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Pakistan welcomes China's latest Covid policy: Ambassador

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Imran delayed CPEC projects for four years

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'I don't need to satisfy anyone', Babar responds

Detailed News On Page-06



Geneva moot starts Flood-devastated Pakistanis looking for compassion

PM Shehbaz Sharif says humanity is at an inflection point in world history

NEWS DESK / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that millions of Pakistanis, affected by unprecedented devastation due to floods, looked for compassion and solidarity to build back better. "Humanity is at an inflection point in world history. Our actions today will shape the resilient future for our succeeding generations, the prime minister posted on his Twitter handle. In a related tweet, the prime minister said that he was leaving for Geneva today to co-host International Conference on Resilient Pakistan, being held on January 9, along with the UN Secretary-General.

He said that he would take the opportunity to present the case of flood victims before the world. "I will also throw light on steps my govt. has taken for relief & rehabilitation," he further posted. The prime minister said that in the conference they would place a comprehensive post-disaster framework plan for recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction with resilience before development partners and friendly countries. "Bridging funding gap is key to restore critical infrastructure, rebuild lives & livelihoods & revive economy," he added. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday departed to Geneva along with a high-level delegation to co-chair an international conference on 'Climate Resilient Pakistan', along with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, being held on January 9. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister of Climate Change Sherry Rehman and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Maryyium Aurangzeb accompanied the prime minister, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

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IMF team may hold talks with Ishaq Dar in Geneva

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of International Monetary Fund is expected to meet Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on the sidelines of International Geneva Conference going to be held tomorrow (Jan 9), the IMF spokesperson said on Sunday. In a statement, IMF representative in Islamabad Esther Pérez Ruiz said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a constructive talk with the managing director of the Fund on Jan 6 regarding the Geneva Conference scheduled to be held on Jan 9. The representative said that the IMF MD expressed her sympathy to those directly affected by the floods and supported Pakistan's efforts to build a more resilient recovery. She said that a delegation of the Fund is expected to meet Finance Minister Dar on the sidelines of Geneva Conference and they would discuss outstanding issues and are expected to find a way forward on the IMF loan programme. Pakistan entered a \$6 billion IMF programme in 2019, which was increased to \$7bn last year.

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SKARDU: Children enjoying traditional skating on snowy carpeted road during snow fall in Northern Areas of Pakistan. – APP

Aleem, Awn dismiss reports of forming 'new party'



BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Awn Chaudhry and Abdul Aleem Khan have dismissed reports of forming a new political party, Geo News reported on Sunday. The reports of former PTI leaders – who defected from the party – preparing to form a new political party and holding negotiations had been circulating since Saturday (January 7).

Sources said that some eminent politicians from central and south Punjab including Aleem were said to be joining the new party. However, Chaudhry clarified that former PTI stalwart Jahangir Tareen, Aleem or Chaudhry Sarwar are "not forming a new political party". "Currently, we are part of the government and are standing with it. Tareen group is an ally of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and will remain an ally," Chaudhry said. He said that the group is not forming a separate political party. Meanwhile, senior politician Aleem denied joining a political party or forming a new one, saying: "There is no truth in the reports of my inclusion in a new political party." "I am neither a part of any political party nor have any intentions to become," Aleem said adding that he has good ties with former PTI leaders Chaudhry Sarwar and Jahangir Tareen but has no intentions of becoming active in politics.

Khan urges powerful quarters to refrain from political engineering

Imran voices concern over country's situation

ALI HAMZA



LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan blamed ex-army chief General (retd) Qamar Bajwa for pushing Pakistan into the mess it is in today, urging the powers that be to refrain from political engineering in the next elections. He addressed the female supporters attending the women's convention of PTI in Karachi via video link from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore. Imran said that PTI is the only party in the country that can drive it out of prevailing crises. Ex-PM said that they have started deliberating on war-footing steps to rescue Pakistan when they next come into power. He added that, unlike in the past, people could not even hope now from the establishment as a powerful man – Bajwa – brought the country to the current stage. Only a strong government backed by public

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PTI condemns 'harassment' of Moonis Elahi, family: Fawad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry said on Sunday Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader Moonis Elahi and his family were being harassed to pressurize them. Taking to Twitter, former information minister Fawad Chaudhry said the establishment had no way but to use force for keeping incumbent government in power. Political opponents were using force against us but this practice would not be allowed to continue for long, he added.

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Ceasefire expires Russia claims it killed over 600 Ukrainian soldiers

DNA

MOSCOW: Moscow said on Sunday its army conducted a "retaliatory strike" in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk to avenge the deaths of 89 Russian troops killed in Makiivka. "More than 600 Ukrainian servicemen were killed" as a result of a strike on Kyiv troops stationed in two buildings in Kramatorsk, the Russian defence ministry said in a statement that could not immediately be verified. Two Ukrainians were killed and another nine were wounded despite Russian leader Vladimir Putin saying he had unilaterally ordered his forces to

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Aid to Ukraine a money laundering scheme: Kadyrov

DNA

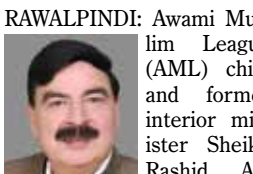
MOSCOW: The Western aid to Ukraine is a working money laundering scheme, Head of Chechnya Ramzan Kadyrov said on his Telegram channel Sunday. "I see that some are worried about the foreign aid to Ukraine.

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Briefs

Sh. Rashid warns of 'thrashing' march

DNA



RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Sunday warned of thrashing march instead of inflation march, saying the government had no control over prices of food and essential items. Taking to Twitter, he said first death due to hunger had been reported in Mirpur Khas. "The first death for seeking two meals a day has taken place in Mirpurkhas. Now, instead of inflation, there may be thrashing march. The foreign exchange reserves have reached \$4.5 billion, which is less than 20 days worth of imports. We need a map to avoid nine months of destruction the country has faced and default."

PTI to hunt down all parties in Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL



KARACHI: Senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Umer said on Sunday the PTI would defeat all parties in the upcoming local elections and claimed the whole Karachi would support PTI chief Imran Khan. He said disappointment had been pervasive and the country would rise again after the elections in 2023 when he claimed Imran Khan would be prime minister again, while alleging the thieves were imposed on country and the country was being looted.

Israel revokes FM Maliki's travel permit

Al-Maliki affirmed in statement that the occupation's measures violate int'l law

NEWS DESK



JERUSALEM: Israel on Sunday revoked the Palestinian foreign minister's travel permit, part of a series of punitive steps against the Palestinians that Israel's new hard-line government announced days ago. Riad Malki said in a statement that he was returning from the Brazilian president's inauguration when he was informed that Israel rescinded his travel permit, which allows top Palestinian officials to travel easily in and out of the occupied West Bank, unlike ordinary Palestinians. It was not clear whether the permits of other officials had been revoked as well. Israel's government on Friday approved the steps to penalize the Palestinians in retaliation for them pushing the U.N.'s highest judicial body to give its opinion on the Israeli occupation. Rulings by the International Court of Justice are not binding, but they can be influential on world opinion.

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Thousands protest against Israeli govt

DNA

TEL AVIV: Thousands of Israelis have taken to the streets to protest plans by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's new government that they say threaten democracy and freedoms. The protesters gathered in the city of Tel Aviv on Saturday, days after the most right-wing and religiously conservative government in the country's 74-year history was sworn in. It plans sweeping reforms, from expanding illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank to weakening the power of the judiciary. Protesters brandished signs with slogans including

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Is the PTI heading towards a cul-de-sac?

ANALYSIS

ANSAR M BHATTI

IMRAN Khan during his recent interaction with the media people had desired the Punjab Chief Minister Ch. Pervaiz Elahi to take a confidence vote ahead of the court hearing that resumes today. But hitherto Pervaiz Elahi has not done so nor does he intend to do it even in the coming days. Pervaiz fears if he gets a confidence vote, the PTI chairman will ask him to dissolve the assembly. There is also a possibility that some of the MPs may not put their weight behind him if a vote takes place. So in both cases he has chances of losing his power that is why he has perhaps decided to stay in power and wait for the decision of Lahore High Court. He seems to have succeeded in persuading Imran Khan as well that they should wait for the court verdict. Pervaiz Elahi, in his recent interviews, came down heavily on the PTI leadership openly taunting it to have knuckled



under pressure of the erstwhile Punjab government on May 25 when the party had decided to launch a long march towards Islamabad. In a way, he tried to scare the PTI leaders that if they lose the government in Punjab, they might face a similar situation. The PML Q is well known for being a party of the Establishment. Even when Pervaiz Musharraf was ruling this country the PML Q used to say that it would get the dictator elected to power again and again even in the uniform. According to Pervaiz Elahi, it was General Bajwa who had asked them to join the PTI in order to form a government in the Punjab. The Q league therefore considers General Bajwa as its benefactor. Not only this they Q leaders would sarcastically remind the PTI as well that it was because of the ex. army chief that they could enjoy power for about four years. Pervaiz probably wants the PTI not to grill Gen. Bajwa – a demand outright rejected by Imran Khan. The PTI chairman has now made it clear that if Pervaiz Elahi does not seek a vote of confidence he will then ask his MPs to resign from the Punjab Assembly. Since the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly belongs to the PTI therefore there won't be

any problem in acceptance of the resignations. The PTI is of the view that Pervaiz Elahi has already betrayed the PDM and especially the PML N therefore it may not be possible for him to go to the PDM for support in case the PTI withdraws its members from the provincial assembly. Hence, it thinks Pervaiz Elahi has no option but to comply with the demand of dissolution of the assembly. But this is also a fact that Pakistan's politics, over the years, has proved itself quite unpredictable and so is the case with the Pakistani politicians. I have pointed out in my previous peices that Pakistani politics badly lacks any moral values; commitments; fair play and so on and so forth. Self-aggrandizement; deceit; broken promises and changing of loyalties appear to be a few epithets the Pakistani politics can be characterized with. In the light of this it is not out of the question that Pervaiz Elahi when abandoned by the PTI, again resorts to the PDM for help and the PDM leadership 'in the larger interest' of politics and perhaps country as well, welcomes the Q leadership into the huddle. Imran Khan's predicament emanates from his inability to foresee things beforehand. His approach of crying over

the spilt milk has not earning any good repute to him. It was he who gave a three year full term to ex. Army chief but now he is trying to tell people that he committed a big mistake. It was he who had appointed the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) but now he is repenting on his decision. It was him who appointed Lt. Gen. Asim Munir as the DG ISI (now the army chief), but within months he removed him only because he had unearthed some fishy things happening in the prime minister's house. His critics nevertheless give him the benefit of doubt that the error of judgment on his part was because of his being new to statecraft and if voted to power, this time he may conduct himself in an independent manner. While this remains an undeniable fact that Imran Khan has emerged as the most popular political figure in Pakistan after his ouster, his ability to run the country in an efficient manner carries doubts. However, if he has learnt from his mistakes then it may altogether be a different game. Normally, we do not have a history and tradition of our politicians learning from their past mistakes. Most of them believe they had never committed any mistakes in

their political life. Same goes for the military dictators as well. Undoubtedly, fresh elections seem to be the only viable option to lift the country out of political and economic quagmire. The coalition government lacks credibility that is why the international donors are hesitant to contribute generously to the flood relief fund. The Geneva donors' conference is unlikely to yield positive results from Pakistan's perspective because the donors are not sure about the rightful utilization of their contributions. Political and economic instability makes it incumbent upon the authorities to pave way for the early elections. Even an early caretaker set up can relieve us from most of our economic woes. I do not see any problem with the idea of having a caretaker set up for a longer period in order to give relief to the bruised and battered economy. PTI's survival lies in its politics of agitation and protests. The party seems to have been distracted from this path ever since its chairman was advised to stay at home after sustaining injuries in the Wazirabad firing incident. Imran Khan needs to be in action again in order to whip up the slow but gradual drop in the party's popularity.

KMU conducts centralized test for admissions

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Medical University (KMU) conducted centralized tests at Peshawar and Islamabad on Sunday for admissions in various BS programs in which a total of 1201 candidates participated.

The result of the test would be declared within 48 hours which could be seen on the official website of KMU (<http://cat.kmu.edu.pk>).

According to the details, two separate test centers were established in Peshawar and Islamabad for the said test. In Peshawar test center, 851 students participated in the test while in Islamabad, 350 candidates appeared in the test.

It is pertinent to mention here that for admission to all allied health sciences programs affiliated to KMU, it is mandatory for every student to appear in KMU-CAT, without which no institute is allowed to take admission in any discipline. Meanwhile, KMU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that the purpose of conducting this test was to save the future of those students aspiring for admission in allied health sciences programs who, for whatever reason, were not able to participate in the previous tests of KMU and now they were facing difficulties in admissions to KMU-affiliated institutes. He said that private institutes of allied health sciences affiliated to KMU are our main stakeholders. Therefore, protecting their interests and solving their problems is our top priority, he told.

