



Islamabad POST

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President Arif Alvi for ensuring the inter-faith harmony

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NATO Chief slams Russian nuclear threats

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Pakistani Taimoor Khan defends title

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Briefs

Saudi Asst Minister calls on COAS

APP

RAWALPINDI: Assistant Minister of Defense, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Major General Talal Abdullah Al-Otaibi called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir here at General Headquarters (GHQ), the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Wednesday said. Earlier this month, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir arrived in Saudi Arabia on his first official visit to a foreign country since assuming the command of Pakistan armed forces.

Zardari mulls strategy with PM

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Former president Asif Ali Zardari called on Wednesday Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the future strategy of the PDM. The meeting which was held at the PM House, discussed the country's political situation and also reviewed the Sindh's politics. Sources privy to the development said the PDM bigwigs also underscored the reservations of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQMP). On this occasion, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Railways Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique, Ayaz Sadiq and senator Saleem Mandviwalla were also present.

I will not go against establishment

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A seasoned politician and Awami Muslim League (AWM) chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad categorically stated that Lal Haveli has never fought the establishment in past and it will also not go against it in the future. He also gave a hint at witnessing a 'civil war' in Pakistan due to the 'Minus Imran Khan' policy and arrests of PTI leadership. Sh Rasheed addressed the party workers outside his residence, Lal Haveli in Rawalpindi.

Imran seeks CJP role

Fawad nabbed on complaint of ECP Secy

Court sends Fawad on 2-day physical remand; party vows to resist 'draconian' measures



STAFF REPORT

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: Senior PTI leader Fawad Ch was arrested from his residence earlier on Wednesday after he publicly "threatened" the members of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in a media talk outside Imran Khan's residence in Zaman Park a day ago. The LHC had ordered authorities to present Fawad before it in response to a petition filed by Fawad's cousin, Nabeel Shehzad, for the "recovery" of the former federal minister. The petitioner had filed a habeas corpus plea and urged the court to "recover" the PTI leader after the Islamabad police acquired his transitory remand. He also appealed to the court to stop any illegal action against the PTI leader. Justice Sheikh, while hearing the plea, had ordered the authorities to present the PTI leader before the court by 1:30pm. The time was later extended to 2pm, but the authorities failed to pro-

duce Fawad before LHC. Then, the court again told the authorities to produce Fawad at 6pm, but they failed to follow the orders. Interestingly, the orders were issued after a local court of Lahore had approved Fawad's transitory remand in a sedition case filed against him in Islamabad on the election commission's complaint. Meanwhile, In a fresh round of criticism, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan Wednesday slammed the state institutions after his party's senior leader, Fawad Chaudhry, was arrested in a sedition case. In a televised press conference, the PTI chief has said that the nation is looking to the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial for justice – which has been a far-fetched idea after the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) took over the reins.

Fawad was arrested from his residence earlier today after he publicly "threatened" the members of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in a media talk outside Imran Khan's residence in Zaman Park a day ago. Speaking to the media at a court in Lahore, where the police presented him for obtaining remand, Fawad said that he is "proud" of the case that has been registered against him. As PTI workers protested at GT Road in Jhelum, the police also rounded up Fawad's brother Faraz Chaudhry. However, a local magistrate released him on bail after a brief detention. Imran Khan, while cursing the ECP in his address, also questioned if it wasn't aware of the Constitution's Article 218 and its third clause which reads: "It shall be the duty of the Election Commission to organise and conduct the election and to make such arrangements as

Continued on Page 06

Harassment cases in a foreign mission

Further details about this incident are being gathered and some more startling disclosures are likely to be made

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Harassment cases have been unearthed in a foreign mission leading to resignations of a few foreign staff members of the said embassy. According to reports the Pakistani staff working in the said foreign mission has also been subjected to harassment. The diplomatic sources have confided to this news agency that a female staff member of a foreign mission located in the diplomatic enclave resigned from her service after being harassed. She claimed that Pakistani staff working in the said embassy was

also facing similar issues. Further details about this incident are being gathered and some more startling disclosures are likely to be made. It may be mentioned there that this newspaper had published a number of articles about wrong-doings in some of the foreign missions. However those wrong-doings related to misuse of liquor quota; import of cars illegally; hiring of residences and mission building on extremely higher rates etc. After these reports the Ambassador of a European country was sacked from the services while the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs involved in this business was also shown the door.



RAHIM YAR KHAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with Mohammad Bin Zaid Al-Nehyan, President of UAE at Chandna Airport, Rahim Yar Khan. – DNA

Pakistan 2nd home of UAE President: Shehbaz

Both leaders vow to further cement relations

STAFF REPORT

RAHIM YAR KHAN: Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of United Arab Emirates arrived in Rahim Yar Khan on a private visit to Pakistan. He was welcomed at the Airport by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Caretaker Chief Minister of the Punjab Syed Mohsin Raza Nagvi and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi were also present on this occasion. During their meeting at the Airport, both the leaders expressed their resolve to further enhance brotherly relations between the two countries. The Prime Minister recalled his recent visit to the United Arab Emirates and emphasized that both countries

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ECP denotifies 43 MNAs

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Wednesday denotified 43 lawmakers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the last batch of the MNAs who resigned en masse. The development came after National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Tuesday approved

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Pakistan condemns desecration of Holy Quran in Netherlands

Pakistan has always maintained that freedom of expression comes with responsibilities

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the despicable act of desecration of the Holy Quran in the Netherlands on 22 January 2023. It is undoubtedly a provocative Islamophobic hate crime committed under the guise of freedom of expression. Such offensive acts deeply hurt the feelings of 1.5 billion Muslims around the world and can create disharmony among the international community. Pakistan has always maintained that freedom of expression comes with responsibilities. We also believe that it is the responsibility of national governments and the international community at large to prevent such vile acts, which are perpetrated with the ulterior motive to provoke and incite religious hatred and violence. The international community should raise its collective voice against Islamophobia and work together to promote inter-faith harmony and peaceful coexistence. That was the spirit behind the resolution passed by

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Qatar strongly condemns desecration of Holy Quran

NEWS DESK

DOHA: The State of Qatar has condemned and denounced in the strongest terms the tearing of a copy of the Holy Quran by an extremist in The Hague, Netherlands, confirming that this act fuels the feelings of more than two billion Muslims all over the world. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned from allowing the repetition of such behavior under the pretext of freedom of expression, calling on the world community to double their efforts and take responsibility to stop such deliberate insults and repeated acts.

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Pakistan urges 'new strategy' to engage Afghan Taliban – Page 08

Govt distances itself from Fawad Chaudhry's arrest

Says Some people are attempting to portray that Fawad Chaudhry's arrest was politically motivated



MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb said Wednesday the coalition government had no hand in Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice

President Fawad Chaudhry's arrest, clarifying that "we have the same power as PTI did while in power, but we will not use it for political victimisation". "Some people are attempting to portray that Fawad Chaudhry's arrest was politically motivated. But let me take the opportunity and clarify: if we wanted to arrest, then the entire top-tier PTI leadership would be behind bars. It is not politically motivated," the minister said in a press conference. Fawad was arrested from his residence earlier after he publicly "threatened" the members of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in a media talk outside Imran Khan's residence in Zaman Park a day ago. In her presser, the federal minister noted that it was not the government that had registered the case against Fawad, rather, ECP Secretary Omer Hamid Khan had lodged the first information report (FIR). "For the past nine months, we were in power, but we did not resort to the tactics that PTI used. During their tenure, ministers and Imran Khan, himself would hold press conferences and describe how their political opponents would be arrested later."

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Briefs

Iran ready to supply gas to Pakistan: CG

QUETTA: Iran's Consul General Hassan Darvishvand on Wednesday said that Iran was ready to supply gas to Pakistan to deal with the energy crisis. While talking to local journalists here Wednesday the Consul General expressed his grief over the martyrdom of Pakistani security forces in Panjgur and consoled the families of the martyrs saying that some mischievous elements wanted to alienate us by creating misunderstandings between the two brotherly countries. The security authorities of both countries should come together to suppress the evil elements, he noted. He said that we wished that the Zahedan Express train from Quetta to Zahedan could be further improved and with the support of the Chamber of Commerce, direct flights from Quetta to Tehran would be started soon to further promote cooperation in tourism and economic sectors. Hassan Darvishvand said that Iran and Pakistan share the same interests, language, culture and religion saying that media could play a key role in promoting relations between the two neighboring countries. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has met Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdullahian in the Eco Conference to bring the people and governments of the two countries closer, he said. He said that relations in the economic sector have been boosted and we have reached a high level beyond the limited scale, however, there was a need to promote Pakistan-Iran relations in various fields. He said that the target of trade volume between Pakistan and Iran was five billion dollars and this target could be reached by starting more economic activities. — APP

First patient recovered with paralysis injection

PESHAWAR: For the first time in Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) a patient was administered paralysis injection following which he gained recovery and was saved from long-term disability. Spokesman LRH, Muhammad Asim told media that the injection costing Rs100,000 was provided to the paralysis patient free of charge. The clots created in his veins were removed with the single shot, he said, adding it was the first patient at LRH who was successfully treated with the anti-paralysis shot. Asim said to achieve a positive result of the shot, it was necessary that the patient should be brought to the hospital within three to four hours of the paralysis attack otherwise it will not work. The injection, he said, would be administered to the paralysis patient after inspection by the doctor in the Emergency Department of the hospital. Dr Ayesha of the LRH said whenever blood clots were created in the brain of paralysis patients that could be treated through this injection if administered in stipulated time. Usually, she said the patient gets recovery with this injection and is saved from disability. Medicine Chairman LRH, Assistant Professor Zia Ullah Chamkani said this injection was being used in other countries for a long time, however it was now also available at LRH. — APP

ICCI for fostering women entrepreneurs for growth

Rizwana Asif, President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the government should help in organizing exhibitions of women products in foreign markets that would provide them international exposure and contribute towards exports promotion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that women are almost half of the total population and government should make conducive policies to enhance their role in the economic activities that would pave way for their empowerment and accelerate the economic growth of the country. He said this while talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs during their visit to ICCI. Beenish Iftikhar Qadri Founder President Hyderabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Rizwana Asif President Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Samina Fazil Founder President, Naima Ansari former President IWCCI and others were in the delegation. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that women have reserve seats in the parliament and provincial assemblies, which is encouraging. However, he said that there is a great need to focus on fostering women entrepreneurship so that they could play a more effective role in the development of the economy. He said that ICCI is taking many initiatives for women entrepreneurs and it would continue to work in collaboration with women chambers of commerce and industry for their better economic empowerment. He said that ICCI would give awards to the enterprising women at the International Women's Day to recognize their contribution to the development of the country. Beenish Iftikhar Qadri, Founder President, Hyderabad Women Chamber of



Commerce and Industry said that women start-ups have to face great problems in easy access to finance and emphasized that the government should address this issue to facilitate the growth of more women enterprises. She said that close cooperation between ICCI and Hyderabad Women CCI would help in facilitating women in business development. Rizwana Asif, President, Islamabad Women

Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the government should help in organizing exhibitions of women products in foreign markets that would provide them international exposure and contribute towards exports promotion. She said that the government should set up separate and specific women markets in the country that would encourage more women to start businesses in them with confidence.

Samina Fazil, Founder President, Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that IWCCI would organize a women expo in March this year to provide them a good platform for display of their products. She appreciated ICCI for providing its auditorium to IWCCI for organizing various functions for women and said that ICCI co-operation with IWCCI would facilitate women in business development.

