



Friday, December 30, 2022

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

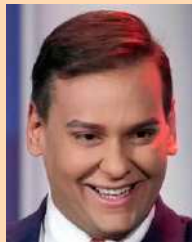
Price Rs. 25

Kane Williamson scores his fifth double hundred

Detailed News On Page-06

US lawmaker facing probe for lying in resume

Detailed News On Page-07



China urges for 'fair and scientific' curbs

Detailed News On Page-07



## Briefs

UN chief stresses need for peace

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in his New Year Message, has called for the world peace in 2023, underscoring the need for conflicts to be resolved through dialogue. "From Ukraine to Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and beyond, people left the ruins of their homes and lives in search of something better," he said in his video message on Thursday. "Every New Year is a moment of rebirth," he said, adding, "In 2023, we need peace, now more than ever."

Ishaq Dar's assets unfrozen

AGENCIES

LAHORE: The district administration of Lahore restored Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's frozen assets on Thursday on orders of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). NAB also issued a notification to the relevant authorities to restore the finance minister's bank accounts which had earlier been frozen. Earlier this month, the bureau's Lahore headquarters issued a letter to the district administration to restore the frozen assets of the finance minister.

FM lauds 'UN Loss & Damage Fund'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said the creation of "Loss and Damage" Fund at the UN Climate Change Conference in Egypt, last month to support the climate disasters hit countries is a significant achievement. In an interview with the Arab News, he said this fund is something that climate activists have been struggling for the last 30 years.

## Two terrorists killed

# 3 soldiers martyred in Kurram

Prime Minister summons a meeting of the National Security Committee today



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: Three soldiers were martyred and two terrorists gunned down Thursday after an intense exchange of fire in a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – which is hit by a fresh wave of terrorism. In its statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) mentioned that the troops fought bravely and effectively engaged the terrorists' location in Kurram district's Arawali area. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists who remained actively involved in terror-related activities against security forces, the military's media wing mentioned. "Sanitisation of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area," the ISPR wrote. The military, in its statement, said that the

Continued on Page 06

President, PM laud Pak Army's valor

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday lauded the Pakistan Army for action against terrorists in the Kurram District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They paid tribute to the sacrifices of martyred soldiers, including Subedar Shuja Muhammad, Naik Muhammad Ramzan and Sepoy Abdul Rehman. "We will continue to move forward against terrorism with a firm resolve and steadfastness. Those challenging the security of Pakistan will nowhere find any haven," the prime minister remarked. The president resolved that

Continued on Page 06

## Islamabad tells Delhi Stop supporting terror activities in Pakistan

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch says Pakistan grateful to various countries for providing humanitarian assistance for the flood-affected people

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has called on India to end its suppression in Occupied Kashmir and desist from supporting terrorist activities inside the country to destabilize it. Addressing a news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan is interested in peace and dialogue and it is up to the Indian authorities to take a responsible position to improve relations. To a question about Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's visits abroad, the spokesperson said these tours are a demonstration of international community's interest to engage with Pakistan and to develop understanding on a range of issues. She said Pakistan is also very interested in expanding and strengthening its friendship around the world. She said with the enhanced interactions, visits and exchanges, we can strengthen our friendship, cooperation and dialogue

with the international community. Replying to another question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan is grateful to various countries and multilateral financial institutions and organizations for providing humanitarian assistance for the flood-affected people of Pakistan. She said these include Belgium, China, Denmark, the European Union, France, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Italy, Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Nepal, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uzbekistan as well as some multilateral financial institutions and the United Nations.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs, Qamar Zaman Kaira calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

## Terrorists designs to be foiled: Sanaullah

Says most of the TTP men present in KPK

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah said on Thursday the terrorists would not be allowed to succeed in their nefarious designs. He said this during his visit to the PIMS hospital where he inquired after policeman Muhammad Hanif who was wounded in Islamabad's I-10 explosion. The minister also presented a bouquet and cheque to the wounded police official. He said most of the TTP people were present in the KPK. Speaking on the occasion, Rana Sanaullah appreciated the policeman for performing his professional duty and said the mental and professional skills of the policemen saved Islamabad from a major accident. He further said martyr Adeel Hussain would be given a bravery medal and support would be given to the injured personnel. The minister said terrorists would not be allowed to succeed in their nefarious designs, adding that the cowardly attacks would not demoralise the security forces. On Tuesday, Sanaullah said that the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) had arrested suspects involved in last week's suicide bombing in Islamabad. He said the cab driver purported to be involved in the attack was innocent, adding the driver had not been hired by the accused.

Continued on Page 06

## PTI announces nationwide protests against inflation

In the first phase, PTI's lawmakers would lead protests for three weeks

ALI HAMZA / DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced Thursday it would start a country-wide protest movement starting today (Friday) as the party seeks to force the coalition government into early elections. The PTI has been repeatedly calling for snap elections since ex-prime minister Imran Khan's ouster in April as it refuses to go back to the National Assembly and keeps on stressing that "early polls" are the only solution to the country's ongoing crisis. "From Friday, country-wide protests will start against rising inflation, deteriorating economy, and shortage of gas," PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry told journalists in Lahore after the party's high-level meeting with Khan in the chair.

Continued on Page 06

## Qureshi, Khattak in the dock for skipping meeting

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has summoned senior party leaders Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Pervez Khattak for skipping the meeting with National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf regarding the verification of their resignations, sources told media on Thursday. Khattak and Qureshi were part of the delegation sent by PTI to meet

Continued on Page 06

## G7 tells Taliban to reverse women ban

LONDON: G7 foreign ministers on Thursday called on the Taliban to "urgently reverse" a ban on women working in Afghanistan's aid sector. The ban is the latest blow against women's rights in Afghanistan since the Taliban reclaimed power last year. The Taliban rulers also barred women from attending universities earlier this month, prompting global outrage and protests in some Afghan cities. The G7 ministers along with those of Australia, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and the Netherlands said in a joint statement they were "gravely concerned that the Taliban's reckless and dangerous order... puts at risk millions of Afghans who depend on humanitarian assistance for their survival".

"We call on the Taliban to urgently reverse this decision," they said in the statement issued by Britain's foreign ministry. It comes after six aid bodies suspended operations in Afghanistan in response to the ban. They included Christian Aid, ActionAid, Save the Children, the Norwegian Refugee Council and CARE. The International Rescue Committee, which provides emergency response in health, education and other areas and employs 3,000 women across Afghanistan, also said it was suspending services. "Women are absolutely central to humanitarian and basic needs operations."

Continued on Page 06

# Challenges posed by resurgence of the TTP

COMMENT

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI



THE Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has started taking a heavy toll on especially the security forces personnel of Pakistan. In the recent spate of terrorism at least a dozen of security personnel have embraced martyrdom while scores of others sustained serious injuries. The TTP unleashed a reign of terror when it had pulled out of the agreement made with the Pakistan government in September this year. The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) announced an end to the months-long "indefinite ceasefire", accusing the government of breaching the agreement brokered by the Afghan Taliban. TTP spokesperson Mohammad Khorasani in a statement had claimed that the Pakistani government made no efforts to make the negotiations successful "so it is not possible to continue the ceasefire". The reasons cited by the TTP for ending the ceasefire included non-release of prisoners, continued military operations and lack of communication from the government of Pakistan. The militants

claimed that the government released some of their prisoners but re-arrested them in violation of the agreement. On the announcement of the end of the ceasefire, TTP chief Mufti Noor Wali said that they had never refused meaningful negotiations and it was part of Shariah law. But no progress was made during these negotiations. Therefore, the armed struggle would continue, he announced. The talks between Pakistan and the outlawed TTP had reached a deadlock as the militant group refused to budge from its demand for the reversal of the merger of erstwhile FATA with the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. There has also been a stalemate over the issue of TTP laying down their arms in case of a peace deal, which would enable them to return to their homeland. Pakistan, in August 2022, had sent a delegation to break the stalemate. Following the visit of a delegation of Ulama led by Mufti Taqi Usmani, a tribal jirga visited Kabul. The purpose of the Ulama delegation's visit was to use the good offices of the religious clerics to persuade the TTP to withdraw its demand for FATA merger and other contentious issues. However, the TTP leadership did not give any firm assurance as Ulama also pressed them to lay down their arms and return to Pakistan. Usmani had termed his visit positive but did not mention his

interaction with the TTP. Apart from FATA merger issue the TTP, ostensibly on the insistence of Afghan Taliban, has been pressurizing Pakistani authorities to do away with the fencing along the Pak-Afghan border- a demand the Pakistani authorities had turned down vehemently. An estimated expense of around six million US dollars was incurred on the fencing project therefore it was simply impossible to wrap it up. The TTP albeit never made this demand part of the negotiations Terms of References (TORs) nevertheless it tacitly continued to put pressure in favour of this demand. Then, recently the Pakistan government banned export of American currency to Afghanistan in the wake of depleting foreign exchange reserves of the country. This check was not very well received within the Taliban ranks as hitherto they had been thieving on these dollars. About \$2 billion used to go to Afghanistan from Pakistan in the form of official and unofficial trade, misuse of Afghan transit trade, smuggling and through the borders. Another mind boggling question is as to how the TTP managed to immediately regroup itself and started coordinated acts of terrorism. The answer is that when the Pakistani authorities launched operations to root out the menace of terrorism be it Operation Raddul Fasad or Operation Zarb-e-Azb, these outfits

were perhaps not eliminated altogether. At that time the mantra of good Taliban and bad Taliban was also in action due to which a number of TTP men managed to go scot free only because the authorities believed that they would behave in future. That approach however seems to have backfired as the good Taliban appears to have reunited with the bad ones and both of them have now girded up their loins against Pakistan. In addition to that the Taliban phenomenon is not just a name of some armed personnel seeking undue largesse, it has now turned into a mindset and that mindset is present in the very ranks of our society. It is not necessary that only the bearded people should represent this mindset, even those hailing from the so-called liberal class may also be representing this mindset. While it is possible to defeat forces that are putting up physical challenges, it is next to impossible to eliminate the mindset phenomenon. To do away with the mindset issue the authorities concerned have to address social and cultural anomalies, which have penetrated deep into our milieu. Bad governance; lack of rule of law; nepotism; acute corruption; absence of merit happen to be some of the factors that have contributed towards disenchantment of all and sundry and thus leading to creation of very mindset. One thing is for sure the TTP can-

not do anything without the support of the Afghan Taliban. As mentioned above Pakistan did try to make friends with the new Afghan government but all efforts have gone down the drain. The recent effort proved highly counterproductive when Pakistan sent a delegation to Kabul which was spearheaded by Hina Rabbani Khar. Even those who would otherwise defend this government despite all its weaknesses, did not like that idea. It was indeed a miscalculated and strategically wrong move to send a woman to talk with those who simply hate women's role either in politics or any other sphere. The TTP chose a time for its subversive acts when Pakistan's political and economic situation was in dire straits. For the government the biggest and foremost task appears to be the delay of general elections till the time it may be in a position to grab some seats while the opposition is hell bent upon getting a date for early elections come what may. The security establishment seems to be in a state of to be or not be as the new leadership obviously needs some time to grapple with the situation. If the status quo persists then unfortunately there is a likelihood of more such acts, which, may take away more precious lives. The stakeholders therefore need to rise to the occasion in the larger interest of the country before it gets too late.

## Inside...

Snowfall lovers throng to Kalam, Malama Jabba – Page 02

Pakistan to capitalize on exportable services: RCCI – Page 03

National fellowship programme launched for transgender folk – Page 04

West's double standards: Pursuit for human rights or a tool for dominance – Page 05

NZ take two early wickets after Williamson's heroics – Page 06

All sectors of economy must be developed equally: Alvi – Page 07

Ukraine reports 'massive' Russian missile attack – Page 08



## DA retrieves 400 kanal land in Sector C-16

ISLAMABAD: Enforcement teams of Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Thursday conducted a mega anti-encroachment operation in Sector C-16, demolished several illegal constructions and retrieved 400 kanals state land. The operation was carried out on the instructions of the CDA chairman. The land in Gandhara enclave, in Sector C-16 Mauza Sangani, which is about 400 kanals, was illegally occupied by the local people. With the help of district administration, six shops, four hotel kiosks and 23 rooms were demolished during the operation. In a separate operation, plastic bags were also seized from several shops in Sector I-9/4 and I-9/2 during a crack-down against those violating the Prohibited Plastic Products Regulation 2019.—APP

## Police martyr of I-10 blast to be awarded Tamgha-e-Shujaat

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Thursday said that Adeel Hussain, the martyr of the blast which occurred last week in sector I-10, would be awarded Tamgha-e-Shujaat for his bravery. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had also approved the martyr package for Shaheed Adeel Hussain, he said while visiting the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) hospital, where he inquired after the health of Constable Muhammad Hanif who sustained injuries in the blast. The minister was accompanied by Inspector General of Islamabad Police Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, Director General Operations Sohail Zafar Chhattha and other senior officers. Rana Sanaullah said that terrorists would never be allowed to succeed in their nefarious designs as the country's law enforcement agencies were fully capable of countering them. He lauded the injured policeman and his colleagues who had saved the Federal Capital from a major incident by foiling terrorist's attempt. The minister said the entire Pakistani nation paid tribute to the brave policemen who sacrificed their lives for the country. The country's security forces would not be demoralized by such cowardly acts of the terrorists, he added.—APP

## E-stamp paper formally launched in Peshawar

PESHAWAR : Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Shafiullah Khan formally launched e-stamp paper in the provincial capital on Thursday. The step has been taken on the special directives of the Chief Minister Mahmood Khan. Besides, officers of the district administration, officers of the revenue department and National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) were also present on the occasion. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner said that with the launching of e-stamp papers, the practice of the issuance of stamp papers in back dates would stop and help prevent dispute regarding sale and purchase of properties, beside the fixation of actual rate and eradication of the tampering and frauds. He said that each e-stamp paper would be issued with unique Barcode, which could be easily verified online.—APP

## SC dismisses Imran's appeal

LAHORE: The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday dismissed an appeal of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan against striking out his right of defence in a defamation suit filed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif against him. The three-member bench heard the appeal at Supreme Court Lahore Registry and dismissed it with a 2-1 majority while



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Argentina Leopoldo Francisco Sahores hosted Argentine style Barbecue party to celebrate football world cup victory. Seen in the picture are Editor Daily Islamabad POST/Centrelina Ansar M Bhatti, Argentine Ambassador, fmr Pakistan ambassador, Walid Mushtaq, Kashmala Tariq, Zulfiqar Zulfi.—DNA

