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Korean President calls for effective extended deterrence

Detailed News On Page-06

Jair Bolsonaro applied for US visa, reports say

Detailed News On Page-07



IOC rejects criticism from Ukraine leaders

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Shujaat to remain PML chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday declared that Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain would remain the president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q). The electoral watchdog also stated that the PML-Q central working committee's move to remove Shujaat as party chief was illegal and declared it null and void. It furthered that the elections announced by the central committee were also null and void. Earlier, the ECP had reserved its decision on Shujaat's plea.

Fascist mindset defeated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday the fascist mindset that planned to remove Chaudhry Shujaat as the PML-Q President was defeated. In a tweet, she congratulated PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and said the order of the Election Commission of Pakistan was a message that the decisions would be made in the light of the Constitution and the law, not in darkness. The fascism of burning, demolishing, killing, picking up and throwing away was not imposed in the country now, she said.

Mazari calls for end to abuse of laws

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President Dr. Shireen Mazari stressed the need for focusing on implementation of Constitution, respect for fundamental rights for all and end to abuse of laws. In statement on Tuesday, Dr. Mazari said that fact was Pakistan has been reimagined already after regime change conspiracy. She said that reimagined where State ruled through desperate corrupt puppets and munshis and alternatives being engineered after one set of puppets proved utterly incompetent.

Suicide blast

National unity need of the hour, says Asif

Defense Minister says Pakistan's involvement in Afghan war had negative impact

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Tuesday called for unity in the fight against terrorism, saying that it was time for Pakistan to set its "house in order". He expressed the views while speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, a day after a suicide blast at a mosque in Peshawar claimed 100 lives and injured dozens. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also appealed all the political forces to get united against anti-Pakistan elements. In a tweet on Tuesday, he said terrorists, through their despicable actions, want to spread fear and paranoia among the masses and reverse our hard-earned gains against terrorism and militancy. The Prime Minister said his message to all political forces is one of unity and we can fight our political fights later. At the outset of his speech, the defense minister said that a war was fought against terrorism from 2010-2017. "This war started from Swat during the PPP's tenure and it was

Peshawar blast: Death toll surges past 100

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The death toll from the suicide attack on a mosque in Peshawar's Police Lines area a day earlier rose to 100 on Tuesday after more bodies were recovered from the attack site. Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) spokesperson Mohammad Asim said that 100 dead bodies had been brought to the medical facility. In a statement, he said 53 injured citizens were currently being treated seven of whom had been admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU). He said that most of the injured were out of danger, adding that all

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RAWALPINDI: Sri Lanka High Commissioner in Pakistan, Vice Admiral @ Mohan Wijewickrama calls on General Sahir Shamsah Mirza, the Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee of Pakistan, at the Joint Headquarters. - DNA

IMF, Pak review fiscal policies for 9th review

Ishaq Dar welcomed the visiting IMF delegation

CENTRELINE REPORT
Picture on Page 7

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Pakistan here on Tuesday discussed and reviewed the economic and fiscal policies as well as the reforms agenda to accomplish the 9th review under the Extended Fund Facility. According to press statement issued by the Finance Ministry, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a meeting with IMF review Mission led by its chief, Nathan Porter. The meeting was attended by IMF resident representative,

Rupee ends losing streak, recovers Rs4.43

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani rupee finally ended its losing streak against US dollar on Tuesday, gaining Rs4.43 after massive depreciation over the last week. During the intra-day trading, the rupee was hovering at 266.75 with

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Mily brass vows to bring blast perpetrators to book

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: A day after one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Pakistan's history, the country's top military brass on Tuesday met and discussed the prevailing and emerging terror threat. The corps commanders conferences was presided over by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General AsimMunir, who on Monday was in

Peshawar along with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif following the suicide bombing at Police Lines killing scores of people mostly policemen. Against the backdrop of resurgence of terrorism in the country, the military commanders were briefed in detail about prevailing and emerging threats, according to the military's media wing on Tuesday. As per the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), they were also briefed on the ongoing

intelligence based operations being undertaken by army and law enforcement agencies for breaking the nexus between terrorists and their support mechanism across the country. Without naming any country, the statement referred to Afghanistan, from where Pakistan believes the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its affiliates operate.

Continued on Page 06



RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Asim Munir presiding over Corps Commanders confernece. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

OIC slams Sweden, others for Quran incidents

OIC Secretary-General says govts must take punitive steps

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation convened an open-ended Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee on Tuesday to express the organization's common stance against the recent desecration of the Holy Qur'an in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Held at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, the meeting also discussed the possible actions that the OIC could take against the perpetrators of the despicable Islamophobic attacks.

Continued on Page 06

Governor KP proposes April 16-18 for polls

DNA

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Haji Ghulam Ali on Tuesday suggested April 16, 17, and 18 as tentative dates for holding elections across the province, media reported. The suggestion came in response to the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) letter, in which it proposed April 15 to 17 for the KP Assembly elections. In his letter, the governor urged the ECP to ensure free and fair elections in the province.

PM stresses global response to tackle climate change

The Premier appreciated the work being done by UNEP

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed that Pakistan, being one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, needed a global response to build resilience. The prime minister stated this in a meeting with Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), who is on an official visit to Pakistan. PM Shehbaz Sharif appreciated the work being done by UNEP and called for enhanced efforts to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation, more effectively. He regarded climate change as one of the defining issues of present times. The Executive Director briefed the prime minister on the initiatives being taken by UNEP in Pakistan. The prime minister also encouraged UNEP, as part of the UN system, to contribute to and

support Pakistan's efforts to build back better and greener, after the devastating floods in the country. Last week, the United States assured Pakistan of its support in flood reconstruction efforts. This was assured as US Ambassador Donald Blome called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the PM Office in Islamabad. During the meeting, Shehbaz reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to deepen economic and trade engagement with the United States. To achieve shared goals in regional domains, it was stressed that bilateral trade ties must be enhanced. The prime minister reiterated that Pakistan attaches great importance to its longstanding and broad ties with the United States. Noting the recent momentum in high-level bilateral exchanges, Shehbaz stressed that structured and broad-based Pakistan-US engagement was critical to advancing the shared goals in both bilateral and regional domains for both countries.

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Historic decisions have been taken for police martyrs

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: The Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that in pursuance to the directives of the caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, historic and major decisions have been taken for the welfare and immediate relief of families of the police martyrs and the Ghazis who were injured and disabled in combat with terrorists or other field operations. Police sources said hereon Tuesday that Dr. Usman Anwar issued an order to clear the pending dues of all police martyrs within a week. He said that the widow's allowance (Rs. 8500 per month) of the police employees who died in line of duty is very insufficient in the current economic situation, so it is necessary to increase the widow's Guzara allowance to make it equal to the minimum wage of laborers, 25,000 approved by the government in order to re-

duce their financial troubles. IG Punjab said that it has been decided to increase the Guzara allowance of the widows of the police employees who died before ten years of service to make it equal to approved minimum wage of a laborer by government. IG Punjab said that the rules for departmental recruitment of children of police martyrs are being simplified and all the children of police martyrs coming on open merit will get 10 additional marks during the departmental recruitment process. IG Punjab said that if seat is not available in the concerned district for recruitment on Shaheed quota, then the child of the martyr should be recruited immediately in any other district of the province where seat is available. IG Punjab said that the children of martyrs should be given full support for admission in the best schools, colleges and universities, in this regard RPOs and DPOs have been directed to contact with the families of martyrs.

IG Punjab directed that all possible relief should be provided to the families of police martyrs and they should not feel that they are alone or abandoned. IG Punjab said that the medical claims of police Ghazis should be cleared immediately while preference should be given to Ghazis with respect to transfer posting. Dr. Usman Anwar said that a special package is being worked on for all those Ghazis who have become completely disabled and are unable to even get up from bed. IG Punjab said that the package of the martyrs who had an on-duty accident is being revised and the families of such martyrs will be given full salary. IG Punjab said that a decision will be taken to increase the financial package of brave Ghazis of the police who become disabled in the line of duty and fighting anti-social elements. In this regard, a three member committee of DIG Establishment, DIG Operations and DIG IT has been formed, which will prepare its recommendations

in seven days and present them in the next meeting of the executive board. Dr. Usman Anwar said that the brave martyrs and Ghazis who sacrificed their lives in the sacred duty of protecting the lives and property of the people are my pride and deserve exemplary respect and all possible relief. IG Punjab said that the police martyrs have secured the future of the nation by sacrificing their blood, similarly, the services of police Ghazis are also eternal and can never be forgotten. These views were expressed by IG Punjab at the Central Police Office. He was presiding over the police executive board session and giving instructions to the officers, historical and major decisions were taken for the welfare of the families of police martyrs and Ghazis. In the meeting of the Police Executive Board, the professional matters of various branches, standing orders and other matters were discussed while the officers participating in the meeting expressed their suggestions.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi presenting an honorary shield to Qamar Bashir on his retirement, in appreciation of his services as Press Secretary to the President, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.—DNA

Pakistan-Iran need to make PTA effective: Consul General

LAHORE: Consul General of Iran Mehran Movahedfar said on Tuesday that Pakistan-Iran needed to make Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) effective. Talking to business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), he said, "We need to focus on preferential trade agreements." The Iranian government was in the process of following up on it while the Pakistani Chambers should also follow up on it. He said that the problems of banking channels had started since 2010. "We need to create a Conflict Resolution Committee or system that will be the responsibility of a financial institution," he maintained. He mentioned, "We have presented our suggestions in this regard. Three

months ago, the Governor of the State Bank of Iran came to Karachi and signed the agreement for the Conflict Resolution Committee. This is an important step that will resolve the disputes between traders on both sides." The Consul General said that tragic terrorism incident in Pakistan had undermined the need for strengthening relations between the two countries in other fields apart from economic relations. Cooperation needed to fight terrorism, a common threat to both countries, he maintained. The Consul General said that terrorism was a common affliction and it required joint action to combat it. He said that Iran preferred to develop relations with neighboring countries. "Keeping this in mind, we have to determine

the size of our relationship for the long term," he said. He said that Pakistan and Iran had a common border of 900 kilometers. "Our capacity requires planning together. Both the countries can multiply the volume of trade with the cooperation of various institutions and ministries," he observed. He said that businessmen of the both sides were not satisfied with the current trade volume. The Consul General said that it was sad to say that despite the cooperation of the two governments regarding barter trade, there had been no improvement, asserting that difficulties were faced by the companies exporting rice from Pakistan, due to which many companies refused to continue cooperation. He said that Iran had banned In-

dian rice and now there was a golden opportunity for Pakistani rice exporters. "From Pakistan we can import rice, meat to Iran and give LPG and raw materials in return." He said that recently, Iran had removed Preferential Agreement restrictions on import items and allowed the import of Kinross from Pakistan. It was expected that Pakistan would not obstruct the import of Iranian apples and kiwis. He said that Punjab was an agricultural province and they wanted the agricultural chambers of Iran to be connected with Punjab. He said that importance of exchange of delegations could not be denied. He said that 50 percent of the market in Iran was captured by Pakistani rice.—APP

Construction of houses for flood victims in Sindh

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: World Bank supported SPHF with 500 million dollars have allocated with federal government fund to construct new houses in all affected parts of Sindh. Chief Secretary Sindh Dr Muhammad Sohail Rajput, while speaking at the Workshop organized by Sindh People's Housing Foundation at local hotel here on Tuesday. Chief Secretary told that Sindh government has formed a company under section 42 to construct houses for flood victims. Chief Secretary Sindh He said the houses will be constructed under the company in collaboration with various partners. Chief Secretary Sindh told that the survey has been completed before the construction of the houses. The World Bank has pledged \$500 million to build houses, while 250 Sindh Government have been granting.



He further told the federal government has also pledged \$250 million for the completion of construction of houses. [7:06 PM, 1/31/2023] +92 333 5203232: KARACHI: Chief

Secretary Sindh Dr Muhammad Sohail Rajput speaking to Workshop organized by Sindh People's Housing Foundation here at local hotel in Karachi on Tuesday.