NEPRA grants generation licence to NPGCL

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has granted a separate generation licence to Northern Power Generation Company Limited (NPGCL) for its 565.65 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant at Nandipur. The Nandipur Power Plant was made part of the Generation Licence (No. GL/03/2002) of NPGCL on October 31, 2014. However, pursuant to the decision of the government regarding the privatization of the Nandipur Power Plant, the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) directed NPGCL to obtain a separate generation licence for the plant, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. Accordingly, the Authority, after receiving the application for the grant of a generation licence from NPGCL, approved the grant of a separate generation licence for the Nandipur Power Plant in the interest of privatisation of the power plant. — APP

CG of Japan calls on Governor Sindh

KARACHI: Consul General of Japan Odagiri Toshio on Wednesday met with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House here. Bilateral relations, investment, trade and other issues of importance were discussed in the meeting. Sindh Governor said that Pak-Japan bilateral relations span many decades. He said that Pakistan has always given special importance to relations with Japan. Kamran Khan Tessori said that Pakistan is keen to increase investment and trade with Japan. Consul General of Japan Odagiri Toshio said that Japanese investors are interested in various sectors in Pakistan. — APP

NA Speaker condoles with Mandokhail

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani on Wednesday commiserated with Pakistan Peoples Party, MNA Qadir Khan Mandokhail over the demise of his beloved father. In separate condolence messages to Qadir Khan Mandokhail, speaker and deputy speaker expressed their deep sorrow and grief over the death of Mandokhail's father. They prayed to Allah Almighty to grant the deceased eternal rest and console those deeply pained by his death.

Prioritizing education is a key to human development

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: On this International Day of Education, experts stressed on the need of prioritizing education especially in times of disasters so that learners are not deprived of their right to education and highlighted the role of political parties in ensuring quality education. These thoughts were expressed during a dialogue conducted by Awaz CDS and Child Rights Movement with the theme of "to invest in people, prioritize education". This event was an effort to bring awareness to the intricacies of issues in the Education sector according to Chief Executive Awaz CDS Mr. Zia ur Rehman, via panel discussions of both Development sector and government officials. He further said that the root cause of our education calamity is the lack of implementation of government policies already put in place, and once Pakistan succeeds in implementing the legislations and policies, progress and development is not far. The first panel discussion was aimed to address the challenges of provision and attainment of education in times of disaster in Pakistan. National Coordinator, Pakistan Coalition for Education Ms. Zehra Kaneez pointed out that even those who had educational

resources such as schools, lost them instantly due to lack of disaster resistant measures and infrastructure hence there is a strong need to invest in disaster resilient systems and infrastructure. Ms. Baela Raza Jamil, Chief Executive Officer of Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi highlighted the need of improved school infrastructures. She demanded more budgets and resources for education. Mr. Syed Ishtiaq Ul Hasan Gilani, Chief Executive of United Global Organization of Development emphasized on the added concern of child abuse and child trafficking that can significantly be resolved if Pakistan rigorously implement a free and compulsory education policy.

Ms. Ayesha Khan, Country Director of Hashoo Foundation segued into the next panel discussion by concluding the first one and by reminding everyone the importance of public-private sector collaboration and reasserting the effective role of civil society to collectively address this nationwide educational disparity. In the panel discussion on "Role of Political Parties in Education", Zubair Safdar representing Jamat-e-Islami reiterated the issue of education governance and government schools. He said that government schools have great infrastructural resources but quality of educa-

tion needs to be improved to gain parents trust. Nafeesa Inayatullah Khan Khattak, Ex-MNA and member of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, reminded that education is the right of every child and one of the top priorities for her party and Malaika Raza, member of Pakistan People's Party agreed and informed that education is free in Sindh and 800 million Rupees have been invested so far on the education of girls in particular. Raja Ateeq Sarwar, Senior Vice President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) concluded the second panel discussion by emphasizing the dire need for provision of school infrastructure and resources especially on higher secondary level for girls in rural villages. Concluding the session Mr. Zafarullah Khan Executive Director Vision 2047 said Political party representatives have influence over their supporters and policy makers in jointly bringing the necessary reform needed in our education sector. Political parties must realize their ability to affect systematic change and act accordingly. The event was closed with a productive and thought-provoking Question and Answer session. Ms. Aqsa Batool from Workers Welfare School Rawalpindi presenting the Charter of Demand on Education.

USA ambassador to Pakistan visits SCCI

DNA

SIALKOT: USA Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) for a meeting with members of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Ambassador was warmly received by President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik along with other officials. According to the SCCI Press release, while addressing to the house President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik, mentioned that both the United States of America and Pakistan were celebrating 75 years of bilateral partnership. Malik emphasized on the areas of mutual interest including enhanced trading linkages, women empowerment, green environment & sustainable production. Abdul Ghafoor Malik further mentioned that the United States of America could extend its cooperation, expertise, technological support, and a conceptual framework to promote the model of Sialkot, across Pakistan. He said that USA was the top trading partner of Pakistan and that both countries should focus on further improving the bilateral trade. In this regard, he mentioned about cooperation from US Embassy in exchanging trade delegations, participation in US based trade exhibitions, and finding common grounds for collaboration mutually beneficial for businesses of both countries. Ambassador of the USA to Pakistan Donald Blome, in his address shared that the United States was committed to helping Pakistan mitigate the effects of climate change, promotion of sustainable energy, encouraging women's participation, and enhancing bilateral trade. While interacting with the business community of Sialkot the Ambassador expressed his conviction that partnership between the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the US Embassy would further strengthen and that both countries would support private cooperation important for improving ties in all field.

Protest in Attock against burning of Quran in Sweden

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: Thousands of people from all walks of life from inter provincial bordering district Attock here on Wednesday have expressed their anger with the strong protest against the tearing and burning of Holi Quran by Swedish politician Rasmus Paludan in front of Turkish embassy in Stockholm on Saturday last. The protesters led by JUI District Ameer Attock Mufti Tazuddin Rabbani, Senior Vice Ameer Mufti Syed Ameer Zaman Haqani, Chief Patron, Central Leader Molana Sher Zaman, Qazi Khalid Mehmood, Hafiz Haroon ur Rasheed, Molana Mohammad Naeem Qasimi, Qari Mohammad Ibrahim Behoodi, Molana Qamar ulislam, Molana Izhar ulHaq, Malik Mohammad Shahid, Qasim Khan Wardag, Molana Qari Ismail, MolanaMasud Akhtar Zia, Molana Zia ul Mohsin, Zarkhon Shah, Ibrahim Fani, Qari

Fakharuddin Razi, Mufti Saeed ur Rehman Basalvi, Molana Abdullah, Molana Hasnain Movia, Mufti Idrees and Qari Abdul Rauf along with thousands of citizens from different corners of the district have also urged upon the rulers of Pakistan to wake up from the sleep of their temporary powers for bringing this most important serious issue at the forums of OIC and UNO instead of issuing condemnatory statements of taking it for granted. In their joint protest statements, they demanded exemplary punishment of Rasmus Paludan on the charge of hurting the religious feelings of the Muslims community all over the world under the garb of right of expression. They condemned the frequent provocative acts of hatred launched by the unbridled anti-islamic and anti-Muslims elements of the west particularly on the abetment of Swedish Government. They also reiterated on their stance to avoid such kind of acts failing which this will create wide spread hatred sentiments for other religions of the world, they added.



ISLAMABAD: Rawalpindi/ Islamabad Photo Journalist Association (RIPJA) newly elected President Sohail Malik, General Secretary, Sohail Shahzad and other officials are taking oath from President of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalist (PFUJ), Afzal Butt. — DNA

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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
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Jan 26 / Australia	National Day
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Motorway Police....9266044
Motorway Police..9270601-20
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DHQ.....5556311-4
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Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

US partners with KP, FAO to boost agri livelihoods

The agriculture training centers will impart skills and training in alternative crop production technologies, which promote sustainable economic growth and eliminate community dependency on illicit crop production

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, Andrew Schofer, Wednesday joined U.S. Embassy Director of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Lori Antolinez, Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) Representative Florence Rolle, and KP Special Secretary of Agriculture Department Janat Gul to celebrate the successful completion of a \$477,876 project to benefit the citizens of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The project developed state-of-the-art training manuals, supported 350 farmers—including 80 women—on improved alternative agricultural technologies, and trained 16 master trainers from the Agriculture Extension Department from Mohmand, Khyber, Bajaur, and Torghar districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), said a press release issued by the US Embassy. DCM Schofer reflected on the partnerships between the U.S. Government, FAO, and the



KP Government: "This project has achieved promising results in terms of crop productivity enhancement and increased incomes, while also strengthening the relevant institutions which will continue to help farmers by providing them essential support for the production and marketing

of their crops." The agriculture training centers will impart skills and training in alternative crop production technologies, which promote sustainable economic growth and eliminate community dependency on illicit crop production. Florence Rolle said the FAO partnership with the U.S. government and the KP agriculture department has been instrumental in generating best practices for the development of alternative livelihoods in the region. Over the past four decades, the U.S. Government, through INL, has invested more than \$1 billion dollars to improve citizen's security and enhance law enforcement capacity across Pakistan, the statement said adding that INL works in more than 90 countries to help combat crime and corruption, counter the narcotics trade, improve police institutions, and advance fair and accountable court systems.

IRSA releases 57,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Wednesday released 57,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 44,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1495.65 feet, 97.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 16,500 cusecs while the outflow as 36,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1126.75 feet, which was 76.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 9,200 cusecs and 2,800 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 35,000, 41,200, 19,700 and 8,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 7,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Roohi Bano remembered on her death anniversary

ISLAMABAD: The 4th death anniversary of famous TV and film actress Roohi Bano observed on Wednesday. She was born in Karachi on 10 August 1951. Roohi Bano was known for her roles in Kiran Kahani, Zard Gulab, and Darwaza. She was conferred the Pride of Performance award by the President of Pakistan in 1981. She also earned many PTV awards, notably Nigar Award, Graduate Award and Lux Lifetime Achievement Award. She breathed her last on 25th January, 2019 in Istanbul.—APP

Railways starts up gradation work

ISLAMABAD, Jan 25 (AP-P): Pakistan Railways has accelerated the upgradation work involving the private sector to improve services in passenger trains as well as major railway stations to address the growing issues, especially sanitation issues. "The department was of the view that the cleanliness-related services in trains and at major stations, including Lahore, Faisalabad, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Quetta, Peshawar, Khanewal, Sukkur, Sahiwal, Multan and Bahawalpur were not satisfactory," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said that if services of the private sector were hired under a fast-track policy, the hygiene conditions at stations and in trains could be improved which would also restore the confidence of passengers in the department. The official said Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique also asked the officials to accelerate efforts to bring uniformity in the design and signboards of stalls at the major railway stations under a policy. He said that Saad Rafique was also curious to quickly devise a policy in a bid to bring uniformity in the design of all the stalls.—APP

Health professionals asked to remain vigilant on diphtheria cases

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Health (NIH) has asked health professionals to remain vigilant in picking up suspected Corynebacterium Diphtheriae cases and to undertake prevention and control measures during the winter season. According to the advisory issued by the NIH's Center for Disease Control for the prevention and treatment of Corynebacterium Diphtheriae, sporadic cases of Diphtheria are mainly reported in Pakistan from November to February while in the year 2022, there were 26 laboratory-confirmed cases reported from all across the country.

