

DNA CAIRO: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived on Sunday in Egypt at the start of a Middle East

Continued on Page 06

He said that the government had to take with Rs200bn mini budget," he wrote.

these measures due to the devaluation of The Khan-led party's Secretary-Gen-

the rupee and the 11 percent increase in eral Asad Umar prayed for the coun-

oil prices in the international market. The try's people seeking Allah's mercy.

minister said that currently there is plenty "People are already worried about the

PM saddened

At least 44 die in

Lasbela bus accident

Palestine, Turkiye, Iran embassies

Continued on Page 06

At least 10 kids die

as boat capsizes

ISLAMABAD: At least ten children were

killed after a boat carrying tourists cap-

sized in Tanda Dam in Kohat on Sunday.

According to a private media report, ten

children have died after a boat carrying

25 tourists including many children

aged between 10-15 year were students

team was called from Peshawar. He said

the divers managed to rescue eight oth-

ers alive from the water. More than 40

personnel of Rescue-1122 participated

in the rescue activities, 4 boats and 2

of petrol in the country and due to these ru- worst inflation in history," he tweeted. mours , efforts are being made to create an Meanwhile, PTI member and former

Sunday afternoon, No loss of life or damage to property has been reported. According to private media reports, the Pakistan Metethe civilized world to

STAFF REPORT ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday called upon

Ulema condemn Quran desecration in Denmark

BUREAU REPORT

trip on which he will look to notch down Israeli-Palestinian tensions after an eruption of violence. Blinken, who will travel Monday and Tuesday to Jerusalem and Ramallah after his stop in Cairo, had long planned the visit to see Israel's new right-wing government, but the trip takes on a new urgency after some of the worst violence in years. A gunman on Friday killed seven people outside a synagogue in a settler neighbourhood of east Jerusalem, and another attack followed on Saturday.

MQM shows concern over price hike

NAZIR SIYAL



expressed concern over the hike in petroleum prices by the federal government, media reported. In a statement, the political party stated that the increase in the prices of petroleum products will further increase inflation, impacting the already inflation-hit people of Pakistan.

Inside.

Fast track work on

Russian, Pak Energy

Corridor urged



ISLAMABAD: At least 44 people died and several others were wounded in an accident after a passenger plunged into a ravine and caught fire near the Chinki stop in the Bela area of the Lasbela district on Sunday. According to a private media report, the accident

Continued on Page 06



of a religious seminary (Madrasah) overturned in the Tanda Dam of Kohat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Kohat deputy commissioner said due to the non-availability of divers in Kohat, a

recovery vehicles were also involved in the rescue operation. - APP **Continued on Page 06 Imran Khan to contest by-polls** from all 33 constituencies

No contact with establishment: Qureshi



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President Xi to inaugurate Gwadar int'l airport soon - Page 04

Iran's strategic moves – Page 05

Djokovic wins in Melbourne to equal Nadal record – Page 06

Retired Gen. Petr Pavel wins Czech presidential election – Page 07

Iran says attack should not affect Azerbaijan ties - Page 08



LAHORE: PTI Chairman Imran Khan addressing the core committee meeting. - DNA

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Senior Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Sunday said that his party had decided to contest in by-elections on 33 National Assembly seats in March and former prime minister Imran Khan would be their candidate in all constituencies. PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry had already announced earlier this month the party chief's decision to contest by-elections on all vacant National Assembly seats. Qureshi made the announcement again during a press conference in Islamabad flanked by PTI leader Asad Umar following a joint meeting of

Continued on Page 06

Khawaja Asif hints at Khan's arrest

STAFF REPORT

SIALKOT: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has warned that former premier and Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan may be arrested for 'violating law and causing unrest in the country', media reported on Sunday. Talking to journalists in Sialkot, the defence minister lambasted the PTI chief for accusing PPP co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari of an assassination plot, saying that such statements can bend politics towards violence and can cause bloodshed in the country. Khawaja Asif said that such allegations can create life-threatening situations for Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) leadership, warning that the former premier will be held responsible if any tragedy occurs in the country. In response to a question regarding PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest, the defence minister said if PDM leaders can be arrested in 'bogus cases', then how Imran Khan can get away with 'proven charges' of Toshakhana and foreign funding? "Imran Khan can also be arrested due to the violation of the law," said Khawaja Asif.

orological Department said that the epicenter of the earthquake was the Tajikistan region and the depth was reported at 150 kilometers. Tremors were also felt in surrounding areas. People rushed out of their houses and shops in panic. However, no loss of life or damage to property was reported.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 6.3-magni-

tude earthquake jolted Is-

lamabad and Rawalpindi on

3 Factory owners booked after 18 die DNA

KARACHI: Police on Sunday booked three factory owners on charges of manslaughter and negligence after 18 people, including 16 children, died over the past few weeks from inhaling "toxic fumes" in Karachi's Keamari district. Over the past few days, 18 people have reportedly died in the neighbourhood due to inhaling mysterious toxic gases emitting from factories functioning in residential areas. Officials from the

strongly condemned the highly offensive acts of desecration of the Holy Quran. On his Twitter handle, the prime minister said, "The highly offensive desecration of the Holy Quran by a Danish politician is the third such incident in a row that should be strongly condemned by the civilised world." He further said that the need for global unity to fight Islamophobia couldn't be more urgent than it was now. "We are deeply hurt," the prime minister posted. Meanwile, Pakistan condemned in the strongest terms the senseless and deeply offensive act of desecration of the Holy Quran in Denmark, by the same

Continued on Page 06

LAHORE: Islam is a religion of peace and security and the teachings of the Holy Quran promote peace, affection, tolerance, and harmony. The governments should take immediate action against the blasphemers who desecrate the Holy Quran in Sweden and Netherlands, said Ulema-Mashaykh and religious leadership. Ulema-Mashaykh and religious leadership observed "Sanctity of Quran and Namoos-e-Risalat Day" here on Friday and addressing the religious congregations all over Pakistan underlined that there is a need to

Continued on Page 06



NATIONAL

Islamabad **POST** Monday, January 30, 2023

Zardari, Bilawal grieve over loss of lives

02

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: Former President of Paki stan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians, Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman PPP, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives in Bela, Balochistan and Kohat, KP. President Zardari and Bilawal Chairman expressed grief over the tragic accidents and said that the entire country is saddened. They said that they share the grief of the families who lost their loved ones in the accidents. The authorities should investigate the causes of the accidents so that similar tragedies can be avoided in the future. President Zardari and Chairman Bilawal while expressing sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims of the accidents, prayed to Almighty Allah to grant eternal peace to the depart-ed souls.-DNA

Bahaar Rung Women Gala begins on Feb 11

ISLAMABAD: Lets' Grow Together - a community of entrepreneurs will hold a grand event of Bahaar Rung - Islamabad Women Gala 2023 here on February 11 to promote home based women workers and artisans at f-9 Park.

The two-day gala is being organized for the fourth time featuring over 150 stalls of made in Pakistan homemade products by women entrepreneurs including a variety of lifestyle exhibits like fashion products, interior decor products, furniture, resin art, paintings, garments and jewelry etc while some stalls are also given to children to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship among the young minds and engage them in healthy activities. A traditional puppet show will be part of activities for children to create awareness about various social issues as well as keep alive the traditional performing arts. Food court will also be setup for women gala to offer a variety of foods

Fast track work on Russian, Pak Energy Corridor urged

Attock police arrest outlaws

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN ATTOCK: .Attock Police

Devcom-Pakistan Webinar: Russo - Pak Economic and Energy Cooperation, Scope and Challenges

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar on Saturday urged the government to fast track the process of economic and energy cooperation agreements with Russia after the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs). It would ease the economic conditions for the citizens. There shall be no delays from the Pakistan side while the US has also conceded to Pakistan's need for a discounted rate.