Concrete measures taken to facilitate youth

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Assistant Shaza Fatima Khawaja said Tuesday youth is our government's main focus and we are taking concrete measures to facilitate them. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Commonwealth year of youth, Shaza said keeping in mind the needs and priorities of youth, we have started a number of projects under Prime Minister Youth Program. The Special Assistant said Prime Minister Youth Program is a significant and all-encompassing intervention to empower youth and enable them to fully realize their potential. While presenting the information regarding the program, she said a digital youth hub is being designed to connect all opportunities, integrating it with a single national job site.—Online

President orders restoration of occupied property

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has upheld the orders of the Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women (FOSPAAH), and directed the restoration of a valuable property of a female citizen of Islamabad through the appointment of a local commissioner and getting it vacated from illegal occupation, breaking open the locks of the premises if it is locked, removing any other hurdles or barriers in the way of taking possession of the property, and giving it back to the rightful owner under the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020. The President stated that "a local commissioner be appointed to restore or confer possession of the title of the property, a valuable house in Bahria Town, to Ms Aalya Fazal (the complainant) including measures to perfect such title and to submit a compliance report within

seven days". He added, "The local commissioner can avail the aid of local police if necessary, and the SHO of the local police station should extend full aid to the local commissioner and be present with her at the relevant time along with the police contingent for the safety and security of the local commissioner". The President in his decision rejected the unqualified and baseless stance of the accused person that he had been condemned unheard by FOSPAAH, adding that the accused had not produced anything to establish the title of the disputed house in his favour, and thus, had no locus standi to bring the representation against the orders of FOSPAAH. As per details, Ms Aalya Fazal had filed a complaint before FOSPAAH stating that her father Chaudhary Fazal Hussain has appointed her as his attorney to manage the affairs

of his house in Bahria Town, Islamabad. This house was rented to different persons from 2007 to 2016 and afterwards, it remained vacant. According to the complainant, when her brother visited the house in 2020 it was found that the house was illegally occupied by some unknown persons wherein the matter was reported to Bahria Town and the local police. The police summoned the person residing in the house who gave the undertaking to vacate the house. Afterwards, a suit was filed in court that the house was purchased in 2008 based on a forged agreement dated 02.07.2008. The complainant approached FOSPAAH for the vacation of the house, who passed the orders in the complainant's favour. The orders were then challenged by the accused person by filing a representation with the President, which was rejected.—APP

One-day mourning observed in KP

PESHAWAR: One day mourning was observed in all over the KP due to suicide blast in mosque in Peshawar police lines and Tanda dam Kohat tragedy on Tuesday. The death toll of Peshawar blast has risen to ninety including prayer leader and police personnel as rescue operation is still underway and debris of mosque is being removed. According to Police Control Room Peshawar, more than two-hundred injured were brought to the Lady Reading hospital, out of which about one-hundred injured are under treatment in the hospital and the rest have been discharged.—Online

Minister terms suicide blast as security breach

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister, Khushdil Khan Malik Tuesday termed the suicide attack in Malik Saad Police Lines as breach of security and must be investigated strictly to find out real culprits behind the gruesome crime. Taking to media persons during his visit to Peshawar Press Club here, he said this incident was a stigma on face of our safety measures and must be washed away by taking appropriate measures. Khushdil Khan while congratulating newly elected cabinet of Peshawar Press Club also made a clarification about his nomination as caretaker minister.

He said there were news in media that a government servant not be appointed in caretaker set up till completion of his two year period after retirement. Whereas, he continued, this restriction of two years was for those government officials who wanted to participate in elections. Khushdil Khan also apprised media persons that portfolios would soon be awarded to interim cabinet and delay in this regard was due to different incidents including the policemen bomb attack. He also expressed the resolve of running his office in three shifts from morning to afternoon, evening to

night and from night to early morning from home. He held out assurance of responding to any call made to him even at midnight and action would be taken for resolution of issues. Khushdil Khan also vows of making staff of his department as provided by government responsible and action would be taken over laxity in duty. He also requested media persons to keep in contact with caretaker government in highlighting of different issues and extend help in ensuring better governance. On this occasion, the minister also appreciated response of the nation to deadly police-line blast.—APP

RCCI organizes blood donation, medical camp

RCCI is closely working with Thalassemia society and other agencies to play its CSR role in the fight against thalassemia

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A medical and blood donation camp was organized at the premises of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) in collaboration with Pakistan Sweet Homes and Temar Diagnostics. Mr. Zamarud Khan, Former Chairman of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Ex-MNA and the Patron in Chief of Pakistan Sweet Homes graced the occasion with his presence. RCCI members, staff, and members of the civil society donated blood for children and other patients suffering from thalassemia. Later, in the briefing session, RCCI President Saqib Rafiq gave a summary of RCCI CSR activities. Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President RCCI Mr. Faisal Shahzad, Former Presidents Mr. Zahid Latif Khan, Malik Shahid Saleem, Executive Committee Members and distinguished RCCI members were also present on the occasion. RCCI is

closely working with Thalassemia society and other agencies to play its CSR role in the fight against thalassemia and would continue to work with other organizations to alleviate the plight of the patients.



NAME CORRECTION

My real name is Raja Masood Nawaz son of Raja Muhammad Nawaz while in some documents Masood Nawaz son of Muhammad Nawaz is written by mistake, so it should be written and read by my real name and correct in all record documents. Raja Masood Nawaz, son of Raja Muhammad Nawaz, resident of Dakhkhana Khos Baga Tehsil and District Jhelum

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY

- Feb 04 / Sri Lanka National Day
- Feb 06 / New Zealand National Day
- Feb 06 / Uganda Defece Forces Day
- Feb 11 / DPR Korea National Day
- Feb 16 / Lithuania National Day
- Feb 18 / Gambia National Day
- Feb 19 / Nepal National Democracy Day
- Feb 23 / Brunei National Day
- Feb 23 / Guyana National Day
- Feb 23 / Russian Federation National Army Day
- Feb 23 / Tajikistan Armed Forces Day
- Feb 25 / Kuwait National Day
- Feb 27 / Dominican Republic Independence Day



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Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
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TMA.....5770886
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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Export-led growth is the cure for our economic woes

The meeting was attended by Exporters Representatives from Steel, Pharmaceutical and Textile sectors, who also apprised the minister about the problems faced by them in course of doing business and exporting the indigenous products abroad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Export-led Growth is the cure for our Economic woes. Ministry of Planning and Development will recommend to Prime Minister that Export emergency should be declared to take the country out of Economic quagmire; said the Minister while meeting the top Pakistani Exporters today. The meeting was attended by the Exporters Representatives from Steel, Pharmaceutical and Textile sectors, who also apprised the minister about the problems faced by them in the course of doing business and exporting the indigenous products abroad. The Minister while assuring them about the full-fledged support of the Government remarked that we will provide all-out support to the Industrial sector for resolution of their issues. He also asserted that the Business community should present to the Government of any red-



tapism or any other bottlenecks in the way of undertaking any venture, "we will cut Red Tape," said the Minister. He added that the incumbent Government is pursuing a business friendly policy and promoting the conducive environment for entrepreneurs.

The Minister said that in the past, we learnt to consumed instead of earning dollars. He also said that survival of the country is based on the premise that whether we can enhance our exports from \$32 billion to \$100 billion on short-

est possible time. The Government stands with the Industrial sector to attract the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and to push Exports. The Minister offered the platform of Ministry of Planning and Development to private sector for as-

sisting in resolution of their problems. The Minister lamented that CPEC provided us the golden opportunity to turnaround the economy of Pakistan but the opportunity was squandered due to bad economic policies of the previous regime. However, we are committed to reviving the CPEC Project. He added that China imports \$2250 Billion worth of goods out of which Pakistan has meagre share of \$3 billion, which is dismal. The Minister laid emphasis to target Chinese market and increase market share in US and European markets so that progressive export-led economy can be realized adding that the Government will support the industrial sector to meet the challenges of the Global competitiveness. The Minister said that the vision 2010 and Vision 2025 envisioned to revamp the Economic structure and bring prosperity and development in Pakistan but unfortunately Political instability derailed the journey of progress.

Action against illegal sale of LPG prerogative of district admin

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Law and Justice, Shahadat Awan on Tuesday told the Senate Session that action against the illegal and insecure sale of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for domestic and commercial use across the country was the prerogative of the district administrations. In his reply written to the queries raised by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed on the sale, transmission, and price monitoring mechanisms of LPG and any action in the pipeline against the insecure and overpriced sale of the petroleum commodity. The Senate Session commenced with Chairman Senate in chair followed by the recitation of the verses of the Holy Quran commanding mankind to be thankful for the blessings of Allah instead of indulging in gluttony to accumulate earthly riches and wealth. Minister of State for Law and Justice, Shahadat Awan in his response to the supplementary questions by Senator Mushtaq said the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) was the responsible body to regulate the prices of LPG. However, the details were provided in Annexure II. He referred to the written reply furnished before the House that the action against LPG's unsafe sale and overcharging of prices was the prerogative of the district administration and he could gather the data from the country to satisfy further queries of the member. After repeated queries by the Senators, the Minister of State shared the official price of LPG as Rs1,928 for an 11.8 KG cylinder. Awan requested the mover and others to read Annexure-II provided to the Senate Library for further details. - APP

Senators for devising counter terrorism policy

Former Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani of PPP demanded devising a new consensus over counter-terrorism policy in the upcoming joint session of parliament by taking on board all stakeholders

ISLAMABAD: Senators from various political parties on Tuesday demanded devising counter terrorism policy to exterminate the menace of terrorism from the country after evolving consensus with all stakeholders. Participating in a discussion on the incident of terrorism in Peshawar and other parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, they urged the govt to provide required facilities to police and law enforcement agencies to enable them to exterminate the menace of terrorism. Former Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani of Pakistan Peoples Party demanded devising a new consensus over counter-terrorism policy in the upcoming joint session of the parliament by taking on board all the stakeholders. He said parliamentary probe should

be initiated for starting dialogue with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) sans taking into confidence people and other stakeholders. Mushahid Hussain Syed of Pakistan Muslim League said country's Afghan policy has miserably failed to yield desired results. He lamented incapacitating National Counter Terrorism Authority (NECTA). He urged the government to announce general elections and let's talk about Pakistan and its people. Saifullah Abro of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) criticized the government for dragging PTI Chairman Imran Khan in every ill being confronted by the country. Bahramand Khan Tangi of Pakistan Peoples Party asked who stopped implementing National Action Plan (NAP), which was formulated in con-

sensus with all stakeholders. Kamran Murtaza of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUIF) said terrorists were targeting Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The resolution of the country's issues lies in empowering parliament as well as the government. Rana Maqbool of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), said NECTA should be declared as division by equipping it with the required manpower and other facilities to it. Afghan authorities should be contacted through diplomatic channels urging them to not allow the use of their territory against Pakistan. Anwar Ul Haq Kakar of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) stressed adopting holistic approach for devising consensus among all politicians for exterminating

terrorism from the country. Specialized forces should be appointed for countering terrorism, he said. Ejaz Chaudhary of PTI urged the government to announce the date of elections in the country as this is the only way to drive the country out of crisis and achieving sustainable peace. Faisal Javed of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said the country had endured over \$150 billion in economic losses and displacing over 3.5 million people in the past 20 years due to supporting war on terror. Danesh Kumar of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) urged devising consensus strategy to counter terrorism. Muhammad Akram of National Party criticized the successive governments for not strengthening country's economy.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Shazia Marri, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety & Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) along with SAPM Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi meeting with H. E. Ms. Henny de Vries Ambassador of Netherlands in Pakistan. - DNA

Canadian HC concludes visits to Chitral, Gilgit-Baltistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Canadian High Commissioner in Pakistan, Leslie Scanlon, along with ice-hockey enthusiasts from the Canadian High Commission, participated in five winter festivals organised by rural mountainous communities in Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan in January 2023. The High Commissioner's daughter, who is an ice-hockey coach, also participated in the sports festivals, said a press release issued by the Canadian High Commission in Islamabad on Tuesday. In her remarks, Canadian High Commissioner stated

that the broader purpose of the winter sports festivals was the "economic and physical well-being of the communities of Gilgit-Baltistan," as harsh winters halt the physical and economic activities in these regions. Therefore, AKRSP, with its partners, provides an opportunity to activate physical and economic activities, she added. The High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon and her team participated in Climate Walk with the local youth, like the Booni Environment Academy, to shed light on the devastating impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss in the region, and to discuss solutions for embedding climate

action in recovery actions to build back better - to create economies and communities that are more sustainable, resilient, and equitable. High Commissioner Leslie Scanlon explaining her country's policy on women said, "Canada has a Feminist International Assistance Policy, which underscores our belief that by including women and girls in everything from politics to the economy, and in sports, only then will communities thrive both in Canada and around the world. We all have a role to play in breaking down barriers and ensuring that women, girls, and the differently abled have every opportunity to succeed in life. Watching the girls'

hockey games and being able to play with all these amazing female athletes has been a highlight for us. We applaud these communities' efforts to include everyone." The High Commissioner and her team travelled for 16 days to visit communities, where they coached youth on ice-hockey skills, attended a variety of festival events, and engaged with local leaders. The programme brought together 40 male and female ice hockey teams and provided opportunities to more than 100 rural women entrepreneurs to display their products at the Women Business Expos held on the sidelines of Winter Sports Festivals.