It said that Diphtheria is a potentially life-threatening bacterial disease caused by infection with toxin-producing strains of Corynebacterium Diphtheriae. It is transmitted usually from person to person through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing. While informing about the probable cases, the advisory said that any person who meets the clinical case definition for respiratory diphtheria like upper respiratory tract illness characterized by laryngitis or pharyngitis or tonsillitis and a visible adherent membrane on the tonsils, pharynx, or nose and without

epidemiological linkage and laboratory confirmation. It added any confirmed case is a probable case that has been laboratory confirmed or linked epidemiologically to a laboratory-confirmed case. Persons with positive Corynebacterium Diphtheriae culture, but asymptomatic, should not be reported as suspected or confirmed cases. The advisory said that Diphtheria is transmitted from person to person, with skin lesions usually through respiratory droplets (coughing or sneezing). The infection may come in contact or touching open sores (skin lesions) and

material objects (toys or clothes) used by the person who already is sick with diphtheria. The incubation period is usually 2-5 days, occasionally longer while the bacteriological culture and PCR can be used to detect toxigenic strains of C. diphtheriae which is a standard test for confirmation specimen collection. It said that persons should immediately start the treatment if diphtheria is suspected without waiting for laboratory confirmation. It added Diphtheria patients are usually kept in isolation until they are no longer able to infect others.—APP

Hum Dono' first look grabs netizens attention

ISLAMABAD: Top-notch Pakistani starlet Hira Mani and the heartthrob Ahsan Khan all set to share the screen in the upcoming series 'Hum Dono'. Mani, rose to fame from her much-loved serial 'Do Bol', enchanting social media posts and her soulful voice, surely knows how to grab the audience's attention with her talent and charismatic personality. This time around, the 'Sawaari' sensation took her official Instagram handle and wowed her huge fan following as she shared the gripping poster of her upcoming tale along with the caption "Get ready for a mini-series 'Hum Dono' coming soon" As per the shared poster, the story revolves around the little angel Saadi "Keep a look out for Hum Dono and meet the child who changes everything" Mani stated followed by an emoticon. The enchanting poster shortly hooked the audience as well as showbiz big wigs, the post drew thousands of likes and supporting comments "Congrats and bring this on my two loveliest people Hira Mani and Ahsan Khan" the 'Dum Mastan' sensation Amar Khan stated. Furthermore, Ahsan Khan along with the diva's husband also stated lovely comments on the Insta post, to which Mani responded with gratitude. The stellar cast includes Ahsan Khan, Hira Mani, Azra Mansoor, Bismah Babar, Faizan Chawla, Taqi Ahmed, Asfar Khan, Saadi, Zobia, Bina and Feroza Mohammed. Directed by the ace director Aabis Raza and written by the ladies with a golden pen Nimra Jamil and Warisha Fatima, the masterpiece is expected to be aired soon.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry met with Ambassador of Morocco Muhammad Karmoune at his office.—DNA

IMF wants action rather than promises

ISLAMABAD : Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and Ali Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said the IMF officials have become tired of promises and assurances and they will not act unless Pakistan takes action. Government must take the required decision to initiate the ninth review of the international organization, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the finance minister of the former government delayed the agreement with the IMF until he was fired,

but his delay led to the collapse of the economy. Now the current government is repeating the same mistake while delaying the agreement which ruining the economy. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the terms of the IMF and the proposed mini-budget will prove a disaster for the people, but it is necessary for the survival of the county. Apart from elitism and wrong policies, the economy has been damaged as a result of the epidemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, and to get out of this situation, Pakistan has to abide by strict IMF conditions.

There is no option but to accept the conditions and get its financial support as Pakistan has almost exhausted its foreign exchange reserves. Attempts were made to run the economy without the IMF which achieved nothing but economic misery and public anger. Now the friendly countries have also refused any kind of help and have made it clear in clear words that to get their help, Pakistan has to put its house in order. In these circumstances, the government has decided to present a mini-budget while the determination of the value of the dollar will also be left to the market, which will see an immediate sharp increase in the value of the dollar and inflation may exceed 35 percent. The IMF's stringent conditions are aimed at enabling our fragile economic system, but it is also a fact that due to the increase in electricity and gas prices, petroleum levies.—DNA

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Briefs

Motorway
Police assist
travelers

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) helped commuters recover their lost phones in two separate incidents on Wednesday.

According to the details issued by NHMP, a passenger contacted the Motorway Police to report that he had lost his phone on a bus while travelling at Toba Tek Singh (N-5). The police utilized all the possible resources to locate the bus and phone which returned the phone to its rightful owner.

In another incident, police officials found a mobile phone worth Rs60,000 during patrolling at Azakhel N-5. The officers searched for the owner with the help of saved contacts and managed to reunite the belongings. The citizens expressed their gratitude and appreciated the positive role of the motorway police.—APP

AIOU
initiates
revision of
courses

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Pakistan Girls Guide Association, and Taleemabad has started the revision process of six non-formal education teacher training courses.

The book revision process for distance education teachers will be completed in three days and the



books will be digitized," said Dr. Muhammad Ajmal Chaudhry, Chairman, Department of Distance, Non-Formal and Continuing Education, AIOU, at the opening session of the workshop. Program Specialist, Youth and Adult Literacy, JICA, Muhammad Bilal Aziz along with his team, Program Coordinator, department of Distance, Non-Formal and Continuing Education, Dr. Tahira Bibi, representatives of Pakistan Girls Guide Association and Taleemabad were among the participants of the workshop. Muhammad Bilal Aziz said that the number of children between 10 and 16 years of age was the highest among those who drop out in Pakistan after Covid-19 and with the help of Allama Iqbal Open University we were trying to bring children of this age group back into the education network. He said that we had also started middle tech program in collaboration with AIOU and, there was a need to link education with technical education for the better interest of Pakistan and Pakistani children.—DNA

BISP advises
to beware of
fraudulent

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support program (BISP) has advised the beneficiaries not to consider any message regarding payments of Benazir Kafalat program except the official number of 8171.

While issuing an alert to the beneficiaries, the BISP has issued an alert to the beneficiaries to beware of fraudulent or scammers and stated, "All the payment messages from BISP are sent from 8171 only while the messages received other than this number will be fake". BISP in support with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is also taking legal action against those involved in sending fake messages to the beneficiaries. The BISP informed that all the messages being circulated on social media regarding registration of BISP programs are fake and BISP have no connection with all these messages and videos.

The registration of BISP is only carried out through Benazir National Socio Economic Registry (NSER) and designated registration centers without any charges. For further information about the programs, the beneficiaries may contact the helpline 0800-26477.—

Narcotics Ministry, UNODC
launch PMS online portal

In his remarks, Mr. Zafar Mahmood – Former Chairman of the PCMA expressed satisfaction over the newly automated Pakistan's Precursor Management System

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Narcotics launched its newly automated Precursor Management System – an online portal for registering and applying 'No Objection Certificate (NOC)' for importing controlled precursor chemicals by the industry. This newly automated system has been technically supported by UNODC, through funding support by the Government of Japan.

The formal launch ceremony was chaired by Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti – Federal Minister for Narcotics Control. Other high-ranking participants included Federal Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control, Chairman of Pakistan Chemical Manufacturers Association (PCMA), and Representative of UNODC Country Office Pakistan (COPAK). Officials from various federal ministries and line departments, senior representatives from the industry and the civil society and international donor representatives also attended the ceremony. While warmly welcoming the participants, Dr. Jeremy Milsom, Representative UNODC Country Office in Pakistan highlighted that the new web-based



Precursor Management System has significantly enhanced capacities of these national authorities – to collect or receive, process, interpret data and approve requests related to import and legitimate industrial use of controlled precursor chemicals – in a more secure and real-time manner. "This technical capacity-building initiative will improve Pakistan's precursor control regime and improve 'ease-

of-doing business' for the Pakistani chemical and pharmaceutical industry. Hence, this capacity development has paved the way for attaining objectives of Government of Pakistan's Anti Narcotics Policy 2019, and our shared aspirations under the provisions of UNODC's Pakistan Country Programme III (2022-2025)", said Dr. Milsom. A comprehensive presentation on the PMS was delivered

by Mr. Sabino Sikandar Jalal – Senior Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Narcotics Control. He apprised the participants design and functioning of web-based information management and application processing system, that has replaced manual processing system, focusing public companies' registration, requests for importing controlled precursor chemicals for industrial use, issuance

of 'No Objection Certificate', and submission of utilization details of imported controlled chemicals.

In his remarks, Mr. Zafar Mahmood – Former Chairman of the PCMA expressed satisfaction over the newly automated Pakistan's Precursor Management System. He highlighted that one of the leading objectives of the PCMA was to anticipate, suggest, and respond to Government of Pakistan's regulatory policy and practices. "The PCMA is committed to attracting new investments and improving Pakistan's chemical exports. We continue endeavors to achieve competitiveness through sustainable growth and adoption of global best practices, in close coordination with the Government of Pakistan", said Mr. Mahmood. In her remarks, Ms. Humaira Ahmed, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Narcotics Control highlighted that the newly automated Precursor Management System is a manifestation of Government of Pakistan's broad vision, to automate the entire process of registration and issuance of 'No-Objection Certificate (NOC)' to the chemical and pharmaceutical industry for importing, exporting and utilizing controlled precursor chemicals.

Noor-ul-Amin
appointed
as Chairman
CDA Board

ISLAMABAD: The Establishment Division on Tuesday notified the appointment of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Chief Commissioner, Capt. (Retd.) Noor-ul-Amin Mengal (PAS/BS-20) as Chairman of the CDA Board. According to the notification, the appointment has been made under Section 6(2) of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) Ordinance, 1960, with immediate effect and until further orders.—DNA

Fish exports
increase by
12.23% to
\$224.9m

ISLAMABAD: The exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 12.23 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The country earned \$224.982 million from seafood exports during July-December (2022-23) against the exports of US \$200.473 million in July-December (2021-22), showing growth of around 12.23 percent, PBS reported. In terms of quantity, the exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 18.61 percent going up from 74,626 metric tons last year to 88,517 metric tons in the first six months of last year. On a year-on-year basis, the seafood exports decreased by 21.54 percent to \$39.206 million in December 2022 as compared to the exports of \$49.971 million during December 2021. In terms of quantity, the exports witnessed a 5.67 percent decrease going down from 17,895 metric tons last year to 16,880 metric tons this year. On a month-on-month basis, the seafood exports declined by 23.42 percent when compared to the exports of \$51.198 million in November, according to the PBS data. In terms of quantity, fish exports went down by 18.71 percent in December 2022 compared to the exports of 20,382 metric tons in November 2022. The overall food exports from the country were recorded at \$2,325.474 million during July-December (2022-23) against the exports of \$2,481.010 million recorded during July-December 2021, showing negative growth of 6.27 percent. It is pertinent to mention here that the trade deficit witnessed a decline of 32.65 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The trade deficit during July-December (2022-23) was recorded at \$17.133 billion against the deficit of \$25.438 billion in July-December (2021-22), a decline of 32.65 percent.—APP

Parliament
House to
resume
routine
functioning

ISLAMABAD: Parliament House will resume routine functioning from Thursday after a three-day comprehensive electrical audit and fixation of various electrical faults pertaining to sensitive electronic gadgets and overall wiring of the entire building by the experts.

According to a press release, after hard work and continuous efforts, concerned authorities have been able to fix the fault that resulted in minor short-circuit in parliament building a couple of days ago. Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf monitored the overall operations and directed the concerned to take all precautionary measures to avoid any future untoward incidents. Senate Chairman and National Assembly Speaker were of the view that human safety is crucial and every effort must be made to overcome loopholes in the system. Both the postponed sessions of National Assembly and Senate would now resume as per revised schedule. The Senate will meet on Thursday (January 26, 2023) at 11:00am and National Assembly at 11:00am on Friday, (January 27, 2023) in their respective halls.—APP

Pirzada for stringent penalties
on bounded labour laws violation

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Human Rights Riaz Husain Pirzada on Wednesday stressed upon imposing stringent punishments on violators of bounded labour laws to end discrimination of the masses facing exploitation for earning their livelihoods. Addressing the 3rd meeting of Inter-Ministerial and Inter-Provincial Steering Committee of National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights, the Minister said there was a need of amendments in the existing laws to provide more stringent punishments against those

violating the law and also to ensure provision of government assistance and rehabilitation programmes' dividends to the victims of forced or bounded labour. Pirzada said the inter-provincial coordination on Business and Human Rights should be continued among the federating units in line with the National Action Plan (NAP) without any interference from the federal government. The provinces or federating units should exercise their powers to ensure NAP recommendations extending human rights to all without the interference of the federal government,

he added. He said the federal and provincial governments should periodically revise the list of hazardous occupations and increase uniformity amongst various regulations regarding the working hours in industries. The Minister said that the UN framework also clarifies that corporate responsibility to respect human rights exists parallel to States' ability to protect Human Rights. He added that the Departments of Industries, Human Resources Development, and Securities Exchange Commission of Pakistan should make efforts

for better coordination on implementation of NAP on Business and Human Rights. The Minister also stressed on incorporating the sections of ILO Conventions into legal frameworks governing the rights of all workers. To eliminate the child labour the Minister said that the violators flouting rules on child labour should be fined on spot for immediate justice and strict compliance of laws. The meeting was attended by Secretary Human Rights Ministry, DG Human Rights Ministry, inter-provincial stakeholders of human rights and members from the Industries Department.—APP

IESCO for taking
measures during
rainy spell

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday advised the general public to take precautions to avoid any accidents during rains as a little carelessness can lead to fatal accidents. The general public was advised to follow precautionary measures for the sake of saving life and important belongings, told IESCO spokesperson here. He said always kept a reasonable distance from electric poles, transformers and meters. Never touch naked wire and get repaired defective wiring, use three pin plug along with proper earthing while using an iron, washing machine, refrigerator etc, put wooden pieces, flapper or 'dari' under your feet and also use rubber soles on shoes, said. He said to use rope while drying clothes instead of electrical wires and never use a water pipe for it. Instruct children to avoid going near electricity installations while playing, he added. Do not tie the rope of cattle with poles or stay-wire and remain at least a hundred feet away from high-tension wires.—APP

Gwadar will start
receiving 100
MWs of electricity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar will have 100 Megawatts of additional electricity from March 1 from Iran, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday quoting Director General Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Qambarani. "Insha'Allah Gwadar will have 24/7 power supply, this will boost industry, tourism and real estate business in Gwadar," Mr. Qambarani wrote on his Twitter. To fulfill the electricity needs of Gwadar, the governments of Pakistan and Iran signed an agreement for the supply of additional 100 Megawatts of electricity in June 2022. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his visit to Gwadar last year had directed authorities



concerned to complete the project in a short period of time. Moreover, the Central Development Working Party (CDWP), last June, approved a 132kV transmission line from Jiwani to Gwadar. The project namely the Construction of the 2nd Circuit Stringing of the 132kV, transmission line from Jiwani to Gwadar (94km), will be completed with Rs. 2,322.940 million. Gwadar relies on imported electricity from Iran and with the construction of the 132kV line, the port city will be connected to the National Grid for the first time.