# Snowfall lovers throng to Kalam, Malama Jabba

Attracting Buddhists, monks and archaeologists from across the world throughout the year, the Swat's archaeological treasures and ancient artifacts housed at Saidu Sharif Museum become a distinctive feature taking tourists to the glorious history of Swat

DNA

MINGORA: Following MET office's prediction of the snowfall over the hills of Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Swat valley, the tourists and snowfall lovers on Thursday thronged to the most scenic Kalam, Bahrain and Malam Jabba valleys to enjoy the first snowfall of the winter season. Domestic tourists along with families mostly arrived from different districts of Central Punjab and northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were being seen in sizable number in Upper Swat's valleys of Kalam, Madain, Bahrain and Malam Jabba exploring its mesmerizing natural beauty amid light to modern rains and snowfall that turned weather extremely cold and muggy. Tourists from Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad were seen in large number at Kalam, Malam Jabba and Bahrain to get pleasures from snowfall, trout fish and river rafting. Besides Kalam and Malam Jabba, the snowy mountains peaks of Gabin Jabba,

Miandam, Matiltan, Kalam, Utror, Gabral, Matiltan, Mahodand, Loya Sar resorts have drawn influx of snowfall lovers along with families and children amid great fun and laughter. "I came from Wapda Town Peshawar to my favorite tourists' destination Kalam for snowfall and trout fish following MET's office forecast for snowfall over the hills of Upper Swat," said Ahtisham Khan, a lecturer of Urdu literature while talking to a state run news agency. He said Swat was known for combination of its seven distinctive features including snowfall that was hard to find together in any tourist destination of Pakistan. In addition to a home to primitive Gandhara civilization, he said the Swat's unique features including ice skiing, river rafting, adventure sports, snow-clad mountain peaks, trout-fish, and Swat motorway has made it an ideal destination for winter tourism and sports in Pakistan. These distinctive characteristics, which are second to none in any other district of the country, draw adventure sportsmen, archeologists, water rafters, mountain-

eers, snowfall lovers, foodies, and eco-tourists throughout the year. The 150-kilometer-long freshwater of the river Swat originating from different glaciers and lakes including Mahodand and Gabral mountains offers unique opportunities for adventure sports enthusiasts to explore in a single day trip along with loved ones. Fazagut, Fatehpur, Barikot, and Chakdara were most suitable for water sports and introduction of such sports would help bolster rural economy and promote tourism and transport industries in KP. Bestowed with more than 50 high-altitude small and big lakes, Swat's Mahodand Lake is an exceptional source of attraction for tourists enjoying its blue waters and boats riding amid cold breezes and snowfalls. Qaiser Khan, a retired Wapda employee told the agency that he came from Nowshera to enjoy snowfall in Kalam, trout fish of River Swat and Ma-

hahand Lake. He said Mahodand and Gabral lakes carried unique charm and clean air besides nearby birds chanting valleys take tourists into a lap of serenity. "I have ordered two KG trout fish to enjoy it with my family members," Qaiser said, adding green trout of Swat attract foodies amid snowfall at Kalam, Madain and other areas of the district. Besides its famous Deodar trees and precious wildlife, he said the Swat's snow-clad tall mountain ranges of Falakser, Mankial and Elum peaks offer great challenges to mountaineers and trekkers to explore especially during winter. Likewise, its extensive plains and orchards that bear fruits and vegetables carried a unique comparative advantage than other tourists' destination of the country. He advised tourists to bring warm clothes and sweaters while coming to Upper Swat these days in the wake of chilly weather and rainfall. Attracting Buddhists, monks and archaeologists from across the world throughout the year, the Swat's archaeological treasures and ancient artifacts housed at Saidu Sharif Museum

become a distinctive feature taking tourists to the glorious history of Swat. The most celebrated monk from Thailand, Arayawangso along with 20 disciples has recently visited different Buddhist sites of Swat including Saidu Sharif Museum and Stupa besides Buthkara Buddhist monastery which impressed him a lot. He said Swat was very important in terms of Buddhist history in Pakistan and must be visited by followers of Buddhism from all around the world. Another striking feature of Swat is skiing sports being played at Malam Jabba every year during winter and such sport was hardly placed in any part of the country. Malik Luqman, KP tourism department's senior planning officer told the agency that a mega project costing Rs238 million was prepared for organizing different winter sports and tourism events in various districts including Swat. Kalam's winter gala and tour-de-cycle race would be organized in Swat while first-ever sports rafting at River Swat would be held besides an international paragliding event at Saidu Sharif.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami highlighted PN Fleet achievements during the outgoing year making particular mention of the conduct of a number of Live Weapon Firings, participation in multilateral exercises, HADR missions, Overseas Deployments and Regional Maritime Security Patrols undertaken by Fleet units. Later, Chief of the Naval Staff gave away Efficiency Award shields to best performing units of various Squadrons of Pakistan Navy Fleet.

# BISP offices to be opened in 8 new tehsils: Kundi

LAHORE: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi said on Thursday that financial assistance had been disbursed among 98 percent flood victims who were beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme. Addressing a press conference here, he said that almost Rs 8.5 billion had to be distributed in Punjab among flood affectees, adding that only 7,516 families had left. He said that almost 2.8 million beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme suffered due to recent floods in the country and the government allocated about Rs 70 billion to provide them financial assistance. Remaining beneficiaries were those whose data needed updation, he added. He further said there were 139 offices



of Benazir Income Support Programme in Punjab while the offices of BISP would be opened in seven to eight new tehsils as well. Faisal Karim said that BISP had taken an initiative to register transgender community in the programme. The State Minister said that BISP was going to hold a dynamic survey which would start soon in BISP tehsil offices. He said that previ-

ous government stopped almost 800,000 to 900,000 cards without carrying out proper verification, adding that BISP board had given approval and soon majority of these cards would be restored. He said that Imran Khan had made a tall claim of collecting Rs 15 billion through a telethon for flood victims, adding that flood affectees were still waiting for this amount to be used for

their rehabilitation.

He said, "PPP does not believe in deviating from the constitution." During the tenure of PTI government political leaders were politically victimized through National Accountability Bureau, he added. If PTI members wanted to give resignations they could give but speaker office had to adopt a due process in this regard, he said. Faisal Karim said country, constitution and parliament could not work as per the wishes of any individual. He said if Imran Khan was serious in dissolving assemblies then he should dissolve Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly where PTI was not in alliance with any party. The State Minister said that the day was not far off when PTI would once again start criticizing Chaudhry Parvez Elahi.—APP

## Delegation of KCCI discusses Trade & Economy with US Diplomats

PESHAWAR :The United States has long been Pakistan's largest export market - importing more than \$5 billion Pakistani goods that is surpassing any other country and we want bilateral economic relations to be further strengthened by inviting Pakistani businessmen to visit the US and get an advantage of the United States expertise in different sectors. This was stated by Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi, President Khyber Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) during his meeting on trade-ties between Pakistan and the US with Mr. Panfilo Marquez, US Consul General at Peshawar and Mr. Kurt L. Beurman, Political and Economic Affairs Officer. The delegation of Khyber Chamber of Commerce & Industry held an hour-long meeting and thoroughly discussed Pakistan-US trade ties and the exchange of visits of Pakistani businessmen to US to have business-to-business meetings with different US companies for extending trading ties and to get benefits from the US expertise. Executive members of KCCI Muhammad Yousaf Afridi, Moin Uddin Khan and Muhammad Haroon Sabir were also present at the meeting. The main products that Pakistan exports to the United States are house linens, knitted sweaters, and other clothing articles. During the last 25 years, the export of Pakistan to the United States has increased at an annualized rate of 4.79%, from \$1.26b in 1995 to \$4.04b in 2020. The United States is also one of the top trading partners of Pakistan.—DNA

## Turkish Aerospace Industries, NUST mull partnership



ISLAMABAD: A high-profile delegation, led by CEO Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) Mr Temel Kotil, called on Rector NUST Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari at NUST the other day. Members of senior management from NUST also attended the meeting, which was aimed at exploring new avenues to strengthen collaboration between NUST and Turkey in areas such as joint research, establishment of research facilities, student and faculty exchanges, academia-industry linkages etc. CEO TAI said that Pakistan being a brotherly country is our first preference for outreach. He also expressed his desire to recruit talented engineers and scientists from NUST to work on cutting-edge projects of TAI. Rector NUST remarked that NUST provides a comprehensive knowledge ecosystem based on a Quadruple Helix Model, where presence of industrial R&D centres and labs like Turkish Aerospace Industries holds paramount importance. Later, the guests visited NUST School of Interdisciplinary Engineering & Sciences (SINES), where they were conducted to various labs, and apprised of robust and impactful research and innovative solutions churning out of the School that draws upon interdisciplinary strengths of NUST.—DNA

## PIC organizes two-day workshop for journalists

ISLAMABAD: A two-day training workshop for new and mid-career journalists organized by Pakistan Information Center (PIC), a special project of Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting concluded here on Thursday. The workshop was held at the Information Service Academy (ISA) under the theme of "News Authenticity and Tools to Counter the Fake News & Anti-State Propaganda," said a press release issued by PID. The main objective of the workshop was to enlighten the participants on the need and importance of countering fake news and negative propaganda.—APP



**National Days and Armed Forces Days**

**December**

Dec 01 / **Romania**  
National Day

Dec 02 / **UAE**  
National Day

Dec 02 / **Laos Republic**  
National Day

Dec 05 / **Thailand**  
National Day

Dec 06 / **Finland**  
Independence Day

Dec 07 / **India**  
Armed Forces Flag Day

Dec 09 / **Tanzania**  
National Day

Dec 11/ **Oman**  
Armed Forces Day

Dec 12 / **Kenya**  
Independence Day

Dec 12 / **Turkmenistan**  
Neutrality Day

Dec 16 / **Bahrain**  
National Day

Dec 16 / **Kazakhstan**  
Independence Day

Dec 18 / **Qatar**  
National Day

Dec 18 / **Niger**  
National Day

Dec 23 / **Philippines**  
Armed Forces Day


Dec 23/ **Japan**  
National Day

**Hotels & Restaurants**

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133


Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812



**Airlines**

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



**Emergency**

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.....1122


& Rescue Services.4451122

Motorway Police.....9266044

Motorway Police.....9270601-20

Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596

Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



**Enquiry**

Edhi Ambulance.....115

PIAFlightInfo.....114

PIA Cargo.....9280979

Railway Inquiry.....117

Railway Exchange9270831-5

WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489

CAA.....9281092



**Hospitals**

CMH.....5611111

MH.....561116

Cantt Hospital...9270907-11


DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-0



**Departments**

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

**Islamabad Metropolitan**

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

RawalTown.....5773343

**Water Tank**

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Pakistan to capitalize on exportable services: RCCI

Businesses are also capitalizing on opportunities emerging from digitization, such as supply chain efficiency, lower transaction cost and enhanced flexibility in addressing consumer needs

**DNA**

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) urged the Government of Pakistan to capitalize on exportable services and products requiring minimal infrastructure and investments. RCCI President Saqib Rafiq while addressing "Corporate Clients Seminar" hosted by Wah Nobel Group at Islamabad Club, said that being competitive, a country's exports should be in line with market trends and quality, and be certified on internationally acceptable standards. He said that Pakistan has its great importance with respect to strategic



location. We can tap Central Asia and Africa for non-conventional sectors like Information technology, Services, Hospitality and Pharmaceutical. Central Asian countries are landlocked countries, the only and nearer Sea Port is Gwadar. This has immense potential especially in the Agri market. Mangos, RICE and Oranges already have great demand in these countries, he added. Saqib Rafiq said that Pakistan is among the economies where digitization is triggering changes in some components of the service sector. Businesses are also capitalizing on opportunities emerging from digitization, such as supply chain efficiency, lower transaction cost and enhanced flexibility in addressing consumer needs.

## Custom Islamabad officials met with IGP Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief collector customs Muhammad Umar Mehmood and Collector Islamabad Hassan Saqib met with Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan at the Central Police Office, a police public relations officer said. He said that, during the meeting it was decided Islamabad capital police and customs department will create a joint checking system, under which legal action will be taken against non-custom paid luxury vehicles without discrimination. Moreover, a joint legal action will also be taken against those involved in hoarding goods without paying customs duties.

## NHA chalks out plan for Hub-Dadu Motorway

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority (NHA) on Thursday chalked out plans for 270-kilometres-long, Hub-Dureji-Dadu Motorway (M7) to connect more cities in the country to the Motorway Network. According to the official document available with APP, NHA has sought consultancy services for a feasibility study and detailed design for the construction of the M7 Motorway. M-7 is a portion of the southbound motorway from Islamabad to Karachi and after its completion, there will be less traffic on M-6. The 270-kilometre-long highway will feature six service areas. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif laid down the groundwork for the 306-kilometre-long, Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway (M-6). The Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway is the final segment of the Peshawar-Karachi Motorway, which will interconnect major cities in Pakistan. —DNA

## Ahsan concerned over slow utilization of funds under PDSP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday reviewed the second quarter of Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) 2022-23, and noticed slow utilization of funds that is 56% of the authorized funds. The meeting was attended by the Federal Secretaries and head of institutional representatives. During the meeting PSDP projects of all the Ministries/ divisions were discussed while the Minister was briefed on the utilization and expenditures of funds. "Those projects which are in advanced stages and have low utilization should be capped and priority should be given to the important projects which are near to completion," said the Minister while stressing the ministries to ensure the utilization of funds. The Minister suggested that keeping in view the constraint budget and release strategy, priority may be assigned to those projects which are strategic and near to completion. —DNA

# Tele Health System fully operational for ICT Police

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Al-Tirmidhi Foundation visited the Central Police Office Islamabad and met with AIG Establishment and AIG General. A MOU was signed between Islamabad capital police and Al-Tirmidhi foundation for tele health system. By this system, the officials will get direct assistance of digital clinic doctors through their smart phones by 24/7 along

with this, they also get an online appointment from a specialist doctor as well. The facility of all specialist doctors is available in this system. IGP Islamabad said that, in the first phase, the tele-health booths are set up in the Central Police Office, CPO Operations office and SSG line. He further said that, the paramedical staff will be present at tele booths round the clock and senior doctors will be available online at these booths. Policemen may

get medicines after visiting the booths and consultation fees will be paid by the police department itself. Moreover, mobile tele-health units are also established where doctors will be present online and they would visit the houses of policemen after receiving any emergency calls from them. The existing ambulances of Islamabad capital police are connected with this system where online tele health doctors are present to provide services to policemen

during special duties at gatherings, public events or any other law and order situation. IGP Islamabad said that personnel of the force have risks of diseases like heart attack, blood pressure, mental stress due to old age, and tough duties, and this system will help to improve their health facility and mitigate such risks. He further stated that this system was the need of the hour which would help to ensure timely medical checkup and treatments to the officials.

