makes it an international outlier. There is every reason to doubt the pledge to tackle waiting lists with new staff, given that recruitment targets across the public sector are routinely being missed. Following Liz Truss's disgraceful suggestion in the summer that the French president could be considered a "foe", Mr Sunak's commitment to work with EU partners is a welcome change. For the sake of the thousands of people stuck in limbo, waiting for their claims to be processed, it must be hoped that his renewed focus on this issue will bring some beneficial effects, however limited.



Throwing darts

James Dorsey

At first glance, Islamic scholars discussing the religious legitimacy of the United Nations and the nation-state sounds esoteric. It's not. On the contrary, it's potentially revolutionary. Religious scholars, led by Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest and arguably most moderate Muslim civil society movement in the world's largest Muslim-majority country and democracy, hope that the legitimization will counter notions of a caliphate and a transnational Islamic state as an alternative world order as advocated by militants such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. If adopted, legitimization of the United Nations would make the UN charter with its references to "fundamental human rights... the dignity and worth of the human person, (and)... the equal rights of men and women" legally binding for its Muslim signatories, according to religious law. In doing so, the religious legitimization would take substantial wind out of the sails of often whipped-up anti-Muslim sentiment that questions Muslim attitudes and loyalty towards the state. That sentiment was, for example, evident when an anchor on India's controversial Hindu nationalist, Hindi-language Z news recently asked whether "Muslims who sing the national anthem become kafirs." The anchor was using the Arabic word for an infidel. The effort to reform Islamic jurisprudence so that it embraces the concept of the nation-state, and the United Nations, is part of a sustained Nahdlatul Ulama effort to spark reform of Islamic jurisprudence and inspire other faiths to take a critical look at their potentially problematic tenants as a way of countering extremism and religiously inspired violence. That's where the revolutionary aspect kicks in. Reform of Islamic jurisprudence challenges a key pillar of autocratic strategies in the Muslim world designed to ensure the survival of repressive regimes. Muslim leaders, parroted by their Western counterparts, have for more than two decades since 9/11 insisted that Islam and Islamic jurisprudence need no reform. Instead, they assert that jihadis misrepresent and misconstrue the faith. In doing so, autocrats drown out criticism of their brutal, repressive rule that brooks no dissent and potentially provokes violence. Casting jihadis as deviants rather than products of problematic tenants of jurisprudence that justify violence stymies criticism of the justification of autocracy as a necessary means to combat violence and promote moderate Islam. Even so,

that may not be a popularly shared approach. In a poll, 56 per cent of Saudis surveyed said the government was not "paying attention to the opinions of ordinary citizens like me." Timed to coincide with the centennial of Nahdlatul Ulama according to the Muslim Hijri calendar, the scholars will gather in February in the Indonesian city of Surabaya under the auspices of the recently constituted Religion Forum 20, a Group of 20 engagement tack, to discuss an "Islamic jurisprudence for a global civilization." The Group of 20 brings together the world's largest economies. Nahdlatul Ulama's concept note for the Surabaya conference argues that "views that legitimize and encourage suspicion, segregation, discrimination, and even hostility and conflict towards those who bear the legal status of 'infidels... are scattered throughout classical texts on Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). These views... are still considered... credible... and should... be practiced to the present day. Muslim groups involved in conflict – including the use of violence and terror – defend their position by citing references from these classical fiqh texts." The concept note was bolstered by a Nahdlatul Ulama religious finding in 2019 that eliminated the category of the kafir or in Islamic law. Potentially, the concept note will put on the spot some of the invited speakers, such as Muslim World League General Secretary Muhammad al-Issa. Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies President Abdallah bin Bayyah, Tabah Foundation head Habib al-Jufri, and Ahmad Al Tayyeb the Grand Imam of Al Azhar, the Muslim world's foremost seat of Islamic learning. These men represent autocratic regimes that insist that Islamic jurisprudence needs no reform. Mr. Al-Issa's League is Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's vehicle for propagating a socially liberal, politically repressive interpretation of Islam that demands absolute obedience to the ruler. Messrs. Bin Bayyah and AlJufri serve the same purpose for United Arab Emirates President Mohammed bin Zayed. Mr. Al-Tayyeb's Al Azhar is subservient to the government of Egyptian President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi and supported by the two Gulf monarchies. Religious legitimization of the United Nations and the concept of a nation-state could have far-reaching consequences for the order of the Muslim world that partially bases its religious justification on the employment by the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) of the language of Islamic jurisprudence to empower states. The OIC groups the world's 57 Muslim-majority countries. By reforming the jurisprudence, Nahdlatul Ulama would, in theory, introduce guardrails for the incorporation by OIC members of Islamic law into domestic legal sys-

tems. By and large, Muslim-majority states have used the OIC framework to monopolise the right to interpret Islamic law and bend it to their will, for example, in the justification of abuse of human rights or, in the case of countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to demand absolute obedience of the ruler. The OIC and some of its members have also used the organisation's religious framing and 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam to lobby the United Nations to classify blasphemy as a violation of human rights and a form of hate speech. Liberal critics charge that Nahdlatul Ulama's silence about a recently adopted new Indonesian criminal code has cast a shadow over its credibility. The law defines apostasy as leaving a religion or belief and criminalises anyone who attempts to persuade a person to be a non-believer in a religion or belief. It also bans extramarital sex and curbs freedom of expression by, for example, outlawing insulting the president, but puts major limitations on who can file a complaint. Nahdlatul Ulama's acquiescence sparked questions on how it squares that with its unconditional endorsement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – a significant differentiator in its rivalry with state-sponsored autocratic versions of moderate Islam. Privately, influential Nahdlatul Ulama sources defend the socially restrictive aspects of the law but concede that freedom of expression concerns are legitimate. The sources expect the law to be modified in challenges likely to be filed with the Constitutional Court. Even so, scholars Sana Jaffrey and Eve Warburton warned that provisions of the law "threaten political dissent with prison sentences and have the potential to muzzle public debate about the purview of the state in citizens' private and political lives." The criticism notwithstanding, Nahdlatul Ulama's effort to anchor the United Nations and the concept of the nation-state in Islamic jurisprudence constitutes the most serious current challenge to autocratic Muslim justification of repressive rule. In doing so, it could prove to be revolutionary. Thank you to all who have demonstrated their appreciation for my column by becoming paid subscribers. This allows me to ensure that it continues to have maximum impact. Maintaining free distributions means that news website, blogs, and newsletters across the globe can republish it. I launched my column, The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer, 12 years ago. To borrow a phrase from an early proprietor of The Observer, it offers readers, listeners, and viewers 'the scoop of interpretation.' If you are able and willing to support the column, please become a paid subscriber by clicking on Substack on the subscription button and choosing one of the subscription options.

The Taiwan Conundrum

Syed Nasir Hassan

Washington's unwanted presence in Asia is hindering the region's growth creating economic and structural fissures. U.S. needs to reassess its diplomatic orientation or may shift it to collaboration rather containment for global peace to prevail

Geography plays an important role in the faith of nation then comes the leadership which steers that faith and great powers are those who have both. Great powers of today's world were empires of the past. Many proceeded into becoming global hegemony and rests were laid in the ranks of those upon which great power competition is being played. Taiwan is one such piece of land, blessed with geography, bloomed under an empire, shined under a nation state and now a captive of great power competition. While one claims it to be its integral part, other exploits it to settle its global political feuds. For many the strategic brawl over Taiwan is a matter of recent times however, it dates back 20th century when at the end of decades long cold war, Communists won in China and US backed nationalists fled to Taiwan forming an independent government. Washington signed a security pact with Taiwan in 1950 with an objective of backing nationalists and refused to acknowledge the People's Republic of China (PRC). However, in 1972, US played a diplomatic card by recognizing Peoples Republic of China and Taiwan as an integral part of PRC ending its official relations with Taiwan but at the same time it introduced Taiwan relations act to continue its relations with Taiwan at the same time. Since then, Washington played a significantly passive role by economic and arms assistance to Taiwan through mutual trade. The economic importance of Taiwan can also not be neglected between Washington and Beijing perhaps it remains one of main contentious element in this strategic brawl between the two powers. US was having its tech revolution in late 1970-80s and hence required electronics and IT manufacturing equipment which is Taiwan's jewel in the crown. The trade volume between the two has increased since then making US Taiwan's biggest importer of chips and electronic material. Taiwan's export to US were around \$16 billion in 1985 which skyrocketed to \$77 billion in 2021. Taiwan is China's 6th and US' 10th largest trade partner however; this trade stats is more invariably dependent on the chip mine Taiwan is sitting on henceforth none can give up on Taiwan for both strategic and economic reasons. The recent geo-political events have made Taiwan a hot bed for next geopolitical

