



Islamabad POST

Monday, January 02, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

CPEC created 192,000 jobs for Pakistanis: Nong Rong

Detailed News On Page-08

Lula returns for 3rd term as Brazil President

Detailed News On Page-07

Kim orders new ICBM, bigger nuclear arsenal

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Dar wants tax potential achieved

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar has directed Federal Board of Revenue to increase its efforts to achieve the true tax potential in the country. He gave these directives while chairing a meeting on the revenue performance of FBR in Islamabad. The Finance Minister appreciated the FBR team for its efforts to meet the targets. Chairman FBR Asim Ahmad gave a detailed presentation on revenue targets and performance of FBR for the months of November and December 2022.

Imran has no feelings for people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb castigated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan for his senseless tweet on the occasion of New Year. In a tweet, she said Imran Khan is a strange person having no feelings for happy occasions. The Minister said that a person like Imran who did not know how to share others' happiness and sorrow, how would he think about the betterment of 220 million people.

Reforms vital for development

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SHAKARGARH: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal has said composite reforms are of vital importance to steer the country out of economic crises. Talking to media in Shakargarh on Sunday, he said the friendly countries are extending assistance to stabilize the country's economy. He said the PTI's government badly damaged the country's economy and laid the foundation of country's devastation.

Khan says hard times coming

Ex. COAS 'setup still very active'

PTI Chairman blames establishment for interfering in Elahi's vote of confidence

MONITORING DESK

LAHORE: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has claimed that ex-chief of army staff (COAS) General (ret'd) QamarJavedBajwa's "setup is still working in the establishment". During an interaction with journalists in Lahore on Sunday, Khan, without taking the name of the army chief, said: "In Pakistan, the establishment is the name of one person." Imran, who was removed from power through a vote of no-confidence in the National Assembly in April last year, said the former army chief did not want accountability in the county, hence, his relations with Gen (ret'd) Bajwa turned worsened. Referring to a question, Khan said Bajwa was expressing solidarity with him after stabbing him in the back. Recalling his last meeting with the former army chief, Khan said Gen Bajwa termed him a "playboy", adding that he replied: "Yes, I had been a playboy." The former army chief was against the rule of law in the country, Khan also accused Bajwa. The former prime minister accused Gen (ret'd) Bajwa of hiring the services of Husain Haqqani, former Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, for lobbying in the US. Haqqani was accused of seeking US action against

Continued on Page 06

PTI to run campaign against inflation

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: PTI leader and former federal minister Asad Umar on Sunday said the PTI would run countrywide campaign against mounting inflation as the nation has come across a flood of rising prices [in the last eight months of the PDM government]. Addressing a presser in the provincial capital, he said the 13-party gang of PDM ran anti-inflation campaign against the PTI government and promised to control the prices, but they had fully exposed now. The minister said per kg milk was being sold in Rs200 presently, but it was Rs130 per kg in the PTI's tenure. Similarly he said the edible oil had witnessed 33 per cent increase. Umar said the country had been passing through testing times, hoping that 2023 elections would end the political uncertainty prevailing in the country.

PM Sharif, Zardari discuss Punjab's political imbroglio

The ongoing political crisis in Punjab has led to parties gathering their workers and in this regard both MPAs came to the PM office



ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and co-chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Asif Ali Zardari held a telephonic conversation on Sunday. Sources privy to the development reveal both bigwigs talked over the current political predicament of Punjab while

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'Govt had no idea what quagmire it was stuck in'

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Ruling coalition had absolutely no idea what quagmire it was stuck in when it took the charge of the government, Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief MaulanaFazlur-Rehman said on Sunday. Addressing All Parties Conference (APC) in Peshawar, the JamiatUlema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUIF) chief said that the more a person tries to get out of a swamp, the more he gets stuck in it. Berating Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Fazl said that the party's political power has been exposed.

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LAHORE: Member of the Punjab Assembly Malik Ghulam Qasim Hunjra calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

MQM-P threatens to quit govt

Re-unification of MQM factions on the cards

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui sounded on Sunday the alarm for the incumbent government and threatens to quit government if its demand of delimitation of local government constituencies in Karachi and Hyderabad was not accepted before January 15. While addressing a press conference, Mr Siddiqui said, "We heard the news that local government elections were being held on January 15, MQM-P was even ready for LG elections on January 10 as well." Mr Siddiqui said that the talks with the coalition government regarding local government elections continued and that there was an agreement between the MQM-P and PPP on various issues, and it was done in a constitutional way.

Continued on Page 06

Kabul mily airport blast kills 10

DNA

KABUL: An explosion outside the military airport in Kabul on Sunday caused 10 casualties, a spokesman for the Taliban-run interior ministry said. "Today morning an explosion took place outside Kabul military airport, due to as many as 10 people were killed and scores others sustained serious injuries."

Detailed news on the Back Page

Anathema to democracy President Alvi returns Islamabad Local Govt (Amend) Bill unsigned

Says the bill will further delay LG elections in Capital

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Observes legislation will further delay Local Government elections in federal capital: Says actions of federal government taken in hurry resulted in delaying poll process twice, which is anathema to democracy President Dr Arif Alvi has returned unsigned the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government (Amendment) Bill observing that the bill will further delay LG elections. The official Twitter handle of Presidency wrote on Sunday: "President DrArifAlvi has returned unsigned the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in terms of clause (1) (b) of Article 75 of the Constitution."



ECP likely to hold Islamabad polls this week

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is likely to hold Islamabad local government (LG) polls this week, citing sources, media reported on Sunday. The election commission issued orders to the concerned returning officers (ROs) to start transportation of polling material on an emergency basis. ECP sources told media that the new date of the Islamabad local government polls will be announced at

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Lula returns for third term as Brazil president – Page 07

CPEC created 192,000 jobs for Pakistanis: Nong Rong – Page 08

Pakistan, India exchange list of nuclear installations

India urged for early release of Pak civilians

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India have exchanged lists of nuclear installations and facilities in their countries and have also handed over lists of prisoners in each other's custody in pursuance of agreements signed between the two countries. The Foreign Office statement issued on Sunday stated: "The Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India was signed on 31st December 1988 and ratified on 27th January 1991. The Agreement, inter alia, provides that both countries shall inform each other of their nuclear installations and facilities, falling within its definition, on 1st January of each calendar year. "Pursuant to the agreement, the list of nuclear installations and facilities in Pakistan was officially handed over to a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today. Simultaneously, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs also handed over the list of India's nuclear installations and facilities to a representa-

tive of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi." The FO also stated that Pakistan and India exchanged the lists of prisoners in each other's custody through diplomatic channels. The simultaneous exchange of lists took place in pursuance of the Consular Access Agreement of 2008. Under the agreement, both countries are required to exchange the lists of prisoners in each other's custody on 1st January and 1st July, every year. The Government of Pakistan shared with the Indian High Commission in Islamabad a list of 705 Indian prisoners detained in Pakistan, including 51 civilian prisoners and 654 fishermen. The Indian Government also shared with the High Commission for Pakistan in New Delhi a list of 434 Pakistani prisoners in India, including 339 civilian prisoners and 95 fishermen. Separately, Pakistan has requested for early release and repatriation of its 51 civilian prisoners and 94 fishermen, who have completed their respective sentence and their national status stands confirmed. Furthermore, a request for grant of consular access to missing defence personnel of 1965 and 1971 wars, and special consular access to 56 civil prisoners has also been made, the FO concluded.

Radio
Pakistan
celebrates
New Year

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) here on Sunday organized a function to celebrate New Year 2023 in FM101 Studio, Radio Pakistan. Station Director Radio Pakistan SyedalfatJabbar was the chief guest while all the staff members including RJs and duty officers participated. Speaking on the occasion, IffatJabbar congratulated all the staff members and the audience and hoped that the New Year would bring peace, prosperity and stability in our country. She reaffirmed her commitment to make the broadcasting house a role model for listeners and provide all the facilities to its staff. She said all the studios would be renovated with installations of the latest broadcasting gadgets according to the guidelines of Director General PBC. SyedalfatJabbar said Radio Pakistan Peshawar also broadcast live commentary during cricket matches which was highly appreciated by the worthy listeners. On this occasion, a cake was also cut to celebrate the New Year. —APP

MNA calls
on CM,
discusses
development
projects

LAHORE: Member National Assembly (MNA) Malik Umar Aslam Khan met with Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry ParvezElahi at CM Office on Sunday. Political situation, development projects and matters of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting. On the occasion, the CM stated that the Punjab government during only five months had done more work than the last five years, adding that the change was visibly clear to everyone. He maintained that the well-being of a common man was dear to him and the aim behind making new legislation was to ensure good governance. CM said "Our resolve is to provide real service to the people." He remarked that to create ease for the masses and provide them facilities was a mission of his life. He said: "We will jointly continue our strives for the welfare of people." CM apprised that real progress had started in the far-flung areas of Punjab including Khushab, adding that equal progress was being made in the backward and neglected areas as well. The chief minister informed that development projects were being formulated in consultation with the assembly members, adding that record development works had been done during his previous tenure as well. CM vowed to set a record of doing public service as it had been done earlier. Malik Umar Aslam Khan said that the Chief Minister always focused on the public welfare oriented development projects. Malik Umer Khan lauded CM ParvezElahi for delivering in an effective manner during his first tenure and setting new records even now. Muhammad Sami was also present on the occasion. —APP

Austria keen to have enhanced trade ties with Pakistan: Envoy

Says Austria and Pakistan's mutual trade volume can grow from \$150m to \$1billion with given opportunities available

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SAHIWAL: Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan Andrea WICKE has said Austria has a lot to offer being a manufacturer and exporter of products and technology in the areas of Industrial Machinery and materials, construction & Infrastructure, Services, Creative Industries, Energy & Sustainability, Natural Resources, Food, Retail & Consumer goods, Mobility, Technology and Health etc. She made these remarks while speaking during a reception hosted by Suhail Ansari, well known as ambassador of Sahiwal. She added, she was delighted for the warm hospitality given to her in Sahiwal, especially by Mr Suhail Ansari and his family. While talking about business ties she said, Austrian imports last year were around \$220 billion and we are seeing around 30% yearly increase in our imports in the recent years. However our imports other than from Europe mostly come from China and USA; and we have a lot of potential to explore other markets too. She added, Gems and precious metals posted the fastest growth in value among the top 10 import categories, with 82% last year. The greatest accelerations in Austrian imports under this product category were for gold, silver and jewellery. She reckoned Pakistan had potential in this category. 'Austria and Pakistan's mutual trade volume can grow from \$150m to \$1billion with given opportunities available. I am delighted to notice that Sahiwal has a lot to offer in terms of not only warm hospitality, but also huge potential for industrial and agricultural growth that promises rampant trade possibilities between Austria and Pakistan'.



Ambassador Wicke said she wished to see tourism, education and skill exchange programs that we can plan together to bring this zealous nation of Pakistanis at par with the first world of business, industry and agriculture. Sohail Anjum Ansari in his speech thanked

the ambassador for visiting him and his family. He said, Austria and Pakistan though have diverse cultures, however with the wide use of information technologies, barriers are diminishing, and globalisation is getting stronger roots. Sohail added, the Austrian government appears to be much

committed to provide and create synergies between two countries and create an environment where education, new technologies and collaborations can result in the overall development of both countries. There can be many ways to collaborate with the trade platforms, Industries and educational

institutions of Austria and those of Pakistan; from win-win trade agreements to extensive student exchange programs we may have limitless mutual opportunities. He said, Pakistan's leather export volume is around \$750 million/annum, with semi-processed and finished

hides and skins to Italy, and finished leather articles to the Federal Republic of Germany. Austria may also benefit from the quality leather exports from Pakistan. Sahiwal is a promising dairy production hub of Pakistan, and has vast potential for future food

needs. The local breeds are one of the best natural thorough breeds in terms of milk production, which can further be nurtured to have exponential growth in production. Pakistan is a 230 million population, 6th largest in the world and 34th largest economy, he concluded.

Pakistan's firm geopolitical
repositioning crucial by next year

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a webinar opined that Pakistan needs to revisit its geopolitical strategic and economic framework in the context of the changing landscape of the world, especially of the Asia-Pacific region. The country is being surrounded by many severe security and economic challenges, and remains undecided to which side it shall be. Meanwhile, political instability is playing an enemy within economic growth, foreign investment and dynamic foreign policy. They said, Pakistan will be marking ten years of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) in 2023, which is pivotal to our economic security, and 25 years since Pakistan went nuclear in 1998, which has strongly protected our national security. The webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) on Saturday, the new year eve. The subject of the webinar was "Pakistan's geopolitical repositioning in 2023".