Reforms underway in Islamabad police

ISLAMABAD: Showing firmness to their basic objective of maintaining law and order and ensuring peace in the city, personnel of Islamabad police successfully handled security affairs during the last seven months and ensured effective action against criminal elements. With the support of the incumbent government and the Ministry of Interior, the top brass of the force is working hard to upgrade Islamabad police on modern lines, sharpen agility through the provision of resources and boost the morale of its personnel through welfare steps. During the last seven months, multiple steps have been taken to overcome several constraints and boost the morale of the force. All these steps have been aimed at creating a professional—APP



LALAMUSA: Prime Minister Adviser on Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira and former Tehsil Nazim Kharian Nadeem Asghar Kaira welcomed by people of Karnana. Qamar Zaman Kaira inaugurated work on Lalamusa-Dinga link road.— DNA

Nawaz Sharif to return soon, says Sh. Aftab

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: The Central Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz Group) ex-Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Sheikh Aftab Ahmed said that PML(N) Leadership former Prime Minister Pakistan Mian Nawaz Sharif will pull out the country from the deteriorating political and economic quagmire created by the previous immature regime of Pakistan Tehsil Insaaf imposed by some anti-democratic elements for their own interests. These views he expressed while talking to the media persons here at his residence in Attock on Saturday after his detailed meeting held with Mian Nawaz Sharif in London (UK). Replying different questions of the journalists, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed confirmed that Mian Nawaz Sharif is ready to come back to Pakistan very soon who will put the country on the right direction as par with the other developed countries of the world. He said that during his meeting with Mian Nawaz Sharif, he felt that his Quaid is much worry about the political, economic instability of the country because the economy of Pakistan was strengthened before 2018. Sheikh Aftab while highlighting the salient features of his tenure has said that socio-political economic conditions of the country were accelerating day by day. He said that price hike, load shedding of gas, electricity, unemployment, poverty, crimes, were controlled and masses were also prosperous during the period of PML(N) led Government. PML(N) Government also erected power houses of 14 thousand mega volts to overcome the load shedding of electricity. The country was going to be included in the race of other developed countries in the next ten years if PML(N)'s government is not snatched by the anti-democratic elements for their vested interests. Sheikh Aftab said that PML(N) will once again come into power after getting historic success in the forthcoming general elections under the able leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif and his competent experts' teams. Sheikh Aftab Ahmed also thanked to all his well-wishers came across the country to inquire his health during his hospitalization, he added.

Sara Malik case: Father alleges daughter sexually assaulted

DNA

KARACHI: The father of 22-year-old Karachi girl Sara Malik, who allegedly committed suicide at Karachi's Seaview beach, has claimed that her daughter was sexually assaulted by hospital owner where she was working as a veterinary doctor. The 22-year-old girl Sara Malik went missing from Karachi's Seaview beach on Friday and it was later transpired by police that she might have committed suicide while jumping into the sea.

In an FIR registered with Sahil police station, the father of the victim girl alleged that her daughter was raped by the owner of the veterinary hospital and she might have committed suicide under mental stress. "Sarah left home on Friday to perform her duties as a veterinary doctor in private hospital," he said in FIR, adding that she had a relationship with the owner of a veterinary hospital located in Karachi's Defence Nishat Commercial area. Police have arrested the owner and female staff of hospital on the complaint of the victim's father. Police have shifted the body to Jinnah hospital for autopsy and recorded statements of family members and witnesses. It is pertinent to mention here that the body of a female doctor who allegedly drowned at Karachi's Seaview beach was recovered on Sunday morning. The mysterious incident caught attention after her bag with identification documents was found near Do Darya's spot. After getting information, the police team reached Seaview beach and started an investigation into the mysterious incident.—DNA

MADADGAR door step delivery service

GILGIT: In order to introduce a more flexible and time-saving system, Gilgit-Baltistan Government has come up with the MADADGAR Door Step Delivery Service initiative to facilitate citizens in collaboration with Pakistan post and GB police and its first pilot is being run in Skardu district in three weeks' time Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan Muhiudeen Wani while talking to media here in Gilgit said that this is a first-of-its-kind public service initiative. The Madadgar Doorstep Delivery Service will enable the citizens in acquiring important documents such as domicile, birth certificate, legal heirship certificate, police verification, municipal certificates/ approvals, Revenue certificates of ownership or transfer, motor car registration, etc. from the comfort of their homes, CS GB added.—APP

Govt trying to delay elections

STAFF REPORT

ATTOCK: PTI former Provincial Minister Punjab, MPA (Attock) Syed Yawar Abbas Bokhari expressing his views on the prevailing political, economic crisis has said that PML(N) alliance Government has lost its majority which is manipulating to get the elections delayed under one pretext or the other to save their skin but the results will prove their political death in the forthcoming general elections. This he said while talking to the media persons here at his residence Al Murtaza House Attock on Sunday. The Attock focal person PTI Attock Syed-Khawar Abbas Bokhari along with PTI Coordinator were also present on this occasion. Syed Yawar Bokhari, replying different questions of the journalists said that there is no option except to dissolve the assemblies and announce date of holding elections as per advice of Mr. Imran Khan.

He challenged the PML(N) alliance rulers to assess their political importance during the elections of two provincial assemblies. Syed Yawar Bokhari said that PML(N) is even not in a position to face its people as they failed to deliver necessary relief instead of making tall claims to overcome price hike, shortage of life saving essential medicines, dollars, of gas, electricity, flour, wheat and other kitchen items. The present Government of PML(N) even has no funds to open LC in the banks and now making empty announcements to mislead its people dragging towards economic default leading to further agonized price rocketing situation in the country. Yawar Bokhari comparing the progress of his Government has said PTI led Government left 19 billion dollars in the national exchequer and the growth rate was going to 6% in the GDP. The Government of PTI also created 55 lacs jobs opportunities in public private sector

besides having 5 bumper crops and special privileges for the import industry extended during their tenure. Yawar Bokhari further said that works on development projects of more than 13 billion rupees were launched in his constituency which are to be completed within the stipulated period. He said mother and child hospital of 200 with the cost of Rs 6.5 billion rupees is also being constructed in Attock. Such as, CT Scan machine is also being installed in CCU besides upgradation of Cardiology, Liver and Hemi Thalia Centre in the Asfandiyar Bokhari District Hospital Attock to provide better medical care facilities to its people. He said development programs of 30 millions rupees have also been launched in over all nine union councils of PPI Attock. Whereas, Attock University is also being established as well as one girls and one boys college are also constructed along with allocation of maximum quota for the students of Attock in the Air University during the next academic year, he added.

Sherpao criticizes PTI for protest against inflation

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Sunday criticised the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for staging protests against spiralling inflation and said the recent price-hike was the result of the wrong policies of the previous govern-

ment. He stated this while speaking at a gathering in Watan Kor where scores of women political workers announced joining the QWP. "It is ironic that the ones whose flawed policies caused inflation are now protesting against it," he remarked. He said the PTI could not deceive the people through such tactics. He said PTI leader Imran

Khan must face the reality and accept his failure instead of blaming others. He said the economic situation started worsening during the PTI government due to its incompetence. Aftab Sherpao said the PTI had pushed the country towards bankruptcy and its leaders were now bent on creating anarchy, which was not good for the economy.

Imran delayed CPEC projects for four years, claims Kaira

GULZAR NOSHI

LALAMUSA: PPP Leader and Advisor to PM on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira has said that if PTI Chairman Imran Khan was not removed from power, he would have caused more damage to the country.

The PPP leader alleged that Imran Khan delayed the CPEC projects for four years. Kaira was addressing a launching ceremony of development projects in Lala Musa on Sunday. Lashing out at former prime minister, he said that inflation was at its peak in his tenure. He said that Imran angered friendly countries and as soon as he got power, he violated ties with China.

The PPP leader rued that Imran regarded it as his success that a storm of indecency was unleashed on social media. "Now Imran is attacking the Election Commission of Pakistan. He is talking against the state institutions. He has enraged Pakistan's friends and isolated the country in the comity of nations. He made Turkey, Malaysia, China and Europe angry," Kaira lamented.

The PM advisor was of the view if the former premier stuck to power any longer, the country would have to endure more pain.

Authorities directed to speed up construction work

RAWALPINDI: The authorities concerned have been directed to speed up the construction work of the Tourism Highway Project which would be an alternative road from Rawalpindi to Muzaffarabad, Murree, Kotli Sattian, Kahuta, and Kallar Syedan. According to an RDA spokesman, Chairman Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Tariq Mehmood Murtaza, while reviewing the progress of the construction work on the project here the other day, asked the FWO and Nespak to accelerate efforts for early completion of the project. The authorities concerned were also instructed to complete the missing links in the tourist highway. Murtaza said the completion of the project would provide travel facilities to tourists and the local residents would also benefit from it. He said the project was mainly started to facilitate tourists and promote tourism in the region. The road would be an alternative route to reach Murree and adjoining areas, he added. According to an RDA spokesman, the foundation stone of the 123-kilometre tourism highway from Rawat Pandori Chowk to the three hilly tehsils of Rawalpindi—Kahuta, Kotli Sattian, and Murree—and further up to Lohar Topa to Azad Jammu and Kashmir, was formally laid in April last year.

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Tel: (+92-51) 2822471, 2274221, 2878029, 2272273, 2822711, 2874289 - Fax: (+92-51) 2825132, 2274227.
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Karachi
Room No. 14/15, 3rd Floor, Nakhsh-e-Mil, Main Targ Road, 7th Block 2, P.E.C.H.S.
Karachi. Tel: (+92-21) 3630026, 3630149.
Fax: (+92-21) 3630147.
E-mail: karachi@freelinemovers.com

Lahore
F-4, Gulberg Centre, Main Boulevard, Lahore.
Tel: (+92-42) 3570881, 3570908.
Fax: (+92-42) 3571432.
E-mail: lahore@freelinemovers.com

Peshawar
Office No. C-2 3rd Floor, Zaher Plaza, Loft Road, King Road, Peshawar.
Tel: (+92-91) 2502778.
Fax: (+92-91) 2502788.
E-mail: peshawar@freelinemovers.com

Katol
House # 4, Street # 4, Charahi Anar Road, Shahr-e-Nasr, Katol - Islamabad.
Tel: (+92-7962) 773, 83 79796 896, 83 71988 268.
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Arabic Language Course Level 01	2 Months	Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm	22-01-2023
Certified Supply Chain Professional (CSCP) Study Group	5 Months	Sunday, 9 am to 3 pm	22-01-2023
Industrial Relations & Labor Laws	3 Months	Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm	22-01-2023
Challenges in Professional Teaching & Learning Behavior (Hybrid)	4 Months	Saturday, 3 pm to 7 pm	28-01-2023
International Trade Management:	3 Months	Sunday, 3 pm to 8 pm	29-01-2023
Import Export Procedures with Documentation			
Professional English Program	3 Months	Wed & Fri, 6 pm to 9 pm	08-02-2023
Administrative Skills	3 Months	Mon & Wed, 6 pm to 9 pm	08-02-2023
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Educational Leadership & Management	3 Months	Saturday, 11 am to 5 pm	11-02-2023
Event Management and Interior Designing	3 Months	Sunday, 10 am to 3 pm	12-02-2023
Healthcare & Lean Hospital Management (Hybrid)	4 Months	Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm	12-02-2023
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Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ISLAMABAD: The two state-owned companies, SNGPL and SSGC, have collectively provided the gas facility to around 108 villages and towns at their respective networks during the last fiscal year (July-March). Besides, the companies laid a 67-kilometer (KM) gas transmission network, 3,244 KM main, and 829 KM services lines, according to an official document available with APP. Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) also provided around 259,212 additional gas connections including 257,644 domestic, 1473 commercial and 95 industrial across the country as compared to 304,573 additional gas connections awarded during the same period in the fiscal year 2020-21. According to the document, the indigenous supply of natural gas witnessed a decline of around 5 percent and its contribution was recorded at 33.1 percent in the total primary energy supply mix of the country. The available statistics indicated that Pakistan had an extensive gas network of over 13,539 KM transmission, 155,679 KM distribution and 41,231 KM service gas pipelines to cater to the requirement of millions of consumers.—APP

GB than in other provinces and territories. GB had the highest rate across the country. Punjab had the highest proportion (80.1%) of those not involved in any kind of voluntary work. She said that the PIDE study shows that volunteerism increases with increasing educational level, with those with higher or more education having the lowest proportion (55%) of those never being involved in voluntary work. In addition, increased income levels are associated with a stronger involvement in voluntary work, as can be seen from the highest income level (fifth quintile) having the lowest proportion (61%) of those never engaged in voluntary work.

the report of SLICP and wanted to withdraw his complaint. Later, the complainant filed a representation with the president, which was accepted. Accepted the representation of the complainant, the president directed SLICP to submit its compliance report to the Wafaqi Mohtasib within 30 days.

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پاکستان ایئر فورس

میں بحیثیت انٹر میں شمولیت اختیار کریں

آن لائن رجسٹریشن 09 جنوری تا 18 جنوری 2023 www.joinpaf.gov.pk پر کیجئے۔

ایروٹریڈز	تعلیمی قابلیت: میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 60% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس کیا ہو۔ فزکس، کیمسٹری اور ریاضی کم از کم 33% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس ہو۔ انگریزی میں کم از کم 70/150 (47%) نمبر ہوں۔ قومیت: پاکستانی مرد / ازدواجی حیثیت: غیر شادی شدہ / عمر: 15½% تا 20 سال بشمول تاریخ 26 جون 2023 تک / قد: 163 تا 188 سینٹی میٹر
پی ایف اینڈوڈی آئی	تعلیمی قابلیت: میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 60% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس کیا ہو۔ فزکس، کیمسٹری اور ریاضی کم از کم 45% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس ہو۔ انگریزی میں کم از کم 75/150 (50%) نمبر ہوں۔ سلیکشن مندر پر بورڈ انٹرویو سے پہلے فونیکل ٹیسٹ بھی ہوگا جس میں 1 mile (8 min) Running، 20 Pushups، 15 Reach ups، 04 Chin ups اور Command Test (Loud & Clear Voice) شامل ہوں گے۔ فزیکل ٹیسٹ پاس کرنا لازمی ہے۔ قومیت: پاکستانی مرد / ازدواجی حیثیت: غیر شادی شدہ / عمر: 15½% تا 22 سال بشمول تاریخ 25 دسمبر 2023 تک / قد: 178 تا 188 سینٹی میٹر / نظر 6/6
سپورٹس مین	تعلیمی قابلیت: میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 60% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس کیا ہو اور نو امیدواران نے ضلعی، صوبائی، قومی یا بین الاقوامی سطح پر کھیلوں میں نمایاں کارکردگی کی استاد حاصل کی ہوں ایسے امیدواران انگریزی میں 47% نمبروں کی بجائے 50/150 (33%) نمبروں کے ساتھ کسی اہلی ہوں گے۔ سپورٹس کی بنیاد پر جرنی ہونے والے امیدواران سپورٹس ڈویژن کے ساتھ ساتھ فریڈوڈی میں بھی سرانجام دیں گے۔ قومیت: پاکستانی خواتین / ازدواجی حیثیت: غیر شادی شدہ / عمر: 16 تا 22 سال بشمول تاریخ 25 دسمبر 2023 تک / قد: 147 تا 188 سینٹی میٹر
خواتین میڈیکل اسٹنٹس	تعلیمی قابلیت: میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 60% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس کیا ہو۔ بیالوجی میں کم از کم 60% نمبر ہوں۔ فزکس اور کیمسٹری کم از کم 33% نمبروں کے ساتھ پاس ہو۔ انگریزی میں کم از کم 68/150 (45%) نمبر ہوں۔ قومیت: پاکستانی مرد اور آزاد کشمیر کے متعلقہ خطہ و دیگر علاقوں سے تعلق رکھنے والے امیدواران جنہوں نے اپنے علاقے کے سکول سے میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 50% نمبروں کے ساتھ اپنے علاقے کے سکول سے پاس کیا ہو اور انگریزی میں 50/150 (33%) نمبر ہوں۔ (ب) خیبر پختون خواہ (فاٹا)، گلگت بلتستان اور بلوچستان سے تعلق رکھنے والے امیدواران جنہوں نے اپنے علاقے کے سکول سے میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 40% اور انگریزی میں 50/150 (33%) نمبر حاصل کئے ہوں۔ (ج) بلوچستان صرف ضلع کوئٹہ سے تعلق رکھنے والے امیدواران جنہوں نے اپنے علاقے کے سکول سے میٹرک سائنس کم از کم 50% اور انگریزی میں 60/150 (40%) نمبر حاصل کئے ہوں۔ مندرجہ بالا علاقوں سے تعلق رکھنے والے امیدواران کسی بھی فریڈوڈی میں جرنی کے اہل ہوں گے بشرطیکہ وہ سرٹیفکیٹ کی باقی قاتیت پر پورا آتے ہوں۔