The coup attempt in Germany

Adham Kawa



On December 7, 2022, the German authorities announced the dismantling of a network of supporters of an extreme right-wing group that aimed to seize power by carrying out an armed attack on the German Parliament building and controlling it, stressing that it is an operation that has been planned since November 2021. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier expressed his deep concern that the ideas of extremists have reached this unprecedented level internally. German Interior Minister Nancy Wesser described the activists behind the act as "united in their hatred of democracy and the German state." This attempted coup against power in Germany sparked a great controversy about the movement involved in it, its motives, as well as its repercussions during the coming period. According to information issued by the official government agencies in Germany, the details of this coup plot can be summarized in the following points: The accused: 25 out of 52 wanted far-right extremists were arrested in a sweeping operation that covered all parts of Germany, most of them are elderly, and they are suspected of forming an organized group, and their supposed leaders include: Heinrich XIII, 71, a scion of a noble family from the state of Thuringia in eastern Germany, whose family origins give him influence among extremists. A former lieutenant colonel in the German army named "Rudiger", who was the commander of a battalion of paratroopers in the 1990s. A judge named "Birgit MalsackWenkmann", a former deputy of the far-right "Alternative for Germany" AfD party between 2017 and 2021, and she was handed over the justice bag in the "conspirators' government", as described by the German authorities. spokesman for the German Defense Ministry, Arne Kolatz, also announced that there were other soldiers involved, one of whom belonged to the Special Forces Command. 2-Their ideological orientations: The German Federal Prosecutor, Peter Frank,

announced that the participants in the planning process for the coup are followers of the ideological ideas of the "QAnon" group, which believes in the conspiracy theory, and they belong to the "Reichsbürger" movement; It is a movement that appeared in the eighties and does not recognize the legitimacy of the current German state, and its supporters refuse to pay taxes or submit to the police, and their total number is estimated at about 20,000, including a small group estimated at about a thousand people who have become highly organized since the end of 2021, as it has a central organizational structure and a military wing. Its members have licenses to own weapons. - The coup plan: According to a press release issued by the German prosecution, the stalkers prepared concretely to enter the seat of parliament in Berlin (Bundestag) with a small armed group, in a scenario similar to the attack on the Capitol building by supporters of the former US President, Donald Trump. They were also trained to handle weapons, and at least four meetings were held during the summer to expand the network of members of this group. Recruitment efforts specifically targeted members of the German police and army. The military branch of the cell was responsible for purchasing weapons and organizing training. Multiple dimensions overlapped in an attempt to analyze the timing and objectives of this coup attempt in Germany, the most important of which are the following: 1-Hinting at Russian involvement in the coup plot: The German press indicated that there was a partner within the coup network, a Russian citizen named "Vitalia"; A friend of Henry XIII, she attempted to act as an intermediary to coordinate contact with the Russian authorities for possible support. However, the Kremlin strongly denied any "Russian interference" in this file, and the Russian embassy in Berlin denied any involvement in these terrorist activities. Later, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov commented that no Russian interference of any kind could be discussed. The German security services showed their strength: about 3,000 security personnel were mobilized to carry out the coup thwarting operation, and more than 130 searches and raids were conducted, in a procedure that German media described as the largest ever police operation in the country. The campaign of arrests was also carried out in 11 out of 16 German states, and the inspections included army barracks in southwestern Germany, to show that the security system in the country is very strong, and that the intelligence services are working efficiently, after criticism that it had not obtained prior information about The plan to blow up the gas pipelines "Nord Stream 1 and 2" and the failure to find the perpetrators. The power of influence of "conspiracy theory" narratives: "Reichscitizens" believe that a "deep state" actually rules Germany, similar to the ideas of the QAnon movement that emerged in the United States and

considers that there is a targeting of the white man, which many analyzes linked to the storming of a building The Capitol in January 2021. Supporters of the "Reichsbürger" movement tried to enter the German Parliament in August 2020, in protest against the health restrictions imposed during the Corona pandemic, against which resentment was exploited to attract more supporters of their movement. Supporters of this trend have also intimidated some doctors who are vaccinating against Covid-19, and some of them are attributed to trying to plan the kidnapping of the German Minister of Health. 4- Evoking the imperial past of Germany: Some supporters of the "Reichsbürger" or "citizens of the Reich" believe that the true form of Germany existed between 1871 and 1918, while others consider that the constitution of the Weimar Republic between the two world wars is the constitution of the real Germany, while a third group focuses on considering The legal borders of German lands are the borders that were established in 1937. Most of the "Reichsbürgers" refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the current democratic state in Germany, and they aim to return to the former imperial form, but they lack a unified vision about the preferred alternative system, is it akin to a constitutional monarchy For Kaiser Wilhelm II, or the democratic experience of the Weimar Republic, or the experience of Nazi rule? The recent coup attempt and the selection of Henry XIII as the head of power reveals the longing for the restoration of a constitutional monarchy in the style of Caesarean rule. Recalling the "Beer Hall" coup in 1923: The failed attempt at the current coup in Germany with the approach of 2023 brought back memories of the coup organized by the German National Socialist Workers' Party (the Nazi Party) about a hundred years ago, specifically in 1923. Although that coup was successfully suppressed by the police at the time, it changed the course of German history, because it drew the attention of the German people towards Adolf Hitler. At a time when Germany was facing high inflation, Hitler tried to overthrow the Weimar Republic, and although his coup attempt failed, his Nazi party grew significantly after that. The thwarted coup in Germany could have many repercussions in the near future, the most prominent of which can be explained in the following: Tightening control over extremists and preventing their possession of weapons: There were calls to monitor supporters of the far-right to ensure their adherence to the law, and the German Minister of the Interior, Nancy Wesser, came out to stress that the government must do better to combat the violence of the extreme right, and to prevent its possession of weapons, especially within army and police.

-The writer is International Relations & Diplomacy

Briefs

CTD Police compound is still in...

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CTD compound have reportedly snatched guns from security guards late on Sunday evening and made hostages all of security forces personnel including an officer of armed forces. As a result of primary encounter, one policeman was killed and three other personnel of security forces including a Captain injured. Since Sunday evening, there exists curfew like situation in almost Cantonment areas of Bannu, adjacent to North Waziristan. The compound is surrounded by heavy contingents of military, para military and police personnel. All roads and routes in the area have been closed for traffic and pedestrians as well. University administration announced postponing of Examinations whereas all educational institutions in cantonment areas also shuttered. The civilians residing in cantonment are being directed "not to come out," or "remain inside homes."

The militants soon after disarming and converting the security forces personnel as hostages, demanded safe passage to Afghanistan but from Monday morning they asking for giving them opportunities to enter North or South Waziristan. The banned TTP through a statement confirmed militant's association with it and asked the government to let them to move and enter Waziristan region. The militants who have occupied the CTD Police Station Compound stated from 20 to 25 whereas civilians, locked for interrogation purposes are also stated around 10 in strength. The militants as well as the civilians are sharing video message, demanding of the government for giving safe passage to them. Bannu facing this situation for second time in last one decade. On the mid night between April 14th and 15th (in early hours of April 15th Sunday), the militants broke away main gate of Bannu Jail and released 384 inmates including 150 hard core militants like suicide bombers. Amongst the released persons Adnan Rashid, ex-Pakistan Air Force employee charged for involvement in murder attempt against ex-military chief and President Pervez Musharaf. Disappearance of Adnan Rashid is still a mystery.

'Codal limitations' stopping...