Transportation and freight will be the main constraints that may make the proposition difficult. Secondly, payment terms with Russian Crude suppliers would be another impediment if not promptly handled and sorted out for smooth sailing in this regard. Refiners are concerned about payment arrangements and terms under prevalent conditions; where Russia is engaged in war with Ukraine, Pakistani Banks may not open LCs for Russian Crude Oil. Also, Russians might not want to accept payment in US Dollars. Refineries are already under obligation to honor long-term Sale and Purchase Agreements with Middle Eastern Suppliers including KPC, ADNOC, and ARAM-CO and therefore, any immediate import of Russian Crude Oil seems a remote

possibility The webinar was organized by Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications network) and DTN on Saturday on the subject "Russo - Pak Economic and Energy Cooperation, Scope and Challenges". Senator Lt. General (Rtd) Abdul Qayyum was the keynote speaker. The guest speakers included foreign affairs expert Dr. Salma Malik, energy and environment expert Qaiser Aijaz, and Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed. Hussain Ali Shah,

Iftikhar Ahmed, Sarah Khan, Natasha Jameel, Maliha and Avan Mitra also spoke on the occasion. Senator Lt. General (Rtd) Abdul Qayyum said: The recent MOUs with Russia are a long-awaited icebreaking that can lead to an important partnership and investments in defence and oil and gas development in Pakistan after the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. But, the current challenges could be the internal extreme political polarization in Pakistan, lack of foreign reserves and low productivity in every field,

and balance of payment. He said Pakistan needs to have sustainable and balanced foreign relations while improving the exports, and attracting external investments. Political stability and consistency of policies shall be the key agenda of

whosoever replaces the previous government. Secondly. Pakistan shall actively take part in the multilateral forums besides improving its indigenous economy, domestic peace and gov-ernance. These measures will help the country to develop more than one economic and energy corridor. Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said: A comprehensive Russo-Pak Energy Corridor is very crucial for both countries at this point. Strangely, overlooking the sacrifices of about seventy years, the US has left Pakistan in isolation for siding with China in the new US-NATO cold war against Pakistan's iron friend. Russia, on the other hand, is facing a difficult battle to defend a Moscow-leaning Ukraine that has been seized by US-puppet presidents since the so-called "Revolution of Dignity," prompted by US touts. That revolt compromised the honour of common Ukrainians. While the Russian Federation defends its friends in Ukraine, the US and the West have destroyed Ukraine and frozen \$330 billion in the Russian government and citizen assets. Munir Ahmed said that the time is ripe for both the countries to think about the larger and more comprehensive Russo-Pak Energy Corridor (RPEC), similar to

the governments in Pakistan the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both corridors can help Pakistan historic economic have growth and prosperity, while the country can also play its backbone role in the regional economic bloc. Whoever takes it up will be the hero of the nation and the region too. Dr. Salma Malik said:The Pakistan-Russia energy cooperation deliberations is a welcomed step, yet needs to be viewed with cautious optimism, given the larger geo-economic dynamics. In a world with growing energy needs, conflicts such as that between Russia and Ukraine or China's economic outreach play a significant role in the advancement of geopolitical interests. Alliances, partnerships, sanctions and global regimes are used both as enablers and restrictive measures by global powers - and countries as Pakistan need to effectively apply diplomacy and power potential to get maximum benefits. She said Russia Pakistan Economic corridor seems good, but only after a deep study of what best we can in real terms get out of such a prospect than a label only. What will such bilateral regimes bring for us in immediate to long term basis. We need to be cognizant of our needs, compulsions, assets, and shortcomings and only then make an all rounder wholesome assessment.

She said there is a need for strong governance, a sustainable policymaking and keeping key stakeholders on board. The reason why the oil deal would work now than before, as with growing oil demand internationally, countries such as Pakistan are facing dire economic challenges and as in US administration's words they value Pakistan's economic stability and will support conversations between Pakistan and international partners. Hence, we need not fear a sanctions regime, as similarly India benefited (last year) from this selective sanctions regime. Yet the best way out in longer term is an indigenous usage of energy miz, creating a culture of efficient energy usage and sustainable policy framework that restores investors confidence, help rebuild economic growth and take us to a path of progress, with self reliance Qaiser Aijaz said the Russo - Pak economic and energy Development Cooperation

has a history. Pakistan's first five-year plan of 1950 was based on the Russian Economic Model and subsequent provision of technical and financial support for setting up Oil and Gas Development Corporation Ltd in 1960 and Pakistan Steel Mills in the 1970s. All time Pakistan-China friendship also kept Russia at arms-

length though the cooperation between Russia-Pakistan remained limited. The recent developments are overwhelming and the momentum shall not meet any halt. Russia has set aside USD 14 Billion for energy sector projects including USD 2.5 Billion for gas pipeline projects in Pakistan. Russo - Pak Economic and Energy Cooperation has huge potential to grow and is expected to develop further on a fast track basis with fast changing geo-political dy-namics of the region having global impacts: and mainly due to Pakistan's strategic and natural corridor location to reach out to the globe. However, he said, Pakistan's homework for importing Russian crude oil is not up to the mark. There is lack of clarity among the Ministry's own team particularly with reference to technical suitability, logistics, commercial arrangements and benchmarking with existing imports of crude oils in the country. Government should approach refiners in Pakistan and constitute a committee comprising members to have an in-depth discussion with their Russian counterparts on all issues including technical, operational, and commercial, so that an enabling import and processing mechanism and

framework be formalized

nabbed ten out laws involved in drug pushing, gambling, murder, possessing illegal weapons along with ammunition in different bids within the jurisdictions of six police stations of the district during a crackdown launched against anti-social elements here in Saturday. In the first attempt Attock Khurd Police arrested Ghulam Hussain r/o Peshawar and recovered two Kalashnikovs and a pistol from his possession. In different other attempts police arrested six drug peddlers from different areas of the district and recovered 4.4 kg chars from their possession . Those arrested include Ghulam Ansar r/o Pindigheb, Wali Ullah r/o Dir, Waseem Gul r/o Kohat Saeed Ahmad , Waseem Abbas and Munir Hussain r/o Tehsil Hazro . Cases under the act have been registered against them and all have been sent behind the bars. Similarly Hasanabdal police have arrested an accused Israr Hussain Shah who had shot dead his elder brother Syed Safeer Hussain over a petty domestic dispute in village Bhoigar. On the other hand Police Station New Airport has arrested Jahanzeb r/o Gujjar Khan for allegedly trying to occupy the land of Tahir Amin In another attempt Injra police have arrested three gamblers from Makhad Sharif and recovered Rs 47980 bet money from. their possession. Those arrested include Rizwan Khan ,Masud Khan and Iftikhar u Deen.

Two persons killed, couple injured

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ATTOCK: Two persons were killed while a couple was injured in three different incidents within the jurisdiction of Attock on Sunday. In the first incident, a man was tortured to death for allegedly desecrating the Holy Quran at the outskirts village Surug of Pindigheb Police station. Police sources said that the accused Fakhar Zaman has allegedly desecrated the Holy Quran few weeks ago and Sunday his tortured body was found as some unknown person has tortured him to death. Separately body of a man was found from river Indus near Damaan in the limits of Hazro Police station. Police sources said that some locals have spotted the body of a man floating in the river and informed rescue 1122 who have recovered the body and shifted to tehsil headquarters hospital Hazro where the deceased was identified as 37 years old Sattar Ahmed.



FPCCI's UBG greets caretaker ministers Shahzad Ali Malik said that a sustainable economy has assumed

soonest.

the highest priority worldwide for the survival of a state

ISLAMABAD: Chairman United Business Group of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPC-CI) Shahzad Ali Malik Sunday felicitated the newly inducted caretaker ministers Punjab SM Tanveer and Syed Azfar Ali Nasir. He said the first time two renowned industrialists enjoying good repute coupled with the highest degree of in-

for the families and visitors in a cultural environment while some stalls will be dedicated to imported products for income generation of women entrepreneurs, said Ambreen Haider, Leader of Lets Grow Together Community while talking to APP.-APP

Railways starts upgradation work

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has accelerated the upgradation work involving the private sector to improve services in passenger trains as well as major railway stations to address the growing issues, especially sanitation issues. "The department was of the view that the cleanliness-related services in trains and at major stations, including Lahore, Faisalabad, Karachi, Rawalpindi, Quetta, Peshawar, Khanewal, Sukkur, Sahiwal, Multan and Bahawalpur were not satisfactory," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said that if services of the private sector were hired under a fast-track policy, the hygiene conditions at stations and in trains could be improved which would also restore the confidence of passengers in the department. -APP

AXILA: Visitors taking interest in antiques displayed on the occasion of Gandhara Festival organized by Punjab Arts Council at Gandhara Art Village Taxila.-DNA