ISLAMABAD : Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Mr. Neil Hawkins, called on Leader of the opposition in the Senate, Dr. Shahzad Waseem in Islamabad and exchanged views on matters of mutual interests.—DNA

President for ensuring Inter-Faith harmony

DNA

ISLAMABAD: While addressing the International Inter-Faith Peace Conference, President Dr. Arif Alvi has called for practicing cherished principles of Islam which called upon everyone to practice one's own religion without interfering in other's religions, ensuring political, social, cultural, legal and religious freedoms for the followers of all religions, respecting and protecting their places of worship and allowing followers of all religions to pray in their worship places. The President expressed these views while addressing the opening session of the International Inter-Faith Peace Conference titled "Respect for Humanity and its Importance", in Islamabad, on Wednesday, Chairman Inter-Faith Council for Peace and Harmony, Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabeer Azad, and Founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio, Prof Dr Andrea Ricardi, also addressed the occasion, whereas the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Muhammad bin Abdul-Karim AHssa, addressed the occasion through a recorded video message. The Conference was attended by the national and international scholars of different religions, and people from different walks of life.

Addressing the occasion, the President said that all the religions of the world preached peace, security and harmony in society but unfortunately, followers of different religions forget and neglect these teachings and resort to war on the basis of vested interests, nation-

alism, racism, land, resources or politics. The President said that it was the duty of the Islamic society to protect the religious places of other religions, provide security and respect to their religious leaders and give equal rights to them under the law. He added that Muslim societies are responsible to protect the honor, dignity, life and properties of followers of all other religions. He said that religion is wrongly labelled as the reason for war as most of the wars fought in the recent history were by those countries which had the knowledge, education and information, were developed but

still they fought amongst themselves and with the others on the basis of their hegemonic designs and self-serving vested interests. The President said that human beings learn more from making observations from what was happening in reality around them and less from the history and academic debates and in the same manner countries and nations do not learn from their past mistakes of waging senseless wars but repeat the same mistake again and again like USA and USSR invaded Vietnam and Afghanistan and learned a bitter lesson, but soon forgot and invaded again in

Afghanistan and Ukraine. Similarly, he added, that Jews went through harrowing experience of Holocaust but the same Jews who were victims of holocaust forgot their experience and are perpetrating cruelty and inhuman treatment on Palestinians.

The President condemned the abhorrent act of burning and desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and urged upon international community to take notice of this heinous and abhorrent act and take all necessary measures to provide justice and put in place a mechanism to prevent rehashing of such shocking acts in future. He emphasized that religious sentiments of followers of all religions need to be respected and safeguarded and no one should be allowed to hurt and insult religious sentiments of the followers of other religions in the garb of freedom of expression. He added that hate speech, speech inciting violence, promoting racism and bigotry should be curbed and discouraged at all forums. He called for ending discrimination in the treatment of refugees, saying that refugees should not be discriminated on the basis of their colour, race, religion, or place of origin. He said that Pakistan hosted 4 million Afghan refugees for 4 decades without discrimination and imposing conditions, and the world needed to learn from Pakistan's generosity and experiences. Prof Dr Andrea Ricardi also addressed the occasion and appreciated Pakistan's hosting of the Afghan refugees. He said that dialogues among communities were essential for promoting peace and harmony, adding that different religions needed to coexist peacefully.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi giving honorary shield to Prof Dr Andrea Ricardi, Founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio, at the International Inter-Faith Peace Conference.—DNA

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Biden's classified documents

There is no real equivalence between the classified documents found in Joe Biden's possession at a former office and his home in Wilmington, Delaware, and those taken from Donald Trump. The president had just a tiny fraction of the thousands found on Mr Trump's premises – but more important is the men's dramatically different handling of the issue. Mr Biden's team realised there were documents wrongly held, turned them over, and voluntarily allowed the FBI into his home to search for any more. In contrast, Mr Trump was required to return all classified material by a grand jury subpoena, relating to the potentially unlawful removal and destruction of White House documents. His lawyers said he had done so. Nonetheless, the discovery of the documents held by Mr Biden – and especially the drip-drip manner in which they have emerged – is an embarrassment. The president has been sold on his probity and competence compared to the man who preceded him, and challenged Mr Trump's carelessness regarding classified material. The distinctions between the cases may well be lost on many voters, particularly given the rightwing media's expertise in whataboutery. Senior Democrats have been exasperated enough to be unusually critical of Mr Biden. Both cases may reflect in part the US government's "overclassification addiction". It classifies some 50m documents a year. This would be a good moment to take stock of its procedures, but the prospects of a sensible accounting are surely slim amid the political mudslinging. In any case, prosecuting Mr Trump will now be politically as well as legally difficult. Despite the Democrats' unexpected strength in the midterms, the reality of a divided congress is coming more sharply into view. The Republicans have long declared their intention to harry Mr Biden with investigations, his son Hunter being the first and easiest target. Some of the most conspiracy-minded Republicans now sit on the oversight committee. Meanwhile, the battle over the debt ceiling heralds a new era of legislative brinkmanship. This is unhappily familiar territory for Democratic presidents, but is likely to be bloodier than ever given the current Republican caucus. To ideological small state zeal (easily overcome when Mr Trump sought to raise the debt ceiling), and the perennial desire to hamstring a Democratic administration, can be added the sheer incoherence, unpredictability and nihilism of the "freedom caucus". The assumption so far remains that Mr Biden is the party's most likely candidate in 2024, albeit to a large degree because no credible alternative has emerged, and because it is thought that Mr Trump, while damaged, will probably be the Republican choice. But his achievements will be further in the rear-view mirror in two years' time, and neither he nor his party can afford careless errors.

Young asylum seekers

The latest reports of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children disappearing from English seaside resorts are spine-chilling. While it has been known for some time that young people have gone missing after being placed in hotels by the Home Office, the evidence, from a whistleblower, of children being picked up and driven away is deeply shocking. Last year, the heads of more than 25 organisations, including Barnardo's, Coram and the National Children's Bureau, responded to figures showing 1,606 children in England had been placed in such accommodation over the previous 12 months. They described the policy as amounting to "negligence in corporate parenting duties" and "void of respect for children's rights". This is because it is an exemption from the duty to provide care to children. The vulnerability of some young people in care to criminal exploitation is understood clearly by experts, and by members of the public who followed the inquiries into Rochdale and other grooming rings. While teenage girls are most often targeted for sexual abuse, boys are recruited as drugs couriers by county lines traffickers. In 2019, gang members were convicted of modern slavery offences after using three children to deal drugs. Pressure on the government must now be increased until the hotels policy is ditched. It is appalling, if not surprising given the government's broader approach to asylum, that it has continued for as long as it has. The right of children to be looked after must be reasserted – and councils properly resourced to carry it out. At the moment ministers are presiding over a dangerous jigsaw, where responsibility is shared between the Home Office, local authorities and the police. The result is that extremely vulnerable young people are falling through the cracks, very possibly into a criminal underworld that is difficult to escape. The general expansion of unregulated accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds must not be used as an excuse. Last year, the charity Article 39 failed to convince the high court that treating this group differently from other teenagers was illegal. But the policy is wrong, and civil society has a vital role to play in standing up for children who lack other advocates. If ministers want to undermine traffickers, as they have repeatedly said, they must come up with a strategy to end the disappearances, and commit to replacing illegal migration routes with safe and legal ones. Providing group homes for unaccompanied asylum seekers is not the job of the Home Office or its outsourcing partners. Block-booking hotels was the wrong way to take the pressure off overwhelmed councils. An immigration system that loses children has failed the most basic test.

The Illusive strategy of China

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



This economy has grown by 800% and now has a large population. China has bided its time and expanded its power, and today it has aspired to a broader regional and global role, as do all great powers with escalation of wealth and power. Since 1945, the great states that have risen to prosperity and prominence have been Washington's closest allies, if not quasi-protectors: Germany, Japan, and South Korea. A typically disruptive feature of international politics

China's foreign policy has also become more ambitious under Xi Jinping. The country's growing belligerence marks a break with its earlier passivity, shaped by Deng Xiaoping's proverb "Hide your strength, seize your time". The military build-up in particular, shows that China is pursuing a long-term plan. Deng advised other Chinese leaders to wait and see in the 1990s, the country was impoverished with a weak economy. This economy has grown by 800% and now has a large population. China has bided its time and expanded its power, and today it has aspired to a broader regional and global role, as do all great powers with escalation of wealth and power. Since 1945, the great states that have risen to prosperity and prominence have been Washington's closest allies, if not quasi-protectors: Germany, Japan, and South Korea. A typically disruptive feature of international politics the rise of new powers was therefore unusually benign for the United States. Not only is the People's Republic of China much larger than the rising powers of its predecessors it has always been outside the US alliance structure and sphere of influence. American foreign policy from both parties has become adapted to a world in which America is the undisputed leader. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright has explained "We are America; we are the indispensable nation," she said. "We stand tall and look further into the future than other countries." In 2019, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo claimed in a statement that would surely infuriate any Chinese citizen that the United States and its allies needed to put China "in its rightful place." China's sin, according to Pompeo, is that it spends more on its military than it needs on its defenses.