Patel visits federal capital's hospitals

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel has visited Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and the Federal Government Polyclinic (FGPC) hospital. During visit, he examined the arrangements being made in both hospitals in case of referring of Peshawar blast patients. Talking to media persons, the minister said that if blast patients were shifted to capital's hospitals, best medical services would be provided to them. He added all possible arrangements were being made to ensure the availability of all concerned services for them. "All arrangements are being monitored by myself," he added. He said that enough quantity of blood was available in hospitals while beds were also in sufficient number in both hospitals. He said that it was our obligation to provide them with extraordinary medical care and services. He said that directions had already been issued to administrative heads of the Federal Capital's two major hospitals to remain on high alert, keeping in view the prevailing situation after a bomb blast in Peshawar. He said keeping in view that the blast victims might be referred to the capital hospitals, the heads of two hospitals would ensure the availability of medical and para-medical staff as well as the essential services in their respective facilities round the clock. The administrations of both hospitals had also been asked to take special measures to keep the emergency. - APP

NAHE holds Leadership & Management Training

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), an academic wing of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), conducted a two-day Leadership & Management training programme for HEC's BPS-18 and equivalent officers. The objective of the training programme was to strengthen the capacity of HEC employees as professional leaders and reinforce the role of critical thinking and its impact on professional decision-making. Speaking at the opening session, Advisor (Academics, Curriculum & NAHE) HEC Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan welcomed the participants and highlighted the need for professional behavior as important ingredient towards effective performance of an employee in the public engagement domain. The two-day dialogue provided the participants a platform to enhance their ability in tackling complex challenges systemically while exploring the importance of team work together in identifying their challenge areas. During the closing ceremony, Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan distributed certificates among the participants. He highlighted the importance and impact of capacity building programmes for improvement of quality leadership skills.

Fencing underway around diplomatic enclave in Capital

The Third Road construction work has been completed and closed from both sides while special checking points have been set up to strengthen security

ISLAMABAD: The fencing and construction of boundary wall around the diplomatic enclave is underway and will be completed on priority basis with the objective to further secure the area. Police source said the work of fencing and boundary wall construction around the diplomatic enclave is being completed rapidly in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority. The Third Road construction work has been completed and closed from both sides while special checking points have been set up to strengthen the security. The Capital Police Officer Security Division said that all necessary measures will be taken to protect foreign nationals, embassies and private and public property. In order to further improve security, foot patrolling has also been started in the diplomatic enclave. The use of mobile phones during the duty is completely prohibited while all the personnel on duty are being provided complete equipment to ensure effective security. - DNA

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Briefs

PAC seeks details of posting of FBR officers

ISLAMABAD: Sub committee of Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has sought details of posting of the employees in FBR who have returned money through plea bargain or voluntarily in corruption cases. The court also directed to contact Advocate General (AG) with reference to FBR court cases. The committee met here under its convener Nawab Sher in parliament house Tuesday.

The audit objections in respect of FBR for the year 2017-18 were reviewed in the meeting. Nawab Sher Wasir said chairman FBR has not come. The committee accepted justification of non presence of FBR chairman. He said "I wonder that your reply is No to all the questions from audit. You make commitment but don't fulfill it. Your cases are running from years upon years. Your so many audit paras were settled last time. You officers don't want to sit along with each other. The most of the amount is stuck up in court cases. The officers who are punished return to the same posts too. Then what is use of it."

The audit told the committee that audit of documents of 800 tax payers was conducted and a considerable difference was found between statements and returns. The amount of 41 billion rupees is still there and no recovery action has been taken towards it. —Online

Court orders prosecution to provide case record to Swati

ISLAMABAD: A lower court on Tuesday ordered the prosecution to provide the copy of the case record to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Leader Azam Khan Swati in controversial tweet matter. A special judge central Muhammad Azam Khan heard the case against Senator Azam Swati who appeared before the court along with his lawyer Ali Bokhari. The lawyer said that it was the right of his client to be provided the case record so that he could defend charges against him. Azam Swati, on the occasion, said that he had been part of the movement for the independence of the judiciary a fifteen years ago. He said that still some people were doing justice in the judiciary. The judge said that merit would be ensured in this case as well. After this, the court ordered the prosecution to provide the copies of the case record to the defence side. The further hearing of the case was adjourned till March 28. It may be mentioned here that a first information report was registered against Swati for controversial tweets against the state institution. —APP

RDA inaugurates RO plant to supply clean drinking water to citizens

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) here on Tuesday inaugurated Reverse Osmosis (RO) Plant to supply clean drinking water to citizens, RDA, WASA and PHA employees. Director General (DG) RDA Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa inaugurated the RO plant which had been completed in collaboration with a non-governmental organization Saylani Welfare International Trust.

Speaking on the occasion, the DG said the RO plant project had been completed to facilitate the citizens. He said clean drinking water would also be available for the citizens and hundreds of employees of RDA, WASA, PHA and other institutions. The DG said, "The project has been completed to facilitate the people particularly live in Li-aquat Bagh area and we will continue to launch more projects to provide relief to the citizens." RDA officers including the Chief Engineer RDA, Dr. Habibul Haq Randhawa, Chief Planner RDA Jamshaid Aftab, Director Admn, and Finance Malik and Land Development RDA Ghazanfar Ali Awan, the Director Estate Management, Asif Mahmood Janjua, Deputy Director Finance, Khawaja Javed Arshad, Deputy Director Admn, RDA Iftikhar Ali and employees of RDA. —APP

Pak-China hydropower coop helping Pakistan

Small-scale hydropower can not only solve the problem of electricity consumption of local residents, but also help in developing small local industries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan small hydropower cooperation is injecting energy into Pakistan's green economic development, said Wang Chungping, chairperson of Heroboss Technology group, in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN). He said, the development of small-scale hydropower can not only solve the problem of electricity consumption of local residents, but also help in developing small local industries, increasing local taxes after being incorporated into the national power grid, and regulating the local ecological climate. Wang Chungping added, Heroboss Technology is mainly engaged

in scientific and technological cooperation with the Pakistani Ministry of Science and Technology and local energy institutes. It is responsible for setting up the S&T cooperation platform between the two countries in the China-Pakistan small hydropower joint research center, connecting the joint discussions of Chinese state-owned enterprises in Pakistan, and promoting the integrated S&T development. The China-Pakistan Small-scale Hydropower Technology Joint Research Center is one of the first batch of joint laboratories under the "Belt and Road Initiative". Since the implementation of the China-Pakistan "Belt and Road" joint laboratory on small hydropower technology in early 2021, 5

meetings have been held and consensus has been reached on small hydropower development. The energy exhibition hall has been completed and 80 percent of the equipment donated by China has arrived. It has also completed studies for the development of several small hydropower projects, and assisted in the compilation of relevant regulations for small hydropower projects in Pakistan. Tan Bixuan, project manager of CGGC DASU hydropower project in Pakistan, consultant of the research center emphasized that the center is willing to carry out all technology transfer within the scope of national permits, so as to enable the iron brother to develop faster and better. He explained that "recently, we con-

ducted a joint discussion with major enterprises involved in BRI on how to give full play to achieve more technological transformation." In Pakistan, hydropower projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor are in full swing. According to Wang, small hydropower development is more conducive to the economic development of poor mountainous areas than large-scale hydropower projects. 60% of rivers in Pakistan are tributaries with a partial annual water flow of 50 m³/s, a large height difference, and a kilometer-long length, allowing for multi-stage small hydropower development in natural conditions. Pakistan is one of the countries hardest hit by climate change. Since mid-

June 2022, multiple rounds of rainstorms have hit various provinces of Pakistan, causing severe flooding. Tan believes that S&T should be used to support Pakistan's post-disaster reconstruction and fight climate change. "For post-disaster reconstruction, we are actively studying and cooperating on mobile solar power houses, mobile energy storage systems and mobile communications. And there is a lot of room for cooperation between China and Pakistan in the field of renewable energy, including hydropower, such as small hydropower development in the northern mountains, urban waste power generation, solar power generation, hydrogen energy, air storage, etc," added Tan.



ISLAMABAD: DG ISSI Amb. Sohail Mahmood had a meeting with Foreign Ministry's DG Aamir Ahmed Atozai. Matters relating to Pakistan's deeper engagement with Asia-Pacific region & enhanced partnership with ASEAN were discussed. Key focus was on ISSI's role in reinforcing these important processes.—DNA

AIOU holds RDs conference

It is pertinent to mention that AIOU has also issued security high alert instructions on the main campus and all regional campuses



ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood chaired the regional directors' conference at Peshawar Regional Campus the other day. He strongly condemned the Peshawar tragedy and expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss

of precious lives. Speaking at the occasion, Prof. Nasir said, "Our prayers and condolences are with the families of martyrs and injured." After the VC's address, a collective prayer was offered for the martyrs and injured. Vice Chancellor instructed the Regional Directors to provide full support to the government in establishing an atmosphere of law and order by ensuring proper security arrangements during the ongoing admissions campaign for the 2023 spring semester. Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmad Khan gave a detailed briefing to the Vice Chancellor on the nationwide admission campaign for the ongoing spring semester 2023. VC AIOU directed all the regional heads to do a door-to-door campaign and include out-of-school children in the educational network. The Regional Directors assured the Vice Chancellor that they would do their best to enroll the maximum number of students for increasing the literacy rate in their respective areas. Heads of all the regional offices of AIOU in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in the conference. Whereas, Director of Admissions, controller of examinations, Director ICT, and Director of IET took part online. It is pertinent to mention that AIOU has also issued security high alert instructions on the main campus and all regional campuses.—APP

ICCI condemns terrorist attack on Mosque

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a mosque in Peshawar's Police Lines area that has sent shock-

waves across the country as over 90 people have reportedly lost their lives in this dastardly act. He expressed solidarity with the victims of the horrible attack and said that the business community of the entire country is grieved over this cowardly suicide attack on the innocent people who were offer-

ing prayers in the mosque. He expressed condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for early recovery of the injured ones. He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Estate Agents Association during their visit to ICCI led by President Sardar Tahir. Faad Waheed said that such despicable acts of terrorism cannot break the resolve of the government and the people of Pakistan and reiterated that the business community is fully standing with the armed forces and the security agen-

cies of the country to foil such nefarious designs of the terrorists who want to disrupt peace in Pakistan. He hoped that the government would accelerate the implementation of the National Action Plan in letter and spirit to eliminate terrorism from the country. Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI also condemned the terrorist attack on Peshawar Mosque and expressed condolences to the bereaved families. He said that the whole nation is standing in solidarity with the bereaved families in this hour of grief.



ISLAMABAD: Acting Governor Balochistan, Jan Muhammad Jamali and Senator Sana Jamali called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.—DNA

Could a drug for high blood pressure help slow aging?

