



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan relations to grow further, vows ASEAN chief

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Fawad sent to jail on 14-day judicial remand

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Sania Mirza bids farewell to Grand Slams

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Briefs

Canada names adviser to combat Islamophobia

DNA



MONTREAL: Canada on Thursday appointed its first special representative on combatting Islamophobia, a position created following several recent attacks on Muslims in the country. Journalist and activist Amira Elghawaby will fill the post to "serve as a champion, adviser, expert and representative to support and enhance the federal government's efforts in the fight against Islamophobia, systemic racism, racial discrimination and religious intolerance," a statement by the prime minister's office said. An active human rights campaigner, Elghawaby is the communications head for the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and a columnist for the Toronto Star newspaper, having previously worked for more than a decade at public broadcaster CBC.

Maryam Nawaz due in Lahore today

DNA



LONDON: Maryam Nawaz, senior vice president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), has departed for Pakistan from London. Nawaz Sharif, PML-N Supremo and former prime minister, wished Maryam Nawaz goodbye from Avenfield House London. Maryam Nawaz's flight from Dubai will land in Lahore at 3 pm on Saturday where party officials and supporters will greet her warmly. On the other hand, PML-N leader and Federal Minister for Information Marriyum Aurangzeb provided information on the party's senior vice president's travel plans from London to Pakistan in a tweet on the social networking site Twitter. Aurangzeb tweeted, "Maryam Nawaz has departed London. Insha Allah, Maryam Nawaz will arrive in Lahore on January 28 at 3:05 pm on a Saturday."

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

PM confident of IMF deal this month

Inaugurates Green Line Train service; urges nation to stand united

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed confidence that Pakistan would conclude a deal with International Monetary Fund (IMF) during the current month in a bid to overcome the financial challenges. Addressing at the launch of the Green Line train service between Islamabad and Karachi, the prime minister said the headway in talks with IMF would help the country address the current economic situation. The IMF delegation will be visiting Islamabad from January 31 to February 9 to continue discussions regarding the ninth review of the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The prime minister emphasized the adoption of austerity at massive scale to tackle difficult economic problems. He said the government had set its priority keeping in view its foreign exchange reserves, thus allowing the import of medicines and food as essential items. He said courageous nations stand united while braving the challenges with resilience. Shehbaz Sharif expressed confidence that with dedication and commitment, the country would soon regain its glory. He regretted that the Green Line project, which was initiated during the tenure of then prime minister Nawaz Sharif, was delayed by the previous government in a mala fide manner. He endorsed the concept of outsourcing Pakistan Railways to make it better equipped and at par with contemporary services. The prime minister said Main Line-1 (ML-1)

'Pakistan stands with Palestine'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said Israel continues to massacre innocent Palestinians with impunity and expressed support for the people of Palestine. "Pakistan stands with the people of Palestine," he said in a tweet. Shehbaz Sharif said killing of 10 Palestinians including an elderly woman in Occupied West Bank called for the strongest condemnation. He stressed sustainable peace in the Middle East, saying that it was linked to two-state solution. Pakistan on Friday strongly condemned Israel's brutal attack on the city and camp of Jenin in the State of Palestine, killing several Palestinians. The Foreign Office in a statement called upon the international community to assume its responsibility in bringing these illegal incursions and actions by the Israeli occupation forces to a halt and ensuring adequate protection of the human rights of the Palestinian people.

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ECP announces by-polls on 33 vacated NA seats

The seats had fallen vacant when NA Speaker accepted resignations of 34 lawmakers

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) announced on Friday that it will hold by-polls on 33 vacant National Assembly (NA) seats on March 16. The NA seats had fallen vacant earlier this month when NA Speaker Raja Parvez Ashraf accepted the resignations of 34 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers and Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rashid. The PTI resigned en masse in April last year after the ouster of Imran Khan but only 11 resignations were accepted in July. The speaker had announced that he would verify all the remaining resignations individually but he moved swiftly, accepting 113 more resignations after the PTI chief announced to return to the assembly. According to the election schedule announced by the ECP today, candidates will be able to file their nomination papers between February 6-8. The names of the candidates will be published on

Continued on Page 06

PTI moves SC over Naqvi's appointment

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: PTI on Friday challenged in the Supreme Court the appointment of Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, and petitioned that he be restrained from performing any function regarding the elections and appointing any cabinet members. In the petition filed by Advocate Imtiaz Rashid Siddiqui, the PTI argued that Naqvi's appointment by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was "in direct violation of the provisions of the Constitution read with the provisions of the Elections Act 2017 and the Election Rules 2017".



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inaugurates Greenline Express Train Service (Margalla-Karachi) at Margalla Railway Station. - DNA

Embassy security head killed Azerbaijan embassy in Tehran attacked

Baku demands of Iranian govt to take action against culprits



NEWS DESK / DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan government has strongly condemned the armed attack on the Azerbaijan's Embassy in Iran's capital Tehran. "We strongly condemn the treacherous Terror Attack against the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Islamic Republic of Iran", the government statement added. According to details, as the country where the embassy is located, the Iranian side had to fulfill its obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations to ensure the security of the embassy and safety of its employees.

Pak condemns attack on Azeri embassy in Iran

Pakistan stands in solidarity with brotherly people of Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD: Government and people of Pakistan are deeply saddened by attack on Embassy of Azerbaijan in Tehran. In a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday, Pakistan government offered sincere condolences to bereaved families and prayers for early recovery of the injured. Pakistan stands in solidarity with brotherly people of Azerbaijan in this moment of grief, the official statement further said. - DNA

Previously, there have been attempts to threaten our diplomatic mission in Iran, and it was constantly raised before Iran to take measures to prevent such cases,

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Financial crisis deepens at MOFA

Visa amount being used to run daily affairs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD, The financial crisis has intensified in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs due to the shortage of foreign currency. According to the official sources, payments in foreign currency to all the embassies have been stopped. The Ministry of Finance did not approve the payments due to the shortage of the foreign exchange reserves. Most of the diplomats live in rented residences. They have received eviction notices for the non-payment of rent. Due to the

notices to vacate the residences, there is a great anxiety among the diplomats. Most of the embassies have stopped all important works due to the lack of funds. The Ministry of Finance has said that the payments should be stopped for the time being. According to diplomatic sources, the foreign missions are catering to their day to day needs from amount collected on account of visa services. But those missions are in real trouble where proceeds obtained from the visa services are quite low. Sources say, many foreign missions have not been able to pay to the local staff, which is earning a bad name for the country.

CWDP approves seven projects

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved seven development projects worth Rs 22.16 billion during its meeting held on Friday under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Planning Ministry, Chief Economist, Members Planning Commission and representatives from the various ministries and divisions.

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SECURITY 'WITHDRAWN' FROM BANI GALA RESIDENCE

Imran claims Zardari behind new assassination plot

Says IMF has asked Sri Lanka and Egypt to cut armed forces size; defense spending



BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: PTI chief Imran Khan claimed on Friday that former president and PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari was behind a new plot to assassinate him for which the latter had "given money to a terrorist outfit". In a televised address, the ex-premier said that plans had been hatched to assassinate

him as soon as he was ousted. "Earlier, in a public rally, I had told my supporters that there were four people who had planned to kill me [...] but they backed off when I made these revelations." Then a "plan B" was made to "eliminate" me in the name of religion, Imran continued, referring to the attack on his life in Wazirabad. "But I got to know about that too and I revealed their plan in two public rallies." Referring to Wazirabad attack, he said that the people behind these "conspiracies" had almost succeeded but "God saved him". "Now they have made a plan C and Zardari is behind it. He has unlimited corrupt money [...] the money he loots from the Sindh government is used in elections, to buy MPAs [...] whether it is the elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or Gilgit-Baltistan, he recklessly throws money around. "He has given this money to a terrorist outfit. His facilitators are powerful people in the agencies. The decision has been taken from three sides

Dar criticizes Khan, holds PTI responsible for crises

ISLAMABAD: In a video address, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday criticized the economic performance of the Imran Khan-led government during 2018-2022, stressing that inflation and the exchange rate increased during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) tenure, media reported. Dar's statements, in which he compared economic indicators during the PTI government and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)'s tenure in 2013-2018, came as criticism of the coalition government grew after rupee's historic fall against the US dollar. "If we had conducted elections right after the vote of no-confidence, you would have lost very badly," said Dar. "You should be glad that the coalition government decided to sacrifice political capital for the state. "We worked hard during the five years of our government (2013-2018). You ruined it during 2018-2022." The finance minister challenged financial figures quoted by the PTI chief, saying that cherry-picked figures were being used to present an unrealistic picture of the economy. He challenged Imran to a live debate between the economic teams of both sides "so that the truth becomes clear". The finance minister also refuted Imran's claims of giving 5.5 million jobs, saying no credible data could prove this figure. "The labour survey showed that a total of 3.3 million jobs were created overall during PTI's 2018-2022 tenure," he said. - DNA

and they have planned to execute the next crime," Imran claimed. The PTI chairman went on to say that irrespective of whatever was planned, he would be back in the streets as soon as he recovered from the injuries he had sustained during the Wazirabad attack. "But if something happens to me, my nation should know who was behind it [...] so that my nation never forgives them." At the outset of his address, Imran said that the state of Pakistan's economy could put Pakistan's national security at risk. "Those who will bail out Pakistan out of this condition [...] remember that they will ask for a price. The International Monetary Fund has asked Egypt and Sri Lanka to reduce their armies [...] it can ask us to do the same." The former prime minister warned that the depreciating rupee, declining foreign exchange reserves, and skyrocketing inflation would not just affect the people, but also Pakistan's security.

Continued on Page 06

Information cell to compile data of illegal societies

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: The Chief Officer Zila Council Attock Mr. Badshah Khan while sharing his views on the scam of 92 illegal housing societies here in Attock on Friday has said that an information cell has been set up at district level to compile the complete data of mushrooming growth of these unauthorized housing schemes operating within the territorial jurisdiction of Attock without completing any pre-requisite legal formality. The Chief Officer, Zila Council Attock Mr. Badshah Khan further said that complete details on all these illegal housing societies operating include 05 in Attock, 06 in Hazro, 22 in Hasanabdal, 53 in Fatehjang, 04 in Pindigheb and 02 in tehsil Jand has been made available for information of the general public. Responding to different questions of the media persons, Mr. Badshah Khan also warned the general public to be more cautious before purchasing any plot or house. The people should not make any kind of sale purchase deal prior to get the data of the housing society confirmed by the district administration Attock failing which they will be deprived of their investments by these illegal housing society operators. The Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr. Hassan Waqar Cheema has also directed Revenue Department Attock and Attock Police to initiate legal proceedings against 92 illegal housing societies operating in tehsil administration Attock-Pindigheb, Fatehjang, Hasanabadal, Hazro and Jand. He said the case has already been forwarded to the Director General, Federal Investigation Agency Islamabad for taking further necessary legal action against these illegal and unregistered housing societies which are floating their attractive media campaign to deceive the general public without any prior approval of the relevant departments.

FAFEN urges political consensus on Critical Electoral Reforms

ISLAMABAD: Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) calls upon the political parties to immediately initiate a comprehensive dialogue on addressing the weaknesses in the existing legal framework for elections in the country. Unless the political parties set aside their differences for upholding democracy and protecting its integrity through free, fair, and transparent elections, the country will continue to be embroiled in political instability having adverse effects on the already-fragile economy.—DNA

SC directs Sindh govt to recover missing girls

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday directed the Sindh government to recover the two missing daughters of Dr. Mehreen Baloch within one month and submit the report to the court. Chief Justice of Paki-

stan Justice Umar Ata Bandial expressed annoyance over the non-recovery of the girls for five years and remarked that the court was not using the suo-moto powers. The CJP remarked that the court wanted to strengthen the

state institutions. He said that the state and constitutional institutions were supposed to operate under the law only. The chief justice remarked that the court was not taking suo-moto but it would protect basic human rights. He ob-

served that there was no political interference in KP police, adding that the situation in Balochistan was also better. The court said that the Sindh and Punjab governments should also bring betterment in the system against police interference. Justice Athar Minallah remarked that it should be admitted that the administration had no competency to protect the citizens. Justice Bandial remarked that the influential people not only assisted in the

abduction of girls but also protected the accused. Justice Minallah remarked that the girls went missing six years ago but no one was ready to take responsibility. Justice Aisha A. Malik asked whether a person was so powerful that he was failing the whole system. Chief Secretary Sindh said that it was not good to take action against state institutions. Non-recovery of the girls was the failure of the police, he added.—APP

Pakistani students to visit Japan under Japan-SAARC Network Program

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of nine Pakistani students accompanied by a supervisor will be visiting Japan from February 1 to February 7, 2023 on the invitation by the Government of Japan under the Japan-SAARC Network Program of People-to-People Exchange known as JENESYS. The students delegation comprises of five undergraduate students from COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad campus and four high school students from Westminster Academy Islamabad along with a supervisor to visit Japan under this youth exchange program. Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) is a youth exchange program between Japan and the Asia Pacific region launched by the Japanese Government aiming to reaffirm and strengthen mutual trust and understanding among the people of Japan and participating countries. Under the JENESYS 2022 program,



participants from SAARC countries during their stay in Japan will be provided opportunities to learn and deepen further their understanding of Japan's cutting-edge high technologies,

economy, society and also experience Japan's traditional culture by participating in various lectures and visits. The Embassy of Japan organized a pre-departure orienta-

tion session for the visiting delegation of students to give them some necessary information and also to hand over travel documents to them before their departure for Japan.