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On one occasion in the presence of several PTI ministers, the sources close to the retired general said, the former army chief reportedly warned Imran Khan against his wish of fixing all his opponents as well as many of his own party leaders. These sources, however, confirm that Gen (ret'd) Bajwa had been advising the former prime minister to focus on economy instead of his opposition. During his government, Imran Khan himself has been heard complaining about the fear of NAB and its negative impact on economy and civilian bureaucracy. But his urge to fix the opposition did not let him reform the NAB. General (ret'd) Bajwa is mostly blamed for keenly pursuing what is generally referred to as "Imran Khan project." It is alleged by Khan's opponents and many media commentators that the establishment initiated supporting Imran Khan almost a decade back.

Imran victim of his own...

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taken any step to serve the people," he pointed out. "The Pakistani nation has now recognised his true face, the biggest proof of which is the recent Kashmir elections. Despite its government, the PTI could not get 30 percent seats," he added.

High Court rules Rwanda deportation plan legal

Britain's ruling Conservative Party has made a priority of the Brexit promises of tackling immigration and control of the country's borders

DNA

LONDON: The High Court in London has today ruled the British government's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda is legal. In April, the UK struck a deal with Kigali, aiming to send tens of thousands of migrants arriving on its shores to Rwanda. However, no deportation has yet taken place because of legal challenges - and this may remain the case should there be further appeals. Announcing the court's decision, Judge Clive Lewis said it was lawful for Britain to make arrangements with the Rwanda government to send asylum seekers to the country for their asylum claims to be determined there. "The (British) government has made arrangements with the government of Rwanda which are intended to ensure that asylum claims of people relocated to Rwanda are properly determined there," the judge said. "In those circumstances, the relocation of asylum

seekers to Rwanda is consistent with the Refugee Convention and with the statutory and other legal obligations on the government, including the obligation imposed by the Human Rights Act 1998." But the High Court added that the country's former interior minister had failed to consider properly the individual circumstances of eight individual asylum-seekers who had challenged the policy. Those cases must be reconsidered, he said. The decision has been welcomed by the government in Kigali. "We welcome this decision and are ready to offer asylum seekers and migrants the opportunity to build a new life in Rwanda," government spokeswoman Yolande Makolo told AFP, calling it a "positive" step to solve the global migration crisis. The first planned deportation flight was blocked in June by a last-minute injunction from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), and the strategy's lawfulness was subsequently challenged by a judicial review at London's High Court. The government's

victory on Monday does not mean that flights can take off straight away because there may be a further appeal in the British courts. The ECHR injunction imposed during the summer prevents any immediate deportations until the conclusion of legal action in the United Kingdom. All this comes at a time when illegal crossings of the English Channel have reached record levels, and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has staked his political credibility on stopping the arrivals in small boats. Britain's ruling Conservative Party has made a priority of the Brexit promises of tackling immigration and control of the country's borders. Sunak has said he wants to restart flights to Rwanda, despite opposition from politicians across all main parties, as well as the United Nations. The prime minister is under growing pressure from his own members of parliament and the public, with figures showing around 45,000 people have arrived in small vessels on English shores this year,

compared to 28,526 in 2021. Four migrants, including a teenager, died attempting the crossing last week. In November 2021, 27 migrants perished when their small boat capsized trying to make the journey. The UK and France have vowed to intensify a drive to stop the dangerous journeys, with only limited success. Many migrants have travelled from Afghanistan, Iran, or other countries suffering war or repression to travel across Europe. Increasing numbers this year have come from Albania - which the UK insists is a "fundamentally safe country" - prompting calls for a clampdown on criminal people-smuggling gangs. Lawyers acting for asylum seekers from countries including Syria, Sudan, and Iraq, as well as charities and Border Force staff told the High Court in hearings this year that the government's Rwanda policy was inhumane and does not comply with human rights conventions. They said that Rwanda, whose own human rights record is under scrutiny, does not have the

capacity to process the claims, and there is a risk some migrants could be returned to countries from which they had fled, citing concern raised by government officials themselves. Government lawyers argued that the agreement with Rwanda ensured that those who would be deported there would have a "safe and efficient" refugee status determination procedure. Britain says the Rwanda deportation strategy will help deter migrants from making the perilous trip across the English Channel and will smash the business model of people-smuggling networks. Supporters of the Rwanda deal say that sending migrants to the country will reduce overcrowding in processing centres and give genuine refugees a home. Under the agreement with Rwanda, anyone judged to have entered Britain illegally is eligible for deportation, with the exception of unaccompanied children. Deportees granted protection by Kigali would be eligible to live there but would not be permitted to return to Britain.

Messi's royal Arab robe draws undeserved backlash

DOHA: Gary Lineker and Pablo Zabaleta were astounded by the sight of Lionel Messi, resplendent in a sheer black robe, triumphantly hoisting the World Cup aloft. Argentina captain Messi scored twice in the dramatic 3-3 draw with France before his side triumphed on penalties to finally win football's ultimate prize at age 35. At the trophy presentation, he was offered a bisht, a traditional Arab cloak, to wear by the emir of Qatar. Messi allowed the emir to place the robe around his shoulders before taking the trophy from FIFA President Gianni Infantino and lifting it in front of his ecstatic teammates. BBC presenter Lineker felt the decision spoiled what should have been a "magic moment." The former England striker said: "This is a magic moment. It seems a shame that they've covered up Messi in his Argentina shirt." Ex-Argentina defender Zabaleta agreed, saying on BBC One: "Just why? No reason to do that." FIFA has been asked to comment by the PA news agency. The emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, wrote on Twitter: "I congratulate the Argentine national team for winning the Qatar World Cup 2022, and the French national team... and I thank all the teams for their outstanding play, and the fans who enthusiastically encouraged them. "In conclusion, we have fulfilled our promise to organize an exceptional championship from the Arab countries, which provided an opportunity for the peoples of the world to learn about the richness of our culture and the originality of our values." Dr. Mustafa Baig, a lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, told PA that the bisht is a



formal robe worn by royalty, dignitaries, grooms on their wedding day and graduates at graduation ceremonies. "So only a select few people would wear the best," he said. Baig said about Messi wearing the garment: "They honoured him by putting it over his shoulders. 'It's like a mark of honor and just kind of a cultural welcoming and acceptance.'" Baig said it is also representative of Qatar's national dress - but only on important occasions. "And this is a top occasion. I mean, there's probably no bigger occasion, so they put it on him as a mark of honor," he said. Baig said he saw it as "an embrace by Messi of the local culture," adding that it was "a pretty cool thing" for Qatar to do and "smart thinking" on their behalf. The bisht is a long cloak made out of light, often sheer, material with trimming made out of real gold that is worn over a white thobe. Primarily worn in the Gulf, it is a garment that has been worn for centuries during special occasions. It is viewed as a sign of appreciation and respect and is typically worn by top officials such as politicians, sheikhs and other high-status individuals. Mustafa Baig, a lecturer in Islamic studies at the University of Exeter, told the dpa news agency that the bisht is a formal robe worn by royalty, dignitaries, grooms on their wedding day, and graduates at graduation ceremonies. "So only a select few people would actually wear the bisht," he said. "They basically honoured him [Messi] by putting it over his shoulders. It's like a mark of honour, and just kind of a cultural welcoming and a cultural acceptance." - DNA

'The Greatest': Messi and Argentina the toast of world media

DOHA: Legendary, greatest, immortal: News media across the planet ran out of superlatives after Lionel Messi led Argentina to victory in one of the most dramatic World Cup finals ever. The thrilling penalty-shootout win over France gave La Albiceleste their first World Cup since national hero Diego Maradona guided them to the 1986 title. And it sparked an explosion of joy in Argentina, where the media saluted the nation's latest generation of World Cup heroes, and their talisman Messi. Images of him holding the trophy aloft and the team's celebrations adorned news websites and social media feeds in Argentina. Messi's Argentina had won "the greatest final in history," said the daily La Nacion, while Clarin described it as an "unforgettable" match. The sports daily Ole's homepage was splashed with "We are world champions!" The final was billed as a titanic showdown between Messi and French superstar Kylian Mbappe, and it did not disappoint the neutrals. While Messi scored from the spot twice to put Argentina in the lead, Mbappe inspired the French fightback with a hat-trick to take the final to penalties. - Agencies

