



Islamabad POST

Monday, January 16, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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PM Shehbaz hopes to crush resurfacing of polio virus cases

Detailed News On Page-08

Mihai Eminescu, Romania's most famous Poet

Detailed News On Page-08

Nasser wins Dakar Rally for the fifth time

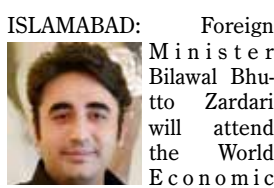
Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

FM to attend WEF moot in Davos

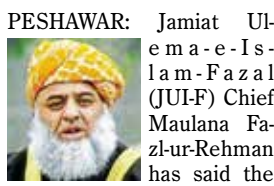
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will attend the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland which will begin on Monday. The Foreign Minister will be accompanied by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar. The World Economic Forum annually brings together political and business leaders to identify pathways to overcome economic, social, and environmental challenges. This year's forum is being organized under the theme, "Cooperation in a Fragmented World".

Govt failed conspiracies of Imran

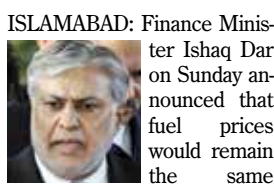
DNA



PESHAWAR: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazal (JULF) Chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman has said the people who intended to wipe out Islam from Pakistan have been removed. Addressing a public rally in Peshawar on Sunday, PDM chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman claimed that the government has succeeded to fail all conspiracies of Imran Khan aiming to destroy the country. "We have defeated not a person, but an ideology." He said that Imran wanted to fulfill the agenda of external forces.

No change in fuel prices, says Dar

STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday announced that fuel prices would remain the same for the next fortnight which ends on January 31. "We are not changing the prices. The price of petrol will remain at Rs214.80, diesel will remain at Rs227.80, price of kerosene oil to remain at Rs171.83 while light diesel oil will remain at Rs169," he said during a televised address. Earlier this month, the government announced to maintain the prices of petroleum products at current levels to provide some relief to the masses.

Sindh LG election

PPP ahead in 2nd phase of elections

PPP leads in majority of districts; voter turnout remains low; incidents of violence reported

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: Unofficial and unconfirmed results started pouring in after polling ended for the much-hyped second phase of local government elections in 16 districts, including Karachi and Hyderabad amid MQM-P boycott. Polling was held in seven districts of Karachi division and nine districts of Hyderabad division. Apart from Karachi and Hyderabad city, votes will also be cast in Jamshoro, Matiari, Tandulmuhammad Khan, Tandwala Yar, Dadu, Thatta, Sajawal, Badin areas. According to the unofficial and unconfirmed results, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was leading by securing 115 seats. The voter turnout remained low while there were reports of clashes and allegations of rigging and mismanagement at various polling stations. Several acts of violence, clashes and setting elections camps on fire were reported in different districts of Sindh the ongoing local government elections on Sunday. Unidentified people set seven election camps of different political parties on fire during ongoing local government elections in different areas of the provincial capital. Police said first incident was reported in Saubad area where fire was brought under control in no time. The suspects fled the scene. The Korangi SSP said the investigation is

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Low turnout mirrors people's reaction: MQM-P

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Expressing outrage over federal and provincial governments, Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) Convener Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said on Sunday that his political party was stepping back from forming and running governments besides rejecting today's local government (LG) polls in Karachi, Hyderabad and other districts of Sindh. While addressing a press conference with MQM-P central leaders, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that MQM is stepping back from facilitating others to form and run governments. He categorically rejected the recent phase of LG polls. The political party also compiled a report regarding its decision to boycott the LG polls and alleged mismanagement in the recent elections. Siddiqui said that the citizens of Karachi and

Continued on Page 06

At least 68 killed in Nepal plane crash

Sudarshan Bartaula told media that among those on board - 68 passengers and four crew - were 15 foreigners including five Indians, four Russians and two Koreans

AGENCIES

POKHARA: At least 68 people were confirmed dead Sunday when a plane with 72 onboard crashed in Nepal, police said, in the Himalayan country's deadliest aviation disaster in three decades. "Thirty-one (bodies) have been taken to hospitals," police official AK Chhetri told AFP, adding that 36 other bodies were still in the 300-metre (600-foot) gorge the aircraft plunged into. This was partially confirmed by the army, with a spokesman saying 29 bodies had been retrieved and that there were 33 more at the site in Pokhara in central Nepal. "The aircraft crashed into a gorge so it is difficult to bring the bodies Search and rescue is ongoing. No survivors have been found yet," army spokesman Krishna Prasad Bhandari told AFP. One local official said that some survivors had been taken to hospital - but this was not confirmed by either the airline Yeti Airlines or others. Yeti spokesman SudarshanBartaula told AFP that among those on board - 68 passengers and four crew -

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan condoles over loss of lives

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The Government and the people of Pakistan on Sunday offered their deepest condolences over the loss of precious lives in an air crash in Pokhara, Nepal. "We are saddened at this tragic accident and our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the victims. We stand with the people of Nepal in their hour of grief," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. According to media reports, dozens of people were killed after a plane with 72 people on board crashed near an airport in central Nepal on Sunday. The Yeti Airlines flight from Kathmandu to the tourist town of Pokhara crashed on landing before catching fire, the reports said.

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PARIS: Pakistan's Ambassador of France Asim Iftikhar Ahmed photographed with the President of France Emmanuel Macron. Ambassador Asim presented his credentials to the French President. - DNA

Caretaker CM: PTI proposes 3 names

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The PTI in consultation with Punjab Chief Minister Ch. Parvez Elahi has proposed three names for the caretaker chief minister. These names include former bureaucrat Ahmed Nawaz Sukhera, Nasser Khan and Nasir Khosa. Sukhera is presently serving as the Cabinet Secretary. While Nasir Saeed Khosa belongs to the civil service and has served in key positions. He is considered an upright officer. He is the brother of former Chief Justice of Pakistan Asif Saeed Khosa and former DG FIA Tariq Khosa.