The same, of course, applies to the United States and France, Russia, Great Britain and other large countries. In fact, a useful definition of a great power is a country that cares about more than its own immediate security. The political climate in Washington always pushes policymakers to be "hard" rather than "soft" a dangerous way of conducting international affairs. The real question is, can they be smart instead of stupid? America's new hawkish consensus on China is awkward, without any discussion of how its target will respond. Beijing has its own hawks who have warned for years that the US wants to hold China down and even seek regime change in Beijing. More importantly, the Trump administration's stance has validated these voices, giving them the leverage to encourage the very kind of aggressive and destabilizing behavior in China that US policy seeks to prevent. This dynamic, with each side arm reinforcing the other, increases tension and increases the risk of collision. It's important to note that Trump's tough tactics have achieved none of his goals from closing the US trade deficit to winning Beijing's support in dealing with North Korea and Iran. In the result China is being more aggressive on the outside and more repressive at home. American determination is rooted in the fear that China might one day take over the entire world. This is a dangerous fear because in the history, when a prominent power perceives that it is losing ground, it often anticipates and exploits the "window of danger" that its rise does not fall. It was this kind of rationality that drove European politicians to war in 1914. During its rise Washington neither succeeded in conquering the world, the Soviet Union, Japan or Afghanistan despite of some horrible events. On the other hand, China with all its successes and strengths is

facing of internal challenges from a shrinking population to a mountain of debt. The Communist Party also faces an uncertain political future. Despite a decade of political repression on the mainland, it is true that the rise of the middle class is fueling aspirations. Most importantly, China's rise has unsettled nearly all of its neighbors, from Japan to India to Australia. Xi's foreign policy has dramatically increased these countries' fears, prompting many of them to fundamentally reconsider their foreign policies. Ever since the June 2020 border skirmish that left dozens dead, India appears to be pursuing a long-term strategy to balance China. Despite its heavy reliance on the Chinese market, Australia now views China as its main adversary, particularly given Beijing's many cyberattacks on Australian targets, and has called for a global probe into how Beijing mishandled the first Covid-19 outbreak. Japan revived the Trans-Pacific Partnership, bringing other countries on board and ensuring implementation of the agreement. Even Vietnam, wary of its larger neighbor, has embarked on what was once unthinkable: if not an alliance but a military partnership with its old enemy the United States. Taiwan's people have re-elected an anti-China president and are turning more hostile to the mainland, making military options more difficult and expensive for Beijing. China's greatest geostrategic weakness has always been its abundance of neighboring countries who oppose his rise. Far from addressing this deficiency, Xi's policies have exacerbated it. China is emerging today but embedded in a vast continent with hostile neighbors who are becoming more hostile.

AMAN23: An antithesis to great power rivalry in Indian ocean region

Gul.i. Ayesha Bhatti



On the other hand, Chinese navy ships patrol and engage in naval drills with states bordering the Indian Ocean, posing a danger to the US and its allies. The Indian Ocean is now China's main priority after the BRI/CPEC/CMEC (China Myanmar Economic Corridor), in which China aims to invest US \$1 trillion. To protect its SLOCs

Exercise AMAN's eighth series will take place in Karachi from February 10 to 14, 2023. "Together for Peace" is the exercise's slogan, and AMAN, which means "Peace" in Urdu, symbolizes the significance of this cause and the shared determination of all participating nations and partners. The exercise contains two separate phases, as follows: The first phase will take place in the harbor from February 10 to February 12, then the sea from February 13 to 14. In order to coordinate the modalities of sea exercises and exchange experiences on current maritime security concerns, a number of professional and social events will be held during the harbor phase. Exercises and an assessment of the global fleet are part of the sea phase, which demonstrates a unified front against piracy, maritime terrorism, and other pervasive illegal operations specifically in the Indian Ocean Region. Through such cooperative efforts, Exercise AMAN-23 greatly contributes to achieving the shared maritime nation's aim for regional peace and prosperity. The Indian Ocean Region (IOR), which stretches from the western coast of Australia and the northern Strait of Malacca to the western Mozambique Channel, is a geographical region that contains more than 30% of the world's water SLOCs. A vital maritime route connecting Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas is the southern Indian Ocean, which contains the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. In addition, China's naval might is directly impacted by the Strait of Malacca's role as a naval choke point, and there has been a resurgence of interest in the sea lanes as a possible arena for competition and cooperation. IOR is a very secure region of Great Power competition that supports maritime trade, transports more than half of the world's oil at sea, and has 23 of the top 100 container ports in the world. The Straits of Hormuz, the Malacca Strait, and Bab el-Mandeb are three crucial choke points along the IOR, a crucial maritime path. Due to the enormous amounts of commerce

that travel through them, these choke spots are of utmost strategic importance in both the geographic and economic domains. Due to its intrinsic geographic significance, IOR has long been seen as the hinterland of great power competition and global geopolitics. Its supremacy was unavoidable for obvious reasons due to its geographic importance as well as its commercial and economic relevance. IOR is a crucial geostrategic region that connects the Middle East's energy-rich countries with Asia's thriving economies. Due to the presence of conventional and nuclear ships from the main powers and nuclear-armed nations like Pakistan, China, and India, the Indian Ocean Region, which was previously considered a "neglected ocean" has now become the center of political, strategic, and economic operations. Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) and the deployment of fleet missile submarines are crucial for preserving the balance of power in the area and enabling second-strike capabilities. The importance of the Indian Ocean in US strategy is demonstrated by the presence of the 5th Fleet in Bahrain, the permanent bases at Diego Garcia and Djibouti, and the agreements for the use of base facilities by Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, the Seychelles, and other countries. Moreover, a major foundational agreement between India and the US was signed in October 2020 and is known as the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), signed in 2016, and the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), inked in 2018, are the other two military agreements that have been signed. BECA makes it possible to give top-notch tools as well as real-time intelligence and information, enabling India to use American geospatial data to attack adversary targets with extreme precision. The United States and India are important participants in The

Quad, a strategic alliance comprising the governments of India, Japan, Australia, and the United States. Its primary objective is to limit China's strategic hegemony over the Indian Ocean, Eurasia, and the South China Sea. In 2020, AUKUS was created as a result of Australia ready to buy eight nuclear submarines from the US and UK. That brings negative vibes to China. The United States, India, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates have formed a new bloc known as I2U2 (with "I" standing for India and Israel and "U" for the US and UAE). Among other areas of cooperation, the Israel's naval forces will be permitted to operate in the Indian Ocean. Israel is seen as a check on China and a move against the BRI/CPEC. On the other hand, Chinese navy ships patrol and engage in naval drills with states bordering the Indian Ocean, posing a danger to the US and its allies. The Indian Ocean is now China's main priority after the BRI/CPEC/CMEC (China Myanmar Economic Corridor), in which China aims to invest US \$1 trillion. To protect its SLOCs, China establishes its first military facility in Djibouti (Sea Lanes of Communications). While keeping this great power rivalry in mind, it is necessary to come up with a more friendly and peaceful maritime environment in IOR to reduce the stress. In this regard, Pakistan, through the AMAN exercise, aims to promote peaceful regional cooperation for maintaining law and order specifically in IOR, enhancing interoperability, exchanging ideas, and demonstrating a shared commitment against terrorism and organized crime in the maritime realm. The countries from all over the world's involvement show increased confidence in the exercise's usefulness and appreciation for the Pakistan Navy's efforts to encourage cooperation between regional and extra-regional warships in the face of various non-traditional security concerns.

—The writer is PhD Scholar International Relations Islamabad

Briefs

Fawad nabbed on...

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are necessary to ensure that the election is conducted honestly, justly, fairly and in accordance with law, and that corrupt practices are guarded against.”
The PTI chief asked the polls organising authority on what basis did it choose the name of Punjab interim chief minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi. “Did the election commission not know about Mohsin Naqvi’s background? He played the maximum role in toppling our government. Wasn’t he with [Pakistan Peoples Party’s Co-Chairman] Asif Ali Zardari in the Sindh House? Didn’t he call Mohsin Naqvi his own son?” Khan questioned the electoral authority.

Govt distances...

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The federal minister said that during Khan’s government, a daughter was arrested in front of her father — referring to the time when Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam was taken into custody while PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif was in jail. Regarding Fawad’s arrest, a PML-N spokesperson said that trying to intimidate the heads of constitutional institutions and their families was a red line and campaigning against constitutional institutions is “treason” against the country. In a statement, the spokesperson further slammed Fawad for “sowing the seeds of hypocrisy in the political system,” adding that he had ridiculed state institutions and had started to insult political opponents, which was not acceptable. The statement mentioned that the former federal minister had threatened to bring the heads of the constitutional institutions to their graves, which was “unforgivable.” The spokesperson also referred to former senator Nehal Hashmi, who was disqualified by the Supreme court and sentenced to one month in jail for contempt of court in February 2021. Stating that Hashmi was disqualified and arrested for directly criticising SC judges, the statement continued: “Daniyal Aziz and Talal Chaudhary were disqualified for criticising the SC decision. Everyone is equal in the eyes of the law, no one is above the law, so Chaudhary too should face the consequences of his threats.”

Pakistan condemns...

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he United Nations General Assembly in 2022 to mark 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Pakistan’s concerns are being conveyed to the authorities in the Netherlands. We urge them to be mindful of the sentiments of the people of Pakistan and the Muslims around the world and take steps to prevent such hateful and Islamophobic acts.

Ukraine’s Odessa wins UNESCO status

PARIS: UNESCO on Wednesday added the historic centre of Ukraine’s port city of Odessa, often described as “the pearl of the Black Sea”, to its World Heritage List, overcoming opposition from Russia. The 21 member states of the UN cultural body’s world heritage committee approved inscribing designated areas of the city with six votes in favour, one against and 14 abstentions. Russia, which invaded Ukraine in February last year, tried repeatedly to delay the vote to recognise the site’s “outstanding universal value” and “the duty of all humanity to protect it”. “While the war continues, this inscription embodies our collective determination to ensure that this city, which has always surmounted global upheavals, is preserved from further destruction,” said UNESCO director-general Audrey Azoulay after the decision. Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky, who requested the listing in October to shield the city from Russian bombardment, welcomed the decision. — APP

Australian open-2023

Djokovic, Sabalenka roll into semi-finals at Melbourne

Two-time Melbourne champion Victoria Azarenka, also from Belarus, will face Moscow-born Kazakh Elena Rybakina in the other semi-final

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic was two wins away from a 22nd Grand Slam crown after bulldozing into the Australian Open semi-finals on Wednesday, while Aryna Sabalenka was equally impressive in reaching the women’s last four. Serbia’s Djokovic delivered a masterclass to crush Russian fifth seed Andrey Rublev 6-1, 6-2, 6-4 on Rod Laver Arena and set up a meeting with Tommy Paul for a place in Sunday’s final. Djokovic’s quest to go level with great rival Rafael Nadal on a leading 22 major titles carries an air of inevitability. The 35-year-old has struggled with a hamstring injury in the early rounds at Melbourne Park but was dominant during his fourth-round demolition of Alex de Minaur and was equally clinical against the outclassed Rublev. “I cannot be happier with my tennis, honestly,” Djokovic told an adoring Rod Laver Arena. “I’ve been playing very solid from the back of the court and I really love playing in these conditions and this court.” Victory for the red-hot favourite propelled him into a 44th Grand Slam semi-final to close the gap on Roger Federer’s all-time record

of 46. Anything other than a rampant win for Djokovic against unseeded Paul would amount to a massive upset, albeit at a tournament that has seen numerous shocks in the men’s and women’s draws. Paul defeated his fellow American Ben Shelton 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 to reach his first major semi-final. But former world number one Djokovic, who can return to the top of the rankings if he wins the Australian Open for a record-extending 10th time, will be a whole new prospect. Paul, ranked 35, and the Serb great have never played each other before. “I saw him in the locker room after I finished my match. He said, congrats,” said the 25-year-old, adding they had practised together before. “Obviously he’s pretty comfortable here in Australia,” the American added. “It’s going to be a challenging match but I’m playing some of my best tennis, so it’s a good time.” The other semi-final is between third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas and Russian 18th seed Karen Khachanov. Sabalenka set up a semi-final with surprise-package Magda Linette after once again displaying the kind of form and finesse which has made her favourite for the wom-



en’s title. The Belarusian fifth seed defeated Croatia’s Donna Vekic 6-3, 6-2 as she closes on a first Grand Slam title. The match was closer than the score suggested, but Sabalenka was in scintillating form — she is yet to drop a set in Melbourne and has won all

nine matches in 2023. It is a far cry from a year ago, when she struggled badly with her serve and was reduced to tears at an Australian Open warm-up tournament. “It feels really special to be in the semi-finals here, it was a tough match,” said Sabalen-



ka, 24, who was competing in her first Australian Open quarter-final. “I’m super happy with the win and it was so great to play here today, the atmosphere was unbelievable.” Sabalenka will play unseeded Linette for a place in Saturday’s fi-

nal after the Pole marched into her first major semi-final at the age of 30. Linette stunned former world number one Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 7-5 to continue flying the flag for Poland after the shock exit of world number one Iga Swiatek.