The key speakers included chairman Senate Standing Committee of Defense Production Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, former speaker Balochistan assembly Rahila Durrani, Senior Research fellow at East-East Institute (London) Dr. Najam Abbas, development expert Tahir Shamsah, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director and a well-known geopolitical analyst Munir Ahmed, and an Indian journalist Ayan Mitra (Bengal). Senator Mushahid Hussain mentioned three key global changes that Pakistan will be affected by. The present era is marked by profound changes in the global and regional order, which has strategic implications for Pakistan. There's the retrenchment of US power in the Muslim World, the resurgence of Asia led by China and the rise of Hindutva, bidding goodbye to Nehruvian secularism, in neighboring India. Perhaps the

most important statement of 2022 that sums up this tectonic shift of global power was made by the French President Macron, who told French diplomats in August 2022 that "the era of Western hegemony is coming to an end". Senator Mushahid Hussain said, the other two elements include the return to two global camps; the US-NATO versus China-Russia while the Ukraine War has led to a North-South divide. President Xi Jinping's historic visit to Saudi Arabia has further added to the divide. Pakistan now has strategic space and more autonomy to pursue a realistic foreign policy with clarity on its relations and goals. Pakistan must pursue its role as a hub of regional connectivity, while strengthening ties with its core partners like China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. It shall maintain economic and cultural outreach to the West, especially to the USA and Europe, and avoid repeating the old mistakes it did in Afghanistan. Most importantly, Pakistan needs a 'political ceasefire' at home on key issues like economy, extremism, education, so that people get a respite from this unending polarization and continuing quest for power. Munir Ahmed said with the rise of China and the resurgence of Russia the world has moved into a new era of great power competition. China is the primary rival to the US supremacy and in Asia the two superpowers are contenders for hegemony in the same geographical space. The US is vying to maintain its decades-old supremacy in the region while China has built up partnerships and projected its influence by using the huge resources at its disposal. The Ukraine and increasing Indian influence at Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and G-20 is worrisome for internally divided and economically weaker Pakistan. —DNA

Sindh CM
Murad plays
street cricket
with boys

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah paid a surprise visit to inspect the ongoing development works in Karachi and also played street cricket with boys on Sunday. The chief minister reviewed and observed the work at Malir Expressway City School and directed to speed it up by removing the encroachments from Deh-Dhaddu. Sindh ministers Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Hussain Shah and Murtaza Wahab also accompanied the Sindh CM during the visit. Transport Minister, while briefing the Sindh Chief Minister, said that Malir Expressway is being constructed at a cost of Rs29 billion and that the BRT Red Line will have 250 low-emission bio-hybrid buses. The Chief Minister then played street-cricket with local boys.

Carpet
industry's
issues to be
resolved

DNA

LAHORE: A delegation of Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMAEA) met the top officials of the State Bank of Pakistan and presented demands to maintain the credit period as in the past, besides asking for to lift the ban on third-party shipments and apprised them of problems being faced by exporters due to dollar fluctuations and other long-standing issues. Under the leadership of senior vice chairman of the association Usman Ashraf, the central leader Abdul Latif Malik, senior members Riaz Ahmed, Shahid Hassan and Kamran Razi met SBP officials. Usman Ashraf informed the authorities of State Bank of Pakistan that hand-woven carpets industry is a cottage industry, semi-finished raw materials come from Afghanistan after which the final production of carpets is done at various places in Pakistan and keeping this in mind, instead of reducing the credit period for exporters of hand-made carpets.

Floodwater still
standing in Sindh,
Balochistan districts

ISLAMABAD: The water of last year's unprecedented floods still standing in flood-hit areas of Sindh and Balochistan provinces. Federal government has received reports on floodwater drainage from provinces, sources said. The water could not be completely discharged from flood-stricken areas and water still standing in 10 districts, sources said. Floodwater still standing in Khairpur, Badin, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Umakot, Dadu, Qambar-Shahdadkot, Mirpur Khas, Shaheed Benazirabad and NaushehroFeroz districts of Sindh, according to sources. They, however, said that 85 percent water drainage has been completed in flood-hit areas of the province. According to sources, six-inch to two-feet deep floodwater still standing in flood ravaged districts of Sindh. Floodwater also standing in Sohbatpur and Jaffarabad districts of Balochistan. Around one-foot-deep water standing at some places in Sohbatpur and Jaffarabad districts. The water has been completely drained out from flood-hit areas of KP and Punjab, according to sources. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah in December claimed that flood water from eighty percent affected areas has been drained out while efforts are being made to ensure revival of educational activities in the province. He said a donor's conference will be held next year so that the flood-affected people are compensated in a better way. It is to be mentioned here that flood affected people have filed petitions in Sindh High Court circuit bench Sukkur over failure of district officers in floodwater drainage from various areas of Sukkur, Khairpur and NaushehroFeroz districts. "The water has been standing for last four months even it has not been drained out from schools," Advocate ShabbirShar told to the court. More than 33 million people in Pakistan affected by the flooding, brought on by record monsoon rains amplified by climate change. Sindh was the most affected province in unprecedented floods, which made millions of people homeless. — DNA

KP govt
establishes 9 new
economic zones

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has said that the provincial government during last four years had established nine new Economic Zones (EZs) and revived 167 sick industrial units. In a statement issued from the Chief Minister's Secretariat here Sunday, the chief minister said that the new economic zones include Jalozi Economic Zone, Nowshehra Economic Zone (extension), D.I Khan Economic Zone, Rashakia Special Economic Zone, Chitral Economic Zone, Hattar Special Economic Zone, Bannu Economic Zone, Ghazi Economic Zone and Mohmand Economic Zone. Additionally, Daraband Special Economic Zone, Salt and Gypsum City Karak, Buner Economic Zone, Katlang Economic Zone and Mansehra Economic Zone will also be launched soon. An investment of around Rs. 338 billion has been made in the above-mentioned economic zones wherein 167 sick industrial units have been revived and 366 new industrial units established. The chief minister termed industrial development as vital importance for economic stability and said that the incumbent provincial government was paying special attention to the industrial sector with the aim of creating employment and livelihood opportunities. He added that the provincial government was striving hard to provide a conducive environment for industrialists and attract investment. He made it clear that economic growth could only be possible by increasing exports through industrialization, which needed sincere and devoted leadership to serve common citizens. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government is working under a comprehensive and well devised strategy to develop the industrial sector on modern lines. —APP

Shoe industry has great
potential to grow: RCCI

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has said that the shoe manufacturing industry has a great potential, the government should pay attention to this sector and provide incentives. "Footwear contributes less than one percent to Pakistan's global exports. Despite the low contribution to the international footwear market, Pakistan is the seventh largest producer of footwear, manufacturing more than 2.0 percent of all footwear produced worldwide. Addressing the prize distribution ceremony of catwalk shows at a local hotel, RCCI President Saqib Rafiq said that the platform of the chamber is available to bring local brands forward. The government should focus on this sector and give incentives like other sectors. Shoe manufacturing is a major part

of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), he added. He informed that Pakistan exports footwear to more than 60 countries in five continents of the world. Pakistan's exports of footwear

have registered a high rate of growth in the recent past. The Chamber has always demanded that the services sector should be developed to increase exports. He further added that the government

should focus on sectors that require minimum infrastructure and investment. Motorcycles, mobile phones, and other prizes were distributed in the ceremony. Vice President Faisal Shehzad, Anju-

manTajran Punjab President ShahidGhafoorPracha, Executive Member Muhammad Akram, representatives and members of Shoes Market Association were also present in the ceremony.



National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA
Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Palestine
Palestine Revolution Day

Jan 01 / Sudan
National Day

Jan 04 / Myanmar
Independence Day

Jan 06 / Iraq
Armed Forces Day

Jan 12 / Tanzania
Armed Forces Day

Jan 14 / Uzbekistan
Armed Forces Day

Jan 15 / Nigeria
Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Mali
Armed Forces Day

Jan 20 / Laos
Armed Forces Day

Jan 25 / Thailand
Armed Forces Day

Jan 26 / Australia
National Day

Jan 26 / India
Republic Day

Hotels & Restaurants

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

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance..1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police....9266044
Motorway Police..9270601-20
Women Police Stations
Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

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Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIAFlightInfo.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-3
WASA Rawalpindi..555489
CAA.....9281092

Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....561116
Cantt Hospital...9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International.4603666

Departments

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Railways to get Rs14 bln for infrastructure rehabilitation

The official said there were two passenger trains Jaffer Express (40 Up, 39 Down) and Chaman Passenger (349Up, 350 Down) operating in Balochistan while no stations had been closed during the last 15 years in Quetta division

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways would soon get around Rs 14 billion from the federal government for the rehabilitation of its infrastructure massively damaged by the devastating rains and flood in Balochistan. “The funds will only be utilized for rebuilding of the railway infrastructure damaged in Balochistan province,” an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. In August, he said that Pakistan Railways suspended its train operations at various sections, mostly in Balochistan and Sindh, after the flash floods washed away the tracks in the provinces. He said the train operations remained suspended during the second week of August at Narowal-Sialkot section after the Nul-lahDek overflowed and washed away the railway line. However, the official said the department had resumed the operation after reconstructing the affected track within

a couple of days. While at the end of November, three months after the floods in Balochistan, Pakistan Railways succeeded in restoring train operations linking the province with Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. To a question, he replied that Pakistan Railways was also planning to restore all the closed sections in Balochistan province which could not only generate revenue for the department but also facilitate the masses. “The decision will facilitate the local people of the province and also boost the business activities for the small business owners,” he added. He said that Minister for Railways Khawaja SaadRafique had also taken a keen interest in this regard and asked the relevant official of the department to make a plan for the restoration of different sections to generate income in the province.

To a question, he replied that Pakistan Railways had also planned to start rehabilitation work of 33-kilometer track through sleeper renewal between Quetta-Bostan and Quetta-Chaman section. “The track will not only facilitate the passengers, but also connect three major cities of the province,” he said. He said railway network in Balochistan province mainly consisted of Quetta Division having Dera Allah Yar-Sibi-Quetta, Quetta-Chaman, Sibi-Khost, Spezend-Dalbandin-Taftan, Bostan-Zhob which were closed for the last 15 years. The official said there were two passenger trains Jaffer Express (40Up, 39 Down) and Chaman Passenger (349Up, 350 Down) operating in Balochistan while no stations had been closed during the last 15 years in Quetta division. He said the overall length of the railway track in Balochistan was

1,470.36 kilometers including the closed Bostan-Zhob section. “Most of the track is more than 100 years old and on certain stretches, engineering speed restrictions have been imposed due to deferred maintenance and owing to resource constraints,” he said, adding that the routine maintenance of track was being carried out with available resources. To improve railway services in Balochistan, he said, the department was taking several steps like approval of PCI for the track’s rehabilitation and the rehabilitation of another 100-km track between AhmedwalDalbadin on Quetta-Taftan section. The official said that rehabilitation work of track between NokundiKohi-Taftan on Quetta-Taftan section while 160.024 kilometers track between Bostan-Chaman on Quetta-Chaman section would be carried out. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavari, ICICI in a group photo with Ahmad Hasan Mughal, former president of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, former senior vice president Khalid Chaudhry and former executive member Zia Chaudhry. – DNA

PR looking up new options for branding trains, platforms

“The deficit of the department to decrease after starting this project and the minister has already directed the concerned to complete all the formalities in this regard as soon as possible”

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is planning to consider various options for branding several passenger trains and railway platforms to generate maximum revenue for the department. “Minister for Railways Khawaja SaadRafique has already directed the concerned authorities to present a new revenue model regarding the branding of trains and platforms,” an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said the branding of the trains and platforms would not only address the increasing deficit of Pakistan Railways but also allow private firms to advertise their products for this purpose. The official said that initially Pakistan Railways would be offered five trains for branding their seat covers, internal walls of the passenger coaches, and even toilets as a pilot project. “The deficit of the department to decrease after starting this project and the minister has already directed the concerned to complete all the formalities in this regard as soon as possible,” he added. Pakistan Railways is also planning to upgrade its five major railway stations across the country on modern lines to facilitate the passengers and help the department to generate more revenue. The purpose to upgrade the railway stations is to make them commercial hubs for business activities and facilitate the passengers,” he added. He said the stations include Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Peshawar, and Quetta. The official said that the decision was made in line with the direction of Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique. The official said that the government was taking several steps to improve the performance of Pakistan Railways and would provide maximum facilities to the masses. – APP

Employees allotted 'only one' plot during service: FGEHA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Housing Authority (FGEHA) has clarified that only one plot is allotted to government employees and other specified groups during the entire service under its residential scheme. “The allotment is made as per the approved policy of authority by the executive committee/board from time-to-time as per their entitlement according to their scales from BS-01 to BS-22,” according to an official document available with APP. However, it said the government in 2006 had allowed an additional residential plot to the federal secretaries (BS-22) officers in pursuance of approved policy/ criteria titled-Prime

Minister’s Assistance Package Scheme on the recommendations of the Establishment Division. About this policy, the document said the Islamabad High Court had declared this policy as illegal in 2021, directing the Secretaries of Establishment Division, Housing and Works, and Law & Justice to place the matter of entitlement of the second plot to Federal Secretaries before the Federal Cabinet, who shall give its approval afresh after considering the law. Accordingly, the matter was before the federal cabinet who approved the discontinuation of the second allotment under Prime Minister’s Assistance Package Scheme.