KP Assembly dissolution summary on Tuesday: CM

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan said on Sunday that the summary for the dissolution of the provincial assembly would be sent to the governor on January 17 (Tuesday). The move comes after the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly as PTI Chairman Imran Khan inches closer to fulfilling his promise of disassociating from the "current corrupt political system" by quitting the provincial legislatures where he is in power. In a tweet, the KP CM said that according to the directives issued by Imran, the summary for dissolving the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly would be sent to the governor on Tuesday. "Inshallah the PTI will return with a two-thirds majority," he said.

Establishment's role crucial for progress: Imran

Imran Khan has urged COAS General Asim Munir to ensure transparent polling

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan said on Sunday that the establishment is a reality and is above the law but country's situation will improve when the establishment works for the rule of law. In a meeting with the producers of TV channels, he said that if there is an attempt to reduce our mandate in Punjab, we will resist. "Our people from South Punjab are being forced to join Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and also told that Imran Khan has no future," the PTI chairman said. The former PM further said that no other institution has as much power as the army, adding that if the army plays a positive role, no one can stop the country from moving forward.

Continued on Page 06

Parvez Elahi calls for 'patience' on merger

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: In a fresh development, Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi has hinted at the possibility of a merger between the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and its ally the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Elahi - while answering a journalist's question during a media talk at the inauguration ceremony of the Khatam UINabiyeen University in Lahore Sunday - implied that the possibility of the PTI-PML-Q merger might be a possibility. On the question of whether the provincial chief executive would contest in

Continued on Page 06

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Joe Biden's classified docs crisis deepens with more discoveries

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The crisis surrounding U.S. President Joe Biden's handling of classified documents has deepened after five additional pages were found at his family home in Delaware, the White House said Saturday. It was the latest in a series of revelations about the apparently improper storage of papers dating from Biden's time as Barack Obama's vice president. Biden has said he had no intention of keeping any classified documents. White House lawyer Richard Sauber said the latest papers were found after he visited the home Thursday to oversee the transfer to the Justice Department of a first batch of documents found a day earlier in a room next to the home's garage. Biden's personal lawyers searching the garage at the home in Wilmington, Delaware - where the 80-year-old president often spends weekends - had found a document marked classified in the ga-

rage itself. As these attorneys lacked the necessary security clearance to read it, they notified the Justice Department, Sauber said in a statement. A 1978 law obliges U.S. presidents and vice presidents to hand over their emails, letters and other official documents to the National Archives. Sauber said he does have the necessary security clearance, so he then went to the Delaware house to check out the situation for himself. That is when he found the other five pages, he said. He said all documents were "immediately and voluntarily" handed to the Justice Department. Critics of Biden have seized on the steady stream of revelations to argue that he has not been transparent and forthcoming. Others papers had been found on Nov. 2 at Biden's former office at a Washington think tank, where he had offices after leaving the Obama White House. The president's attorneys had also found "a small number of documents," potentially confidential, on Dec. 20 in

the Wilmington garage, and alerted the Justice Department. Amid a rising furor over the discoveries in Washington, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland on Thursday named Robert Hur as an independent prosecutor to investigate Biden's handling of classified documents. The issue is an unwelcome distraction for Biden as he prepares to announce whether he will seek a second term. The disclosures have prompted comparisons to the case of former President Donald Trump, who is also being investigated by a special counsel for storing hundreds of classified materials at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida and allegedly obstructing government efforts to retrieve them. In contrast, Sauber emphasized that Biden had returned documents "immediately and voluntarily" when they turned up. "I take classified documents and classified material seriously. We're cooperating fully (and) completely with

Continued on Page 06

Police arrests 3 drug peddlers

DNA

ATTOCK: Attock Police intercepted three drugs peddlers along with recovery of hashish and opium worth rupees lacs from their possession here on Sunday. Police said, on tip off, a drugs supplier Mohammad Ilyas was searched and arrested by Hazro Police on the charge of possessing 2 kilograms hashish of international quality. Meanwhile, Pindigheb police taken in to custody two criminals identified as Waseem Akram with hashish of 530 grams and Zahid Zafar with opium of 530 grams. Later on, case under Narcotics Act have been registered against these outlaws and further investigation are underway. During preliminary investigation, the criminals also disclosed their network and told that the recovered narcotics was to be delivered to their addicts.

SCCI holds consultative session on enhancement of export to China

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) conducted a consultative session titled "How to increase export to China" at the Chamber House here on Sunday. The meeting was presided over by SCCI's Senior Vice President Shahid Hussain, while the Chamber's Vice President Ejaz Khan Afridi, member of executive committee Ms Qurtul Ain, former executive member Zahoor Khan, Vice Chairman, SCCI Standing Committee on Land Route Naem ur Rehman, Coordinator of SCCI Research and Development Cell Ishtiaq Ali and Research Officer Ms Sumaira attended the session, said in a press release. The main purpose of the meeting was to hold discussions on several proposals regarding the increase of exports to the People's Republic of China. In this study meeting, it was discussed in the light of a research of the possibility of enhancing export to China both through sea and land routes, especially through those provinces and areas in proximity to Pakistan. During the discussion, it was identified that the seaport was quite far away and instead through the seaport, export to China of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab manufacturing products through Sost route is very feasible and appropriate. If a feasibility study is prepared of various cities of KP and Punjab province, a comparative analysis regarding freights and fares, duration and expenses could be made. Therefore export through seaport can also be enhanced besides land routes, the participants of the meeting said. In the meeting, it was also discussed about expenses, fares and freights and time consumption during export to China through seaport. - APP

WB to finance two 245 MW hydropower projects

PESHAWAR: The World Bank will provide financial assistance for the construction work on two hydropower projects of 245 megawatts in district Swat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year which after completion, will generate an annual income of more than Rs.13 billion for the province. It was also decided to add a security package by making quick amendments in the documents before starting these energy projects. This decision was taken in a high-level meeting with the World Bank mission which was attended by Secretary Energy and Power Nisar Ahmad Khan. WB Senior Energy Specialist Muhammad Saqib, members of the World Bank mission, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO), Engineer Naeem Khan, Chief Engineer of KHRE Program Shah Hussain and respective project directors, said a press release issued here on Sunday. - APP

Nazriya Pak trust launches Quaid e Azam leadership lecture

Ex, Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman says 'we could have taught India even a bigger lesson during Pulwama crisis', speakers say 'Quaid's leaders based on character, courage & commitment key to Pakistan's turnaround in the future'



STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan's premier organisation devoted to promoting the vision and philosophy of the Founding Fathers, the Nazriya Pakistan Trust, launched the Quaid e Azam Leadership Lecture with the first talk by former PAF head, Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman. Terming ACM Aman an 'authentic Pakistani hero', Senator Mushahid Hussain, Vice Chairman of Nazriya Pakistan Trust

(NPT), said the Quaid e Azam through his leadership based on 'character, courage and commitment' had set a unique example which inspired the Muslim masses and led to the struggle which created Pakistan. 'Thanks to the Quaid e Azam and the founding fathers, we are today living as free citizens of a free country', Mushahid Hussain said, underlining that 'the Nation must honour its heroes who are role models' for the people of Pakistan. He said the 'people of

Pakistan have guts and the spirit but they are let down by weak leadership'. Senator Mushahid Hussain lauded Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman for building a modern fighting force in the form of the Pakistan Air Force, which gave a befitting reply to Indian aggression against Pakistan in Balakot in February 2019, which was 'Pakistan's finest hour, along with the Nuclear Tests in May 1998'. In his speech, Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman spoke of 'passion and de-

termination' as key elements of leadership and added that the Quaid e Azam proved through creation of Pakistan that 'nothing is impossible'. He also mentioned that Pakistan's superior strategy and decisive leadership had humbled India during 'Post-Pulwama Crisis' in February 2019, when 'we had 8 Indian aircraft within our grip, with electronic warfare tracking their every move and we have could have taught them a bigger lesson, but we didn't want to escalate'.

Presiding over the meeting, NPT Senior Vice Chairman, Mian Farooq Altaf, talked about various attributes of the Quaid e Azam's leadership, his impeccable integrity and his honesty, and his uncompromising stand on Pakistan, adding 'the Quaid gave all his property to educational institutions and his family derived no benefit from the creation of Pakistan'. Conversely, today he warned against 'worshipping power and money', as character was more important than these worldly material

possessions. The meeting began with an Introduction to Nazriya Pakistan Trust by its Secretary, Naheed Gill, while the Trust Additional Secretary Saifullah Chaudhry conducted the proceedings, which included Tilawat from Holy Quran, Naat, National Anthem and a popular anthem acclaiming the leadership of Quaid e Azam, 'Millat ka Pasban hai Muhammad Ali Jinnah'. A packed audience of 200 plus persons heard the speeches with rapt attention.

Firdous Naqvi expelled from polling station

KARACHI: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Sunday took notice of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Firdous Shamim Naqvi for allegedly breaking the seal of ballot boxes. The ECP has issued directives to expel Firdous Shamim Naqvi from the polling station. A video of Naqvi opening the seal of a ballot box amid voting in Karachi LG polls went viral on social media. The incident took place in the polling station of UC ward 4 of the Soldier Bazar area of the city. Reacting to the matter, PPP wrote a letter to the ECP to lodge a complaint against Naqvi for violation of election rules. PPP leader Taj Haider urged the ECP for immediate notice and action against the PTI leader. Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja has urged the people of Karachi and Hyderabad to take part in the electoral exercise and express their confidence in democracy. In his message, he assured the voters that the ECP will ensure elections without any interference and that any attempt at orchestrating violence will be tackled with full force. He also said that local governments were inevitable for democracy and progress. ECP, polling staff and law enforcement agencies will live up to the expectations of the voters in ensuring free, fair and peaceful elections in Karachi and Hyderabad, CEC Raja added. -DNA

Belgium parliamentary delegation to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: On the special invitation of National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Belgium parliamentary delegation led by Senator and Chairperson of Pakistan-Belgium Parliamentary Friendship Group, Alessia Clots is officially visiting Pakistan from 16 to 21 January. This visit will serve as a tool to strengthen bilateral ties between both nations and further strengthen parliamentary cooperation between the two countries. Furthermore, new avenues of cooperation in trade and business would be also explored during this visit. Belgium parliamentary delegation comprises of Alessia Claes, Karl Vanlourve, State Senator Philippe Courard, PS, State Senator Georges Dalmagne, Les Engages, Member of the Belgian Chamber of Representatives and Senior officers of Belgium Parliament. Beside having call on with National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, the Belgium parliamentary delegation would also hold meeting with Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani. The delegation would also hold meetings with Convener of Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals and chairperson of Women Parliamentary Caucus in the Parliament House. -APP

Arrangements finalized for anti-polio drive in district Attock

STAFF REPORT

ATTOCK: All arrangements have been made in inter provincial bordering district Attock to administer Polio drops to more than three lacs children of under five years of age from January 16 to 20 in District Attock amid tight security cover. This was decided in a meeting held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr. Hassan Waqar Cheema. Among others, the meeting was also attended by the CEO Health Attock Dr. Mohsin Ashraf, World Health Organization representative, relevant officers of all provincial departments. The Deputy Commissioner also appealed all the citizen of the district to extend their cooperation with the polio team of health department to make the district a polio free territory. During the briefing session, the Chief Executive Officer Health Department Dr. Mohsin Ashraf highlighted the salient features of the polio move and said that polio teams have been deployed at all entry and exist points of the district Attock to ad-

minister polio vaccine drops to children of under five years age throughout the district. He said that the Polio campaign has been launched from January 16, 2023 which will be continued till January 20, 2023 without any break. In addition, visiting teams have also been constituted to provide the polio drops at door to door levels besides imparting necessary training to the polio teams in addition to their normal assignments. He said a full fledged control room has also been established at district level to monitor the entire exercise till its successful conclusion. The Chief Executive Officer Health Department Attock Dr. Mohsin Ashraf also warned all the officials on duty to face disciplinary proceedings in case of any irresponsibility or negligence is reported from any corner of the district, CEO Health added.

Gangsters looted grocery store Some unknown gangsters took away grocery food items along with live power wire worth of rupees lacs from the outskirts business hub Gondal Mandi of police station Attock Khurd.