Concerns raised over harassment of journalists

The report throws light on there are hazards and security risks in Pakistan's media environment. 90% of active journalists admitted to receiving threats while performing their professional duties

ISLAMABAD: The ceremony of the awareness foundation which was held in the private hotel Islamabad disclosed the bitter facts about the violence on journalists 84 journalists were tortured, including the investigative journalist Arshad Sharif, 5 journalists were murdered, and 2 were kidnapped, during the year 2022. In the year 2022 awareness foundation released a report on the violence against journalists. Several well-known journal-

ists and other people from different organizations were invited to the room signature hotel. According to the data of

the report, during the year 2022, more than 84 cases from various sources are collected, and there were many other cases of threats that victims were unable to report due to fear of the establishment and the powerful authorities. The report throws light on there are hazards and security risks in Pakistan's media environ-

ment. 90% of active journalists admitted to receiving threats while performing their professional duties. The most alarming part of threats is their tone of severe repercussions, which is reported by 90% of journalists. Amongst the journalists who reported that they were being targeted, 5% were killed, 3% were kidnapped, 20 % were verbally harassed, 8% were detained. 3% were arrested. 14% were assaulted, and legal cases were filed

against 7%. Despite rules and laws, valance exited there in Pakistan. The report unveiled the ill-legal censorship of the News channels by the PEMRA. The speakers demanded the judiciary to stop the increasing violence against journalists and also demanded freedom of speech. The speakers also demanded the investigation of the murder of Arshad Sharif. The awareness foundation thanked all the guests.-DNA

Stipend of Rs7,000 transgenders announced

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Marri on Sunday said that the federal government will try its best to not have an effect of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement on the poor people of the country as no one is in favour of taking loans. She said that the priorities of the country would be on top in talks with the IMF. Talking to media persons after a ceremony of transgenders' inclusion in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) at the Arts Council of Pakistan-Karachi, she said that Prime Minister Mohammed Shahbaz Sharif had constituted an austerity committee. Shazia Marri said that they were bearing the brunt of the previous government's wrong decisions. Condemning allegations of the PTI

Chief Imran Khan against former President Asif Ali Zardari, she said that Imran Khan always issued irresponsible statements. She said that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would sue Imran Khan. The Federal Minister said that the prisons were broken in PTI-led gov-

ernment. She said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and his family were under threat. She alleged that Imran Khan was facilitator of terrorists. Earlier, addressing the ceremony, Shazia Marri said that transgenders were being formally included in BISP. She said that the

transgenders belonged to a poor segment of society. They were facing economic and societal challenges in the country, she said adding that they were ignored in society and moreover, they were separated from their families. She said that transgenders avoid to come



forward before the data managers due to society's behaviour towards them. The Federal Minister said that as per available data 50,000 transgender were registered with an organization. She said that their registration with NADRA was mandatory for availing BISP financial support. Shazia said that the transgenders should register themselves with NADRA and later, visit a BISP centre for further process to get Rs7000 financial assistance quarterly. She said that initially three transgender had got registered themselves with BISP. She said that in all 9 lac families were being financially supported by BISP. The spirit of the programme was to support the poor people of society, she added. Later, she handed over Rs7000 financial assistance among three registered transgender.- APP

a N & S 3rd Floor, Kim

1402-211-34801747

172-1.Block-2.P.E.C.H.S rachi. Tat (+92-21) 34530828.3421047)

(+62-42) 38758881, 36761385

+92-42135711422

tegrity laced with inherited spirit of dedication and devotion have been inducted in provincial cabinet which he added will endeavour their best to deliver the goods in the prevailing scenario. He said both ministers are true representatives of the business community and have vast knowledge and rich experience of good governance in the private sector. He hoped that SM Tanveer in his capacity as minister for industries, commerce, investment and energy will push forward the industrial sector and help address the genuine problems being confronted by the private sector on top priority to pave way for economic growth. Shahzad Ali Malik said that a sustainable economy has assumed the highest priority worldwide for the survival of a state. He said our fragile economy needs immediate result-oriented measures for its durable stability. He hoped both ministers will take all stakeholders and chambers of commerce and industries into confidence to steer out the country from the prevailing economic quagmire. - APP



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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 Dav

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



Regional connectivity key to boost Pakistan's exports Geo-strategic position of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan

also highlights their geo-economic importance ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan -Kyrgyzstan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday said that promoting bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan could be a milestone in regional and global trade integration and connectivity. Delivering his presidential address at a seminar on "Trade Prospects between Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan" held under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, he said the geo-strategic position of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan also highlights their geo-economic importance, which could play a significant role in promoting trade connectivity amongst different

regions and potential markets of the world.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi on Saturday directed the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) to issue instructions to Shifa International Hospital Islamabad (SHI-FA) to refund an amount of Rs2.9 million to the daughter of a patient who died due to the medical negligence, professional misconduct, and malpractice of the doctors of the hospital. The president also upheld the imposition of fine of Rs900,000 on SHIFA as maladministration and medical negligence had been proven against the hospital, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Saturday. The president issued these directions while rejecting a representation filed by IHRA against the orders of the federal ombudsman in which the ombudsman had held that the complainant (deceased patient's daughter) had been discriminated against as in a similar case in the past, IHRA had not only imposed a fine on SHIFA but had also issued the directions to the hospital to refund the amount in lieu of medical bills. He ordered that the refund should be paid within a week to the complainant. While rejecting IHRA's representation, the

president observed that IHRA had investigated the complaints, found medical negligence and imposed fine of Rs900,000 upon SHIFA

He said that Pakistan was currently a major player in global and regional trade, bordering the Middle East and South Asian states on the one hand and the global economic power China on the other. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan, due to its very important geographical location, had a distinctive place among the Central Asian states (CARs).

He said Kyrgyzstan exporters can also use Gwadar port for the shipment of their products to European countries and other parts of the world and Pak importers can import value-added milk products besides either side can also promote tourism and collaboration in the mining industry. He said that Pakistan was contributing \$100 million to the Kyrgyz economy in terms of fees and other living expenses of approximately 10,000 Pakistani students. He said Pakistan partially can also meet its energy needs from Kyrgyzstan.

He said Kyrgyzstan offered many opportunities for trade with Pakistan as it was the shortest entry point of Pakistani products to the 'Eurasian Economic Markets' of 182-million people comprising Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Armenia. He said that goods once exported to Kyrgyzstan could be further transported to the Eurasian markets without payment of customs duties. Meher Kashif Younis said that many high-rising buildings for

shopping malls, apartments, and hotels were currently being constructed mostly by Turkish firms for which raw material was being imported from other countries. He said that construction materials from Pakistan could also be exported. Meher Kashif Younis said we are lucky enough to have dynamic Ambassador Kyrgyzstan Ulanbek Totuiaev who is all the time available only one call away to facilitate pak traders and promote bilateral trade between two countries. He said Dr Shahid Hassan President Kyrgyzstan Trade House is also actively involved to strengthen trade relations and cooperation with two Muslim states. - Agencies

ment of Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority was to provide a regulatory frame work to ensure provision of quality health care services, by implementing quality standards by the healthcare sector, to residents of the Islamabad Capital Territory".

He noted that IHRA was responsible to "exer cise any powers and perform any functions as may be necessary for carrying out the purposes of its Act on the instruction of the Federal Government", and since maladministration and negligence had been established and it had not been assailed by SHIFA, therefore the orders had been rightly passed, and the representation deserved to be rejected. As per details, Mst Farrukh Naeem Tahir (the complainant) had alleged that her mother was diagnosed with COVID-19 who died due to the negligence of the doctors of SHI-FA and she lodged a complaint before IHRA against the hospital and IHRA imposed a fine of Rs900,000/- on the hospital for committing negligence but did not ask the hospital to refund the medical bill amounting to Rs2,979,637 as per order of the ombudsman. Thereafter she filed a review application and requested to re-open the case and re-visit its earlier decision with the direction to IHRA to issue instructions to the hospital to refund the medical bill. The ombudsman issued the orders in her favour which were impugned by IHRA by filing a representation with the president.

race and mobility. The creation of human beings is the best ever creation among all creatures on earth and in the heavens and Allah Almighty commands to equally protect the rights of all human beings particularly of the differently-abled persons. After the human rights enshrined in holy scripture, our Constitution guarantees social and economic well-being of all citizens. Article 38 (d) of the Constitution of the Islam-

Paying

special heed

to differently-

able persons

FARHAT FATIMA

ISLAMABAD: Allah Al-

mighty has bestowed mankind with countless abili-

ties to see, listen, speak,

walk, think and much more regardless of their

religion, caste, creed, sex,

ic Republic of Pakistan states "provide basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, housing, education and medical relief, for all such citizens, irrespective of sex, caste, creed or race, who are permanently or temporarily unable to earn their livelihood on account of infirmity, sickness or unemployment."