Pakistan’s Taimoor Khan defends heavyweight title



BANGKOK: Pakistani boxer, Taimoor Khan retained his Asian Boxing Federation heavyweight championship title after defeating his Thai counterpart, Aekaphob Auraiwan, in a highly-anticipated bout in Bangkok. Taimoor knocked out his opponent in the second round to defend his title and extended

his overall fight record to seven wins, which now include six knockouts. Prior to the fight, Taimoor stated that he is ready to defend his title and had requested prayers from his fans so that he can make his country proud. He remarked that he was highly motivated to enlighten the name of his beloved country

and continue his reign as the heavyweight champion. The Pakistani boxer had risen to fame as he defeated his Indian opponent, Vedant Agarwal, for the AFBF heavyweight championship title last year. This was Taimoor’s first fight since his win against his Indian opponent and he successfully defended his championship

with a wonderful performance. While Taimoor did ensure keeping his title for another fight, it also ensured his eligibility for the World Boxing Association Intercontinental Championship as well. Details about his fight for the intercontinental championship have not been finalized yet.—Agencies

Modric, Kroos key despite Madrid ‘transition’: Ancelotti

MADRID: Carlo Ancelotti said on Wednesday veteran midfielders Luka Modric and Toni Kroos are still key for Real Madrid even though he dropped the pair last weekend. Los Blancos won 2-0 at Athletic Bilbao on Sunday and the duo appeared from the bench, with Eduardo Camavinga and Dani Ceballos starting ahead of them. Modric, 37, and Kroos, 33 — both out of contract at the end of the season — face stiff internal competition this season, with Ancelotti highlighting that Madrid are in a period of transition. “They are professionals and understand what this club means,” Ancelotti told reporters ahead of Thursday’s Copa del Rey quarter-final with Atletico Madrid. “They know the quality this squad has and I don’t think I have to explain anything. “We’ve been speaking from the start of the season about this topic, it’s a moment of transition and everyone has to understand it, the young players and the veterans.” Modric joined Real Madrid in 2012 while Kroos arrived in 2014 and together they have formed an essential part of the team’s success. They have won three La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues together, among other silverware. Until this season they had Casemiro behind them too, but the Brazilian moved to Manchester United last summer, with Aurelien Tchouameni taking that role this season. Ancelotti said despite being dropped against Athletic, the duo will still play an essential role for Madrid. “Of course they can play together, they are performing this season and have been key, and they will keep on being so,” added the coach. —APP

Sania Mirza mixed doubles final

MELBOURNE: Sania Mirza, India’s greatest women’s tennis player, stayed on track for a fairytale farewell after she reached the mixed doubles final at the Australian Open on Wednesday. Mirza teamed up with Rohan Bopanna for her final Grand Slam in Melbourne, having announced her desire to step away from the sport after next month’s Dubai Tennis Championships. Mirza, who won the women’s doubles crown at the 2016 Australian Open, and Bopanna defeated the third seed pairing of Desirae Krawczyk and Neal Skupski 7-6(5) 6-7(5) 10-6 in the semi-finals on Wednesday. For Mirza, there was no change of approach heading into her final major, with the 36-year-old focused on competing at her best level. “I play every match trying to win, whether it’s my last tournament or my last slam or my first slam. For me, competitiveness is in my blood,” Mirza, the first Indian to win a WTA singles title, told reporters. “Every time I step on the court, I want to win regardless of whether it’s going to be my last slam, whether it’s my last season.—APP

Russia says it is working hard to resolve Armenia-Baku dispute

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said it is continuing efforts to resolve a dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Lachin corridor, a mountainous road linking Armenia to Karabakh where Russian peacekeepers are stationed. “The Russian Federation

... continues its painstaking work in this direction,” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev denies that the corridor is subject to a blockade and says activists protesting illegal mining activity are the main reason for the dis-

ruption to traffic. Russia is an ally of Armenia through a mutual self-defence pact, but tries to maintain warm relations with Azerbaijan and has rejected calls by Yerevan to provide military support. The standoff is a test of Russia’s authority as the

main security guarantor in the region at a time when its struggles in the war in Ukraine risk undermining its primary status among former Soviet republics in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Relations between the former Soviet republics of Armenia.—DNA

Germany into semifinal after win against England



ODISHA: Germany struck twice with two minutes left in the match to wipe out a two-goal deficit and then prevailed over England in the penalty shootout to make a dramatic entry into the semifinals of the FIH Men’s World Cup here on Wednesday. Captain Mats Grambusch and his younger brother Tom scored in the space of one minute after England was ahead 2-0 till the 58th minute as Germany snatched a win from the jaws of defeat in an edge-of-the-seat quarterfinal match. Germany, which finished second in Pool B and defeated France 5-1 in the crossover match, will face title contenders Australia in the semifinals on Friday.

The vociferous spectators at the Kalinga Stadium thought that England would wrap up the match comfortably after Zachary Wallace (12th) and Liam Ansell (33rd) gave them the 2-0 lead. But to their astonishment, the Germans came back roaring to score goals

in the 58th and 59th minutes through Mats and Tom Grambusch respectively. Just before that Christopher Ruhr had wasted a chance from the penalty stroke in the 57th minute. Trailing 1-2, Germany got a penalty stroke with one min-

ute to go in the match. Mats then asked his younger brother Tom to take it and he made no mistake from the spot to take the match to the penalty shootout. Niklas Wellen, Hannes Muller, Prinz Thies and Christopher Ruhr scored

for Germany in the shootout. For England James Albery, Zachary Wallace, Phil Roper scored, while David Goodfield missed. “It was a crazy match for sure, we were behind for most of the match. But we were able to convert the chance

that came our way late in the match. It shows the character of the team,” Mats said. “Our parents must be watching this match and they must be extremely happy seeing that we both scored in a crucial match for the team and

country,” Tom said. The German fightback is reminiscent of their national football team which is famous for its never-say-die attitude. “It is a cruel game, you were 2-0 up less than five minutes to go in the match and you lost the game,” rued England captain David Ames. England had directly made it to the quarterfinals after topping Pool D ahead of India. It started as the more attacking side and took the lead in the 12th minute off a fine combination among Jack Waller, Stuart Rushmere and Zachary Wallace. Waller cut into the striking circle from the right and Rushmere weaved around three German defenders before Wallace slammed home with a tennis-like volley. Wallace had another go at the German goal later but his shot, after dodging past a defender in the second quarter, was blocked by the goalkeeper. Germany pressed in the second quarter with a lot more players upfront.—Agencies

CDA auctions 20 plots worth over Rs 32.50 bln

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has so far sold 20 plots worth over Rs 32.50 billion during the ongoing open auction, which would continue till January 26. “The authority is getting overwhelming response as a large number of investors took part during the second day of the auction,” said the CDA in a news release. The open auction of the plots, supervised by a committee headed by Member Finance of CDA, will continue till January 26 here at Jinnah Convention Centre. The auction committee included CDA’s Member State, Member Planning and Design, DFA-II, DG Law, Director Public Relations, Director Urban Planning, Director Regional Planning, Director State Management-II and Director Finance. The CDA said that the committee had made effective arrangements to ensure a transparent and competitive environment for conducting the auction.

Pakistan 2nd home of UAE...

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would work on the under-standings reached between the two leaders during his visit to the UAE, in various fields. His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE said that the brotherly relations between the two countries went back many decades and his father, who had immense love for Pakistan and its people, laid the foundation of their bilateral ties. He further stated that he considered Pakistan as his second home and assured the Prime Minister that the UAE would always stand by Pakistan.

ECP denotifies 43 MNAs

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the resignations of the PTI MNAs in the lower house despite their request for withdrawal of the resignations, raising the total to 123. The NA speaker had approved the resignations on “January 22 and forwarded them to the electoral body the same day” for further processing. The news had come after the party announced that its MPs are withdrawing their resignations and returning to the assembly in a bid to claim the posts of the leader of the opposition and chairman of the Public Accounts Committee — a powerful NA body that keeps a check on government spending. Last week, the Election Commission denotified 80 members of the PTI and Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Chief of the Awami Muslim League and Imran Khan’s ally. With the acceptance of 123 resignations, only dissident PTI lawmakers remain in the National Assembly. Though former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan has been disqualified from his seat in the Mianwali constituency, he has won from six constituencies in the by-elections of 11 vacant seats of the National Assembly. He has not taken yet an oath from any of the winning seats while another PTI candidate Maulvi Mehmood, who won the election from the seat that fell vacant due to the death of DrAamir Liaquat Hussain from Karachi, is yet to take oath. On Monday, the PTI approached the ECP that it had withdrawn the resignations and that the commission should not denotify its members. According to parliamentary sources, the PTI members’ requests to withdraw their resignations were not as per the rules. The sources in the National Assembly say that the speaker had accepted the resignations of the remaining 43 members on January 22 and sent them to the Election Commission, so email and WhatsApp requests on January 23 were against the rules. They say the resignations had been accepted on January 22, so on January 23, the withdrawal requests were ineffective. The speaker had accepted 113 resignations in the last two weeks, while two PTI members Sardar Talib Nakai and Nawaz Alai’s resignations are yet to be accepted for being on leave.

Briefs

Warsaw to request EU for Leopard tanks supply

WARSAW: Poland will apply to the EU for compensation for the transfer of Leopard tanks to Ukraine, said the nation's prime minister on Tuesday. "This would be another test of goodwill of the EU," Mateusz Morawiecki told a press conference in Warsaw. Poland's deputy foreign minister said last Friday that Warsaw was ready to send Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine even without Germany's re-export approval. "If there is strong resistance, then we will also be ready for non-standard action, even if someone takes offense at it. I do not exclude our readiness to take such a step," Pawel Jablonski told radio station RMF FM. Germany has been cautious about approving weapons that might be seen as escalating conflict. In an interview with Bloomberg TV, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said discussions with Germany's allies on tanks were ongoing but should not be conducted in public. Poland said it wants to send 14 German-made Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine as part of a coordinated effort by NATO allies, but it first needs Berlin's approval because of rules governing the re-export of German military equipment. Ukraine has so far relied on Soviet-era T-72 tank variants. Ukraine wants the US' M1 Abrams tanks and Germany's Leopard 2s, which would give it an advantage over Russia. Last month Gen. Valeriy Zaluzhny, commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, called for 300 tanks and 600-700 fighting vehicles to help Ukraine. "I hope that a response from the Germans will come quickly this time, because they are delaying, dodging, acting in a way that is difficult to understand," Morawiecki said. "We can see very clearly that they do not want to help Ukraine, which is defending itself, to a greater extent. What does this mean then? Does this mean fear, or some incomprehensible fear, or faith that a return to normal relations with Russia is still possible?"—DNA

Hundreds protest in Afghan city against Holy Quran's burning

KHOST: Hundreds of Afghan men staged a protest in the eastern city of Khost on Tuesday to express anger at the burning of the Holy Quran in the Swedish capital over the weekend. Swedish-Danish far-right politician Rasmus Paludan on Saturday set fire to a copy of the Muslim holy book in front of Turkey's embassy in Stockholm. Protests have been held since then in some Muslim countries, and on Tuesday crowds of Afghan men condemned the incident in Khost. "Death to the Swedish government, death to such politicians," protesters chanted in the city's main square, an AFP correspondent reported. Video footage taken by AFP showed protesters, many holding copies of the Holy Quran, burning the Swedish flag and chanting against Paludan. "The people of Khost condemned the burning of the Quran in Sweden and called on Muslim countries to raise their voices against this evil and filthy politician," Qadeer Lakanwal, a protester and one of the organisers of the rally, told AFP. Another organiser, Ibrahim Sayar, said such acts "should not be repeated so as not to create hatred in the hearts of Muslims for other religions".