As per details, Dr. Sheikh Inam Rabani reported to the local police that some unknown outlaws removed live wire of more than 100 meters of Rs.20 thousand connected with the electricity meter of his hospital near HazroGondal Road in mid night. Earlier, iron windows, agricultural tools and silver plates worth Rupees lacs were also stolen by some criminals. In another incidence, some unknown burglars have also made away with food items include rice, sugar, tea, soaps, pulses, wheat flour having price of rupees more than one lac after cutting the iron grills of the general store owned by Mr. Abdul Jabbar at DhokJangal during the same night. The police registered the cases and started investigation as usual. However, police could not find the clue of the gangsters till filing of this story. While, the business community have expressed their profound concerns over the increasing rate of street crimes in the locality causing severe sense of insecurity among the people since long.

FGEHA to launch residential projects in eight cities

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) will shortly start new residential projects in eight major cities of the country to provide housing to government employees and general public. "The authority has already received several applications from land owners, companies and firms interested in the mega projects," sources in the FGEHA told APP. They said the applications were invited from land owners, developers, firms and eligible individuals for the supply of land for housing schemes (plots, houses and apartments) projects in major cities of the country. The procedure for applications and selection was being followed as per Joint Venture Regulations 2020, they added. They said the authority was planning to launch new residential projects in eight major cities of the country, including the twin cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Other cities are Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Multan, Faisalabad and Karachi. "The new housing projects will be started for federal government employees and the general public on the basis of a joint venture," they added. -APP



KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah visiting control room during Sindh local bodies election. -DNA

Malik Fakhrazad elected new president of Attock bar

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK(JAN-14): The new office bearers for the slots of President and General Secretary of the District Bar Association Attock obtaining 249 votes while his opponents Syed Faisal Bokhari, Advocate 163 votes and Sufi Ashfaq Ahmed Advocate 35 votes in their favour respectively. Such as, Mr. Waseem Imtiaz Advocate has been elected as General Secretary on securing 254 votes

while Mr. Mohammad Adil Advocate remained second for getting 195 votes. There were total 534 registered votes of the District Bar Association Attock out of which 460 voters used their right of franchise while 07 votes were rejected by the election board constituted to conduct the elections as per policy guide lines of the Punjab Bar Council.

Meanwhile, PPP's candidate for MNA Attock Syed Azmat Bokhari Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan, Member Punjab Bar Council Malik Israr Advocate and Malik Saeed Akhter Vice President PML(N) Lawyers Forum Rawalpindi Division also expressed their profound felicitation to the newly body of the District Bar Association Attock.

Advertisement for SME Bank Limited. Includes text: 'اشتہار نیلام زیر دفعہ سیکشن 15(2) فنانشل انسٹی ٹیوشن ریکوری آف فنانش آرڈیننس 2001ء', 'SME Bank Limited', and a table with columns for 'تفصیل چاہنے والے', 'مکان', 'معرفیہ', 'تاریخ', 'مقام', 'محلہ', 'رقبہ', 'تعداد', 'تاریخ', 'مقام', 'محلہ', 'رقبہ', 'تعداد'. Also includes contact information for the bank and a list of conditions for the auction.

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

Jan 01 / CUBA	Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Palestine	Palestine Revolution Day
Jan 01 / Sudan	National Day
Jan 04 / Myanmar	Independence Day
Jan 06 / Iraq	Armed Forces Day
Jan 12 / Tanzania	Armed Forces Day
Jan 14 / Uzbekistan	Armed Forces Day
Jan 15 / Nigeria	Armed Forces Day
Jan 20 / Mali	Armed Forces Day
Jan 20 / Laos	Armed Forces Day
Jan 25 / Thailand	Armed Forces Day
Jan 26 / Australia	National Day
Jan 26 / India	Republic Day



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& Rescue Services.....	4451122
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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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Rs150.560 million for 'National Minerals Data Centre' project

The project, initiated last year, is aimed at compiling data of available minerals for the facilitation of investors and future projects planning in the country

ISLAMABAD: The government has allocated funds amounting to Rs 150.560 million in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23) to advance an ongoing project of establishing a modern National Minerals Data Centre (NMDC). The project, initiated last year, is aimed at compiling data of available minerals for the facilitation of investors and future projects

planning in the country. The two-year project is being jointly carried out by the Petroleum and Planning Divisions in consultation with all Provincial Mines & Minerals Departments including that of Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Geological Survey of Pakistan. "Pakistan has world-class minerals' resource potential but contribution in the national GDP is

1pc which is considerably below the global average of 2-8% of GDP primarily due to non-availability of integrated geological, regulatory and other relevant data that is the basic requirement for investment facilitation and projects' planning," according to an official document available with APP. Under the project, Geographic Information System (GIS)-based integrated solutions and applica-

tion development would be established to ensure the availability of online geospatial data and maps for investment facilitation and benefit of the stakeholders in the minerals sector. The NMDC would contain information such as geological and geochemical maps, minerals sample analysis reports, airborne geophysical maps, areas granted and applied for mineral

titles, roads and rails layers, geographical borderlines (province, district and town), reserves areas like 'strategic, forest and religious places.' The compiled data would be categorized for publication through a web portal as per guidelines issued by the government. "The exercise will be a regular activity and information will be updated accordingly," the document said. - APP

Police conducts search operation

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital police conducted a joint search and combing operation in the jurisdiction of Sabzi Mandi police station, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directives of IGP Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, search and combing operations are being conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens. Following these orders, a joint search operation was conducted in the jurisdiction PS Sabzi Mandi areas. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: President ICCI Ahsan Bakhtawari presenting shield to DSP Malik BASHIR during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. - DNA

Huge crowd through hilly areas to enjoy snowfall

ISLAMABAD: With the onset of the snowy season, a number of tourists from across the country have started visiting the hilly areas to enjoy the beauty of nature during snowfall. According to a private news channel, a great rush of tourists was witnessed in popular tourism destinations including Murree, Malam Jabba, Kalam, Naran, Kaghan, Swat, Hunza, Ziarat, Chitral, and Kashmir. Reportedly, local as well as international tourists are increasing significantly after the first snowfall of the season but visitors are facing issues related to lodging and increased rates as several hotels and other businesses had already been closed before the start of the current snowfall spell. As Naran-Kaghan Road is closed since November 2022, the only available route to these destinations is the Karakoram Highway. Visitors are advised to check weather advisories, road situations, and routes before leaving for these destinations. Pakistan is a very beautiful country with diverse weather conditions and locations. A large number of visitors in Swat also witnessed that many hotels were already booked and requested the authorities concerned to take serious action against the profiteers who are taking advantage of the situation.