It also guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and expression for all people and equal protection of the rights of normal as well as differently able persons by providing social justice. Pakistan also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) in July 2011 with Ministry of Human Rights being the Focal Ministry to coordinate and facilitate implementation and reporting of UNCRPD.

President orders Shifa hospital to refund Rs 2.9 mln The president also upheld the

imposition of fine of Rs 900,000 on SHIFA as maladministration and medical negligence

which had also been received by IHRA and thus medical negligence had been established upon the healthcare establishment. He further said that IHRA did not direct the hospital to reimburse actual amount of medical bill incurred on the treatment of the complainant's mother as per orders of the learned ombudsman whereas in another case namely Dr Iqtidar Mehmood Dara against Shifa International Hospital, Islamabad, IHRA had held that "The medical bill should be refunded to the complainant by SHIFA International Hospital". The president held that it was an established principle that similarly placed persons should be treated alike and equal treatment to all is the hallmark of our Constitution i.e.

He said that the object and purpose of the law would be fulfilled only when the complainant was provided relief for any negligence by the hospital. "The Agency must have been more vigilant and watchful to fulfil its responsibilities", he added. The president further observed that the main purpose of the establish-

Article 4 and 25.



Emergency

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



Enguiry

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIAFlightInfo	114
PIACargo	.9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange9	270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.	.5555489
САА	9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

CDA9221334-43	
CDA9208301-04	
Met Office9250360-6	l
RDA5555864	l
TMA5770886	
Cantonment Board 9270151-3	
	l

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation......9209224 Potohar Town......9209224 RawalTown.....5773343

Water Tank Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Chief Commissioner Islamabad Noor Ul Ameen Mengal visited Sunday Bazaar in G 9 and express dissatisfaction over facilities provided to customers. - DNA

Int'l Conference on Science Communication to start from February 1

relations experts, NGOs, and NPOS,

Coordinators working at media organ-

izations (electronic, print, social) will

attend this conference cum workshop.

Rs. 240,566,109 utilized to

cater health expenditures

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety has utilized Rs. 240,566,109 to cater the

catastrophic health expenditures of deserving patients

under Tahafuz Program through twelve empanelled hos-

pitals across the country during the year Fiscal year 2021-

22. According to an official source, Tahafuz Program is

a Public Sector Development Program (FY-202I-2024)

demand-driven initiative designed to protect the extreme-

ly poor from catastrophic health expenditures. Tahafuz

Program is providing healthcare services across Pakistan

to the patients in its empanelled public sector hospitals

irrespective of geographical limitations and domicile.

The program is also providing healthcare assistance to

the poor who fall under the pre-defined eligibility criteria

primarily based on BISP or National Socio-Economic Reg-

istry Poverty scores i.e. PMT. During the Fiscal Year 2021

22, a total amount of Rs. 46,200,000 has been utilized

under the Tahafuz initiative by providing health services

to deserving patients in Islamabad Capital Territory. Rs.

47,176,180 has been utilized to cater the medical needs of

the patients through three hospitals in Punjab while Rs.

5,038,441 has been utilized in treating patients through

four hospitals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. - APP

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH-the OIC The themes of the conference under Standing Committee on Scientific the topic Science Communication inand Technological Cooperation has clude Academia and Understanding, planned to arrange an International Science Diplomacy, Emerging Tech-Conference on Science Communinologies, Climate Change and Life cation and Community Engagement Sciences while the focus of the workfrom February 1-3. According to an shop will be Media training, Networkofficial of COMSTECH, the science ing and Advocacy. or media students, researchers, public

The international speakers who will participate in the conference include Mr. Ehsan Masood, Editor of Nature, UK; Dr. Mahaletchumy Arujanan, Malaysia; Dr. Fabio Turono, Italy; Dr.

Daborah Blum, USA; Mr. Mohammad Yahya, Egypt; Dr. Brooke Smith, USA; Prof. John Dudley, France; Dr. Saad Lotfey, UAE and Mr. Michael Wadleigh, USA. The workshop will be of hybrid nature in which the participants can attend the event in person and online. Coordinator General, COMS-TECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary will be the Patron-in-Chief of the workshop while Prof. Dr. Syed Javaid Khurshid will be the Associate Coordinator. The event will be organized by COM-STECH in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Daily Technology Times, Regional Rapport and Pakistan Biotechnology Information Center. COMSTECH the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC was established by the Third Islamic Summit of OIC held at Makkah, Saudi Arabia in January 1981. - Agencies

Martial arts training receives spotlight in twin cities

ISLAMABAD: An elevated interest to learn martial arts has been witnessed among the youngsters of twin cities, for gaining physical and mental health along with an added skill of self-defense. Talking to APP here on Sunday, Martial Arts Trainer Irfan Bhatti said that people were choosing to learn martial arts due to four reasons, including fitness, sports, career opportunities and personal safety. He said fitness is one of the primary reasons why many people choose to learn martial arts. He said martial arts involve a lot of physical activity, such as striking, grappling, and cardio training which helps in improving overall fitness level and gain strength, endurance, and flexibility. He said that sport is another popular reason for learning martial arts. Individuals learn martial arts, such as Ninjitsu, Karate, Mix Martial Arts (MMA), and Taekwondo to participate in different national and international sports competitions. Irfan said that training in martial arts can also help individuals to develop discipline, focus, and mental toughness, all of which are important in other sports as well. - APP



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunications NATIONAL INFORMATION TCHNOLOGY BOARD (NITB)



National Information Technology Board requires to procure following Items and support renewal as per given tender document from GST registered & NTN holder firms.

	SCHEDULE OF REQUIREMENTS		TIMEFRAME / PERIOD OF SUPPLY/DELIVERY	
S.No.	IT HARDWARE / SOFTWARE / SERVICES ITEMS	Qty	from the date of issuance of purchase order.	
Lot #01	Dell Servers and SAN Support Renewal			
a.	Dell Servers and SAN Support Renewal	06	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
b.	Server Hardware Upgrade: RAM – Dell 32GB Module	12	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 02	VmWare and VCenter Support Renewal	08	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 03	Laptops	06	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 04	Desktop Computers	09	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 05	Printers (Black and White)	08	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 06	Portable Printers Color	02	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 07	Scanners ADF	06	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 08	Video Conference Equipment	03	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 09	Antivirus Renewal	250	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 10	IBM Software SIEM Subscription and Support Renewal	1000 EPS	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 11	Firewall Next Generation	02	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 12	Virtual SmartZone Ruckus Wireless Controller	01	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 13	Microphone Conferencing System	1 Job	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	
Lot # 14	Desktop for Animator	01	Six (06) to eight (08) Week	

PID NO: 4678/22

Tender Document can be downloaded from www.nitb.gov.pk and www.ppra.org.pk. Bid receiving date is 14"February, 2023 at 10.30 am and tender will be opened on the same date at 11:00am

> Director (F&A) National Information Technology Board, Plot no 24-B. Street No 6, Sector H-9/1, Islamabad, Phone: 051-9265042, 051-9204218, 051-9008267 Fax 051-9265376 email: shahid.jadoon@nitb.gov.pk

TWIN CITIES

Islamabad **POST** Monday, January 30, 2023

Briefs

BISP advises **beneficiaries**

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

While issuing an alert to the beneficiaries, the BISP has issued an alert to the beneficiaries to beware of fraudulent or scammers and stated, "All the payment messages from BISP are sent from 8171 only while the messages received other than this number will be fake". BISP in support with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and Pakistan Telecommunication Au thority (PTA) is also taking legal action against those involved in sending fake messages to the beneficiaries. The BISP informed that all the messages being circulated on social media regarding registration of BISP programs are fake and BISP has no connection with all these messages and videos. The registration of BISP is only carried out through Benazir National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) and designated registration centers without any charges.-APP

Various milestones achieved under STEM

ISLAMABAD: The Public Sector Development Program "Launching of STEM in Pakistan- Phase-I" has achieved various milestones during the fiscal year 2021-22 to give impetus to Pakistan's preparations for developing a workforce for the Fifth Industrial Revolution.