نوٹ PAF حاضر مرد اور فریڈوڈی ملازمین کے لیے اپنا دائرہ سرٹیفکیٹ اپنا چارج بھر کر ادا کرنے اور کانفرنس ہال جانچ (Verification) کے وقت اندراج کرنا ہمیں اجازت نہیں ہوگا۔ 2020 یا اس سے پہلے میٹرک پاس کرنے والوں کو اصل (Original) سند ملا کر پیش کرنا ہوگی۔

انٹرویو سے پاس نہ ہونے والے امیدواران کے میٹرک پاس نہ ہونے کی وجہ سے انٹرویو سے پاس نہ ہونے کی اطلاع دی جائے گی۔ تمام امیدواران کو کمری بالائی حد میں ایک سال کی رعایت دے جائے گی۔

ملفوظاتی کتابچہ ابتدائی امتحان کے دن دستیاب ہوگا۔

مدد ملازمت مجوزہ مراعات دیگر سہولیات اور رتی کے مواقع

- (ا) مدد ملازمت تنخواہ اور الاء سنسر (بی۔ اے۔ ایف کی مرجمہ پالیسی / پے اسکیلو کے مطابق)
- (ب) مفت کھانا اور رہائش
- (ج) فریڈوڈی کے بعد شادی شدہ افراد کو رہائش ملی۔ اے۔ ایف کی مرجمہ پالیسی کے تحت دی جائے گی۔
- (د) فریڈوڈی اور والدین کے لیے مفت طبی سہولیات
- (ه) گروپ انفورس ٹیکنیکل سروسز اور فریڈوڈی کے دوران ملحقہ امور
- (و) ریل اور روڈ ٹرانسپورٹ کے لیے خصوصی سہولیات
- (ز) اعلیٰ تعلیمی اداروں میں بچوں کی تعلیم کے لیے خصوصی کورس
- (ح) فریڈوڈی کی ادائیگی کے لیے رعایتی شرحی سہولیات
- (ط) پاک فضائیہ میں رہائشی سکیموں کی سہولیات

نالائبت

- (ا) درج ذیل قوانین کی خلاف ورزی کے مرتکب امیدواران بہر صورت سلیکشن انٹریڈنگ کے لیے نااہل ہیں۔
- (ب) پی۔ اے۔ ایف سے ملنی یا تعلیم مضامین کی بنیاد پر نامزد قرار دینے کے امیدواران جو امیدواران انٹریڈنگ میں جرنی کے لیے ہوتے والے امتحانات میں تین مرتبہ شامل ہو گئے ہوں۔
- (ج) ایسے امیدواران جنہوں نے اپنی استاد میں ردوبدل کیا ہو یا غلط معلومات فراہم کی ہوں۔
- (د) اخلاقی جرائم کی بناء پر عدالت سے سزا یافتہ۔
- (ه) ایک ہی انٹریڈنگ کے لیے ایک سے زائد میٹرز پر جرنی کرنا والے امیدواران۔
- (و) کسی بھی سرکاری ملازمت سے برطرف شدہ۔

سلیکشن کا طریقہ کار

- (ا) سلیکشن سینٹر پر ڈیزائن، اضافی امتحان (انٹرس، فزکس، جالبانی اور ریاضی مضامین)، پرسونلٹی (Personality) ٹیسٹ، انٹرویو اور ابتدائی طبی معائنہ۔
- (ب) ابتدائی امتحانات پاس کرنے کے بعد میرٹ کی بنیاد پر منتخب امیدواران کا سلیکشن سینٹر پر انٹریڈنگ اور فریڈوڈی۔
- (ج) میرٹ کی بنیاد پر منتخب انٹرمین کو تربیت کے لیے کوہاٹ اور کراچی بھیجا جائے گا۔
- (د) انٹرمین کو آرڈر کے میرٹ کی بنیاد پر کئے گئے سلیکشن کے مراحل کے نتائج میں سمجھے۔
- (ه) ابتدائی طور پر منتخب امیدواران کا کوہاٹ اور کراچی میں دوبارہ تفصیلی طبی معاینہ قبولیت یا نشتر لی اور اسے کیا جائے گا۔ اور جو امیدواران بھی معائنہ اور دروداران فریڈوڈی میں سلیکشن برآمدی لینا ہوگا وہ جب کہت کی بناء پر نامزد ہونے والے کنکورس سے ڈسچارج کر دیا جائے گا۔

اہل امیدواران اصل استاد بشمول ڈیٹیل ماسک شیٹ (DMC)، قومی شناختی کارڈ (سارٹ کارڈ)، اور جامعہ تصدیق شدہ پاسپورٹ سائز تصاویر کے ہمراہ درج ذیل کسی بھی ایک نزدیکی ترین پتے پر ایف ایف انفارمیشن اینڈ سلیکشن سینٹر پر رابطہ کریں۔

<p>☆ کراچی : متن شارب فیصل بھٹو، ڈی۔ اے۔ ایف نیٹ ویل فون: 021-99240999 021-34570222</p> <p>☆ لاہور : 14- میرٹھ، نیکوڑہ، ڈی۔ اے۔ ایف سینٹر فون: 042-99220084 36671041-43</p> <p>☆ ملتان : 217 شیر ماروڈ فون: 061-9201183 061-92017951</p> <p>☆ پشاور : 9، ایریڈوڈ پشاور فون: 091-9210829</p>	<p>☆ اسلام آباد : 310 نزدیکی بیدنگل کپٹنس، ماسکوڈ فون: 0992-385157 0992-385166</p> <p>☆ فیصل آباد : متن جمگرت روڈ نزدیکی ہریت چاک فون: 041-9201199</p> <p>☆ حیدرآباد : 49 صلاح اللہ، نزدیکی فون: 022-9200936 022-2780949</p> <p>☆ راولپنڈی : 3، ندی راولپنڈی، بالفائل AFIC فون: 051-5701143 5701257-58</p>	<p>☆ ممبئی، بھارت : فون: 081-9201753 0304-8220054</p> <p>☆ حیدرآباد، بھارت : فون: 071-9310409 071-5624515</p> <p>☆ دہلی، بھارت : فون: 0966-9280311 0459-350226</p> <p>☆ کلکتہ، بھارت : فون: 0344-0969323</p>
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پاکستان ایئر فورس

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Briefs

Two-day
free medical
camp
concludes

ISLAMABAD: A two-day medical camp organized by Dr. Akbar Niazi Teaching Hospital (ANTH) concluded here Sunday after offering various medical facilities on hundred percent discount. Talking to APP, an official of ANTH Mudassar Farooq said that a number of citizens visited the medical camp at the Centaurus Mall and availed medical advice, nutrition advice, screening and fitness tests. He said that health awareness materials were also distributed amongst the public during the multi-speciality health camp. He said that medical specialists, nutritionists, pediatric surgeons, physiotherapists and dermatologists provided consultation to the clients. He said that complimentary diagnosis such as diabetes, bone strength, body mass index along with free medicines were provided. Mudassar Farooq said that aim of the camp was to provide quality healthcare for people who are unable to afford the quality healthcare facilities. "These camps reduce medical bills and make healthcare more affordable for everyone" he added. He highlighted that such medical camps can help raise awareness about health issues and help people to take necessary decisions about their health to stay fit.—APP

ANF seizes
over 86.3 kg
drugs; arrests
two

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting four counter-narcotics operations in different areas of the country seized 86.3 kg of drugs and arrested two drug smugglers, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Sunday. He informed that ANF foiling a bid to smuggle drugs concealed in balloons recovered over 2.5 kg of Ice drug from a parcel being sent to Australia through a private courier company on Shahrah-e-Faisal Karachi. In another operation, ANF recovered 723 grams of Ice drug from another parcel booked for Australia at a private courier company in Islamabad.—APP

Governor
felicitates
Meher Kashif

ISLAMABAD: Governor Punjab, Engineer Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman Sunday felicitated Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on his appointment as Chairman of the first-ever Kyrgyzstan Trade House in Pakistan. Talking to Meher Kashif Younis who called on him at the Governor's House in Lahore, Baligh ur Rehman said the Kyrgyzstan Trade House recently opened by the Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Ulanbek Totuaev will help Pakistan in direct interaction with the business community of either country to promote bilateral trade and tap huge potentials through regional connectivity which he added is need of the hour in the prevailing global scenario. He called upon the chambers of commerce and industry to come forward and encash the existing unexplored market of Kyrgyzstan and adjacent states of the region, said a press release issued here.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of students receiving degrees on the occasion of convocation of RIPHA University.—DNA

Pak need's people-centric
security paradigm

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar urged for internal political stability and people-centric national security paradigm to meet the geopolitical and geo-economic challenges confronting the country. The vested interest of the key individuals runs the internal and foreign policy framework that is actually based on the short-term measures. A long term integrated and comprehensive national security framework is yet to come out. The speakers mentioned that the Establishment could not be A-political. It has to watch the state direction and national interests in the context of changing geopolitical landscape. However, the Establishment shall have no political fiddling and interference. The political experimentation has led us to chaos and internal instability, denting the geo-economic interests. The webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTN on Saturday. Speakers included

former chief ISI Lt General retd Muhammad Asad Durrani, Ambassador retd Asif Durrani, Bahria University Associate Professor Dr. Hassaan Daud Butt, National Defense University Assistant Professor Dr. Sumeera Imran, and Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed. The keynote speaker Lt General retd Muhammad Asad Durrani said the National Security (NS) is a comprehensive concept. Its three pillars – internal, external and defence are linked to each other. The domestic front is the most important while other two are essentially its projection. A stable structure is built on firm foundations. In terms of NS, it implies strengthening the Civil Society. The "people centric" policies are therefore the mantra we often recite. Devolution or Local Governments are the doctrine and instrument to implement the policy objectives. "Subsidiarity" is the basic principle of Public Administration, which means that what can be done at a lower level, must not be undertaken at a higher level. He said because of the weakness of our

state structures, it's the private sector that meets most of our needs, especially for the masses. Gaps in health and education for example are filled by the NGOs or through the individual enterprise. The best illustration of the role of our "Non-State Actors" is in the economic field. Undocumented, Underground, or whatever it may be described; this sector is now probably larger than the official economy. By keeping themselves out of the extractive state's stranglehold, it provides poor employment and affordable livelihood. They may even be helping the country to stay afloat despite the near collapse of our official economy. Ambassador Retd Asif Durrani urged to take steps to come out of the 'security state' paradigm and focus more on the non-traditional security threats including and food and climate security. A long term consistent plan shall be focus of all stakeholders in the government and state institutions, supported by efficient geopolitical diplomacy. Dr. Hassan Daud Butt stated that the crisis creates new opportunities and after

COVID-19 and the existing financial crises, we have an opportunity for introspection and also to establish a better pattern of development. In these challenging times, governments have a vital role to play in identifying low-hanging fruits in sustainable development. We must prioritize government investments toward a people-led paradigm rather than a security paradigm. Infrastructure projects shall be the priority to create rural-urban synergy where the agriculture sector is a major contributor to national GDP. Dr. Sumeera Imran said: Political instability, polarization and uncertainty are the greatest threats to Pakistan's stability. Political stability is the third important pillar of state power, military and economic being others. In terms of parity and significance, political stability stands at par with military strength and economic security. Revival of the nation's confidence in the sanctity of the political system and administrative structure takes the first priority in any security resolution.