# Ten outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police apprehended 10 outlaws from different areas and recovered weapons with ammunition from their possession, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city. Following these directives, the Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Amjad Hussain and recovered 60 cartridges of 9mm from his possession. Bhara Kahu police team arrested the accused namely Gul Nayab involved in illegally gas filling. Similarly, the Phulgrain police team arrested two accused namely Najeeb Ullah and Muhammad Yousaf involved in illegal gas filling. The Koral police team arrested an accused namely Muhammad Ismail and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession. Moreover, the Kirpa police team arrested two accused namely Abrar and Sana Ullah and recovered one 9mm pistol and one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from their possession. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway. During a special crackdown against proclaimed offenders and court absconders police teams arrested 03 proclaimed offenders from various areas of the city. IGP Islamabad directed all senior officials for effective crackdown against the accused involved in drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons. The performance of police officials in this regard would be reviewed on a continuous basis, he maintained.

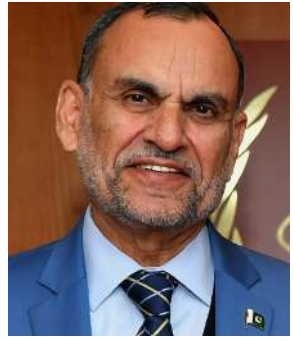
# AIOU holds seminar on undergraduate education policy

ISLAMABAD: A seminar was held yesterday in Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) regarding the revamping of "Undergraduate Education Policy-2020" of Higher Education Commission (HEC). Director Academics, HEC, Dr. Hidayat Ullah Khan, and Consultant, HEDP, HEC, Dr. Arshad Bashir was the resource person. Director of the Directorate of Academic Planning and Course Production (ACPP), Dr. Zahid Majeed hosted the event. Faculty members and principal officers also attended the event. Presenting the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2020, Dr. Arshad Bashir said that HEC issued the revised proposed policy and handed it over to the universities after identifying the defects in the Undergraduate Policy two years ago. He said that the opinion of the Vice-Chancellors and faculty members is essential in formulating the policy, hence feedback from the universities has been sought to make this policy acceptable to the universities. He said that after incorporating the recommendations and suggestions of universities, the policy will be forwarded to the commission for approval, and the policy will be implemented after the approval. The faculty members of AIOU have given various suggestions to further improve the policy. They suggested including skill sets and Quran translation in general courses. They also gave suggestions to increase the credit hours of social sciences and Islamic studies courses. —DNA



# Court extends Azam Swati's judicial remand

ISLAMABAD :A local court on Thursday extended the judicial remand of PTI leader Azam Khan Swati till January 12, in a controversial tweet case. Judicial Magistrate Naseer Udin heard the case against Azam Swati after the completion of his fourteen-day remand. The court extended the judicial remand as the case chalan couldn't be produced



this day. It may be mentioned here that the FIA had registered FIR against Azam Khan Swati for maligning the state institution through his tweets. Earlier, the Islamabad High Court on Monday issued notices to the state and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) while hearing a bail petition filed by PTI Senator Azam Khan Swati seeking his release in a case related to

controversial tweets. Swati was arrested on November 27 after the FIA booked him in Islamabad over a "highly obnoxious campaign of intimidating tweets [...] against state institutions". It was the second time that Swati was booked and arrested by the FIA over his tweets about army officials in less than two months.—DNA

# Education rights of Afghan women and girls must be respected

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Currently, around 850,000 Afghan girls are out of secondary schools which makes up to over 80% percent of the female student population above the primary education level. Girls' education remains a vexing issue since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. It is believed that impediments to girls' education in Afghanistan are not entirely due to religion but cultural and tribal attitudes of the society too. To gauge the potential of the tribal leaders to advocate for normalizing education for women and girls in the region, and strengthen Pak-Afghan relationship, the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) convened

the 1st Pak-Afghan Tribal Stakeholders Conference as part of its multi-track diplomacy initiative, Beyond Boundaries. The participants of the conference held in Peshawar included tribal elders from the bordering areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The elders expressed concerns regarding the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and the problems following the influx of refugees into Pakistan. They also stressed the need to comply with the Doha Peace Agreement, especially concerning Afghan girls' education and human rights. They noted that governments on both sides should realize and legitimize the tribal leaders' century-old role in peacemaking. Only the masses (Olas) can bridge the gap, therefore, the consultation pro-



cess and people-to-people ties need to be strengthened. In the interest of economic and people-to-people

connectivity, a robust mechanism should be devised to address the issues in trade and public movement, and new infrastructure and border markets should be developed as an essentiality to enhance relations. "850,000 Afghans have applied for a Pakistani visa, in addition to already documented 21 lac Afghans in Pakistan. This situation is overwhelming the administration," said a participant about the surge in refugee influx. Trade should be apolitical; not be held hostage to geopolitics. The rampant corruption in the trade and transit process should be dealt through joint mitigation efforts. The participants expressed concerns about the shrinking trade volume between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the brisk decamping of Afghan traders from the economic sphere due to the inimical business environment. The conference concluded with an

insightful discussion on women's rights, where the participating tribal elders deemed Taliban's attempt to pull women off the public sphere as concerning. They noted that Islam empowers women and thus, they need to be included in the economic workforce in the light of Sharia and culture. While efforts should be made to include them, external interference in these matters cannot be accepted, hence, a domestic discourse on these issues needs to be carried forward. The elders said that the pursuit of knowledge is imperative but needs to be within the boundaries of Shariah and norms of the territories. The participants demanded measures from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to ensure education for all its citizens with dignity, including women.



## Briefs

Net metering  
can reduce  
electricity  
bill: Dr Amjad

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Dr Muhammad Amjad while terming solar energy an environmentally friendly and excellent source of electricity on Thursday said that a significant reduction in electricity bills was possible through net metering connections. He said that on the instructions of the Federal Government and the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), the installation of net metering connections in the company's region was going on rapidly. The consumers were not only getting cheap electricity for their use from sunlight, but surplus electricity could sell out to IESCO, he said in a statement issued here. IESCO consumers could get any kind of information regarding net metering by contacting the company's focal person on Tel No. 051-9252931. He said IESCO has received 7794 net metering applications so far out of which 7274 net metering connections have already been installed. —APP

Police arrest  
three POs  
wanted in  
different  
cases

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police here on Thursday arrested three proclaimed offenders (POs) wanted in different cases. According to a police spokesman, Mandra police managed to arrest an accused namely Amjad, wanted in an attempt to murder case. Similarly, Civil Lines and Waris Khan police rounded up two accused, Farzand Ali and Habib ur Rehman wanted in two cases. He said that Rawalpindi district police were taking stern action in accordance with the law against the lawbreakers, adding, the operations would continue and all the POs would be sent behind the bars. SSP Operations, Rawalpindi directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against POs and most wanted criminals. —APP

Police search  
64 houses in  
different  
areas

RAWALPINDI, Dec 29 (APP): Rawalpindi District Police on special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi on Thursday searched 64 houses and 34 shops in the jurisdiction of Gungmandi, Bani, and City police stations. According to a police spokesman, heavy police contingents, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and Ladies police under the supervision of senior police officers conducted a search operation and searched 64 houses, and 34 shops, besides checking the particulars of 39 tenants. Over 214 persons were also checked during the operations, he added. Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations, Rawalpindi Waseem Riaz Khan said that search operations were being conducted to net criminals and other lawbreakers. —APP

Rupee sheds  
04 paise  
against dollar

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 04 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs 226.41 against the previous day's closing of Rs 226.37. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 233.5 and Rs 235.5 respectively. The price of the euro was decreased by 07 paise and closed at Rs 240.58 against the previous day's closing of Rs 240.65, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen gained one paise to close at Rs1.69, whereas an increase of 29 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 272.50 as compared to its last closing of Rs 272.21. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 01 paise each to close at Rs 61.64 and Rs 60.22 respectively. —APP

National fellowship programme  
launched for transgender folk

Three-month fellowship programme aims at an inclusive humanitarian response

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The first-ever National Transgender Fellowship Programme has been launched for the transgender community in 33 flood-affected districts. The programme, the first-ever in Pakistan, aims at empowering and mainstreaming the transgender community and to ensure their inclusion in flood relief and response. The three-month fellowship programme aims at an inclusive humanitarian response. The fellowship is part of a national programme that PJN is implementing in

all four provinces and federal level titled "Bridging the Barriers - Inclusion of Transgender Community in Flood Relief and Response" in collaboration with NCHR with the support of the Concern Worldwide and US-AID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) is an independent statutory body created to look into matters pertaining to all forms of violations of human rights within the territorial jurisdiction of Pakistan by virtue of NCHR Act of 2012 headed by Chairperson Rabiya Javeri Agha. According to Syed Raza Ali,

PJN's CEO and the Convenor National Transgender Taskforce on Floods Relief & Response, the commission is working for the empowerment of the most vulnerable communities and part of its mission is to support the vulnerable groups such as the transgender community in the aftermath of natural disasters. The findings of needs assessment on transgender protection and humanitarian response conducted during the current flood relief and response by Peace & Justice Network has informed that the transgender community has been excluded at all levels. It will also help in establishing district

transgender protection and an inclusive humanitarian response system by enabling transgender fellows after comprehensive training to play a proactive and leading role during disasters as well as to equip them so that they can effectively coordinate with government and humanitarian organizations to address the needs of the transgender community. Under this programme, the Peace and Justice Network (PJN) and National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) will enhance the capacity and skills of the transgender community in humanitarian disaster relief response, inclusion,

flood relief efforts, and protection through residential training and also through three months of district engagement of the selected Transgender Fellows. Ali Raza stated that the transgender community in Pakistan is a highly marginalized group and has been further marginalized by the devastating flooding that has displaced over 33 million people and left millions deprived of basic needs. This Fellowship programme, first of its kind in Pakistan, will provide a great opportunity for the transgender community to play a mainstream role and it will also help them ensure their inclusion with dignity.

Mujeeba Batool, National Programme Manager, was of the view that there was no official data available on how many transgender community members have been affected due to recent floods, so this means they are not actually the priority of the government. Advocate Faiza Farooq, Director PJN, said that I believe transgender people are extraordinary, strong, intelligent, and skillful by all means, and through this programme, the trans community will get a boost from the grass root level to become part of mainstream society. Many transgenders community members have lost their homes in recent floods. The floods have taken away their livelihood.

Investors' confidence  
linked to re-  
paired ties with IMF

The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Thursday said restoring the confidence of investors without restoring the confidence of the IMF is an illusion. Running the economy without improving relations with the international organization is like playing with fire, it said. Accepting all IMF demands is the only option which if delayed will inflict more damage to the economy, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of PEW. He said that despite reassuring statements from key political leaders and senior officials, rumors of default in the country are gaining momentum, the rupee is depreciating against the dollar and foreign exchange reserves are dwindling alarmingly. Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that international credit rating agencies are continuously lowering Pakistan's rating, commercial lenders have refused to extend the repayment period of loans, and some international organizations have expressed fear of a serious currency crisis in Pakistan. He added that the IMF has postponed its review twice, the program will be restored only after the completion of the review and Pakistan will be able to get 1.2 billion dollars. Owing to the tension between the IMF and Pakistan some other institutions and friendly countries are also not willing to give loans to Pakistan resulting in worries among the business community. Man investors have delayed their investment decisions and they are awaiting some positive signals. Dr. Mughal said that the policymakers should not deceive themselves and restore ties with the IMF to end anxiety, uncertainty, and rumors which are very harmful to the limping economy. —DNA

UoP receives Rs. 4.5m under  
Chinese Scholarship Program

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Under the Chinese Ambassador Scholarship program for the University of Peshawar (UoP) 2022, the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad has issued Rs. 4.5 million for deserving students of the university. Through China Study Centre (CSC), UoP, the amount will be distributed amongst the deserving students of the University, Gwadar Pro reported it on Thursday. In this regard, Dr. Zahid Anwar, Director CSC and Pro Vice Chancellor UoP visited the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad to receive a cheque of Rs. 4.5 million from Ambassador Nong Rong. On this occasion, both officials discussed a variety of issues including China-Pak cooperation in education, the China-Pa-



kistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), etc. Ambassador Nong Rong said that UoP is an important partner for China and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province to strengthen cultural exchanges and think-tank cooperation.

"The embassy is willing to continue to maintain close cooperation with UoP to promote people-to-people bonds between China and Pakistan, and to enhance the friendship between the young generation of the two brotherly neighboring countries," an official statement

quoted the Ambassador as saying. Prof. Zahid Anwar briefed the ambassador on seminars, workshops, conferences, Chinese language courses, the launching of the Journal of Pakistan-China Studies, and the approval of BS, MS, and Ph.D. courses from statutory bodies, etc. Mr. Anwar informed that UoP has signed MOUs with high-ranking Chinese Universities for academic cooperation, a field study of Gwadar Deep Sea Port, collaboration with other Pakistani Universities and the Chinese Study Center for promoting China Studies in Pakistan, Under the guidelines of CPEC Consortium of China Pakistan Universities, BRI, CPEC, and many other regional and global issues. During the meeting, Bao Zhong, a Political Counselor, and other officials of the Embassy were also present.

HEDP 6th steering  
body reviews progress

DNA

ISLAMABAD: HEC's Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) project held its sixth Steering Committee meeting at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Secretariat, Islamabad. Steering Committee is the highest forum of the project comprising senior officials from federal ministries, provincial higher education departments, vice-chancellors, and private sector representatives. HEDP is a five-year national project (2019/20 - 2023/24) implemented by HEC to expand upon its key higher education priorities. The committee members reviewed the progress made so far on the project.

Dr. Shaista Sohail, Executive Director, HEC chaired the meeting. In her opening remarks she said "Like every project, this project also has yearly financial and physical targets. At the end of every year in June, all the project deliverables are checked and validated. These evaluation reports are then shared with the World Bank to make financial disbursements to the Government of Pakistan for the project. I am glad that despite the financial, hiring and leadership challenges,

the project as of today still stands at good financial and physical progress."