According to an official source, the project is being executed through the Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), Ministry of Science and Technology.

Since the initiation date of the project (August 10, 2021), training modules are being developed for the Grade IX- XII for which correspondence with national stakeholders including the National Curriculum Council (NCC). Federal Directorate

President Xi to inaugurate Gwadar int'l airport soon

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed Alauddin Marri, former Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan and assured that ICCI would take a delegation to Balochistan to meet with Chief Minister, Governor and Corps Commander Quetta and explore business opportunities in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD: Alauddin Marri, former Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan and prominent businessman said that Gwadar is the future business hub of the country and Chinese President Xi Jinping would inaugurate the Gwadar airport during his upcoming visit to Pakistan. He said this while exchanging views with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry during his visit to ICCI.

Alauddin Marri said that the coastal areas of Balochistan including Gwadar, Turbat and Makran have not been connected with the national grid as yet and added that 100 MW of electricity would soon be supplied to these areas from Iran. He said that Gwadar offers huge business opportunities to both local and foreign Investors in many sectors including service industries, fisheries, petrochemical, tourism, trade logistics, processing and manufacturing industries like assembling of oil storage, refining, transport equipment, ship



breaking, food & building materials processing, home appliances

good time for potential investors manufacturing, electronics and IT industry. He said that it is a to move to Gwadar and take ad-

Govt prepares new oil refinery policy other ad valorem tax, or any

other levies/ duties on the

operations, and engineering

velopment Board.

revealed.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To inject fresh impetus into the planned \$ 4.5 billion oil refinery plant by a Chinese company in Gwadar as well as more than \$ 10 billion oil refinery plant by Saudi Arab and UAE in Hub, Balochistan, the Pakistani government has finalised a draft of the oil refinery policy 2023 that envisages several tax exemptions and incentives. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday, the refining policy comprised of on account of the purchase of machinery/equipment to be installed in the project.

import of equipment to be installed or materials to be According to the draft policy, used in the refinery without in case the pricing regime is deregulated, during the any precondition of certification by the Engineering Deperiod from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2028, the The federal government will refineries will be allowed to facilitate the grant of similar retain the prevalent customs exemption from the provinduty in the ex-refinery price. cial and local taxes, the Policy If the existing pricing mechanism or a regulated pricing The exemption will be availregime remains applicable able to foreign contractors after December 31, 2028, the or sub-contractors from the applicability of prevalent cusprovincial and federal taxes toms duty to the ex-refinery price of finished products will concerning the execution of services for construction. be reviewed.

gin (IFEM) framework. OGDCL official told Gwadar Pro that in the past 40 years, no new refinery has been set up in Pakistan, which needs a new plant that can process 400,000 barrels of crude per day to meet the country's high petroleum demand. Upgrading the existing refineries can also lead to an increase in their installed capacity to cater to consumer needs. At present, Pakistan's oil refineries are meeting 55% of the annual demand for petroleum products and saving foreign exchange

In the event the pricing reof \$1 billion. They utilise

RCCI concerned at rising inflation, free fall of rupee Govt should concentrate on economic reforms besides. fair policy formulation, regulatory realignments

employment and bring prosperity

to the province.

RAWALPINDI: The business community, industrialists at chambers of commerce and industry have expressed their concern over the rising inflation rate in the country. "The drastic fall in the PKR is the most immediate reason for the spike in the inflation rate. Inflation forces our majority of population in the country to spend almost their entire income for the very basic necessities of survival like food, clothing and shelter, said Sagib Rafiq, President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). Inflation affects the lower segment of the society which stands more than 70 percent of the total population of the country, he added. In a statement, RCCI President said that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) on a monthly basis, along with 'Whole-sale Price Index' (WPI) and the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) on weekly basis have increased manifold. While quoting the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data, he said that the weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Index (SPI), posted an increase of 32.57 per cent for the combined income group on a year-on-year basis ending Jan 26 due to a massive surge in prices of both food and non-food items, especially vegetables like onions. The government should concentrate on economic reforms besides, fair policy formulation, regulatory realignments and their implementation, he added.-DNA

Three injured in gas explosions in Rawalpindi

ISLAMABAD: A couple and their toddler were injured in a gas leakage incident in Rawalpindi on Sunday According to a private media report, a gas explosion hit a house in Shamsabad colony of Rawalpindi causing burn injuries to the husband, wife and their twovear-old kid.

The rescue team shifted the injured to the Burns Center of Holy Family Hospital.-APP

Mobile puncture shops gain traction

ISLAMABAD: The emergence of mobile puncture shops in the twin cities has gained significant popularity among riders and drivers as a convenient solution for flat tires. Talking to APP here on Sunday a mechanic, Muhammad Ajmad who operates a mobile puncture shop on his motorcycle at Kashmir Highway said that mobile shops are equipped with all the necessary tools and resources to quickly and efficiently fix a flat tire which makes it easier for riders to get back on the road in no time. He said that mechanics have marked their phone numbers by pasting advertisement banners in the relevant area and they are contacted by many riders on a daily basis. "Not only do these shops benefit the riders, but they also provide a livelihood for the

mechanics", he added. Amjad said that in addition to providing puncture repair services, they also offer bike services and carry passengers when puncture work is not available. He mentioned that compared to the normal puncture price which is around 100 rupees, people are willing to pay some extra price due to the convenience and ease they are getting from the mobile puncture shops. Talking to APP, a bike rider Shabbir Hussain said that this new trend of mobile puncture shops has made it easier for twowheeled riders to find help on the road without having to go to a traditional shop that saves them time and hassle. He said that the mobile puncture shops also provide a new business opportunity for mechanics and entrepreneurs who are looking to earn a living. Another traveler Bilal Majeed said that the mobility of these shops allows them to respond quickly to customer needs and provide services on-demand, which is a great convenience for riders who find themselves with a flat tire on the road. He said that in case of emergency, when the riders are in a hurry to reach somewhere, they can have their punctures fixed in no time without having to wait for long hours. Bilal said that this trend will continue to grow in popularity as more people become aware of the convenience and benefits of mobile puncture shops.-APP

of Education (FDE) and Agha Khan University (AKU), was made, paving the way for making a consolidated document in this regard.

Furthermore, 76 best national scientists were contacted throughout the country and were requested to provide experiments for STEM. A tender for the Development of Training Modules on STEM Education is also in process and is expected to be completed by December 2022. Under the STEM project, 50 Higher Secondary Schools (HSSs) or Cadet Colleges have been selected by transforming their existing labs into Mini STEM FABLABs. in addition to teacher training programs and module development on STEM education.-DNA

Fawad's brother requests CJP for fair trial

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Faisal Farid advocate, brother of senior PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry, in a letter to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, has pleaded to the Supreme Court that a fair and transparent trial in his brother's case should be conducted. The letter also urges the CJP that court should take immediate and effective steps for rule of law in the case. Faisal said Supreme Court had before it a request made by another lawyer Fawad Chaudhry seeking justice. Fawad was detained from his residence in Lahore on January 25.