Govt takes
practical
steps
journalists
rights:
Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday said that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM's) government had taken practical steps for the protection of the rights of the journalist community. In her congratulatory message to the newly elected office bearers of Peshawar Press Club, she said that the incumbent government fully believed in freedom of expression. The minister congratulated Arshad Aziz Malik on his election as President, Rizwan Sheikh as Vice President, Irfan Musazai as General Secretary, Tayyab Usman as Joint Secretary, Imad Waheed as Finance Secretary and other members of the governing body on their success in the elections. The minister said that journalists of the press club had always promoted positive and responsible journalism in the country. She expressed her hope that newly elected body of Peshawar Press Club would devote its skills and energy for the welfare of the Press Club and the journalist community. She expressed her best wishes for the newly elected office bearers of Peshawar Press Club.—APP

Poor unable
to get two-
time meal
due to record
inflation

ISLAMABAD: The poor unable to get two-time meal due to unprecedented inflation across the country. The flour price has risen by Rs10 to Rs160 per kg. In the open market, the wheat price has increased to all-time high of Rs5,150. Long queues of people could be seen all cities across the country and they have to return empty-handed after waiting for hours. In Lahore, the rate of 40kg Chakki flour has been raised to Rs6,400 after an increase of Rs400. Meanwhile, the Punjab Food Department has decided to increase the quota of subsidized wheat to resolve the issue of demand and supply. Punjab Food Director Shoaib Saeed said that the quota of flour mills will be increase by 1,500 tonnes daily. After the increase, the flour mills quota will rise to 23,000 tonnes from 21,500 tonnes.—DNA

NAB
summons PTI
leader Zulfi
Bukhari
on Jan 9

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Saturday summoned the former SAPM and PTI leader Zulfi Bukhari. As per details, the anti-corruption watchdog sent another notice to Zulfi for the investigation of the transfer of land for Al Qadiri university. The anti-corruption watchdog ordered the PTI leader to appear before NAB along with the land transfer record. The former cabinet member Zulfi Bukhari was told that the registry documents should also be submitted to NAB. Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Zulfi Bukhari has withdrawn his British nationality.—APP

PM's resolve
to meet IMF
conditions lauded

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Sunday lauded the resolve of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to meet International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditionalities. Prime Minister has expressed resolve to complete the terms of the IMF Extended Fund Facility programme which is a step in the right direction as it will subside anxiety in the market, he said. Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as Chairman of PVMA said that the PM has assured the Managing Director of the IMF to complete the terms of the IMF's program and explained Pakistan's economic difficulties after the devastating floods. IMF delegation will come to Pakistan soon which is also a piece of good news which will tackle fears among the investors and masses as some elements are busy spreading rumours about default, he added. Pakistan entered a \$6 billion IMF programme in 2019, which was increased to \$7 billion last year. The programme's ninth review, which if completed successfully, would result in the release of \$1.18bn to Pakistan. The review is currently pending as the government did not comply with

the agreement which prompted IMF to suspend the tranche. The IMF review has earlier been put off for two months due to the PML-N-led government's unwillingness to accept certain conditions placed before it by the Fund, and the disagreements have yet to be resolved. The business leader said that the international community seems unconcerned about the plight of people in Pakistan hit by floods. Large parts of the Sindh and Balochistan provinces remain inundated. The number of food-insecure people in Pakistan has doubled to 14 million and another 9 million have been pushed into extreme poverty. These flooded areas now look like permanent lakes, transforming forever the terrain and the lives of people living there. No amount of pumps can remove this water in less than a year. Pakistan is suffering not just from flooding but from recurring climate extremes. In spring 2022, the country was in the grip of a scorching, drought-aggravating heat wave that caused forest fires. The fact that some of the same areas that received record temperatures were subsequently submerged shows sharp swings in weather patterns that are becoming a norm

Renowned
Urdu poet
Atash
remembered

ISLAMABAD :Noted Urdu poet Khawaja Reazuddin Atash was remembered Sunday on his 22nd death anniversary among the literary circles and tributes were paid for his services to Urdu literature including language and poetry. Atash belonged to a literary family hailing from Delhi and Azimabad, Bihar and following political and civil unrest in the then East Pakistan, Atash migrated to Karachi. He started writing poetry from an early age and participated actively in 'mushairas' and literary sittings. Atash wrote ghazals, nazms and hamd-o-naat and authored books on the Urdu language. He published the biography of Urdu poet Dr. Mubarak Azimabadi titled "Daagh ka Akhri Charagh", a disciple of Daagh Dehlavi. His notable work includes "Urdu ka Shajra-e-Nasab", a linguistic research and reference work on the Urdu language, and "Urdu Dushman Tehreek ke Sau Saal", a collection of investigative papers and articles about anti-Urdu movements.—APP

Negative policies
torturing masses

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Sunday said the public's anxiety has increased and a good number of people are disappointed about the future of the country. Despite the challenging situation, important economic decisions are being politicized and these wrong policies are not benefiting the government, but harming the public, it said. The economic conditions of the country have been bad for the past several years, but now the situation has become alarming and the masses are getting disappointed about the future of the country, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of PEW. He said that the country's economy is nosediving, there are no new jobs and existing jobs are also decreasing in various sectors and the country's default has become the most important issue of discussion among the public. Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the agriculture, industrial and service sectors are in decline and the country's population is getting poor day by day. Masses have been forced to cut essential expenses while education and health have become a luxury ending the prospects for future development, he noted. Small businessmen are worried about the situation while many entrepreneurs are moving their businesses and capital abroad out of desperation which will not be good for Pakistan. Youth are leaving the country in large numbers which has never been seen in the past which indicates that they see no future for themselves in Pakistan. He said that the majority of local and foreign investors are considering an investment in Pakistan as a high-risk deal while the majority of people believe that politicians lack any solution to the existing problems and they have no desire for it because their attention is focused on politics and serving the elite. Elites are becoming more influential and they are successfully producing desired outcomes which are squeezing the masses facing multiple problems.

NSC meeting to match economic challenges

CHAUDHRY MUHAMMAD LATIF



The top most forum of the nation called the National Security Committee (NSC) held a comprehensive meeting for two days to contemplate on pressing challenges confronting the country, were extensively discussed and vital decisions were taken. The civil and military leadership took decisive action against terrorists and their facilitators to wipeout rising terrorism, militancy, and threatening national economic position. It is vividly felt from the perusal of the press release that main focus of the NSC meeting was to crush and curb the explosive threat of terrorism. But the meeting seems to have accorded less importance to the equally dangerous crisis of the economy of the country which is being exploited by the forces opposed to the state as well as to the government. There is no denying the fact that several na-

tions lost their supremacy due to economic down fall. The National Action Plan has to be reactivated to get hold of terrorists and their facilitators hidden in, generally, holly mazzars, lungerkhanas, shelter homes, beggars and newspaper hawkers to mark high value targets. The coalition government should take bold steps to adopt economic measures including austerity and frugality. It is surprising that press release of the meeting of the NSC has not laid as much emphasis to the national economic crisis as it deserves. We must seek to the principle and process of earning by saving. The federal government needs to review the matter of undue and extraordinary concessions and perks allowed by some large organizations, like WAPDA giving free electricity to it employees, PIA granting annual recreation tour trips within and abroad, Railways issuing free travel passes in their trains, Coastal Guards officials allowed to purchase confiscated vehicles etc on depreciated prices. The latest discovery of the potential of Toshka Khana gifts requires immediate legislation to regulate the gifts consigned to Toshka Khana, each of which carries the prestige and honor of the personality who offer the gifts and grace our

dignitaries, political or otherwise. The sacred watch and the only one of its kind in the world should have been placed at a prominent place for the devotees for their sight for spiritual devotion and paying gratitude to the honorable donor who had got it prepared. In this matter we can follow the example of our honorable brother country Turkey who have enshrined and preserved the gifts, donations, and jewelry offered by the devotee Muslims for the support the Turkish Caliphate. The valuable sacrifice of South Asian Muslims has become a symbol of Islamic brotherhood and a bond of friendship for Pakistan and Turkiye. It is astonishing to see the wisdom and vision of the people at the helm of affairs that the schemes for the amelioration of energy position placed before the federal cabinet for sixty two billions are only conceptual and not implementable. The proposals in this respect seem to lead to confrontation and noncooperation by the opposite provincial governments. The practicable and feasible measures for the federal government in the current political scenario would be advisable in the sectors and sphere where they have

direct full administrative control. Instead of managing closing hours of offices and business concerns the apt and appropriate action would be to regulate opening time of offices and business community. The order of one holiday in a week should be repeated. The federal government could freeze recruitments, trim public service, sell or lease loss making enterprises, crush smuggling of commodities and currency, ban tours and transfers. The federal government should encourage micro level development oriented schemes like building of artificial lakes, check dams, water reservoirs, water tanks, and roads in rural areas with public participation resulting in jobs for the jobless. The concept of protocol is using major chunks of police force and the public is left at the mercy of bandits and rascals for street crimes. In the open day light male and female travelers are looted in the streets and nowhere police is visible nor available. The number of national flag holders should be reduced to release the police force for their basic duty of law and order. A line should be drawn in security and protocol objectives. The writer is Retired Additional Chief Secretary and Advocate Supreme Court of AJK.

Railways retrieved
974 acres of land

SLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has retrieved as many as 961 acres of its land worth Rs23,406 million during various anti-encroachment operations across the country from the land grabbers. "Around 480 acres retrieved in Punjab, 139 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 331 acres in Sindh and only 24 acres in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said that about 3,287 acres in Punjab, 832 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,180 acres in Sindh, and 687 acres of land in Balochistan were being encroached. The official said that in the light of the directives of the Supreme Court, the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached railway land all over the Railway network were initiated and a joint procedure order was issued to all Divisional Superintendents for retrieval of Railways land from encroachment.—APP

Nominal change
I have changed my name from Mushaim Abbas to Muhammad Mustafa Abbas.
FBISE K SSC New Registration
No. 2424340381 for 2022 record to be corrected.
Muhammad Mustafa Abbas
son of Madah Abbas
POF School Campus 4
Gadwal Wah Cantt.

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

Pak forex reserves stand at \$10b

Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has said that Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves currently stand at \$10 billion and not \$4 billion as \$6 billion held by commercial banks also belong to the country. The minister made the remarks on Saturday while talking to a private news channel and maintained that Pakistan's due debts are being returned on time and the country's forex reserves will "stabilise again very soon". The statement by the financial czar comes a day after this paper had reported that the country's forex reserves held by the central bank fell to \$4.5 billion - hardly enough to finance 25 days of imports - after Pakistan returned over \$1 billion in loans to two foreign commercial banks. According to sources, two separate repayments of \$600 million and \$415 million have been made to two Dubai-based commercial banks. Read PM in last-gasp bid to revive IMF talks Dar further told the news channel that an International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation will visit Pakistan soon. He also said that he will meet the IMF officials at the Geneva moot beginning tomorrow and will stop in the UAE on a three-day official visit on his way back to Pakistan. The moot will be held on January 9 and Dar is expected to leave for Geneva along with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and meet IMF officials on the sidelines of the conference. The finance minister furthered that he is hopeful that funds from friendly countries, including Saudi Arabia, will be transferred to Pakistan soon. It is pertinent to mention here that the economic activities in the country have already been severely affected due to depleting reserves, devaluation of local currency and non-opening of letter of credits (LCs) for private companies. It is expected that Pakistan and the IMF will hold a discussion next week for the completion of the pending ninth review of the programme. Read More Forex reserves rise to \$8.9b If the pending review is completed successfully, Pakistan will get a loan installment of over \$1 billion from the IMF. A plan laying out a timeline and the financing of the rebuilding effort has been a sticking point in talks to clear the ninth review that will release \$1.1 billion in IMF funds and unlock other international funding too. Dar has been critical of the IMF lately, publicly saying that the lender was acting "abnormally" in its dealings with Pakistan, which entered the \$7 billion bailout programme in 2019. However, PM Shehbaz has requested the IMF managing director to immediately send over a team to the country to start review negotiations for the next tranche of its loan. The premier's direct intervention in the IMF programme talks suggests that the matters have slipped out of the hands of the finance ministry.



Forging an 'Economic Iron Curtain'?

Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yasutoshi Nishimura met with US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo in Washington. The two reached consensus on strengthening cooperation on economic security, in other words, strengthening export restrictions on China and Russia in critical technologies such as semiconductors, biotechnology and artificial intelligence, ganging up to promote decoupling and breaking supply and industrial chains. Whatever excuse they use, this is a step backward in the global history of free trade. The US and Japan have cloned their military alliance in the field of economy and trade. Japan, which sees trade as fundamental in its national development strategy, should think carefully. After the talks, Nishimura delivered a speech at the US think tank Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). He said that democratic powers had made a mistake more than two decades ago in assuming that deepening economic interdependence by bringing China and then Russia into the World Trade Organization would "unquestionably bring about a peaceful world." Rather than helping to build peace through prosperity, it only ended up increasing the geopolitical risks, Nishimura said. Authoritarian governments used economic growth and technological advancement to boost their power. It makes people feel uncomfortable to hear this superficial point of view, which has been circulating in Western "civil science" circles, and is now solemnly expressed by Japan's trade and industry minister. It is not surprising for the heads of Western countries' security departments, who see exaggerating "threats" as their responsibility, to say so. But this is 2023. It is a mystic regression that a major trading power's trade and industry minister's understanding of global free trade remains at the level of when the "Iron Curtain" speech was delivered. His logic involves forging a new iron curtain of economics and trade in the world. They did not make a mistake more than 20 years ago. They are making a huge historical mistake today. They are splitting and dividing this world, which was only able to reach its current closely connected status thanks to economic globalization. To be honest, Japan is sometimes hard to understand. China has been Japan's largest trading partner for 15 consecutive years, and trade with China accounts for more than 20 percent of Japan's foreign trade. This is not a question of whether some politicians like it or not, but about the vital interests of a large number of Japanese people. Therefore, it is normal for Japan to feel trapped in a dilemma when Washington puts pressure on the country to cooperate in the containment and suppression of China, and Japan is relatively restrained on some issues. However, on other issues, Japan can suddenly act proactively, and even more radically than Washington. This immaturity and instability in national strategy makes it difficult for Japan to achieve the goal of becoming a "political power" it has been striving for, and it also makes neighboring countries worry. The US strategy toward China has become an overt conspiracy. It is committed to weaving an external network that blocks and restricts China's development. It starts with the alliance system, in which Japan plays an important part, but it is fundamentally being used as a tool. Of course, Japan has its own calculations between China and the US, and in fact it has a certain space to use its own initiative.