On the occasion, H.E. WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, congratulated the young students upon their selection for visiting Japan under this youth exchange

program which, he said, will be a life-time opportunity for the young minds to learn more about Japan. The Ambassador, while emphasizing the importance of people-to-people exchange stated that exchange of people especially the youth is probably the most productive and fruitful way to further deepen the relations between the countries. Expressing his best wishes, the Ambassador hoped that the visiting Pakistani students, besides fostering friendships with the Japanese youth, will find ample opportunities to learn and enjoy the life, culture and historical heritage of Japan during their stay in the country. This year under JENESYS 2022 program, a total of 70 high school students and undergraduate students from SAARC countries have been invited by the Government of Japan to participate in this short term initiative. The program is expected not only to promote capacity building but also to develop mutual understanding among youths of Japan and that of SAARC countries.

IRC, PDMA launch disaster management info system

DNA

PESHAWAR: The 'Disaster Management Information System' (DMIS) has been launched in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to ensure quick access of disaster management authorities to accurate actionable information and better handling of disasters with modern management skills to minimize losses to human lives. This system has been launched as a result of extensive collaboration and work between the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) KP keeping in view the challenges encountered with information management previously.

While speaking at the concluding day of a two-day comprehensive training arranged by the IRC for 52 PDMA field assistants and divisional reporting officers from across the province here on Thursday, Director General PDMA-KP, Sharif Hussain explained that the DMIS system is developed as per geographic contextual needs and it entails comprehensive modules on incident reporting, relief management, monitoring of water levels in rivers, integration of weather updates with MET office and camp management information. He further explained that the key innovation under the DMIS is the GIS component, which will enable PDMA to plot all the incidences on a map and

generate a daily situation report. "This information will support relief organizations in planning and implementation of humanitarian response. Moreover, the system can record public grievances, which are routed to the concerned district administration for corrective actions," the DG said. Sharif Hussain said these modules are designed holistically to address a pre and post-scenario where the DMIS serves as an early warning system and in the aftermath of a disaster provides timely information for a speedy coordinated response based on real-time information. The system is cognizant of the challenges faced in the supply chain and therefore a module is in place to issue automated

supplies based on the inputs from respective districts. In her remarks on the occasion, Country Director IRC-Pakistan, Shabnam Baloch, said that the IRC is collaborating with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at the national level as well. Such collaboration will pave way for policymakers and humanitarian agencies to make informed decisions during the phases of relief, early recovery, and rehabilitation of populations that are impacted by calamities. She explained, "Pakistan is particularly vulnerable to climate shocks but has little capacity to invest in preventative infrastructure. It is imperative that these initiatives are scaled up and resources are allocated

towards a climate resilient Pakistan". The two-day IRC training for PDMA field assistants and divisional reporting officers from across the province was aimed at providing hands-on training to these officials along with supplementary resources for DMIS. It will play an important role in capacity building towards furnishing as well as disseminating the accurate and latest information to all relevant organizations. Pakistan faces some of the highest disaster risk levels in the world. This risk is driven particularly by the nation's exposure to earthquakes and high exposure to flooding and some exposure to tropical cyclones and their associated hazards, and drought.

President stresses linkages between local, int'l universities

LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi has called upon the universities and higher educational institutes to create meaningful linkages with local as well as credible international universities to benchmark their best practices, learn from their experiences, innovation and creativity. The educational institutes should carry out updating of the curricula, teaching modules and materials to remain abreast with the developments taking place in the field of education, higher learning and research, and development around the world, he stressed. The President expressed these views during his visit to Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), here on Friday. He also chaired a meeting of the LUMS Advisory Board and met the LUMS leadership. Pro-Chancellor Abdul Razak Dawood, Rector Shahid Hussain, VC Dr Arshad Ahmad, members of the Board of Trustees and senior leadership of the university attended the meeting. President Alvi urged the policymakers and regulatory bodies to strive for adopting innovation and development for timely decisions and swift implementation to help Pakistan become a progressive country. The President advised the university to continuously scan the international educational horizon to identify emerging technologies, developed around the world and link them with their curricula to create quality graduates, who are equipped with skills and capable of coping with the challenges of the modern world. The President said that innovation in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector had caused an explosion of knowledge and abundance of information, which was available to everyone with the touch of a button on smart devices, which has eliminated the need for memorisation and rote learning. He underscored that universities should enable their students to become proficient in their skills, create new knowledge, as critical and analytical thinking skills would strengthen their standing in the competitive world. The President urged the university to employ out-of-the-box solutions including combination of brick and mortar, hybrid and online teaching capabilities to increase their capacity and give admission to all those PSC passing students who are aspirant of getting higher education. The President emphasised that online and hybrid education was easier, accessible, cheaper, and conveniently scalable and provided convenient and hassle-free mode of teaching to a much larger body of student without constraint of time and space and when this mode was combined with "open access knowledge and information", it becomes even more productive. Dr Arif Alvi asserted that the research, carried out by the developed countries, especially during COVID-19 lockdown, had proved that online and hybrid modes of education were successful without compromising the integrity of the education discipline and quality and proficiency of the graduating students.

Senate adopts resolution against desecration of Holy Quran

ISLAMABAD: Senate on Friday adopted a unanimous resolution to condemn the vile act of desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden and the Netherlands which has hurt the religious sentiments of 1.5 billion Muslims around the globe. The upper house of the parliament strongly protested the governments of Sweden and the Netherlands for allowing the extremist elements for this heinous crime in the garb of freedom of expression. The Senate termed this disgraceful incident of Islamophobia as hateful and contrary to the principles of international law laid down in several instruments, including United

Nations General Assembly resolution number 36/35 of 25th November 1981 which proclaims the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights and European Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief which states that responsibility and freedom of expression go hand in hand and the latter should not incite hatred, shock or disturbance to any segment of society, the call of the World Conference on

Human Rights upon all governments to take all appropriate measures to counter intolerance, United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/6 of 9th November 2001 on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, Resolution of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights 2005/40, and International Day to Combat Islamophobia. According to the resolution, the Senate, therefore, stands for upholding the universal principles highlighted above and expresses the collective will of the state and people of Pakistan against the act of desecration of the Holy Quran by racists and extremists. It said this vicious crime is a calculated and deliberate at-

tempt to harm interfaith harmony, social peace, and religious tolerance, and ultimately it will prove to be divisive for peace and stability amongst countries, cultures and civilizations. The Senate urges Muslims to maintain calm and composure, refuse to be intimidated by the hate-mongering Islamophobes, and promote Islam's message of peace, tolerance and universal brotherhood. It also called upon the government to initiate prompt action on the following lines such as; to summoning the ambassador of Sweden and Netherlands and conveying the strong sentiments, shock and anger felt by the people of Pakistan against the desecration of the Holy Quran.—APP

Rain, snowfall predicted in KP from 28

PESHAWAR: The Met Office on Friday predicted rain with snowfall over the hills in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from January 28 to 30 due to which a cold wave would grip most parts of the province. It predicted moderate to isolated heavy snowfall over the hills in Chitral, Lower and Upper Dir, Malakand, Swat, Buner, Shangal, Kohistan, Battagram, Torghar, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur and Swabi districts.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Participants of Dress show and singing competitions pose for group photo with Principal Prof Rozina Faheem in intercollegiate ceremony held on Friday.—DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

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



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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ISLAMABAD: Traders of Islamabad led by Ajmal Baloch, Khalid Chaudhry and others holding a protest demonstration against the Swedish government for allowing desecration of Holy Quran. – DNA

France offers scholarships to Pakistani students

The "FRANCE EXCELLENCE MASTER" scholarships program funded by Embassy of France in Pakistan is designed to help Pakistani students residing in Pakistan to continue their education at Masters Level in France

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani applicants with outstanding academic records can benefit from a number of funding options for their in France taught-in-English degrees: 170 scholarships programmes offered by the French government, universities, regions or companies are listed on the Campus Bourses scholarship search engine on the Campus France Pakistan website (<https://www.pakistan.campusfrance.org/>). All fields of knowledge and level are covered. In addition, every year, the Embassy of

France in Pakistan awards scholarships to meritorious young Pakistani to go to France for master degrees taught in English, short French language training or art residences. In total, 225 000 euros (59.3 million rupees) of scholarships will be granted by France in 2023 among which 197 000 euros (52 million rupees) will be allocated to talented students who wish to pursue their higher education in France at Masters Level. Application for the Master scholarship in 2023 can be filed 2 ways: - "FRANCE EXCELLENCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE" and "FRANCE EXCELLENCE MASTER".

Both ways cover a return air ticket Pakistan-France-Pakistan, the student visa and fees for study in France, social security in France and online crash courses in French before departure, provided at the Alliances Françaises (Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi). Besides, full tuitions fees and monthly allowance of 860 euros (226,000 rupees) will be granted for the "France Excellence for Climate Change" scholarships. Depending on the availability, a preferred access to university residence may be offered. The selected academic programmes for the "FRANCE EXCELLENCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE" scholarships of the Embassy of

France for 2023 encompasses top-notch degrees delivered by some of the best French higher education institutions, like IMT Atlantique or Rennes School of Business, all specialized in providing courses on Climate Change resilience covering scientific, managerial and economic fields. The "FRANCE EXCELLENCE MASTER" scholarships program funded by Embassy of France in Pakistan is designed to help Pakistani students residing in Pakistan to continue their education at Masters Level in France in priority areas set up by the French and Pakistani governments: economics, public policy, environment & energy.

AIOU seeks 100pc literacy rate in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood has urged all public and private sector institutions and non-governmental organizations to work together for achieving 100 percent literacy rate in Islamabad and bringing its 50,000 drop-out children into the educational network. He was addressing the meeting of the Non-Formal Education (NFE) forum here on Friday. Prof. Mehmood said that AIOU will train the teachers of the institutions working to include the dropout children in the educational network. The training courses for teachers of non-formal education institutions were being updated, he said, adding their duration was increased from six months to one year. "All the services in regional offices of AIOU across the country are available for the stakeholders working for non-formal education," he assured. In the meeting, Program Specialist of JICA, Bilal Aziz, Director General, Pakistan Institute of Education, Dr. Zaigham Qadeer,

Saqib Farooq from Ministry of Federal Education, Chairman, Elementary Teacher Education, AIOU, Dr. Fazal-Ur-Rahman, Chairman Department of Distance, Non-Formal and Continuing Education, AIOU, Dr. Muhammad Ajmal Chaudhry, and representatives of private sector institutions and non-governmental organizations were also present. All stakeholders reiterated to intensify efforts to "make Islamabad 100% literate". They introduced their respective institutions and briefed about the educational and social services they are providing. Bilal Aziz highlighted the educational services of JICA in detail. Dr. Zaigham Qadeer offered to host the next session of the forum. Saqib Farooq said that the Ministry of Education had included 12,000 drop-out children of Islamabad in the educational network and they were making efforts to bring the remaining children back to schools. Dr. Fazal-Ur-Rahman said that there was a need to include dropout children not only from Islamabad but from the entire country in the education net so "we become an educated nation".



ISLAMABAD: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman giving gold medals to the outstanding students during the 20th Convocation of Fatima Jinnah Women University for the graduates of 2022 held at Jinnah Convention Centre. – APP

Implementation of IMF conditions Pak interest

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Friday said over the last several decades there has hardly been a finance minister who after lashing out against the IMF hasn't agreed to their conditions. Statements against the IMF do not harm this in-

stitution, but we have to face the music therefore this practice should be stopped, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the cost of the delay in the implementation of the program is paid by the country and the people. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that all finance ministers always claim to run the country without the support of any lender which results in an economic collapse.