Countries seal deal to protect nature

NEW YORK: Countries have reached a landmark agreement at a marathon United Nations biodiversity summit to protect the world's land and oceans and provide critical financing to save biodiversity in the developing world despite objections from some African countries. The chair of the COP15 nature summit, Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu, declared the deal adopted at a plenary session in Montreal on Monday and struck his gavel, sparking loud applause from assembled delegates. The most significant part of the deal is a commitment to protect 30 percent of land and water considered important for biodiversity by 2030. Currently, 17 percent of terrestrial and 10 percent of marine areas are protected. "There has never been a conservation goal globally at this scale," Brian

O'Donnell, director of the conservation group Campaign for Nature, told reporters. "This puts us within a chance of safeguarding biodiversity from collapse... We're now within the range that scientists think can make a marked difference in biodiversity." A representative from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) earlier objected to the text, raising concerns about developed nations' responsibility for funding conservation in developing countries. "The parties which are developed nations should provide resources to parties which are developing," the DRC's representative said through a translator. A representative from Cameroon said via a translator: "What we saw was a force of hand." The draft also calls for raising \$200bn by 2030 for biodiversity from a range

of sources and working to phase out or reform subsidies that could provide another \$500bn for nature. As part of the financing package, the framework calls for increasing to at least \$20bn annually by 2025 the money that goes to poor countries - or about double what is currently provided. That number would increase to \$30bn each year by 2030. Some advocates wanted tougher language around subsidies that make food and fuel so cheap in many parts of the world. The document only calls for identifying subsidies by 2025 that can be reformed or phased out, and working to reduce them by 2030. "The new text is a mixed bag," Andrew Deutz, director of global policy, institutions and conservation finance for The Nature Conservancy, said. "It contains some strong signals on finance and biodiversity but it fails to advance beyond the targets of 10 years ago in terms of addressing drivers of biodiversity loss in productive sectors like agriculture, fisheries, and infrastructure and thus still risks being fully transformational." - APP

Argentina erupts in celebration after win

The victory set off a wave of euphoria across Argentina, where people have been struggling with an economic crisis and inflation at nearly 100 percent this year

DNA

BUENOS AIRES: Football is more than a game, they say. On Sunday, that truism came alive in the heart of Buenos Aires. It was visible on the faces of the young men and women whooping from atop traffic lights, in dancing little girls with the nation's flags painted on their cheeks, and in elderly men fighting back tears. In the embraces between strangers. The anthems that hovered over the city. The simultaneous pulsating of a sea of people to the drums of victory. Football is hope, and hope is contagious. Argentina's hard-fought World Cup win over France in Qatar has triggered an outpouring of emotions in the South American country. Joy and relief are competing with deep gratitude to the national team led by Lionel Messi who was finally able to hoist the one coveted trophy that had eluded him. It was Argentina's first World Cup victory since 1986 when Diego Maradona led the country to glory. "Bien, Ar-

gentina, bien," one man said quietly to himself, as he looked around at the throngs descending on the Obelisco de Buenos Aires - the capital's iconic landmark - to celebrate the victory. "It really is a sensation like no other," said Mariló Oviedo, 32. "It's happiness. That's what it is." Tens of thousands of people

flowed through the arteries of the nation's capital towards the obelisk, chanting, singing, jumping and dancing under giant flags stretched across the width of entire avenues. Anthems reverberated off the ornate balconies of Sante Fe Avenue, paying homage to Messi and the spirit of Maradona - who passed away two years

ago - who many believe was looking down upon them today. "Soy Argentino! Es un sentimiento que no puedo parar!" they sang. "I'm Argentinian! It's a feeling I can't contain." The World Cup final was as dramatic as they come. Argentina dominated play for most of the regulation 90 minutes, until French phenom Kylian Mbappé

sunk two goals within a minute to draw his side level. A thrilling period of extra time followed, in which each side managed to score a goal, leading to the excruciating penalty kicks and the brilliance of Argentina keeper Emiliano "Dibu" Martinez in stopping two shots. Messi had said before the tournament that this would be his last World Cup, although after this victory he told an Argentinian media outlet that he wasn't done with the national squad just yet. The victory set off a wave of euphoria across Argentina, where people have been struggling with an economic crisis and inflation at nearly 100 percent this year. The World Cup was, for many, a necessary reprieve from an otherwise brutal 2022 that had left people disillusioned and exhausted. Near the obelisk, people climbed on top of bus shelters, scaled the foliage of a giant BA sign, set off firecrackers and sang the de facto Argentina World Cup anthem, Muchachos, Ahora Nos Volvimos a Ilusionar (Boys, now we're excited again) on loop.



Opp. submits no-trust motion...

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vis-a-vis PTI Chairman Imran Khan's announced maneuver that he would dissolve the Punjab Assembly on December 23. The meeting's participants pondered over different options to form PML-N government in largest province of the country. The party sources said that the higher leadership of the Nawaz League directed its Members of Punjab Assembly to immediately reach Lahore. The PML-N lawmakers have also been instructed to keep in touch with the party leadership all the time. Sources further revealed that the PML-N leadership directed members of its allied parties and independent Members of Punjab Assembly to reach Lahore. There is possibility that the governor would ask the chief minister to take vote of confidence. Sources said that the opposition might also submit the no-confidence motion against the chief minister. Whether it's submission of no-trust motion or the move by the governor to ask the chief minister to take vote of confidence, the PML-N MPs have been directed to stay in Lahore till further orders. After the conclusion of the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif left for Islamabad. The meeting was attended by Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Tariq Basheer Cheema, AzmaBokhari, Khalil Tahir Sindhu and others. Separately, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also held a meeting with his advisor Aun Chaudhry. They discussed political situation prevalent in Punjab.

Imran Khan slams govt over...

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part is that this increasing terrorist threat [and] attacks from across our Western border are finding no space in the discourse of this government of a cabal of crooks," the former prime minister wrote referring to the unfortunate incident. He went on to say that the Pakistan Democratic Movement-led government is only interested in their NRO II and its preservation. "Therefore, despite the economy tanking they are petrified of holding elections which is the only way to stabilise the economy through political stabilisation," he said renewing his demand for fresh elections. In yet another hard-hitting statement against the former army chief, PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Monday said that General (ret'd) QamarJavedBajwa was "solely responsible for the country's prevailing political and economic crises" - including his ouster from power in April this year. Speaking to foreign correspondents at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore, the former premier alleged that Gen (ret'd) Bajwa was controlling the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). He claimed that the former army chief granted NRO - relief in corruption cases - to the incumbent rulers despite his opposition. The ex-PM claimed that initially, Gen (ret'd) Bajwa did not oppose his anti-corruption drive to hold culprits accountable "but eventually asked me to focus on the economy and to move away from accountability".

Dutch PM apologises for 250 years of slavery

THE HAGUE: Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Monday officially apologised for 250 years of the Netherlands' involvement in slavery, calling it a "crime against humanity". The apology comes almost 150 years after the end of slavery in the European country's overseas colonies, which included Suriname and islands like Curacao and Aruba in the Caribbean and Indonesia in the East. "Today on behalf of the Dutch government, I apologise for the past actions of the Dutch state," Rutte said in a speech in The Hague. "We, living in the here and now, can only recognise and condemn slavery in the clearest terms as a crime against humanity," he said. Dutch ministers have travelled to seven former colonies in South America and the Caribbean for the event. - APP

PBBF affiliated with Pakistan Sports Board

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) becomes an active affiliated unit of Pakistan Sports Board after the approval of PSB Board Meeting in line with PSB Rules 2022. According to the details, the decision was taken in the 26th Board meeting held under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC)/President, Pakistan Sports Board, Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari. The promotion of basketball in the country was also discussed in the meeting which recently held at Islamabad. Under the leadership of its President, Brigadier (R) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor and Secretary General, Khalid Bashir, PBBF are playing vital role for the promotion of basketball in the country which is also affiliated with Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) recognised by IOC, International Basketball Federation (FIBA) PBBF organised mens and womens events in the recent past and organising back to back basketball tournaments coming months. After the approval of PSB Board, Pakistan Basketball Federation is the only representative organization at national and international level that can take all kinds of measures for the development of basketball, Said Pakistan Basketball Federation spokesperson added that the department and division must also take permission from the federation to organize basketball competitions in the country. It is also mention that under the International Olympic Committee (IOC) agreement, the federal government and PSB recognized only those national sports federations which are affiliated with their world bodies.