Pakistani music on a journey of progress

ISLAMABAD: Naveed Naushad, known as King of OST, a creator of popular tunes, music director, singer and composer has said that Pakistani music has been on a journey of progress since its inception, it has never declined. In an exclusive interview with APP, he said that the future looks good to me. "Yes, I would definitely like to say that new creators have God gifted talent and they should not be afraid of difficulties," he said, adding that "I enjoyed working with Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, Shafiq Amanat, Nabil Shaukat, Ali Zafar, Ameer Ali, Amanat Ali and Humira Channa". Replying a question, he said, until the song goes on air, I keep making some changes to it. - APP

Police issued 18,117 character certificates

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Police khidmat markaz of Islamabad capital police have facilitated citizens with different services like issuance of character certificate, foreigners' registration, registration of tenants and domestic servants, a police public relations officer said. He said that the Inspector General of Police (IGP)

Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan is taking all possible steps to provide maximum facilities to the citizens of Islamabad adding that several steps have been taken by the police in this regard. He further said that police khidmat markaz has received a total of 18,271 applications of character certificates so far. On which 18,117 character certificates were issued to the citizens after complete verification by concerned

police stations while work on the remaining applications were under process. For character certificates, applicants must bring his/her original CNIC and passport. In case, the Islamabad address is not mentioned on applicant's CNIC, he must bring residential proof or rental agreement. If the applicant is abroad, he/she will have to authorize his relatives on a specified authority letter duly attested by a gazetted officer.

Police bulldoze 4,000 horns, fancy number plates

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to curb noise pollution and ensure public safety, the Islamabad Capital Police bulldozed over 4,000 pressure horns and fancy number plates, a police public relations officer said. He said that, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, SP (Traffic) and other senior police

officials witnessed the bulldozing process at Traffic Police Office (Faizabad). Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, efforts are underway to ensure a safe road environment and disciplined traffic system in the city. Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad said that, the traffic police was striving to make the capital "noise-free". Is-

CTO Islamabad said that, the traffic police was striving to make the capital "noise-free"

lamabad capital police has constituted special squads to check the noise pollution, which takes action against installation of pressure horn in Public Service Transport and small as well as on heavy vehicles. The Chief Traffic Officer said that to make Islamabad a noise free city, strict action is being taken against pressure horn users while special directions have been issued to transporters in this regard. He appealed to transporters to cooperate with Islamabad capital police to check noise pollution. The use of fancy number plates is also a security risk and prohibited, he added. CTO Islamabad urged the citizens to display authorized number plates issued by the excise and taxation office and cooperate with police for a safe road environment. He further said that, the citizens can lodge complaints about vehicles using pressure horns at Islamabad capital police helpline "Pukar-15" as strict action would be ensured against such vehicles, he maintained.

RCCI to formulate the business community perspective

RAWALPINDI: The 15th edition of "All Pakistan Chambers Presidents' Conference (AP-CPC) under the banner of the International Chamber Summit (ICS 2023) will be held in Islamabad from January 17 to 18. According to a statement, the conference's purpose was to formulate the business community's perspective on the ongoing uncertainty in the country and suggestions to deal with the

economic crisis. Saqib Rafiq, President of the Chamber, said that the Summit was being held when Pakistan was passing through a difficult period in its history, with meagre foreign exchange reserves, depreciating rupee, and delay in letters of credit to exporters and importers. He informed that interest rates and inflation were at record highs while investor confidence was low. Saqib added that the conference's main objective was to gather feedback and recommendations from key business community stakeholders and present it to the govt. Through this conference, RCCI had also prepared a joint declaration which will be presented to all concerned government agencies and stakeholders and will serve as policy guidelines for budget, fiscal and export policy etc., he added. President RCCI said the critical agenda points include taxes and their impact on the national economy, cost of doing business, free trade agreements and preferential trade agreements, Climate Change, national economy and E-commerce business in Pakistan. - DNA

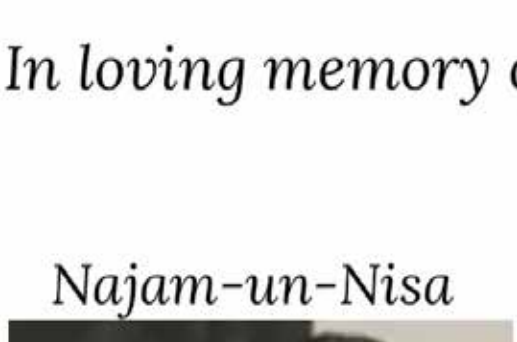
Reforms a must for climate resilient Pakistan'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar on "the Geneva roadmap for a climate resilient Pakistan" said that it is unlikely to mature all the \$10 billion commitments for Pakistan's post-flood recovery and rehabilitation. So, Pakistan needs to go for institutional and governance reforms to combat the challenges of climate change in the long-run. A country-wide efficient adaptation plan shall be worked out on a bottom-up approach alongside religiously implementation of conservation strategies. Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) organized the webinar on Saturday. The climate change expert Ali

Tauqeer Sheikh was the keynote speaker. Other guest speakers included Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed, Lahore Garrison University assistant professor International Relations Dr. Zainab Ahmed, Economist at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Dr. Khalid Mahmood, and climate advocacy specialist Zahra Khalid Haque. Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director and a well-known climate advocacy expert Munir Ahmed introduced the subject of the webinar. He said the UN and Pakistan cohosted the 'International Conference on Climate Resilient Pakistan' on January 9 at Geneva to present a \$31.2 billion "Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework (4RF)", which lays out a multisectoral strategy for rehabilitation and reconstruction in a climate-resilient and inclusive manner. The other key objective was to secure international support and forge long-term partnerships for building Pakistan's climate resilience and adaptation. Munir Ahmed said it was the first ever UN donor conference at Geneva to raise funds for any country. Pakistan needs to act wisely to safeguard its climate vulnerable communities with a stronger local governance system. The inclusive bottom-up approach, and multi-stakeholder monitoring for transparency will support sustainable recovery and rehabilitation.