ISLAMABAD: From the Fountain of Youth- Trusted Source to the Holy Grail, humans have always been looking for a way to slow or reverse aging and extend their lives. Thanks to today's scientific advances, people now age slower and live longer. The average life expectancyTrusted Source jumped from 66.8 years in 2000 to 73.4 years in 2019. And recently, a woman in Spain was recognized as the oldest living person in the world at the age of 115. Now, researchers from the University of Liverpool in the United Kingdom, in collaboration with the Institute of Translational Medicine in Switzerland, and Harvard Medical School in the United States, argue that a hypertension drug called rilmenidine could be repurposed to help increase a person's lifespan. Scientists demonstrated these benefits using a roundworm model and searched for known compounds that mimic a caloric restriction diet. The study recently appeared in the journal Aging Cell- Trusted Source. Rilmenidine and caloric restriction Rilmenidine is a prescription drug sometimes marketed under the brand

names Hyperium, Albarel, Tenaxum, and Iterium. It is used to treat hypertension, or high blood pressure. According to Dr. Jo o Pedro Magalh es, corresponding author of the study, currently chair of molecular biogerontology at the University of Birmingham — who was at the University of Liverpool during the time this research was conducted — scientists previously performed a computational analysisTrusted Source to identify existing drugs that may mimic caloric restriction. "Caloric restriction — reducing the amount of calories without malnutrition — is the most robust and consistent method of extending lifespanTrusted Source and delaying aging," he told Medical News Today. "However, caloric restriction has a number of side effects, and therefore identifying compounds that mimic the benefits of caloric restriction is of great interest and importance," Dr. Magalh es added. "Our computational method works by identifying drugs that exhibit molecular signatures similar to caloric restriction and allowed us to identify various compounds

as candidates for slowing aging." "We previously publishedTrusted Source on another candidate, allantoin, but then decided to focus on rilmenidine because it is orally available with human clinical uses and modest, rare side effects," he continued. "Therefore, it is an attractive drug for repositioning for other age-related diseases and anti-aging in general." Slowing aging in roundworms For this study, Dr. Magalh es and his team used an animal model, the roundworm Caenorhabditis elegans, which he said lives only a few weeks. "We found that animals treated with rilmenidine live significantly longer, about 20%, than controls," he detailed. "We also found lifespan and healthspan benefits in both young and old animals." "Then we looked at health markers and found that animals treated with rilmenidine are healthier for longer, meaning that both lifespan and health span are extended by rilmenidine treatment," Dr. Magalh es added. Can people use rilmenidine to slow aging? Dr. Magalh es said that because rilmenidine is already used in the clinic, including by older individuals, is orally availa-

ble, and has rare and non-severe side effects, repurposing it for other clinical applications is plausible. "Although of course, more work is necessary to establish its effectiveness in the context of other age-related diseases," he continued. At this stage, Dr. Magalh es said he can only speculate when we might see doctors able to prescribe rilmenidine as an anti-aging intervention. "At the moment there is no such thing as an anti-aging prescription, even though there are a few drugs that have been touted [as] having potential anti-aging properties," he explained. "From a regulatory perspective, it's also unclear whether drugs can be prescribed for aging, though we and others [have been] pushing in this direction." "I do think it will be possible to repurpose longevity drugs, including rilmenidine, for other age-related diseases, subject of course to more studies," Dr. Magalh es added. "In other words, I think first we will see longevity drugs being repurposed for other age-related diseases and, if successful, I envision a future where we have longevity drugs used as anti-aging as a form of preventive intervention or prophylaxis." —Online

Job Expo at NUTECH Skills Development Department

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Job Expo activity regarding placement of skill students in the industry for their internships was held at Job Placement Cell, NUTECH Skills Development Department (NSDD). A total of 22 companies interviewed the studentsfor internships. During Job Expo, Rector NUTECH Lt Gen Moazzam Ejaz (R), Pro-Rector Maj Gen Khalid Javed and DG Skills Maj Gen Raza, visited and interacted with the company's representatives. As NUTECH's motto is "University for Industry", theJob Expo aims to fill the gap between industry and academia by providing opportunities for students to interact with the industry. The event provided an opportunity for NSDD students to interact with actual industry partners and be aware of the corporate sector requirements. The students prepared their CVs and forwardedthem to potential employers. Job Expo is held bi-annually at NSDD and the result has been encouraging with the majority of the students being employed after completing 6 months of courses at NSDD.

DISCOs' consumers to get Rs 2.32 per unit relief

ISLAMABAD: The consumers of all power distribution companies (DISCOs) are likely to get Rs 2.32 per unit relief in power tariff for December 2022 as the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Tuesday concluded public hearing into monthly fuel adjustment (FCA) for month of December for XWAPDA DISCOs. Chairman NEPRA Tauseef H Farooq presided over the hearing while member Sindh Rafique Ahmed Sheikh, member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Maqsood Anwar Khan and member Balochistan Mathar Niaz Rana were also present. In petition, Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) on behalf of DISCOs has sought Rs 2.20 per unit decrease in power tariff for December 2023 under the monthly fuel cost adjustment mechanism. However, as per initial NEPRA calculation of the statistic, decrease is calculated as Rs 2.32 per unit. The positive FCA for November was charged as 18 paise per unit. The FCA for December would be Rs 2.50 less as compared to FCA of November. The negative FCA would be applicable to all consumers except lifeline, using upto 300 units, agri consumers, electric vehicles charging stations and K-Electric consumers.—APP

NLPD to hold Urdu journalism conference

ISLAMABAD: The National Language Promotion Authority (NLPD) will organize a one-day International Urdu Journalism Conference on February 02 (Thursday) titled "Seventy-Five Years of Urdu Journalism".

This event is being organized in connection with the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of Pakistan to highlight the services of Urdu journalism in literature. Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage, Engr Amir Muqam would be the chief guest of the event while noted literary personalities Iftikhar Arif and Mujeeb-ur-Shami would also be the special guest of the inaugural session. The second session of the conference would be chaired by Federal Secretary Ministry for National Heritage and Culture Division, Fareena Mazhar while Javaid Siddiqui and Nasar Malik would be the special guest of the session. The third and last session of the conference would be presided over by the noted literary personality, Fareeda Hafeez, while Jabar Mirza, Hanif Khalid, and Arshad Farooq would be the special guest of the concluding session. A Kitab Mela would also be a part of this conference where books of noted writers would be available at discounted prices.—APP

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Diplomacy, not belligerence required of US, Israel

Following their meeting in Jerusalem on Monday, both visiting United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken and newly elected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reiterated the two countries' longstanding consensus on preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. His government's policy is "to do everything within Israel's power to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them", said Netanyahu. While Blinken, on his part, said at their joint news conference that the Biden administration was adamant "that Iran must never be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon". Although Blinken claimed in an interview with Saudi-owned news outlet Al Arabiya in Cairo, Egypt, that "diplomacy is never off the table" and it is the Biden administration's "preferred path", he emphasized that "every option remains on the table" to make sure Iran doesn't gain nuclear weapons. According to Blinken, the Islamic Republic's alleged recent violent suppression of civilian protests at home and support for Russia's special military operation against Ukraine by providing "drones and potentially other weapons systems" have shifted Washington's focus from reviving the nuclear deal with Iran to "the many things that have happened since". With President Joe Biden personally declaring the 2015 deal dead, and rising calls for a tougher approach to Teheran in the US Congress, the atmosphere is surely not conducive to stake-holding parties resuming serious negotiations aimed at rescuing that deal. Just two days prior to Blinken's arrival in Israel, there was a drone attack on a "workshop complex" in central Iran under the country's Ministry of Defense, which Israeli officials declined to comment on and the US Defense Department denied involvement in. The attack, which Teheran described as "unsuccessful", and which has so far remained unaccounted for, may not substantially escalate tensions for the time being, but it certainly goes against Blinken's claimed wish for "some calm" in the Middle East. Despite the relative insignificance in terms of physical damage, incidents like this inevitably add distrust and animosity between historical foes in the region, especially if Washington's claim of preference for diplomacy is taken into account. In response to the prospect of the US resorting to the military option, the Iranian Permanent Mission to the UN stated that the US resorting to the use of the military means "at any level" would mean war. Teheran and Washington are fully aware of the dire consequences once the military option is taken, which is why both parties, along with all other signatories to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, had demonstrated continuous interest in resurrecting the deal. Past experience has also proved the uselessness of threat of force. Returning to negotiations and maneuvering a diplomatic solution is the best possible path available. The parties were reportedly close to agreeing a "final" draft for reinstating the JCPOA after nine rounds of negotiations in Vienna. Giving up on the previous efforts would be a huge loss for all.



Irresponsible, reckless warmongering words

The world is full of obvious things that many choose not to observe. Such as the fact that, despite all its cries of alarm about this or that country being a threat to peace and stability, it is the United States that is the most gung ho and habitual destroyer of both. This has been once again laid bare by the reckless talk from Washington of a coming "war" between China and the United States over Taiwan. According to reports, Michael McCaul, the new chairman of the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee, said on Sunday that the odds of a conflict with China over Taiwan "are very high". His remarks came two days after a rabidly bloodthirsty memo by US Air Force General Mike Minihan was made public. In it, Minihan said he believed that the US would fight a war with China in the next two years, directing all troops under his command to undertake firing practice "with the full understanding that unrepentant lethality matters most. Aim for the head." Considering that the US has been constantly stoking tensions across the Taiwan Straits through such tricks as colluding with pro-independence forces on the island, selling arms to it and hollowing out the one-China principle with various political stunts, it is not hard to deduce that the US military is actually gunning for such a conflict, or at least hyping it up for a bigger budget. Meanwhile, those politicians in Washington heralding an imminent war with the Chinese mainland over Taiwan already have their eyes on 2024 and are early players in the "let's show who's the toughest on China" game the two parties always play in the run-up to a presidential election. US President Joe Biden has said on more than one occasion that the US does not seek a new Cold War, does not seek to revitalize its alliances against China, does not support "Taiwan independence", and has no intention to have a conflict with China. Yet, at the same time, there can be no mistaking the subtext of the message the US is sending, which is that it will have no qualms about sacrificing world peace and stability in order to maintain its hegemony. Nonetheless, US officials hyping up the possibility of a war with China should take some time to reflect upon their warmongering words and the potential consequences of emboldening the secessionists on the island. No one should underestimate Beijing's determination to resolve the Taiwan question and realize China's complete reunification, nor believe that it can be intimidated. But, having said that, nor should they ignore its consistency in stating that national reunification by peaceful means is the preferred choice, as it best serves the interests of the Chinese nation as a whole, and works best for the long-term stability and development of the country as a whole.

Apocalypse in Palestine: The rise of Israeli fanaticism

Marwan Bishara

Today's fanatics lament the early Zionists' failure to rid the "Jewish State" of all its Palestinian inhabitants. They believe their forefathers were right to evict hundreds of thousands of Palestinians back in 1947-1949, but wrong to allow for a small minority to stay behind, or allow it to grow in numbers and influence. So, what to do? Rabbi Meir Kahane, the departed guru of many of today's fanatics, argued in a 1980 book with the telling title, They Must Go, that the Palestinians are a "cancer" in the body

Say what you may about Israel's ruling fanatics but listen carefully to what they say. Unlike their coalition partner, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, they are blunt about their racism and bigotry. These straight-talking maniacs say what they think and do what they say. Their vision may be disastrous, even catastrophic, but their candour is refreshing in the way it exposes the myth of a secular, liberal and enlightened Israel. One leading fanatic is Bezael Smotrich, the head of the Religious Zionism party and Israel's new finance minister. After a recording of him admitting to being a fascist became public in recent days, he retorted sardonically: "I may be a far-right person, a homophobe, racist, fascist, but my word is my bond". True that. And more. He and his fellow zealots believe that: first, Israel cannot and should not be both Jewish and democratic; second, Israel has the exclusive right over all of what they call "the Land of Israel", i.e. historic Palestine; and third, Israel should beware the ways of the liberal West, and reject American dictates or overtures. Let us take these gems one at a time. Today's fanatics lament the early Zionists' failure to rid the "Jewish State" of all its Palestinian inhabitants. They believe their forefathers were right to evict hundreds of thousands of Palestinians back in 1947-1949, but wrong to allow for a small minority to stay behind, or allow it to grow in numbers and influence. So, what to do? Rabbi Meir Kahane, the departed guru of many of today's fanatics, argued in a 1980 book with the telling title, They Must Go, that the Palestinians are a "cancer" in the body of the "Jewish State" that must be removed by whatever means necessary. His present-day disciples, like the minister of national security, Itamar Ben-Gvir, also believe Israel is bet-

ter off without its Palestinian citizens, but they reckon if Palestinians must stay, then can only be second or third-class citizens, vowing total loyalty to their Jewish masters. Unlike their political and ideological partner, Netanyahu, who helped pass the racist law "Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People" in 2018, but continues to peddle the debunked "Jewish and democratic state" cliché, Kahane's followers boast of Jewish supremacy in the "Jewish State". Indeed, as Kahane himself put it, "Those who refuse to give the Arab that right but tell him he is equal think he is a fool. He is not." Indeed, he is not. Unlike the Jewish fanatic who believes Israel must be a theocracy or the foolish and delusional liberal who is convinced Israel could be Jewish and democratic, the Palestinian Arab knows Israel must be a true democracy in order to be at peace with itself and its neighbours. This brings me to the second point. Like all other religious fanatics, Israel's fanatics believe "the end justifies the means" when fighting for the almighty. This includes the forced reconsecration or Judaisation of Jerusalem and its holy sites, including Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam, regardless of its catastrophic ramifications, peace and coexistence be damned. Needless to say, there is "nothing novel about the victorious Jews' takeover of sites sacred to the Muslims", in the words of former deputy mayor of West Jerusalem, Meron Benvenisti. If anything, the new fanatics are simply picking up where their Zionist elders left off, but with more religious zeal. Combining messianic Judaism with Israeli chutzpah, these fanatics are determined and they are dangerous. They are upfront about deepening the occupation, multiplying the illegal Jewish settlements, and eventually annexing them altogether, regardless of the consequences. Unlike Bibi, the spin doctor, they feel no need to lie or justify their disinterest in diplomacy and peace with the Palestinians. Many wish for an apocalyptic

end to this age to pave the way for the advent of the "kingdom of heaven". It is no surprise then, that they reject international law and the entire peace process jargon about the two-state solution, which Israel's Western backers continue to peddle, either foolishly or dishonestly. Which brings me to the last point. Unlike mainstream secular Israelis who are passionate about the American style of life, the religious camp rejects the influence of liberal America on Israel and its way of life. These fundamentalists wish for a kingdom, not a republic. They want Israel to live according to Jewish law and tradition, not Western liberalism or universal values on issues of gender, sexuality and family. Although they get enormous financial and other assistance from the United States, they believe Jewish redemption in the land of Israel must be biblical, not American or liberal. They also insist on subjugating the country's rather liberal Supreme Court to the whim of the parliamentary majority they are part of. No wonder, then, that secular and liberal Israelis oppose the fanatical forces in power, who, they believe, are "turning Israel into an insular, suspicious, and chauvinistic Sparta" - to quote Israeli journalist Ari Shavit's book, My Promised Land. But most of them focus only on the government's domestic agenda while ignoring the violent occupation. That is selfish and shortsighted - indeed foolish. Israeli fanaticism is the culmination of decades of war, occupation, and colonisation. Israel's fanatics and fascists draw their force and fervour from their messianic mission in the occupied Palestinian territories, where they have expanded their power base at the expense of the Palestinians. To stop the fanatics, concerned Israelis, Americans and others must do all to end the colonisation of Palestine, first and foremost.