Briefs

Thai navy searches for sailors after vessel sinks

BANGKOK: Thai military frigates and helicopters were on Monday searching for 31 sailors after a naval vessel sank, with dozens of others having been hauled from choppy waters. The HTMS Sukhothai capsized late on Sunday night as it was patrolling the Gulf of Thailand, about 37 kilometres (22 miles) off the nation's southeastern coast. Some sailors survived by jumping into a life raft at night, according to images shared by the Royal Thai Navy, which said 75 people had been rescued.

However, 31 sailors were still missing on Monday afternoon, according to navy spokesperson Admiral Pogkrong Montrapalin.

The search and rescue operation involved two Seahawk helicopters, two frigates and one amphibious ship, according to a navy statement. A statement from the Royal Thai Air Force later Monday said they were also assisting in the operation, without giving details.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-Cha said the cause of the incident was being investigated. "I am following the news closely, about five people are seriously injured," he added in a statement.—APP

Sweden blocks extradition of FETÖ member

STOCKHOLM: Sweden's top court on Monday rejected a request to extradite a terror suspect wanted by Türkiye, saying the crime the person is alleged to have committed is "not criminalized" in the Scandinavian country. In a statement, the Supreme Court said that there were "obstacles to extradition because it is a matter of so-called political crimes, i.e. crimes that are directed against the state and that are political in nature." The court did not name the suspect in line with Swedish policy.

However, the Swedish news agency TT said the suspect was Bülent Keneş and that Ankara claims he was a member of the Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ), which was responsible for the failed coup attempt in Türkiye in 2016.

Keneş, 55, who has asylum in Sweden, is the editor of the English-language Today's Zaman newspaper, which was owned by the terrorist group linked to U.S.-based Fetullah Gülen. It was closed down as part of a government crackdown on the group after the coup attempt. NATO member Türkiye has been holding up bids by Sweden and Finland to join the military alliance, pressing for the two Nordic countries to crack down on terrorist groups and extradite suspects wanted in Türkiye. When Sweden and Finland dropped their long-standing policies of military nonalignment and applied for NATO membership in May, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan promptly said his country would not accept them and accused the two Nordic countries of turning a blind eye to terrorism.—APP

Vietnam reports 408 new COVID-19 cases

HANOI: Vietnam recorded 408 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, down 88 from Friday, according to the country's Ministry of Health. All the new cases were locally transmitted, said the ministry. The new infections brought the total tally to 11,520,445. The Southeast Asian country reported no new deaths from the pandemic on Saturday, with the total fatalities staying at 43,178. As of Saturday, 68 severe cases were in need of assisted breathing and 10,609,573 COVID-19 patients, or over 92 percent of the total infections, have recovered, according to the ministry.

Nearly 264.9 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the country, including over 223.1 million shots on people aged 18 and above, said the ministry.—APP

Kyrgyzstan wants enhanced trade relations with Pakistan



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Ulanbek Totuaev, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan said that his country wants enhanced trade relations with Pakistan as both countries have good potential to do trade in many items. He said that Kyrgyzstan exported 3000 ton coal this year to Pakistan and being a rich country in natural resources, can supply more items to Pakistan. He said that Pakistan can export many

products to Kyrgyzstan including pharmaceuticals, textiles, agricultural products. He said that Pakistani mangoes and citrus have also great potential in Kyrgyzstan. He said that Kyrgyzstan is importing marble from India and Pakistani marble exporters have a good opportunity to capture the market in Kyrgyzstan. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

The Kyrgyz Envoy said that

a Kyrgyzstan House would be opened in Lahore next to display the Kyrgyz products for Pakistani consumers. He said that a China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project would be extended to Peshawar through Afghanistan in future that would help in boosting trade relations. He said that an investment summit would be held in Kyrgyzstan in January or February next year and stressed that Pakistani investors should participate in it to explore business and investment opportunities in

his country. He said that ICCI should form a delegation for Kyrgyzstan and assured that his embassy would provide cooperation in facilitating its visit. Speaking at the occasion, Engr. Muhammad Zafar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are enjoying cordial relations, but their bilateral trade of around US\$ 8-9 million is much below the actual potential of both countries. He said that both

countries are doing trade in limited items and they should focus on diversification of trade to achieve better results. He said that Pakistan can provide easy access to Kyrgyzstan through its port to many world markets. He said that the Kyrgyzstan embassy should share a list of potential areas for business and investment for Pakistan in Kyrgyzstan so that ICCI can form a delegation for Kyrgyzstan to take advantage of them. Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid

Maqbool, Muhammad Ahmed, Amir Hamza, Javed Iqbal, Hamayun Kabir, Maqsood Tabish, Khalid Chaudhry, Syed Adil Anis, Ch. Ashraf Farzand and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas to further improve bilateral business and investment relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan. They stressed for direct road, railway and air links between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan to improve trade relations.

Pakistan benefited numerously from BRI

BEIJING: "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have significant international influence and can effectively help developing countries promote infrastructure construction and economic development. Pakistan is the biggest beneficiary of BRI," said Zafaruddin Mahmood, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, according to Gwadar Pro on Monday Zafaruddin Mahmood gave remarks at the high-end academic forum on Sino-Pakistan ties. The forum was hosted online and offline by Jiangxi University of Science and Technology (JXUST).

The forum focused on CPEC, China-Pakistan language, culture, and education cooperation, China-Pakistan nonferrous met-

als cooperation, China-Pakistan economy and trade, and Pakistan hot issues. The special assistant has studied in China for many years and claims himself a "China-made student". He stated at the forum's opening ceremony that BRI, the Global Development Initiative, and the Global Security Initiative are all very important and have the potential to make the world a better place in the next 100 years. He specifically affirmed the "2+2" talent training model jointly established by JXUST and the University of Punjab, and expressed his expectation that future exchanges and cooperation between the two parties would be strengthened. In his welcome remarks, Wen Herui, President of JXUST, expressed his optimism for the forum as an opportunity to build on the

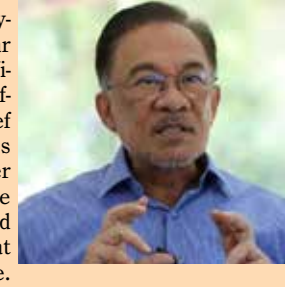
momentum and make new and greater contributions to the high-quality development of Sino-Pakistan ties. Luo Lin, Director of Secretariat of International and Regional Studies of the Ministry of Education of China, highlighted that "China and Pakistan have supported and forged ahead with each other in the face of changes and chaos in the world, which demonstrates our unwavering friendship." He expressed support to the Pakistan Studies Center of JXUST for its efforts to strengthen liaison with various parties and build a distinctive think tank platform by combining the university's superior disciplines. Tu Anbo, Vice President of the Jiangxi People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, explained that in re-

cent years, Jiangxi has continuously expanded cooperation and exchanges with Pakistan in the implementation of the BRI, and achieved fruitful results in the areas of CPEC construction, the fight against the epidemic, economy and trade, education and culture. He said the association is willing to work with other parties to expand Sino-Pak cooperation mechanisms and platforms, promote the establishment Sino-Pak sister cities, schools and hospitals, and add new impetus to the building of an even closer Sino-Pak community with a shared future in the new era. In his closing remarks, Liu Chengsheng, Secretary of the CPC Committee of School of Foreign Languages at JXUST, proposed to hold similar forums on a regular basis in the future.—DNA

PM Anwar wins vote of confidence

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim won a vote of confidence on Monday, weeks after being appointed as chief executive by the country's king. Deputy Prime Minister Fadillah Yusof had moved the motion which was passed through a voice vote after at least two hours of debate.