Violating laws, he was taken by security forces like a terrorist. The issue was raised in Lahore High Court, but the whole world is witness to the fact that security agencies made fun of LHC orders by ignoring them. Prominent bar councils of the country condemned the unfair treatment meted out to Fawad Chaudhry. However, the voice fell on deaf ears of the power quarters and he was shifted from Lahore to Islamabad. After sending Fawad to jail on judicial remand, he was again left at mercy of the police for physical remand. After grant of physical remand by court, fears have arisen that he will be subjected to custodial torture in police custody.

two components with one related to existing local refineries and the other about the investment for the new refineries in the country. The policy proposes an exemption from customs duty, surcharges, withholding taxes, general sales tax, any

performed in Pakistan. Refineries will be exempt from the withholding tax requirements under the Income Tax Ordinance 2001 on payments to be made to non-resident persons (including the contractor or an associate of the contractor)

Admin foils 19 bids to

smuggle 6123 wheat,

flour bags; arrests 22

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district

police foiled 19 bids to smuggle 6123 wheat, fine flour (Maida)

According to a district administration spokesman, the authori-

ties of the food department along with Potohar Division police

conducted raids in different areas and rounded up 22 accused

on recovery of 6123 wheat, fine flour bags and 40 tons wheat

flour during last seven days. He informed that the accused

were trying to illegally ship out wheat, flour and Madia out of

Rawalpindi division. He said that Rawalpindi District Food

Department was ensuring supply of nearly 37,000 wheat flour

bags on daily basis in various markets and bazaars across the

district as 74 wheat flour sale points were set up in different

areas of the district to facilitate the citizens and ensure regular

supply of the flour on subsidized rates. He said all the flour mills of the district were directed to supply 500 each subsi-

dized wheat flour bags weighing 10 kg to the citizens daily. He said the district administration teams were also monitoring the

supply of wheat flour and action in accordance with the law was

being taken against the violators of the order. In line with the

directives of the district administration, the food department

had launched a crackdown on flour mills which were not providing the required quota, he added. "The food department

was taking action against hoarders and those involved in the

cartelisation of wheat causing a price hike as we have a surplus

of agricultural commodities in the Rawalpindi division," he

added. He said, the Food Department Rawalpindi and district

police on the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawal-

pindi were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi

district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids. The spokesman

said that all the exit points of Rawalpindi division were being

monitored 24/7 to control wheat smuggling as the administra-

tion had set up 14 check posts at exit points of the four districts

of the division to check wheat smuggling.-APP

bags, 40 tons wheat flour and arrested 22 accused.

gime is deregulated after December 31, 2028, the refineries will be free to set prices for their products. Besides the customs duty above, 10% would be returned to the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) under the Inland Freight Equalisation Mar-

per day.

around 70,000 barrels of local crude and condensate They say they are providing more than 100.000 direct and indirect employment opportunities and are making reasonable contributions to the national exchequer and GDP.

Power Cement to use Thar Coal in cement manufacturing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SEC-MC) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Power Cement for the trial of Thar Coal in their cement manufacturing facilities. Gwadar Pro quoting an official statement of SECMC, report-

ed on Saturday that company's goal is to play a game-changing role in industries other than electricity generation and "proving Thar Coal is crucial for Pakistan at large". "The initiative is integral in utilizing the richly available indigenous resources of Thar Coal by industries to lower reliance and dependence on expensive imported coal". SECMC

has termed the initiative a "game-changing start" and has congratulated its entire team on this achievement. Power Cement Limited of Arif Habib Group has been manufacturing, selling, and marketing cement since 1981. SECMC is a joint venture between the Government of Sindh and Engro Energy Limited and its partners namely China Ma-

chinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC), Thal Limited, HBL, HUBCO, and SPI. The current annual mining capacity of the Thar Block-II is 7.6 million tons and provides lignite quality coal to power producers in the country. The total reserves of block II are sufficient to support 5000MW of energy for 50 years.



Gwadar Free Zone to get electricity in 60 days

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To provide 5 MW electricity to Gwadar Free Zone (North), a successful joint feasibility survey has been completed by Quetta Electric Power Supply Company (QEPSC) and China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC), paving a way for the provision of power in 60 days.

According to Gwadar Pro, a joint feasibility study finalized that after finding all physical and operational indicators smooth and positive, Gwadar Free Zone (North) is going to get regular and affordable 5 MW electricity in the first step. If all goes well, in the second step, a 12 MW power supply will be ensured for Gwadar Free Zone

(South) and Gwadar Port in the coming months, a QEPSC official told Gwadar Pro. "As part of the first-step arrangements, we are gearing up electricity installation infrastructure and relevant apparatus like erection of polls with transmission lines", the QEPSC official said. The entire electricity paraphernalia will span over 3 kilometers that will connect Gwadar Port's Grid Station to the area of Gwadar Free Zone (North), he mentioned.

"The Deep-Sea Port Grid Station was established in 2019 exclusively for Gwadar Port and Free Zone through 3 feeders. Since inadequate power was available at the disposal of QEPSC, the Grid Station had to rely on diesel generators for the production of thermal

power using expensive fossil fuels at a high cost," he added.

In a query, he said, "after a comprehensive feasibility study that continued for many months, now the good news is that we will turn off the 8.5 MW Diesel Generator and will link up Gwadar Port's sole Grid Station with three sources. One source is the national grid station of Quetta. The second source is Gabd-Remdan on the Pakistan-Iran border. The third source is the Nag-Besima section also on the Pakistan-Iran border. "The new dispensation will augur well for investors of Gwadar Free Zone (North)," he added. A COPHC official said that as matter of fact, the current electricity price at Gwadar

Free Zone (South) and Gwadar Port

is off the charts, incurring a heavy

financial blow to Port's operator and companies working in Gwadar Free Zone (South). "We used to purchase petrol at Rs. 1.5 million for Gwadar Port and Rs. 3.5 million for Gwadar Free Zone (South) monthly. Chinese companies in Gwadar Free Zone (South) are charged around Rs. 85 per unit. However, after the availability of 5 MW under new arrangements in the first step, electricity cost to industries and factories at Gwadar Free Zone (North) will be around Rs. 50 to Rs. 55 per Kilowatt. The same reasonable cost will also be available for Gwadar Port and Gwadar Free Zone (South) in the second step later. It means investors and factory owners will enjoy a saving of around Rs. 30 per kilowatt. This will directly impact financial leverage and production

growth not only for current enterprises but also for potential investors," COPHC official said. Currently, in Gwadar Free Zone (South), around 51 companies have been registered. Around 10 companies including CBC, H.K. Sons, Agvon, Linyi Trade City, China Ecological Company, China Harbor Engineering Company, Hengmei, Jintai, and others are up and running their functions. Meanwhile, in Gwadar Free Zone (North), currently three companies have been completing their construction works to run their industries in two months. Many more including East Sea Group Limited entered into a deal to establish a \$4.5 billion oil refinery in Gwadar Free Zone (North). Smooth and affordable electricity prices will be a big booster for them.

RDA for action against marketing of illegal schemes

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG) Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa has warned the marketing companies advertising illegal housing schemes of strict action.

According to a RDA spokesman, the authority had issued notices to three marketing companies namely Sky Marketing, Ghafari Marketing and Wirasat.com for running promotional campaigns of illegal housing schemes and directed to stop such campaigns to promote the housing projects which are not approved by the authorities concerned.

informed RDA had He stopped the illegal housing societies within its jurisdiction from running any marketing campaigns and selling plots. He said MP&TE Directorate RDA issued notices as the marketing companies were running promotional campaign about projects of the aforesaid illegal housing schemes. He said the DG had directed the authorities to take action against the rules violators.-APP

Britain's failings on child refugees naccompanied children fleeing war, torture and chaos are surely one of the most vulnerable demographics in the world. Yet an

Observer investigation has exposed how once these children reach the UK they can be treated with an appalling lack of care, to the extent that large numbers are being kidnapped in plain sight by criminal gangs. Today, we publish allegations by a whistleblower that the staff in one hotel accommodating some of these already traumatised children have subjected them to repeated emotional abuse. Peter Kyle, the Labour MP for Hove, has met some of the children being housed in a hotel in his constituency. He has described their vulnerability: one 15-year-old from Iran who had lost both of his parents travelled to the UK with a friend but was separated from him because he tested positive for Covid and was so anxious "his face was pinched and his legs were buckling". The majority of unaccompanied children arriving in Britain come from countries with terrible records of conflict and human rights abuses: Iran, Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. Many will be in immediate danger from the criminal gangs to whom they owe money for smuggling them into the country. Yet the government has absolved itself of its ethical and legal responsibilities to these children. The Children Act 1989 places a legal duty on local authorities for the safeguarding and protection of all children in need in their local area, regardless of who they are or how they arrived in the UK. The government's inaction has paved the way for more and more children to fall into the hands of criminal gangs A borders inspectorate report last year revealed disturbing gaps in their care. Despite nurses being onsite at the hotels, they did not have the authority to prescribe medication for the children, including basic pain relief, and there was no access to emergency equipment such as defibrillators or EpiPens. There was no mental health support, despite the high levels of trauma experienced by many of the young people, and their basic educational needs were going unmet. Some of the staff living in the hotels alongside vulnerable children had not even undergone basic safeguarding checks. It is unthinkable that this has been allowed to go on so long, despite MPs like Peter Kyle having alerted the government to the growing problem. The government's inaction has paved the way for more and more children to fall into the hands of criminal gangs. There is so much to criticise in the government's approach to those seeking refuge in the UK. But its horrific treatment of a relatively small number of unaccompanied children fleeing war zones is a stain on the collective conscience of us all.