Project Coordinator Prof. Dr. Mehmood ul Hassan Butt gave an overview of the HEDP project, its history, progress, future plans, and recently recruited staff. He briefed the committee on the key project initiatives, including the physical and financial progress of all the 11 project indicators called as Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs). In addition, it was apprised that the project is being restructured to support flood-related damages to HEIs in which a cost of Rs. 1.6 billion will be allocated for 14 worst affected universities/ institutes of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Technical heads of the project components updated members on the progress of each of the six components of the project including 44 research grants awarded this year. In addition, 15 Innovator Seed Funding (ISF) grants are also given to startups which are now being incubated in ORICs around Pakistan. HEDP is also in the process of finalizing MOUs for the establishment of Quality Enhancement Cells in Affiliated Colleges (QECACs) of 22 universities. In addition, the new Undergraduate

Education Policy (UEP) is now finalized incorporating the feedback from all the Vice Chancellors across Pakistan. The faculty of KP is already trained on new UEP implementation while the plan for other provinces/regions will be rolled out very soon. The IT component head of the project briefed members on the expansion of the Pakistan Education Research Network (PERN) in another 71 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the development of the national MOOCs platform PaksitanEdX and the launch of Enterprise Resource Systems for 25 HEIs. Bids have been reviewed and final decision will be made in January 2023. Procurement processes for several national IT initiatives are also underway. The committee members appreciated the efforts of the HEDP team and provided valuable suggestions. The lack of public funding for the Higher Education sector of Pakistan was discussed at length and allied mitigation strategies for revenue generation models and financial autonomy were proposed accordingly. The members also explained the grim situation of higher education institutions, especially Affiliated Colleges (ACs), in their respective regions.

Medicinal  
products' import  
decreases by  
70.20% in 5  
months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The import of medicinal products witnessed a decline of 70.20 percent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan imported medicinal products worth \$632.828 million from July-November (2022-23) as compared to the imports of \$2123.489 million from July-November (2021-22), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, however, medicinal imports witnessed a surge of 27.53 percent, as the country imported 16,999 metric tons of medicinal products during the months under review as compared to the imports of 13,330 metric tons last year. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, medicinal products imports during November 2022 decreased by 77.48 percent, from \$688.876 million in November 2021 to \$155.130 million. On a monthly basis, medicinal products imports during November 2022 however increased by 47.27 percent as compared to the imports of \$105.337 million in October 2022.

Chinese cultural exchange  
program in Pakistan to  
resume in 2023

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese government is expected to resume the cultural exchange programs in 2023 after it relaxed COVID-19 restrictions at home, Gwadar Pro reported it on Thursday. This was stated by Xing Lijun, Second Secretary, Cultural Office of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan while briefing Pakistani media about the 2023 Happy Chinese New Year and upcoming events in connection with the celebrations of the Chinese Spring Festival. On the occasion there was a live telecast of the 2023 Happy Chinese New Year Press Conference here at the Chinese Embassy. The Press Conference was held in Beijing. Gao Zheng, Director General of the International Exchange and Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China, Zhao Cong, head of China National Traditional Orchestra, and well-known pianist Lang Lang, the cultural ambassador of the 2023 Happy Chinese New Year, spoke at the press conference, introducing the 2023 Happy Chinese New Year activities. Gao said the Happy Chinese New Year, an annual brand activity held to celebrate Spring Festival, has taken off in recent years and is increasingly becoming an important platform for China to share Chinese culture with people from all over the world. Various online and offline activities, including music concerts, temple fairs, and parades will cover the globe. The press conference also released the mascot of 2023 Happy Chinese New Year. As the coming Chinese New Year is the Year of the Rabbit, the mascot, designed by the Central Academy of Fine Arts, is a cute rabbit with long ears based on the shape of a lucky bag. China will be celebrating the 2023 traditional Chinese New Year from Sunday, January 22 until February 9, 2023. It is one of the most important and biggest festivals in traditional Chinese culture and one of the longest holidays, lasting up to 7 days. After the telecast, Xing Lijun briefed the Pakistani media about the 2023 Happy Chinese New Year and upcoming events in connection with celebrations of the Chinese Spring Festival. He also highlighted the Pak-China cultural exchange programs. Xing said that the cultural bonds between the two nations were strong and this relationship will expand into all domains of Pakistani life and grow further with the passing of each day. He said that Pakistani journalists will also have a chance to visit China and witness the different aspects of the glorious Chinese culture. —DNA

The Diabetes  
Centre (TDC)  
to expand its  
operations in  
Sahiwal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Diabetes Centre (TDC), Pakistan's first diabetes and multidisciplinary hospital in a bid to expand its operations has planned a groundbreaking ceremony of a massive hospital in Sahiwal on 6th of January, 2023. The hospital shall be built on 8 Kanal of land donated by a Pakistani Australian, Chaudhry Mustafa, resident of Wollongong. TDC Sahiwal hospital shall be first of its kind catering large population of Punjab. Giving details of project, Chairman, The Diabetes Centre while speaking to a section of press said that TDC is a registered charity in Pakistan, UK, USA and in Australia. 'Funds have been raised by Hospital's Australian Chapter headed by a renowned Senior Nephrologist, Dr Asrar H Khan in various fund-raising events held in Australia'. While highlighting the need to provide treatment of diabetes across Pakistan, Dr Asjad Hameed expressed his stern resolve to expand TDC's operations to various regions of country so that people can get awareness and treatment at earliest. 'Diabetes has a trickle-down effect. It is deadly if left untreated and can play havoc to a human body affecting major organs as heart, kidneys, eyes, liver and limbs. In worst case scenario, amputation is the only way out which is indeed sad for the patient and his or her family' Dr Asjad Hameed said.

POWERCHINA  
provides jobs  
in a big number  
to local people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As Chinese companies continue to create jobs for local Pakistanis, Diamer Basha Dam Project (DBDP) contractor m/s POWERCHINA has created at least 208 new jobs for skilled and technical professionals at the project site, Gwadar Pro reported it on Thursday. According to the Chinese company, qualified and professional locals between the ages of 20 and 45 can apply for various positions. The company needs 22 welders, 50 steel fixers, 45 carpenters, 25 masons, seven electricians, six painters, three drillers, three drivers and two crane operators. Earlier in September 2022, the project offered jobs to locals in different fields including medical, safety services, and driving. POWERCHINA not only provides jobs to the locals at the dam site, but also trains young locals from time to time to adapt to the modern job market. Earlier this month, the company launched an internship program for junior engineers, geologists and civil engineers.

Govt releases  
Rs 4.21b for  
IT projects

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has released funds amounting to Rs 4.21 billion to execute Information Technology related projects during the first four months of the current fiscal year under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23). According to official data, the government has authorized the utilization of development funds amounting to Rs 4,211.21 million out of a total allocation of 5,731.70 million for various ongoing and new projects of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. Out of the total authorized/dispensed amount, the total amount spent on the development projects during the corresponding period (July-October) stood at Rs3,487.32 million. According to the disbursement mechanism of the Planning Division, the development funds allocated in the federal budget are released at the rate of 20 percent in the first quarter (July-September), followed by 30 percent each in the second and third quarters and the remaining 20 percent in the last quarter (April-June) of a fiscal year.

## Dy Naval Chief for tapping potential of blue economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral M. Amjad Khan Niazi said that the blue economy in Pakistan offers great business potential, which still remains untapped and said that the business community should tap it to generate more business and economic activities. He said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President. Admiral M. Amjad Khan Niazi said that by 2023, strong growth is expected in maritime industry which would create several jobs and open new avenues of entrepreneurship & commercial innovation and desired that the private sector should explore this industry for business opportunities. He said that Pakistan Navy is organizing Pakistan International Maritime Expo & Conference (PIMEC) from February 10-12, 2023 under the patronage of Ministry of Maritime Affairs to jumpstart the development of maritime sector and invited ICCI

to participate in it. Real Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Ops) said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and it should

play role to promote indigenous production of defence equipment and products to further strengthen the defence sector. He said that a maritime science & technology park has

been approved and its construction would create more opportunities for business community as well. Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad

Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) thanked the Naval Chief for giving time to ICCI delegation for meeting. He said that Pakistan Navy is importing many parts and equipment to meet its needs of manufacturing frigates and other defence related systems and ICCI wants to join hands with it to explore indigenous production of frigates and other systems that would also benefit the local industry. He said that the indigenous production of defence equipment would reduce the import bill and save precious foreign exchange reserves of the country. Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan is blessed with over 1000 Km long coastal line and stressed for close cooperation between ICCI and Pakistan Navy to promote the coastal tourism. Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Maqbool, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Raja Muhammad Imtiaz, Khalid Mehmood Chaudhary, Saif Ur Rehman and Zia Chaudhary were in the ICCI delegation.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry with Real Admiral Faisal Abbasi, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff Operations. —DNA



Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 130

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



## Western badmouthing of China's virus fight unsavory

After China made major adjustments to its prevention and control policy, overseas reports about that have been full of schadenfreude, employing such terms as “failure” or “crisis” to describe the recent surge in infections in the country. But that is a false assessment of the situation, and simply reveals their animosity toward China. What they fail to take note of is the fact that life in an increasing number of cities is returning to normal. The number of serious cases has remained manageable, and many of those infected have recovered after a few days. It is natural that there should be a surge of infections in the country after the lifting of mobility restrictions given the transmissibility of the Omicron strain of the novel coronavirus. There is no denying that what the country did in its response to COVID-19 over the past three years has been a success. Despite having the world's largest population, the death toll from the virus is among the lowest, and economic activities had been maintained, albeit to varying extents. The Chinese government implemented the dynamic zero-COVID policy because it places people's lives above everything and considers it the top priority to keep people safe from the virus. It adjusted the policy more than a month ago because the Omicron variant, though much more transmissible, is much less pathogenic than the previous variants of the virus. It is also because the majority of the population has been vaccinated, which will prevent many infections from developing into serious cases. The fact that life has begun to return to normal in more and more cities has verified it was the right time to adjust the COVID-19 policy. It is good to see governments at various levels are taking concrete measures to ensure the supply of medicines and health services, and it is clear they were well aware of what would occur after the policy shift and that the focus is still on saving lives. There are media outlets in the West that have no qualms about speaking ill of whatever the Chinese government does. The dynamic zero-COVID policy, which was meant to save lives and which indeed kept the pandemic at bay for more than three years, was described as prohibiting people's freedom. Now amid the surge of infections, a natural result of the scientifically determined adjustment in policy, they are only too happy to describe it as a “crisis” or “failure” of China's COVID-19 response, belying the facts. In the eyes of these Western media, nothing China does can be right. It is the bias they harbor against China that pulls the wool over their eyes. The pandemic has entered a new stage, and it is time to fully fire up the country's economic engine, but China will continue to focus on a science-based fight against the virus and continue to make saving lives the priority.

## Europe's radical right

The legacy of a seismic political autumn is beginning to unfold. Just before politics adjourned for the Christmas break, the migration minister in Sweden's new rightwing government announced a plan to make it easier to revoke residence permits for immigrants. Maria Malmer Stenegerd belongs to the centre-right Moderate party, but at her side during the press conference was Henrik Vinge, the deputy leader of the Sweden Democrats. A radical-right party that originated in fringe neo-Nazi movements, the Sweden Democrats are not part of the governing coalition. In fact, until the landmark election in September, when the party finished second, it had been judged beyond the pale and excluded from power. Technically that remains the case. But – as Mr Vinge's presence testified – the reality is very different. Dependent on the Sweden Democrats' support to stay in office, the prime minister, Ulf Kristersson, allows it to exert significant influence, particularly on favourite topics such as migration and crime. In consensual Sweden then, the cordon sanitaire around the radical right has been discreetly lowered. In Rome, 1,500 miles to the south, a still more startling and far-reaching process of political detoxification has taken place. Four years ago, Giorgia Meloni was a firebrand leader of a party with neo-fascist roots, which scored 4% at the 2018 elections. Following Italy's poll in the autumn, which followed hard on the heels of Sweden's, she is the country's prime minister. Her radical-right coalition also contains Matteo Salvini and his anti-immigration League party. Once shunned and confined to the periphery of postwar European politics, radical-right movements have thus penetrated the political mainstream. In France, the idea of the cordon sanitaire was conceived to deal with the rise of the Vichy apologist Jean-Marie Le Pen. His daughter, Marine, has effectively broken through it, as she prepares to contest a third presidential election when Emmanuel Macron steps down. A poll this month for Le Monde found that 48% considered Le Pen and her party to represent a “patriotic right”, compared with 36% who associated her with the “nationalist and xenophobic right”. For it is not only in Ms Meloni's Italy, or Mr Orbán's Hungary, that “great replacement” rhetoric is determining policy towards migration from Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Denmark's Social Democrats regained power in 2019 by aping the approach of the populist, anti-immigrant Danish People's party. Under the leadership of the prime minister, Mette Frederiksen – who has just won a second term – the Social Democrats have backed a cap on non-western immigration, and in 2021 Denmark became the first European country to try to send refugees back to Syria. Money has also talked in the east, where Poland and Hungary have played cat-and-mouse games with the EU as it seeks to impose rule of law and anticorruption norms. Amid acute financial pressures and domestic discontent, this month Warsaw signed up to judicial reforms required by Brussels in order to access 34bn in post-pandemic funding. But as the future of Europe is defined in a volatile and increasingly multipolar world, weaponising fiscal largesse may not be enough. On issues such as LGBT and minority rights, abortion, race and immigration, the empowered nationalist right will seek to undermine liberal norms in the name of an authoritarian worldview that has little interest in universal rights. For the EU, which remains an essentially technocratic organisation, this is treacherous terrain. In a new book entitled Europe's Coming of Age, an adviser to former presidents of the European Commission, Loukas Tsoukalis, notes that, as essentially bureaucratic organisations, “Brussels institutions are never comfortable dealing with identity and cultural issues”. Europe's population is ageing and shrinking as a result of declining birthrates, and migrant labour will become an economic necessity in the decades ahead.

# West's double standards: Pursuit for human rights or a tool for dominance

Sabah Aslam

Furthermore, in this reference, one of the key measures taken were also to weaken the Muslim bloc by preoccupying Muslim countries with terrorism and counter-terrorism.