Borrowing from IMF's is delayed as a routine and once the loan is granted, the program is not implemented, which increases mistrust, he added. He said that we should know the fact that the IMF does not ask any country for lending, rather it is the countries in trouble that beg for loans. Mian Zahid Hussain said that Saudi Arabia has also done a favor to Pakistan by advising it to make reforms instead of getting more loans, which made the government realize the seriousness of the situation, and they restored contact with the IMF and assured to meet all their conditions which have increased the value of the dollar in Pakistan by 30 rupees. – DNA

Feb 11 last date to apply for postal ballot for NA 193

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has fixed February 11 as last date for receipt of applications for postal ballot papers for NA 193 by elections. According to the ECP, this facility is being extended only to government officials, members of armed forces, holders of public offices, their wives and children stationed at a place other than the constituency, where their votes are registered. Persons detained in prison and persons with physical disability who are unable to travel and hold a National Identity Card with a logo for physical disability issued by National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) are also entitled to vote by postal ballot. Similarly, the persons appointed by the Returning Officer, including police personnel for the performance of any duty in connection with an election at polling stations other than the one at which they are entitled to cast their vote should apply for postal ballot to the Returning Officer within three days of their appointments. The ECP has explained that applications for postal ballot should be submitted on the prescribed form with the returning officer of the constituency in which such persons are enrolled as voters. Application forms for postal ballot can be obtained from Shahab-ud-Din, District Election Commission/Returning Officer, from his office situated at Municipal Committee (MC), Jampur, Rajanpur; Contact no 0604-685969. The application form may also be downloaded from ECP's website www.ecp.gov.pk. The voters to whom postal ballots are issued will not be entitled to vote in person at the polling stations.

Security personnel briefed for effective duty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, security personnel deputed at route headquarters were briefed to perform effective duties and be ready to deal with any untoward incident in a timely manner, a police public relations officer said. He said that, SP security/VVIP briefed Islamabad capital police personnel who were deputed on route duties and security of VIP movement. The security personnel were briefed and directed to be ready to deal with any untoward incident in a timely manner. Officials should remain alert during duty and keep a close watch on suspicious vehicles and individuals, he added. The Capital Police Officer Security Division directed the police officials to be highly alert and ready all the time to deal with any emerging law and order situation. All necessary measures will be taken to protect the life and property of the citizens. He said that instructions have been issued to all officers to make security more effective at red zones and diplomatic enclaves and to brief the staff and check all the duty points by themselves.

ICCI shows concerns over falling forex reserves

ICCI delegations calls on Ambassador of Morocco Muhammad Karmoune

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has shown great concerns over the falling forex reserves of the State Bank of Pakistan, which have tumbled down to a new low level of around US\$ 3.7 billion and sharp erosion in the value of rupee, which has fallen to over Rs.265 against a dollar in the open market on Friday. These indicators show that if immediate corrective measures are not taken, the economy of Pakistan would be heading towards a collapse. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce

and Industry said that strong foreign exchange reserves of a country give confidence to the local and foreign investors, but the continuous fall in the forex reserves of Pakistan are shaking the confidence of the business community and the potential investors. He said that the government in consultation with the private sector should take war footing measures to boost exports and divert remittances through banking channels to improve the foreign reserves of the country. He said that over 9000 containers carrying essential commodities including petroleum products, LNG and soybean are stuck up at ports due to shortage of dollars. He stressed that the government should explore out of the box solutions to improve the foreign exchange reserves to ensure that all essential imported consignments are

cleared on time to save the business community from further losses. ICCI President said that the unprecedented fall in the value of rupee in just two days would not only trigger a new wave of inflation, the expensive loans after the interest rate hike would hit the industrial activities. He said that the weak rupee would also increase the landed cost of imported goods and industrial raw materials besides making the life of common man more miserable. He said that SBP had increased the interest rate to tame the inflation, but the latest currency devaluation would negate the SBP's efforts to check food prices. He stressed that the government should take solid measures to bring stability in the local currency to save the businesses and the people from its harmful consequences. – DNA

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Briefs

Police arrest seven for possessing illegal weapons

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi Waseem Riaz Khan conducted raids in different areas and netted seven accused for possessing illegal weapons. According to a police spokesman, Westridge, Bani, Saddar Wah, Dhamial, and Rawat police rounded up seven namely Zohaib Imtiaz, Muhammad Ali, Abdullah, Ahsan, Shehryar, Shabbir and Ali and recovered six 30 bore pistols, a 9mm pistol and ammunition from their possession. The SSP said strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against the lawbreakers and operations against aerial firing and illegal weapon holders would continue.—APP

IWMB Park Rangers foil hunting attempt in MHNP

ISLAMABAD: The Park Rangers of Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB), with the assistance of Punjab Wildlife Department, conducted a successful operation against poachers near the eastern border of Margalla Hills National Park. According to the IWMB, a special team of Park Rangers led by Director Wildlife, Assistant Director Wildlife and Supervisors, traced the poachers while acting on the information shared by local sources. "Eight hunters with their rifles were lying in ambush on the eastern border of the National Park to hunt wild deer and wild fowl (kaleej pheasant)," an IWMB official told APP. The park rangers carried out a successful operation and took two poachers into custody along with their weapons, while the others managed to escape. The Park Rangers imposed a fine of Rs 120,000 on hunters for possessing illegal rifles, and handed them over to the Punjab Wildlife Department for further legal action. The IWMB official said that the area of the National Park from where the accused were arrested, was close to the Punjab province's Murre tehsil, and the accused reportedly came from that area. The Punjab Wildlife Department was well aware of the area and its surroundings. It assisted the IWMB to trace the hunters, making the operation successful, he added.—APP

Gandhara festival to be held in Taxila from Sunday

WAH CANTT: The two-day Gandhara festival is scheduled to be held at Gandhara art village near Taxila from Sunday. The festival is organized by Rawalpindi Arts Council (RAC) in collaboration with Pak-Romina friendship association to highlight the ancient civilization of Taxila. Rawalpindi Arts Council (RAC) Director Waqar Ahmed said that the main objective of the festival was to highlight the old civilization of the region and to inform the young generation about the country's history, art and culture. He said festivals were being organized to highlight the culture of Punjab as well as the ancient civilizations of Gandhara. He said the exhibition of Buddha statues made by local sculptors would also be part of the festival in a bid to promote the rich Gandhara civilization. He said that the Gandhara festival will include an art exhibition, a book fair, a folk dance and a Sufi night. Zaidar Ahsan Shah, Chairman Pakistan-Romania friendship association said that organizing the festival with aim to sensitize public as well as Islamabad based diplomatic community about their ancient heritage spanning the province. He said the festival will help the province attract foreign and local investment in the tourism sector, adding that Buddhist countries play a key role in upgrading their holy sites spread throughout the province. Mr Shah said that there was a close relationship between culture and ancient civilizations, because the civilisation of any region must have an impact on its culture.—APP

PTI's inability doubles cost of ML1: Ishaq Dar

The minister said that Pakistan had become 24th largest economy in 2016 however owing to PTI inabilities it stood at 47th number last year. He highlighted the importance of investigating the reasons behind this downfall

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said here on Friday that the cost of Main Line 1 (ML1) had almost doubled owing to inability of the previous regime of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, which failed to carry out the project in accordance with set timelines. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Green Line Train Project here, the minister said the cost of ML1 was project at \$6 billion under \$46 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, however due to failure by the previous regime for not executing on time; it may cost now \$11 billion to \$12 billion.

"This is legacy of previous government which this government inherited. They [previous government] should have actually imple-

mented that but they could not," the minister said. The minister congratulated Federal Minister for Railways, Khawaja Saad Rafiq for reviving the impressive Green Line Railway service.

The minister also highlighted the importance of commercialization of railway track, which he said would not only help Railways to stand on its own feet but would make it profit-earning organization to contribute in the national economy. He also underlined the importance for utilizing Railways for freight transport which he said could minimizing the transport cost to a great extent. The minister said that Pakistan had become 24th largest economy in 2016 however owing to PTI inabilities it stood at 47th number last year. He highlighted the importance of investigating the reasons behind this downfall. He said, Pakistan Muslim League



(N) government had turned around economy at a time when it was predicted to default within a period of 6 months back in 2013. He said, during the past PML(N) tenure, food inflation was just 2 percent; general inflation 4.6 percent whereas GDP was recorded at 6.8 percent with highest foreign reserves adding the Pakistan Stock Exchange was best in South

Asia and 5th best performing in the world. He said, at that time all world organization were looking towards Pakistan, which was predicted to be second choicest investment destination. He however deplored that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf ruined all this progress. The minister said, Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif has been meeting many challenges and expressed the hope that he would pull the country out of quagmire. Meanwhile, speaking on the occasion, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said that railways act as a backbone for the economy, and its development was directly linked with the economic development. He said the PML-N government started ML-1 railway project under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2017-18 which was aimed at modernizing the railway sector in Pakistan besides in-

creasing the speed of the trains up to 160 kilometers per hour. However, he said the successive PTI government did not give importance to this project due to which progress on the project stopped. Ahsan Iqbal said the country's economy must have to be based on export led growth as the exports need to jump from current \$32 billion per year to over \$100 billion in few years. He said just as Pakistan is paying price of the global carbon emissions due to which the country had to bear loss of over \$30 billion after disastrous flooding last year, the current government is also paying the price of irrational economic decisions and policies of the previous government. However he resolved to put full force to undo the wrong policies of the previous government and to put the country's economy again on the path of rapid growth and development.

14 new Corona cases reported in last 24 hours

ISLAMABAD: Health officials on Friday said that 14 new Coronavirus cases were reported during the last 24 hours across the country. As per data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio was 0.32 percent while 10 patients were in critical condition. No death was reported from the virus in the last 24 hours while 4,414 corona tests were conducted. As many as 416 tests were conducted in Lahore, out of which two cases were confirmed positive, while 306 tests were conducted in Islamabad out of which one was reported positive. One case was reported in Peshawar out of the 247 tests with a ratio of 0.40%. Meanwhile, Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Abdul Qadir Patel said that the government had strengthened the role of Border and Health Services in Pakistan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19. The minister said that there was a surveillance system at all entry points of the country including airports. He said that there will be rapid tests and screening of passengers at all airports. He said that the situation was completely under control and asked the general public to avoid listening to rumors. He added that the Corona case passivity ratio was just 0.3 to 0.5 in the country while 90 percent of the country's population already got the COVID-19 vaccine.

"An efficient system with a proper management team is fully functional in the country to remain vigilant and is ready to make an emergency plan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19," the minister added. He said that Border and Health Services Pakistan was ensuring the implementation of international health regulations. He said that in case of any untoward situation, the health system was fully prepared to deal with any sub-variant of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 including BF.7 in the country.—DNA

Most honest government official of 2022 to be honored

ISLAMABAD: Youth Association of Pakistan (YAP) and Accountability Lab Pakistan (ALP) will honor the most truthful and honest government officials in the country through Integrity Icon Pakistan Campaign. An official of YAP told on Friday that as many as five government officials from various departments would be given this award in "Integrity summit and crowning ceremony of the Integrity Icon 2022" to be held on February 01 (Wednesday). The initiative, which is an annual event, aims to acknowledge and appreciate those government officials who are doing the job with honesty. The event will not only present these icons as a role model for the youth but will also encourage and promote the value of honesty and dignity among youth. The event will also spark discussion on the values of Accountability, Integrity and Honesty and documentaries on the life and journey of these icons will also be a part of the ceremony. The public is gradually losing faith in the public institutions, due to the poor state of governance, service delivery and corruption.—APP

ANF recovers 44,500 intoxicated tablets, three kg heroin

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan during two counter-narcotics operations seized 44,500 intoxicated tablets and over three kg of heroin besides arresting two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed ANF in an operation near Rawalpindi Pirwadhai Bus Terminal recovered 3100 grams of heroin from a suspicious parcel. In another raid conducted on Harbanspura Road Lahore, ANF recovered 44,500 intoxicated tablets from the possession of two accused residents of Mardan. The spokesman said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

Pak to strengthen community based preparedness regime

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Friday said Pakistan is aiming to strengthen the community based preparedness regime through national level simulation exercises to mitigate the impact of climate-induced disasters and emergencies in the country. The Chairman apprised the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)'s Head of Office for Pakistan Carlos Geha who called on him here, a news release said. The Chairman NDMA discussed the contours of Remodeled National Preparedness and Response system and stated that the digitally updated National Emergencies & Operations Center (NEOC) would be



a house of collaborative data for the early warning system, generating alerts & consequently information-based decision-making for proactive management of disaster or emergency in the given circumstance. He also outlined the role of the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) to facilitate multi-sectoral researches

along with countrywide universities in field disaster management and formulate research-driven modules for contingency plans and mock exercises to build national resilience towards climatic hazards. On the occasion, the OCHA Head commended the NDMA's plan to transform the disaster management system in

Pakistan and extended his organization's full support to accomplish these tasks. Both sides agreed upon establishing benchmarks for joint ventures and arranging the staff-level meetings on monthly basis to meet common objectives for building resilience and better response mechanism in hazard-prone areas.