“Matter is still subjudice in IHC/SCP: Meanwhile, the Jurists Foundation also filed an Intra Court Appeal (ICA) in Islamabad High Court against the judgment announced by the IHC in writ petition No. 3277/2020 and prayed to explain a mechanism under which the illegal benefits could be taken back for public exchequer,” the document explained. Moreover, it said the Islamabad High Court has suspended the balloting held for allocation of plot numbers to prospective allottees of sector F-14/15 (including PM Assistance Package for Federal Secretaries) and presently, “an appeal of FGEHA is subjudice in Supreme Court”. – APP

‘Hijab’ didn’t impede Pakistan girls to reach ‘Huawei ICT Competition’

ISLAMABAD: It is generally considered that women cannot excel in their profession until they are not dressed up as per requirement of the modern-day life, but the three Hijab wearing Pakistani girls not only made way to the ‘Huawei Information and Communications Technology 2022’ (ICT) Competition 2022’ but also showed their prowess at an international forum. After going through various mul-

ti-ple-choice questions and situational judgment tests, the three girl students of low-ranked universities of Pakistan were selected for the Regional Finals held in Muscat, Oman from December 21, to 22, 2022. The girls along with three male counterparts were chosen from 12,000 students of 135 universities who had taken nationwide test. Fatima Shafique of Mehran University of En-

gineering and Technology (MUET), Jamshoro, and EmanYaqoob, and Maryam Fareed from LCWC, all Hijab wearing girls, have excelled their skills in the ICT sector as evident from their selection for Huawei competition. The three girls, in an interaction with APP, expressed their gratitude to the Huawei Pakistan for providing them an international platform and necessary training to refine their ICT

skills in order to compete in the mega event. They said it was just the beginning of their professional career. They had been offered for an internship programme by the Huawei Pakistan, which would help polish their ICT skills and make considerable progress in the practical life, they added. Dismissing the impression that wearing Hijab could be a barrier to their professional life, they claimed that they were making significant advancements in the technology industry and Hijab was no more a hindrance in that regard. – APP

Traffic Police impounded 89 bikes on New Year

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) has issued challans and impounded 89 bikers involved in over-speeding and one-wheeling on New Year’s Night. According to the details, on the orders of CTO Rawalpindi Taimur Khan, one-wheeling squads of the CTP, on New Year’s night deputed on various highways of Rawalpindi city, including Peshawar Road, Mall Road, Jhelum Road, Old Airport Road, Murree Road and Sixth Road. In order to prevent one-wheeling, strict action was taken against violators. During the action against 89 bikers for speeding, dangerous and underage driving, challans were issued to 77 while 12 were impounded in police stations for not having the proper documents. On this occasion, the CTO appreciated the wardens to maintain the flow of traffic on the occasion of New Year’s night. The best strategy was adopted to prevent one-wheeling and fatal accidents. One-wheelers take the law into their hands and endanger not only their own lives but also many other road users, he added. – APP

PRA seals restaurant over non-payment of sales tax

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) sealed a restaurant in Bahria Town Phase 7, Rawalpindi, for non-payment of sales tax on services. According to details, the team led by Revenue Commissioner Rawalpindi TahiraJaved took action against Kallisto restaurant, which had an outstanding amount of Rs 15 million. She said that PRA had issued several notices to the restaurant for payment of sales tax. Tahira said that a crackdown had been started against those who do not pay sales tax on services across Punjab, and no leniency would be given to anyone. – APP

13 gamblers arrested during crackdown

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested 13 gamblers and recovered stake Rs 35,000, 13 mobile phones and 05 batteries from their possession during a crackdown here on Sunday, informed police spokesman. The arrested gamblers were identified as Allah Ditta, Nazir Hussain, Nazakat, Rab Nawaz, Dildar, Rafiq, Tanveer, Nawab Khan, Faisal, Altaf, Gulzada Khan, Javed and Iftikhar. SP Rawal appreciated the performance of police team adding that gambling is the root of other social evils, the accused involved in such crimes cannot escape from the grip of the law. Actions against gamblers will be continued, he added. Meanwhile, Rawalpindi police rounded up 22 professional beggars during an operation. According to police spokesman, SSP Operations Wasim Khan said that operation against professional beggars will be continued without any discrimination. – APP

CDA repairs government’s buildings, various sectors

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has carried out the repair and maintenance work on several government-owned buildings, housing units, and various sectors in Islamabad during the ongoing year. “The government has allocated and provided hefty funds to CDA for repairing and maintenance of buildings and sectors aimed to keep the federal capital beautiful and clean,” an official of CDA told APP. He said the CDA was committed to utilize the funds to complete the maintenance work during the current fiscal year while ensuring the originality and uniqueness of the buildings and different sectors to attract foreign dignitaries and domestic visitors. – APP

Experts for scientific forum to address leopard issue

Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) team reached the spot, but could not find the body for further probe into the matter, and the eye-witness did not cooperate with the team to track exact location

ISLAMABAD: Experts on Sunday demanded the quarters concerned to come forward for a collective effort to form a technical forum to gather scientific evidence in order to tackle growing leopard encounter issue. Recently, an endangered Common Asian Leopard got killed after being hit by two vehicles on the Grand Truck Road near Taxila-Sangjani area while chasing its prey. The Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) team reached the spot, but could not find the body for further probe into the matter, and the eye-witness did not cooperate with the

team to track the exact location. The Punjab Wildlife Department Team from Rawalpindi district also reached the spot and continued the search along the IWMB team, but remained unsuccessful. Vice Chairman of Pakistan Wildlife Foundation Safwan Ahmed told APP that the endangered species of leopards were taken seriously by the IWMB and stakeholders to ensure its conservation that has thrived in a very short span of time in Margalla Hills National Park (MHPN). It had resulted into overpopulation of the wildcats that became a nuisance, similar to that in India where leop-

ards were also thriving, he added. He said as a suggestion it could be worked out to capture some of the pairs of leopards that might be sent to the northern areas to control its population in the Margallas and study its territorial spread across the region. He said the MHPN all around was surrounded by population that made it vulnerable to human-wildlife conflicts. Ahmed underlined that all mammalogists would have to sit together to devise a solution to this matter. The recent incident of leopard running into the vehicles on G.T. Road was an indication of its over-

population, whereas most of the wildcats used to perish in internal fights of males to gain area dominance in their territory. To a question, he said an extensive research would be required to study the problem of growing encounters of leopards and then devise an informed strategy to tackle the issue. Referring to his suggestion to address the matter, he said it was a wise scientific guess but not a solution which needed scientific validation through evidence. Safwan Ahmed said that there were two main disadvantages of leopards’ overpopulation, one increase in male leopards’ fight or violence,

and the other rise in the probability of human-wildlife conflict. For instance, he said in year 2005, there was a single human-leopard conflict but this might increase to ten in the prevailing scenario. Earlier, Chairperson of IWMB Rina Saeed Khan wrote on her Twitter account, “This sad incident occurred last night (Tuesday) around 2.15 a.m. on GT road (from Isd to Taxila) below Nicholson monument. Leopard jumped out onto road (chasing a prey?) & got run over by truck. Then was hit by another car whose bumper broke. Common leopard did not survive. – APP

Briefs

Call for promoting Pakistani art, culture abroad

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Actor and former Director General of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) Tauqeer Nasir has called cultural departments for promoting art and culture abroad to project a soft image of the country. "Cultural centers should be established in New York and London as Pakistan has a great historical and cultural heritage that needs promotion at the international level," he said while talking to APP in an interview. He lamented that we are not giving due importance to our art and culture which is negligence that results in intolerance and extremism. Tauqeer Nasir who was also awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz for acting during the current year said that 22 years ago, he got Tamgha Imtiaz while he was the youngest actor to get this award in the year 2000. Now he was awarded the second highest award Sitara Imtiaz. He said that he worked for 40 years and served Pakistan drama with great dedication to promote Pakistan art and cultural values. He termed the migration of his parents during partition of sub continent as a source of inspiration during his whole career and life. —APP

Fraudster detained in Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD: Rawalpindi Police on Sunday has arrested the accused who lured 1900 people and registered the first case of the New Year against him. According to a private media report, the Rawalpindi Cantt Police has arrested a fraudster, who has been identified as Chaudhry Shehbaz, who cheated hundreds of men and women on the pretense of employment. According to police officials, the accused used to pretend to be a PS of high-ranking government officials and impersonate senior officers on bogus calls to lure citizens into his clutches. The officials said that the accused had also created fake cards and videos of fake interviews to cheat, while he used to receive money for getting various government jobs and later blocked the number and ended the contact. The Police officials also told that the accused had allegedly cheated 1,400 men and 500 women on the pretext of employment and was booked earlier in cases in different cities. According to the police officials, the accused has disclosed incidents worth millions of rupees in various cities and more big and important revelations are expected from him in further investigation.

IESCO issues shutdown schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The work of expansion of IGP Road Islamabad and construction of flyover at various places is going on by the district administration. On the request of the district administration and in view of the safety of the workers during the construction work dated 03 January 2023 to 06 January 2023 on daily basis from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Commercial Center, Farooq-e-Azam, Fourth Road, E-Block, Shaheed Mohammad Deen, Abu Bakar, Abdul Rahman, 6 Road, T&T, Asghar Mall, B Block, New Malpur, Shakriyal, JM Road, C Block, Afandi Colony, Syedpur Road, Faizabad, Sadiqabad, Noor Mohammad Road, Dhok Khaba, Malikabad, Cricket Stadium, Shamsabad, National Market, Ghousia Colony, PTCL, Hydr Chowk, Tariq Shaheed, Urology Center feeders will be affected, due to which B Block, Commercial Market, Sixth Road, Service Road, Dhok Kala Khan, Farooq-e-Azam Road, Syedpur, Dhok Hayat, Syedpur Scheme No. 2, E-Block, Kashmiri Colony, Khanna Road, Abdullah Masjid, Ayub Medical College, Mohalla Bhattian, Noora Road, Abu Bakar Abdul Rehman, Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, T&T Exchange, Chah Sultan, Chaklala Road, Murree Road, Asghar Mall Road, D Road, Asghar Mall Scheme, Joharabad, Dhok Babu Irfan, New Malpur, Double Road.

President forging unity for seeking latest knowledge

The president expresses his views over the ongoing campaigns about the breast cancer, women's rights, rights of the differentially abled persons, persons with disabilities and revolution in the information technology industry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi remained a distinct figure during the year 2022 owing to his all-bracing pursuit of social, moral, educational and political reforms, reminding the society to adopt to the latest developments in the realm of science and technology, while shunning their differences with an urge to steer the country out of the current challenges in different areas. Expressing his views in a short documentary about the one-year (2022) performance of the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president said that he enjoyed a working relationship with the incumbent federal government. Both he and the prime minister respected each other's offices, he said, adding that different pieces of legislation were sent by the government to his office for signing and sometimes, he sent back unsigned certain pieces of legislation after due consideration. The president expressed his views over the ongoing campaigns about the breast cancer, women's rights, rights of the differentially abled

persons, persons with disabilities and revolution in the information technology industry and the political situation of the country. The president had been leading the political efforts to bring the political parties together. After change in the government, the president said, he tried to steer Pakistan out of the crises of polarization, lack of dialogue for the future and the mandate issue which had become critical. The president referring to recent floods in Pakistan, said that climate-induced floods had caused widespread devastation as vast chunks of land, spreading over hundreds of miles in Balochistan and Sindh provinces had been under floodwater, forcing the people to migrate. The country suffered huge losses to the tune of billions of dollars. The world support in this regard was not sufficient, he said, adding a donors' conference was being held in Geneva, and he hoped that it would have positive outcome. The president also thanked those countries, institutions, the NGOs and the civilian and military organizations that had supported the flood relief ac-

tivities in Pakistan. President Dr Alvi and First Lady Begum Samina Alvi had been very vocal about the women's inheritance rights and fervently advocating for the female skill development in different technical fields. The president stressed that it was the responsibility of the society to provide harassment free-environment to the women. Founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam had also stressed upon the women's empowerment, he added. The president referring to a recent survey conducted in about 158 countries and in which Pakistan ranked low in women's disparity indicator, said that it had disappointed him very much. He maintained that Islam and the Islamic state established by the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) had given rights to the women which were even unthinkable of in Europe during 1910. The president expressing his satisfaction over the outcome of the breast cancer awareness drive spearheaded by him and Begum Alvi, said that now, it was no more considered as taboo in families. About the differentially abled persons, the president enumerat-

ed that they could be classified in three categories, blind, deaf and physically retarded people. All of them possessed the same capabilities like the ordinary people, therefore, they should be given access in the society and be encouraged not as dependent, but contributing members of the society, he stressed. The president said that the students suffering from different mental illnesses like autism, dyslexia etc, should be enrolled in all schools. The government had allocated 3 to 5 percent jobs quota for them, but they were not fully trained to get those jobs and emphasized that these people should be properly trained, besides the allocated jobs should be tailored for them. To another issue, the president said that there should be a national programme to overcome issues like the mental stress being detected in number of families and students. The president, during the past year, also effectively campaigned for nurturing the talents of youth with adequate focus on IT education. He opined that the IT sector had witnessed an abrupt and exponential growth, provid-

ing a window to Pakistan to find a place among the developed countries within a decade as the world was looking for IT-trained people. The Federal Ombudsmen's Offices had also been working effectively to redress public issues. The different appeals against their decisions were made to the president. The president recollected a case pertained to the levy of tax on an old person by the FBR and regretted that with just a mere impugned amount of Rs2033, the FBR spent a precious amount and wasted time. About the new year, 2023, the president said that he foresaw it as an election year and stressed that every person should participate and ensure that a good government could be formed. Besides, he said the society should focus on education of the family and the social and moral values. "I have the confidence that Pakistan will make progress by leaps and bounds in every field by cultivating certain habits and values like seeking of knowledge, consideration for the human beings, kindness and forgiveness," he added.