Pakistan – the only nuclear Muslim state is going through challenging time due to political instability and terrorism. Pakistan is suffering for being frontline non-NATO Ally in US war against terrorism. Additionally, in last few decades, we have witnessed a strong effort by some states to push propaganda against Islam and Muslims using overt and covert means including media outlets, academia, civil societies, and contaminating media (social, electronic, and print) with disinformation

With the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, it was hoped that the world especially the eastern part of the globe would have at least peace at borders and within. The regional power competitors were looking for regional prosperity through development and multilateralism. However, the emerging situation in Ukraine since 2014 was a preparation for another regional chaos, which exacerbated as the Ukraine – Russia war. The US planned and secretly pushed the war to Russian borders. US since 2014, has provided around \$22.1 billion to Ukraine in security assistance for training and equipment, and to help maintain its territorial integrity, secure its borders, and improve interoperability with NATO. In response to Russia's unjustified war against Ukraine, US and its allies sided with Ukraine and supported it to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Furthermore, other than military assistance, disinformation is also employed as one of the chief weapons to manipulate the international arena with fabrication. Moreover, in controlling states' behaviour, Weapon modernization – a tactic to engage the world into arm race to ensure negative peace and stability through deterrence is massively employed. On one hand, through weapon modernization, countries come under heavy debt, the donors' economy flourish and these recipient states suffer at home due to multiple encumbrances. Security assistance in that regard is a trap by U.S. Secondly, under the banner of peace, U.S. itself is playing a role of war promoter by supplying all sorts of weapons

and equipment to other states. It is arming the states with an aim to destabilize the globe at large. Despite Joe Biden's election pledge to not “check [America's] values at the door” when it comes to arms sales, the U.S. has increased, not decreased, its weapons sales around the world, according to a new report of Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, a Washington-based thinktank. Furthermore, as per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) study, the United States accounted for 39 percent of major weapons deliveries for the five-year period from 2017–21, this is twice as large as Russia's share, and over eight times China's share to the world market. Defense Security Cooperation Agency director James Hursch said “Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ongoing conflict has helped spur a greater demand for U.S. weapons, particularly from European nations who find themselves needing to replenish their own munitions stockpiles or have begun rethinking their own defense needs.” “In this time of uncertainty, we have a clear way forward: Help Ukraine defend itself. Support the Ukrainian people. Hold Russia accountable,” Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State said in a statement in February this year when Russia launched an offensive against Ukraine. However, U.S. arms sales would also pose challenges to its own security by promoting conflicts, provoking other regional powers, encouraging arms races, and drawing the US itself into excessive or counterproductive wars. US arms sales is also facilitating

human rights abuses by associate states like India in Occupied territory i.e. Kashmir. The definition of ‘Human’ and ‘Human Rights’ is different under western countries lens. From, last seven and half decades, the Muslims of Palestine and Kashmir are under occupation by Israel and India, but not a single western country came forward with military or security assistance. A question for Western Powers, ‘Who will hold India and Israel accountable?’. The hypocrite nature and double standards of major international players are making this world – a war zone. The issue of Palestine and Kashmir, and aggression done by Israel and India is far graver. However, no Human Rights advocate (Western States) pushed to at least take some proactive measures to end these two prolonged occupations. International arena is clouded with ‘Double Standards and Hypocrisy’. US always wanted to be in East because of many reasons for instance natural resources, threat to its hegemony, emergence of a powerful eastern bloc, and to counter China and Russia's rise as global powers. Furthermore, in this reference, one of the key measures taken were also to weaken the Muslim bloc by preoccupying Muslim countries with terrorism and counter-terrorism. Pakistan – the only nuclear Muslim state is going through challenging time due to political instability and terrorism. Pakistan is suffering for being frontline non-NATO Ally in US war against terrorism. Additionally, in last few decades, we have witnessed a strong effort by some states to push propaganda against Islam and Muslims using overt and covert means including media outlets, academia, civil societies, and contaminating media (social, electronic, and print) with disinformation.

# SCO: Effective platform to combat terrorism in Pakistan

Gul.i. Ayesha Bhatti



The TTP inmates' siege and hostage-taking at the center, which had started on December 18, took place for more than 60 hours and cost five precious lives. Alongside, a police station in Lakki Marwat near Bannu, North, and South Waziristan was also raided by terrorists on December 18 and 19. There, dozens of TTP militants beat up police officers and took all the weapons while issuing a warning to all local officials to quit their jobs as police officers as soon as possible. TTP head Noor Wali Mehsud, who is apparently in the protection of Kabul under the Taliban, had stated to CNN just a day prior to the TTP attack on the CTD and the Bargi Police Station

Terrorism has once more shaken Pakistan as the year comes to a close. The blacklisted TTP has attacked the federal capital after causing devastation in KP, bringing to light the achingly uncomfortable reality that unless the militant organization is stopped in its tracks, the current wave of terrorism may very well spread to other regions of the State. When a suicide bomber detonated himself in Islamabad on Friday, when police tried to stop his car for verification, a police officer was died. There is no doubt that terrorism is spreading beyond the heart of the country. The wave of terrorism in the state is a cause for severe worry. It is stated that if the capital is not safe, then no other place in the state is either. Before few days of this incident, the blatant assault on security officers took place outside the counter-terrorism department (CTD) facility in Bannu Cantonment. The TTP inmates' siege and hostage-taking at the center, which had started on December 18, took place for more than 60 hours and cost five precious lives. Alongside, a police station in Lakki Marwat near Bannu, North, and South Waziristan was also raided by terrorists on December 18 and 19. There, dozens of TTP militants beat up police officers and took all the weapons while issuing a warning to all local officials to quit their jobs as police officers as soon as possible. TTP head Noor Wali Mehsud, who is apparently in the protection of Kabul under the Taliban, had stated to CNN just a day prior to the TTP attack on the CTD and the Bargi Police Station in Lakki Marwat that his organization is not using Afghanistan territory for strikes within Pakistan. He asserted that Pakistani land is the location of whatever the TTP does to further its objectives. Ironically, Noor Mehsud followed this up by telling his “mujahdeen” who were occupying the CTD building (on December 20) not to give up. When all of this was happening, Centcom Chief General Michael E. Kurilla was on a visit to Pakistan too and during the visit,

he offered Pakistan “every possible help” in the TTP. Approximately two weeks before this, the US State Department identified four al-Qaeda subcontinent and TTP combatants as global terrorists. This whole situation is complicated since all the stakeholders, overtly and covertly involved, have different goals. TTP is one of the stakeholders that has borrowed heavily from the Taliban's ideology of Shariah to apply it in Pakistan. The TTP intends to seize control of the border region in order to establish its ideal Caliphate. Additionally, it wants the Pakistani army to vacate the border regions, which the administration views as unacceptable. Another important stakeholder is the US, which regrets leaving Afghanistan and wants to make a welcoming return. This comeback is only feasible if Pakistan is seen to have failed completely to end domestic terrorism and to find a viable solution to its problems with the Taliban administration because the stability in Pakistan is inextricably linked to the stability in Afghanistan. The third stakeholder is those parties that want to halt CPEC without proceeding any further, as they see CPEC as a threat to their monopoly in this region. Since the events of 9/11, Pakistan has been battling terrorism with the US as its “Non-NATO Ally.” Pakistan has made unparalleled and laudable achievements in this regard. It has, however, received accusations from the US instead of praise. Pakistan was set to reap the rewards of its well-played role in the US-Taliban peace pact in 2020 and the US pull-out from Afghanistan after eighteen years of domestic peace and stability concerns brought on by terrorism, which led to economic hardship and a devastated society. Nevertheless, the rise of this new wave of terrorism is quite frightening and portends major future risks. While joining hands with the international community to combat terrorism and nipping it in its bud, it is crucial to consider regional organizations like SCO as well. In order to ensure comprehensive security, SCO has vowed to coordinate efforts

to counter common security challenges and threats, increase communication and strengthen collaboration, combat terrorism, cyber terrorism, separatism, extremism, transnational organized crime, and illicit drug trafficking, as well as strengthen global information security and emergency response. Moreover, The SCO Convention on Countering Extremism is the organization's joint reaction to the continually expanding menace of extremism. Along with this is Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism, the Convention of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization against Terrorism, and the 2016-2018 SCO Member States Programme on Cooperation in Combating Terrorism, Separatism, and Extremism. The SCO Convention on Countering Extremism aims to improve the legal environment in this area while also strengthening security and enhancing effective collaboration amongst member states. Pakistani and Russian military personnel have participated in the Druzhba joint training exercises every year since 2016. The drills involve personnel from both nations' special operations teams. The goal of the exercises is to train the Special Forces in counter-terrorism (CT) and to share experiences with other special forces. Russia has already shown concern about the need to further increase the multifaceted bilateral cooperation, including in counterterrorism with Pakistan. In addition, the two nations agreed to enhance cooperation for military training. Although the Ukraine war has brought a halt to the joint military this year, however, its inevitability should not be ignored. Russia, China and Iran have a convergence of interest with Pakistan in terms of counterterrorism and regional stability. They are interested in peaceful Afghanistan with minimal US engagement. They are well aware that counterterrorism is connected to the prosperous and progressive region. Therefore, they should join hand with Pakistan to combat terrorism in an effective way.

—The writer is PhD Scholar in International Relations



## Briefs

## 3 soldiers martyred in Kurram

FROM PAGE 01  
Pakistan Army is "determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism" and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has summoned a meeting of the National Security Committee on Friday to review the security situation in the country following a suicide blast in Islamabad and a spate of terrorist attacks in Balochistan.

The civil and military leadership will attend the NSC meeting. A number of federal ministers will be in attendance. Army Chief General Asim Munir, director general military operations, chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff committee, naval and air force chiefs will also attend the meeting. Military officials will brief the huddle on internal security and situation at the borders. The meeting is expected to frame a comprehensive strategy against the terrorism and important decisions are expected in the meeting.

For the past few weeks, Pakistan has witnessed a fresh wave of terrorism with the most recent spate of terror attacks carried out in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On Wednesday, Pakistan Army's top brass resolved to uproot terrorism "without any distinction" as the country battles a fresh wave of insurgency, which has left many soldiers martyred and several others injured. Earlier this week, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, too, reiterated his resolve to uproot the menace of terrorism by using all available resources. The premier said he would take all possible steps to control terrorism in all its forms in the country.

## President, PM laud Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01  
the efforts of the security forces as well as the whole nation would continue till elimination of the scourge from the homeland.

He said the prayers of the whole nation went to their brave security forces.

Both the president and the prime minister sympathised with bereaved families of the martyred soldiers and prayed for high ranks of the martyrs in the paradise and for patience to the grieved families to bear the loss.

## Stop supporting terror activities in Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01  
Answering a question about Afghanistan, the Spokesperson said Pakistan has been engaging with Afghanistan authorities on all matters, including the border situation and security of diplomats and missions and terrorist threat its Pakistan faces. She said the Afghan-interim authorities have assured to resolve all such issues soon. She said Pakistan has a natural stake in peace and stability in Afghanistan and we would like to continue to engage and find solutions to all matters of concern.

## Terrorists designs to be foiled: Sanaullah

FROM PAGE 01  
The terrorists arrived in Rawalpindi from Kurram agency. The law-enforcement agencies have detained handlers and rounded up at least five others.

"The banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) accepted the responsibility for the attack," the minister said, which claimed the life of a policeman and wounded several others.

## NZ take two early wickets after Williamson's heroics

Unstoppable Williamson completed his fifth double-hundred as New Zealand put Pakistan under extreme pressure with a strong 174-run lead in first innings of the opening Test

DNA

KARACHI: Ish Sodhi and Michael Bracewell took a wicket each for New Zealand as Pakistan continued to suffer in home conditions during first Test. After taking a strong 174-run lead thanks to Kane Williamson's double-hundred, New Zealand bowlers trapped opener Abdullah Shafique and Shan Masood earlier. Abdullah, who has failed to score big in his last six innings - scoring

just 106 runs, fell to Bracewell after scoring 17 runs. Shan was dismissed after scoring 10. Unstoppable Williamson completed his fifth double-hundred as New Zealand put Pakistan under extreme pressure with a strong 174-run lead in first innings of the opening Test. Williamson took his time and stayed at the crease for 244 minutes on the fourth day to add 95 runs to his overnight score of 105 runs. Overall, he stayed for 600 minutes in first innings which is also a record in Pakistan.

It took him some time to reach to his double-hundred but as soon as he reached 200-mark, New Zealand declared their innings for 612-9 before going for Tea. Abrar Ahmed took five wickets, his second fiver in just the third Test since debut against England earlier this month, to help Pakistan have some time to cheer. Nauman Ali bagged three wickets. Sodhi fought hard with Williamson, scoring 159 runs together. He played most balls (180) of his Test career today, scoring ca-

reer-best 65 runs. It was a frustrating day with the ball throughout for Pakistan, starting off with first session. Sodhi kept himself under control and helped Williamson get going for New Zealand in first innings of the opening Test. Resuming at an overnight score of 440-6 with a lead of two runs, Sodhi remained calm and composed alongside Williamson as New Zealand looked slow while scoring. New Zealand added 79 runs to their overnight score as their lead reached 81 runs at lunch.

Williamson, who survived after a successful review, scored unbeaten 137 runs. Sodhi played 127 balls to save one end after surviving from dropped catch by Shan Masood at 20. He remained not out for 41 runs at lunch. Nauman Ali, in 116th over, appealed for an LBW which was given by umpire Aleem Dar. But, it was a brief celebration in Pakistan camp as Williamson took a review straight away and it went in his favour. Pakistan had to settle wicketless before lunch on day 4.

## PAF T20 Cricket Trophy for Blind from Friday

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) T20 Cricket Championships Trophy for the Blind will commence here at the PAF Cricket Ground in Sector E-9 on Friday. The four-day event is being organized by the Islamabad Cricket Club of the Blind in collaboration with the PAF, said a press release on Thursday.

As many as four teams including Peshawar, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), Gujranwala and Islamabad are participating in the event. On first day two matches will be played. In the first match AJK will take on Gujranwala, while in the second match hosts Islamabad will face Peshawar. - APP



KARACHI: New Zealand's Kane Williamson plays a shot during the fourth day of the first Test Cricket Match between Pakistan and New Zealand at the National Stadium. - APP

## Nine killed in fighting in Sudan's Darfur

KHARTOUM: Nine people have been killed in fighting in Sudan's western Darfur region between groups of Arab Rizeigat and the Fur people, the government said Thursday.