Unregistered companies got contracts from past PMC body

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The past management of the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) had awarded contracts to ghost companies, which is a clear violation of rules and regulations. According to official sources at Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), these companies were not even registered at the time of bidding but they were awarded the contracts in violation of rules. They said that scams of millions of rupees are under inquiry against the former management for giving such contracts to these companies. They said that the past management of PMC was also involved in many other irregularities like the PMC handed over the task of inspections of medical and dental colleges to another

public sector organization while a detailed procedure was adopted by any institution seeking recognition with PMDC. As a regulator, the PMDC used to monitor, inspect and regulate all the medical and dental colleges, they added. Similarly, foreign graduates were put under some pathway not given in the act as the act refers to preparing assessment criteria, they added. Unlike PMDC's method of taking NEB exams through one recognized public university to register foreign students, the MBBS or BDS local students who used to give five university exams had to give again NLE National licensing exit exam and then were given a full license, the source added. They said that as per PMDC rules the local students were registered by PMDC after passing the

recognized institutions whereas the PMC created three exams for a full license, provisional license and temporary license. They said that PMDC was internationally accredited whereas the PMC faced a lot of problems in accreditation with international stakeholders which created panic among the doctors working abroad. They said that the PMC conducted the entry test by arranging it through an external testing authority, which resulted in depriving over 50 percent of Sindh students to get admissions in medical and dental colleges. They said that the capable students have been deprived of admissions as no criteria for awarding these marks were given to the colleges and it was according to their whims and wishes that those students were selected on the wrong exam held by the PMC.

Membership of five more MPs restored

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday restored the membership of five more parliamentarians and allowed them to function as members of the Senate, Sindh Assembly on filing their mandatory statements of assets and liabilities to the commission. According to an ECP official, the parliamentarians, who were suspended over non-submission of their asset details, had now filed their statements of assets and liabilities and fulfilled the legal requirement in conformance with the relevant election laws. In total, the membership of three Senators and two members of the Sindh Assembly has been restored. The membership of three Senators including Aon Abbas, Rukhsana Zuberi and Manzoor Ahmed has been restored.—APP

US Embassy expands interview waiver eligibility for Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD: The US Embassy in Pakistan has announced to expand interview waiver eligibility for Pakistani citizens who are renewing their B1/B2 tourist and business visas. In a tweet uploaded by US Consulate in Karachi on Friday, an official said "We are pleased to announce that we have expanded interview waiver eligibility for Pakistani citizens who are renewing B1/B2 tourist and business visas. Who to know if you are eligible for the interview waiver? Visit our website to find out. The United States Mission in Pakistan is pleased to announce the expansion of interview waiver eligibility at the US Embassy in Islamabad and the US Consulate General in Karachi for Pakistani citizens who are renewing B1/B2 tourist and business visas. "All Pakistani citizens, regardless of age, whose B1/B2 visas are valid or have expired within the last 48 months are eligible to participate. Previously, only Pakistani citizens of ages 45 and older were eligible to participate. Additionally, interview waiver eligibility for student and petition-based work visa applicants who have previously held a US visa is also extended through 2023. The expansion of interview waiver eligibility is a procedural change to provide better customer service and more efficiently process renewals of tourist and business visas for qualified and eligible Pakistani citizens. As required by US law, some eligible visa holders may be required to appear at the US Embassy or US Consulate General for interviews after submission of their applications.—DND

Kundi asks Khan to start election campaign

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi Friday asked Imran Khan to start campaign for the upcoming Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa elections instead of hiding himself in Zaman Park. Addressing a presser along with the Secretary General Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Nayyar Hussain Bukhari, the SAPM said that Imran Khan might be planning to run the election campaign like work from home instead of coming into the field. Criticizing PTI for their performance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Kundi said that the province which was once peaceful is now suffering from unrest due to the ineffective policies of the PTI government. While the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has no funds to pay salaries of the government employees. About the recent audio leak, the SAPM said that the PTI has been calling others thieves and dacoits but the recent audio leak had exposed their own corruption for which they should be held accountable. He said Pakistan People's Party has always demanded the formation of an independent medical board to prove whether Imran Khan has received bullet injuries or not.

Faisal Kundi said that it happened for the first time in the history of the world that a person is having plaster on his leg when the

bullet has not damaged his bones which he satirically termed as a strange tradition of Shaukat Khanum hospital. Meanwhile, Secre-



tary General Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Nayyar Hussain Bukhari said that the present government would complete its tenure and general elections across the country would be held in time. He said that early elections were not the solution to get rid of the challenges being faced by the country. He said Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had invited the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for dialogue without any condition. Nayyar Bukhari said that Chairman PTI Imran Khan had isolated Pakistan from the whole world but Bilawal Bhutto had put maximum efforts to restore cordial relations with the world. He said that PTI was badly failed in delivering on any front during the last four years and today the whole nation was questioning PTI's commitments to the provision of jobs and houses. Nayyar Bukhari said that the fact of the international economic crisis and its impact on Pakistan cannot be denied but the incumbent government was putting maximum effort to address the challenges. He said: "Two assemblies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab have been dissolved but the National Assembly would complete its constitutional term". Nayyar Bukhari said the leadership and the workers of PPP have rendered huge sacrifices for the strengthening of democracy and the parliamentary system in the country.

Carbon offsetting: a model with dangerous flaws

The strong reaction to the Guardian's joint investigation into carbon offsetting shows how much is at stake when the effectiveness of market mechanisms in combating global heating is challenged. Already, in Australia, politicians and scientists have renewed their criticism of public entities using international carbon credit schemes to offset local emissions. Verra, the Washington-based non-profit at the centre of the story, is the world's leading carbon standard, certifying the credits that companies use to make claims about their environmental impact. It is a blow to anyone committed to the idea that emissions trading can help the world to reach net zero, to learn that 90% of the rainforest credits analysed are unlikely to represent genuine carbon reductions. The problem, which was uncovered by journalists working alongside experts using satellite images, is the methodology used by Verra to certify its credits. While Verra disputes the findings, and is due to publish its own assessment, the researchers found that the evidence used to calculate offsets was flawed. Predictions of what would have happened in the absence of credits were unreliable, and benefits were overstated.

Given Verra's importance, the significance of the findings goes beyond a single organisation. What happens next is crucial, and will be closely watched by governments and businesses around the world. The question is: can existing processes be improved? Here, academics and environmental campaigners are divided. Carbon markets have long been controversial, with some arguing that any attempt to protect nature by assigning it monetary value is doomed. According to this view, the focus on nature conservation and restoration of recent years has been co-opted and corrupted by corporate interests, including fossil fuel producers who are among the biggest purchasers of carbon credits.

Defenders of emissions trading, however, insist that while such greenwashing must be called out, carbon markets have a role to play. Governments will not provide the necessary funds to protect the world's rainforests. Therefore there is no alternative but to direct private capital towards them and other carbon sinks and biodiversity hotspots. If the existing ways of doing this don't work, better ones must be developed. Our investigation discovered three projects in Madagascar that were excellent. Carbon market optimists think these results can be replicated. The carbon offsets market is worth around \$2bn, and is expected to be worth 10 times that by the end of the decade. It is emphatically not the solution to the enormous threat posed by dangerously high emissions. But with much tougher oversight and regulation, it ought to be possible to design a system whereby forested nations are financially incentivised to protect nature. Exposing the weakness in the current system is a necessary first step in that direction.

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Brutal new phase of war in Ukraine

The war in Ukraine has entered a new, more deadly and fateful phase, and the one man who can stop it, Vladimir Putin, has shown no signs that he will do so. After 11 months during which Ukraine has won repeated and decisive victories against Russian forces, clawed back some of its lands and cities and withstood lethal assaults on its infrastructure, the war is at a stalemate. Still, the fighting rages on, including a ferocious battle for the city of Bakhmut in the eastern Donetsk region. Cruel, seemingly random Russian missile strikes at civilian targets have become a regular horror: On Jan. 14, a Russian missile struck an apartment building in Dnipro, in central Ukraine. Among the at least 40 dead were small children, a pregnant woman and a 15-year-old dancer. Both sides are now said to be bracing for a fierce new round of offensives in the late winter or spring. Russia has mobilized 300,000 new men to throw into the fray, and some arms factories are working around the clock. Ukraine's Western arms suppliers, at the same time, are bolstering Kyiv's arsenal with armor and air defense systems that until recently they were reluctant to deploy against Russia for fear of escalating this conflict into an all-in East-West war. Ukraine and its backers hope that the Western arms will be decisive, giving Ukraine a better chance to blunt a Russian offensive and drive the Russians back. How far back is another question. President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine talks of chasing Russia out of Ukraine altogether, including the territory seized by Russia in 2014 in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. In the end, the question is whether any of Mr. Putin's lectures on history really provide a justification for the death and destruction he has ordained. Russians know the horrors of all-out war; they must know that nothing Mr. Putin has concocted remotely validates the leveling of towns and cities, the murder, rape and pillaging, or the deliberate strikes against power and water supplies across Ukraine. Like the last great European war, this one is mostly one man's madness. The true scope of Russia's casualties is also being kept from its people. Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in November that Moscow's casualties were "well over 100,000 Russian soldiers killed and wounded." About 300,000 men have been pressed into cannon-fodder duty in the army and many more may follow. It is possible that Mr. Putin might eventually seek a negotiated settlement, though that becomes ever more remote as the Ukrainians suffer ever greater destruction and loss, and as their determination not to cede an inch of their country deepens. For now, Mr. Putin seems to still believe he can bring Ukraine to his knees and dictate its fate, cost be damned. Russians have seen this act before in the Kremlin. They might do well to ponder whether, in this version, Mr. Putin is the omniscient czar and Mr. Manturov the bumbling functionary — the intended lesson — or whether they are being played for fools by Mr. Putin's vanity, delusions and spitefulness.

Russia-Ukraine Air War: Important Lessons

Air Marshal M Ashfaque Arain (Retd)

The Russian military operations were preceded by hybrid warfare using disruption through cyber-attacks and destruction with the employment of surface-to-surface and air-to-ground missiles. Russia selectively employed precision guided munitions to destroy military targets such as airfields, ammo dumps, command and control centres, radars and other air defence systems. Some defence industrial complexes were also targeted to damage production capacity. Targets such as Lutsk airfield, just 70 km from the Polish border were attacked to deter military equipment shipments from the West

The Russia-Ukraine War, which started on 24 February 2022, is an example of a major military power fighting a smaller neighbour, supported by the sole super power

and its allies. This provides an unparalleled opportunity to assess the impact of military capabilities and performance of a wide range of modern weapons and technological support.

An accurate analysis could help draw valid lessons for application and role of air power in future military conflicts. However, as the conflict is still ongoing, mainstream media only gives the Western perspective and available information is fragmented. Availability of more authentic data may lead to changes in lessons. To assess applicability in other conflicts, like future Indo-Pak conflicts, India's advantage of having US intelligence support must be given due consideration.

The Russian military operations were preceded by hybrid warfare using disruption through cyber-attacks and destruction with the employment of surface-to-surface and air-to-ground missiles. Russia selectively employed precision guided munitions to destroy military targets such as airfields, ammo dumps, command and control centres, radars and other air defence systems. Some defence industrial complexes were also targeted to damage production capacity. Targets such as Lutsk airfield, just 70 km from the Polish border were attacked to deter military equipment shipments from the West. During the first few hours of the conflict, Russia employed airborne and helicopter operations to capture Antonov airport at a distance of 20 km from Kyiv. However, after successful operations, they failed to form an airhead in the face of shoulder-mounted surface-to-air missile (SAM) threat.

The Russian Air Force succeeded in engaging 75% of static defence sites during the first 48 hours of the war, which suggests that there were no sanctuaries throughout operational depth. The Russian armed forces, however, demonstrated their vulnerability to deception owing to lack of ability to quickly fuse information, as was witnessed during the attack on the Russian naval flagship when the air defences were distracted by UAVs. The air war also highlighted increasing significance of Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) and CounterUAS (CUAS) in all domains. However, despite their efficacy in providing situational awareness and accurate attacks in highly defended

areas, 90% of UAS were lost. Electronic Warfare (EW) emerged as the most effective primary means of countering UAS operations. Despite their ability to create desired effects, precision engagement weapons also demonstrated their vulnerability to enemy EW. Contrary to Western propaganda, Ukraine mostly employed air power for defensive purposes inside its own territory. This included extensive use of shoulder-fired anti-aircraft weapons making the war appear like urban guerrilla warfare, as in one case the intercepted missile fell on a building. Ukraine's extensive use of unmanned platforms has given many successes especially against Russian armour columns and sea-based assets. However, these successes could not have been possible for Ukraine to employ its aircraft, missile and UAVs effectively without intelligence information provided by the US and its allies.