"The voice vote is a testimony that 148 or 2/3 of 222 MPs (members of parliament) support Anwar Ibrahim as prime minister. Let's move on," Digital Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil told reporters after the parliament sitting. Anwar needed at least 112 votes. Earlier today, in its first sitting, the Malaysian parliament elected its new speaker. Johari Abdul was elected the new speaker of the parliament, locally known as Dewan Rakyat, replacing Azhar Azizan Harun. Johari's name was proposed by Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim which was supported by prime minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi. Today's sitting of the 222-seat parliament also administered oaths to the newly elected lawmakers. A reformist leader, Anwar, 75, is leading the unity government, formed among his Alliance of Hope or Pakatan Harapan (PH), National Front, or Barisan Nasional (BN) and Sarawak Parties Alliance or Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS). Malaysia held its 15th general elections on Nov. 19 which threw up a hung parliament of 222 seats.—Agencies



EU Commission proposes stronger rules to fight human trafficking

BRUSSELS: The European Commission on Monday proposed to strengthen the rules that prevent and combat human trafficking. Every year over 7,000 people become victims of human trafficking in the EU, a commission statement said, adding that the figure can be higher due to many undetected cases. The majority of victims are women and girls but the share of male victims is also on the rise and the yearly cost of human trafficking reaches 2.7 billion (\$2.86 billion). Nothing that the forms of the exploitation have evolved with the crime increasingly taking an online dimension, the statement said: "This calls for new action at EU level, as traffickers benefit from opportunities to recruit, control, transport and exploit victims, as well as move profits and reach out to users in the EU and beyond." The updated rules will include forced marriage and illegal adoption among types of exploitation, human trafficking offenses committed or facilitated through information and communication technologies, including internet and social media, mandatory sanctions for legal persons held accountable for trafficking offenses, stepping up demand reduction, and EU-wide annual data collection.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shazain Bugti presenting a souvenir to Mohammed Bin Saeed Al-Qarni, Director General of Directorate of Narcotics Control of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. - APP

Global financial system needs urgent reform

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Addressing climate emergency worldwide, particularly in climate vulnerable countries, requires an urgent and holistic overhaul of global financial system amid the growing economic and social costs of inaction, economists have told Turkish state owned News agency. The voices are increasing for a reform in global financial system after Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley has been vocal on the issue under the Bridgetown Initiative at the UN climate meeting COP27, which took place in November in Egypt. The global financial system is not delivering the resources needed to respond to today's multiple crises and the Bridgetown Initiative proposes a transformative action plan to change it with a systemic reform. Developing countries, which are the most vulnerable against the impacts of climate crisis, want "access to resources at the pace and scale needed to relieve financial stress, enable economic development and address climate change," according to E3G, an environmental think tank. Global South is complainant of the ap-

proach from developed countries as they have been falling short of delivering the promised \$100 billion climate fund per year since 2020, while the climate adaptation needs in the developing world are set to skyrocket to as much as \$340 billion a year by 2030, according to the UN Environment Program. "There is a huge gap in climate finance. The global climate finance need is estimated as \$5 trillion a year, while the global finance provided has remained under \$700 billion annually so far," Sibel Kulaksiz, a senior economist at the World Bank, told Anadolu Agency in an interview. A coordinated approach from public and private finance sector with financial institutions is critical to increase the climate finance, according to Kulaksiz "Global finance system could be transformed but right investment choices should be determined for reaching net zero, supported by long term strategies and national climate plans. Without the necessary climate investments and with the current slow pace of measures, climate change could cost the world economy \$8 trillion by 2050," she said. The economist further said 100 million more people could live under power-

ty threshold by 2030 and 216 million more could be climate migrants by 2050. Cautioning that social and economic costs will be much higher if necessary actions are not taken, she said a strengthened climate finance policy could help reach the global climate targets. Kulaksiz said the World Bank aims to provide 35% of its total finance for climate in the next five years. According to data, the World Bank's climate finance stood at \$26 billion in 2021 and \$31.7 billion in 2022. Maya Hennerkes, green financial systems director at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), said transitioning to net zero and resilient economies in line with the goals of the Paris climate deal requires scaled-up and accelerated investments. "Public resources – significantly stretched by the multiple global shocks – are falling significantly short of the required levels. In this context, private climate finance is essential in driving innovation and climate-compatible transition," she said. Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) work with developing countries on enabling markets, catalyzing supportive policy environments and mobilizing private sector finance, while the condition for

success is a greening of the financial systems, according to Hennerkes. The greening of financial systems needs to include robust and demonstrable alignment of financial flows and institutions with the goals of the Paris Agreement, the strengthening and full integration of climate financial risk considerations, and tailoring scalable green and sustainable finance interventions, she said. "Thus, such a transformation (in financial system) is possible and requires a holistic approach. We need all hands on deck," Hennerkes said, including regulators, finance ministries, financial institutions, and MDBs that will provide a full circle support for a green transformation. Some finance sector players are ready and some are getting ready as they see the need for change in the face of strong drivers, she said. "Regulators are increasingly requiring financial institutions to disclose environmental including climate and social risks, so banks are rewiring their internal climate and environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) to be able to comply with that, while investors are increasingly requiring banks and funds to have

robust ESG strategies and management systems in place," Hennerkes said, adding that consumer demand for sustainable financial products is also on the rise. According to Ebru Dildar Edin, the chairperson of Business Council for Sustainable Development Türkiye, sustainable finance has emerged as one of the significant issues of the world as the impacts of climate crisis are drastically growing. "How to create adequate finance for adaptation to climate change and to reduce emissions is still a question mark. We see that it is becoming harder for countries to reach net zero targets while the costs are increasing and adequate finance cannot be created," she said, adding that the current global economic crisis is adding to the uncertainties. Thus, Edin said, supporting finance sector with efficient policies play key role in reducing the uncertainties and accelerating the transition to sustainable finance. "Finance sector should add new roles to the existing ones in avoiding the uncertainties," she said, stressing that the required investment of up to \$7 trillion to reach net zero is an opportunity to scale up progress.

Putin signs law banning surrogacy for foreigners

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday signed into law a bill banning foreign citizens and stateless people from providing surrogacy services in the country. "For Russian citizens who are married, as well as single women, this opportunity remains. The ban will not apply to cases where a Russian citizen is in a registered marriage with a foreigner," the State Duma, lower house of the parliament, said in a statement. It also added that a child born in Russia by a surrogate mother who has entered into a surrogacy agreement with potential parents or a single woman will be able to acquire Russian citizenship by birth. The State Duma previously announced on Dec. 8 that lawmakers adopted the bill in the second and third readings.—DNA

Russia, China to conduct joint naval exercise

MOSCOW: Russia and China will conduct a joint naval exercise, dubbed Naval Interaction-2022, in the East China Sea on Dec. 21-27, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Monday. "The main goal of the exercise is to strengthen naval cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China and maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region," the Russian Defense Ministry statement said on Telegram. According to the statement, joint missile and artillery firing against air targets will be conducted by the two navies, in addition to artillery firing at sea targets and practicing joint anti-submarine maneuvers. "The Russian Navy at the exercise will be represented by the flagship of the Pacific Fleet of the Order of Nakhimov, the guards missile cruiser Varyag, the frigate Marshal Shaposhnikov, the corvettes of project 20380 Hero of the Russian Federation Aldar Tsydenzhapov and Soversheniy," the Russian Defense Ministry further said. The statement added that two destroyers, two patrol ships, an integrated supply ship, and a diesel submarine will be involved in the exercise from the Chinese side. The two countries have been holding the annual "Naval Interaction" exercise since 2012.—Agencies

Twitter users vote in favor of ousting Musk as CEO

NEW YORK: Apoll launched by Twitter CEO Elon Musk asking users whether he should step down from his position showed that more than half of 17.5 million voters responded in favor of the decision as it closed on Monday.

About 57.5% of voters opted for "Yes," while 42.5% were against the idea of Musk quitting his CEO position. There was no immediate announcement from Twitter, or Musk, about whether that would happen, though he said that he would abide by the results.

Musk has clashed with some users on multiple fronts and on Sunday, he asked Twitter users to decide if he should stay in charge of the social media platform after acknowledging he made a mistake in launching new speech restrictions that banned mentions of rival social media websites.