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Washington's intentions for Hong Kong

n a strongly worded response to the White House decision to extend and expand Deferred Enforced Departure for certain Hong Kong residents in the United States, the Office of the Commissioner of the Chinese Foreign Ministry in Hong Kong urged Washington to "forsake the pipe dream of containing China with Hong Kong", and "immediately stop the execrable show of interfering in Hong Kong affairs". While the applicability of the national security legislation in Hong Kong in no way compromises the "one country, two systems" framework, the US has accused Beijing of undermining Hong Kong's autonomy. Those suspected of criminal wrongdoings, from street violence to collusion with foreign forces, and who fled the SAR after the introduction of the national security law, are being provided safe haven as "freedom fighters" worth protection. What is a natural assertion of Chinese sovereign rights over the SAR is being utilized against Beijing as evidence of it curtailing the SAR's autonomy. Likewise, what in the mainland authorities' eyes is a means of maintaining stability and order is being distorted as a tool of suppression. However, as the Foreign Ministry office in Hong Kong stated, "Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong, Hong Kong affairs are purely China's domestic affairs". The corresponding Memorandum on DED extension and expansion, it argued, defames the rule of law and human rights conditions in Hong Kong, maliciously attacks the national security law for Hong Kong, interferes in Hong Kong and China's domestic affairs, and openly tramples on the basic principles of international law and international relations. Hong Kong is "moving forward steadily on the correct track of 'one country, two systems'". The true purpose of the US memorandum is to provide "those who oppose China and disrupt Hong Kong and fled overseas" with safe havens by manipulating visa policies, which "fully exposes the malicious US intention" to destabilize the SAR. The US is hyping up the "consequences" of the national security law in Hong Kong to denigrate the legislation. The truth is around 230 people have been arrested by the SAR police authorities on suspicion of endangering national security, among these, a little more than 30 have been tried and found guilty in court. This is in clear contrast with Washington's allegation of "continued and repeated attacks on the protected rights and freedoms cherished by people in Hong Kong". The enactment of the national security law has played a decisive role in realizing Hong Kong's transition from chaos to governance and continued prosperity, by effectively countering the efforts of outside elements to instigate chaos in the SAR using local proxies. Due to its implementation Hong Kong is once again stable, united and thriving.

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



Both the countries have also expressed their willingness to set up an oil refinery in Baluchistan with a capacity of 400,000 barrels of oil. In addition, Iran has offered Pakistan to increase its electricity imports from 100MW to 1,000MW and eventually 3,000MW. Since the nuclear deal Tehran has been used as a historic opportunity to expand bilateral ties and take advantage of a rising Iran in the region. The lifting of economic sanctions had opened new avenues for Iran to strengthen its

Iran's strategic moves

ran is a western neighbor of Pakistan with 158 billion barrels of oil reserves and 34 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. However, the official bilateral trade of the both countries did not reach \$2 billion. In September 2022, Pakistani and Iranian officials agreed to remove hurdles, increase bilateral legal trade and implement the barter agreement for achieving the target of \$5 bilateral trade. Pakistan and Iran have maintained cordial relations since the Shah's regime butpost the Iranian Revolution many social, political, economic and security problems have arisen. Relationship between Pakistan and Iran are poor due to the Saudi element, but Pakistan strives to remain neutral in its relations with both countries. Among other issues, the competition between Chabahar and Gwadar and the slow progress in joint economic projects are affecting their

pipeline project, while Pakistan has yet to build the related infrastructure. Pakistan is understandably stuck in the balance of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan's active participation in the Middle East security matrix is a manifestation of an important role for Pakistan.

Iran's mobilization in Middle East security is a surprising development for traditional regional powers such as Egypt, Israel, and especially Saudi Arabia. Tehran is dominating the regional security matrix from Baghdad to Damascus, Beirut and Sana'a, formed a strong coalition to demonstrate its superiority. Iranian military support for regimes in Iraq, Syria and Yemen has upset the traditional balance of power in the region. Furthermore, due to the lifting of sanctions, the Iranian economy is growing at a remarkable pace as many foreign companies are willing to invest in Iran. This development has spread panic in the Arab states. The United Arab Emirates, originally a duty-free country, now imposes the tax because billions of dollars-worth of Iranian transactions flowed through the UAE during the sanctions. Saudi Arabia is facing a budget deficit. The regional landscape is fraught with foreign support for Iran in many ways. Turkey is preoccupied with its internal problems and is unwilling to confront Iran directly. Russia supports the Assad regime, a strategic partner of Iran, with active military support. China is supporting Iran in trade, economy and investment. European states are eager to take advantage of the emerging economy, and the United States is forced to back Iran because of its geopolitical reach, political influence, and military might to defeat ISIS. Along with international support, Hassan Rouhani had won strong domestic support in the 2016 parliamentary elections, giving him much-needed backing to pursue Iran's

diplomatic, political, and economic recovery. There are two possibilities in this environment of regional security. The Iranian rise is viewed positively and the gradual normalization of the region is seen for the benefit of all, or the rise is viewed negatively and as a result increases the atmosphere of conflict. However, despite many attempts, the Assad regime has not been able to fall. The war in Yemen has failed to weaken the Houthi rebels, but rather has emboldened al-Qaeda and Iraq.

The 34-state alliance, despite the highly publicized 'North Thunder' military exercise, has failed to have a significant impact on regional dynamics as key states Turkey, Egypt and Pakistan are unwilling to contribute their forces. Currently, the national, regional and international political environment favors Iran. Therefore, it would be better to consider the rise of Iran as a positive development and to work for peace, development and stability in the region. After the end of the Iranian nuclear saga, Pakistan can easily and cheaply harness its southwestern neighbor's energy resources to maximize its economic growth. Furthermore, Pakistan has the ability and courage to address the lack of communal trust in the Muslim world, particularly in the Middle East. Pakistan should use its diplomatic offices to remove the obstacles impeding the political and economic development of the region. Pakistan can play a constructive role between Iran and Saudi Arabia to eliminate of the two's unwanted hostile regional policies. Therefore, it is time for Pakistan to formulate a pragmatic policy in view of the changing strategic dynamics in the region and expand its relations with Iran to protect its national security interests. The changing regional geopolitics and strategic dynamics may affect Pakistan; therefore, it should take advantage of Iran's geostrategic position.

bilateral relations.

Both the countries have also expressed their willingness to set up an oil refinery in Baluchistan with a capacity of 400,000 barrels of oil. In addition, Iran has offered Pakistan to increase its electricity imports from 100MW to 1,000MW and eventually 3.000MW. Since the nuclear deal Tehran has been used as a historic opportunity to expand bilateral ties and take advantage of a rising Iran in the region. The lifting of economic sanctions had opened new avenues for Iran to strengthen its economic and political power. This is time for Pakistan to strengthen its ties with its oil and gas rich neighbor and to mend the broken fence with Iran. The closest power source to Pakistan is already supplying 74 MW of power to Pakistan's Makran division, while another 100 MW transmission line is under construction to Gwadar, Pakistan's emerging economic hub. Iran has invested more than \$2 billion in the agreed gas

Measuring the financial will of first world in C

Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed

UN climate summit concluded its conference of parties COP 27 with notable financial support from Austria and New Zealand. Austrian government announced 50 million Euros (US\$51 million) over the next four years for natural disaster due to climate change. The funding will provide economic cover to the Santiago Network, a UN initiative for technical support to countries facing damages from climate-related disasters. New Zealand offered allocation of NZ\$20 million (US\$12

nited Nations Framework Conven-tion on Climate Change, 27th Conference of the Parties) is being held in Sharm el-Sheikh on the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt from 6 to 18 November 2022. The first UN Climate Change Conference took place in Berlin in 1995 in Berlin. Though the Humanity is heading towards a very seen disaster of warming of more than 2.5 degrees, with devastating effects on our lives on the only planet. The era of climate justice has been embarked with strong voice of global community. The time when country of south Asia like Pakistan are looking towards comity of nations for justice and compensation. It is right time understand the global financial will express in recent conference of parties COP27.