An analysis of air operations contradicts Western media reports about Russian inability to gain control of the air, as in such a situation, its ground forces could not have operated deep inside Ukrainian territory. Additionally, despite USD 100 billion dollar military support to Ukraine in ten months and claims of Ukrainian victory, need for more military support 2 clearly indicates Russia's successes in the war. It may be right to assume that Russia endeavored for air control in the selected areas only. However, it is also true that despite being 8-10 times larger than the Ukrainian Air Force, Russian Air Force was not utilised to its full potential. This could have been done to limit destruction as Russia possibly intends to control these areas after the war. However, there is a glaring lesson for the Russian Armed Forces which operate on the principle of jointness with land component priorities being paramount. Such an arrangement without the ability to understand employment of all services resulted in suboptimal employment of naval and air forces. Study of the application of air power in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war to predict future wars suggests, as discussed earlier, that information warfare remained an intrinsic

component of the war operations to build a convincing narrative to shape opinion, legitimise actions and enhance morale of the people as well as armed forces. It also demonstrated that high intensity conflicts require reasonable stockpiles for the envisaged duration of the war. While employment of EW systems ensures success of both, offensive as well as defensive operations, dispersal, camouflage and concealment as well as hardened shelters are extremely important for the protection of assets, especially in the absence of strategic depth. Additionally, airborne operations can only succeed if aircraft, UAS and helicopters can be protected from enemy defences with the help of EW platforms and self-protection jammers. Modern wars require high degree of situational awareness with the help from space and air based assets. Use of Artificial Intelligence will help quick assimilation and distribution of information for decision-making. Employment of longrange precision munitions helps in protecting launch platforms during conduct of offensive operations. The conflict also demonstrated that joint operations yield best results when planned, practiced and executed jointly supported by joint organisational structures to enhance synergy. Airpower is most effective when it is applied for offensive application to create effect based operations for accelerated achievement of military objectives. Restricted application of airpower fails to achieve desired results. Additionally, as air power is inherently offensive, air defence should also be handled offensively combining offensive and defensive counter air operations as a separate air defence command is likely to fail.

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“GB calls for governance reforms”

Wajhullah Fahim

Due to a lack of knowledge about the vast spread areas of Gilgit Baltistan, the political agent introduced the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) under which the feudal system and taxation system were restored. Instead of introducing the proper governance framework, the government of Pakistan gifted the black law of FCR to the people of Gilgit Baltistan. In 1972, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto visited Gilgit Baltistan as the Head of the State, he tried to resolve the administrative and governance issues of Gilgit Baltistan and also introduced some reforms. He annihilated the black FCR law and feudal system. He established a representative body

Gilgit-Baltistan formerly known as the Northern area of Pakistanis famous for the abundance of natural resources and its border with two economic power of the world India and China. After two years of battle with Dogras in 1948, the people of Gilgit Baltistan got independence and decided to join Pakistan. After formal accession to Pakistan, they thought they had become Pakistani, but still, they are treated like a second-class citizen. Since its independence from Dogra Raj, this area is facing serious governance issues. The 1951 Karachi pact between the Government of Pakistan and the Kashmiri leaders contributed immensely in today's governance crisis of Gilgit Baltistan. Moreover, this pact included Gilgit Baltistan as part of the disputed Kashmir region without the consent of local leaders. After this event, the government of Pakistan appointed junior state officer as a political agent for this area who had the responsibility to control the administrative setup of Gilgit Baltistan.

Due to a lack of knowledge about the vast spread areas of Gilgit Baltistan, the political agent introduced the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) under which the feudal system and taxation system were restored. Instead of introducing the proper governance framework, the government of Pakistan gifted the black law of FCR to the people of Gilgit Baltistan. In 1972, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto visited Gilgit Baltistan as the Head of the State, he tried to resolve the administrative and governance issues of Gilgit Baltistan and also introduced some reforms. He annihilated the black FCR law and feudal system. He established a representative body to run the administrative activities of Gilgit Baltistan known as the Northern Areas Advisory Council. The council consisted of sixteen members which were elected through the election. Even though it was the first representative body of Gilgit Baltistan but this body had limited power. They could only approve the developmental schemes and the rest of the power was under control of the head of state of Pakistan. The formulation of the Northern Areas Advisory Council just created a ray of hope for

proper governance set-up but failed due to the limited transfer of power to the council. During the Zia's regime, the whole Gilgit Baltistan was brunt due to the sectarian war which caused no improvement in the governance structure of Gilgit Baltistan. In 1988 when Benazir Bhutto became Prime Minister of Pakistan, she formed a new governing body known as Northern Areas Council. In her second tenure, she introduced the Legal Framework Order (LFO) in which the name of the Northern Areas Council changed to Northern Areas Legislative Council (NALC). The Northern Areas Legislative Council consisted of six members from every three divisions of Gilgit Baltistan and five reserve seats for women. The formulation of the Northern Areas Legislative Council (NALC) also failed to give proper governance and administrative structure to the people of Gilgit Baltistan. Under this council, the Minister of Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan affairs became the Chief executive of Gilgit Baltistan and all the executive powers were shifted to the ministry. Without sign or approval of the Chief executive, the council could not pass any bill or implement any laws. During Musharraf's regime, the Northern Area Legislatively Assembly (NALA) was created and the power to amend the Legal Framework Order (LFO) was given to the Legislatively Assembly. In 2009 when the PPP formed government at the federal, they introduced Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Order 2009. The government of Pakistan decided to take some important steps to improve governance issues in Gilgit Baltistan some of them mention here. Three new seats were created for technocrats and professional members in the Northern Area Legislatively Assembly (NALA). First time in the history of Gilgit Baltistan positions of the chief minister and governor were created. Under this order, 61 subjects were placed under the jurisdiction of the Gilgit Baltistan assembly. In the name of empowerment and self-governance, Gilgit Baltistan Council was formed which consists of the Prime minister of Pakistan, six federal ministers and members of parliament elected by the

PM, the CM and Governor of GB and six members elected from the Gilgit Baltistan Legislative Assembly. As this order was introduced for empowering and self-Governance of GB but in the order right to amendment in LFO was removed and more power was granted to the GB council as compared to the GB assembly. As the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self Governance Order 2009 failed to improve empowerment and self-Governance in Gilgit Baltistan, new presidential order named as Gilgit Baltistan Order was introduced in which all the executive powers of the GB council transferred to GB Assembly which includes legislation regarding hydro-power, minerals and tourism sectors. The Chief Court name changed to the High Court and the Council of Islamic ideology also extend to Gilgit Baltistan. The status of the non-voting membership in different bodies such as NFC, ECC, CII and IRSA has also been granted to GB. But here again, in name of empowerment and self-governance, all the main powers are shifted to the PM of Pakistan even the people of Gilgit Baltistan cannot vote/elect the PM. Now, the time has come to form a proper governance framework for Gilgit Baltistan. Every time the federal government introduces some presidential orders in name of self-governance Gilgit Baltistan without considering the perception of the local inhabitants. Due to increase awareness among the people especially among youth, the presidential order for self-governance in Gilgit Baltistan cannot work, even implement it. The perception of the local people should be given weightage if the federal government wants to give self-governance to Gilgit Baltistan. Whatever the choice made by locals for empowering and governing Gilgit Baltistan should be formulated and implemented, otherwise people will continue to protest about the issues like the recent one in which people gave dharnaat -20 temperatures. The solution to all the problems and crises in Gilgit Baltistan lies in considering the perspective of the local inhabitants and formulating a proper self-governance framework.

Briefs

Sania Mirza bows out of Grand Slam tennis

DNA

MELBOURNE: Indian trailblazer Sania Mirza bowed out of Grand Slam tennis Friday with defeat in the Australian Open mixed-doubles final playing alongside Rohan Bopanna – her first playing partner 22 years ago. The 36-year-old Mirza, regarded as her country's greatest women's tennis player, returned to Melbourne Park for one last hurrah and made it all the way to the decider.

But she and 42-year-old Bopanna were unable to get over the line, losing 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 to Brazilian pair Luisa Stefani and Rafael Matos. Mirza was in tears in the post-match presentation ceremony. "Rohan was my first-ever mixed-doubles partner at (aged) 14 and we won the nationals," said Mirza, a six-time Grand Slam champion, three in doubles and three in mixed. "It was a long time ago, 22 years ago, and I couldn't think of a better person – he's one of my best friends and best partners – to finish my career here and to play the final.

PM confident of IMF deal..

FROM PAGE 01

railway track was a top priority for the government and mentioned that China was committed to its early completion. He pointed out that the previous government indulged in baseless accusations of corruption against Chinese companies, and stressed that the coalition government was working on restoring the bilateral ties. The new train service, comprising modern coaches imported from China, was launched from the Margalla railway station, in the Federal Capital.

The prime minister visited various coaches of the train and appreciated the services provided for the travellers to make their journey comfortable. The Green Line train will have stops at the stations of Rawalpindi, Chaklala, Lahore, Khanewal, Bahawalpur, Rohri, Hyderabad and Drigh Road, Karachi. The turnaround time of the Green Line is set at 22 hours, which will be reduced gradually.

Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafiq said the ticket would cover breakfast, lunch, hi-tea, and dinner besides Wifi. Apart from this, he said high-quality bedding and utility kits will also be provided to the passengers. He said around 2,200 passengers would benefit from the train service to be run between Islamabad to Karachi. He said Pakistan Railways would formulate rules for the approval of the Cabinet in the next few days regarding the collection of revenue from its land.

ECP announces by-polls...

FROM PAGE 01

February 9 and the returning officers (RO) will carry out the scrutiny of the nomination papers till February 13. The last date to file appeals against the RO's decision on the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers is February 16. According to the election schedule, the last date for the appellate tribunal to decide on the appeals is February 20. After this, the revised list of candidates will be published on February 21.

The last date to withdraw candidature and release of revised list of candidates is February 22 while the election symbols will be allotted on February 23 and the polls will be held on March 16. So far, the resignations of 123 PTI MNAs have been accepted and all have been denotified. The PTI resignations were accepted by NA Speaker Ashraf in four stages. Initially, only 11 resignations were accepted, while 34 resignations were accepted on January 17, another 35 on January 20, and 43 resignations were approved on January 24. The by-polls are being held on the resignations that were accepted on January 17. However, the by-polls are being held on only 33 seats as two seats were reserved seats of women.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army and Navy players competing during first match of Inter Departmental National Basketball Championship organized by Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF). – DNA

US, German CG praise Pakistan's special athletes

"Today I feel happy and proud to attend event representing my country here. I am excited for your participation in upcoming games as US strongly advocates for rights and equality of persons with disabilities in every respect, including sports"

DNA

KARACHI: Chairperson Special Olympic Pakistan, Ronak Lakhani, hosted a dinner reception in honor of the special players who will be participating in the Special Olympic World Games which will be held in Berlin this year. In promoting the Special Olympics, Chairperson Lakhani and her team have prepared a competitive contingent from Pakistan through their sponsorship efforts. On this occasion, the athletes said that they are making full-fledged preparations for the mega event in Berlin and are hope-

ful of winning honors for Pakistan. US Consul General in Karachi, Nicole Theriot, said the special players were an inspiration for everyone and are a shining example for Pakistani society. "I am really proud of these young athletes, who are working hard to represent Pakistan at the Berlin Special Olympics 2023," she said. "It is a great experience to spend time with such talented athletes." The U.S. Consul General recalled that the Special Olympic Games originated in the United States. "Today I feel happy and proud to attend the event representing my country here. I am excited for



your participation in the upcoming games as the United States strongly

advocates for the rights and equality of persons with disabilities in every respect, including sports." Expressing good wishes for the Pakistani contingent at the Special Olympic World Games, to be held in June this year, German Consul General Rüdiger Lotz said: "I wish all these players a great time in Berlin and sincerely hope that not only do they perform at their best with their abilities but also learn and gain experience by playing against special players from around the world while enjoying the game and make the victory podium by doing so." Special Olympic Pakistan Chairperson Ro-

nak Lakhani said that the athletes who win the honours for the country are role models for one and all. "They are differently abled and by no means are less than the others. I hope that this time too, like in the past, our athletes will win the medals at the Special Olympics and bring dignity and pride to Pakistan by securing medals." Also present at the event were the many qualified coaches working hard to ensure these special athletes are well prepared for the Special Olympic World Games. Later, the guests of honour, flanked by the athletes, also enjoyed a musical performance on the occasion.