In loving memory of



Najam-un-Nisa

Daughter of late Iqbal Ahmed Sethi (Sethi Mohalla, Peshawar)

Daughter of late Shafiq Bano (Samman Burj, Wazirabad)

Wife of late Sajjad Ul Hassan

Sister of late Amir Ahmed Sethi

"May Allah grant her highest ranks of Jannat. Her presence will be truly missed. A beautiful, kind, witty, humorous and truly nurturing and caring soul. A true disciplinarian like there exist no more. A strong, fiercely independent lady. One who enjoyed all things classy and beautiful. A class apart."

- Zaib-un-Nisa, sister, with daughters Adila, Yasmin, and Amna and her children Mariam, Shahryar and Mustafa.

Briefs

Musical show held at PAC

RAWALPINDI: A variety musical show was organized to nurture talent in Punjab Arts Council (PAC), in which singers from across the province participated.

Tahir Nayyar, Gulab, Asma Lata, Saqeen Musa Khelvi, Amira Mir, Sharafat Baloch, Sagar Khan, and Jahangir Khan created the magic of their voices in the musical program and received applause from the audience.

Musical show held at PAC

RAWALPINDI: A variety musical show was organized to nurture talent in Punjab Arts Council (PAC), in which singers from across the province participated.

'Sufficient fuel stocks available in country'

ISLAMABAD: A spokesman for Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Sunday strongly rejected speculative reports circulating in a section of the media about the shortage of petrol and diesel in the country.

Sanjrani hosts farewell dinner for Chinese envoy

Ambassador H.E Nong Rong appreciated the comments of the Senate Chairman and said that the government and people of China are also proud of their everlasting friendship with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD : Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani today hosted a farewell dinner in honor of outgoing Chinese Ambassador H.E Nong Rong.



Sanjrani said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project is a gift from China to the people of Pakistan and acknowledged the active contribution of China to the relief and rehabilitation during the recent floods in Pakistan.

New land for 'Gwadar modern Shipyard' on cards

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Since CPEC is catalyzing saga of developments in Gwadar, fresh efforts are afoot for the allotment of the most suitable land for the establishment of 'New Modern Shipyard' in Gwadar, with an objective to incentivize commercial shipbuilding and repair industry.

stormed. "Feasibilities were also hashed out to make the project cost-effective, productive and result-oriented. In the final proposal, instead of Moza Kappara, we proposed the area of Surbandar as the most appropriate land for the construction of Modern Shipyard.

also offer services for building new ships," he added. "Pakistan's federal and provincial governments have announced a collaboration by signing an MoU for the establishment of Gwadar shipyard in February 2021.

security. China, Japan and South Korea are currently the three countries that dominate the global shipbuilding industry. At present, Pakistan's shipbuilding, repair and maintenance work is undertaken at the state-owned Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KSEW).

55 % work at New Gwadar Int'l Airport, completed, test flight in 60 days

ISLAMABAD: New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA) has met its fresh completion benchmark as more than 55 percent multi-tier works have finally been accomplished in stipulated time promising its first test flight within 60 days.

Chinese patent medicines get registered in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Chinese patent medicine are being listed in Pakistan promoting intensive collaboration, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.



Lianhua Qingwen capsules distributor, Pakistan Huazhilong International Trading Company and Tai He Tai Law Firm worked together for 31 months to apply for the listing approval number from the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan.

various pathogens, hyperglycemia, hypertension, etc." Tang Yunxia(also known as Donna Tang) from TAHOTA Law firm in China highlighted that "we can use these similar cases to help Chinese investors in the pharmaceutical industry invest in Pakistan, improve the local capacity to produce medicines, and also export to Middle Eastern countries."

Four wanted criminals held; weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad capital police Shahzad Town police station team arrested four wanted criminals and recovered weapons from their possession, a police public relations officer said.

Politics destroying economy beyond recovery

Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Sunday said Punjab Chief Minister has sent a summary to the governor to dissolve the assembly, which has aggravated the ongoing political crisis in the country.

ICT Admin ensures J. Salik

ISLAMABAD: Former Federal Minister and renowned human rights defender Julius Salik famously known as J. Salik has proposed the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration to initiate a special campaign on promoting humanitarian norms and ethics among the youth through special lectures by the rights defender whereas the Capital administration welcomed his idea for positive youth engagement.



ISLAMABAD: Student from The Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) with his final year engineering design projects at 3rd engineering capstone expo-2022 stall organised by Pakistan Engineering Council. —DNA

Social media influencers banned from entering parliament's premises

ISLAMABAD: Due to the rise of misconduct by social media journalists with the members of parliament, the National Assembly Secretariat on had decided to stop the entry of social media anchors within the limits of parliament.

ECP directs Pemra to put a stop on govt ads

ISLAMABAD: The Election Committee of Pakistan (ECP) on Sunday directed Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) to take concrete steps to stop airing govt ads on television channels.

46,402 Corona patients discharged after recovery

RAWALPINDI: As many as 46,402 Coronavirus patients had been discharged after getting treatment from the district's health facilities, out of which 42,769 were Rawalpindi residents and 3,633 were from other districts.

No shortage of subsidized flour in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD, Jan 15 (APP):Deputy Commissioner of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Irfan Nawaz Memon on Sunday refuted rumors regarding supply disruption of subsidized flour saying sufficient stock of the edible was available at different 82 sale points and 27 utility stores of the city.