The Lebanon-Israel maritime deal and Hezbollah

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



A former Israeli general Yaakov Omidor, and Netanyahu's national security adviser, stated that "there is no question that Israel has capitulated" on where the border should be. Nonetheless at least in the short term, Israel needs to get the fuel out of the deal. The main conflict between Israel and Hezbollah was not over gas but over Hezbollah's ideology, weapons production and pro-Iranian agenda

The 1983 Israel-Lebanon Peace Accords established diplomatic relations after Israel expelled the Palestine Liberation Organization from its northern neighbor. Syria immediately abrogated this new peace, even though it was a treaty under international law. The agreement signed did not have "an Arab leader and an Israeli leader sitting down, but was a paper-document agreement between the US and Israel and the US and Lebanon, and Lebanon "signed in the same room of the Israelis. On the security front, the noticeable threat from Hezbollah is considered a decisive factor. Hassan Nasrallah's leadership gave security assurances to the Israeli leadership that

the shock field would not be attacked. The entire deal was vetted by the group's top officials before it was approved, marking a reversal in years of Hezbollah's hardline stance in border negotiations with Israel. However, the question is whether Hezbollah's conciliatory position will be maintained. The movement currently lacks popular support in Lebanon and Hezbollah will be eager to exploit the country's fragile political situation using its resistance rhetoric against its political opponents and their dealings with Israel. In any case, "Lebanon has no interference. The country occupied by Syria and Iran" does not have the ability to act in its own interest. Therefore, deterrence cannot work against an actor. Unlikely to have an agency, "That applies to Hezbollah as well, if Iran, which founded, finances, arms and trains Hezbollah, supplies gas off the coast of Israel but it would not decide to threaten Fields because economics drive politics is not perceived in the Middle East. It concerned that Israel has now allowed significant financing of a terrorist organization Hezbollah that uses gas sales to Beirut to further Iran's goals. Indeed, the new deal may provide an incentive for Hezbollah and Iran to sabotage gas development by using threats of sanctions to force concessions from Israel and the United States. In endorsing the deal, Israel's defense establishment says "we were on the verge of war with Hezbollah". Now it is impossible for Hezbollah to open hostility toward Israel. Although this is the worst time for Hezbollah to go to war because it has sent 4,000 to 8,000 armed men to Iran to support widespread protests against Israel's government. If it's about deterrence, Israel just split them paying protection money to his opponents. As for the American guarantee of Israel's security, this is said to be part of the exchange of letter. American support for the Jewish state depends on the fact that "Israel carries its weight" as an ally of the United States. Israel support United States stance on the issue of Russian invasion in Ukraine and China's growing threat to Taiwan. Israel's willingness to chart its own course, as then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposed the Obama administration's Iran nuclear deal in a 2015 speech to Congress, told Gulf States like the Emirates United Arabs who can trust Israel. He added that this helped open the door to Ibrahim Accord. The Lebanon deal could undermine that notion. Israel is going to become a natural gas export hub, with lines connecting Persian Gulf producers and Israel to Europe. Instead, it seems likely that Israel will continue to rely on natural gas exports through Egypt and Jordan rather than develop its own infrastructure. Is-

raeli Prime Minister YairLapid hailed the agreement as a political achievement, saying: It is not every day that an enemy country recognizes Israel in a written agreement in front of the international community as the beginning of a new era. But the Lebanese government has also emphasized that the deal, reached after more than a decade of negotiations, does not signal a normalization of relations with Israel and is less important than agreements that established full diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Israel. In Israel, the deal has been variously portrayed as a historic achievement that will boost regional prosperity and stability, or as a shameful capitulation to threats from the Iranian-backed Lebanese group Hezbollah, which has waged a months-long war with Israel. Before a deal was sealed, Hezbollah had promised to block any Israeli attempt to drill at Karish Easter Mediterranean, an underwater gas field near the disputed border between the two countries. Earlier this year, the Israeli army shot down several drones sent by Hezbollah as warnings to tamper with the Karish site, fueling fears of heightened tensions if the talks fail. Israel has achieved in security, economy, diplomacy and energy. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said Thursday that his group was backing down on the gas issue. Now that the naval deal had been reached, he said in a televised address: "The resistance mission is complete and all Hezbollah's extraordinary actions have ended." A Hezbollah spokesman said this meant that Hezbollah forces, which had been temporarily placed on full alert, were no longer preparing for a close battle. "This deal is a concession if you look at it from the Israeli point of view" said SaritZahawi, a former military intelligence officer, describing it as a "moral and psychological victory" for Hezbollah. In my understanding, it is a time buying strategy, the deal may not stop the war, but it possibly will help postpone the next conflict. A former Israeli general Yaakov Omidor, and Netanyahu's national security adviser, stated that "there is no question that Israel has capitulated" on where the border should be. Nonetheless at least in the short term, Israel needs to get the fuel out of the deal. The main conflict between Israel and Hezbollah was not over gas but over Hezbollah's ideology, weapons production and pro-Iranian agenda. According to Amedor (A fellow at the conservative-leaning Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security and Washington Strategy) the offshore gas deal may be good for Israel economically; it could turn out bad strategically. The question is how the Hezbollah leader, Nasrallah, is reading the situation. If Nasrallah understood the deal to mean the Israelis had accepted his threats and were not ready to confront Hezbollah, it would also speed up the schedule for the next conflict.

Musk is repeating Trump's mistakes

Mamdouh al-Muhainy

At first, Donald Trump's strategy for dealing with the US media was intelligent. He considered it part of the coalition of corrupt elites that he promised to get rid of. Seeking to undermine the media and its credibility, called it fake news and said that journalists are corrupt, giving them a long list of titles. In contrast to the perception of many who saw him as an impulsive figure who did not weigh his words, Trump knew what he was doing. His attacks on the media reinforced his image as an outsider being fought because he was against the establishment and sought to get rid of it. The media, on the other hand, was painted as seeking to protect the establishment and the interests of their owners, who are in bed with the politicians in Washington. It was an ingenious strategy until he took it too far, becoming paranoid and deluded into thinking he was being targeted. This led him to make one mistake after another, and they eventually led to his ouster from the White House. In my view, the media cleverly tricked him. They attacked him relentlessly, going as far as depicting him as an unstable man unsuited for the most important job in the country who damaged the image of the presidency. These are among the elements that the Biden campaign focused on, undermining his image as a man worthy of leading the nation. Most American and Western media outlets were explicitly anti-Trump, and they did not hide the fact their aim was to get rid of him before he even completed his first term. For Trump's part, he gave them all the material they could have dreamed of. The symptoms of a man who felt persecuted and unfairly targeted quickly became apparent. His long quarrels with journalists damaged his image. In that famous press conference, CNN correspondent John Acosta deliberately sparked an argument with him and provoked him in front of millions of viewers. With malicious cunning, Acosta triggered Trump's outbursts, which were not befitting for presidents. Trump berated journalists at press conferences, treating them like schoolchildren and demanding that they sit down and shut their mouths. However, he forgot that these journalists were devouring him like hyenas without him realizing it, leaving him to bleed out till the end. By the time COVID hit the

US, Trump had reached an advanced stage of paranoia and made glaring mistakes. He sparked a conflict with the medical team, refused to wear a mask, and, terrifyingly, denied the scientific facts at a time when the number of deaths was increasing. He was primarily motivated by a desire to defend himself against the media outlets that were seeking to exploit the COVID pandemic to push him out. And so he went the opposite direction, denied the facts, and accused others of baselessly attacking him and trying to take their revenge. Nonetheless, it is his refusal to recognize the results of the elections and the January 6 attack on the Capitol that are the clearest manifestations of his volatility and delusions. Trump's story has been well documented, but Elon Musk is repeating this scenario. Musk did the right thing when he opened the door to dialogue and weakened the grip of the radical left on Twitter, breaking the iron-clad monopoly that massive companies had enjoyed. However, he has begun making the same kinds of mistakes because of journalists' attacks, defending bizarre and illogical ideas put forward by deranged characters and websites knee-deep in conspiratorial thinking. Musk's attack on Dr. Anthony Fauci, who led the war on the pandemic in the United States, is one example. Sharing a link claiming that Nancy Pelosi's assaulted husband had been sexually involved with a man is another. These are indications that Musk feels like a persecuted victim. It is not just a desire to hit back at what he sees as unjust attacks from the media that drives him. Convinced that Twitter is the voice of the people and aims to fix human civilization, he also wants to present Twitter as an alternative to journalism and the media. And that just isn't true. Twitter is a platform where nothing is sourced, and while it allows information to spread faster than it does through the media, it is an inherently open space where even common and sick individuals can spread their obsessions. Twitter is a platform for the exchange of ideas. However, Musk, who is angry with the press and picking fights with journalists, believes he can not only challenge the media and confront it but obliterate it. We have already seen this story, and we are well aware of how it ends.

Source: Asharq Al-Awsat

America's Covid test requirement for Chinese travelers is a farce

Frankie Huang

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy, whose country has in place a similar testing requirement, called for the European Union to follow Italy's lead in adopting the same policy, but her request was denied by most member states on grounds of inefficacy. Indeed, without universal testing, contact tracing and masking mandates, selective reinforcement by geographic origin succeeds only in singling out the predominantly

When the Chinese government abruptly eased its draconian Covid-19 policies in December, I felt an uncanny combination of abject horror and relief. After three years of endless PCR tests and lockdowns — "zero Covid," which has gripped China like a vise, was finally brought to a close. Overseas Chinese people like me will finally be able to more easily reunite with family and try to make up for lost time. But China's recklessly executed reopening has become a farcical nightmare resulting in millions of people infected, and hospitals and crematoriums overflowing; seemingly overnight, it felt as if everyone I know in China has tested positive for the coronavirus. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's testing requirement for passengers "on flights originating from the People's Republic of China (PRC), including the Special Administrative Regions

(SAR) of Hong Kong and Macau," will once again invite a racial backlash against Asian people in America. Even though the CDC requirements are not a nationality-based travel ban, history told me to brace for xenophobic panic. I didn't need to wait long before the Biden administration swiftly rolled out a new policy requiring travelers from China to present negative Covid-19 tests before entering the United States. For three years, Western media coverage has treated the Covid situation in China like a spectacle, an opportunity to gawk at the toxic cesspool contained in self-imposed isolation across the ocean. But now that flights between the United States and China are poised to return to pre-pandemic frequency, Chinese people will no longer be "over there," but will once again be able to regularly travel. We already live with Covid; infection rates — measured by hospitalizations — are on the rise in many countries around the world. Covid is not a new enemy, for it has already breached the walls of the United States. Some public health experts have been quick to call out the new policy as useless in addressing the spread of the highly contagious coronavirus. Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy, whose country has in place a similar testing requirement, called for the European Union to follow Italy's lead in adopting the same policy, but her request was denied by most member states on grounds of inefficacy. Indeed, without universal testing, contact tracing and masking mandates, selective reinforcement by geographic origin succeeds only in singling out the predominantly Chinese travelers and reviving rampant anti-Asian hate. In the place of coherent policy, requirements similar to those in the United States — and in a handful of other nations, such as Italy, India, Japan and Britain — are nothing more than the violent, involuntary jerk of a giant racist muscle. For the better part of this year, the mainstream narrative in America has been that the pandemic is over and that Covid is no longer a true danger. President Biden said so himself, and just 12 percent of all adults in the United States still view Covid-19 as a severe health risk. Even amid the winter "triple-demic," no nationwide viral mitigating action has been taken, and pundits gleefully ridicule masking as fringe activism. Troubling reports of debilitating long-Covid symptoms and multiple reinfections have done little to influence policy, but as soon as China reopened to the world, the administration mobilized. The official narrative cites concern that a surge of infections

in China could spawn a more dangerous variant, even though the newest Omicron subvariant, XBB.1.5, with documented immune-evasive properties, is spreading rapidly in the United States without triggering nationwide mask mandates or alarm. Why does the administration drag its feet on XBB.1.5 but treat the "China variant" as a dangerous, volatile plague that must be kept from invading America? This echoes the travel ban in early 2020 on passengers from China, a racist policy decision that focused on the spread of the coronavirus from China while ignoring European travelers who brought it to New York. By treating only Covid from China as a real danger and domestic cases as presumably milder, the US government effectively endorses the centuries-old tropes of Asians as the "diseased other" and the notion that the coronavirus is, in fact, the "China virus." This places Asians in America once more in the cross hairs of racist scapegoating. The days of heightened anti-Asian violence are barely behind us, and I fear a return of vulnerable elders being harmed in public, of shouted slurs. Just last year, the Covid-19 Hate Crimes Act addressing anti-Asian violence passed with rare bipartisan support from both chambers of Congress. Even this legislation could prove to be an empty gesture now that the Biden administration is creating policies that actively promote the xenophobia it claims to stand behind eradicating. We know a lot more about Covid than we did three years ago, and there is so much that can be done to actually protect Americans from new strains. Dr. Lucky Tran of Columbia University's Irving Medical Center told me, "If the US is really worried about variants and the spread of Covid through travel, it should require negative tests for all travelers, no matter where they come from, and reinstate the mask mandate for public transportation." The coronavirus knows no nationalities or borders, and treating it as a uniquely Chinese problem not only serves to pathologize Asian people but also fails to protect the American public, whose understanding of how the virus spreads and harms depends on consistent and scientifically rigorous messaging from the government. The racialization of a pandemic is a result of a diseased mindset, which almost three years into the pandemic is no longer acceptable. The good news is we already have the cure for that. Source: Asharq Al-Awsat

Briefs

Flood-devastated Pakistanis...

FROM PAGE 01

In the conference, Pakistan will outline the framework vision for rehabilitation and reconstruction and emphasis upon the need for global support and long-term partnership to implement it. In the inaugural high-level opening segment, the official document would be unveiled over reconstruction and rehabilitation of the flood-affected areas, and feature partner support announcements. The prime minister and the UN secretary general will also hold a joint press stakeout. Leaders and high-level representatives from several countries and international financial institutions, foundations and funds are expected to attend the conference, both in person and virtual format.

IMF team may hold talks with...

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The programme's ninth review, which would release \$1.18bn, is currently pending. It had earlier been put off for two months due to government's unwillingness to accept certain conditions placed before it by the Fund, and the disagreements have yet to be resolved. The IMF spokesperson's statement came two days after prime minister announced that a delegation of the Fund would visit Pakistan in next two to three days to complete the ninth review of the IMF \$7 billion loan programme for Pakistan.