Trophies, kits for Zalmi Media T10 Cricket Cup inaugurated

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali on Friday unveiled the glittering winner and runner-up trophies and playing kits of the first Peshawar Press Club Zalmi Media T10 Cricket Cup, here. Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik along with senior journalists warmly received the governor. Peshawar Press Club Secretary Irfan Mosazai lauded CEO of Zalmi Foundation Javed Afridi and its management for extending support to organizing a Zalmi T20 Media Cricket Cup, wherein a total of 8 teams comprising more than 200 journal-

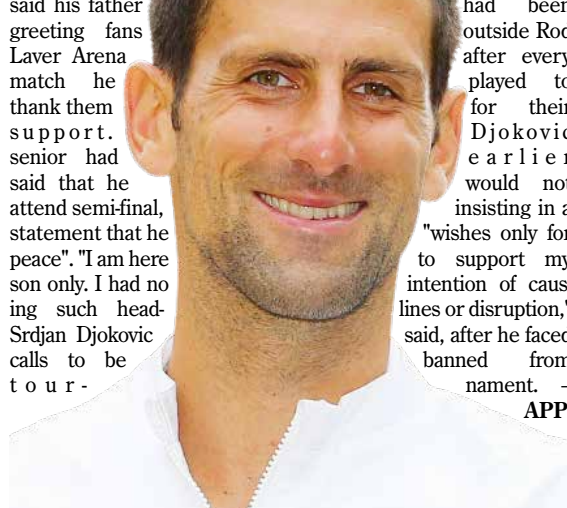
ists are taking part. He said earlier it was planned to have 16 teams but due to shortage of time, "the T10 Media Cricket League will have eight teams and the matches will be played on knock-out basis in three days, here at Islamia College University Cricket Ground for which all arrangements have also been made. Arshad Aziz Malik said that sports activities were a regular feature of Peshawar Press Club and aimed to provide much needed physical and mental relief to its members, which have increased to over 600. He said the Annual Sports

Gala for male and female members and the 7th edition of the Twenty20 Media Cricket League-2023 would also be organized wherein such activities would be open for all members. Speaking on this occasion, Haji Ghulam Ali said that sports were essential to stay healthy. He said healthy activities like this were very important for journalists. "Back in our time there were sports periods in schools. Now the role of schools and colleges in the promotion of sports has almost ended as these institutions are confined to just rooms, wherein no space is allocated for grounds

or sports activities," he said. "Sports activities in schools are about to end now because schools are being built in very limited places, and many schools have been built in Peshawar at a very close distance," the governor said. "At the time of establishment of schools, distance from other schools should be taken care of, and NOC should only be issued to those schools and colleges which have proper space for students to play," he added. "In my capacity as chancellor, I directed all the universities to ensure organising sports activities for students and provide them required facilities," Haji Ghulam Ali said. – APP

Djokovic says images of father with Russian flags 'misinterpreted'

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic hit out Friday at what he said was a "misinterpretation" of images showing his father posing at the Australian Open with a Russian flag that had Vladimir Putin's face on it. The Serbian tennis star admitted that the controversy swirling around his father Srđjan had "got to me", but maintained no harm was meant. Djokovic beat Tommy Paul to seal a place in Sunday's final and said he hoped his father would be there after skipping Friday's semi-final. The 35-year-old Djokovic stressed that his father had "no intention whatsoever to support any war initiatives". "I saw as everyone else saw what happened and it was unfortunate the misinterpretation of what happened has escalated to such a high level," Djokovic said after his semi-final. "It has got to me of course. I was not aware of it until last night. And then of course I was not pleased to see that. My father, my whole family, have been through several wars. As my father put in we are against war. We will never support or war," he said his father greeting fans Laver Arena match he thanked them support. "I am here on my own, I had no such head-



tour - APP

1st 'KP Badminton League' begins

PESHAWAR: The first Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Badminton League-2023 Friday got underway here at Peshawar Sports Complex in which six best teams of the province are participating. Badminton League is being organized for the first time with the cooperation of Directorate General Sports and the Provincial Badminton Association in which six teams of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar Falcon, Bannu Green, Deer Royal, KP Police, Future Champions KP, and

JJ Sports Peshawar will participate. The Badminton League will continue till January 30. Talking to the media, DG Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Khalid Khan said that the province was taking vigorous measures for the promotion and development of sports, 90 percent of the work on the ArbabNiaz Cricket Stadium was completed and the rest would

be completed by June this year. The rest of the work will also be completed this way. He said work is also going on the upgradation of Qayyum Sports Complex football ground, apart from this, various sports competitions will continue according to the schemes, in which Inter-Schools competitions and competitions for special individuals will be held in February and March. On this occasion, the organizing secretary of the league, Nadeem Khan and Hayatullah, said that the purpose of the league is to prepare the players for the National Junior and Senior Championships to be played in February. They said through such league the juniors players while playing side-by-side learn more from their senior players in the League. After the successful conduct of the Pakistan Badminton League will also be organized very soon. – APP

Djokovic sees off Paul to set up Tsitsipas final

Djokovic, who beat Paul to set a new landmark of 27 consecutive wins in the men's singles here, is aiming for a record-extending 10th title which would equal Rafael Nadal's tally of 22 major men's titles

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Nine-time champion Novak Djokovic steamrolled another opponent as he beat Tommy Paul to set up an Australian Open final against Stefanos Tsitsipas. Serbia's Djokovic, 35, overcame a wobble in the opening set, re-establishing his authority to earn a 7-5 6-1 6-2 victory over the American. Tsitsipas, 24, has another chance to land his first Grand Slam title after beating Russian

Karen Khachanov. Greek third seed Tsitsipas won 7-6 (7-2) 6-4 6-7 (6-8) 6-3 against Khachanov. Tsitsipas booked his place in Sunday's final after recovering from 18th seed Khachanov saving two match points in the third-set tie-break. Another tight forehand saw a third chance disappear in what proved to be the final game, before Tsitsipas regained his composure to convert his fourth when Khachanov batted long a first serve. Tsitsipas lost to Djokovic in

the 2021 French Open final and now has the opportunity to avenge that defeat in his first appearance in the Australian Open showpiece. But to lift the trophy, he must become the first player to beat Djokovic at Melbourne Park since 2018. Djokovic, who beat Paul to set a new landmark of 27 consecutive wins in the men's singles here, is aiming for a record-extending 10th title which would equal Rafael Nadal's tally of 22 major men's titles. The winner will also be-

come the new world number one. Djokovic had raced through the previous rounds without any major incident and, after a couple of days where his father Srđjan had captured headlines for posing with supporters of Russia president Vladimir Putin, he looked set for more minimal fuss on the court against Paul. Spending a little time on court as possible appeals to the Serb as he tries to limit the impact on a hamstring injury which has bothered him all tournament.

After he thrashed Australian hope Alex de Minaur and Russian fifth seed Andrey Rublev in little over two hours, an even quicker defeat looked to be heading Paul's way on his first appearance in a major semi-final. Djokovic led 5-1 in the opening set but it took him another half an hour to seal the advantage. Serving for the set, Djokovic allowed his progress to be derailed by a row with umpire Damien Dumoussis over the French official starting the 25-second

shot clock while he was still using his towel. The exchange signalled a change of momentum. Djokovic won just three of the next 16 points as Paul fought back to level at 5-5. But the former world number one regained his focus when it mattered at the business end of the set to break again. Djokovic celebrated by cocking his ear to the crowd and, with a steely focus back, broke twice in each of the next two sets to secure victory after two hours and 20 minutes.

Army, Wapda wins first victory in Basketball C'ship

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Defending champion Pakistan Army and Wapda outclassed Navy and Police in the first leg of pool round of Inter Departmental National Basketball Championship organized by Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) here at Liaquat Gymnasium Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad on Friday. On the first day of the five-day championship, Pakistan Sports Board Deputy Director General Saeed Akhtar, Mansoor Ahmed, Army team manager Col Ahmed Ali Tipu, former basketball coach Malik Muhammad Riaz, Associate secretary of Pakistan Basketball Federation Ouj E Zahoor and other officials were witnessed the day one matches.

In the first match Defending Champion Pakistan Army thrashed Navy team with a big margin of 64 points as red shirts won the match with 105-41 points. Some wonderful moves and aggressive play were seen from army players during the match as army players were completely overshadowed in the match. Shoaib Aslam scored 18 points, Yasir Ali scored 16 points, Hamza bin Javed scored 12 points, Shahraz Aslam scored 10 points played the key role in the success for defending champion while ZiaurRehman and Mohammad Farhan scored 16 and 8 points respectively.

'Pakistan stands with Palestine'

FROM PAGE 01

"Pakistan reiterates its strong and unwavering support to the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people for full realization of their fundamental rights including the right to self-determination," the FO statement said. The FO said, "The government and the people of Pakistan extended sincere heartfelt condolences to the families of victims and best wishes for full and swift recovery of the injured in this brutal attack." It said Pakistan renewed its call for a viable, independent and contiguous Palestinian State, with pre-1967 borders and Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in accordance with the relevant United Nations and OIC resolutions.

Imran claims Zardari...

FROM PAGE 01

"Today, every Pakistani is worried about security, except for those who do not have a stake in Pakistan [...] and I am the most worried about it," Imran said, adding that the incumbent government was to blame for these crises. Meanwhile, The Islamabad Police Friday withdrew security from Pakistan Threerke-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan's residence, Bani Gala, in the federal capital. Meanwhile, the Punjab Home Department has also written a letter to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to withdraw the province's police from the former prime minister's home in Lahore's Zaman Town. "Bani Gala is the former prime minister's private residence. He has not been staying in Islamabad for the past several months," a spokesperson for the capital's police said sharing the reason for the security's withdrawal. In Khan's absence, the spokesperson said, police from Islamabad and other provinces cannot be deployed over there.

Azerbaijan embassy...

FROM PAGE 01

and to ensure the safety of our diplomatic missions. Unfortunately, the last bloody terror attack demonstrates the serious consequences of not showing proper sensitivity to our urgent appeals in this direction. "We are of the opinion that the recent anti-Azerbaijani campaign against our country in Iran led to such an attack against our diplomatic mission". Azerbaijan demanded of the Iranian government to identify and punish the perpetrators of the mentioned terrorist attack, as well as the instigators of this bloody act as soon as possible in the most severe manner.

Briefs

Zelensky's
govt launches
anti-
corruption
drive

WEB DESK

KYIV: At the time of typing this, 11 officials have either resigned or been sacked as Kyiv tries to tackle government corruption. It's led to some politicians in the US calling for aid to Ukraine to be restricted. President Volodymyr Zelensky is trying to quickly restore public faith, but the allegations are serious, and the timing is bad. Several claims have surfaced thanks to Mykhaylo Tkach, an investigative journalist for the news website Ukrayinska Pravda. He has recently reported that the company of a senior official's personal trainer allegedly received millions of pounds since the full-scale invasion, as well as a story about President Zelensky's deputy head of office. Kyrylo Tymoshenko quit two months after Tkach reported that he'd moved his family to the mansion of a well-known property developer. The journalist also published footage which appeared to show the official driving an expensive Porsche for a few months. Mr Tymoshenko has denied doing anything wrong. "Quite often, with MPs and officials, if the source of their money isn't clear, they register assets to people close to them," explains Tkach.

KP business
delegation
calls on
Chairman
FBR

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa led by Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi, President of KP Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on Friday called on Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Asim Ahmed here at Peshawar Customs House. President of KCCI and Chairman Council of Border Trade Chambers, Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi informed the Chairman FBR about the problems being faced by traders during clearance of goods through Pakistan Single Window System (PSW) and by different other departments including Animal Quarantine Department (AQD) and Plant Protection Department at Torkham, Kharlachi, Ghulam Khan and Angor Adda border crossings connected with Afghanistan. Kazmi welcomed the construction of an international standard terminal in Torkham and said that due to undue delay in the project, the miseries of traders had been aggravated. He urged to ensure early completion of the project through local employment to facilitate of traders and local people.—APP