Briefs

South Korean president travels to UAE, seeks arms sales

ABU DHABI: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol received an honor guard welcome Sunday on a trip to the United Arab Emirates as he hopes to expand its military sales here. Yoon's visit comes as South Korea conducts business deals worth billions of dollars and stations special forces troops to defend the UAE, an arrangement that drew criticism under his liberal predecessor. Now, however, it appears the conservative leader wants to double down on those military links even as tensions with neighboring Iran have already seen Tehran seize a South Korean oil tanker in 2021. "I think that the situation in the Middle East is changing very rapidly when it comes to geopolitics," said June Park, a fellow with the International Strategy Forum at Schmidt Futures. "So Korea wants to make sure some of the strategic partnerships and the components ... with the UAE." Yoon arrived at Qasr Al Watan palace in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. - APP

WHO appeals to China to release more Covid-19 information

BEIJING: The World Health Organization has appealed to China to keep releasing information about its wave of COVID-19 infections after the government announced nearly 60,000 deaths since early December following weeks of complaints it was failing to tell the world what was happening. The announcement Saturday was the first official death toll since the ruling Communist Party abruptly dropped anti-virus restrictions in December despite a surge in infections that flooded hospitals. That left the WHO and other governments appealing for information, while the United States, South Korea and others imposed controls on visitors from China. - APP

UN: Afghan bank's cash remarks 'misleading'

KABUL: The U.N. criticized Afghanistan's Taliban-controlled central bank for making "misleading and unhelpful" remarks about cash destined for humanitarian work. It comes amid growing tension between the global body and the country's rulers over bans on female education and employment. The U.N. uses the money mostly to provide millions of Afghans with critical humanitarian assistance, flying in cash because of banking disruptions since the Taliban seized power in August 2021. Foreign aid stopped after the takeover. World governments imposed sanctions, halted bank transfers and froze billions more in Afghanistan's currency reserves, unwilling to work with the Taliban, given their rule in the late 1990s and their refusal to educate girls and allow women to work. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif administering polio vaccines to children to kickstart first anti polio campaign of the year. 15th of January, 2023. - DNA

PM Shehbaz hopes to crush resurfacing of polio cases

The resurfacing of the few cases had certainly raised concerns among the partners including Bill Gates Foundation, WHO and other stakeholders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed the hope that a new nationwide campaign was being launched to eliminate the resurfacing of the polio cases in Pakistan. Shehbaz Sharif said this on Sunday while inaugurating a three-day nationwide polio eradication drive by administering polio drops to the children. During his brief address on the occasion in Islamabad, the prime minister expressed the belief that all the provincial governments, along with the federal government, will actively participate in the drive for complete eradication of poliovirus from the country. Paying rich tribute to polio workers, who laid down their lives in this fight against

the epidemic, the Prime Minister said their sacrifices will be remembered in achieving the goal of a polio free Pakistan. He also thanked all stakeholders, including Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Health Organization for their cooperation and commitment to support Pakistan in eliminating the disease. Shehbaz Sharif said this nationwide drive was being started to overcome the resurfacing of the polio cases. He said floods in the summer season had disrupted the national drive, but despite all those difficulties, the polio workers carried out the onus with their hard work and commitment. He further observed that unfortunately, Pakistan was among the few countries where polio cases had resurfaced. A few years back, during the government of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, these cases were completely

eradicated, he added. Shehbaz said about 20 cases of polio were reported from Waziristan, but due to consistent efforts, these were restricted and controlled and did not spread to other parts. The prime minister also lauded those frontline workers and law enforcement agencies personnel who had laid down their lives for achieving the objective and embraced shahadat. He said that their sacrifices would always be remembered. "I have the conviction that all the provincial governments, along with the federal government will continue collaborating to eradicate the disease forever," he added. The resurfacing of the few cases had certainly raised concerns among the partners including Bill Gates Foundation, World Health Organization (WHO) and other stakeholders, he added. The prime

minister said that during a telephonic conversation, Bill Gates had expressed his commitment to support the government's efforts to eliminate the disease. The prime minister also expressed his gratitude to the WHO, stakeholders, related departments, law enforcement personnel and the daughters of the nation for their continuing efforts and commitments. The prime minister mentioned that he had held meetings with the federal health ministry officials and others, whereas the federal and the provincial governments were all supporting these efforts. He expressed the confidence that they would control the disease with collective efforts. The Prime Minister, on the occasion, also distributed appreciation letters and gifts among polio workers and children.

Govt decides to keep POL prices unchanged till Jan 31

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to keep the existing prices of Petroleum products from Monday till Jan 31. This was announced by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar while addressing a news conference in Lahore on Sunday. The minister maintained that the government has decided to keep the prices of petroleum products unchanged. This is the second time this month that the government has not revised the petroleum products' prices. In his televised address, Dar said: "The government has decided to maintain the price of petroleum products for the next 15 days". Next revision on the prices will be made on January 31, he added. Accordingly, petrol would be sold at Rs214.80 per litre, high-speed diesel at Rs227.80 per litre, kerosene oil at Rs171.01 per litre and light diesel oil at Rs169 per litre. It is pertinent to mention here that the coalition government on December 15 decided to cut down the petrol price by Rs 10 and diesel by Rs 7.5 respectively.

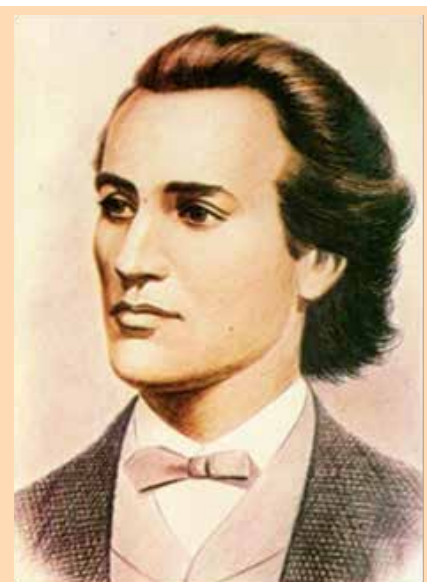
President condemns Peshawar terrorist attack

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday condemned a terrorist attack on Sarband police station in Peshawar. The president expressed his deep grief and sorrow over shahadat of police officers and personnel, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. Sharing grief with the bereaved families, the president reiterated that fight against terrorism would continue till its complete elimination. He said the entire nation saluted the sacrifices of its martyrs. The president also prayed for the high ranks of the departed souls and for the families to bear the losses with fortitude. - DNA