On Friday, Managing Director International Monetary Fund Ms Kristalina Georgieva called Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif over telephone and reiterated her commitment to help Pakistan in the difficult period. She also expressed her

Israel revokes FM Maliki's...

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The decision highlights the tough line the current government is already taking toward the Palestinians just days into its tenure. It comes at a time of spiking violence in the occupied West Bank and as peace talks are a distant memory. In east Jerusalem, a flash-point of Israeli-Palestinian tensions, Israeli police said they broke up a meeting by Palestinian parents about their children's education, claiming it was unlawfully funded by the Palestinian Authority. Police said the operation came at the behest of National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, an ultranationalist with a long record of anti-Arab rhetoric and stunts who now oversees the police. The Palestinians condemned the revoking of Malki's permit, saying Israel should be the one being "punished for its violations against international law." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a meeting of his Cabinet on Sunday the measures against the Palestinians were aimed at what he called "an extreme anti-Israeli" step at the U.N. Israel's Defense Ministry confirmed that Malki's permit had been revoked.

Aid to Ukraine a money...

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Do not worry! This is a working money laundering scheme. Western and Ukrainian officials will embezzle these funds, and no more than 15% of the entire aid will reach the trenches," he said. Kadyrov also noted that there is no need to worry about hostilities currently happening on Russian territory. "These are our regions, which opted to join our state for the sake of protection of their people from Satanist actions of Ukrainian and NATO nationalists," he underscored. On January 6, the US announced a new aid package to Ukraine worth over \$3 billion. According to the White House, the aid will be provided directly from the Pentagon reserves, and will include Bradley armored vehicles, self-propelled howitzers, MRAP (Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected) vehicles, air defense missiles and other weapons and ammunition.

Fritz beats Berrettini as USA win inaugural United Cup

The dominant United States crushed the Iga Swiatek-led Poland 5-0 to make the decider of the new tournament - which began with 18 nations playing round robin matches in Perth, Brisbane and Sydney - while Italy outgunned Stefanos Tsitsipas's Greece 4-1

SYDNEY: World number nine Taylor Fritz battled past Italian Matteo Berrettini with a powerhouse performance to steer the United States to the inaugural mixed teams United Cup title in Sydney on Sunday. Frances Tiafoe and Jessica Pegula both won their singles rubbers to give their country a 2-0 lead with Fritz delivering victory by winning 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (8/6). Madison Keys made it a clean-sweep 4-0 with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Lucia Bronzetti.

"It's amazing for the team to win this event, we came in with really high hopes," said Fritz. "Really happy to be in the position to clinch the match. The emotions when you win are amazing. "We had a lot of team bonding this week," he added. "When we combine the guys and girls from the US we are so deep through the rankings it just makes team so much stronger." The dominant United States crushed the Iga Swiatek-led Poland 5-0 to make the decider of the new tournament - which began with 18 nations playing round robin matches in Perth, Brisbane and Sydney - while Italy outgunned Stefanos Tsitsipas's Greece 4-1. Fritz constantly put pressure on the Berrettini serve, earning four break points on his



first two service games, but all were saved. Despite the American being in charge from the baseline, it went to a first set tiebreak where he got two decisive early breaks to move 3-0 ahead before closing out the set. Fritz again created a series of break points in the second set, but Berrettini hung on and it again went to a tiebreak where he

once more prevailed. Women's world number three Pegula, who burst into the top 10 in 2022 by winning the WTA 1000 Guadalajara tournament, stormed home 6-4, 6-2 against Martina Trevisan. "Definitely very relieved, first match of the day, first match of the final," said Pegula. "Martina is playing great, she's a fighter, I feel

like she's thriving on the atmosphere with the fans and her team and really hard to beat someone like that. "Glad I was able to play well enough to get the win." Trevisan stunned world number six Maria Sakkari in a gripping three-hour encounter on Friday, and her confidence was high. But Pegula was also in red-hot form, toppling

world number one Swiatek for the first time in the semi-finals. She came out firing against Trevisan, racing to a 3-0 lead after breaking the Italian's opening serve. Trevisan showed the fighting qualities that helped her beat Sakkari to claw back, converting a break point in the fifth game and holding serve to get it back on level terms. They exchanged breaks again on the fast hard courts before Pegula pounced once more to clinch the set on the Trevisan serve with a backhand winner. It was all Pegula in the second as she put her foot to the floor, racing 5-0 clear. But the Italian refused to give up and broke back as the American served for the match before her comeback faltered. Tiafoe picked up where Pegula left off, surged through the first set 6-2 against Lorenzo Musetti before the Italian retired due to a right shoulder injury. He broke Musetti's serve early, with the Italian increasingly touching his right shoulder as the set wore on before receiving treatment and calling it a day. "I thought it was a really high level... obviously at the end there I could see he was touching his shoulder a lot," said Tiafoe. "I didn't want to win this way. I hope Lorenzo feels better." - APP



KARACHI: Pakistan's skipper Babar Azam and New Zealand's Kane Williamson posing with ODI series trophy. - DNA

Naomi Osaka pulls out of Australian Open

This year has been not the best year for me but I've learned a lot about myself," she said

MELBOURNE: Two-time Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka on Sunday pulled out of the opening Grand Slam of the year just over a week before it starts, organisers said. "Naomi Osaka has withdrawn from the Australian Open. We will miss her at AO2023," the tournament said on Twitter. No reason for the Japanese star's withdrawal was given. It was another big blow for the tournament after US Open champion and world number one Carlos Alcaraz also withdrew on Friday with a right leg problem. Veteran American Venus Williams will also be a no-show after picking an injury at last week's Auckland Classic. The champion in Melbourne in 2019 and 2021, Osaka has not played a competitive match since pulling out of a tournament in Tokyo in September with abdominal pain and has slumped to 42 in the world rankings. The four-time Grand Slam winner has previously talked about struggles with her mental health and spent all of 2022 outside the top 10, enduring first-round defeats at both the French and US Opens. She withdrew from Wimbledon with an Achilles' injury. Speaking at the Pan Pacific Open in September, she admitted she had gone through "more down than up" in 2022. "This year has been not the best year for me but I've learned a lot about myself," she said. "Life is ups and downs, and this year was more down than up, but overall I'm pretty happy with where I am now." Reports in Australia last week said Tennis Australia had been unable to verify Osaka's whereabouts. Her social media accounts indicated that she had been travelling in Europe with her on-again off-again boyfriend rapper Cordae. - APP

South Africa hold out to draw third Test, deny Australia sweep

SYDNEY: South Africa batted out for a draw on the final day of the third Test in Sydney on Sunday, denying Australia a series clean sweep. Australia entered the fifth day of the rain-ravaged Test requiring 14 wickets for victory, but the Proteas comfortably saw off the threat to earn a first draw in their last 47 Tests going back to 2017. The teams shook hands with five overs left and South Africa at 106 for two in their second innings with Sarel

Erwee unbeaten on 42 and Temba Bavuma on 17. Australia enforced the follow-on after Josh Hazlewood led the way with four wickets to dismiss the Proteas for 255 - 21 runs short of their target, but their highest innings total of a dismal series. Australia could only muster two wickets in South Africa's second innings with skipper Dean Elgar yet again failing along with Heinrich Klaasen. Elgar fell for the fourth time

in the series to a leg-side catch by wicketkeeper Alex Carey for 10. Rival captain Pat Cummins peppered him with a rising delivery and targeted Elgar's technical batting flaw off his hips for yet another cheap dismissal. Elgar finished a miserable series with 56 runs from six innings at an average of 9.33, raising yet more questions about his future as South Africa's Test skipper. Leading spinner Nathan Lyon was left distraught

when two contentious reviews involving Klaasen went against him. Klaasen survived a strident leg before wicket appeal and subsequent review on 27. A run later a low catch by Steve Smith was given not out after a review with the third umpire Richard Kettleborough ruling that part of the ball was touching the grass when it went into Smith's fingers. But Klaasen didn't last much longer and was bowled by Hazlewood for 35. - APP

Babar responds to criticism

'I don't need to satisfy anyone'

KARACHI: Pakistan captain Babar Azam has responded to criticism on his captaincy ahead of the three-match ODI series against New Zealand in Karachi. Azam said that he is focused on winning matches for Pakistan rather than paying attention to criticism. "My job is to play cricket and enjoy it. I don't need to satisfy or answer anyone. I know what my game and responsibility is while batting or captaincy. I don't

need to make anyone happy, my job is to win matches for Pakistan," Azam said during a press conference on Sunday. Azam also remained tight-lipped on Pakistan's playing XI for the first ODI on Monday, January 9. "I have not looked at the pitch. We will decide our playing XI after assessing the pitch. We will try to field our best XI," he said. "We will try to continue our momentum in white-ball cricket," he added. The Pakistan skipper also stated that the selectors and team management are on the same page. "The captain, coach and chief selector are on the same page because that's important for the betterment of the team. We conveyed our opinion to the chief selector on selection of players," he said. Pakistan have a chance to become the number one ODI team in the world during the upcoming series against New Zealand. If Pakistan whitewash New Zealand 3-0 during the three-match series, they will jump to the number one spot in the rankings with 114 rating points. - DNA

Thousands protest against new govt

FROM PAGE 01

"Democracy in danger" and "Together against fascism and apartheid". Another banner read, "Housing, Livelihood, Hope." Some protesters carried rainbow flags. The protest was led by left-wing and Palestinian members of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset. They slammed Justice Minister Yariv Levin, who on Wednesday unveiled the government's long-promised overhaul of the judicial system that aims to weaken the country's Supreme Court. Critics accused the government of declaring war on the legal system, saying the plan will upend Israel's system of checks and balances and undermine its democratic institutions by giving absolute power to the new governing coalition. "We are really afraid that our country is going to lose the democracy and we are going to a dictatorship just for reasons of one person which wants to get rid of his law trial," said Danny Simon, 77, a protester from Yavne, south of Tel Aviv.

IK urges powerful quarters...

FROM PAGE 01

mandate can perform Pakistan's surgery, he said. PTI chairman doubted that political engineering would be carried out in the next elections to weaken PTI - which he asserted is the most popular political party. He urged the powerful quarters to refrain from it as a government formed against the will of people will not be able to resolve mammoth problems faced by the country. Meanwhile, while condemning terrorist acts and threats, former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan has criticized that there is a complete vacuum of a cohesive counter-terrorism policy which is giving rise to terrorism in which our security personnel are being targeted specifically. In a tweet posted on Sunday, PTI Chairman Imran Khan wrote: With a complete vacuum of a cohesive counter terrorism policy and a bizarre intel focus on manufacturing doctored audios & videos, we are seeing a dangerous rise in terrorism with our security personnel being specific targets. We strongly condemn these terrorist acts and threats.

PTI condemns 'harassment'...

FROM PAGE 01

On Saturday, Another twist to high drama in Punjab's political arena appeared as PTI supreme Imran Khan said his party would begin the election campaign after Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi's vote of confidence in the assembly. The deposed premier, while taking a swipe at the ruling Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), said he would not provide any opportunity to the "imported group" to escape from snap elections, adding that the rulers knew that they would be rejected by the masses.

Russia claims it killed...

FROM PAGE 01

pause attacks during Orthodox Christmas, Kyiv said on Sunday. As a result of "Russia's armed aggression", one person was killed and another eight wounded in the eastern region of Donetsk over the past 24 hours. Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office, said on Sunday. One more person was killed in the north-eastern region of Kharkiv and another was wounded in the southern region of Kherson over the same period, Tymoshenko said. "Despite the so-called 'ceasefire' declared by the Russian occupiers, over the past day the enemy launched nine missile and three air strikes and fired 40 attacks from multiple rocket launchers," Ukraine's defence ministry said in a separate statement. War-scarred cities in eastern Ukraine saw no significant let-up in the fighting overnight Saturday to Sunday.

Djokovic, Sabalenka win Adelaide single titles

"The support that I've been getting in the past 10 days is something that I don't think I've experienced too many times in my life, so thank you so much to everyone for coming out every single match"

SPORTS DESK

ADELAIDE: Novak Djokovic saved a match point as he beat Sebastian Korda to win the Adelaide International and extend his winning run in Australia to 34 matches. The Serb dropped his first set of the tournament but fought back to win 6-7 (8-10) 7-6 (7-3) 6-4. The world number five has won 92 career ATP singles titles, level with Rafael Nadal. Only Jimmy Connors, Roger Federer and Ivan Lendl have won more. "It's been an amazing week, for me to be here is a gift," said Djokovic. "The support that I've been getting in the past 10 days is something that I don't think I've experienced too many times in my life, so thank you so much to everyone for coming out every single match." The Adelaide International is Djokovic's first tournament in Australia since he was deported in 2022 because of his Covid-19 vaccine status, but his visa ban has now been overturned.



Djokovic will look to extend his record number of wins at the Australian Open which starts on 16 January. He is targeting his 10th title, which would also equal Nadal's men's record of 22 Grand Slam titles. Aryna Sabalenka won her 11th career singles title, beating 18-year-old qualifier Linda Noskova 6-3 7-6 (6-4) in the women's final. It was world number five Sabalenka's first win since May 2021, sealing the victory without dropping a set throughout the tournament. "I'm a different player right now," Sabalenka said after the match. "Maybe a little bit smarter, a little bit calmer on court. Just a little bit of everything changed." Elsewhere, world number seven Coca Gauff won the ASB Classic in Auckland, New Zealand. Gauff, 18, beat Spanish qualifier Rebeka Masarova 6-1 6-1 and did not drop a set across five matches. It was Gauff's first title since 2021 and her first on hard court since 2019. "Honestly, a great week for me despite the rain," Gauff said. "I couldn't ask for a better start to my season - my first title on hard [courts] since I was 15."