Marriyum prays for resolution of problems

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday prayed for the resolution of the problems of suffering humanity in the new year. In a tweet, she wished all a happy New Year and prayed that humanity may get rid of inflation, terrorism, cruelty, injustice, lies, and hatred. She prayed that 2023 may bring happiness, progress, and prosperity and that the dreams of the youth might be fulfilled. She wished for the early recovery of sick persons. She wished that the unrest may end on the earth and peace may prevail in 2023. —APP

Action directed against illegal constructions

RAWALPINDI: The authorities concerned of Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) have been directed to take strict action in accordance with the law against illegal constructions. According to RDA spokesman, the officers concerned of RDA on the directives of Director General (DG) Saif Anwar Jappa had launched an operation and demolished the structure illegally constructed on public land in Saidpur Housing Scheme. The State Management Directorate and Building Control Wing (SMD & BCW) RDA launched an operation and took action in accordance with the law against a violator who illegally encroached the public land and raised structure. He informed that earlier, a citizen resident of New Phagwari area lodged a complaint that the owner of plot no 31 had started construction of a house in front of his residence violating the by-laws and encroached the public land illegally. The DG directed the Director SMD & BCW Asif Mahmood Janjua to take immediate action against the encroacher and demolish the structure raised illegally. The DG said that no one would be allowed to occupy even an inch of the government land and advised the citizens to get prior approval of the maps of their houses from the authorities concerned to avoid any inconvenience. —APP

Citizens urged to donate blood

RAWALPINDI: President, Al-Aqsa Welfare Trust (AAWT), Volunteer Blood Donations Organization, AJK and Pakistan, Muhammad Hamid Khan Edhi here on Sunday urged the people to come forward to donate blood in a bid to help Thalassemia patients, who need regular blood transfusions to live a normal life. Talking to APP he informed that over 100,000 thalassemia major patients exist in the country. However, the exact overall figure of thalassemia patients in the country is not known as no national baseline survey was conducted. There are three types of thalassemia — minor, major and intermedia. A person with thalassemia major suffers from the disease throughout his life while a patient with thalassemia intermedia can get thalassemia major any time, he said. A person afflicted with thalassemia minor leads a normal life but is a carrier and can pass on the disease to his or her child, he said adding, because of the disease, body stops making red blood cells due to which blood is given to the patients. The only cure is 'bone marrow transplant' which is not only very expensive but also requires a donor. —APP

CTO advises tourists to follow rules in Murree

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan on Sunday advised the tourists travelling to Murree and other hill stations to strictly follow traffic rules to avoid traffic mess and any mishap. According to a CTP spokesman, CTP had issued a traffic advisory for the tourists planning to visit Murree and other hill stations to enjoy snowfall of winter. The tourists rushing to mountain resorts to enjoy snowfall used to get stuck in traffic jams due to heavy snowfalls and road blockades. Taimoor Khan urged the tourists to avoid wrong parking, double lines and taking selfies in the middle of the road. He said that additional traffic wardens had been deployed to facilitate tourists and advised the visitors to obey traffic rules and avoid over-speeding. He also suggested the tourists to keep their vehicles fit before travelling to hill stations. The CTP had devised a proper traffic plan to ensure smooth flow of traffic and also requested the masses to cooperate with the police, he said. He informed that CTP Rawalpindi had issued a comprehensive traffic plan to facilitate the tourists visiting Murree. —APP



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf in a group photo with UK/USA Humanitarian Delegation for Pakistan Led by Lord Qurban Hussain Member of House of Lords at Parliament House. —DNA

Pakistan Sweet Home organizes blood donation camp

Obviously, the children fighting against thalassemia, hemophilia and blood cancer are not alone and if I have to travel all over Pakistan, I will campaign for them from city to city

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Sweet Home Blood Bank and Zamurad Khan in collaboration with Rawalpindi District Administration here on Sunday organized a blood donation camp at Food Street Saddar Rawalpindi Cantt on the eve of New Year with the aim to highlight its mission of saving innocent lives. The blood donation camp was participated by a large number of young people who started the new year by donating their blood for minor patients of thalassemia. On this occasion, head of Pakistan Sweet Home Zamurad Khan visited the blood camp and encouraged the volunteers who donated blood. He said that the camp was organized with aim to donate blood by the youth for a noble humanitarian cause instead of wasting the time in fireworks and other useless activities at the beginning of the new year. "Indeed, saving the life of one person is equal to saving all humanity," he added. Khan said that donating blood at the beginning of the New Year was a perpetu-

al charity and a practical expression of love for humanity as well as a great act of worship. "I am very grateful to the Rawalpindi District administration and especially the Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Captain (R) Shoaib Ali who fully cooperated with us in this camp today." In 2022, the Pakistan Sweet Home collected more than 10,000 blood donations, saving more than 30,000 lives and was determined to collect another 25,000 blood donations in 2023 and saved millions of innocent lives, he said. Obviously, the children fighting against thalassemia, hemophilia and blood cancer are not alone and if I have to travel all over Pakistan, I will campaign for them from city to city. I am extremely grateful to all the donors who came to donate blood on our call and supported us in this noble cause," he concluded. He also said that Pakistan Sweet Home was not only supporting the lives of thousands of orphans but was also saving the lives of millions of innocent children.

USC jacks up prices of sugar, flour, ghee

ISLAMABAD: Despite the Prime Minister's relief package, the government-run utility store corporation (USC) has jacked up the prices of sugar, flour and ghee and other food items. According to the notification issued here, the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) have increased the price of sugar by Rs19 per kg, ghee by Rs75 per kg, and a 20-kg bag of flour by Rs496. The new prices would be effective at Utility Stores across the country from January 1, 2023, said the notification. The new prices would not apply to the deserving beneficiaries of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), it added. Earlier, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif had announced to provision of targeted subsidies on basic food items through Utility Stores Corporation. These items included flour, sugar, ghee, rice, and pulses. Consumers enrolled in the Benazir Income support Program are eligible to get the food items on subsidized rates from the Utility Stores outlets. —APP

Rescue-1122 deploys rescuers at 14 strategic points

RAWALPINDI: Rescue-1122 has deployed the rescuers at strategic locations in Murree to give immediate response in case of emergency. According to a Rescue-1122 spokesman, the Secretary, Punjab Emergency Service (PES), Rescue-1122 Dr. Rizwan Naseer during a visit to Murree reviewed the emergency plan prepared to deal with any emergency during snowfall. The Secretary also inspected all the arrangements finalized for Murree district and checked measures taken to give a quick response in case of any emergency. The District Emergency Officer (DEO) Murree gave a briefing regarding the plan during a meeting held at the District Headquarters, Murree. Dr. Rizwan Naseer on the occasion also observed mock drills by the district staff to deal with emergencies during snowfall. The secretary was informed that the purpose of deploying resources at strategic locations was to respond to blizzard and snow emergencies in a timely and effective manner. District Murree Rescuers and Community Emergency Response Teams actively participated in the exercise. The Secretary also inspected the deployment of the rescuers and emergency vehicles at 14 strategic emergency points and emergency facility centers established at various locations in Murree. The spokesman informed that Dr. Rizwan Naseer had instructed the DEO, Murree that the response of the rescue service related to snow storm or any untoward incident during winter should be prompt and professional. The motorbike rescuers were directed to respond with community emergency response teams from strategic points as snow and traffic jams during winter make it difficult to respond from the rescue stations. On the orders of the Secretary, the authorities concerned had declared code red across Murree and Rawalpindi. The Secretary urged the citizens to use the toll-free emergency number 1122 in case of any emergency as a timely call could help the rescuers to give a quick response. Dr. Rizwan gave 20 additional rescue motorbikes to Murree Rescue-1122 so that a timely response could be given in case of emergency. —APP

Pakistan's alarming diabetes surge

Welcoming around 40 doctors locally and rest from various countries shall give a brilliant opportunity to learn about the latest approaches for diagnosing and managing patients with diabetes.

SHAHZAD LODHI

Health experts in Pakistan have expressed grave concerns over surging cases of diabetes in the South Asian nation, warning that the situation could spiral out of control if the government fails to take immediate action. International Diabetic Federation (IDF) ranking the world's top countries for number of adults (20-79 years) with diabetes has put Pakistan in third place with a total of 33 million, after China and India. Pakistan is also the country with the highest proportion of deaths under the age of 60 due to diabetes, with 35.5% The IDF found that a further 11

million adults in Pakistan have Impaired Glucose Tolerance (IGT), which puts them at higher risk of developing type-2 diabetes. Pakistan spends less than 1% of its GDP on health. Decreasing health budget has forced public hospitals to shut down a wide array of health care services, including those for treating diabetes. In the last passing years, costs have skyrocketed, steering away patients. Diabetes medicine and insulin cost between 2,000 rupees (10, \$11) and 7,000 rupees in Pakistan. But in a country where the majority live on less than \$3 a day, it's not possible to get proper treatment. A lack of access to affordable education in Pakistan also plays a

role in growing diabetes cases. Many Pakistanis living in rural areas are illiterate. They do not understand that diabetes is a silent killer. Many only seek medical advice when their health status has declined to the point of diabetes-related complications, some of which would require amputation. Unless people change their lifestyle and dietary habits, this problem will continue to haunt us and millions of more people will suffer from it. Infact, more awareness of the disease needs to be raised nationwide. If diagnosed early and managed carefully, diabetes patients can lead normal lives, but poor management of the disease increases the likelihood of serious compli-

cations such as premature blindness, renal failure and amputation, as well as death caused by myocardial infarction or stroke. The World Health Organization estimates that by 2030 almost 14 million people in Pakistan will have diabetes, up from just over five million in 2000. This will create a major problem in terms of providing adequate treatment for all these extra patients, in a country with already limited resources. At government level, there is need to hold an International Diabetes Conference in Pakistan. Welcoming around 40 doctors locally and rest from various countries shall give a brilliant opportunity to learn about the latest approaches for diag-

nosing and managing patients with diabetes. Proposed International diabetes conference to the incumbent government and stake holders by Chair, Dr Asjad Hameed, a British Pakistani, The Diabetes Centre, Pakistan's largest and multidisciplinary hospital situated along Murree Express, immediate next to Puhlgaran toll Plaza may feature lectures and debates led by expert speakers, plus Q&A sessions on a wide variety of topics, such as new diagnostic methods for neuropathy and ischemic heart disease, dietary and pharmacological recommendations, insulin treatment, diabetes and stroke, diabetic foot and managing diabetes in pregnancy, among others.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 132

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



How Brazil should be remade in image of its hero

The death of Pelé, one of Brazil's most famous sons, coincides with the departure from office of the defeated president, Jair Bolsonaro, one of its most internationally reviled. The death of the footballer aged 82 has prompted a global outpouring of love and respect. In contrast, Bolsonaro slipped out of the country last week with a self-justificatory snarl, muttering about a political comeback. It is difficult to express what Pelé, born Edson Arantes do Nascimento to a provincial working-class family, meant to Brazil as a nation. His skill was breathtaking, his goalscoring ability unsurpassed. Yet his joy in playing and his dazzling artistry appealed to non-football fans, too. He turned the pitch into a stage and the "beautiful game" into a global phenomenon. The contrast with Bolsonaro could not be more striking. A radical right-wing populist, his surprise election victory in 2018 initiated four years of damaging social divisions and policy disasters. His hate-filled rhetoric, endlessly rehearsing the politics of grievance, appealed to people's worst instincts. His nickname, Trump of the Tropics, was well deserved. Bolsonaro's term will be remembered not for achievements but for the destruction he wreaked, most infamously in the Amazon rainforest. Deforestation increased by 60% as he defied the environmentalist and climate consensus. The pandemic was met by similar bungling and denialism. Up to 700,000 Brazilians died. For all his misdeeds, Bolsonaro, again like Trump, retains high levels of support. He attracted 49% of the vote in the autumn, losing narrowly to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. With typical ill grace, he is boycotting today's inauguration of his leftist successor while vowing to make a comeback. Lula and his new government face a daunting task to put Brazil back together again. They have already chalked up one success: seeing off sporadic but determined attempts by well-armed Bolsonaroistas to violently overturn the election result. Far-right Capitol Hill-style coup plots have come to nothing. Nevertheless, security around Lula and the inauguration ceremony will be intense. The new president is moving quickly. Sônia Guajajara, a celebrated Amazon defender, will lead Brazil's first-ever ministry for Indigenous peoples – Lula's response to the waves of violence and land invasions of the Bolsonaro era. Marina Silva returns as environment minister, committed to halting and reversing deforestation. But the bigger picture for Brazil is grim, the outlook problematic. "After a four-year mandate, we find the government in penury," Lula said last week. A transition report warned public services were near collapse. It predicted "serious consequences for health, education, environmental preservation, job and income generation and the fight against poverty and hunger" without swift remedial action. Yet as the right awaits its chance, failure is not an option. On top of all this, Lula has an especially urgent, unifying goal: reclaiming the yellow Brazil football shirt from the Bolsonaroistas, who co-opted it as a partisan symbol of right-wing nationalism. Pelé would surely cheer him on.