US forces kill
IS Somalia
leader in cave
complex

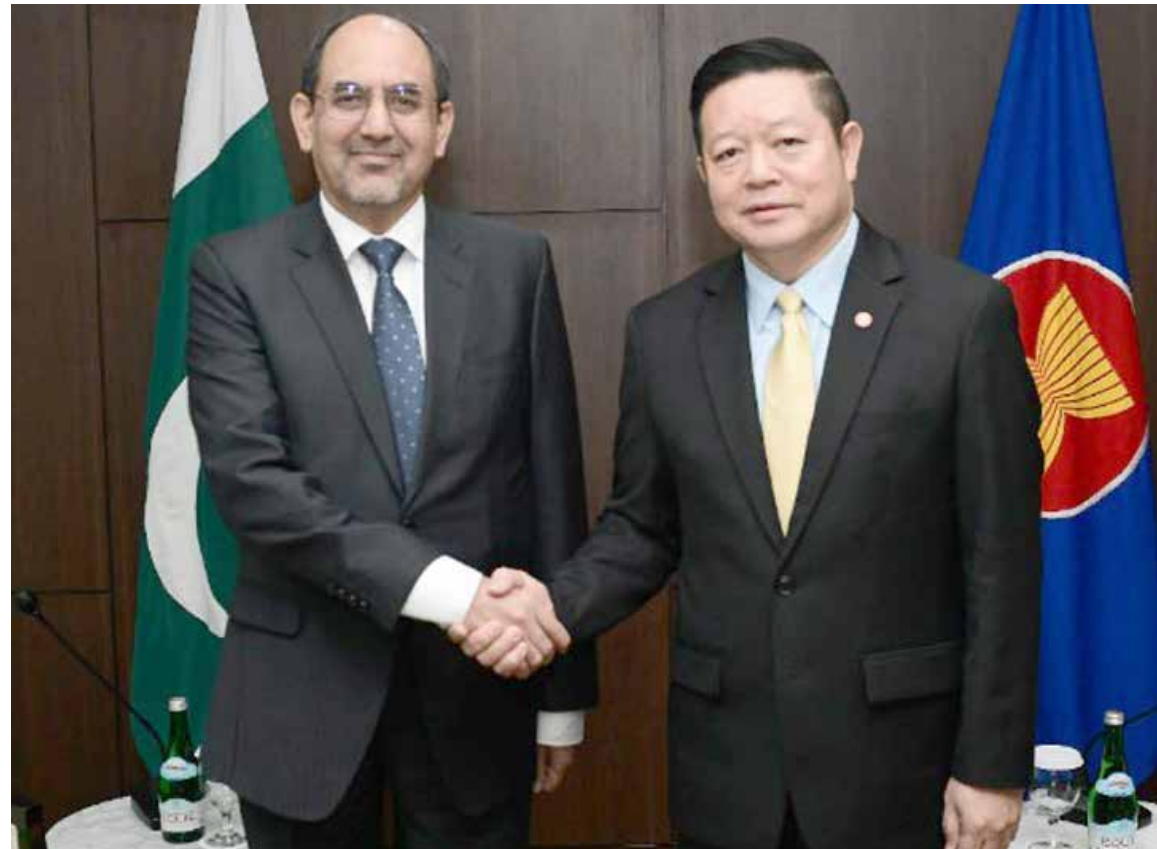
WASHINGTON: US forces have killed an Islamic State leader, Bilal al-Sudani, and 10 of his operatives in northern Somalia, American officials say. He was killed after US special forces raided a remote mountainous cave complex hoping to capture him. "Al-Sudani was responsible for fostering the growing presence of ISIS in Africa," Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said. He also allegedly funded the group's activities globally, Mr Austin added. Analysts say the fact that US troops were sent under orders of President Joe Biden to kill or capture Sudani, rather than using a less risky drone strike, indicates his significance. Details about the nature of the operation have not been released, however the soldiers were drafted in via helicopter, according to the New York Times with Sudani killed after a firefight broke out. The operation comes after President Biden redeployed hundreds of US troops to the country after his predecessor, Donald Trump, pulled them out. However, those forces are reportedly only there to train Somali soldiers, rather than conduct operations.—APP

ASEAN, Pak relations to grow further: Kao Kim Hourn

The Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia, Timor Leste & ASEAN, Muhammad Hassan, paid a courtesy call on the newly appointed Secretary General of ASEAN

DNA

JAKARTA: The Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia, Timor Leste & ASEAN, Muhammad Hassan, paid a courtesy call on the newly appointed Secretary General of ASEAN, Kao Kim Hourn in the ASEAN Secretariat. The Ambassador congratulated the Secretary General on his appointment as the Secretary General of ASEAN, and hoped that during his tenure, the long-standing relations and mutually beneficial cooperation between ASEAN and Pakistan would continue to flourish. The Ambassador noted that Pakistan valued its long-standing relations with ASEAN, based on mutual respect, cordiality and shared values in the region. The Ambassador also briefed the Secretary General of ASEAN on the current trajectory of Pakistan-ASEAN relations. He highlighted the current initiatives taken by Pakistan, to enhance mutually beneficial engagement under Practical Areas of Cooperation, including the successful execution of the First Short Diplomatic Course for diplomats from ASEAN countries in Islamabad in September 2022. A second diplomatic course is planned to be held in May this year, he stated. In addition, three more cooperation projects, including a short



training course for central bank employees of ASEAN Member States by National Institute of Banking and Finance (NIBAF) in May, 2023, an ASEAN-Pakistan

Business opportunities Conference and a training course for custom professionals was at the final stages of approval and implementation. The Ambassador informed the

Secretary General that after successful implementation of the above-mentioned cooperation projects, Pakistan would submit another set of projects to promote coopera-

tion in the fields of trade, investment, tourism, media, agriculture, cyber security and climate change, to ASEAN Secretariat for its consideration. The Secretary General complimented Pakistan for its long-standing association with ASEAN. He hoped that the upcoming cooperation projects would help reinvigorate Pakistan-ASEAN relations. He also lauded Pakistan's active participation and contribution in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and hoped that it will continue in future. He further stated that both sides needed to focus on implementing the already agreed practical areas of cooperation, as well as finding new avenues of cooperation. Ambassador Muhammad Hassan proposed that in order to reinvigorate cooperation between ASEAN and Pakistan, the 7th meeting of ASEAN-Pakistan Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (APJSCC) may be convened during 2023. He also invited Secretary General of ASEAN to visit Pakistan, as per his convenience. The Secretary General thanked the Ambassador for the invitation to visit Pakistan and hoped that it would take place soon.

Shares in India's Adani
plunge 15% after fraud claims

MUMBAI: Trading in the business empire of Asia's richest man Gautam Adani was halted Friday following a 15 percent plunge in its share price, days after a US investment firm claimed it had committed "brazen" corporate fraud. Flagship Adani Enterprises tumbled to 508.45 rupees (\$6.23) in Mumbai in the afternoon, triggering an automatic 105-minute trading halt, while subsidiary Adani Total Gas also halted after it tanked 20 percent. Hindenburg Research this week alleged in a report that Adani Group had used undisclosed related-party transactions and earnings manipulation to "maintain the appearance of financial health and solvency" of its

listed business units. Adani, 60, was the world's third-richest person on Wednesday, but on Friday fell to seventh place on Forbes' billionaires tracker after losing \$19 billion when trading resumed in India following a Republic Day holiday. Adani's sprawling interests range from Australian coal mines to India's biggest ports and the combined market cap of its seven listed companies exceeded \$218 billion at the start of the week. The conglomerate said Thursday it was the victim of a "maliciously mischievous" reputational attack by Hindenburg just as it was preparing for a major fundraising round. Legal chief Jatin Jalundh-wala said in a statement

that Hindenburg's short-sell position in the firm, announced in the report's release, was proof the company had a vested interest in driving down Adani stocks. Adani was exploring its punitive action against the research advisory in US and Indian courts, he added. Hindenburg responded that Adani had ducked the issues its research had raised and instead resorted to "bluster and threats". "If Adani is serious, it should also file suit in the US," the firm said in a statement. "We have a long list of documents we would demand in a legal discovery process." Shares in Adani business units have soared as much as 2,000 percent in the past three years, adding more than \$100 billion to its founder's net worth and

vaulting him up the ranks of the world's richest people. Adani - who now has an estimated fortune of around \$120 billion - is considered a close supporter of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Hindenburg's report accused Adani Group of engaging in a "brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades". It claimed Adani's elder brother Vinod managed "a vast labyrinth of offshore shell entities" in tax havens including Mauritius, Cyprus and several Caribbean islands. The report said a pattern of "government leniency towards the group" stretching back decades had left investors, journalists, citizens and politicians unwilling to challenge the group's conduct "for fear of reprisal".—Agencies

Saad urges
masses to use
Green Line Train

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique on Friday urged the masses to use the state-of-the-art Green Line Train inaugurated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for boosting the revenue. "It is my appeal to all the citizens to travel in the newly inaugurated Green Line Train which has been equipped with modern facilities," the minister said while addressing the inauguration ceremony of the train. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had personally inspected the Green Line Train which could help 2,200 passengers travel daily from Islamabad to Karachi in a cosy environment. The minister said the train would leave Margalla Railway Station at 3pm and reach Karachi at 2:20 PM the next day. The train would stop at Rawalpindi, Lahore, Khanewal, Bahawalpur, Rohri Junction and Hyderabad stations during the journey. Saad Rafique said the train would provide state-of-the-art services to the passengers including comfortable sleepers, WIFI, quality meals, tea, bottled water, newspapers, standard bedding and air-conditioned rooms. He said the passengers would have the facility of online booking and e-ticketing through which they can purchase e-tickets for their journey on the official website of Pak Railways or through the smartphone application which is available on the Google Play Store.—DNA

Iraq, France
agree on energy,
security coop

BAGHDAD: Iraq and France on Thursday inked a strategic partnership agreement to enhance bilateral cooperation in various areas including energy and security, according to Iraqi officials. The agreement was signed during Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani's one-day visit to France's capital Paris, after he met with French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne and talked with President Emmanuel Macron, al-Sudani's media office tweeted. During talks with Macron, the two leaders discussed bilateral ties, regional and international issues of common concern, and joint cooperation in vital sectors, said the media office's press release. The agreement covers cooperation in such areas as combating terrorism and extremism, cultural exchange, crisis management, combating economic and organized crime, protecting the environment and promoting human rights, which, al-Sudani tweeted on Thursday, "lays down a road map for expanding our two countries' cooperation in various fields." The past years have witnessed deepened bilateral exchanges. Macron has visited Iraq twice, one in 2020 and another in 2021. France-headquartered oil producer TotalEnergies signed a deal with the Iraqi government in 2021, agreeing to invest in oil, gas and renewables projects in southern Iraq over 25 years.—APP



WWW President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with the leadership of the Lahore University of Management Sciences LUMS.—DNA

Philippines to appeal ICC
resumption of drug war probe

Philippine police operations chief Major-General Valeriano de Leon vowed the anti-drug crackdown would continue, calling Duterte an "inspiration"

MANILA: The Philippines said Friday it intended to appeal an International Criminal Court decision to reopen an inquiry into Manila's brutal anti-drug campaign, which left thousands dead. Former president Rodrigo Duterte, who initiated the drug war, pulled the Philippines out of the ICC in 2019, a year after the Hague-based tribunal began a preliminary probe into the crackdown. The ICC launched a formal inquiry in September 2021, only to suspend it two months

later after Manila said it was re-examining several hundred cases of drug operations that led to deaths at the hands of police, hitmen and vigilantes. The ICC prosecutor later asked to reopen the inquiry in June 2022. Announcing the probe's resumption on Thursday, the ICC said its pre-trial chamber was "not satisfied that the Philippines is undertaking relevant investigations that would warrant a deferral of the court's investigations". Menardo Guevarra, the chief lawyer for current

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos' government, told AFP: "It is our intention to exhaust our legal remedies, more particularly elevating the matter to the ICC appeals chamber." General Guevarra and Justice Secretary Crispin Remulla both said Manila, instead of the ICC, should have jurisdiction over alleged drug war crimes. "They are insulting us," Remulla told reporters. "I will not stand for any of these antics that will tend to question our sov-

ereignty, our status as a sovereign country." Philippine police operations chief Major-General Valeriano de Leon vowed the anti-drug crackdown would continue, calling Duterte an "inspiration". Former presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a statement that Duterte "would never subject himself under the legal jurisdiction of any foreign body because it is an insult to the competence and impartiality of our functioning criminal justice system".—APP

PSX witnesses
bearish trend,
loses 396 points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Friday, losing 396 points, a negative change of 0.97 percent, closing at 40,450.53 against 40,846.53 points the previous day. A total of 191,327,163 shares were traded during the day as compared to 364,131,735 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.7.119 billion against Rs.14.480 billion on the last trading day. As many as 333 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 76 of them recorded gains and 238 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 19 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were Pak Refinery with 14,225,354 shares at Rs 13.61 per share, Cnergyco PK with 13,167,971 shares at Rs 3.89 per share, and Fauji Foods Ltd with 12,526,831 shares at Rs.5.19 per share. Mari Petroleum witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 12.29 per share price, closing at Rs1,450.14, whereas the runner-up was Hafiz Limited with a Rs 10.39 rise in its per share price to Rs.148.98. Bhanero Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 83.24 per share closing at Rs 1,026.76, followed by Siemens Pakistan with Rs. 49.71 declines to close at Rs. 613.19.—Agencies

Greek govt
survives no-
confidence
vote

ATHENS: Greece's government on Friday comfortably survived a no-confidence vote called by the opposition over a long-running wiretap scandal in which top officials were targeted by state intelligence for months. The censure motion was defeated by 156 votes to 143, parliament vice chairman Haralambos Athanassiou told the chamber after an official count. Leftist former PM Alexis Tsipras had called for the no-confidence vote on Wednesday, calling Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis the "mastermind and leader" behind a "criminal network" that had wiretapped officials' phones. Mitsotakis insisted the wiretaps cited by Tsipras had been approved by a prosecutor at the state intelligence agency, and were thus legal, without providing more details. "The (monitoring) was legal, we need to clarify this," the PM said.—DNA