Briefs

New US border restrictions spark protests

WASHINGTON: Several hundred people marched through the streets of El Paso, Texas ahead of US President Joe Biden's first visit to the southern border. Demonstrators spoke out against new restrictions aimed at cracking down on illegal border crossings. Biden announced last week that Cubans, Nicaraguans, Haitians and Venezuelans would be sent to Mexico if they enter the US illegally – an expansion of a pandemic-era immigration policy called Title 42. The new restrictions represent a major change to immigration rules that will stand even if the US Supreme Court ends a Trump-era public health law that allows US authorities to turn away asylum-seekers. Around 300 migrants have sought refuge outside El Paso's Sacred Heart Church, with many afraid to seek shelter elsewhere. The US President is scheduled to arrive in El Paso Sunday afternoon before travelling on to Mexico City to meet with North American leaders on Monday and Tuesday.—APP

Japan's COVID-19 cases surpass 30M

TOKYO: Japan's COVID-19 cases crossed 30 million since the start of the pandemic as the country is battling with its new wave of infections, according to official data. With 238,654 new cases reported during the past 24 hours, the total caseload reached 30.2 million, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare data showed. The country also reported record 463 deaths, taking the number of total fatalities to 59,415. Japan has already announced imposing new restrictions on travelers from China, requiring COVID-19 tests for all passengers from Sunday. On Wednesday, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said that Tokyo will further tighten quarantine measures for travelers from China and visitors will need to have tested negative before leaving for Japan and will have to undergo a PCR test upon arrival, according to Kyodo News Agency. "We decided to strengthen temporary measures in consideration of test results of those who entered Japan from mainland China during the year-end and New Year holidays," the agency quoted Kishida as saying.—Agencies

Weibo bans over 1,000 accounts

BEIJING: China's Twitter-like social media platform Weibo has banned more than 1,000 accounts of users on the grounds that they "incite conflict" over Beijing's coronavirus policy. A total of 1,120 Weibo account holders were subjected to either temporary or permanent bans from the platform over "personal attacks" against the country's health experts and inciting conflict, the daily South China Morning Post reported. The report also quoted Weibo's Thursday announcement that says: "It is not acceptable to hurl insults at people who hold a different point of view or publish personal attacks and views that incite conflicts. Any kind of move that is destructive to the (Weibo) community would be handled in a serious manner." The decision came after Weibo reviewed nearly 13,000 posts containing criticisms against health experts, it said. China faced an explosive spike in infections after dumping its strict "zero-COVID" policy last month, following unrest and unprecedented protests in parts of the country. Several countries, including the US, Italy, Malaysia, Spain, Morocco, Qatar, Canada, South Korea, and Taiwan, announced requiring negative COVID-19 tests for travelers coming from China.—DNA

Pakistan welcomes China's latest COVID policy: Envoy

The Pakistani people have noted the revised measures announced by China in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and they "welcome them

BEIJING: Pakistan welcomes China's recent COVID policy adjustment and believes it will significantly contribute to the recovery and growth of the world economy, Pakistan Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque said. In an interview with Global Times, he said that Pakistan is opposed to the "politicization of the pandemic." According to the Pakistani diplomat, the recent adjustments that China made are reflective of the latest pandemic situation and are based on scientific and rational analysis. The Pakistani people have noted the revised measures announced by China in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and they "welcome them."

"Since the outbreak of COVID-19, China has made effective efforts to protect people's lives and health. The recent adjustments are reflective of the latest pandemic situation and are based on scientific and rational analysis. It marks a decisive victory against the virus," he said. "These changes

will facilitate people-to-people exchanges between China and other countries and will significantly contribute to the recovery and growth of the world economy," he noted. China has recently made a series of refined measures including managing COVID-19 with measures against Class-B infectious diseases starting from January 8. The provisional measures on cross-border state that starting from January 8, inbound travelers with no issues to report in their health declaration can enter China without being subject to quarantine. The move has won wide support internationally. However, since China released its refined measures on COVID-19 prevention and control, some countries announced to impose of additional measures on Chinese travelers, citing so-called virus concern. Regarding the question on whether Pakistan will impose different measures on Chinese travelers, the ambassador stressed that "Pakistan is opposed to country-specific



politics and politicization of the pandemic." "We have always maintained that a response to a health crisis of global nature must be based on scientific reasoning and logic and to be tackled through close collaboration and international solidarity. "So as we move forward, health authorities from China and Pakistan will continue their close collaboration and sharing of information to jointly address the evolving pandemic situation and adjusting our respective policies," he said. Haque noted that he expects the cooperation between the two countries will further increase as China relaxes the border controls.

"Our two countries will accelerate cooperation on a range of areas, including exchange of high-level delegations, enhanced B2B (business to business) travel, and increase in people-to-people exchanges. We are also expecting major milestones in CPEC this year, including the inauguration of the new Gwadar International Airport and groundbreaking of ML-1," he said. According to the ambassador, China and Pakistan are celebrating 2023 as the Year of Tourism Exchanges, and the relaxed border control will enhance the flow of tourists from both countries. He noted that during the past years, the two countries have been "cooperating closely even with the border controls in place, which is a manifestation of the commitment of leadership and people of our two countries towards the bilateral ties."

In 2022, both countries saw enhanced high-level exchanges, a stronger economic partnership, the return of Pakistani students to

China, an increase in frequency of flights and most notably a steady development of CPEC, he said. Haque said that the two countries also closely coordinated in the three years' fight against the pandemic. "When the first wave broke out in China, Pakistan sent all its supplies to help our Chinese friends. The President of Pakistan also paid a solidarity visit to China amid the first wave. China's help to Pakistan during the pandemic was also exemplary. We remain grateful to China for its critical support through provision of essential medicines and equipment especially vaccines which remain the mainstay of our inoculation drive saving countless lives." "China has also supported a large number of countries during the pandemic. President Xi had declared that vaccines would be considered a public good. As such China provided billions of doses across the globe, especially to developing countries, which helped in the control of the virus and saved countless lives," he said.

At UN, Pakistan slams Israeli minister's visit to Al Aqsa Mosque

UNITED NATIONS :Pakistan, speaking for the OIC group at the United Nations, has condemned the visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound by Israel's new far-right security minister, after a UN Security Council meeting at which the 15-member body's members called for preserving the historic status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites. "We strongly demand that such acts have to be stopped and they have to be stopped, forthwith", Ambassador Aamir Khan, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told reporters at the UNSC stakeout alongside all ambassadors of Islamic countries. The Pakistani envoy said that the group met prior to the Security Council meeting at the request of Palestine's Permanent Observer to

the UN Ambassador Riaz Mansour, and strongly condemned Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's action. "We have to deal with such situations with the strength and the force of international law," Ambassador Khan added. At the Security Council meeting, Khaled Khari, U.N. assistant secretary-general for the Middle East, said, "As we have seen numerous times in the past, the situation at Jerusalem's holy sites is deeply fragile, and any incident or tension there can spill over and cause violence throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, in Israel and elsewhere in the region." He urged the parties to refrain from escalating tensions and respect the status quo, which allows Jews and Christians to visit the site at specific times but only

Muslims to worship there. The Council's emergency meeting was requested by Palestine and Jordan and supported by council members United Arab Emirates, China, France, and Malta. Israel's new extremist government was sworn in on December 29, along with Benjamin Netanyahu, who returned as prime minister for an unprecedented sixth term. On Tuesday, the new national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, accompanied by a heavy security detail, visited the compound that houses al-Aqsa Mosque. His visit marked the first time since 2017 that an Israeli minister had gone to Haram al-Sharif by and Temple. Ambassador Mansour, the Palestinian envoy, said Ben-Gvir's intentions were clear. "He is pursuing the same extremist

agenda he has pursued all his life: ending the historic and legal status quo. That is his objective, regardless of the consequences," Mansour told the council. Israel's U.N. envoy defended the national security minister's actions. "Minister Ben-Gvir's recent visit to Temple Mount was not an incursion into al-Aqsa or any other fabrication that the Palestinians branded his visit as," Israeli Ambassador Gilad Erdan said. "Minister Ben-Gvir's visit was in line with the status quo, and whoever claims otherwise is only inflaming the situation. Jews are allowed to visit the Temple Mount." "We expect the government of Israel to follow through on that commitment," U.S. Ambassador Robert Wood said at the council meeting.—APP

Iran carries out 2 more executions amid protests

TEHRAN: Two Iranian men were executed early on Saturday in Tehran in a case related to the killing of a paramilitary Basij trooper in late November, the judiciary said. Mohammad Mahdi Karami, 22, and Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, 39, were sent to gallows less than a week after the country's top court upheld their conviction. In a statement, the judiciary's media center described the two men as the "main perpetrators of the crime" that led to the death of Rohullah Ajamian. Ajamian, a 27-year-old paramilitary Basiji, was killed by a group of angry protesters armed with cold weapons in early November in the city of Karaj, the capital of central Alborz province. The judiciary conducted a televised trial of the accused men, in which the main defendants presented graphic details of the incident that led to Ajamian's death. A total of 16 accused were tried in the case, of which five were handed death verdicts and 11 others were given long-term jail sentences. The death penalty was on the charges of "corruption on earth" as well as "crimes against security" and "disrupting public order," judiciary spokesman Masoud Setayeshi said early last month. On Tuesday, Amir Hashemi, head of the judiciary's public relations wing, in a statement said the verdict against Karami and Hosseini had been upheld by the apex court while the death sentence against the other three accused was overturned. The death verdict issued against Hamid Qara Hasanlou, Hossein Mohammadi and Reza Aria was overturned "due to the existence of defects in the investigation," he said, adding that there would be a retrial.—DNA

S.African ex-apartheid minister dies

JOHANNESBURG: Adriaan Vlok, a feared minister under South Africa's apartheid system and one of its few high-ranking officials to be prosecuted, died Sunday aged 85 in a hospital near Pretoria, his family said. The former law and order minister, who oversaw a brutal police crackdown on opponents of white rule, "passed away early this morning in the Unitas Hospital in Centurion, after a short illness," a family spokesman said in a statement. In the late 1980s, Vlok oversaw bomb attacks on churches and trade unions seen as hostile to apartheid rule. "I believed that apartheid was right," he told AFP in 2015. "It was our job to make people fear us." In his old age he said he had changed his mindset, and sought redemption by handing out food to the poor in a township – settlements outside cities designed to segregate non-whites. In 2007, Adriaan Vlok was given a 10-year suspended sentence for attempting to murder a prominent opposition figure. He had sought to kill Reverend Frank Chikane – then head of a leading anti-apartheid organisation – some 18 years earlier by rubbing poison on clothes in the priest's luggage at Johannesburg airport. "I feel ashamed of many things I have done," he said at his sentencing, admitting that his commitment to the racist regime was "a mistake."—APP

Govt will have to convince IMF for economic assistance

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former finance minister Shaukat Tareen has said that the government will have to convince the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for economic assistance. Talking exclusively to a private television channel, he said that the IMF wants fulfillment of promises made with it. "The government recovery has fallen to 10 percent. The IMF will ask the government to increase the prices of gas, oil and electricity," he added. He claimed that the performance of the present government is worse than the previous government. "Pakistan is hopeful of collecting dollars in the Donors' Conference in Geneva," he added. Shaukat Tareen was of the view that Finance Minister Ishaq Dar's press conference is an attempt to divert attention from the problems being faced by the country. "Ishaq Dar has failed in giving a credible strategy to save economy. Unprecedented inflation has been imposed on the people due to the negative policies of the imported government," he maintained.

Indian street walls decorated with Benazir's pictures

DNA

KERALA: Thiruvananthapuram, the capital city of the Indian state of Kerala, saw posters carrying former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's pictures and invited criticism from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Indian media reported that All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), the women wing of the Communist Party of India, pasted Ms Bhutto's pictures on posters and invitation cards ahead of AIDWA's 13th national conference occurring from Jan 6 to Jan 9. The posters also contain text outlining Ms Bhutto's portfolio and educational background. The BJP leader Sandeep Washpati, while reacting to the posters, said Ms Bhutto was the prime minister of India's foe who let not stone unturned to degrade India. "Those who respect India's enemy are India's enemies", he added.

UK's Sunak calls for 'radical actions'

LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has called for "bold and radical" actions to end the crisis across UK's National Health Service (NHS), amid unprecedented strikes by health workers. The call came in when Sunak hosted England's chief medical officer Chris Witty along with NHS England chief executive Amanda Pritchard at the NHS Recovery Forum at Number 10, to discuss the long-term solutions for the NHS crises. The meeting came ahead of talks planned between government officials and union leaders on Monday, aimed at ending the strikes, and attempting to solve short and long-term issues facing the health service. "During the pandemic, we had to bring boldness and radicalism to how we did things in order to get through," Sunak was quoted as saying by Downing Street. "I think we need that same bold and radical approach now," Sunak said, adding that "Together today, we can figure out the things that will make the biggest difference to the country and everyone's family, in the short and medium term." The talks were set to focus on four key issues: reducing delays in discharging hospital patients to social care; how to improve A&E and ambulance service performance; cutting waiting times for operations; and relieving pressure on GPs. The British PM has been under fire for his inaction regarding the chaos across the country's healthcare system, with doctors saying the NHS is in a very precarious situation as units are struggling with demand and health trusts and ambulance services declaring critical incidents. The general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing union, Pat Cullen, told BBC radio that Sunak should negotiate with nurses directly to prevent planned further strike action on January 18 and 19. "He needs to come to the negotiation table with me, and he needs to put money on that table, and it needs to be about the current year," she told the BBC. The health secretary Steve Barclay pledged to take further steps to "improve the flow through our hospitals", with around 13,000 NHS beds blocked by delays in discharging payments.—Agencies



CHITRAL: New Canadian High Commissioner Lislle Lanclon taking interest in handcrafts during her recent visit to Chitral. – DNA

Houthi warns to strike deep inside KSA, UAE

The objective was to crush the popular Ansarullah resistance movement, which has been running state affairs in the absence of a functional government in Yemen, and reinstall the Riyadh-friendly regime of Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. While the Saudi-led coalition has failed to achieve any of its objectives, the war has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and spawned the world's worst humanitarian crisis