In yet another significant policy change, Twitter had announced that users will no longer be able to link to Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon and other platforms the company described as "prohibited." But that decision generated so much immediate criticism, including from past defenders of Twitter's new billionaire owner, that Musk promised not to make any more major policy changes without an online survey of users. The action to block competitors was Musk's latest attempt to crack down on certain speech after he shut down a Twitter account last week that was tracking the flights of his private jet. The banned platforms included mainstream websites such as Facebook and Instagram, and upstart rivals Mastodon, Tribel, Nostr, Post and former President Donald Trump's Truth Social.—APP

Briefs

Dubai retains title as busiest airport in December

ISLAMABAD: Dubai International Airport retained its position as the world's busiest for international passengers in December, ahead of major hubs such as London Heathrow and spurred on by the rebound of Emirates airline. The monthly rankings by aviation consultancy OAG were calculated using airlines' international seat capacity and international flight frequency in December 2022, compared with the same month in 2019 before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Dubai held on to the top spot of the busiest airport for international flights in December, with 4.6 million seats, an increase of 8 percent compared with November, and just over one million seats more than the next busiest airport, London Heathrow, OAG said in its monthly World's Busiest Airports report. Dubai and London Heathrow were also in first and second place respectively in 2019. Dubai International Airport handled 18.5 million passengers in the third quarter of this year, more than doubling year on year amid a bigger-than-expected rebound from the pandemic, according to operator Dubai Airports. This was first time that quarterly traffic reached pre-pandemic levels since 2020, with the figure higher than the 17.8 million passengers who travelled through the airport in the first quarter of 2020 before the onset of Covid-19. The National reported. - APP

Islamabad LB elections likely to be delayed

ISLAMABAD: The local bodies' elections are likely to be delayed in Islamabad. On the request of the Metropolitan Corporation (MC), the number of new Union Councils (UCs) are likely to be increased. The Home Ministry has sent a summary to the cabinet seeking an increase in the number of Union Councils. The summary has demanded that the cabinet increase the number of Union Councils from 101 to 125. "101 Union Councils have been created in proportion to the 2017 population. Due to the increase in the population of Islamabad, the number of Union Councils should be increased to 125," the summary demanded. It is to be noted here that the election commission set December 31 as the date for local bodies' elections.

Buzdar hits back after Parvez Elahi's criticism

LAHORE: In response to his successor's claims, former Punjab chief minister Usman Buzdar said on Monday that criticism of him is like criticizing the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) narrative. Responding to now-CM Punjab Chaudhry Parvez Elahi's comments about him in an interview on Sunday, the PTI leader said that he did not victimise anyone in his tenure. He added that he also has a lot to say but he has never spoken ill about anyone. The former Punjab CM, talking to the media outside the accountability court in Lahore, said that they are currently in an allied government and such disagreements often occur in a multi-party alliance. CM Elahi had said that Usman Buzdar ruined the province and that he sorted things out with his hard work for four months. On the other hand, the accountability court extended the PTI leader's bail in the liquor license reference registered against him by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The bail was issued by judge Naseem Ahmed Virk.

Russian drones hit Kyiv as Putin arrives in Belarus

Ukrainian atomic energy agency accused Russia of sending one of drones over part of the South Ukraine Nuclear Power Plant, in Mykolaiv region

DNA
KYIV: Moscow launched a "kamikaze" drone attack on Monday, hitting key infrastructure in and around Kyiv, hours before Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Belarus, fuelling fears he will pressure his ally to join a new offensive on Ukraine. The Ukrainian Air Force said its air defences shot down 30 drones, in the third Russian air attack on the Ukrainian capital in six days and the latest in a series of assaults since October that have targeted the Ukrainian power grid, causing sweeping blackouts amid sub-freezing temperatures. Officials said at least three people were wounded and nine buildings damaged in the Kyiv region. The Ukrainian atomic energy

agency accused Russia of sending one of the drones over part of the South Ukraine Nuclear Power Plant, in the Mykolaiv region. "This is an absolutely unacceptable violation of nuclear and radiation safety," Energoatom wrote on Telegram. Invading Russian forces currently occupy the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, Europe's largest, near the front line in southeastern Ukraine. "Kamikaze" drones used in the attacks, are cheaply produced, disposable unmanned aircraft that fly towards their target before plummeting at velocity and detonating on impact. Under the darkness of night, a fire raged at an energy facility in the often targeted central Shevchenkivskiy district, a Reuters witness said. "I heard an explosion. And in three or four minutes I heard another explosion," said an old man who works at

a guard at a nearby hospital. The Solomianskyi district in the western part of Kyiv, a busy transport hub, home to a train station and one of the city's two passenger airports, was also hit. Kyiv officials said 18 out of 23 drones were shot down over the city of 3.6 million. "As a result of the attack on the capital, critical infrastructure facilities were damaged," Vitali Klitschko said on the Telegram messaging app. "Engineers are working to quickly stabilise the situation with energy and heat supply." Oleskiy Kuleba, governor of the region surrounding Kyiv, said infrastructure and private homes were damaged and that two people were wounded. He said the attack caused "fairly serious" damage and three areas had been left without power. There has been constant Russian and Belaru-

sian military activity for months in Belarus, a close Kremlin ally that Moscow's troops used as a launch pad for their abortive attack on Kyiv in February. Putin's trip, for talks with Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko, is his first to Minsk since 2019 - before the pandemic and a wave of Belarusian protests in 2020 that Lukashenko crushed with strong support from the Kremlin. "During (these talks) questions will be worked out for further aggression against Ukraine and the broader involvement of the Belarusian armed forces in the operation against Ukraine, in particular, in our opinion, also on the ground," Ukrainian joint forces commander Serhiy Naye said before Putin's arrival. Lukashenko has said repeatedly he has no intention of sending his country's troops into Ukraine.

EU closes in on gas price cap

BRUSSELS: EU energy ministers sought a breakthrough Monday on plans to cap natural gas prices, weighing the danger of allowing prices to soar against the fear of driving exporters elsewhere. Some entering the meeting in Brussels said an accord appeared to be within reach, with discussions revolving around what price level a cap should kick in. The issue is urgent, with Europe facing tight energy supplies as it endures winter, because Russia has cut gas deliveries in retaliation for EU sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine. An agreement on a gas price cap would unlock other measures that are already green-lit, such as joint gas purchases and a new gas price benchmark. Those are contingent on a price-cap accord being reached. The European Commission had proposed a ceiling of 275 euros per megawatt hour, considered too high by many EU countries. It attached conditions that countries saw as unattainable, including requiring the price of gas to go above the threshold for at least two weeks, and the price of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to go above 58 euros for 10 days within that same two-week period. Those tight hoops to jump through reflected reluctance from Germany and the Netherlands over a price cap, which they feared could send LNG to more lucrative markets in Asia. Ministers said they were now looking at a much lower threshold. "I think 188 (euros per megawatt hour) - that will give the right signals to markets," Greek Energy Minister Konstantinos Skrekas said. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, Adam M. Tugio calls on Finance Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. - DNA

Indonesia keen to strengthen economic ties with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia, Adam M. Tugio here on Monday emphasized on strengthening bilateral economic and trade relations with Pakistan. During a call on meeting with Finance Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, the ambassador appreciated Pakistan government for supporting joint venture projects between the two countries. The minister and Ambassador discussed measures to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries, according to press statement issued by finance ministry. They agreed to extend full support to enhance bilateral relations between both the countries. On the occasion, the finance minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar highlighted profound historical and brotherly relations between the two countries. He shared that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Indonesia and expressed satisfaction over the magnitude of economic and trade and investment cooperation and showed desire his government to further deepen the trade and economic partnership between the two countries. - DNA

PTI forms committee for seat adjustment with PML-Q

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Monday formed a three-member committee to discuss seat adjustment with PML-Q for the upcoming elections. The committee would be headed by PTI Vice President Shah Mehmood Qureshi and would include Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry and former defence minister Pervez Khattak. Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry has confirmed that party chairman Imran Khan formed the committee for seat-adjustment negotiations and to look into issues of electoral adjustment. The first meeting of the committee was convened yesterday.