A protester, speaking on a loudspeaker at the rally, was heard calling on the Swedish leader to catch Paludan "and kill him". Afghanistan's foreign ministry had earlier condemned the burning of the Holy Quran. In a statement released on Sunday, the ministry called on the Swedish government "to punish the perpetrator" and to stop "such vile and provocative anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim acts". Demonstrations against Paludan's burning of the Holy Quran also broke out in Iraq and Pakistan, and Indonesia summoned Sweden's envoy on Tuesday over the incident.—APP

US court sentences family for forced labour of Pak woman

The FBI will remain committed to investigating all forms of human trafficking and work with our law enforcement partners in combatting the problem

NEWS DESK

VIRGINIA: A court in the United States sentenced three family members for using a Pakistani woman as forced labour and physically and mentally abusing her for 12 years. "Zahida Aman, 80, was sentenced to 144 months in federal prison, Mohammed Rehan Chaudhri, 48, to 120 months in federal prison and Mohammad Nauman Chaudhri, 55, to 60 months in federal prison in the Eastern District of Virginia. Additionally, the Court ordered Aman and Rehan Chaudhri to pay the victim \$250,000 in restitution for back wages and other financial losses she incurred as a result of the defendants' criminal conduct," said a statement issued by the US Justice Department. The Justice Department said that Aman, Rehan and Nauman were convicted following a seven-day trial in May of last year. The jury had declared the three of conspiracy to commit forced labour, convicted two of the defendants of forced labour and convicted Aman of doc-



ument servitude.

"These defendants callously exploited the victim's vulnerabilities and brutally coerced her labour through physical violence and emotional abuse," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "Human trafficking is an affront to human rights

and to our nation's core values. The Department of Justice is committed to vindicating the rights of survivors and bringing human traffickers to justice."

"Human trafficking is a global issue that cannot be tackled alone," said Assistant Director Luis Quesada of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division. "The FBI will

remain committed to investigating all forms of human trafficking and work with our law enforcement partners in combatting the problem." Zahida Aman had arranged for her son's marriage to the victim in 2002, but even after the victim's husband moved away from the home, the defendants kept the victim in their Virginia

home to serve the extended family. The US Justice Department said that evidence showed that the victim was compelled by the convicts to serve the family as a domestic servant, using physical and verbal abuse, restricting communication with her family in Pakistan, confiscating her immigration documentation and money and eventually threatening to separate her from her children by deporting her to Pakistan. "The defendants slapped, kicked and pushed the victim, even beat her with wooden board, and on one occasion hog-tied her hands and feet and dragged her down the stairs in front of her children. All of these coercive means were employed by the defendants to compel the victim's labour in their home," said the statement. The evidence also showed that the convicts forced the victim to work every day from early morning. "They restricted her food, forbade her from learning to drive or speaking to anyone except the defendants' family members and prohibited her from calling her family in Pakistan," said the Justice Department.

KC-EU's Chair steps up efforts to highlight Kashmir issue

Chairman Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed said in his statement, "We are trying to make the European authorities more aware of the Kashmir issue"

BRUSSELS: Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU)'s Chairman Ali Raza Syed has stepped up his efforts to highlight the Kashmir issue in Europe. In this regard, he started to meet the important European personalities, EU officials and members of the European parliaments and informing them about the latest situation in Occupied Kashmir. On Tuesday, in the lobby of the European Parliament in Brussels, he also exchanged words with Azad Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry, who is currently on a visit to Belgium. Chairman Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed said in his statement, "We are trying to make the European authorities more aware of the Kashmir issue." Apart from meetings with European dignitaries, high officials and members of the European Parliament, the Kashmir Council EU is also continuing to protest in Europe against Indian atrocities on Kashmiris. Kashmir Council EU will



hold a protest camp on the occasion of Indian Republic Day (26th January 2023) in front of EU External Action Service (EU foreign ministry) in Brussels, the capital of Belgium on Thursday. The peaceful protest camp in Brussels would be started at 2 p.m. on Thursday, 26th January, 2023.

Chairman KC-EU Ali Raza Syed said, India claims of being largest democracy of the world but it refuses the democratic rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir as atrocities against the people are continued. He said, peace in Kashmir is connected to the whole region. If Kashmir is witness

of peace, the whole region would be witness of peace and prosperity. Ali Raza Syed said that Kashmiri nation is not ready to compromise on their right to self determination. KC-EU's Chairman demanded New Delhi to give right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.—APP

UN report attributes crises for hindering victim identification

UNITED NATIONS: Fewer victims of people trafficking are being identified, even as the coronavirus pandemic and other crises are increasing their vulnerability, according to a new report released on Tuesday by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Globally, the number of victims detected fell by 11 per cent in 2020 from the previous year, driven by fewer detections in low and medium-income countries. The number of convictions for trafficking offences also fell by 27 per cent over the same period, accelerating a longer-term trend registered by UNODC since 2017. Sharper decreases were registered in South Asia (56 per cent), Central America and the Caribbean (54 per cent) and South America (46 per cent). According to the report, despite reducing opportunities for traffickers to operate, the pandemic may have weakened law enforcement's capacity to detect victims. We cannot allow crises to compound exploitation, UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly, said in a statement. The UN and the donor community need to support national authorities, most of all in developing countries, to respond to trafficking threats, and to identify and protect victims, especially in states of emergency. The analysis also found that fewer cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation were detected during the pandemic, due to the closure of public spaces. Related restrictions may have pushed this form of trafficking into more concealed and less safe locations, making it harder to identify victims. Court case analysis featured in the report also shows that trafficking victims who are identified, mostly escape from traffickers on their own and are in effect self-rescued. Forty-one per cent of victims escaped and reported to authorities on their own initiative compared to 28 per cent of victims who were located by law enforcement, and 11 per cent by members of the community and civil society. The report said this was especially alarming considering many may not identify themselves as victims, or maybe too afraid to attempt an escape at all. War and conflict offer opportunities for traffickers to exploit, with the war in Ukraine elevating trafficking risks for the millions displaced. The report shows how most victims originate in and are trafficked to countries in Africa and the Middle East.—APP

Chinese FM holds phone talks with Indonesian counterpart

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang on Friday held a phone conversation with his Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi. As a major country of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Indonesia is also an important partner of Belt and Road cooperation, Qin noted. China-Indonesia relations are facing new development opportunities currently, the Chinese diplomat said, adding that he stands ready to work with Marsudi to follow the strategic guidance of the two countries heads of state to push for a closer and stronger China-Indonesia community with a shared future. China encourages more quality Chinese enterprises to invest and do business in Indonesia, and hopes Indonesia to provide more safety guarantee and policy facilitation, Qin said.

For her part, Marsudi said China is an important partner of Indonesia on bilateral and multilateral levels, and Indonesia is looking forward to the development of bilateral ties and will strengthen exchange and cooperation with China. Indonesia attaches great importance to and will try its best to ensure the security of Chinese projects and personnel, said Marsudi, adding that Indonesia welcomes the arrivals of Chinese tourists as early as possible. Indonesia, who holds the ASEAN presidency this year, will be dedicated to promoting the development of ASEAN-China relations and expects continuous support from China, she said. Qin said China fully supports the work of Indonesia as the rotating president of ASEAN and believes that Indonesia will reflect its leadership in achieving a greater development of the ASEAN community with a shared future and East Asia cooperation.—APP

Hipkins sworn in as New Zealand's PM

AUCKLAND: Labour Party leader Chris Hipkins was sworn in Wednesday as New Zealand's 41st prime minister following Jacinda Ardern's surprise resignation. Hipkins, 44, served as education and police minister under Ardern. "This is the biggest privilege and responsibility of my life," Hipkins said at the swearing-in ceremony. "I'm energized and excited by the challenges that lie ahead." Ardern on Tuesday made her final public appearance before leaving office and said the thing she would miss the most was the people, because they had been the "joy of the job." She announced her shock resignation last week, saying she would not run for re-election and that her term as prime minister would end no later than Feb. 7. However, she will continue to serve as a member of parliament until April to avoid a by-election, as the country's general elections are scheduled for Oct. 14.—DNA

London-sized iceberg breaks off Antarctica

LONDON: A vast iceberg equivalent to the size of Greater London has broken off the Antarctic ice shelf. The huge iceberg - which measures more than 1,550 square kilometres - broke away from the 150 metre thick Brunt Ice Shelf on Sunday. The good news is that the split is a natural process known as 'calving,' and is not linked to climate change, the British Antarctic Survey say. The new berg is the second iceberg to break off in two years, as a massive crack called 'Chasm-1' extends through the Brunt ice shelf. The icy mass is likely to drift into the Weddell Sea. It will be named later by the US National Ice Center. The Chasm-1 crack has been forming for a few years - as evidenced by striking footage from 2019. Such cracks are common around the edges of Antarctica, explains Professor Dominic Hodgson, a glaciologist for the British Antarctic Survey. "The ice shelves around Antarctica are extensions, floating extensions, of the Antarctic ice sheet. So they do periodically extend out to sea and then break off.—APP

Berlin airport 'paralysed' as Europe hit by strikes

BERLIN: Several sectors across Europe have been impacted by strikes as workers demand higher pay and better working conditions. Here's a look at which workers are going on strike in Europe today: Around 300 flights were cancelled at the Berlin Brandenburg Airport as workers went on strike, the airport said. Those flights would have transported some 35,000 passengers. "Affected passengers are asked to contact their airline for information on rebooking and alternative travel options," the airport added in a statement. Employees in security, ground handling services and the company running the airport were striking over a pay dispute. The airport opened in 2020 after significant delays and construction problems. Berlin Brandenburg Airport continues to struggle financially with a lot of debt but is working on becoming "financially independent," a spokesman said. Workers at an Amazon warehouse in Coventry became the first in the UK to go on strike over the company's low pay. The workers voted in mid-December to go on strike. "The fact that they are being forced to go on strike to win a decent rate of pay from one of the world's most valuable companies should be a badge of shame for Amazon," said GMB senior organiser Amanda Gearing in a press release when the vote happened. A spokesperson for the GMB union said the workers make £10.50 (11.89) as a base rate per hour but the workers are asking for £15 (roughly 17). Around 300 workers went on strike on Wednesday at the Amazon warehouse. A spokesman from Amazon said that "a tiny proportion of our workforce is involved."—APP



MULTAN: Ex-President of Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mian Fazal Elahi Sheikh presenting a shield to the Ambassador of Thailand to Pakistan, Mr. Chakkrid Krachaiwong during his visit to Multan.—APP

NATO chief slams Russian nuclear threats

As well as Ukraine, some European countries, particularly Poland, have pressed Germany to send the battle tanks and allow their export, particularly as a renewed Russian offensive is expected by some to be planned for this spring

BERLIN: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Wednesday condemned Russian nuclear threats in the wake of remarks by former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev who warned the western military alliance that Moscow's defeat in Ukraine could trigger a nuclear war. "The risk of using nuclear weapons is low. But Russian nuclear rhetoric is utterly irresponsible. It is dangerous. Russia should know that a nuclear war can never be won and therefore should never be

fought," Stoltenberg said in an interview with the daily WELT newspaper. "Of course, we are watching what Russia is doing very closely. If that were the case, we would of course react. But even if we allow Russia to blackmail us with this rhetoric, then the world will become more dangerous. Then Russia would keep coming up with this nuclear threat when it wants to achieve something," he added. Since Russia invaded Ukraine almost a year ago on Feb. 24, Medvedev has repeatedly raised

the threat of a nuclear attack. "The defeat of a nuclear power in a conventional war may trigger a nuclear war," Medvedev, who serves as deputy chairman of Putin's powerful security council, said in a post on the Telegram messaging app. "Nuclear powers have never lost major conflicts on which their fate depends," said Medvedev, who served as president from 2008 to 2012. The Kremlin was quick to endorse Medvedev's remarks, saying they were in full accordance with Moscow's

principles. Moscow's doctrine allows for a nuclear attack after "aggression against the Russian Federation with conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is threatened." The chief of the NATO military alliance on Wednesday "strongly" welcomed Germany's decision to send Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine as well as allowing partner countries to do so. "I strongly welcome the leadership of (Chancellor) Olaf Scholz and Germany in providing Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine in consul-

tation with other NATO Allies and partners," Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said on Twitter. "At a critical moment in Russia's war, these can help Ukraine to defend itself, win and prevail as an independent nation," he stressed. As well as Ukraine, some European countries, particularly Poland, have pressed Germany to send the battle tanks and allow their export, particularly as a renewed Russian offensive is expected by some to be planned for this spring.—Agencies

Briefs

N. Korea
locks down
capital over
'respiratory
illness'

DNA

SEOUL: Authorities in the North Korean capital Pyongyang have ordered a five-day lockdown due to rising cases of an unspecified respiratory illness, the Russian embassy and Seoul-based NK News reported on Wednesday, citing a government notice.