SANAA: Yemen's Ansarullah resistance movement says the Saudi-led coalition has exploited a UN-sponsored truce to tighten the brutal blockade against the war-ravaged country, stressing that it won't allow the status quo to persist, and will inevitably launch missile strikes against the Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Ansarullah announced in a statement that even on the six-month truce that expired on October 2 last year and two rounds of negotiations to extend the ceasefire and lift the blockade on commercial airports and entry ports, the Riyadh-led alliance reneged on the terms of the ceasefire and did not honor previous agreements. "The Saudi-led coalition's main goal

out of the truce was to stop the Houthi Ansarullah forces from carrying out retaliatory military operations against targets deep inside Saudi Arabia. Moreover, the crippling sea, land and air blockade on Yemen has created a humanitarian disaster in the country," the statement read. Ansarullah described the famine and siege as criminal and cruel strategies of the Saudi-led coalition against Yemen, arguing that the practice amounts to mass murder under the United Nations Charter and principles. "Siege is same as a war, whose primary purpose is to kill as many Yemenis as possible and take revenge on them by destroying people's livelihood. The Saudi-led coalition's intention behind

the ceasefire was to ramp up the economic blockade against Yemen," the statement read. Ansarullah noted, "The Riyadh-led alliance took advantage of the siege as a weapon of war against Yemen. The ceasefire also proved that the Saudi-led coalition was not looking for any measure to reduce the sufferings of the Yemeni nation. It is firmly against payment of salaries to civil servants and knows no limits to tighten the blockade." The Lebanese Arabic-language daily newspaper al-Akhar has reported that Saudi Arabia's crown prince and de facto leader is seeking to get himself out of the crisis created in Yemen. The newspaper wrote that Mohammed bin Salam has suggested that Ansarullah maintain

control over Yemen in exchange for security guarantees to the Riyadh regime. It said the latest round of indirect and behind-the-scenes talks between Ansarullah representatives and Saudi diplomats with Oman, a Persian Gulf country that borders both Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as mediator had more fateful results than the previous ones. "Riyadh is now showing a lot of flexibility during negotiations. It currently has no concern other than getting security guarantees that strategic facilities deep inside the country would not be hit. It has abandoned the illusion of turning Yemen into a country under its tutelage, and has instead sufficed for security

assurances," the newspaper wrote Saudi Arabia, in collaboration with its Arab allies and with arms and logistics support from the US and other Western states, launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015. The objective was to crush the popular Ansarullah resistance movement, which has been running state affairs in the absence of a functional government in Yemen, and reinstall the Riyadh-friendly regime of Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi. While the Saudi-led coalition has failed to achieve any of its objectives, the war has killed hundreds of thousands of Yemenis and spawned the world's worst humanitarian crisis.—Agencies

Briefs

NATO turns down Serbia's request to deploy troops in Kosovo

DNA

BELGRADE: NATO's mission in Kosovo has turned down a Serbian government request to send up to 1,000 Serbian police and army personnel to Kosovo after a spate of clashes between Serbs and Kosovo authorities. Serbia's former province of Kosovo declared independence in 2008 following the 1998-1999 war during which NATO bombed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, comprising Serbia and Montenegro, to protect Albanian-majority Kosovo.

"They [KFOR, NATO's mission in Kosovo] replied saying they consider that there is no need for the return of the Serbian army to Kosovo... citing the United Nations resolution approving their mandate in Kosovo," Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic said in an interview with Serbian Pink TV channel on Sunday. Last month, for the first time since the end of the war, Serbia asked to deploy troops in Kosovo during a spate of clashes between Kosovo authorities and Serbs in the north of Kosovo, where they constitute a majority. A UN Security Council resolution states that Serbia may be allowed, if approved by KFOR, to station its personnel at border crossings, Orthodox Christian religious sites and areas with Serb minorities. Vucic criticised KFOR for informing Serbia of its decision on the eve of the Christmas Orthodox Christmas after Kosovo police arrested an off-duty soldier suspected of shooting and wounding two young Serbs near the town of Shterpece.

19 killed, 20 injured in road accident in eastern China

BEIJING: Nineteen people died and 20 were injured on Sunday in a road traffic accident in eastern China's Jiangxi province, state media reported. The "major road traffic accident" took place just before 1am (1700 GMT) in Nanchang County, state broadcaster CCTV reported, citing local authorities. "The cause of the accident is under in-depth investigation," CCTV added.

Local news outlet Jimu, affiliated with the state-owned Hubei Daily Media Group, reported the accident took place when a truck hit a funeral procession. People had been carrying out a roadside offering to the dead before planning to head to the crematorium on Sunday morning, a local woman surnamed Deng told the outlet. They were then hit by a truck, the report said, with most of the dead and injured being funeral attendees. Another local man, surnamed Gong, told the outlet his wife had been killed in the accident and that they had been attending the funeral. - DNA



HYDERABAD: Women trying to purchase a few kilograms of flour as the flour shortage has hit most parts of the Sindh province. - APP

Low gas pressure multiplies public miseries in twin cities

The low or zero pressure specially during morning and evening timings compelled the residents of the twin cities to buy breakfast, lunch and dinners from markets

ISLAMABAD: With the increase in cold, shut-off or low gas pressure in various parts of the twin cities has multiplied the problems of domestic as well as commercial consumers. The low or zero pressure specially during morning and evening timings compelled the residents of the twin cities to buy breakfast, lunch and dinners from markets which is much expensive as well as an unhealthy option for families. A number of families have started using substitutes compressors, cylinders, electric roti makers and electric stoves to cook food which is not risky but also very expensive option for the consumers. Beside the issues of domestic consumers, the commercial users especially restaurants, hotels and Tandoor owners are also facing the same issue and using alternate to run

their businesses. They also increased the rates saying that they can't manage the gas expense in the routine prices and are forced to transfer that burden to the customers. Shazia Bibi, a house wife living in Arya Mahalla Rawalpindi while talking to APP said, "Normally I prefer to cook healthy and hygienic food for my family but now the outage of gas has compelled us to buy unhygienic food from the restaurants almost regularly which is affecting the health of my family." She said, "Many restaurants are also taking advantage of the situation and increased the prices of food which badly disturb the overall budget which is a big concern for me." A working women Sadia Ali said, "The low gas pressure in my area has multiplied my problems as I can't finish my kitchen work

on time and get late from my office almost every day." She said, "Restaurants and Tandoors are not a good solution as there are long queues outside during breakfast and dinner times which are times of rush for working people." Saleem Akram resident of G-10/3, while sharing his views told, "My mother is a patient of arthritis which gets more intense during winter." Doctor has advised to provide heating facility in her room during winter but the outage of gas has compelled us to electric heaters which was much expensive and we are unable to afford that expense on regular basis, he told. He said that we were using LPG as an alternate option but the increase in demand of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) amid cold weather conditions has created

shortage of LPG and the suppliers also increased the price of this alternate. He urged the government and Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) to address the issue and ensure uninterrupted supply of gas especially for the domestic consumers. Laiba Khatton, another housewife said, "Cylinder and compressors are unsafe options for me as I witnessed a cylinder blast in my area which scared me and I never adopt these options to cook food." She said, "Since we are facing the problem of gas load shedding I had made it routine to cook food in the mid-night when gas pressure turns normal." "I also bought an electric roti maker but its taste is altogether different from the one made on gas," she added. - APP

Maduro hosts Colombia's Petro

CARACAS: Colombia's President Gustavo Petro made a surprise trip to meet his Venezuelan counterpart Nicolas Maduro on Saturday - their second face-to-face after the thawing of a years-long diplomatic freeze. The two leaders held talks for about three hours in Caracas at the Miraflores presidential palace, where Petro - Colombia's first-ever leftist president - arrived around midday. The summit came just days after the final reopening of the South American neighbors' shared border, closed in a spat over Maduro's disputed 2018 reelection. "We had a comprehensive and very fruitful meeting," Maduro tweeted after the meeting. "We have a clear path of shared work that will continue to give positive results for our countries, in different areas. Long live the union between Colombia and Venezuela!" Maduro said in his message, which Petro later shared on his own Twitter account. Petro shook hands with Maduro and left the palace without speaking to the media. It is the leaders' second meeting since Petro took power from Ivan Duque last August and the official resumption of diplomatic ties a month later. Petro also visited Maduro on November 1, when he called for Venezuela to be brought back into a regional trade alliance and human rights system. Venezuela severed diplomatic relations with its neighbor in 2019 after increasingly strained ties with Petro's predecessors Juan Manuel Santos and conservative Duque - who Maduro accused of orchestrating plans to assassinate him. The final straw came when Duque backed Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido - recognized by dozens of countries as the victor in 2018 elections claimed by Maduro. Reestablishing ties with Venezuela was one of Petro's first moves as president. On January 2, the countries reopened the last stretch of their shared 2,200-kilometer (1,350-mile) border partially closed seven years ago and then completely blocked in 2019. - APP

California braces for more winter storms

CALIFORNIA: California braced for more stormy weather with rain sweeping into the northern part of the state and the San Francisco Bay area, preceding a series of powerful incoming Pacific storms and raising the potential for road flooding, rising rivers and mudslides on soils already saturated after days of rain. The National Weather Service warned of a "relentless parade of atmospheric rivers" over the coming week, producing heavy rain and mountain snow. Atmospheric river storms are long plumes of moisture stretching out into the Pacific and are capable of dropping staggering amounts of rain and snow. The agency's Sacramento office tweeted early Sunday that parts of the Sacramento Valley were experiencing "strong winds with gusts up to 60 mph," as well as "numerous trees and power lines down with power outages."

More than 300,000 customers had their electricity knocked out in and around the state's capital, according to a Sacramento Municipal Utility District online map of outages overnight. The wet weather comes after days of rain in California from Pacific storms. A series of recent weather systems have knocked out power to thousands, flooded streets, battered the coastline and caused at least six deaths. The first of the heavier storms was due to arrive Monday, and the weather service issued a flood watch for a large swath of Northern and Central California with 6 to 12 inches (15 to 30 centimeters) of rain expected through Wednesday in the Sacramento-area foothills. In the Los Angeles area, light rain was forecast for the weekend with stormy conditions expected to return Monday with the potential for up to 8 inches (20 centimeters) of rain in the foothills. - DNA

More than 30 dead in bus collision in central Senegal

THIRTY-eight people died and 87 were injured when two buses collided near the town of Kaffrine in central Senegal on Sunday, a fire brigade official told AFP. "It was a serious accident," said Colonel Cheikh Fall, who is in charge of operations for the

West African country's National Fire Brigade. "There were 125 victims, of whom 38 have died." Following the accident, which took place on the No. 1 national road at 3.15 am local time (0315 GMT) Sunday morning, all the victims were evacuated to a Kaffrine hospital and medical centre, he said. The wreckage and demolished buses have since been cleared and normal traffic has resumed, he said. The governor and local officials have visited the scene, he added. Road accidents are common in Senegal, largely because of driver indiscipline, poor roads and decrepit vehicles, say experts. However this is one of the heaviest death tolls from a single incident in recent years.

Nawaz's directive to hold party elections

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif directed to hold party elections this month. Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal started work on amendments in the party constitution. The way for Maryam Nawaz to become the president of the party was also paved. To become the party president, it is necessary to work in the position of senior vice president. By amending the party constitution, Nawaz Sharif will be elected leader for life. The ECP had also directed the PML-N to hold party elections immediately.

MoFA launches song to highlight flood victims' trauma

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has launched a song "Aao Hum Kuch Aisa Karein" to highlight flood victims trauma and appeals to the spirit of giving and the moral imperative of helping those in difficulty. According to the FO Spokesperson, the track was launched in view of the Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan being held in Geneva tomorrow. It was penned, composed, and sung by Shakeel Asghar Malik, who is an officer of the Foreign Service of Pakistan. The song, captioned in English as 'Acts of Humanity', is dedicated to the victims of recent floods in Pakistan and appeals to the spirit of giving and the moral imperative of helping those in difficulty. The soulful music track has been designed and recorded under the supervision of veteran music maestro Mujahid Hussain.

Iraq reopens Baghdad's Green Zone

BAGHDAD: Iraqi authorities reopened Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone on Sunday in an attempt to ease traffic jams in the capital after it was closed and reopened several times in recent years. Starting in the early hours of the day, Iraqi authorities removed checkpoints and opened major roads and tunnels that cut through the zone on the west bank of the Tigris River. Cars will be allowed to pass through the area while trucks will be banned, officials said. The Green Zone, which houses Iraqi govt buildings and the sprawling U.S. Embassy, will be open every day for 14 hours starting at 5 a.m., Maj. Gen. Jassim Yahya told The Associated Press. During that period, Yahya said, "all the Green Zone will be open for the public." The 4-square mile (10-square kilometer) zone with its palm trees and monuments has been mostly off limits to the public since the 2003 US invasion of Iraq to topple President Saddam Hussein. - APP

ECP completes preparations for Karachi LG polls

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has completed all the preparations to conduct the local government (LG) polls in Karachi and Hyderabad on January 15, ECP sources told media. Sources said the reserved verdict on MQM-P's plea against dual voter lists would be pronounced tomorrow. The ECP bench headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja reserved its verdict on Friday. Sources say that the Election Commission has rejected MQM-P's allegations regarding using dual voter lists and completed all preparations for the LG polls in Karachi and Hyderabad. The local body elections in Sindh's two most populous cities will be held on the old voter lists.

It should be noted that the CEC, during the hearing on MQM's request, said that local elections in Karachi could not be postponed

any more. The ECP had told the Sindh government that the second phase of the local government polls in Karachi and Hyderabad would be held on July 24, 2022, but then it postponed them because of torrential rains and subsequent floods in the province. The electoral body rescheduled the LG elections for August 28, but they were put off again for the same reason. The commission had said that most polling stations had been inaccessible to the voters.

On October 18, the ECP rescheduled the elections for October 23, but the provincial government sought their postponement for three months because it had deployed police in the flooded areas, due to which it was unable to provide the required level of security to the polling stations. After the repeated delays, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) moved the Sindh High Court, which on November 15 instructed the ECP to announce the date for the LG elections within 15 days.

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