According to reports, PML-Q has agreed to dissolve the Punjab Assembly under the condition that it will receive 25 to 30 provincial seats in South Punjab, Gujarat Division and Sialkot in the next general elections. A day earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat following Imran's announcement of December 23 as the date for his extreme measure to dissolve Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) assemblies to force fresh general elections in the country. The ruling coalition tasked Chaudhry Shujaat with preventing the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly by his cousin and fellow PML-Q leader Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. According to sources, it was agreed that the federal ministers from the PML-N would contact the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leaders for consultation on moving a no-confidence motion in the Punjab Assembly or asking Chief Minister Elahi to seek a vote of confidence. - DNA

Five killed in Toronto area apartment shooting: police

MONTREAL: Five people were killed and another wounded late Sunday in a shooting in the suburbs of the Canadian city of Toronto, police said. The suspect also died after an exchange of fire with law enforcement, local police chief Jim MacSween told reporters, saying the shooting took place in an apartment building. The injured person was taken to hospital in "serious condition," according to a statement, but their life is not in danger. Police were called to the site Sunday evening at approximately 7:20 pm (0020 GMT) local time. "Once the officers arrived, they were met with... a horrendous scene where numerous victims were deceased," MacSween told reporters, according to Canadian media. "They (police) went right into

the building and dealt with the situation. One of our officers did discharge a firearm, I can confirm that. And as a result the suspect is deceased," he added. Police were investigating the motive and whether there was a connection between the victims and the male suspect, who has not been named but, according to the Special Investigative Unit, was 73 years old. The suspect allegedly acted alone. The victims were reportedly found in different apartments in the building, which is located in Vaughan, in the suburbs about 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of Toronto. Residents were evacuated immediately and dozens of ambulances and police officers were at the scene in the evening and into Monday morning.

While it suffers far fewer mass shootings than its American neighbor, Canada has experienced an upsurge in gun violence, which has prompted it to recently legislate to ban handguns. In April 2020, a gunman disguised as a policeman killed 22 people in the eastern province of Nova Scotia, Canada's worst mass shooting. In September this year, a man killed 11 people and stabbed 18 others, mainly in an isolated Indigenous community in Saskatchewan province. Firearms-related violent crimes account for less than three percent of all violent crimes in Canada - but since 2009 the per capita rate of guns being fired with intent to kill or wound has increased fivefold. - APP

Chinese hospitals expand ICUs to cope with Covid 19 surge

BEIJING: Chinese cities and medical institutions are ramping up efforts to expand intensive care units (ICUs) and boost their reserves of medical resources and treatment facilities for severe COVID-19 cases in a bid to strengthen medical treatment capabilities to cope with the COVID-19 peak. Observers said that as the construction of more ICUs is underway, lack of fully trained medical staff for ICUs remained the biggest challenge for the medical institutions. Media reports of emergency procurement of medical facilities for COVID-19 severe cases from hospitals have appeared more frequently in the past two weeks. For example, the People's Hospital in the Dazu district of Southwest China's Chongqing Municipality has budgeted 18.75 million yuan (\$2.67 million) for this purpose and the hospital of traditional Chinese medicine in the Dazu district budgeted 15.93 million yuan for buying equipment to treat severe cases. The People's Hospital in Caonian county, East China's Shandong

Province allocated 5 million yuan for facilities including ventilators. The People's Hospital in Dengfeng city of North China's Henan Province is scheduled to purchase medical cranes, invasive ventilators and extracorporeal membrane oxygenators (ECMO). A medical staffer at a hospital in Shanghai told the Global Times that his hospital has enhanced its medicine reserves and has been communicating with drug companies for more fever and cough drugs. Enhancing medical resources for severe cases has been one of the current primary targets of many city governments as well. Guangzhou in South China's Guangdong Province is strengthening its medical resource reserves, improving medical capability in an all-round way including increasing the number of ICU beds from 455 to 1,385, to prepare for a predicted epidemic peak in early January 2023, a local health official said on Monday. Since December, the number of fever outpatient visits in Guangzhou has continued to rise, and has remained at a high level for nearly a week. The majority of patients have been adults aged 18 to 59, accounting for 86 percent of the total, while the population aged 60 and above accounted for 8.2 percent, and individuals under the age of 18 accounting for 5.8 percent, Zhang Yi, deputy director of the municipal health commission of Guangzhou, said at a Monday press briefing. - Agencies

PTI will defeat Zardari Mafia in Sindh, says Ali Zaidi

NAZIR SIYAL
KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) president and former federal minister Ali Zaidi visited the parts of Karachi and Malir district here on Monday and held meetings for possible defeat to PPP in forthcoming elections. Addressing to the gathering at Gulshan Moazzam and Malir Press Club, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh president Ali Zaidi expressed that PTI will defeat Zardari Mafia and his allies in upcoming elections, while untiring struggle would be continued against the PDM mafia he said. He emphasized workers of Malir that future success is in their hands, so that keep their struggle long to achieve the objectives in upcoming elections. PTI leader further said that party needs devotion and struggle for country solidarity not for their loot and plunders in this party. He suggested workers that their is hard accountability in the party when in party, but don't expect charm if they want luxury and develop business, they should join PPP and PML-N not PTI he told the workers.

S.Africa's ruling party votes for new leader

JOHANNESBURG: Voting to elect a new leader of South Africa's ruling party got underway late Sunday, with the race tightening between President Cyril Ramaphosa and his former health minister Zweli Mkhize. Ramaphosa, 70, is expected to be confirmed in the role that would open the way to his being head of state for a second term, despite a damaging cash-heist scandal and vociferous internal opposition. But the race looked closer than previously expected Sunday, with reports of party delegates from several provinces shifting support to Mkhize, who Ramaphosa replaced at peak of pandemic for alleged malfeasance involving Covid funds. More than 4,000 delegates were casting their ballots to appoint seven top leadership roles, including party president, deputy president, chair and secretary general, at a conference near Johannesburg. Ramaphosa had been tipped to win the vote comfortably. - APP

20m flood victims need urgent assistance: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: "Disaster amnesia is not uncommon in a world driven by competing goals and the human tragedy wrought by Pakistan's catastrophic flooding has been forgotten by many where 20 million flood affectees still needed urgent humanitarian assistance," said Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman. "But the climate-induced crisis in Pakistan has long-term implications for recovery and resilience in a context defined by systemic deficits in climate financing with 20 million people still currently dependent on humanitarian aid, while flash appeals just for the humanitarian gap by the United Nations have received only 30% of the US\$816 million," the Minister said in a news release. The Minister said, "When a country has people living on relief and multilateral assistance on the shores of vulnerability, with new lakes being created by climate events, it is not easy to plan for resilient recovery, because building back for complex climate polycrises implies transformational re-sets. These floods caused Loss and Damage worth US\$30 billion, so just the rehabil-

itation and disaster-reconstruction needs are at least US\$16.3 billion. This amount does not include investments required to support Pakistan's adaptation to climate change and overall resilience of the country to future climate shocks. The Minister said, "The UN has warned that 8.4 to 9.1 million people will be pushed below the poverty line. Winter will be harsh on the forgotten arc of climate misery here. The numbers are too huge; 33 million impacted literally meant we were reinventing the lives of populations covering the size of three medium sized European countries at the same

time. Today, after months of humanitarian operations, 14.6 million is the number of people who still need emergency food assistance from December 2022 to March 2023. We should not forget that almost 3.9 million people in Sindh and 1.6 million in Balochistan are facing severe food insecurity, with 5.5 million people no longer having access to safe and clean drinking water. The UN's ongoing assistance is facing a looming risk of ending prematurely as they are running out

of funds to continue the needed support. World Food Programme (WFP) has said that they will run out of funds by mid-January for Pakistan, putting an additional 1.1 million people at extreme risk of food insecurity. Funds are being taken from every sector of the Pakistan government to meet survival needs, but the size of the need is huge." The UN has received only US\$262 million or just 30% from international donors out of the US\$816 million under the Floods Response Plan. "While the level of human suffering from the floods cannot be monetized, repercussions of climate extremes have torn apart the social infrastructure in the flood-affected zones and people need immediate and urgent relief. The Minister said that over 240,000 people remain displaced with at least 10 districts of Sindh province continuing to report standing water, while the same situation persists in two districts of Balochistan. People have started returning to their homes, but they now face compounding issues of food insecurity and health-related challenges," she said. - APP