—It's the occupation, stupid.
Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Honeymoon is over: Growing resentment towards the US in Germany

Sal Ahmed

The general view of the Germans on the street is that the Ukraine war has greatly benefited the US military-industrial complex and put Europe on a path of steep economic decline. The US's relevance in Europe has long been threatened by European countries cosying up to Russia through gas, coal and oil supply and Russia's billions flowing into European markets. Many in Germany believe that escalating the war in Ukraine serves to resurrect US influence in the region. Suddenly, several US military bases, previously lying idle, have sprung into action - the US's

Faced with a declining economy amid multiple crises, Germany has shown first signs of going against US interests in Europe. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's hesitance to send Leopard tanks to Ukraine was partly in line with a rising anti-American narrative in Germany. The general view of the Germans on the street is that the Ukraine war has greatly benefited the US military-industrial complex and put Europe on a path of steep economic decline. The US's relevance in Europe has long been threatened by European countries cosying up to Russia through gas, coal and oil supply and Russia's billions flowing into European markets. Many in Germany believe that escalating the war in Ukraine serves to resurrect US influence in the region. Suddenly, several US military bases, previously lying idle, have sprung into action - the US's relevance in the region has increased. Scholz, who already heads a three-way coalition government, is weak at home and now likely to stand isolated even in Europe. Berlin wants to lead an independent foreign policy, and Scholz is even happy to leave the French behind when it comes to German economic prosperity, his solo trip to China is a case in point. However, Scholz has to tread a fine line with Ukraine and Russia. At home, he has faced severe political opposition from both the right and left to further the cause of the Ukrainian war or provide heavy weapons to the Ukrainians. Some politicians from the far-right Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) party, known for their pro-Russia stance, even visited the Russian-controlled Donbass region in eastern Ukraine. These politicians are well-known for their backing of maintaining good German-Russian relations, including scrapping sanctions

against Russia - their party has been gaining electoral leverage in Germany. While on the left, former Left Party chief Oskar Lafontaine has become the leading voice in opposing German inclusion in the Ukraine war. His latest book Ami, it's time to go, calls on the US to leave the region. "Ami" is a derogatory term for Americans. He is highly critical of American military presence in Germany and the policies on NATO, which he says is impossible to regard as a defence organisation and only can be described as a tool for American geopolitical interests. Lafontaine has gone to the extent of saying that his country's military aid to Ukraine shows how Germany is not an independent country but a vassal of the US. He argues that Europe needs to break with its submission to American interests and pave its own way. His book reached the bestseller category in the same week. To counter the US's "do more" doctrine and Europe's own pressure, Scholz played the delay-and-desist game. Expectations in Berlin were that Ukraine would quickly capitulate and relations with Russia would carry on as usual, but that hasn't happened. And his decision to send Leopard tanks was ultimately made under extreme pressure from Germany's allies. Germany finds itself between a deep recession and a desperate need to not aggravate the situation with Russia, leaving a window of possibility to improve relations in the future while not discrediting itself at NATO. It all started with the 'sabotage' of the Nord-Stream 2 pipeline, along which hung the hopes of Berlin that once the war in Ukraine was over, supplies of Russian gas would restart. But soon after, a short video appeared on social media of a testy exchange between US President Joe Biden and a German journalist

at a press conference, where the President claimed something to the effect that the US will not allow NordStream 2 to go ahead. This was sharply challenged by the German journalist, who said, "How can you control it, it's not in your country," to which Biden replied, "You'll see." Many in Germany took that as a clear sign of the US provoking Europe and Russia into what they believe is in the apparent American interests. Another reason for anti-American sentiments rising across Germany is the trade war which is likely to hit Germany's economy hard. The US President's January 5 tweet, "Let's make 2023 the year of buying American", was a slap in the face of European leaders who see Biden's policies, particularly the Inflation Reduction Act' as a protectionist measure which will block European multinationals out of the lucrative American market. Biden's administration is set to provide a record \$370 billion in new federal subsidies for electric vehicles, wind farms, batteries and other clean energy technologies. EU leaders are worried that the law could lure investment out of Europe and into the US. These subsidies will discriminate against non-US companies, particularly at a time when Europe is suffering economically. The law will offer tax credits to US consumers for electric vehicles as long as 40 percent of raw materials in their batteries are extracted and processed in the US. That means European car makers will lose out in the US market. The broader effects of the Ukraine war and protectionist measures by the Biden administration have driven a wedge between the traditional West which is likely to test the unity of NATO in the near future.

—Courtesy: TRT World

Briefs

National unity need of the hour, says Asif

FROM PAGE 01 concluded during the PML-N's previous tenure, and peace was established in the country from Karachi to Swat. "But if you remember, a year-and-a-half or two years ago [...] we were given a briefing two, three times in this same hall in which it was clearly stated that talks could be carried out against these people and they can be brought toward peace." Asif said varying opinions had risen on the matter but despite that no "conclusive decision" was taken. "But during this time, thousands of people who were left unemployed after the Afghan war settled in Pakistan." He said the first proof of this surfaced when the people of Swat protested against the people who were resettled. He noted that the people of Wana had also protested and expressed similar emotions. "I am mentioning these incidents because the tragedy that occurred yesterday [...] the terrorist was standing in the frontline during Zuh prayers where he detonated himself."

Asif said the prime minister and the army chief visited Peshawar yesterday where they were given a briefing on the attack. "But this is a tragedy where we require the same resolve and unity which was expressed in 2011-2012. I will not talk for long but I will say briefly that at the start, we sowed the seeds for terrorism." Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah expressed the resolve to win the war on terrorism at all costs. Speaking on a motion in the National Assembly on a recent wave of terrorism in the country, he said terrorism is a collective issue, which can be eliminated jointly. He said the political leadership and the military leadership are determined to seek guidance from the parliament in order to defeat terrorism. Condemning the terrorist incident in Peshawar, the Minister said terrorism should not be bracketed with any community or ethnicity. He said every Pakistani is disturbed over the terrorist incidents, irrespective of where they happen. He said we are equally gloomy and sad over the terrorist incidents in Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi or anywhere else.

Peshawar blast: Death toll surges past 100

FROM PAGE 01 the injured were being provided medical facilities free-of-cost. On Monday, 59 people, mostly police officials, were martyred and over 150 were injured after an explosion ripped through a mosque in Peshawar's Red Zone area. The powerful blast blew away the wall of the prayer hall and an inner roof. The outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack. It later distanced itself from it but sources earlier indicated that it might have been the handiwork of some local faction of the outlawed group. Peshawar Division Commissioner RiazMehsud said that the rescue and search operation at the blast site has been completed, after almost 24 hours. Earlier, Rescue 1122 spokesperson Bilal Faizi had said that rescue teams were removing the last part of the collapsed roof of the mosque.

Rupee ends losing streak

FROM PAGE 01 an appreciation of around 1.07 percent as talks between Pakistan and IMF under way for a stalled bailout programme. Earlier on Monday, the rupee plunged by Rs7 and the greenback touched all-time high of Rs272. Last week, the local currency dropped by Rs24.54 in the interbank market – the largest single-day depreciation in more than two decades. Finance experts linked the rupee's recovery to exporters offloading some of their proceeds as remittances and export continued days after dollar cap was removed.

Yoon calls for effective extended deterrence

Austin said the South Korea-US alliance is an axis of Northeast Asian security and is stronger now than ever

NEWS DESK

SEOUL: President Yoon Suk Yeol met with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Tuesday in Seoul and discussed ways to beef up security ties and extended deterrence against North Korea, the presidential office said. Austin arrived in Seoul the previous day on a regional swing that will also take him to the Philippines. Earlier Tuesday, he held talks with Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup. During the meeting at the presidential office, Yoon called for U.S. commitment of an "effective and strong" extended deterrence to cope with North Korea's growing nuclear threats. "We ask for consultations between South Korea and the United States to

come up with an effective and strong extended deterrence system that can dispel South Korean people's concern about North Korea's evolving nuclear threats," Yoon was quoted as saying by presidential spokeswoman Kim Eun-hye. Yoon also emphasized the need for effective Seoul-Washington joint drills, in light of the changing environment, for defense of the peninsula. Austin said the South Korea-U.S. alliance is an axis of Northeast Asian security and is stronger now than ever. Yoon and Austin agreed that Seoul-Washington-Tokyo defense ties must be stronger in order to deter North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. Following the meeting, Austin left for the Philippines. Earlier in the day, the de-

fense chiefs of South Korea and the United States have agreed to further expand the countries' joint military exercises amid intensifying North Korean provocations, they said in a joint statement released Tuesday. South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup and U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin also agreed to continue taking strong steps against North Korean provocations. "The two leaders also pledged to further



expand and bolster the level and scale of this year's combined exercises and training," said the joint statement released by the U.S. Department of Defense. "To this end, the two leaders concurred on the need to take into account changes in the security environment, including the DPRK's recent steps with respect to its nuclear and missile programs, to strengthen combined exercises and training, including the upcoming combined bi-

lateral exercises," it added. Lee and Austin held a bilateral meeting in Seoul on Tuesday (Seoul time). The U.S. defense chief is on a trip to the region that will also take him to the Philippines. North Korea fired 69 ballistic missiles, including eight intercontinental ballistic missiles, in 2022 alone, marking a new annual record that far exceeded the previous record of 25 ballistic missiles launched in a year. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has also called for "exponential" growth of his country's nuclear arsenal, while Pyongyang said in September that its new nuclear law would allow it to "preemptively" use its nuclear weapons against South Korea and the U.S. in case of any contingency. Lee and Austin strongly condemned the North's continued provocations and vio-

lations of United Nations Security Council resolutions, which prohibit North Korea from ballistic missile testing, according to their joint statement. "They also affirmed that the ROK-U.S. alliance, along with the international community, will continue to take a strong stance against any further provocations by the DPRK," it said. The defense chiefs also reaffirmed measures to enhance the implementation of U.S. extended deterrence to underscore the U.S. security commitment to South Korea, according to their joint statement. "To this end, the countries will hold the Deterrence Strategy Committee table-top exercise next month, "in order to facilitate alliance discussions on deterrence and response options to deal with the DPRK nuclear threat," it said.

IOC rejects 'defamatory' criticism from Ukraine

Olympic body responds after Kyiv accuses it of promoting war for considering Russian athletes' return

DNA

KYIV: The International Olympic Committee on Monday rejected fierce criticism from Ukrainian officials, who have accused it of promoting war after the body said Russians could potentially be given the opportunity to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics. Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak at the weekend described the Lausanne-based body as promoting "violence, mass murders, destruction" and said on Monday a Russian presence at the Games would constitute giving the country "a platform to promote genocide". "The IOC rejects in the strongest possible terms this and other defamatory statements," the IOC said in a statement. "They cannot serve as a basis for any constructive discussion." Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who last week called for a



campaign to keep Russian athletes from competing in Paris, asked Denmark's visiting prime minister for support on Monday. In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy pledged to "protect sports structures and the international Olympic movement from being discredited through the efforts of some representatives of sports bureaucracy to allow Russian athletes at international competitions". Russia invaded neighbour

Ukraine on Feb 24 last year saying it wanted to protect its security and Russian speakers. Tens of thousands of people have been killed and millions driven from their homes. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba drew attention earlier to the fact that many Russian Olympians had ties with the military, including by competing for sports clubs affiliated with the defence ministry. "The army that commits atrocities, kills, rapes, and

loots. This is whom the ignorant IOC wants to put under white flag allowing to compete," Kuleba wrote on Twitter. Russia has denied allegations that its forces have committed atrocities in Ukraine. The IOC said last week that it welcomed a proposal from the Olympic Council of Asia for Russian and Belarusian athletes to have the chance to compete in Asia. That could potentially also include Olympic qualifying events, given Russia's invasion. The IOC added then, however, that each sport federation was the "sole authority for its international competitions". The Russian foreign ministry has said any attempt to squeeze Moscow out of international sport because of what it calls its special military operation in Ukraine is "doomed to fail".