Greater power aggression and the ineptitude of the United Nations

Sabah Aslam



Recent happenings in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iran, and elsewhere have brought to light ironies, that the US was the architect of the very UN-based order that current US policy may seem to abolish; and that the US has a greater incentive to legitimize its power through multilateral mechanisms as it becomes more powerful in order to avoid effective opposition

The United Nations' (UN) institutional flaws have allowed great powers, notably the United States (US), to advance their interests at the expense of the organization's core purposes. It has failed to avoid wars; peace and security are now a thing of the past. While only the tactics and patterns of battle have changed, the flames of strife have never been extinguished. The UN is clearly powerless, as it has failed to deter great power aggression. Any resolution opposing their conduct will be vetoed without delay. As a result, the UN serves little purpose during great power wars, and weak nations are subjugated without significant assistance or collective security. The United Nations is the world's primary institution for deliberating on issues of peace and security, although its activity extends well beyond peacekeeping and conflict aversion. Several UN agencies are committed to a spectrum of issues, including health and humanitarian concerns, as well as economic and cultural development, and environmental concerns. For 77 years, the US has served as the organization's principal chaperon and significant sponsor as a founding member. The US is the greatest donor to the UN, in 2021 alone, it contributed more than \$11 billion, accounting for more than 20 percent of the total financing for the body's collective budget. Despite former US President Donald Trump's efforts to reduce financing, his administration has valued sovereignty above multilateralism. His administration claimed that the US suffered disproportionately high expenses and that UN initiatives contradict-

ed the government's strategic positions. However, US President Joe Biden has reaffirmed the centrality of the United Nations in US foreign policy and increased financing for the institution. Despite the promises and commitments, the United States owes the United Nations approximately \$1 billion in peacekeeping alone, according to Executive Director of the Better World Campaign, Jordie Hannum's correspondence with the media. Although the United States has been brutal to its competitors, its ascendancy to global hegemony has given the UN new verve. The United States has blanketed the world in security to serve as a global law enforcer; its economic dominance has allowed it to influence the global economy and attract alliances; its technological advantage has added another dimension to its power; and its ideological principles multilateralism, neoliberal economic system, and democratic political norms have provided it with the tools to craft the rules of the game. In its essence, the UN has been shielded by a hegemonic power; its values have been sustained solely by virtue of US exceptionalism. US suspects that the hegemonic unipolarity that the US enjoyed during the Cold War is threatened by the rising multipolarity. Russia's resurgence and China's rise are viewed as threats by the US to its UN-led structure of the purported liberal democratic international order. The US has attempted to sway the geopolitics and foreign policy of South Asia on several occasions by using the UN system. The US has initiated a pattern of imposing sanctions and taking unjustified action through multilateral

forums and the international community to serve its objectives in confronting China. The United Nations can hence be viewed as both an 'institutional bargain', and the embodiment of the US-led vision of world order. The US's ambiguous attitude toward the UN reflects the precarious nature of the institutional bargain. However, the tie is stronger than it appears since the Organization embodies ideals and objectives that US presidents have advocated for over the last 100 years. It has proven to be a suitable position for the US to exercise and enhance its already exceptional pool of 'soft power'. Undermining the UN might make it slightly easier for the US to act alone when warranted, but the multilateral, institutional, and rule-of-law tendency in US foreign policy thought would not be easily overcome. This drive might manifest itself in organizations other than the UN, but the evidence does not point to the creation of a viable alternative anytime soon. Recent happenings in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iran, and elsewhere have brought to light ironies, that the US was the architect of the very UN-based order that current US policy may seem to abolish; and that the US has a greater incentive to legitimize its power through multilateral mechanisms as it becomes more powerful in order to avoid effective opposition. The UN will continue to serve as an effective tool for the US to turn its interests and values into a global consensus and put its power behind more expansive collective goals for the foreseeable future.

Quality education or justice: Preferences

Afnan Wasif



Because of this education, a competent twenty-seven-year-old young lady in Sweden has been appointed as the Minister for Climate Change. She does not hail from any Bhutto, Khan, or Sharif family. Because when the appointment of our Minister of Foreign Affairs took place, the nation was fooled. He is not sitting on this chair because of any education, hard work or merit, but he hails from a powerful family

The first divine message was revealed to Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the cave of Hira at the age of forty. That first revelation was the initial sign of the declaration of Prophethood upon Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) to the visible world. The first divine message began with "Iqra" which means reading. Thus, in Islam, reading, i.e. the acquisition of education, has priority over all other matters. A political party in Pakistan has been raising the slogan of "Riyasat-e-Madinah" for the past few years. The state of Madinah came into being after the migration of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to Madinah Sharif. It is worth mentioning that what was the first thing that happened when the Prophet (peace be upon him) arrived in Madinah? And that first thing was the establishment of a 'Mosque'. Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) started teaching people Islamic teachings which included moral, economic, political and social values and ideals from the mosque. He adorned the people with the jewel of education. As a result, the clouds of darkness and ignorance began to disperse. Then the eyes of beholders saw that a group of Sahaba like Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (R.A), Hazrat Umar Farooq (R.A), Hazrat Usman (R.A) and Hazrat Ali (R.A) emerged. They practically manifested the whole world the way to wrap up the success of both worlds. For example, no one has seen justice and fairness like Hazrat

Umar (R.A) until today and he became a precedent for the world. The foundation of this success was the first commandment of Allah Almighty "Iqra". A mosque is actually a place of worship as well as a place of learning. And this work was done by the mosque in a great way during that period. But now, unfortunately, our mosques seem to be far behind in the execution of the latter task. This proves that the success of society lies in education. And according to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Rulers are like Societies. Education lightens the intellect. And intellect, comprehension and logic enable a person to distinguish between good and bad. An educated person will condemn corruption, dishonesty, hypocrisy, rudeness, lying, disorder and all such social evils and an illiterate person who is incapable of distinguishing between good and bad will do the opposite. "Say, O Prophet, Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" (Quran 39:9). It is wrong to say that the biggest problem in Pakistan is Injustice. Comprehension is required to identify any problem in society which eventually comes from education. There is a dire need for quality education that gives comprehension to the Pakistani nation. To date, the amount of money spent on education is not hidden from anyone. We have to identify our priorities thoughtfully and carefully. And

we are running out of time. Pakistan is now standing at a critical juncture politically and economically. Our politicians and decision makers have to decide that education must be a priority. It seems necessary to refer to Islam because Pakistan is an Islamic state and its constitution insists on refraining from any word or action contrary to Islamic teachings and principles. But in reality, this has not happened till today. Because we have been proven unable to understand and practice even the first principle of Islam in seventy-five years. By following these principles, the non-Muslims have gone ahead of us and we now put our fingers in our mouths when we see their progress and prosperity. Because of this education, a competent twenty-seven-year-old young lady in Sweden has been appointed as the Minister for Climate Change. She does not hail from any Bhutto, Khan, or Sharif family. Because when the appointment of our Minister of Foreign Affairs took place, the nation was fooled. He is not sitting on this chair because of any education, hard work or merit, but he hails from a powerful family, so he stands entitled for this chair. We need to take concrete steps to provide quality education instead of always chanting that Injustice is our biggest concern.

—The writer is a student of Strategic Studies at National Defence University, Islamabad

Briefs

Ex. COAS
'setup still
very active'

FROM PAGE 01
Pakistan's military through the so-called memo months after the US raid in Abbottabad in 2011 on Osama Bin Laden's compound amid an increasing rift between the civilian and military leadership. He was accused of issuing visas to Americans without due process, bypassing relevant authorities, and embezzling funds. The deposed prime minister also said Haqqani launched a campaign against him and had been promoting the former army chief in the US. Imran Khan claimed that the establishment asked three lawmakers from his party to remain neutral in the matter of Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi's vote of confidence. Turning his guns towards former president and ex-army chief Pervaz Musharraf, Imran Khan said he made dollars by "selling terrorism". "Dollars can be obtained by selling terrorism," the ousted premier added. However, 80,000 people lost their lives due to Musharraf's actions, he added.

PM Sharif,
Zardari
discuss
Punjab's...

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the issue of the expected vote of confidence of chief minister Pervaiz Elahi was also discussed. Earlier, members of the Punjab Assembly (MPAs) Chaudhary Ashraf Ali Ansari and Malik Ghulam Qasim Hunjra on Sunday separately called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The ongoing political crisis in Punjab has led to parties gathering their workers and in this regard both MPAs came to the Prime Minister's office. There is an expected vote of confidence to be taken by the Punjab chief minister and the PML-N leader is meeting its party members to give the tough time to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan Muslim League (Quadi). "During the meetings, the political situation in Punjab province was discussed," PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

'Government
had no
idea what
quagmire...

FROM PAGE 01
"Unrest and target killing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is a cause of major concern", he added. The PDM chief further said that KP CM Mahmood Khan will have to be answerable as the province is indebted to Rs900 billion. He also called out the provincial government to make efforts for the restoration of peace in the tribal and urban areas.

MQM-P
threatens
to quit
government

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He said that it is the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to delineate new constituencies before January 15. The court ordered that a meeting be held between the Sindh government and the ECP, added Mr Siddiqui. Mr Siddiqui said, "We were still saying that the municipal elections were being delayed. MQM-P believed that the elections should be fair and transparent, but the pre-poll rigging has already happened in the municipal elections. We were on the streets to end the pre-poll rigging. MQM-P will pour out onto street and protest, and if this situation continues to prevail, the party will decide whether to stay in the government or contest a separate election."



ISLAMABAD: Senator Salim Saifullah Khan President-PTF, Aziz Boolani CEO of Serena Hotels, Saeed Ahmad Khan SVP-PTF, Mr Faisal Khan-Serena Hotels Col. Gul Rehman Secretary-General-PTF pose with the winning players during the closing ceremony of 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament-2022-23. – DNA

Pakistan and New Zealand
seek Test turnaround in 2023

New Zealand also arrived in Pakistan on the back of a 3-0 drubbing by England. Pakistan skipper Babar Azam vowed his team will play "positive and aggressive cricket" after they finished 2022 without a Test win at home. "We need to take things session-by-session and day-by-day," he said

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: A draw last week having stopped a run of defeats for Pakistan and New Zealand, both sides will be seeking to go one better in the second and final Test in Karachi starting Monday. The tame draw halted Pakistan's four-Test losing streak at home including their first-ever 3-0 whitewash by England. New Zealand also arrived in Pakistan on the back of a 3-0 drubbing by England. Pakistan skipper Babar Azam vowed his team will play "positive and aggressive cricket" after they finished 2022 without a Test win at home. "We need to take things session-by-session and day-by-day," he said. "We're working on it. It's not that we need to play different cricket." New Zealand were in a good position to win the first Test on the final day with Pakistan on 77-2, needing 97 runs to avoid an innings defeat. But Saud Shakeel, who scored 55 not out, and Mohammad Wasim with 43 averted the danger with a 71-run eighth wicket stand eating up time and overs to salvage a draw. Pakistan declared on 311-8 but a target of 138 in 15 overs

under fading light was tough for New Zealand, who finished on 59-1. "We need to credit New Zealand with the way they played and dominated," said Azam, who finished the year as the

highest scorer in Tests with 1,184 in nine matches. The National Stadium pitch helped slow bowlers as 23 of the 28 wickets in the first Test went to the spinners. At the same venue but on a different pitch, New Zealand will also look for a win after going without in their last five Tests. "It does look different from the first Test..."