Shooting broke out late Wednesday in Zalingei, state capital of Central Darfur, after a Fur member was killed, sparking wider fighting, witnesses said. Rizeigat gunmen on motorbikes stormed a camp for displaced people in the city attacking Fur residents, said Adam Regal, spokesman for the General Coordination for Refugees and Displaced in Darfur, a Sudanese independent aid group.

"The regrettable events have claimed the lives of nine people, and wounded others," Central Darfur state government's security committee said in a statement. A market was "completely

burnt" in the clashes, it said, adding that the committee had held talks with the two sides in a bid to end fighting. Security forces have been dispatched to the area, it added. Fighting raged overnight until Thursday morning in the city, 1,020 kilometres (635 miles) west of the capital Khartoum.

Ethnic clashes regularly erupt in Darfur, a troubled arid region awash with automatic weapons still reeling from the bitter civil war that erupted in 2003. That conflict pitted ethnic minority rebels against the Arab-dominated government of then-president Omar al-Bashir. Some 300,000 people were killed and 2.5 million displaced, according to the United Nations.

While the conflict has subsided over the years, violence still flares between

nomadic herders and settled farmers over shrinking access to scarce water and grazing land.

On Saturday, at least 11 people were reported killed following deadly clashes in South Darfur state. It was not clear what started that fighting.

The latest bouts of violence come as Sudan grapples with the crippling aftermath of a military coup led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan in October last year. Civilian groups signed a preliminary deal with the military to end the crisis earlier this month but it has been criticised as "opaque".

Conflicts in Sudan's far-flung regions have killed around 900 people this year and driven almost 300,000 from their homes, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

## Tsitsipas battles past Dimitrov at inaugural United Cup

PERTH: Stefanos Tsitsipas fired his 12th ace on match point to give Greece a 2-0 lead over Bulgaria with a comeback win against Grigor Dimitrov on Thursday at inaugural United Cup. The world number four recovered smoothly after losing the opening set to emerge with a 4-6, 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) victory in his season-opening match at Perth ahead of the Australian Open. Greek teammate Despina Papamichail, ranked 158th, gave her country the opening point as she defeated a cramping Isabella Shinikova, also finishing with a fightback to win 3-6, 6-4, 6-1. The mixed teams tournament features 18 countries playing in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth, with each tie consisting of two men's and two women's singles rubbers along with a mixed doubles. Tsitsipas lifted in the final-set tiebreaker against an opponent he has now defeated in six of their seven matches. "It was extremely close, but I'll take it," he said. "It was a good effort from my side. It was tough playing in the heat - I'm glad they closed the roof. I had to hang in there and fight, Grigor can compete with the best in the world." "But I found a little gap and gave myself the chance to do something in the tiebreak." In Sydney, American world number nine Taylor Fritz and 11th-ranked Madison Keys cruised through their opening ties against the Czech Republic to also get their seasons off to a winning start. - APP

## Turkish, Russian, Syrian defense chiefs talk

ANKARA: The Turkish, Russian, and Syrian defense ministers met in Moscow on Wednesday and discussed counter-terrorism efforts in the region, Türkiye's defense chief said on Thursday. "At the meeting, we discussed what could be done to improve the situation in Syria and the region as soon as possible, while ensuring peace, tranquility and stability," said Turkish National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar before returning to Ankara from Moscow. Noting that Türkiye has emphasized its counter-terrorism efforts during the meeting, Akar said: "We emphasized that we respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty rights of all our neighbors, especially Syria and Iraq, and that our sole aim is the fight against terrorism, we have no other purpose." Türkiye also noted that it aims to "neutralize" PKK/YPG, and Daesh/ISIS terrorists, which are a threat to Syria as well, the defense minister said. Turkish authorities use the term "neutralize" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. "We have told them (Russia and Syria at the meeting) that we are making efforts to ensure the security of our country, nation and borders," Akar said. - APP

## PCB, Balochistan Govt to jointly renovate Quetta stadium

QUETTA: The Balochistan Government and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday decided to jointly renovate a cricket stadium in Quetta with proper arrangements for holding PSL matches in the provincial metropolis.

The decision to the effect was taken during a meeting of PCB officials with Principal Secretary of Balochistan Chief Minister, Imran Kichki. During the meeting, issues pertaining to holding of Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches in Quetta were discussed in detail. It was assured that effective steps would be taken for the security of teams and fans.

Imran Kichki said holding of PSL matches in the provincial capital would give an opportunity to the local cricket players to improve their game. Both the grounds and weather conditions in Quetta were suitable for holding summer cricket camps, he added.

He said Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qud-

*Both the grounds and weather conditions in Quetta were suitable for holding summer cricket camps, he added. He said Chief Minister Mir Abdul QudusBizenjo had deep interest in promoting sports activities in the province*

usBizenjo had deep interest in promoting sports activities in the province. The provincial government, he said, was playing an important role in keeping hockey and football alive at the national level.

He said there were a lot of talented cricket players across Balochistan as the game was played at Tehsil level, and organizing matches like the PSL would give them an opportunity to come forward and show their prowess. - DNA

## Pakistan Cricket Cup semi-finals line-up complete

In today's fixture between Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the NBP Sports Complex, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, after being put into bat, were bowled out for 133 in 31 overs with Fakhar Zaman (32, 37b, 5x4) and Adil Amin (28 not out, 33b, 4x4) adding runs with the bat

LAHORE: Balochistan and Southern Punjab eased through to comprehensive wins over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Northern Punjab today in the 10th and final round of the Pakistan Cup to cement their places in the semi-finals of the 50-over tournament in Karachi on Thursday.

According to the information made available here by the Pakistan Cricket Board, Central Punjab, who have topped the points table with 14 points, will take on fourth-placed Southern Punjab in the first semi-final on 31 December. Defending champions Balochistan,

who ended up with 12 points from 10 matches and on the second spot will take on third-positioned Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the second semi-final on 1 January. The final of the tournament will be played on 2 January. Both semi-finals and the final will be played at the State Bank Stadium. The semi-finals will be broadcast live on PTV Sports.

In today's fixture between Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the NBP Sports Complex, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, after being put into bat, were bowled out for 133 in 31 overs with Fakhar Zaman (32, 37b,

5x4) and Adil Amin (28 not out, 33b, 4x4) adding runs with the bat.

For Balochistan, Mohammad Junaid was the pick of the bowlers with four for 37 from eight overs. Captain Yasir Shah bagged three wickets for 26. In reply, Balochistan achieved the target inside 19 overs with three wickets down. The opening pair of Haseebullah and Imran Butt knitted 64 runs for the first wicket, with left-handed Haseebullah contributing 53 off 32 balls, smashing 11 fours. Imran, returned undefeated on 63 off 46 balls, hitting 10 fours and one six.

In the contest between table toppers Central Punjab and National T20 winners Sindh, the latter failed to chase down the 311-run target and with that lost a chance to seal a berth in the semi-finals. After being asked to bat first, Central Punjab scored 310 for nine in 50 overs courtesy half-centuries by Ahmed Shehzad (67, 83b, 6x4, 2x6) and Tayyab Tahir (59, 46b, 5x4, 3x6). For Sindh, Asif Mehmood and Sohail Khan took two wickets apiece.

In return, Sindh got a decent 43-run start provided by southpaws Saim Ayub (15, 20b, 1x4) and Sharjeel

Khan (32, 19b, 6x4), but after the departure of both batters, only Faraz Ali coming to bat at number four showed some resistance with a knock of 64 off 80 balls, which included one four and two sixes.

Down the order, skipper Anwar Ali (30, 35b, 4x4) and Sohail Khan (43, 29b, 2x4, 4x6) showed some glimpses of brilliance, but were unable to assist the Sindh side in reaching the target as they were bundled out for 244 with five overs to spare. For the winning side, Usama Mir grabbed three wickets, while Mohammad Ali and

Waqas Maqsood took two wickets each.

In the third contest of the 10th round, Southern Punjab, staged a stunning comeback to qualify for the semi-finals. Before facing Northern in the final round match, Southern Punjab were placed at the bottom of the table with six points from nine games, but a comprehensive eight-wicket win over Northern and getting the 121-run target in the 16th over, not only gave Southern Punjab valuable two points, but also improved their net run-rate which helped them go above Sindh in the points table.

## PTI announces countrywide protest...

FROM PAGE 01

In the first phase, Fawad said PTI's members of national and provincial assemblies would lead the protests for three weeks in their constituencies across the country. "After three weeks, Imran Khan will join the campaign and this process will continue till this government is ousted," the PTI leader said, asking the nation to join hands with the party.

The announcement to return to the streets comes after PTI's chief in November called off the long march in Rawalpindi and announced plans for the dissolution of the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies, but it is yet to materialise. The dissolution of the KP Assembly has been linked to Punjab, whose disbandment plans hit a snag last week when the Lahore High Court reinstated Parvez Elahi as Punjab's chief minister and ordered him to not dissolve the legislative.

Fawad said PTI and its ally, Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), have a majority - 190 lawmakers - in the Punjab Assembly, and they are currently mulling over the vote of confidence. "We will try that CM Elahi takes a vote of confidence before January 11. 177 Punjab Assembly lawmakers are in contact with us," the former information minister said. He also blamed Punjab Governor Baligh-ur-Rehman for becoming part of "a conspiracy" in denouncing Elahi as the chief minister. "The governor and the chief secretary will have to come to the assembly and answer for their actions."

## G7 tells Taliban to reverse...

FROM PAGE 01

Unless they participate in aid delivery in Afghanistan, NGOs will be unable to reach the country's most vulnerable people to provide food, medicine, winterization, and other materials and services they need to live," the G7 statement said. "The Taliban continue to demonstrate their contempt for the rights, freedoms, and welfare of the Afghan people, particularly women and girls," it added.

Christian Aid has warned that millions of people in Afghanistan are on the "verge of starvation".

"Reports that families are so desperate they have been forced to sell their children to buy food are utterly heartbreaking," said Christian Aid's head of global programmes Ray Hasan. A ban on women aid workers would "only curtail our ability to help the growing number of people in need", he added. The Taliban's ban has come at a time when millions across the country are dependent on humanitarian aid provided by international donors through a vast network of NGOs.

Afghanistan's economic crisis has only worsened since the Taliban seized power in August last year, which led to Washington freezing billions of dollars of its assets and foreign donors cutting aid.

After the minister of higher education banned women from universities, charging that they too were not properly dressed, protests were forcefully dispersed by the authorities. Since returning to power in August last year, the Taliban had already barred teenage girls from secondary school. - APP

## Qureshi, Khattak in the dock...

FROM PAGE 01

the NA speaker today. However, sources within the party shared that both leaders excused themselves from attending the meeting at the last minute. In their absence, former speaker Asad Qaiser led the delegation in the meeting. Now both the leaders will meet the PTI chairman at his Lahore residence in Zaman Park to explain their position on the matter.



## Briefs

## Stocks wobble as China's Covid surge spooks investors

LONDON :Stocks sank in Asia and wavered in Europe on Thursday, with sentiment clouded by China's Covid surge. The United States has joined a growing number of countries in imposing restrictions on visitors from China after Beijing announced it would remove curbs on overseas travel as Covid cases surge. Investors had previously cheered the easing of the nation's strict zero-Covid controls – which had hammered the world's second-largest economy – but are now worried about the impact of the outbreak on global supply chains and inflation. Hong Kong stocks slid 0.8 percent and Tokyo lost 0.9 percent, while Sydney, Singapore, Shanghai, Taipei and Seoul also languished in the red. Europe lapsed into negative territory at the open, before diverging as the morning progressed. “The Covid spike (in China) looks to be impacting sentiment in markets, especially with other countries now taking action due to the scale of the surge,” Craig Erlam, analyst at trading platform OANDA, told AFP.

There is a risk ... that the relaxation of curbs will cause some disruption and have knock-on effects elsewhere.” Yet volumes were thin in the final trading week of the year, with investors chewing on the prospects of a recession in 2023, and how central banks – especially the US Federal Reserve – are going to handle the fight against rampaging inflation. –APP

## Pandas to return to China after two decades at Memphis Zoo

WASHINGTON: A pair of giant pandas will return to China after two decades at the Memphis Zoo in Memphis, the U.S. state of Tennessee, as the zoo's current giant panda loan agreement with the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens is coming to an end. Giant pandas Ya Ya and Le Le will “make the journey back to China within the next few months,” the zoo announced on Wednesday. Ya Ya and Le Le came to Memphis in 2003, and the contract was renewed in 2013. The current loan agreement will end in 2023. “Ya Ya and Le Le have been integral parts of the Memphis community for the past 20 years and we are grateful for the time we were able to spend with them,” the zoo said in a statement. “During their time at Memphis Zoo, Ya Ya and Le Le helped pioneer research and conservation projects to teach others about the importance of their species,” the statement read. The Memphis Zoo also underscored that it has been a privilege to host these incredible bears and that the impact the Chinese culture has had on the City of Memphis “will forever be remembered.” –APP

## Hundreds of 4,500-yr-old tombs found in central China

ZHENGZHOU: Archaeologists have found more than 300 tombs dating back around 4,500 years in central China's Henan Province, which are of great significance to studying the burial system and social structure of prehistoric China. Located in the Suyang relics site in the city of Luoyang, the tomb complex covers an area of about 15,000 square meters, and all of the tombs are earth pits in a rectangular shape, according to the Luoyang Municipal Institute of Archaeology. “The tomb cluster is large in size and can be traced back to the transition period from Yangshao Culture to Longshan Culture. It is extremely rare to see this in Zhongyuan, a region known as the central plain area,” said Ren Guang, head of the excavation project on the Suyang site. Archaeologists have unearthed nine tombs so far, and the skeletons of 10 people have been found in the tombs. Some of the tombs show evidence of having been seriously damaged by tomb raiders. –APP

## All sectors of economy must be developed equally: Alvi

Pakistan needs investment, foreign exchange and economic activities and the business community of the country is playing an important role in this regard, Khursheed Barlas