PHF imposes life ban on Khawaja Junaid

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has imposed life ban on Olympian and former manager Khawaja Junaid. The decision was taken by the PHF Inquiry Committee on Tuesday over the blunder of fielding 12 players during an Asia Cup match against Japan last year.

Pakistan failed to qualify for the super four of the Asia Cup, where Junaid was the manager of the national side, which meant that they were not able to qualify for the World Cup. The Green Shirts lost an important match against Japan during the Asia Cup after one of their goals was disallowed for having 12 players on the field instead of 11. PHF Legal Advisor Mian Ali Ashfaq also opened up about the verdict of the committee. "Pakistan faced a lot of embarrassment due to Khawaja Junaid. Due to his misconduct, Pakistan failed to qualify for the World Cup," said Ashfaq. "The decision to ban him has been taken in line with FIH rules," he added. He also stated that Junaid didn't appear before the committee to present his point of view. "Committee had called Junaid to appear before the committee but he didn't oblige," he said. "The decision to ban him has also been approved by PHF president." Meanwhile, PHF Secretary Haider Hussain said that Junaid had told him over WhatsApp that "he was not responsible for the debacle". However, Hussain added that, according to FIH rules, this responsibility lies with the manager. Despite Pakistan's rich history in hockey, winning multiple Olympic Gold Medals and World Cup titles, the situation of the game in Pakistan has gone from bad to worse over the last couple of decades. Pakistan failed to qualify for back-to-back Olympic Games, 2016 and 2022, while also missing out on the 2023 World Cup. They also faced the humiliation of missing a World Cup for the first time in their history back in 2014. - DNA

West Ham set up Man United tie by beating Derby

DERBY: West Ham United eased into the FA Cup fifth round with a comfortable 2-0 victory away to third-tier Derby County on Monday to set up a meeting with Manchester United. Derby, fourth in League One, went into the match on the back of 14 matches unbeaten in all competitions but were quickly overrun by the Premier League side, who took the lead in the 10th minute with a close-range volley from Jarrod Bowen. Bowen went 12 matches without a goal before netting twice against Everton last week and now has three in his last two games. The forward then crossed for striker Michail Antonio to head in a second goal five minutes after the interval to break his own goal drought stretching back to November. David Moyes' side saw out the victory without conceding many chances, recording back-to-back wins for the first time since October, and Bowen said he hoped the win would boost his side, who are 16th in the table, one point above the relegation zone. "Two wins on the bounce is good for us it's all about results and momentum and we can use this as a real springboard," he said. - APP

Mbappe, Messi and Neymar in same team not hindering PSG

PSG have won just one of four league games this month but Galtier rejected suggestions the presence of Neymar, Mbappe and Messi was hurting the teams stability

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain coach Christophe Galtier has denied that playing Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe and Neymar all together in the same side has a negative impact on the team's balance, as the Brazilian was ruled out of Wednesday's match at Montpellier. PSG said Neymar is suffering from muscle fatigue and received treatment as he

sat out training on Tuesday while the rest of his teammates prepared for the trip south following Sunday's 1-1 draw at home to Reims in Ligue 1. Neymar scored the opening goal against Reims but PSG conceded an equaliser deep into stoppage time as their lead over second-placed Lens remained three points. PSG have won just one

of four league games this month but Galtier rejected suggestions the presence of Neymar, Mbappe and Messi was hurting the team's stability. "We have at PSG three incredibly strong attacking players - Kylian, Leo and Ney, with 55 goals and 34 assists since the start of the season," Galtier said. "To say that we have to leave one of them out to be balanced is a mistake. We've been able to play well and be solid with all of three of them." PSG face a run of six games in 19 days including the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie against Bayern

Munich on February 14. "January hasn't been good and everyone needs to have it in their heads that February will be better," added Galtier. He confirmed the club was in talks to sign Morocco winger Hakim Ziyech from Chelsea but said no deal had yet been completed. "We will comment on the transfer window when it is closed," said Galtier. "As for whether one, two or three players might come in, based on what I have read, the club is working hard... but I'm not going to comment on potential arrivals or departures. "If there are no arrivals, there are no arrivals." - DNA

Army clinches Inter Departmental Basketball C'ship title

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Defending Champion Pakistan Army clinches Inter Departmental National Basketball Championship title by defeating strong Pakistan Air Force (PAF) with 76-52 points here at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad. Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan ur Rehman Mazari was the chief guest of closing ceremony, while Acting Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Muhammad Ibrar, Secretary Army Sports Directorate Col. Sadaf Akram, Secretary Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Khalid Bashir, Championship Organising Secretary Ouj E Zahoor and other dignitaries were also attending closing ceremony. In the decisive final Army dominated throughout the

final encounter and never allowed their opponent to fight back for the championship trophy. Army took a lead of 13 points till the half time of the decisive fi-

nal by 39-26 points. Army ace players Muhammad Hamza and Ammar Tughlab played vital role for the champion team to retains the championship

title as Muhammad Hamza scored 24 points and Ammar Tughlab 20 for Army to win the championship with 76-52 points while from PAF side Ahmed Jan

scored 21 and Umair Jan scored 12 points respectively. In the third position match Wapda outclassed POF by 68-51 points. Wapda led the match at half

time by 40-15 points. Speaking on the occasion Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Ehsan Mazari encouraged the players participating in the championship and said that the government is trying to promote the sports activities in the country. The IPC Minister congratulated the basketball federation for conducting wonderful tournaments and showed his full support to the basketball federations for the improving basketball standard in the country. He said that the federations that will bring medals will definitely fund them as well as the services of foreign coaches will also be hired for the better performing teams. Seven teams participated in the five days championship which was organized by the Federal Basketball Association under the umbrella of Pakistan Basketball Federation.



Mily brass vows to...

FROM PAGE 01

The government is no longer pursuing a policy to seek negotiations with the TTP, according to officials. Instead Pakistan has asked the Afghan Taliban to fulfil their promise to eliminate the terrorist sanctuaries of the TTP. In a rare move, the Afghan Taliban condemned the Peshawar suicide bombing, saying the targeting the places of worships had no justification. The public condemnation of the interim Afghan government is believed to have compelled the TTP to issue a statement denying its involvement, though one of its commanders earlier took the responsibility. The TTP's move, some observers believe, could be tactical as it wanted to avoid any backlash from the Afghan Taliban. Meanwhile, the forum paid rich tributes to the martyrs of Peshawar Police Line blast and vowed that perpetrators will be brought to exemplary justice. The army chief was quoted as saying: "Such immoral and cowardly acts cannot shake resolve of the nation rather reinvigorate our determination to succeed in ongoing war against terror with Zero tolerance for any terrorist entity." General Asim directed all commanders to continue focus on anti-terrorism operations in coordination with intelligence and law enforcement agencies with renewed resolve till the time we achieve sustainable peace.

OIC slams Sweden...

FROM PAGE 01

During the meeting, the OIC Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha reiterated his dismay at the provocative acts done by far-right activists, emphasizing that such actions were criminal acts perpetrated with the main intention to target Muslims, to insult their sacred religion, values, and symbols. He said that the relevant governments must take severe counter-measures, especially because such provocations have been committed repeatedly by far-right extremists in their countries. He said the intentional act of desecrating the Holy Qur'an and insulting Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) must not be seen as just an ordinary incident of Islamophobia. Such an act is a direct insult to the entire 1.6 billion Muslim population, he added. Brahim Taha hence called all stakeholders to take firm action so that similar provocation will not recur in the future. For his part, the Saudi Permanent Representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Dr. Saleh Al-Suhaibani stressed that these actions could only be considered an insult and contempt for all Muslims, indicating that these despicable acts blatantly contradict the human, moral and religious principles and values of all peoples who love peace and coexistence.

IMF, Pak review...

FROM PAGE 01

Esther Perez Ruiz; Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, Dr Aisha Ghous Pasha; Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Finance (SAPM), Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue, Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Jamil Ahmed, Secretary Finance, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), members of IMF delegation and senior officers from the Finance Division. The Finance Minister welcomed the delegation and shared long-standing friendly relations with the IMF. He briefed the mission on fiscal and economic reforms and measures being taken by the government in different sectors including bridging the fiscal gap, exchange rate stability and in the energy sector for the betterment of the economy. He apprised that reforms were being introduced in power sector and a high-level committee had been formed for devising modalities to offset the menace of circular debt in the gas sector. Dar also extended gratitude to the Managing Director of IMF on continuation of talks and shared that as Finance Minister, he had successfully completed the IMF programme in the past and that the government was committed to complete the current programme. He further extended all his support to the Mission and committed to work together for reaching an agreement to complete the 9th review under Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

Briefs

Bolsonaro applied for US visa, say reports

WASHINGTON: Brazil's former far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who is accused of inciting a riot, applied for a six-month tourist visa to remain in the US, according to Bolsonaro's lawyer, quoted by Financial Times. The former president's lawyer Felipe Alexandre said US authorities received Bolsonaro's application on Friday, the report said on Monday. "I think Florida will be his temporary home away from home," said Alexandre, who advised Bolsonaro not to leave the US while it is being processed. "Right now, with his situation, I think he needs a little stability," he added. The lawyer said there was no evidence that Bolsonaro had committed any crime relating to the riots in Brazil, noting: "If you're going to kick someone out of the country, you have to have legal justification to do so." Bolsonaro might eventually decide to petition for a more permanent US visa than the six-month extension, he added. Earlier this month, 41 House Democrats called on President Joe Biden to revoke Bolsonaro's visa. Bolsonaro lost to incumbent President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in a tight presidential race on Oct. 30 last year. Lula garnered 50.9% of the vote compared to Bolsonaro's 49.1%, according to Brazil's Superior Electoral Court. Bolsonaro left his country for the US state of Florida on Dec. 30, 2022, two days before Lula took office. In the aftermath of Lula's win, Bolsonaro supporters held demonstrations, with many blocking highways across the country and pushing for the military to intervene.—APP

Hungary, Austria will not send weapons to Ukraine

BUDAPEST: Hungary and Austria will not supply Ukraine with military support to prevent further escalation of the Moscow-Kyiv war, according to the Hungarian defense minister. During a joint news conference with his Austrian counterpart Klauudia Tanner in the capital Budapest on Monday, Hungarian Defense Minister Kristof Szalay-Bobrovniczky said his country's position on the war in Ukraine remains the same. Szalay-Bobrovniczky said his country and Austria do not send weapons to Ukraine because they do not want the situation to escalate further. In the meantime, both countries help victims of the war and supply humanitarian aid, he added. For his part, Tanner stressed the effects of the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine on Europe, stressing that a possible spilling of conflict into Europe is the greatest danger.—APP

European countries face continued medicine shortages

BRUSSELS: European countries are still experiencing high incidence of medicine shortages, with deteriorating burdensome impact on patients, according to a recent survey. The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU) conducted a survey with pharmacies in 29 countries, including EU members, Türkiye, Norway, and North Macedonia. The survey results showed that the medicine shortages in most European countries worsened substantially compared to last year. More than 600 drugs are scarce in a quarter of these countries, while 20% reported 200-300 drug shortages, it said. Three-quarters of the countries reported that shortages were worse this winter compared to a year ago. The survey also showed that the most difficult drugs to be obtained in pharmacies across Europe are especially amoxicillin group antibiotics used in the treatment of respiratory tract infections, cough syrups used in the treatment of pediatric diseases, paracetamol in syrup form.—DNA

Extended C. Asia seminar launched in Dushanbe

The driving force of this Dialogue is the think-tank SEFACIL from Le Havre led by Mr. YANN ALIX