It has a bit more moisture," said batting coach Luke Ronchi on Sunday. "The preparations are shorter than normal, obviously we had just a two-day turnaround. "It's going to be a hard slog to get a result, you have to bat really well and need to take 20 wickets." Pakistan will look to bring in pacer Naseem Shah or Hasan Ali, while New Zealand may consider Matt Henry in place of a spinner if they find the pitch suitable for pace.

Teams (from):

Pakistan: Babar Azam (captain), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Wasim, Naseem Shah, Nauman Ali, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Agha Salman, Saud Shakeel, Shan Masood, Zahid Mahmood
New Zealand: Tim Southee (captain), Michael Bracewell, Tom Blundell, Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Ish Sodhi, Blair Tuckner, Neil Wagner, Kane Williamson, Will Young
Umpires: Alex Wharf (ENG) and Aleem Dar (PAK)
TV umpire: Ahsan Raza (PAK) **Match referee:** David Boon (AUS).

Babar Azam, Bismah Maroof
review 2022 in PCB Podcast

LAHORE: Pakistan men and women captains Babar Azam and Bismah Maroof have reviewed 2022 in a special edition of the PCB Podcast, which is now available here for viewing and free downloading for editorial purposes. According to information provided by the Pakistan Cricket Board here on Sunday, the year 2022 was an incredibly busy year for the national men's and women's cricketers in the international arena. The men's side played a total of 44 international matches (nine Tests, nine ODIs and 26 T20Is) and reached the finals of the ACC Asia Cup and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup besides hosting Australia, West Indies, England and New Zealand, while the women's side featured in 32 internationals (13 ODIs and 19 T20Is) and participated in the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, Birmingham Commonwealth Games and the ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup, besides hosting Sri



Lanka and Ireland. Babar Azam, who appeared in all 44 internationals and finished as the most successful batter in the world with 2,598 runs, reflecting on the year said: "Our performances in white-ball cricket upstaged our achievements in red-ball cricket. We reached the finals in the UAE and Australia, and though we didn't perform the way we had expected in red-ball cricket, three sides ranked above Pakistan played in Pakistan that provided us a huge learn-

ing opportunity and also entertained our fans. "In T20 cricket, my favourite match was the win against India in the repeat fixture of the Asia Cup as it was a crucial game for us in terms of a place in the final. In Test cricket, victory in the first Test against Sri Lanka in Galle was outstanding as we chased down 342 for the loss of six wickets on a difficult track. Abdullah Shafique was magnificent in the second innings when he scored 160 not out." Bismah Maroof said: "The highlight of our World Cup campaign was the victory over the West Indies, which was our first in 13 years in the pinnacle event. We also won five of the six ODIs against Sri Lanka and Ireland at home to move up to second in the ICC Women's Championship, while we defeated India in Sylhet for the first time since 2014 though we missed out on the ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup final after losing to SL by one-run in the semi-final." – DNA

'220 million Indian Muslims
on the cusp of genocide'

DNA

NEW DELHI: Prominent Indian journalist Rana Ayyub has deplored that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi whose hands are stained with the blood of 2,000 Muslims in Gujarat taken away the presidency of G-20. Rana Ayyub who received the prestigious John Aubuchon award

conferred on her by the National Press Club of Washington, the Club's highest honour for press freedom, this month, in her speech on the occasion introduced the present-day India to the world by saying, "220 million Muslim population is on the cusp of genocide" and added that "the free press is under attack in India". She dedicated it "to my colleagues Mohammad Zu-

bair, Siddique Kappan, and Asif Sultan incarcerated for speaking truth to power", reported KMS. In her speech, she said, "To begin with, it is a huge honour for me, and I would like to thank Washington Post for having my back at a time when journalists and editors in India, where I worked and held top positions, which did not exist post 2014 when Modi became Prime Minister of India."

She also criticized the US government's lenient approach towards the Butcher of Gujarat, Narendra Modi and said, "When I am in the US, I meet US State Department and other top-ranking officials. They tell me we know what is happening in India, but bilateral relationship vis-à-vis China and Russia ... human rights be damned... journalists be damned." Rana Ayyub said that the man they have put on the cover (title page) of The Economist and The Time is a man who has blood on his hands.

More countries
roll out China
traveller checks

BEIJING: Travellers from China now face restrictions when entering more than a dozen countries as concern grows over its surge in Covid-19 cases, with Australia the latest to demand a negative test before arrival. Last month, Beijing abruptly began dismantling its "zero-Covid" containment policy of lockdowns and mass testing, three years after the coronavirus first emerged in the city of Wuhan. As Covid overwhelms Chinese hospitals and crematoriums, officials have insisted that the wave is "under control" despite acknowledging that the true scale of infections is "impossible" to track. Australia's health minister on Sunday cited Beijing's "lack of comprehensive information" about Covid cases as the reasoning behind the travel requirement, which will take effect on January 5. The move will "safeguard Australia from the risk of potential new emerging variants," he said. In recent days, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have also imposed either a negative Covid test requirement or testing upon arrival for travellers from China. Canada cited "the limited epidemiological and viral genomic sequence data available" on recent Covid cases in China for its negative test demand. Meanwhile, Morocco moved to ban all arrivals from China on Saturday, "to avoid a new wave of contaminations in Morocco and all its consequences". The flurry of global travel restrictions began as countries anticipated a surge in Chinese visitors after Beijing announced mandatory quarantine for inbound passengers would end on January 8. The World Health Organization has called the precautionary measures "understandable" in light of the lack of outbreak information provided by Beijing. But the European branch of the International Airports Council – which represents more than 500 airports in 55 European countries – said the restrictions were not justified or risk-based. European countries will meet next week to discuss a joint response to the issue, with incoming EU presidency holder Sweden saying it was "seeking a common policy for the entire EU when it comes to the introduction of possible entry restrictions". While a few major Chinese cities seem to be emerging from the current wave of infections, under-resourced smaller cities and rural areas have been hit especially hard. – APP

7th Serena
Hotels Tennis
Tournament
concludes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament-2022-23 concluded in a highly befitting manner at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex, Islamabad. In the Men's Singles Final Aqeel Khan bt Muhammad Shoaib 6-3, 6-2 and won the 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament-2022-23 title. In the Ladies Singles Final Sarah-Mahboob Khan bt Esha Jawad 6-2, 6-2 and won the 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament-2022-23 title. Mr Aziz Boolani CEO of Serena Hotels was the Chief Guest at the closing Ceremony. He distributed the prizes amongst the winners and Runner-ups and congratulated all the winners and runner-ups. Senator Salim Saifullah Khan President-PTF was the Guest of Honour at the closing Ceremony. The President-PTF thanked Serena Hotels for conducting the Serena Hotels National Ranking Tournaments for the last seven years. He also appreciated and valued their support for promoting tennis in Pakistan. He also congratulated and appreciated the participation of the players from all over Pakistan. The President also lauded the efforts of the PTF Management and especially Mr Shahzad Akhtar Alvi ITF White Badge Referee, for organizing the event in a highly professional manner. He also thanked Print Media for the excellent coverage of the event. The President also wished everyone a very HAPPY NEW YEAR. The Closing Ceremony was also attended by Mr Saeed Ahmad Khan SVP-PTF, Mr Faisal Khan-Serena Hotels Col. Gul Rehman Secretary-General-PTF, diplomats, Serena Hotels Officials, Tennis Players, Coaches, Parents, MEDIA Persons and PTF Officials.

President
Alvi returns
Islamabad...

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"The Bill was returned by observing that it would further delay the Local Government elections. "Actions of the Federal Government taken in hurry resulted in delaying election process twice, which was anathema to democracy". "It was further stated, "elections could not be held in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) due to the following mala fide actions of Federal Government :- i) After completion of delimitation of 50 Union Councils, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced elections of Local Government in ICT on 31st July 2022. Despite announcement of polling date, Federal Government increased number of Union Councils from 50 to 101, ii) After demarcation of 101 Union Councils, ECP decided to hold elections in ICT on 31st December 2022. Section 2 of current Bill provides for 125 Union Councils in the ICT. "Therefore, elections scheduled for 31st December 2022 have been again postponed. iii) As per Section 3 of current Bill, mode of elections of Mayor and Deputy Mayor has been changed after announcement of schedule of elections".

ECP likely
to hold...

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the earliest. On Saturday, the federal government filed an intra-court appeal in Islamabad High Court (IHC) against holding Islamabad local government polls. As per details, the intra-court appeal was filed by additional Attorney General Munawar Iqbal Duggal in Islamabad High Court (IHC). Meanwhile, the pleas of the federal government and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) Friday order and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) petition seeking contempt of court proceedings against the Centre and ECP are expected to be heard next week. The cases were not marked by the court's staff, and benches for hearing the pleas will be formed on January 2, 2023. The government and the commission had filed their pleas Saturday morning and requested an emergency order, while the PTI had moved the IHC in the afternoon but none of them was scheduled.

World No. 3 Ruud, Kvitova cruise at United Cup

In Sydney, two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova proved too strong for Germany's Laura Siegemund, romping home 6-4, 6-2

BRISBANE: World number three Casper Ruud cruised past Thiago Monteiro in straight sets but it was in vain as Norway crashed in their mixed teams United Cup tie against Brazil in Brisbane on Sunday. After the Brazilians won both opening singles rubbers Saturday, Ruud's 6-3, 6-2 victory brought his country back into contention. But the comeback was short-lived with the South Americans taking the tie

when Laura Pigossi outlasted Ulrikke Eikeri 6-3, 6-4 in almost two hours at Pat Rafter Arena. Brazil won the mixed doubles to give them a 4-1 win. Ruud was far too consistent for the 71st ranked Monteiro, who made 27 unforced errors, wrapping up a dominant win in only 70 minutes to at least give him confidence heading into the new season. "It was a must-win match for Norway so I was maybe

feeling the pressure a little bit," Ruud said. "But I was able to come out with a good start." The Norwegian was a runner-up at last year's French and US Opens and said he was feeling confident ahead of the Australian Open later this month where he will bid to win a first Grand Slam title. He did not play at Melbourne Park last year after rolling his ankle the day before his

first match and said he wanted to make amends. "I always feel very motivated coming down here playing in Australia. Last year was a bit unfortunate," he said. "Hopefully I'll have a good start to the season down here and this is a perfect way for me to start the year on tour." In Sydney, two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova proved too strong for Germany's Laura Siegemund, romping home 6-4, 6-2.

It ensured the Czech Republic won the tie with an unassailable 3-0 lead, having lost their opening clash with the United States 4-1. "Playing Laura is always difficult. She's changing her game a lot, so I had to be ready for everything. I'm glad I got the point," said Kvitova, who beat American world number three Jessica Pegula earlier in the tournament. "This group is very difficult but we are enjoying the event a lot and really

happy that we (the Czech team) are all together here in Sydney." German Oscar Otte defeated Dalibor Srvcina 7-6 (7/1), 6-2 and Germany won the mixed doubles, but the Czechs won the tie 3-2. In Perth, Belgium and Bulgaria were locked at 2-2 heading into the mixed doubles. Elise Mertens beat Gergana Topalova 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 before Bulgaria levelled the tie when Dimitar Kuzmanov downed Zizou Bergs 6-2, 6-0. – APP

Briefs

Nine die in Uganda New Year stampede

KAMPALA: At least nine people died in a shopping mall crush as revellers rang in the New Year in Uganda's capital on Sunday, police said. After fireworks outside the Freedom City mall in Kampala, "a stampede ensued, resulting in the instant deaths of five people and injuries to several others," police spokesman Luke Owoyesigire said. "Emergency responders arrived on the scene and transported the injured individuals to the hospital, where nine were confirmed dead." Owoyesigire said "juveniles" were among the victims, without providing further details on their ages. He said "rash" acts and "negligence" had led to the tragedy. The celebrations to welcome in 2023 were the first in the east African country in three years, after restrictions linked to the Covid-19 pandemic and security issues.—DNA

Grammy-winning singer Anita Pointer dies at 74

LOS ANGELES: Grammy-winning singer Anita Pointer died on Saturday at the age of 74 following a battle with cancer, her publicist said. One of the founding members of R&B group The Pointer Sisters, she delighted fans across the world with hits including "I'm So Excited," "Jump," and "Fire." Along with sisters June and Ruth, the group from Oakland, California released their first album in 1973 before going on to win three Grammy Awards. "Sad to report my client Grammy Winner Anita Pointer of the Pointer Sisters has passed away after a heroic battle with cancer," Roger Neal said on Instagram. She died on New Year's Eve at her home in Los Angeles where she was surrounded by family, Neal told CNN.—APP