The notice, shared by the embassy on its Facebook page, said that a "a special anti-epidemic period has been established" and it called on foreign delegations to keep employees inside. The order also called for individuals to measure their temperatures four times a day and report the results to a hospital by phone.

The notice made no mention of COVID-19 though cited an "increase in winter cases of recurrent flu and other respiratory diseases". The lockdowns were first reported by South Korea's NK News, which monitors secretive North Korea. On Tuesday, the website reported that Pyongyang residents appeared to be stocking up on goods in anticipation of stricter measures. It was unclear if other areas of the country had imposed new lockdowns.

North Korea acknowledged its first COVID-19 outbreak last year, but by August had declared victory over the virus. It never confirmed how many people caught COVID, apparently because it lacks the means to conduct widespread testing.

Students angry
after BBC
documentary
blocked

MONITORING DESK

NEW DELHI: Tensions have flared at two of India's best-known universities over the screening of a BBC documentary on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his role in deadly religious riots in 2002. Reports say police detained students at Jamia Millia Islamia university in Delhi ahead of a planned screening. On Tuesday students at another Delhi university said power and internet had been cut to stop them showing the film.

India's government says the documentary lacks objectivity and is "propaganda". It has invoked emergency laws to block the documentary on YouTube and Twitter.

Dozens of police personnel wearing riot gear were deployed at Jamia university, whose officials said they would not allow any "unauthorised gatherings". A BBC Hindi reporter at the campus said the university's gates had been locked and described the atmosphere inside as calm. There was, however, a huge crowd of students and journalists outside. Videos showed dozens of police personnel standing in a line outside the locked gate.

Zardari gets
relief in
Park Lane
reference

ISLAMABAD: In a major relief to Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairperson and former president Asif Ali Zardari, an accountability court on Wednesday returned the Park Lane reference to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Accountability court judge Rana Nasir Javed heard the arguments before reserving his judgment. The judge declared that the reference exceeded the court's jurisdiction. In the mega money laundering charges, the former president, his sister and several of their business associates were being probed as part of a 2015 case involving fake accounts and fictitious transactions.

The main reference in the Park Lane case accused Zardari of influencing relevant authorities during his tenure as the president – from 2008 to 2013 – to obtain loans for his front companies. – DNA

Pakistan urges 'new strategy' to engage Afghan Taliban

"Because the economy has collapsed – the economy was dependent 75% on foreign assistance," Ambassador Akram said that the Afghan people must continue to be provided international assistance. "That's basically our approach."

NEW YORK: Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, Munir Akram, has called for exploring a "new strategy" of engaging and persuading the Taliban to heed the international community's concerns over political and human rights in Afghanistan so as to continue the global support for its suffering people. "The strategy that has been followed so far of leveraging international assistance in order to pressurize the Taliban to do what the international community wants, has not been successful," the Pakistani envoy said in an interview with BBC Radio and BBC TV Live on Tuesday. "Therefore," he added, "we need to find a new strategy of engaging them and persuading them in order to correct their behavior and to continue the international support for the Afghan people."

Responding to questions, Ambassador Akram said that although some of the Taliban decisions are unacceptable to the international community, Pakistan has no option but to live with Afghanistan, it's neighbour. "Whatever happens in Afghanistan has impacts for Pakistan." "We cannot afford not to continue engagement with the Taliban – they are a reality, they are in control of the whole country, and therefore we have to deal with them," the Pakistani envoy added.



He said if the international support or humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan was cutoff, "we will have a dire situation – famine and hunger, an outflow of refugees, greater instability, rise of terrorism – all those consequences will flow from" from such an action. So, we believe that we should continue engagement, continue humanitarian assistance and support for economic revival in Afghanistan because that is the way

out for the Afghan people to emerge from poverty and the dire situation they face".

"Because the economy has collapsed – the economy was dependent 75% on foreign assistance," Ambassador Akram said that the Afghan people must continue to be provided international assistance. "That's basically our approach." Replying to a question about the Taliban not fulfilling the promises they made had made, Ambassador Akram posed a question: "Apart from engagement, what is the choice that the international community has because the alternative is even greater disaster in Afghanistan – so we have no choice but to engage with them and to continue to try to persuade them."

"It is uncertain, obviously, how and when we could persuade them but certainly, if we were able to put on the table, some incentives, perhaps they may respond better than pressure and coercion." Questioned about the issue of women and girls, he said Pakistan has been trying its best to persuade the Taliban to allow access to females as certainly their role in the international assistance programme was important. "We see that, but you know, we have to work around that difficulty." – APP



ISLAMABAD: Russian Senior Representative on Afghanistan Amb. Zamir Kabulov calls on Hina Rabbani Khar. The two sides Stressed importance of working together to promote regional peace & stability in Afghanistan. – DNA

Half of US mass attacks
sparked by personal,
workplace disputes

The 70-page report, issued by Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center, examined 173 incidents where three or more people were harmed

WASHINGTON: Half of the mass attacks in the United States from 2016-2020 were sparked by personal, domestic or workplace disputes, according to a new U.S. Secret Service report that aims to prevent violence by identifying warning signs. The attackers were overwhelmingly men, often with histories of mental health symptoms, financial insecurity or engaging in domestic violence. Guns were typically the weapon of choice. The report comes days after a pair of mass shootings in California took the lives of 18 people and as authorities searched for motives in the attacks, both linked to older men. Mass shootings have become a regular occurrence in the United States in recent decades, but lawmakers remain divided on the solutions, with Democrats calling for more gun control measures while Republicans focus on mental health and increased security. The 70-page report, issued on Wednesday by the Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center, examined 173 incidents where three or more people were harmed. The attacks targeted workplaces, schools, religious institutions and public transportation, among other locations, killing 513 people and injuring 1,234. Lina Alathari, the center's chief, told reporters that it is common to see behaviors among perpetrators that might have helped others identify a problem beforehand. "Interest in violence, interest in previous mass attackers, posting about them, talking to people about them, bringing a weapon to [their] workplace, bringing a weapon to school, coworkers fearing them, grievances," she said. "These are themes that we do see over and over again." The report found that firearms were used in 73% of incidents, including by some prohibited from owning them. State-level "red flag laws" that allow for the court-ordered removal of guns from someone presenting a risk could limit such attacks, the report said. – Agencies

Existing political system
cant solve problems: Abbasi

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that in order to get the country out of the dire situation, all the institutions need to sit and think, which is not happening in their opinion

ALI FURQAN

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister of Pakistan and the central leader of Muslim League-N Shahid Khaqan Abbasi says that the existing political system had no capacity to solve the country's problems and deliver to the masses. In an interview with VOA's Ali Furqan, he said that the parliament including the provincial assemblies are inactive and the scope of listening to the dissent opinions by the political parties has ended. He added, that is why the parliament failed to solve the country's problems in the last five years. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi says that in the current political and economic conditions, the country cannot be left to a caretaker government for a peri-

od of three months, nor can Pakistan afford an immediate general election.

In the interview, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that in order to get the country out of the dire situation, all the institutions need to sit and think, which is not happening in their opinion. On the question that when PTI announced to return to Parliament, why were their resignations accepted, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that it is not possible to resign today and say to come back tomorrow. The senior PMLN leader said that the government wants to discuss national issues with PTI Chairman Imran Khan, but this discussion could be done within the parliament. If the PTI was in the parliament, it could have played its role in forming the caretaker government and holding the elections, but they felt it was appropriate to resign.

He said that despite PTI's non-participation in the Parliament, the upcoming general elections will be held without controversy. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi asked the judiciary to correct the decisions taken beyond the constitution and law in Nawaz Sharif case. The former prime minister said that the army should work with the government to abolish the legislation regarding the extension of the army chief's term, otherwise it will have negative effects on the institution.

PM felicitates
Chris Hipkins
on becoming
NZ PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday congratulated Chris Hipkins on becoming the 41st Prime Minister of New Zealand.

The prime minister, in a tweet, said that he looked forward to working with him to strengthen and expand the relations between the two friendly countries.

He also expressed best wishes to the new prime minister of New Zealand for his new responsibilities. Chris Hipkins was sworn in as New Zealand's 41st prime minister, following the resignation of Jacinda Ardern last week. – APP

PSX rallies
on hopes of
IMF deal

DNA

KARACHI: The bulls took over the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday as the benchmark KSE-100 index registered gains in hopes of the revival of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and the government's plan of circular debt in the gas sector.

The KSE-100 index was at 39,914.90 points after gaining 859.25 points or 2.20% during the intraday trade at around 12:13pm. "Market is up on hopes of IMF deal and resolution of gas circular debt," said Pakistan-Kuwait Investment Company Head of Research Samiullah Tariq.

PTI strongly
condemns
Fawad's
detention

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and the party leadership strongly condemned the unlawful detention of the PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry in the wee hours of Wednesday in Lahore, demanding his immediate release to save Pakistan's drift towards a point of no return. The PTI leaders stated that the arrest of Fawad without warrant clearly showed that Pakistan became a banana republic and the rising fascist tendencies would further push the country towards anarchy. Condemning the arrest of Fawad, PTI Chairman said: "Fawad's arrest on his apt description of the CEC leaves no doubt in anyone's mind that Pakistan has become a banana republic devoid of rule of law." "We must stand up for our fundamental rights now to save Pak's drift towards a point of no return," he added. In his reaction, PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that Fawad's arrest without warrant was a strong slap on the face of democracy and supremacy of the rule of law of this country.

Mehfil-e-Samma at Peshawar Serena Hotel
Legendary Qawwal Imran Aziz Mian performs at the Mehfil-e-Samma

DNA

PESHAWAR: Tourism Promotion Services (Limited) Pakistan hosted a "Mehfil-e-Samma" with the legendary Qawwal Imran Aziz Mian to celebrate its latest acquisition 'Peshawar Serena Hotel' to its portfolio of Luxury Hotels, Resorts, Forts, Palaces in South and Central Asia. The beautifully organised musical evening began with a meet and greet that included prominent personalities from the corporate sector, business community and media houses. The evening was an ode celebrating Serena Hotels arrival in the oldest city of Pakistan. The management of Serena believes that Peshawar has untapped potential for tourism and boosts a rich cultural heritage, which will help in extending the tourist circuit in the province but will also allow regional connectivity for tourists and business travelers through its vast portfolio of hotels in Islamabad, Peshawar, Kabul, and Dushanbe. The hotel shall serve as a gateway to Central Asia, taking the brand portfolio to a whole new level. The management of Serena Hotel has retained the employees of Pearl Continental Hotel and have been working upon the restoration and conservation of the existing 1970s building, with intention to add on to the existing structure. Serena is well associated with conservation projects, with the Heritage Circuit being a part of the Serena Pal-



PESHAWAR: Imran Aziz Qawwal performs at the Peshawar Serena Hotel. – DNA

aces and Forts that have been restored and renovated and are now being utilised as a historical hotel, the proceeds of which is handed back to the community in an annual ceremony.

A provincial job fair is planned to provide the youth with opportunities to become a part of the Serena family,



PESHAWAR: CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani and Mrs Boolani posing for a picture with Imran Aziz Qawwal and staff of the Serena Hotel Peshawar. – DNA

where internships, mentorship programmes and management training will be offered to the students of the region, showcasing Serenas' ethos of community development, and capacity building. The management has been actively engaged with the community, through the corporate social responsibility platform called 'Jazba-e-Khidmat', which is an initiative to provide donations and support to flood affectees of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region. Now through the Peshawar Serena Platform, the management will be distributing ration bags to the nearby areas affected by the catastrophic flooding of 2022.

The evening marked the beginning of many more events that are in the pipeline for Peshawar Serena Hotel and set

the tone for the future. Celebrating the rich cultural heritage and legacy of the city of flowers, through Serena Diplomacy initiatives i.e., public, cultural, sports, adventure. These initiatives by Serena Hotels have been creating an inclusive environment for the underprivileged and underserved communities, wherever they operate.