FOREIGN DESK

DUSHANBE: Logistics and Diplomacy in the "Extended Central Asia" 4th edition Seminar was launched here on Monday in Dushanbe with French Ambassador Ieac Bichkek AXELCIUM, with fantastic speakers as Max EE Asian Development Bank (ADB) Sulton Rahimzoda IFAS Parviz Mullojonov Faredun Hodiza Mario Apostolov UNECE Public-Private Partnerships Farkhunda Naderi Leila Delovarova Zhulduz Baizakova al-farabi kaznu for only our morning session. The seminar took place in the framework of the Dialogue Eurasiatique du Havre (Eurasian Dialogue of Le Havre). The driving force of this Dialogue is the think-tank SEFACIL from Le Havre led by Mr. YANN ALIX. The forum debated about trading partnerships with challenges, issues, and constraints which have to be solved, especially reducing too high shipment overall cost, cutting longer border-crossing time, lack of ability to implement & per-



form some efficient logistics activities, and increasing financing infrastructure programmes & projects, strengthening regional cooperation by building & consolidating the trust between landlocked Central Asia countries in order to gain benefits and so on. Joint vision and innovative regional logistics facilities must be encouraged to support an "enlarged Central Asia" transportation network to turn landlocked countries

into better land linked trade opportunities. Same purpose has been addressed as well about water and hydropower potential of the sub region, especially taking into account severe climate change consequences over population. Participants from Afghanistan advocated to include logistics as a pivotal element to support political and economic connectivity. Due to the geopolitical situation in Ukraine, we together must speed-up the Trans Afghan-

istan Pipeline, The Trans Afghan-Pakistan Transportation Corridor, railways construction of new lines, various ports' connexion to Gwadar Karachi, and even India Iran considering severe other logistics solutions. It costs actually more or less 1,500 US\$ to carry a container from Karachi to Tashkent. Uniting regional countries through an integrated transportation grid is a mandatory condition to secure Central Asia and accelerate social

and economic sustainable development. The Organization of Turkic States is as well debated today to deal with political stability, energy cooperation and "simplified Customs Corridor" to link Central Asia and South Eastern Europe through the strategic Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) using ports of Aktau, Baku, Batumi, Poti and finally Istanbul which still not very much cost & time efficient. This Middle Corridor is not

significant but the demand is growing considering new logistics connectivity and geopolitical current constraints. This is an alternative route but transfers from rail to ship to rail and road make the process complicated even if huge investments are to come, especially motivated by Turkish authorities. The port of Aktau for instance appears already as a real bottleneck for Central Asia NRJ potential exportation (Oil & Gaz).



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a meeting with IMF review Mission led by IMF Mission Chief Nathan Porter at Finance Division. — APP

Azerbaijan to UN court

Armenia must stop sowing land mines on its territory

NEWS DESK

THE HAGUE: A courtroom battle lingers among neighbors Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan on Tuesday appealed to the United Nations' highest court to urgently order Armenia to stop the laying of land mines and booby traps on Azerbaijani territory and disclose the location of such explosives that have already been placed. El-nur Mammadov, the Azerbaijani deputy minister for foreign affairs, told judges at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that his country has discovered more than 2,700 Armenian land mines since December 2021, when the court ordered both Azerbaijan and Armenia not to take any action that would aggravate their decades long territorial dispute. He said the mines and booby traps are a deliberate attempt by Armenia to prevent the return of Azerbaijanis forced from their homes by the conflict.

"If Azerbaijanis, preparing the liberated territories for the return of those displaced cannot do so safely, how can displaced Azerbaijanis safely exercise their right to return? The purpose and effect of Armenia's conduct are clear: Azerbaijanis are not meant to," said Mammadov. The claim came in hearings at the court's headquarters in The Hague in a pair of cases brought by Armenia and Azerbaijan alleging breaches of a convention preventing racial discrimination. The legal skirmishes are playing out against a backdrop of rising tensions just over two years after the neighboring nations ended a war in Nagorno-Karabakh. The remote and rugged region is within Azerbaijan but had been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since the end of a war in 1994. Russia brokered a cease-fire to end the 2020 war. It granted Azerbaijan control over parts of Nagorno-Karabakh as well as adjacent land oc-

cupied by Armenians. Russia sent a peacekeeping force of 2,000 troops to maintain order. Mammadov said that 282 Azerbaijanis, including 33 civilians, have been killed by mines since the war ended. "Armenia's planting of land mines and booby traps in or near areas where Azerbaijanis once lived - and are expected to return - specifically to terrorize Azerbaijanis must be understood in the broad context of its over three-decade campaign of ethnic cleansing and anti-Azerbaijani incitement," he said. At hearings on Monday, Armenian lawyers urged the court to order Azerbaijan to lift a road blockade isolating Nagorno-Karabakh, referring to the action as part of an act of "ethnic cleansing." Azerbaijan rejected the claim, accusing Armenia of using the dispute for leverage in peace talks. The road, known as the Lachin Corridor, is the only land connection between Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan.

Lawyers representing Azerbaijan denied on Tuesday that their request for what the court calls "provisional measures" was a tit-for-tat filing following Armenia's request that was discussed on Monday. Instead, they said a court order is vital to save lives endangered by the hidden explosives. "The crux of the matter is this: Azerbaijanis are continuing to suffer serious injuries and deaths because Armenia refuses to share information that could save them," Mammadov said. The latest flare-up in tensions comes despite the court issuing orders just over a year ago that included ordering both nations to prevent discrimination against one another's citizens in the aftermath of the war and to not further aggravate the conflict. The court will likely issue a legally binding ruling within weeks on the provisional measure requests by both countries.

Ukraine seeks fighter jets

KYIV: Ukraine is pushing its Western allies to provide it with fighter jets, a week after winning pledges of sophisticated modern tanks to help it beat back Russia's invasion force after almost a year of fighting. Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov was due in Paris on Tuesday where discussions about the possible delivery of fighter jets to Ukraine was expected to be on the agenda. After months of haggling, Ukrainian authorities last week persuaded Western allies to send the tanks. That decision came despite the hesitation and caution of some NATO members, including the United States and Germany. There was no indication that a decision on warplanes to Ukraine might come any time soon and no sign that Western countries have changed their earlier stance on the issue. Some Western leaders have expressed concern that the move could escalate the nearly year-long conflict and draw them deeper into the war. The U.K. government, which has been one of Kyiv's staunchest diplomatic supporters and military suppliers, said that sending its fighter jets is "not practical." Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman, Max Blain, said "the U.K.'s Typhoon and F-35 fighter jets are extremely sophisticated and take months to learn how to fly." "Given that, we believe it is not practical to send those jets into Ukraine," he said Tuesday, though he didn't say that the U.K. was opposed to other countries sending planes. Asked by a reporter Monday if his administration was considering sending Ukraine F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, U.S. President Joe Biden responded "no." Kyiv officials have repeatedly urged allies to send jets, saying they are essential to challenge Russia's air superiority and to ensure the success of future counteroffensives that could be spearheaded by tanks recently promised by Western countries. Ukraine's allies also have ruled out providing Kyiv with long-range missiles able to hit Russian territory, signaling a similarly cautious stance on warplanes. Asked Tuesday about the supplies of Western weapons to Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov repeated the Kremlin's view that "NATO long has been directly involved into a hybrid war against Russia." He added after the talks in Moscow with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry that the Russian military will "take all the necessary measures to derail the fulfillment of Western plans." He said that Shoukry conveyed a message from U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken about Ukraine, which repeated the previous calls from Washington for Russia to withdraw. — Agencies



NATO chief wants to boost ties with Japan

North Korea condemned his visits to South Korea and Japan, saying that NATO was trying to put its "military boots in the region" and attempting to pressure America's Asian allies

NEWS DESK

TOKYO: NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who is currently visiting Japan as part of his East Asia tour, has called for stronger ties with the country, saying "our security is closely interconnected". Japan has been quick to join the US-led economic sanctions against Russia's war on Ukraine and provide humanitarian aid and non-combat defence equipment to Ukrainians. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has highlighted his concern that Russia's aggression in Europe could happen in Asia, where worries are growing over an already assertive China and its escalating tension near Taiwan. Japan has also significantly stepped up its ties with NATO recently. "The war in Ukraine also demonstrates that our security is closely interconnected," Stoltenberg said during his visit at the Iruma Air Base north of Tokyo, where he started his Japan visit on Tuesday after arriving late Monday from South Korea. "If President Putin wins in Ukraine it will be a tragedy for the Ukrainians, but it will also send a very dangerous message to authoritarian leaders all over the world because then the message will be that when they use military force they can achieve their goals," he said. "So the war in Ukraine matters for all of us." Stoltenberg said his visit to Japan "is a way to further strengthen the partnership between NATO and our highly

valued partner Japan." His is set to meet with Kishida and hold a joint news conference later Tuesday. Japan, already a close ally of the United States, has in recent years expanded its military ties with other Indo-Pacific nations as well as with Britain, Europe and NATO amid growing security threat from China and North Korea. Japan issued a new national security strategy in December stating its determination to build up its military and deploy long-range missiles to preempt enemy attacks in a major break



from its post-World War II principle that limited itself to self-defence. Japan also hopes to further ease restrictions on arms export to strengthen the country's defence industry. While in South Korea on Monday, Stoltenberg called for Seoul to provide direct military support to Ukraine to help Kyiv to fight off the prolonged Russian invasion. So far, Seoul has only provided humanitarian aid and other support, citing a long-standing policy of not supplying weapons to countries in conflict. Stoltenberg also met with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Monday and discussed Seoul's commitment to support Ukraine and NATO's possible role in dissuading North Korea from its growing nuclear ambitions following an unprecedented number of ballistic missile tests in 2022, Yoon's office said. Stoltenberg on Sunday mentioned US intelligence reports accusing North Korea of providing weapons to Russia to support its war in Ukraine. North Korea condemned his visits to South Korea and Japan, saying that NATO was trying to put its "military boots in the region" and attempting to pressure America's Asian allies into providing weapons to Ukraine. In a statement released by the state-run Korean Central News Agency, North Korea criticized increasing cooperation between NATO and U.S. allies in Asia as a process to create an "Asian version of NATO" that would raise tensions in the region.

Belgium to shut down 2nd nuclear reactor

BRUSSELS: Belgium will permanently shut down its Tihange 2 nuclear reactor on Tuesday evening, local media reported. After the Doel 3 last September, this will be the second nuclear reactor to be closed in Belgium, part of the country's move away from nuclear energy. The Tihange 2 was in service for 40 years, Belgian news outlet Moustique reported. The shutdown will not lead to layoffs for more than 100 workers employed at the facility, the report said, citing the operator Engie Electrabel. The estimated cost of dismantling and decommissioning the Tihange 2 reactor will be around 1 billion (\$1.08 billion), the report added. Two more nuclear reactors, Doel 1 and Tihange 1, are due to be shut down in February and October 2025, respectively, according to the report.—DNA

France faces fresh nationwide protests

PARIS: France is facing another nationwide strike on Tuesday against the government's controversial proposed pension reforms. More than a million people are expected to protest at over 300 spots across the country, including workers from the energy, transport, education, and health sectors, according to a report by French news site L'Interne. The report warned of massive disruptions in several sectors due to what it dubbed the "Black Tuesday" protests. Almost all workers from refineries and warehouses of TotalEnergies will join the protests, while France's CGT union reported that walkouts have caused a significant decline in electricity generation at power plants of utility company EDF. Employees and students of Science Po, one of Europe's leading social sciences universities, have also backed the protests. According to the French Interior Ministry, some 11,000 police and gendarmerie personnel have been deployed throughout the country, the report said. President Emmanuel Macron's planned pension reforms, which include gradually raising the retirement age from 62 to 64, immediately triggered outrage from workers and unions. Another proposed change is that, starting 2027, only people who have worked for at least 43 years would be eligible for full pensions. Some 2 million people took to the streets of France on Jan. 19, including at least 400,000 in the capital Paris, demanding the withdrawal of the contentious proposal.—Agencies

Nigeria sees cash shortage

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — Nigeria's push to replace its paper money with newly designed currency notes has created a shortage of cash, leaving people unable to buy what they need and forcing businesses to close across the West African nation, experts and business groups said. The Central Bank of Nigeria says the redesigned denominations of 200 (43 U.S. cents), 500 (\$1.08) and 1,000 naira (\$2.17) notes and new limits on large cash withdrawals would help curb money laundering and make digital payments the norm in Africa's biggest economy. But the process to replace the old currency notes is "rushed," and commercial banks don't have enough new cash to give to customers, pushing demand higher than supply, said Ayokunle Olubunmi with Nigeria's main ratings agency, Agosto and Co. The central bank "doesn't want us to be spending cash; they want us to be doing transactions electronically, but you can't legislate a change in behavior," Olubunmi said. "You have to make people see reasons and ensure those channels are reliable." The government is pushing for a cashless economy that is more inclusive and says the changes will drive economic growth. Critics are skeptical, pointing to decades of chronic corruption in which government officials are known to loot public funds and create more hardship for the many struggling with poverty.—APP

Briefs

CNS, Kenya commander discuss maritime security

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Kenya Navy Commander Major General Jimson Longiro Mutai visited Naval Headquarters Islamabad and called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, the honourable guest was received by Chief of the Naval Staff. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Navy presented the guard of honour. Thereafter, the dignitary laid a floral wreath at the Shuhada's Monument and was introduced to the Principal Staff Officers at Naval Headquarters. Later, Commander of the Kenya Navy called on Chief of the Naval Staff at his office. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including bilateral collaborations and regional maritime security milieu were discussed. The Naval Chief highlighted Pakistan Navy initiatives for ensuring maritime security and peace in the region through Regional Maritime Security Patrols. The visiting Admiral appreciated and acknowledged Pakistan Navy's efforts and commitments in support of collaborative maritime security in the region. Later, Commander of Kenyan Navy was given detailed briefing on Pakistan Navy roles and operational capabilities. It is expected that the on-going visit of Commander of the Kenyan Navy will further enhance bilateral collaboration between the two countries.