China ships 19.52 mln 5G phones in October

ISLAMABAD, Jan 01 (AP): Shipment of 5G mobile phones in China neared 19.52 million in October, accounting for 80.1 percent of the country's total mobile phone shipment, according to the China Academy of Information and Communications Technology (CAICT). During this period, 20 new 5G mobile phone models were released in the country, up 25 percent year on year, said the CAICT, a research institute under the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. Domestic brands continued to claim the lion's share of the Chinese mobile phone market, with their shipment topping 16.8 million – contributing to 69 percent of China's total mobile phone shipment in the period. In October, newly-released domestic-brand mobile phone models rose 20 percent year on year to 30, accounting for 90.9 percent of all new models on the market, shine.cn reported.—DNA

Catholics in Jerusalem mourn 'great' ex-pope

JERUSALEM: Church bells tolled for the death of ex-pope Benedict XVI in Jerusalem's Old City on Sunday, where Catholics revered their "great" former pontiff. Before the ancient stones of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Christians believe Jesus was buried, seminarian Matteo Sassano said he had been praying for the retired pope, who died on Saturday. "Pope Benedict was a great pope... also, a great companion of Pope Francis," said Sassano, 33, from Italy. The death of Benedict, nearly a decade after his shock resignation, ends a remarkable era in which he and his successor lived alongside one another within the Vatican walls. The Holy See's top representative in Jerusalem, Pierbattista Pizzaballa, called for all priests to celebrate a mass for Benedict.—APP

Lula returns for third term as Brazil president

"He will have to act assertively in his first 100 days to show where Lula Part Three is headed," said political scientist Leandro Consentino of the Insper institute in Sao Paulo

BRASILIA: Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is set to be inaugurated Sunday for a third term as Brazilian president, in a ceremony snubbed by outgoing leader Jair Bolsonaro, underlining the deep divisions the veteran leftist inherits. The swearing-in will cap a remarkable political comeback for 77-year-old Lula, who returns to the presidential palace in Brasilia less than five years after being jailed on controversial, since-quashed corruption charges. In a sign of the scars that remain from Lula's brutal election showdown with far-right ex-army captain Bolsonaro in October, security will be exceptionally tight at the pomp-filled ceremony in the capital. Some 8,000 police – including more than 1,000 federal officers, a record deployment

for a presidential inauguration in Brazil – will provide security. The stepped up measures come after a Bolsonaro supporter was arrested last week for planting a tanker truck rigged with explosives near the Brasilia airport, a plot he said aimed to "sow chaos" in the South American country. Bolsonaro himself left Brazil for the US state of Florida Friday – reportedly to avoid having to hand the presidential sash to his bitter enemy, as tradition dictates. The snub has hardly dampened the party spirit for Lula and the 300,000 people expected at the ceremony and a massive concert that will feature acts ranging from samba legend Martinho da Vila to drag queen Pablo Vittar. Thousands of Lula supporters have been flooding the

capital, traveling by plane, car and even bicycle to camp out near the Esplanade of Ministries. Foreign dignitaries including 17 heads of state will also be in attendance as Lula, who previously led the country through a watershed boom from 2003 to 2010, takes the oath of office for a new four-year term at 3:00 pm (1800 GMT). They include the presidents of a raft of Latin American countries, Germany, Portugal and the king of Spain. After being sworn in before Congress, Lula will travel by car – traditionally a black convertible Rolls Royce, though officials said that could be changed for security reasons – to the ultra-modern capital's presidential palace, the Planalto. There he will walk up a ramp to the entrance and receive the gold- and di-

amond-embroidered presidential sash. Organizers of the ceremony – led by first lady-to-be Rosangela "Janja" da Silva – have maintained a mystery around who will give Lula the sash in Bolsonaro's absence. It will be the first time since the end of Brazil's 1965-1985 military dictatorship that an incoming president does not receive the yellow-and-green sash from his predecessor. Lula faces numerous urgent challenges for Latin America's biggest economy, which looks little like the commodities-fueled dynamo he presided over in the 2000s. They include rebooting economic growth, curbing rampant destruction of the Amazon rainforest and delivering on his ambitious poverty- and inequality-fighting agenda. An estimated 30 million of Brazil's 215 million

people are living in hunger, and the economy is still struggling to recover from the coronavirus pandemic. Vice president-elect Geraldo Alckmin described the incoming administration's task as "herculean." Lula will face a Congress dominated by Bolsonaro's conservative allies. He is also dogged by far-right hardliners who have been rallying outside army bases calling for a military intervention to keep him from power ever since he narrowly won the October 30 runoff election, 50.9 percent to 49.1 percent. "He will have to act assertively in his first 100 days to show where Lula Part Three is headed," said political scientist Leandro Consentino of the Insper institute in Sao Paulo.—APP

10th anniversary of CPEC crucial to economy

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar opined that Pakistan needs to revisit its geopolitical strategic and economic framework in the context of the changing world landscape, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. They said that Pakistan will be marking ten years of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) in 2023, which is pivotal to its economic security. According to Gwadar Pro on Sunday, the webinar was organized by the Development

Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) on Saturday, the New Year's Eve. The theme of the webinar was "Pakistan's geopolitical repositioning in 2023". Munir Ahmed, Executive Director, Devcom-Pakistan said that China has established partnerships and projected its influence by utilizing the huge resources at its disposal. "As an important pilot project for the joint construction of 'Belt and Road Initiative', CPEC has achieved fruitful

remarkable results. It has brought US\$25.4 billion in investment to Pakistan and created a total of 190,000 jobs, it was learned. In 2023, we should give full play to the role of CPEC as a critical engine of Pakistan's economic development." On the occasion, Chairman Senate Standing Committee of Defense Production Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed highlighted that Pakistan must pursue its role as a hub for regional connectivity, while strengthening

ties with its core partners like China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. He added that "most importantly, Pakistan needs a 'political ceasefire' at home on key issues like economy, extremism, education, so that people get a respite from this unending polarization and continuing quest for power." Former speaker Balochistan assembly Rahila Durani, Senior Research fellow at East-East Institute (London) Dr Najam Abbas, and development expert Tahir Shamsah were also present.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi presenting the trophy to winner of 26th CNS Open Golf Championship.—DNA

Pope leads services with homage to 'beloved' Benedict

VATICAN: Pope Francis hailed the "beloved" Benedict XVI on Sunday as he addressed thousands of Catholics in New Year's Day services at the Vatican, the day after his predecessor died aged 95. "Today we entrust the beloved pope emeritus Benedict XVI to the most holy mother (the Virgin Mary), to accompany him in his passage from this world to God," Francis said at a mass for peace at St Peter's Basilica. Later, delivering his Sunday Angelus prayer in front of thousands gathered in St Peter's Square, the pope bowed his head in a moment of silence in memory of the late pontiff. "Let us all join together, with one heart and one soul, in thanking God for the gift of this faithful servant of the Gospel and of the Church," he said. Benedict, a conservative intellectual who in 2013 became the first pontiff in six centuries to resign, died on Saturday at his home in a monastery inside the grounds of the Vatican. His body will be moved on Monday morning to St Peter's Basilica, where for three days the public will be able to pay their respects before a funeral on Thursday overseen by Francis. The ceremony will be "solemn but simple", the Vatican has said, after which he will be buried in the papal tombs under St Peter's Basilica. The last papal funeral, of John Paul II in 2005, drew a million faithful and heads of state from around the world, although Benedict was a more divisive figure.—APP

Colombia strikes ceasefire with main armed groups

BOGOTÁ: Colombia's government has agreed to a six-month ceasefire with the five largest armed groups operating in the country, President Gustavo Petro announced on New Year's Eve. The truce was the main objective of Petro's "total peace" policy, which aims to end the country's armed conflict, which has persisted despite the dissolution of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 2017. The armed groups still operating in Colombia, the world's largest cocaine producer, are locked in deadly disputes over drug

trafficking revenues and other illegal businesses, according to the Institute for Development and Peace Studies (Indepaz), an independent think tank. "We have agreed to a bilateral ceasefire with the ELN, the Second Marquetalia, the Central General Staff, the AGC and the Self-Defense Forces of the Sierra Nevada from January 1 to June 30, 2023, extendable depending on progress in the negotiations," Petro tweeted. Despite the government's efforts to negotiate with Colombia's various armed groups, which include a

combined total of more than 10,000 fighters, it has so far failed to contain the spiral of violence engulfing the country. Indepaz recorded nearly 100 massacres last year. The National Liberation Army (ELN), the last recognized insurgency in the country, has been negotiating with the government since November. The Segunda Marquetalia and Estado Mayor Central groups – splinter factions of FARC which broke from the 2016 peace pact – have held separate talks with the government. AGC, the country's largest drug gang, is made up

of the remnants of extreme right-wing paramilitaries that demobilized in the early 2000s. The government is offering the groups "benevolent treatment from the judicial point of view" for the armed actors "in exchange for a surrender of assets, a dismantling of these organizations and the possibility that they stop exercising these illicit economies", Senator Ivan Cepeda recently told AFP. Some dissidents refused to lay down their arms alongside their FARC comrades six years ago, when the fearsome rebel army signed the deal with Bogota to end more than five decades of conflict. Colombia has suffered more than 50 years of armed conflict between the state and various groups of left-wing guerrillas, right-wing paramilitaries and drug traffickers. When he took power last August, Petro, the country's first leftist president, vowed to negotiate with all Colombian armed groups as part of a "total peace" policy.—APP

Croatia adopts euro, enters borderless club

Foreign Minister Gordan Grlic-Radman took part in a ceremony at a crossing point with EU member Hungary, where the New Year countdown ended with a traffic barrier being raised

ZAGREB: Croatia on Sunday switched to the euro and entered Europe's passport-free zone – two major milestones for the country after joining the European Union nearly a decade ago.

At midnight, the Balkan nation bid farewell to its kuna currency and became the 20th member of the eurozone. It is now the 27th nation in the passport-free Schengen zone, the world's largest, which enables more than 400 million people to move freely around its members. "It is the season of new beginnings. And there is no place in Europe where this is more true than here in Croatia," tweeted EU chief Ursula von der Leyen, as she arrived in Croatia to mark the

occasion. She met Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic and Slovenian President Nataša Pirc Musar at a border crossing with EU member Slovenia, and was then to head on to Zagreb. Experts say the adoption of the euro will help shield Croatia's economy at a time when inflation is soaring worldwide after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sent food and fuel prices through the roof. Feelings among Croatians are mixed. While they welcome the end of border controls, some fear the euro switch will lead to an increase in the cost of living as businesses round up prices when they convert them. "It will be difficult. Prices that are already high will become even higher," said Ivana Tonicic,

a teacher from Zagreb. But tourist agency employee Marko Pavic said Croatia was joining "an elite club". "The euro was already a value measure – psychologically it's nothing new – while entry into Schengen is fantastic news for tourism," he told AFP.

Use of the euro is already widespread in Croatia. Croatians have long valued their most precious assets such as cars and apartments in euros, displaying a lack of confidence in the local currency. About 80 percent of bank deposits are denominated in euros and Zagreb's main trading partners are in the eurozone. Officials have defended the decision to join the eurozone and Schengen, saying that the country thus completes its full EU in-

tegration. Croatia, a former Yugoslav republic of 3.9 million people that fought a war of independence in the 1990s, joined the European Union in 2013. Experts say the adoption of the euro will lower borrowing conditions amid economic hardship. Croatia's inflation rate reached 13.5 percent in November compared to 10 percent in the eurozone. Analysts stress that eastern EU members with currencies outside of the eurozone, such as Poland or Hungary, have been even more vulnerable to surging inflation. French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday hailed Croatia's switch to the euro, describing it as a "stable and solid" currency that had contributed to Europe's resilience in facing the

consequences of the war in Ukraine. Earlier on Sunday, Croatian National Bank governor Boris Vujcic symbolically withdrew euros from a cash machine in downtown Zagreb. In recent days, customers have queued at banks and ATMs to withdraw cash, fearing payment problems during the immediate aftermath of the transition period. As the clock struck midnight, a series of events were held along Croatia's borders with its EU neighbours to symbolise barrier-free travel. Foreign Minister Gordan Grlic-Radman took part in a ceremony at a crossing point with EU member Hungary, where the New Year countdown ended with a traffic barrier being raised.—Agencies

Trail-5 emerges as new tourist destination

ISLAMABAD: The biodiversity rich Margalla Hills National Park's Trail-5 has emerged as a new tourist and healthy activity destination for nature lovers, hikers and fitness freaks of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, venturing into the wild for enjoying the lush green tracks and exotic bird life. Salim Suleman, a hiker and fitness trainer told APP that he started his meditation at the Trail-5 a couple of months back. The scenic trail though welcomed a number of people daily but its sprawling nature and silence deep into the nature rich realm provided prefect ambience for yoga and meditation, he added. Suleman believed that due to the prevailing pressing times it was necessary for individual of every age group to visit the trails and such places full of nature to relieve their tension and frustration. "It is a good activity to hike on trails as it not only reduces your mental pressure rather maintains your blood sugar levels and provides you an opportunity to have a catharsis of bad feelings and absorb positive vibes from nature."—APP