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The closing ceremony of the second Pakistan International Property Expo and Convention organized by the Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry was held at the President's House. In which a large number of foreign diplomats, members of the housing and construction sector, government officials and various business communities associated with the tourism industry participated. Addressing the ceremony, the President said that the government is focusing on the development of the construction and housing sector. It is giving because it has played a significant role in creating employment opportunities in the country, driving growth and economic development and meeting the housing needs of the growing population. President Dr. Arif Alvi has stressed the need to adopt environment-friendly, energy-saving and cost-effective construction and housing methods to provide quality housing to the people, say-



ing that promoting vertical construction in the country will help the poor. And providing low-cost and affordable housing to the lower middle class can help overcome space scarcity in urban areas, prevent unplanned growth of cities and protect agricultural land from encroachment. The President said. That no society can develop until it lifts the weak and poor sections of the society out of the trap of poverty. He said that public and private sectors need to work together to rehabilitate slum dwellers and solve their problems. He said that slums are suffering

from lack of urban facilities, inclusive and poor-friendly development should be promoted in the country so that no one is left behind and the fruits of development reach all sections of the population. Instead of concentrating activities and initiatives in a few urban centers, active steps should be taken to bring the less developed areas of the country at par with other areas. The President urged the business community to take active and practical steps to increase the representation and participation of women in various sectors of the economy, especially the housing

and construction sector. He called for inclusion of women in trade including providing a conducive, women-friendly and harassment-free environment at workplaces. The President said that all sectors of the economy must be developed equally, public and private sectors should find a comprehensive solution to the problems faced by the economy. He expressed his full confidence in Pakistan's human and natural resources and the nation's ability to deal with the challenges they face. The President also emphasized the need to encourage experts

in every sector, including housing and construction. He also made joint ventures globally in various sectors to promote Brand Pakistan and organized exhibitions, seminars and conferences in all parts of Pakistan and around the world to promote trade and investment (PAE). He praised the administration. Speaking at the ceremony, the founding chairman of Pakistan International Property Expo and Convention, Khurshid Barlas said that Pakistan International Property Expo and Convention is making efforts to promote Pakistan, improve the reputa-

tion of Pakistan, and increase trade and investment in the country. Islamabad Property Expo proved that business conditions can be improved if patronized. I am very grateful to all these institutions and our partners who supported us and played their full role in making this Islamabad Expo a success. what Chairman Khurshid Barlas said that our aim is to bring investment in the country and increase exports. Around 500 different events, conferences, seminars and expos have been organized He said that Pakistan needs investment, foreign exchange and economic activities and the business community of the country is playing an important role in this regard. He also emphasized on regulating the construction sector of the country and training people involved in construction and housing sector. Earlier, the President distributed shields to the representatives of the companies in the housing and construction sector for their exceptional performance.

## Vietnam reports 234 new COVID-19 cases

HANOI: Vietnam recorded 234 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, up 102 from Wednesday, according to its ministry of health. All the new cases were locally transmitted, said the ministry. The new infections brought the total tally to 11,525,013. The Southeast Asian country reported no new deaths from the pandemic on Thursday, with the total fatalities staying at 43,184. As of Thursday, 35 severe cases were in need of assisted breathing and 10,611,114 COVID-19 patients, or over 92 percent of the total infections, have recovered, according to the ministry. More than 265.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the country, including over 223.2 million shots on people aged 18 and above, said the ministry.

## China urges 'scientific and fair' travel curbs

ISTANBUL: COVID-19 requirements being imposed by countries on travelers from China should be based on science, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Thursday. “China believes all countries' responses to COVID-19 should be scientific and fair,” ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said at a news conference in Beijing. China is facing an explosive spike in infections after dumping its strict “zero-COVID” policy this month, following unrest and unprecedented protests in parts of the country. That has prompted countries such as the US, Japan, and Italy to enforce new requirements for people coming from China, including negative COVID-19 tests. The steps are in contrast to Beijing's decision to scrap mandatory quarantine for all visitors starting Jan. 8. “The current measures prevent normal exchanges among people and we hope all countries will base their decisions on science and will ensure a stable global supply chain and economic recovery,” Wang said, according to the Chinese daily Global Times. –Agencies

## US to require travelers from China to show COVID results

NEW YORK: The US will require travelers from China to show negative coronavirus test results as part of new precautions beginning Jan. 5, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced Wednesday. The move by US officials comes amid an alarming rise in infections in China. “The CDC is announcing this step to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the United States during the surge in COVID-19 cases in China given the lack of adequate and transparent epidemiological and viral genomic sequence data being reported from China,” according to the CDC. US officials raised concerns earlier about the transparency of data coming from China concerning new cases. –APP

## Belarus says shot down missile launched from Ukraine

## DNA

MOSCOW: Russia's key ally Belarus said Thursday its air defence shot down a missile launched from Ukrainian territory, in the first such incident reported by Minsk since the start of Moscow's Ukraine offensive. The Belarus defence ministry said a missile was shot down around 10:00 am local

time (0700 GMT) with its debris discovered in a village in the western Brest region that borders Ukraine and Poland. “It was preliminarily established that the fragments belonged to an S-300 anti-aircraft guided missile launched from the territory of Ukraine,” the ministry said in a statement. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko “was immediately informed”

of the incident, a Telegram channel close to the presidency said earlier. There was no information yet about possible injuries or casualties. In November, a missile landed in a village in NATO member Poland and killed two people, also sparking concern the US-led alliance would be drawn into the conflict in Ukraine. Russia denies having fired the missile, while Warsaw said it was likely

caused by a Ukrainian air defence missile launched to intercept Russian attacks. Russia has used Belarus as a launching pad for its Ukraine offensive. In October, Belarus said it was establishing a joint regional force with Moscow, with several thousand Russian servicemen arriving in the ex-Soviet country. The move has fuelled concern Minsk could also send troops to Ukraine.

## China issues guideline on vocational education reform

BEIJING: Chinese authorities have issued a guideline to advance reform and high-quality development of vocational education. It aims to enhance the capacities of vocational schools and increase the quality, adaptability, and appeal of vocational education to train more high-caliber technicians and skilled workers, said the document. It was made public by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council on Wednesday. The reform of the country's vocational education

will focus on developing a multi-form, multi-channel, and sustainable education and training system and a cooperation mechanism among governments, industries, enterprises, and schools. Priority will be given to vocational education for industries such as information technology, numerical control machine tools and robots, aviation and space equipment manufacturing, and bio-medicine. Leading enterprises and vocational schools in these industries are encouraged to enhance cooperation.

More efforts will be made to raise faculty capacity in vocational schools for modern manufacturing, modern agriculture, and modern service sectors. The guideline promised more policy support for vocational education. Local governments are encouraged to explore new cooperation mechanisms with the private sector and attract more private and industrial investment in vocational education. Financial institutions are welcome to offer services and support, the document said. –Agencies

## Air defences activated near key Russia airbase

MOSCOW: Air defences were activated on Thursday near Engels, a base for Russia's strategic aircraft, located hundreds of kilometers from Ukraine's border, regional authorities said. Engels, located in the central region of Saratov, is a base for Russia's aircraft that Kyiv says have been used to strike Ukraine. This month the Engels base has already been targeted twice in deadly attacks that Moscow blames on Ukraine. “The air defence system has been activated in the Engels district,” governor Roman Busargin said on social media. He added that an “unidentified object” had been destroyed and there was no threat to the safety of residents. He did not provide further details. Russia said on Monday it downed a drone over the Engels airfield and that three people were killed by falling debris. On December 5, Moscow said Ukraine's Soviet-made drones had caused explosions at the Engels airfield and another base in the Ryazan region. –Agencies

## S. Korea to boost military readiness

SEOUL: President Yoon Suk-yeol said Thursday that South Korea must boost its preparedness to respond

to airspace intrusions after the military failed to shoot down five North Korean drones that crossed the border. The Monday intrusion by the drones – one of which flew close to the capital Seoul – prompted the South's military to deploy fighter jets and attack helicopters. But despite a five-hour operation, the military failed to shoot down the North Korean drones, prompting widespread criticism

over the response and an apology from the country's defence minister. Yoon said the incident was “intolerable” and added that the South should ensure that Pyongyang “realise that provocations are always met with harsh consequences”. “In order for us to achieve peace, we need to make overwhelmingly superior war preparations,” he said during a visit to the state-run Agency for Defence Development. –Agencies

## 10 killed in hotel-casino fire at Cambodian border

POIPET: At least 10 people were killed and many others are feared dead in a fire at a Cambodian casino, with a rescuer describing how victims hurled themselves from a ledge in a desperate bid to escape the flames. The blaze at the Grand Diamond City hotel-casino in Poipet, within view of the Thai border, broke out late Wednesday night, Cambodian police said. A provincial police report seen by AFP put the death toll at “about 10” but Sek Sokhom, director of the Banteay Meanchey provincial information department, later said authorities feared “dozens” had been killed. A volunteer with Thai rescue group Ruamkatanyu Foundation who wished to remain anonymous said his team arrived at around 2am (0730 GMT) and saw people jump from the building. “I witnessed people running out of the building to escape from the smoke,” he said, adding that a group were also packed onto a rooftop to avoid the flames. “Then we saw some people jumping down,” he said. Video showed the building consumed by flames, with firefighters struggling to contain the blaze and rescuers attempting to pluck people from a burning ledge. In one clip, an unidentified man is seen sitting on a window ledge as smoke billows out from behind him. In another, a group of people huddle on a ledge as flames draw near. A Thai foreign ministry source said they had been coordinating closely with local authorities, “including by sending in fire trucks from the Thai side”. Thai authorities in neighbouring Sa Kaeo province later said more than 50 victims had been hospitalised there, with local public health official Prapas Poekduang telling AFP that 13 people were “on life support”. Sa Kaeo Governor Papiya Phothisat said another roughly 60 people caught up in the fire had already been checked and cleared by Thai hospitals. –APP

## US sells anti-tank systems to Taiwan amid tension with China

## WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: The US State Department has approved the sale of vehicle-launched anti-tank systems to Taiwan worth \$180 million (169 million), as tensions between Taipei and Beijing continue to rise. The Pentagon said approval for the sale came late Wednesday and also includes Volcano anti-tank munition-laying systems, cargo trucks, ammunition and logistics support packages, among other services. The Defense Department said the sale aims to serve “US national, economic, and security interests by supporting the recipient's continuing efforts to modernize its armed forces and to maintain a credible defensive capability.” The new anti-tank system is capable of scattering both anti-tank and anti-personnel mines from a ground vehicle or helicopter. China argues that the self-ruled island is part of its territory and warns that US support for Taiwan would destabilize the region. When announcing the sale, the US stressed that it will improve Taiwan's capability to meet current and future threats, but that it would not “alter the basic military balance in the region.” The sale comes days after China conducted one of its largest incursions into Taiwan-controlled airspace. China deployed 17 warplanes including dozens of fighter jets over the weekend to conduct military exercises around the strait, Taiwan's Defense Ministry said on Monday. Forty-seven of the Chinese aircraft crossed the median line, an unofficial boundary once accepted by both sides. The Chinese military said the exercises were in response to “provocations” and “collusion” between the US and Taiwan, describing them as a “strike drill.” Beijing had earlier expressed anger at a US annual defense spending bill that included some Taiwan-related provisions. One day later, Taiwan's president announced extending compulsory military service to one year from four months, saying that the current duration of service was insufficient.

## 5 killed, 37 injured in S.Korea's tunnel fire

SEOUL: Five people were killed and 37 others injured in a fire that engulfed a noise-barrier tunnel along an expressway in Gwacheon city, just south of the capital Seoul, Yonhap news agency reported Thursday. The fire broke out at about 1:49 p.m. local time (0449 GMT) after a collision accident between a bus and a truck, which caught fire and spread flames to the tunnel along the second Gyeongin expressway. Five people were found dead in the collided vehicles. The death toll was initially tallied at six, but it was revised down to five later. Three others were in critical condition, leaving a possibility for additional deaths. Thirty-four people suffered minor injuries after smoke inhalation. The firefighting authorities dispatched 94 fire engines and equipment as well as about 220 firefighters to extinguish the fire. –APP

## DECEMBER 2022

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk

www.dnanews.com.pk

www.islamabadpost.com.pk



@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,  
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan  
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165





## Briefs

Netanyahu's  
hard-line  
new govt  
takes office

## MONITORING DESK

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: The most religious and hard-line government in Israel's history has been sworn in. Benjamin Netanyahu returns as prime minister, after his Likud party formed a coalition with ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox Jewish allies. There is domestic and international concern it will inflame the conflict with the Palestinians, damage the judiciary and restrict minority rights. Mr Netanyahu has promised to pursue peace and safeguard civil rights. Addressing a special session of the Knesset (parliament) in Jerusalem before taking office, he stated that his administration would "restore governance, peace and personal security to the citizens of Israel". "I hear the opposition's constant laments about 'the end of the state', 'the end of democracy'. Members of the opposition, losing the elections is not the end of democracy - this is the essence of democracy." Several hundred protesters gathered outside, waving Israeli flags, rainbow flags bearing the Star of David, and signs reading "shame", "danger" and "down with racism". Mor, a woman from Jerusalem, told the BBC: "I'm here because my country's falling apart from its democratic values. I'm getting hurt as a woman and my friends are getting hurt as women, LGBTQ [people], Arabs."

US lawmaker  
facing probe  
for lying  
about resume

## WEB DESK

NEW YORK: A New York prosecutor is investigating Republican congressman-elect George Santos after he admitted he lied about his education and work experience. The Republican district attorney for Nassau County announced she will look into the "numerous fabrications and inconsistencies" in his biography. Allegations about discrepancies in his backstory were first made in a New York Times report last week. Mr Santos is scheduled to be sworn in on 3 January. The newspaper published an investigation in this month alleging Mr Santos - who was elected to Congress in the November mid-term elections - had made several lies on his resume. Those included that he had graduated from Baruch College in New York and worked at high-profile Wall Street firms Goldman Sachs and Citigroup. Mr Santos admitted earlier this week he had never worked for either firm directly and had lied on his CV about graduating from college, saying he was "embarrassed" that he had not.

Pak to meet  
'external debt  
servicing  
obligations'

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha stressed Thursday that Pakistan would not default on its international obligations and the government would ensure timely external debt payments. The minister's comments came as - despite assurances from the government about the country's finances - the situation remains gloomy and experts warn of an economic crunch ahead. In conversation with journalists in Islamabad, the state minister added that there is "no chance" of Pakistan's default as authorities were in talks with Saudi Arabia for a \$3 billion loan and the same amount from \$3 billion. "We will also ensure that our foreign debt requirements are met," the minister said, as Pakistan faces an uphill task of repaying the loans amid depleting forex reserves.