Saudi Arabia launches 96-hour free transit visa

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabian Airlines, the Kingdom's national flag carrier, has announced the launch of a new service that provides guests with even easier access to the Kingdom through a digital integration system that links transit visas with flight tickets. The "Your Ticket Your Visa" service will allow guests to stay in the Kingdom for up to 96 hours, during which they can travel around the Kingdom and perform Umrah. The first-of-its-kind service has been introduced in collaboration with the Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, Pilgrims Service Program, and Saudi Tourism Authority, and covers all international airports in Saudi Arabia, Arab News reported. The digital integration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs facilitates the issuing of the transit visa and links it to the flight ticket within three minutes. Captain Ibrahim Koshy, CEO of Saudia, said: "The launch of this innovative and seamless stopover visa is the first-of-its-kind in the aviation industry and a significant milestone in our digital transformation program. It is a testament to Saudia's commitment to supporting the Kingdom's strategic goal of reaching 100 million visits by 2030 and we are confident it will positively impact the growing number of transit passengers while enhancing our position as a hub that connects east and west. The new service will also encourage passengers to perform Umrah, visit key destinations and attend events and Saudi seasons."

Chinese embassy condemns Peshawar blast

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of China in Pakistan has strongly condemned the terrorist attack that took place in a mosque at Peshawar Police Lines and extended condolences to the Pakistani people. He felt deeply grieved and pay our deepest condolences to the families of victims and injured of the tragedy," the Chinese embassy said in a statement issued here on Tuesday. - APP

Western allies send Kyiv mixed messages on jets

Ukraine has long been pushing its allies to provide advanced fighter jets to defend its skies from Russian attacks

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has ruled out providing F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, despite renewed calls from top Kyiv officials for urgent air support. Asked on Monday if the US would be sending the planes, Mr Biden said "no". The UK also said it was "not practical" for it to send its aircraft to Ukraine. Meanwhile, France's Emmanuel Macron said "by definition, nothing is excluded" ahead of meeting a Ukrainian minister. Ukraine says advanced jets will help protect its skies from Russian attacks. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the country's top military officials say there should be no taboos on such military aid - but the US and its partners fear this would lead to further escalation with a nuclear-armed Russia. On Tuesday, Ukraine's Air Force spokesman Yuriy Ihnat was quoted by the Ukrainska Pravda news website as saying that Kyiv needed up to 200 multi-role fighter jets - such as F-16s - to defend its skies. He said that Russia currently outnumbered Ukraine by five to six times in terms of the number

of war planes. The US-made F-16s would be a significant upgrade on the Soviet-era fighting jets - mostly MiGs - Ukraine is currently using, which were made before the country declared independence from the USSR in 1991. However, Mr Biden has repeatedly rebuffed Ukraine's pleas for the jets, instead focussing on providing military support in other areas. Other Western allies have been less definitive though. On Monday, President Macron did not rule out sending its war planes to Ukraine - but he stressed that it must neither further inflame the situation nor limit France's ability to defend itself. Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov is now in Paris, where he is expected to discuss the issue with Mr Macron and French military officials later on Tuesday. Poland - another key ally of Ukraine - has also not ruled out sending F-16s to Kyiv. However, Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said any such move would only be possible "in complete co-ordination" with other Nato members. The US announced last week it would supply Kyiv with 31 Abrams tanks, reversing its earlier stance on the issue. The UK and Germany also pledged similar support. Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Andriy Melnyk welcomed that

announcement but asked allies for the creation of a "fighter jet coalition" that would also provide Ukraine with Eurofighters, Tornados, French Rafales and Swedish Gripen jets. On Tuesday, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman said he was not aware of any formal request from Ukraine for aircraft, adding that "the UK's Typhoon and F-35 jets are extremely sophisticated and take months to learn how to fly". "Given that we believe it is not practical to send those jets to Ukraine," However, the spokesperson said Mr Sunak "has had intensive discussions with military advisers" and "the conclusion is that given Russia's advantage in numbers a sustained war of attrition would not benefit Ukraine". Germany has also said it will not send fighter jets to Ukraine. The F-16 Fighting Falcon is widely considered one of the world's most reliable fighter jets and is used by other countries, such as Belgium and Pakistan. It can be armed with precision-guided missiles and bombs and is able to fly at 1,500 mph (2,400 km/h), according to the US Air Force. The F-16's targeting capabilities would allow Ukraine to attack Russian forces in all weather conditions and at night with greater accuracy.

NCHR accuses ministry of gender discrimination

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) on Tuesday expressed "serious concerns" about the rejection of a female candidate for the Haj director general's (DG) position, allegedly on the basis of her gender. In December, Saima Sabah, a BS-20 officer of Pakistan Audit and Accounts Service, contended in a petition to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) that she had secured first position in a written test for the position by obtaining 71 marks out of 100 but was dropped due to gender discrimination. She had requested the court to direct the religious affairs ministry to declare her the successful candidate and issue her notification for the appointment of the DG Haj accordingly.



NEW YORK: President Azad Jammu Kashmir Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry meets ASG for Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs - (DPPA) Khaled Khiari. - DNA

Toshakhana: Court sets Feb 07 to indict Imran

ISLAMABAD: Local court of Islamabad has set February 07 to indict PTI chairman Imran Khan in Toshi Khana reference. The case filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for criminal proceedings against the PTI chief Imran Khan came up for hearing before Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal Islamabad in district and sessions court Tuesday. At the inception of hearing the court inquired from Syed Ali Bokhari counsel for PTI where is power of attorney from Imran Khan. Saad Hassan counsel for Election Commission said the power of attorney can not be filed unless Imran Khan himself comes. The counsel for Imran Khan said we had presented medical

The counsel for Imran Khan said we had presented medical certificate of Imran on previous hearing. The court remarked file the power of attorney today too

certificate of Imran Khan on previous hearing. The court remarked "file the power of attorney today too. The counsel for election commission said they can not give power of attorney unless the surety bonds are received. Counsels for PTI and election commission exchanged bitter remarks too. Ali Bokhari while cautioning counsel for election commission said "you should direct me. Talk to court. The counsel for election commission prayed the court to issue arrest warrants of Imran Khan. The court fixed February 07 for indictment of Imran Khan. Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal directed Imran Khan to file surety bonds worth rupees 20000 besides ensuring his appearance in person in the court on next hearing. Surety bonds valuing Rs 20000 were filed in the court later. - DNA

World affirms anti-terrorism support to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The world community has strongly condemned the suicide bomb blast at a mosque in Peshawar in which ninety people were martyred and many more wounded. In their separate messages, the world leaders affirmed their support to Pakistan against terrorism. Extending his heartfelt condolences to the families of victims and wishing a prompt recovery to the injured, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reiterated the world body's solidarity with Pakistan in its efforts to address terrorism and violent extremism. President of the UN General Assembly Csaba Korosi in his message of condemnation said targeting people as they pray is a truly horrid and cowardly attack. The OIC Secretary General Hissein Bra-

him Taha expressed his condemnation of this heinous act and reassured the organization's support for Pakistan in tackling terrorism. The Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General affirmed to stand with Pakistan in confronting terrorism and extremists. Saudi Arabia, while strongly condemning the terrorist attack, also reiterated its resolve to stand with Pakistan against all kinds of violence, extremism and terrorism. The European Union (EU) has also condemned the suicide attack on the innocent faithfuls in the mosque in Peshawar police lines. The spokesperson EU said EU stands with Pakistan in war on terror. There is no room for hatred and extremism in our societies. - Online

Blinken voices sorrow for 'innocent' Palestinians killed

RAMALLAH: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed his sorrow Tuesday for "innocent" Palestinians killed in a spike of violence in the occupied West Bank, after meeting Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas. Washington's top diplomat met Abbas in the West Bank city of Ramallah on the final stop on a Middle East tour aimed at curbing the bloodshed, following meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and cabinet minister. Both sides are reeling from a new wave of violence. A Palestinian shot dead seven people in an Israeli settlement in annexed east Jerusalem on Friday, a day after the dead-

liest army raid in years in the West Bank claimed 10 Palestinian lives. This month the conflict has killed 35 Palestinian adults and children - including attackers, militants and civilians - as well as the six Israeli civilians, including a child, and one Ukrainian, killed on Friday. Speaking in Ramallah, Blinken expressed his "sorrow for the innocent Palestinian civilians who have lost their lives in escalating violence over the last year". The year 2022 was the deadliest in the West Bank since the United Nations started tracking fatalities in the occupied territory in 2005. - APP

Pak Army continues rescue operation at Tanda Dam



PESHAWAR: Pakistan Army have launched a rescue and relief operation at Tanda Dam in district Kohat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said a relief and rescue operation is ongoing since the last three days. It added that Pakistan army troops along with Rescue 1122 and civil administration are working constantly day and night since 72 hours in the rescue operation and rescued 5 students alive from Tanda Dam. Furthermore, Pakistan army engineers and divers of SSG recovered 51 deceased students and teachers from Tanda Dam. The five rescued students have been shifted to District Hospital Kohat while search for one missing individual is ongoing. It must be mentioned that dozens of seminary students drowned in the Tanda Dam due to a boat capsized on Sunday. According to Kohat District Police, at least 46 children were riding on the boat during a field trip when it overturned in the middle of the lake apparently due to overloading. - DNA

Pakistan fails to improve on Corruption Perceptions Index

Pakistan ranks 140th out of 180 countries with a score of 27 - worst in a decade, a Transparency International report showed Tuesday. In 2021, country slipped 16 places to 140 from 124 out of 180 countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amid an economic crisis, Pakistan failed to improve in Transparency International's (TI) latest Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI 2022) as it retained its place among 180 countries in the world. The countries and territories included in the survey are ranked by their perceived levels of public sector corruption - scoring on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean) - on the CPI. Pakistan ranks 140th out of 180 countries with a score of 27 - the worst in a decade, a Transparency International report showed Tuesday. In 2021, the country slipped 16 places to 140 from 124 out of 180 countries. The TI report shows that most countries across the globe are failing to stop corruption. "More than two-thirds of countries score below 50, while 26 countries have fallen to their lowest scores yet," a statement from the corruption watchdog said. It further stated that a total of 155 countries couldn't even make any significant progress in the fight against corruption since 2012, "despite concerted efforts and hard-won gains". Meanwhile, the global average remains unchanged for over a decade at just 43 out of 100. The corruption

watchdog noted that the country "continued its statistically significant downward trend" of the last 10 years. "In 2018, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan took the reins of the country promising to combat widespread corruption and promote reforms on the socio-economic fronts but no significant improvement was made," said the watchdog. The report stated that incumbent government must make sure that it "does not allow such political scandals to derail comprehensive anti-corruption efforts" and stressed that it was time for the country to take "concrete action with a holistic and effective anti-corruption plan that addresses illicit financial flows and introduces safeguards for civic space". As per the report, corruption has been a key cause of deteriorating global peace and vice versa for the last 15 years. "Corruption undermines governments' ability to protect people and erodes public trust, provoking more and harder to control security threats." Meanwhile, conflict opens doors for corruption and undermines governments' attempts to combat it. The report stated that the countries with high CPI are key players in threatening global security as "they have welcomed dirty money from abroad, allowing kleptocrats to increase their wealth, power and destructive geopolitical ambitions" for decades.

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