The battle of firefighters on Ukraine's frontline

BAKHMTUT: In the war-torn Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, the chief of a small group of firefighters lines up his small team in front of the national flag, and wishes them a happy new year. For the nine stationed permanently in the city centre fire station, it has been a year of war and fire. They are posted in the eastern region of Donetsk where Bakhmut has become the epicentre of fighting. But their chief Oleksiy Migrin, jovial and good-natured, does not often complain. "The year 2022 has been tough on a personal level, and tough for Ukraine," he tells the team. "Take care of yourself, remember that your families are waiting for you. Next year we will win." He rounds off his speech with a "Slava Ukraini!" ("Glory to Ukraine"). The firefighters are in one of the hotspots of fighting in eastern Ukraine, where Russian forces – and the Russian paramilitaries of the Wagner Group – have been trying to seize the city for the last six months. Inside the station, the men drink coffee near humanitarian aid boxes delivered from Kyiv, which are filled with duvets, medical kits, and cake. There have been heavy losses on both sides here, and enormous destruction in Bakhmut, which had a population of some 70,000 before the war started in February 2022.—APP

China's Xi says 'light of hope in front of us'

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping said Saturday the "light of hope is right in front of us" as China faces an explosion of Covid-19 cases after an abrupt lifting of restrictions. Three years after the coronavirus first emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan, Beijing this month began ditching its hardline containment policy known as "zero-Covid". Chinese hospitals have since been hit by a flood of mostly elderly patients, crematoriums have been overloaded and many pharmacies have run out of fever medications. "Epidemic prevention and control is entering a new phase... Everyone is working resolutely, and the light of hope is right in front of us," Xi said in a televised address for the New Year. It was the Chinese president's second time commenting on the outbreak this week. On Monday, he called for measures to "effectively protect people's lives". China on Saturday reported more than 7,000 new infections and one death linked to Covid out of its population of 1.4 billion – but the figures appear to be out of step with the reality on the ground. Authorities have announced they will end mandatory quarantine on arrival for travellers entering China from January 8 and allow Chinese people to travel abroad, after three years of frustration. In response, several European countries including France and Italy, as well as the United States and Japan, have announced they will require negative tests from passengers arriving from China, mostly over fears of new variants.—APP

Briefs

Faez Isa to
succeed CJP
as 14 judges
set to retire
in 2023

DNA

ISLAMABAD: One judge of the Supreme Court and the Lahore High Court (LHC) each and 12 district and sessions judges from the district courts of the country are going to retire this year. Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial will retire on September 16, 2023 after attaining the age of 65 years. Following his retirement, Justice Qazi Faez Isa will take over as Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) on September 17, 2023. Justice Saffar Saleem Shahid of Lahore High Court (LHC) will retire on July 31, 2023 after attaining the age of 62 years. Lahore Labour Court Judge Tahir Nawaz Khan will retire on March 9, 2023 on attaining the age of 60 years. Sessions Judge Muhammad Masroor Khan, who had been made OSD, will retire on March 20, 2023. Sessions Judge Akhtar Chughtai will retire on March 26, 2023. Sessions Judge Ashfaq Ahmad Rana, who had been OSD, will retire on April 3, 2023. Sessions Judge Muhammad Azam will retire on April 9, Sessions Judge Khadim Hussain on April 14, Sessions Judge Abdul Haq on May 24, DG District Judiciary Lahore High Court Amir Muhammad Khan on May 31, Sessions Judge Rao Abdul Jabbar on July 4, Sessions Judge Pervaiz Akhtar on July 31, District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Younis Aziz on August 31, and Sessions Judge Muhammad Iram Ayaz will retire on October 16.

Kim calls for
'exponential
increase'
of nuclear
arsenal

NEWS DESK

SEOUL: Kim Jong Un has called for an "exponential" increase in North Korea's nuclear arsenal, including mass producing tactical nuclear weapons and developing new missiles for nuclear counterstrikes, state media said Sunday. In a report at the end of a key party meeting in Pyongyang, Kim said the country must "overwhelmingly beef up the military muscle" in 2023 in response to what it called US and South Korean hostility, the official KCNA reported. Claiming that Washington and Seoul were set on "isolating and stifling" the North, Kim said his country would focus on the "mass-producing of tactical nuclear weapons" and develop "another ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) system whose main mission is quick nuclear counterstrike". Such goals form the "main orientation" of the 2023 nuclear and defence strategy, the report said.

Iran police
detain top-
tier football
players
in raid

TEHRAN: Iranian police briefly detained several unidentified top-tier football players in a raid on a party on New Year's Eve where alcohol was served in violation of an Islamic ban, Iranian media reported. Mingling between sexes outside marriage and drinking alcohol are banned under Iran's Islamic laws. Social restrictions are among issues that prompted mass unrest in recent months, following the death in custody of a woman accused of violating the strict dress code. The semi-official news agency Tasnim said several current players and former members of an unidentified top Tehran soccer club had been detained at the party east of the capital. "Some of the players were in an abnormal state due to alcohol consumption," Tasnim reported, without giving further details. — Agencies



SKARDU: A view of Chumik RCC Bridge near Sarfaranga Cold Desert as in the background an attractive view snow covered mountains. — APP

CPEC created 192,000 jobs
for Pakistanis: Nong Rong

The China-aided Eastbay Expressway of Gwadar port has begun operation since June, enhancing connectivity of the port, which is now transporting two hundred thousand tonnes of fertilizer

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has created 192,000 jobs, 6000MW of power supply, 510 km of highway, and 886 km of transmission line, which laid a solid foundation for Pakistan's socio-economic development, according to Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong. According to Gwadar Pro, he was speaking at the Awarding Ceremony for Outstanding Pakistani Staff of the CPEC Projects 2022, held in the Chinese Embassy. Ambassador Nong Rong said that a series of good news are coming from different sectors under the CPEC umbrella. The China-aided Eastbay Expressway of Gwadar port has begun operation since June, enhancing connectivity of the port, which is now transporting two hundred thousand tonnes of fertilizer. Karot Hydropower started commercial operation in June as well, which provides cheap and clean electricity, and can reduce 3.5 million metric tons of carbon emissions annually. The TEL and Nova power plants in Thar also started operations with the local coal. The Shanghai Electric Thar coal-based power plant has been connected to the national grid. Six model farms under Pakistan-China Red Chilli Contract Farming Project are achieving a harvest in Punjab and Sindh Province, with an estimated yield of 700 tons of dried chilli. This is just a portrayal of the great potential of agricultural cooperation



between our two countries. In fact, Pakistan's trade surplus of agricultural products for the year 2021 enjoyed an increase of 13 times. This year is expected to exceed a record high of US\$ 1 billion. The ambassador said that the CPEC is not possible without the joint efforts of staff from both China and Pakistan. According to him, CPEC, as the pilot project of BRI and China-Pakistan cooperation in

the new era, will always provide a broad stage for people to display their talents and realize personal values. It is hoped that the Chinese and Pakistani staff will cherish the opportunity, contribute to the construction of the CPEC with practical actions, and continue to consolidate the iron friendship between China and Pakistan. Meanwhile, Speakers at a webinar opined that Pakistan needs to revisit its geopolitical strategic and economic framework in the context of the changing world landscape, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. They said that Pakistan will be marking ten years of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) in 2023, which is pivotal to its economic security. According to Gwadar Pro on Sunday, the webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) on Saturday, the New Year's Eve. The theme of the webinar was "Pakistan's geopolitical repositioning in 2023". Munir Ahmed, Executive Director, Devcom-Pakistan said that China has established partnerships and projected its influence by utilizing the huge resources at its disposal. "As an important pilot project for the joint construction of "Belt and Road Initiative", CPEC has achieved fruitful and remarkable results. It has brought US\$25.4 billion in investment to Pakistan and created a total of 190,000 jobs, it was learned. In 2023, we should give full play to the role of CPEC as a critical engine of Pakistan's economic development."

'Russia
waging war
so Putin
can stay
in power'

WEB DESK

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Russia of "following the devil" and waging a war to ensure that its President Vladimir Putin remains in power "until the end of his life." Zelensky switched to speaking Russian in his nightly address on Saturday to send a message to the Kremlin and Russian citizens, as Moscow launched a series of deadly strikes that swept several regions of Ukraine ahead of New Year. "All this war that you are waging, you - Russia, it is not the war with NATO, as your propagandists lie," Zelensky said. "It is not for something historical. It's for one person to remain in power until the end of his life. "And what will be with all of you, citizens of Russia, does not concern him," he added. Zelensky said "Russian leader is hiding behind the troops, behind missiles, behind the walls of his residences and palaces" and behind his people. "He hides behind you and burns your country and your future. No one will ever forgive you for terror," Zelensky emphasized. Zelensky said "most of the Russian missiles intercepted by air defense forces." "If it were not for air defense, the number of casualties would have been different. Much bigger," he stressed. "And this is yet another proof for the world that support for Ukraine must be increased."

Aerial firing
on NY Eve
injures 37

DNA

KARACHI: At least 37 people were injured in aerial firing on New Year's Eve in Karachi, police and hospital officials said on Sunday. The injured include four women and two infants. Karachi police also arrested 19 suspects in connection with the firing. "New year's [eve] aerial firing [injury] incidents reported at medicolegal centres of Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), Abbasi Shaheed Hospital (ASH) and Civil Hospital Karachi (CHK) are 36, including four females, their ages between 1.5 and 61 years," said police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed.

Multiple killed in blast
outside Kabul airport

Local residents said a loud explosion was heard before 8 am in the vicinity of the military side of the heavily fortified airport

KABUL: An explosion outside the military airport in Kabul on Sunday has caused multiple casualties, a spokesman for the Taliban-run interior ministry said. "Today morning an explosion took place outside Kabul military airport, due to which a number of our citizens were martyred and injured," spokesman Abdul Nafi Takor told Reuters, adding that investigations are under way. He did not specify the nature or target of the explosion. Local residents said a loud explosion was heard before 8 am in the vicinity of the military side of the heavily fortified airport. They said the area had been sealed off by security forces, and all roads had been closed. The Taliban-run administration has been faced with a bloody insurgency waged by the Daesh, which has in recent weeks targeted a number of key installations in Kabul, including the Russian and Pakistani embassies as well as the office of the country's former prime minister. — DNA

PML-N to mediate
between MQM, PPP

KARACHI: The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has decided to mediate between Muttahida Qami Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) over the delimitation issue, citing sources. Sources privy to the development stated that MQM-Pakistan has expressed serious concerns over the non-implementation of the agreement signed with the Centre and the Sindh government. Sources said the MQM-Pakistan has cleared PML-N that holding local body elections without new delimitations in Karachi would be meaningless. The party also complained that the PPP-led Sindh government had not amended the Local Government Act. Sources revealed that senior leaders from PML-N have contacted PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari to convey him the reservations of MQM-P over delimitations. PML-N has tasked federal minister Sardar Ayaz Sadiq to arrange a meeting between PPP and MQM and resolve issues pertaining to local govt delimitation, they say. Earlier in December, a delegation of MQM-Pakistan (MQM-P), the coalition partners of ruling PML-N, met PM Shehbaz Sharif and conveyed reservations over non-implementation of the agreement signed with PPP. During meeting with PM Shehbaz Sharif, the delegation expressed their concerns over non-implementation of the agreement signed with PPP and federal govt. — DNA

China calls for 'dialogue',
cooperation with US



MONITORING DESK


SHANGHAI: China and the United States must pursue dialogue rather than confrontation and avoid the mistakes made during the Cold War, top Chinese diplomat Wang Yi said on Sunday in his first public comments since his

appointment as head of the ruling Communist Party's foreign affairs office. Wang was replaced as China's foreign minister on Friday by Qin Gang, former ambassador to the United States, but he was widely expected to retain a prominent role in foreign policy after his promotion in October to the Communist Party's Politburo, the country's top decision-making body. In an essay published in the official Party journal Seeking Truth, Wang urged major countries to "set an example" in the face of multiple challenges, citing China's strengthened cooperation with Russia over 2022. "Over the past year, we have unremittingly explored the correct way for the two major countries of China and the United States to get along with each other," he wrote. "The two countries should establish a way of getting along with mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation and put China-US relations back on the right track of health and stability," he said. Wang's stint as foreign minister saw a sharp rise in tensions between Beijing and Washington on a wide range of issues ranging from trade to Taiwan. He said in his Sunday essay that Taiwan remained at the "core of China's core interests" and the "foundation" on which China's political relationship with the United States is built.

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