Ukraine reports 'massive'  
Russian missile attack

The latest blitz came hard on the heels of the Kremlin's rejection of a Ukrainian peace plan, insisting that Kyiv must accept Russia's annexation of four Ukrainian regions

## NEWS DESK

KYIV: Russia fired scores of missiles into Ukraine early on Thursday, targeting the capital Kyiv and other cities including Lviv and Odesa in the west, in one of its largest aerial bombardments that sent people rushing to shelters and knocked out power. "Senseless barbarism. These are the only words that come to mind seeing Russia launch another missile barrage at peaceful Ukrainian cities ahead of New Year," Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba tweeted. Ukraine's military said it had shot down 54 missiles out of 69 launched by Russia in an assault that began at 7am local time. Air raid sirens rang out across Ukraine and in Kyiv sounded for five hours - one of the longest alarms of the war. Officials had earlier said more than 120 missiles were fired into Ukraine during the attack. In Kyiv, Reuters footage showed a team of emergency workers poring through the smouldering wreckage of residential houses destroyed by a blast and smoke trails of missiles lingering in the sky over the capital. In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, fire fighters worked to extin-

guish a large blaze at an electricity station. In the southern central city of Zaporizhzhia, houses were damaged and a missile left a huge crater. "I woke up to everything shaking, crumbling. I got up and screamed, 'Vitia, Vitia (my husband), where are you?' I ran barefoot on glass. He appeared and glass was falling off him," said 60-year-old local resident Halyna. Ukraine's military said Russia had launched air and sea-based cruise missiles, anti-aircraft guided missiles and S-300 ADMS at energy infrastructure facilities in eastern, central, western and southern regions. The attacks followed an overnight assault by 'kamikaze' drones. Waves of Russian air strikes in recent months targeting energy infrastructure have left millions without power and heating in often freezing temperatures. "The enemy placed a high stake on this attack, preparing for it for two weeks. Ukrainian air defence forces demonstrated an incredible level of skill and efficiency," said Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on the Telegram messaging app. "At the same time, there were hits and damage, in particular to energy facilities. In some areas, emergency shutdowns may be

applied to avoid accidents in the networks. Our power engineers are already working to repair everything," he added. The latest blitz came hard on the heels of the Kremlin's rejection of a Ukrainian peace plan, insisting that Kyiv must accept Russia's annexation of four Ukrainian regions. Kyiv authorities said two private houses in Darnytskyi district were damaged by the fragments of downed missiles and a business and a playground were also damaged. The mayor of Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko, said 16 missiles were shot down and three people injured in the attacks. The mayor of Lviv, Andriy Sadovyi, said on Telegram that 90% of his city near the Polish border was without electricity. The missiles damaged an energy infrastructure unit. In the southwestern Odesa region the fragments of one missile hit a residential building, though no casualties were reported, its governor Maksym Marchenko said. Moscow has repeatedly denied targeting civilians, but Ukraine says its daily bombardment is destroying cities, towns, and the country's power, medical and other infrastructure. For months Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has asked Western countries

for further air defence help. Belarus' state-run BelTA news agency reported that a Ukrainian S-300 missile had fallen onto the territory of Belarus on Thursday and published a photo of what it said were parts of it lying in an empty field. Minsk was investigating whether its air defence systems had shot down the rocket or whether it was a misfire. The incident happened around the time Russia was firing missiles at Ukraine. In Russia, a regional governor said air defences had shot down a drone near the Engels air force base, hundreds of kilometres from the frontlines in Ukraine and home to long-range strategic bombers. Russia says Ukraine has already tried to attack the base twice this month. Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24 in what President Vladimir Putin calls a "special military operation" to demilitarize its neighbour. Kyiv and its Western allies have denounced Russia's actions as an imperialist-style land grab. Sweeping sanctions have been imposed on Russia for the war, which has killed tens of thousands of people, driven millions from their homes, left cities in ruins and shaken the global economy, driving up energy and food prices.

Amnesty  
repealed for  
'overstaying  
foreigners'

ISLAMABAD: The Amnesty scheme for foreigners staying over an extended period in Pakistan will be expired on December 31, 2022. According to the notification, issued by the Ministry of Interior on Thursday, it had directed the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to stop extending the amnesty scheme to the said individuals residing in Pakistan after the expiry of the due date, said a press release. The ministry of interior had given a general amnesty scheme for overstaying foreigners to exit Pakistan without paying charges with a cutoff date of December 31, 2022. After the expiry of the amnesty scheme's period, foreigners who have overstayed for more than one year may be put into the black-list category, barring their entry to Pakistan in the future, the release added. The NADRA received online applications till December 29, 2022. The penalty charges would be imposed on those overstaying in the country after the date of January 01, 2023. - APP

EU agency  
says China  
traveller  
screening  
'unjustified'

STOCKHOLM: The European Union's health agency said Thursday it believed the introduction of mandatory Covid screenings of travellers from China was "unjustified", despite a surge in cases in China. The United States and several other countries have introduced mandatory Covid tests on travellers arriving from China. But such measures are not necessary for the EU as a whole, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said in a statement.

However, the ECDC said it did not currently believe the surge in cases in China would impact the epidemiological situation in the EU "given higher population immunity in the EU/EEA, as well as the prior emergence and subsequent replacement of variants currently circulating in China". Consequently, the agency considered "screenings and travel measures on travellers from China unjustified". Potential imported infections were "rather low" compared to the numbers already circulating on a daily basis, which healthcare systems "are currently able to manage", the agency added. The European Commission convened a meeting of the EU Health Security Committee Thursday to discuss possible measures. - APP

Serbia arrests  
Afghan  
general on  
terrorism  
charges

## DNA

SARAJEVO: Serbian police have arrested an Afghan army general and a sniper wanted by France on terrorism charges during a raid on an migrant camp in the north of the Balkan country, Tanjug news agency reported on Thursday. France had issued an international warrant for the two men, police told Tanjug. In a statement, police said the arrests were made at the makeshift camp near the northern town of Subotica, where 109 illegal migrants were found, 29 of whom were "interesting security-wise". The statement gave no details on the two men "wanted on international warrants over multiple criminal acts", just saying that police would take measures against them according to law. There were no details of the suspected crimes or why the men were wanted by France. Police seized an automatic rifle, ammunition and a small quantity of marijuana at the site, the statement said. They also found 93 migrants at the border with Hungary, who will be taken to migrant centres. Last month, Serbian police uncovered 600 illegal migrants near its northern border with Hungary following a shootout in a town in which one person was wounded.

Twitter back online  
after global outage  
hits thousands

CALIFORNIA: Twitter Inc suffered a major outage on Wednesday, leaving tens of thousands of users globally unable to access the popular social media platform or use its key features for several hours before services appeared to come back online. The incident is the social media site's first apparent widespread service disruption since billionaire Elon Musk took over Twitter as CEO in late October. Downdetector, a website that tracks outages through a range of sources including user reports, showed more than 10,000 affected users from the United States, about 2,500 from Japan and about 2,500 from the UK at the peak of the disruption. Most of the reports came from users stating they faced technical issues accessing the social network via web browser. Reports of Twitter outages fell sharply by Wednesday evening, according to the website, with some users later commenting service had returned to normal. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairs a meeting on energy conservation. - DNA

IHC seeks new timeline for  
LG polls in Federal Capital

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday instructed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to submit local government elections' new timeline on Friday after holding consultation with the Federal Government. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, who heard the pleas case filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Jamaat-e-Islami the petitions challenging the Commission's notification regarding postponement of the LG elections in Federal Capital, also sought written arguments from the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) and the ECP. At the outset of hearing, the AGP said the court should ask the ECP director general as to why the elections as the government had not changed the local and had only increased the number of union councils (UCs). He said the ECP would complete the process of delimitation of UCs within 60 days. The court asked the ECP official

whether the Commission was ready to conduct the elections on December 31 as the government was referring the matter to it. Whether the ECP's decision did not violate the assurance it had submitted to the court regarding the LG polls, Justice Arbab questioned. The ECP director general said it would take time to transport the election material. Holding elections on December 31 was not possible in the new situation. The court asked why not the proceedings of contempt of court should be initiated against the ECP. The Commission's lawyer said the election act authorized the Federal Government to increase the number of UCs in the capital. The court asked whether the Federal Government could increase the number of UCs at anytime. The ECP lawyer said there was no restriction in that regard as the government could change the local area after consultation with the ECP.

The court said who would be responsible as the ECP had already spent around Rs 600 million on the LG electoral process. The lawyer said the money belonged to the tax payers and the Federal Government had issued the said funds. The ECP would announce new election schedule after completing the UCs' delimitation, he added. Justice Arbab remarked that the court would not shift the burden to the tax payers at any cost. He expressed annoyance with the officials and remarked that why the ECP had not produced the complete record despite orders. The ECP DG said they would inform the court regarding the expenditure incurred so far in writing. The lawyer said the ECP had set aside the notification regarding the increase in the number of UCs, which the IHC had nullified. The ECP had postponed the elections after hearing the government as per the directives of IHC. - APP

Rohingya  
Muslims  
seek safety  
in Indonesia

PIDIE: Crying with relief after a traumatic 40-day voyage to Indonesia in a leaky boat, Rohingya Muslim Fatimah bin Ismail held a mobile phone with shaky hands as she made a video call to relatives. The 19-year-old was among 174 surviving Rohingyas in the overloaded wooden fishing boat when it washed up on the shores of Indonesia's Aceh province this week. Around 200 had been on board, fleeing poverty and persecution, when it set off across the Indian Ocean from Bangladesh on Nov. 21. Of the 20 or more who died along the way, some leapt into the water in desperation after the boat broke down and started to drift, fearing it would sink. "Three men jumped because they couldn't handle the hunger. Then after 12 days water started coming into the boat," Fatimah told Reuters. "There were bodies floating in the water, here and there. We couldn't do anything." The Rohingyas are a Muslim people from mainly Buddhist Myanmar, where they have long suffered repression. Since a crackdown by Myanmar's military in 2017, around 800,000 have been forced into Bangladesh, UN authorities estimate, but thousands have fled increasingly desperate conditions in refugee camps there. Many try to get to Muslim-majority Indonesia, where the UN refugee agency says nearly 500 Rohingyas have reached land in the past six weeks, or to Malaysia. Indonesian authorities have been providing them with medical assistance, food and temporary shelter, while working with global refugee agencies to ascertain their legal status. Fatimah now hopes to join her relatives in Malaysia, but she doesn't know how or when. "I just want to live comfortably," she said. "I hope I can live well and be safe here." - Agencies

Serbs removing  
barricades in  
easing of tensions

MITROVICA: The roadblock near the main border crossing between Kosovo and Serbia was removed Thursday, state-run TV said, announcing a move that paves the way to easing of tensions in the volatile region. Cars and trucks were queuing in front of the border point from the Serbian side where the roadblock was set up, the report said, while Kosovo police confirmed the crossing was officially re-opened. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic announced removal of the barricades following calls by Washington and Brussels to de-escalate tensions, one of the worst in years in northern Kosovo.

vo. "Barricades will be removed, but the mistrust remains," Vucic was quoted as saying by the state-run RTS television late Wednesday during his meeting with Kosovo Serb representatives near the border. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, after a bitter war in late 1990s. But Belgrade still refuses to recognise it and encourages Kosovo's 120,000 ethnic Serbs to defy Pristina's authority - especially in the north where they make up the majority. The latest trouble erupted on December 10, when ethnic Serbs put up barricades to protest the arrest of an ex-police officer suspected of being involved in attacks against ethnic Albanian police officers - effectively sealing off traffic on two border crossings. After the roadblocks were erected, Kosovar police and international peacekeepers were attacked in several shooting incidents, while the Serbian armed forces were put on heightened alert this week. The European Union and the United States voiced concern over the situation, urged immediate de-escalation and said they were working with both Serbia and Kosovo leaders to seek a political solution to the crisis. - APP

## NA speaker asks PTI to return to Parliament

"The PTI has been asked to return to the National Assembly. They have been asked to solve in the Parliament whatever the problems are," he maintained

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: After a meeting with the delegation of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on the issue of resignations by the party's MNAs, National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf Thursday told the media that he had asked the PTI delegation to return to the National Assembly. "According to the law, the resignation must be handwritten. It is the Speaker's responsibility to confirm the resignation of an MNA. It is the Speaker's responsibility to confirm that there is no pressure from anyone for the resignation," he stated. "The PTI delegation was of the opinion that the resignations of 127 MNAs should be accepted. [But] the resignations will be accepted according to the

Constitution and the rules and regulations of the National Assembly," he added. "The PTI has been asked to return to the National Assembly. They have been asked to solve in the Parliament whatever the problems are," he maintained. "The resignations of only those MNAs have been accepted whose resignations were confirmed earlier. All [MNAs] are equal to me as Speaker," he asserted. "In the current situation, there is a need to create such an environment that will reduce differences in Pakistan. It is clearly written in the Constitution that the resignation should be written by hand," he added. "It is not possible to solve problems without a dialogue. Reconciliation is the need of the hour," he emphasised. It was also learnt that Raja Pervaiz Ashraf

had assured the PTI delegation of full support if they returned to the Parliament. "We cannot return to the Parliament," was the reply of the PTI delegation. They told him that Imran Khan wanted resignations. "Therefore, we cannot come back to the Parliament." The National Assembly speaker told them that the Parliament was a place of discussion. "Come to the Parliament and present your case." The PTI delegation replied that Imran Khan would become angry if they returned to the Parliament. Earlier, a PTI delegation had arrived at the Parliament House to hold a discussion with National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser on the issue of resignations by the party's MNAs. The senior PTI leaders - Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Pervez Khattak - had

apologised to become part of the delegation. As per the PTI sources, Pervez Khattak did not want a discussion with the National Assembly speaker on the issue of resignations by the party's MNAs. The sources said that there were differences in the party on the issue of resignations. Both, Qureshi and Khattak, had informed the party about not going with the delegation in the last hours. It is to be noted here that Qureshi has also hinted at returning to the Parliament. In the absence of Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Qaiser led the PTI delegation that, upon its arrival at the Parliament House, was welcomed by the National Assembly speaker. Qasim Khan Suri, Malik Aamir Dogar, Anjad Khan Niazi, Faheem Khan, Dr Shabbir Hasan and others were part of the PTI delegation.