Mihai Eminescu, Romania's most famous Poet

FOR Romanians, January 15 marks the celebration of the National Day of Culture, which also coincides with the commemoration of the country's most famous poet, Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889). It is undeniable that to have an appreciation of Romanian culture one must become acquainted with the works of Mihai Eminescu. The leading cultural figure of nineteenth century Romania, Eminescu was not only a poet, but also a philosopher, prose writer, translator, and journalist. Born on January 15, 1850, in Ipotești, a small village from north-eastern part of the country, Mihai Eminescu was the most prolific and talented poet of his generation - he published his first poem at 16 - and is seen by many critics and readers as the Romania's national poet. He is considered to have changed both the form and the content of Romanian poetry, strongly influencing the following generations of poets. Moreover, one of the most famous Romanian historians, Nicolae Iorga, described Eminescu as "the godfather of the modern Romanian language in the same way that Shakespeare is seen to have directly influenced the English language." Eminescu started his education in Romania and after a few years in which he roamed the country with different theatre companies, working as a prompter and a copyist, he continued his studies in Ber-

lin and Vienna, in Philosophy and Law. During his university years, Mihai Eminescu became involved in the Romanian literary scene and was a frequent collaborator of various literary magazines and publications, being strongly influenced by the German philosophy and western literature. However, his most notable connection was with the Romanian literary society Junimea, founded in Iași in 1863, which is considered the most influential intellectual and political association of the 19th century, and which helped set up the basis of the modern Romanian culture. After completing his education, he returned to Romania, having various jobs, from university librarian to journalist and editor-in-chief, while continuing to write and publish poetry, being perceived as one of the Europe's most illustrious poets of his generation. Eminescu's poems are often imbued with mythology and philosophy, from Heraclit and Platon to Schopenhauer, Kant and Hegel, but also with Asian philosophies. Eminescu's prose is considered strongly influenced by German Romanticism, most notably Novalis, Goethe or Lenau. But probably the strongest influence on Eminescu's work remains folklore and the spiritual ancestry of the Romanian people. He capitalised folkloric themes and motifs, giving them a new poetic dimension in poems like Luceafărul, Călin (File din



poveste), Strigoi, Scrisoarea III, Doina, Revedere, while turning simple, peasant speech into poetic language, using archaisms and regionalisms and masterfully handling rhyme and verse. Although he is most known for his poetry and prose, Eminescu also wrote numerous political articles and essays published in many important newspapers and political leaflets. Eminescu also dedicated his life and work for the independence of Romania and most of his notable political pieces belong to this period, when Romania was fighting the Ottoman Empire (1877-1878) and throughout the diplomatic efforts that eventually brought the international recognition of Romanian independence.

Ukraine puts Dnipro toll at 21 after wave of Russian strikes

KYIV: Ukraine said Sunday that the death toll had risen to 21 after a Russian missile slammed into a tower block in the city of Dnipro during a massive wave of strikes causing power outages and blackouts across the war-torn country. Ukrainian officials said more than 40 people were still missing after the Dnipro strike Saturday, which came as Ukraine celebrated the Old New Year, a popular holiday, and as Britain became the first Western country to offer Kyiv the heavy tanks it has long sought. At least 21 people were killed and 73 others wounded in Saturday's attack on the Dnipro tower block, Ukraine's regional council head Mykola Lukashuk said. A 15-year-old girl was among the dead, officials said, after dozens of people were pulled from the rubble. "Rescue operations continue. The fate of more than 40 people remain unknown," regional governor Valentyn Reznichenko said Sunday. Rescuers battled through the night in a bid to free a woman trapped under the rubble after hearing her voice, the state emergency service said. The strike destroyed dozens of flats in the Dnipro apartment block leaving hundreds of people homeless, said Kyrylo Tymoshenko, a senior official at the presidency. The Ukrainian army said the block was hit by an X-22 Russian missile that lacked the capacity to shoot down. "Only anti-aircraft missile systems, which in the future may be provided to Ukraine by Western partners... are capable of intercepting these air targets," it said. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday pleaded for more Western military weapons, saying that Russian "terror" could be stopped only on the battlefield. "What is needed for this? Those weapons that are in the warehouses of our partners," Zelensky said. On Saturday, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pledged to provide Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine, the first Western country to supply the heavy tanks Kyiv has been demanding. The tanks would arrive in Ukraine in the coming weeks, Downing Street said, adding that Britain would also train the Ukrainian Armed Forces on how to use them. Russia's embassy in Britain warned that "bringing tanks to the conflict zone, far from drawing the hostilities to a close, will only serve to intensify combat operations, generating more casualties, including among the civilian population". - APP

United States President Joe Biden declares disaster in California

DNA

WASHINGTON: United States President Joe Biden has declared a major disaster in the state of California, as the latest in a succession of storm systems brought heavy flooding to already waterlogged regions and threatened snowfalls of up to two metres (six feet). The latest system was expected to bring "heavy lower-elevation rain, significant mountain snow, and strong winds," with "another surge of Pacific moisture" expected on Monday, the National Weather Service (NWS) said. It predicted "disastrous flooding" across the lower Salinas River valley, a key agricultural region south of San Francisco Bay. Late on Saturday, Biden "declared that a major disaster exists in the State of California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe winter storms, flooding, land-

slides, and mudslides", the White House said in a statement. "Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programmes to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster," the statement said. "Federal funding also is available to State, tribal, and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work in the counties of Merced, Sacramento, and Santa Cruz." At least 19 people are known to have died from storm-related causes in the last three weeks. Among them were drivers found in submerged cars, people struck by falling trees, and a husband and wife killed in a rockfall. Rising waters and unsuitable conditions resulted in a halt in the search for five-year-old Kyle Doan, who was swept away in floodwaters as his mother tried to pull him to safety from their

car, the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's office said on Saturday. In Spreckels, a community a few hundred metres from the Salinas river, most residents had opted not to evacuate despite warnings from authorities. "It looks like we might have missed kind of the worst of it," Robert Zagajski, out walking his dog under a light rain, told the AFP news agency. A few kilometres away, 30-year-old farm worker Erick Diaz watched the flooded fields from his home near the river. Despite evacuation orders, he too had remained. "I have nowhere to go and, for the moment, everything is fine," he said. Floodwaters from the rising San Lorenzo River, which cuts through the town in the Santa Cruz Mountains, inundated Felton Grove, triggering emergency evacuations. Rubbish bins were seen floating down streets, with water levels reaching stop signs and overtaking parked vehicles.

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