Weekly
storage of
natural gas
in US down

HOUSTON: Working gas storage in the contiguous United States was 2,729 billion cubic feet in the week ending Jan. 20, a net decrease of 91 billion cubic feet from the previous week, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said Thursday. The total working gas storage increased by 4.1 percent from this time last year, and was up 4.9 percent from the five-year average, according to the EIA's Weekly Natural Gas Storage Report. The storage of working gas in the United States usually turns to decrease in November and continues to drop in April when the heating season ends in the country, according to previous data. Working gas is defined as the amount of natural gas stored underground that can be withdrawn for use. Its storage capacity can be measured in two ways: design capacity and demonstrated maximum working gas capacity.—APP

Biden urges
calm ahead of
police beating
video release

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden is urging protests in Tennessee to remain peaceful as officials plan to release video of an arrest that led to a motorist's death. Bodycam video of the encounter with Tyre Nichols, 29, will be published on Friday and lawyers for his family said it will show him being severely beaten. Five non-fired police officers face murder charges after Mr Nichols died days after a traffic stop 7 January. Memphis is said to be on edge and police there have increased patrols. "I'm sickened by what I saw," Tennessee Bureau of Investigation director David Rausch said on Thursday after reviewing the footage, describing the officers' actions as "absolutely appalling". Mr Nichols, a black man, was stopped by five police officers, who are also black, on his way home after taking photos of a sunset at a local park, an attorney for the family said. Officials say he was suspected of reckless driving.—Agencies

Illegal goods
worth Rs
400m seized

QUETTA: The Custom Intelligence of Quetta on Friday conducted a major operation against smugglers and recovered a huge cache of foreign goods worth Rs 400 million. A handout issued by the Customs Quetta said that during an operation carried out by the Intelligence Quetta Customs, as many as 94 cartons of non-duty paid cigarettes, 3 non-custom paid vehicles, illegal mobile phones and other miscellaneous items were seized. The value of the seized goods is estimated at Rs 400 million. It merits mentioning here that Customs Intelligence is conducting operations in the province with less manpower and under difficult condition.—APP

Briefs

Punjab CM allots portfolios to ministers

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi has allotted portfolios to eight ministers of the provincial cabinet on Friday. SM Tanveer has been given the portfolios of Energy and Industries, Dr Javed Akram has been allotted Specialized Healthcare portfolio. Ibrahim Murad has been given the portfolio of Municipalities, while Bilal Afzal has been given the C&W Department, and Dr Jamal Nasir has been given the Primary Health portfolio. In the same fashion, Mansoor Qadir has been allotted the portfolio of Higher Education and the Schools Education, Auqaf and Zakat portfolio goes to Syed Azfar Ali Nasir, and Aamir Mir has been given Information portfolio. The S&GAD department has issued a formal notification in this regard.

Ukraine says fighting fierce after tank pledges

KYIV: Ukraine on Friday battled Russian troops trying to pierce its lines in the east and northeast before Kyiv takes delivery of tanks from its Western allies, saying the fighting showed it needed more weapons to repel the invaders. Kyiv said fierce battles were under way, a day after at least 11 people were killed in missile and drone strikes which were widely seen in Ukraine as a response to the promises by important allies to send it tanks. After weeks of wrangling, Germany and the United States this week said they would send Ukraine dozens of modern tanks to help push back Russian forces, opening the way for others to follow suit. Poland gave Ukraine a further boost on Friday by promising an additional 60 tanks on top of 14 German-made Leopard 2 tanks it had already pledged. Both sides in the war are widely expected to launch spring offensives though Washington has advised Ukraine against doing so until the latest weapons are in place and training has been provided - a process expected to take several months. Russia said the United States was "pumping weapons into Ukraine", which Moscow says does Washington's bidding, and chided President Joe Biden, saying he held the key to ending the conflict but had not used it. - Agencies

India expects more clashes with Chinese troops

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: A security assessment by Indian police in the Himalayan region of Ladakh says there could be more clashes between Indian and Chinese troops along their contested frontier there as Beijing ramps up military infrastructure in the region. At least 24 soldiers were killed when the armies of the Asian giants clashed in Ladakh, in the western Himalayas, in 2020 but tensions eased after military and diplomatic talks. A fresh clash erupted between the two sides in the eastern Himalayas in December but there were no deaths. The assessment is part of a new, confidential research paper by the Ladakh Police that was submitted at a conference of top police officers held from January 20 to 22 and has been reviewed by Reuters. The report said the assessment was based on intelligence gathered by local police in the border areas and the pattern of India-China military tensions over the years. The Indian army did not respond to a request for comment but the assessment assumes significance as it was submitted at a conference attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India's defence and foreign ministries also did not respond to requests for comment.

Fundraiser galas by Italian, Czech, Turkish, Thai embassies

Serena Hotels hand over funds to NDMA

With instrumental efforts of Quetta, Swat and Peshawar Serena Hotels, and the regional team; ration bags and tents were dispersed to the affectees

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels strongly believes in helping vulnerable communities through its various initiatives under the ambit of its corporate social responsibility; known as Jazba-e-khidmat. Monsoon 2022 brought an unprecedented onslaught of floods known as Super flood that had a catastrophic impact on millions, submerging the 1/3rd of Pakistan. The floods affected all four provinces and approximately 15% of its population. At the beginning of 2023, an estimated 5 million people remained exposed to or living close to flooded areas. In the Sindh Province, an estimated 89,000 people remain displaced with limited access to food sources and shelter. Not all floodwaters have receded, combined with the onset of severe wintercold that brought a new set of problems for the people living in the flood affected areas. Hence, the importance of meeting critical needs while investing in recovery to prevent additional disaster impacts and help people rebuild their lives is imperative and the need of the hour. Funds were raised with the help of the guests and associates along with different diplomatic missions, where fundraising galas were hosted with the Czech, Turkish, Italian, and



ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani along with Ambassadors of Italy, Czech Republic, Turkey handing over funds for the flood victims to the Chairman NDMA. - DNA

Thai Embassies. Serena Hotels matched the amount raised with their monetary contribution to double the donated funds. With instrumental efforts of Quetta, Swat and Peshawar Serena Hotels, and the regional team; ration bags and tents were dispersed to the affectees of the said cities and their adjoining areas. Serena Hotels collected a substantial amount which was handed over to the National Disaster Management Authority for aid to the affectees, so that they could be utilised for rehabilitation of the affectees.

Minister lauds Korean assistance in flood relief

ISLAMABAD: Korean Ambassador to Pakistan Suh Sangpyo on Friday called on Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi and discussed matters related to bilateral interests. While welcoming the envoy, the minister expressed his gratitude for the assistance provided by Korea during the recent devastating flood in Pakistan. Javed Murtaza Abbasi stressed the need for technology transfer in Pakistan as there was immense potential in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) which needed expansion and increased investment. This sector, he said, had an important role in improving the national economy and its full potential should be exploited for the development of the country. The minister said the ports of Karachi and Gwadar were available to provide better access to Korea to the markets of Central Asia. He praised the quality of Korean products, especially solar panels, and emphasized promoting the existing cooperation in the energy sector. The two sides also discussed ongoing projects of Korean companies in Pakistan and agreed on their further expansion. During the meeting, they underlined the need for further promoting the cooperation and ties between the two countries at the parliamentary and government level. - APP

Rupee's slaying by US dollar continues

ISLAMABAD: After the removal of 'unannounced peg' on the US dollar rate, the slaying of Pakistani currency in the interbank trading becomes all the more evident as the local unit was declined by Rs7.57 in the interbank trading on Friday. According to the foreign currency dealers, the US dollar thumped Pakistani rupee during the morning trading session and started trading by jumping to Rs263, up by Rs7.57. Within two days, the rupee has lost Rs32.11 of its value to the greenback in the interbank market which are likely to increase Pakistan foreign debts by over Rs3,200 billion. The same was the case in open market, where the US dollar went up sharply on Friday registering a healthy increase of three rupees and was currently being traded at Rs265. Experts believe the latest depreciation in rupee's value will trigger another storm of inflation in the country. Yesterday, the local currency witnessed a bloodbath as it was depreciated by a massive Rs24.54 against the US dollar as the currency settled the day's trade at PKR 255.43 per USD. The situation in the open market was no different, with the Pakistani rupee being traded at 258/262 per USD. - DNA

Elahi in 'damage-control' exercise

LAHORE: Former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi Friday made a telephonic call to Fawad Chaudhry's brother Faisal Fareed Advocate and apologised to him and Fawad Chaudhry's family for his statement regarding Fawad Chaudhry's arrest. Pervaiz Elahi said that he had years-long relationship of respect with Fawad Chaudhry and his family. "The sentiments of Fawad Chaudhry and his family were hurt by yesterday's unintentional statement, which I regret," he said. "The arrest of Fawad Chaudhry and the registration of a false case against him is pure brutality. It is highly condemnable," he stated. "I apologise on my statement. I express my complete solidarity with Fawad Chaudhry and his family," he said. "Chaudhry Sahib! It is so great of you that you have apologised. You are our elder. I and my family consider you as our elder and look up to you with great respect," Faisal Fareed Advocate said to Pervaiz Elahi. "We as a family pray for the eternal safety of you and your family," he added. It is to be noted here that Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, while hinting at arrest of Fawad Chaudhry, had said that the close associate of Imran Khan should have been arrested earlier. - DNA

Court sends Fawad to jail on 14-day judicial remand

ISLAMABAD: While rejecting the request to extend the physical remand of PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry, a district and session court in Islamabad has sent the former federal minister to jail on judicial remand in a case related to using threatening language against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) members. Pronouncing his verdict reserved earlier in the day on Friday, Judicial Magistrate Waqas Ahmad Raja ordered to send Fawad Chaudhry to Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail on 14-day judicial remand. Earlier, the court reserved the verdict on the plea for extending the physical remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry in the case of spreading hatred against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Fawad Chaudhry's request to open the handcuffs inside the courtroom was accepted. Lawyers for Fawad Chaudhry namely Babar Awan, Faisal Chaudhry, and Ali Bukhari were also present in the court room. "Fawad Chaudhry is spreading hatred against the constitutional institution. He is trying to create unrest. His statements pose a threat to the lives of the ECP officials," the prosecutor argued before the court. "Fawad Chaudhry's voice has been matched. His statement is on record. He has also confessed to his speech. No objection can be raised on the speech, for the accused himself has confessed to his statement," lawyer for the ECP told the court. The prosecutor further argued before that court that the physical remand was very important for further investigation of Fawad Chaudhry case. - DNA

Gold prices jump all-time high to Rs 202,500

ISLAMABAD: The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs 7,000 on Friday and was traded all-time high at Rs202,500 against its sale at Rs195,500, the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 6,000 to Rs173,610 against Rs167,610, whereas that of 10 grams of 22 karat increased to Rs159,144 from Rs153,642, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of one tola silver increased by Rs50 to Rs2200 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs42.86 to Rs 1886.14. The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$6 to US\$1,930 as compared to its sale at US\$1,936 on the last trading day, the association reported. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the State of Qatar in Pakistan, H.E. Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Rockets, air attacks in Gaza follow deadly raid in Jenin

Khader Habib, an Islamic Jihad spokesperson, said in statement that the Palestinian people had been "subjected to unprecedented killings and attacks by the new Israeli government in all parts of the West Bank amid the complete absence of international intervention"

MONITORING DESK

GAZA CITY: A deadly Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank has provoked grief and anger in Gaza. Rockets have been fired into Israel, and hundreds of Palestinians have taken part in vigils and rallies to condemn what they describe as a "massacre". After nine Palestinians were killed in Israel's raid on Thursday in Jenin, armed groups in Gaza declared a state of high alert, calling the incursion "a new Israeli crime" against the Palestinian people. Following the announcement, two rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel, an attack claimed by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. They were shot down early on Friday by Israel's Iron Dome air defence system, and Israel carried out air attacks on locations in Gaza that it said are used by armed groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Khader Habib, an Islamic Jihad spokesperson, said in state-

ment that the Palestinian people had been "subjected to unprecedented killings and attacks by the new Israeli government in all parts of the West Bank amid the complete absence of international intervention". "As long as the Palestinian people are alone in confrontation, we have no options but to resist with all that we have as the only way to defend ourselves," Habib said. Israel had not carried out a raid on the scale of its operation in Jenin in years, but it is part of intensified military incursions by the Israeli army into the occupied West Bank, which have killed at least 200 Palestinians in the past year. Hisham al-Hato, who took part in a protest march in Gaza, said he was sending his "support and solidarity" to Jenin. "We are very sad and angry," al-Hato told Al Jazeera. "The Israeli crimes against our people in the West Bank must stop. Gaza and the West Bank are one heart." Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem told Al Jazeera that what had happened in Jenin was "a war crime".

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