UN climate summit concluded its conference of parties COP 27 with notable financial support from Austria and New Zealand. Austrian government announced 50 million Euros (US\$51 million) over the next four years for natural disaster due to climate change. The funding will provide economic cover to the Santiago Network, a UN initiative for technical support to countries facing damages from climate-related disasters. New Zealand offered allocation of NZ\$20 million (US\$12 million) climate funding to compensate the developing countries. These negotiations are now on fast track asNew Zeaglobal action on loss and damage.

Climate vulnerable countries in the global South want to see the creation of a finance facility for loss and damage. The global community failed to make the agenda at COP26 in Glasgow last year in 2022 is under hot debate as resourceful nations could not put themselves liable for an accounting sum of compensation to countries in south Asia suffering most due to climate calamity.

The North American counterpart Canada affirmed a financial "practical initiatives" worth 24 million CAD (US\$15 million) to support suffering developing countries in three areas: loss and damage, access to climate finance, and climate governance. The ice pole of the world pledged US\$5 million to the Global Shield Financing Facility for resilience of climate-vulnerable countries, and US\$1 million for the Santiago Network. It also announced US\$4 million to the Climate Finance Access Network for acute affected climate-vulnerable countries. This serves as top up to the already offered US\$7 million to network in 2020. European countries pledged notable resources this year. Scotland continued its support since 2021 for loss and damage and has pledged an additional £5 million (US\$6 million), bringing its total pledge to approximately US\$8 million. The UK is to triple its contribution for climate ad-

land is taking a leading role to advance aptation, from US\$587 million in 2019 to US\$1.8bn in 2025. It announced US\$106 million for forest conservation in the Congo Basin and US\$76 million to fuel the existing Climate Investment Program for indigenous and local forest communities. New British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak also pledged US\$78 million to support researchers and scientists in developing countries to back up clean energy innovations. Belgium reserved US\$26 million for Mozambique from 2023 to 2028 and including US\$3 million for loss and damage. Germany pledged US\$175 million for the Global Shield initiative to strengthen insurance and disaster protection finance. Ireland promised US\$10 million to the Global Shield initiative for 2023. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced US\$1.4 billion over four years to assist smallholder farmers address the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change. The funding aims to build resilience against adverse weather events and support climate-smart innovations for farmers. Forests, People, Climate collaborative efforts account for US\$1.2 billion over five years to safeguard forests and the indigenous peoples and local communities that care for them.

> -Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed is a University Professor and UN Advisor. His area of interests is Energy, Environment, Health and Education.

WORLD / SPORTS

Briefs

Govt drops petrol bomb on masses

FROM PAGE 01 artificial shortage of petrol. Ishaq Dar said that this initiative of the government will end the artificial scarcity of petroleum in the country. He said that from today the new price of petrol in the country will be Rs 249.80, high-speed diesel Rs 262.80, kerosene Rs 187 and light diesel Rs 189.83 per liter. He said that the government did not increase the price of oil in the last 4 months despite the fluctuations in the oil prices in the world market.

Ishaq Dar said that in the last 4 months, our government has reduced the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel by Rs 20 rupees and the price of kerosene oil and light-speed diesel by Rs 30 rupees.

PTI scolds govt over price hike

FROM PAGE 01 National Assembly deputy speaker Qasim Khan Suri also condemned the hike, taking to his official Twitter handle comparing the current prices with those during the PTI's past tenure. "The nation is paying a hefty price for [National Reconciliation Ordinance] NRO2," he wrote on the microblogging site, alleging that the incumbent government has been brought to power through a deal.

Yasmin Rashid, a senior PTI member from Lahore, also bashed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government for taking the major decision, which has left the public worried about their diminishing purchasing power."Today diesel and petrol have become expensive by Rs35 and it will affect everything," she said.

Imran Khan to contest by-polls...

FROM PAGE 01 party's core and parliamen-

Germany beat Belgium 5-4 (SO) to lift Hockey World Cup

Earlier after the painful semifinal defeat, the young Netherlands side overpowered Australia in a 3-1 win to seal a World Cup bronze medal

SPORTS DESK

BHUBANESWAR: Germany had done it before and they did it again. Germany defeated defending champions Belgium 5-4 in the penalty shootout to win the Hockey World Cup 2023 in Bhubaneswar on Sunday. Germany kept their cool and showed resilience and mental strength to beat Belgium. Both the teams scored three goals each at the end of regulation time. This is Germany's third world title as they came back from behind after conceding two early goals in the first quarter. Florent Aubel broke the deadlock in the 10th minute and Tanguy Cosyns then doubled Belgium's lead within seconds. Niklas Wellen reduced the twogoal deficit before the halftime hooter.

Gonzalo Peillat then successfully converted a penalty corner in the third quarter to bring Germany back on level terms. The final quarter saw Germany lead for the first time in the contest as skipper Mats Grambusch beat the Belgian goalkeeper from the left side. Tom Boon, however, delayed Germany's party and converted a penalty corner with less than two minutes remaining in the regulation time.

Fairplay award goes to Belgium. Most Goals Scored by a team go to the Netherlands. The best team goal celebration



goes to Korea. The Fans' choice award goes to Christopher Ruhr of Germany. The best Junior Player award goes to Mustaphaa Casseim of South Africa. The Hero Top Scorer of the tournament award goes to Jeremy Hayward of Australia for scoring 9 goals in this tournament. ISW's best Goalkeeper of the tournament goes to Vincent Vanasch of Belgium. The best defender of the tournament award goes

Islamabad, Faisalabad, Peshawar

to Australia's Jeremy Hayward. The best midfielder of the tournament award goes to Victor Wegnez of Belgium. The award for the best Forward of the tournament as well as the best player of the tournament goes to Niklas Wellen. The German forward was also the Player of the Match in the semi-final and the final

Earlier after the painful semifinal defeat, the young Netherlands side overpowered Aus-

tralia in a 3-1 win to seal a World Cup bronze medal. Having gone a goal down here in the opening half at the Kalinga Stadium on Sunday, the young side recovered to show they wanted it more. "We are a young team and we want something. You really need to show in these kind of games," Jorrit Croon, the Dutch attacking midfielder said after the game. The Netherlands dominated possession from the start, not allowing Australia time on the ball but went behind in the first quarter. But for the second game in a row, Australia went on to lose, despite taking the lead. Skipper Thierry Briknman helped complete the second half revival with two goals in the space of five minutes.

The Kookaburras scored through Jeremy Hayward, the tournament's prolific drag-flicker, when he found the target in his first try by firing the ball into the bottom right corner. The Netherlands, however, restricted them to only three penalty corners in the game. When the teams came out for the second half, the Dutch improved with their passing and pinned the Aussies into their own half with their high line. They had a flurry of penalty corners and Jip Janssen, Netherlands' potent flicker, managed to find a way through when his powerful flick was deflected by the the first runner Tim Brand and into the top

corner, giving Andrew Charter no chance.

At least 44 die in Lasbela bus accident

Islamabad **POST**

Monday, January 30, 2023

FROM PAGE 01

took place in the wee hours of Sunday as the bus was en route to Karachi from Quetta. Bela Assistant Commissioner Hamza Anjum Nadeem said there were 48 passengers on board the ill-fated bus and the said number of bodies and iniured passengers have been taken out, so far.

He said that the rescue operation is underway and the deceased and injured had been shifted to the Civil Hospital, Lasbela.

Meanwhile, the police said that the accident happened due to overspeeding as the bus went out of the driver's control and was careened into the ravine.

They said that teams of the fire brigade, rescue services, and law enforcement agencies' personnel arrived at the site of the accident and launched a rescue operation. Efforts to completely douse the blaze were underway, they added.

The Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extended his condolences on the tragic death in the incident. He also ordered immediate inquiry. He also called upon the authorities to extend fullest cooperation to the innured.

Meanwhile, the embassies of Turkiye and Iran have extended deepest condolences and sympathy due to the bus accident claiming tens of dear Pakistani loved one's life and some people injured. It wishes full health for the wounded. They prayed that May God bless the soul of the deceased.

The Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Ahmed Rabei also expressed his grief over the tragic incident and prayed for the departed souls to rest in eternal peace.

PM Shehbaz calls upon global unity to fight Islamophobia



AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Association (FBBA). Reds, Faisalabad and Peshawar won their matches in the Quaid-e-Azam Cup

rounds matches organised points in the last minute by the Federal Basketball after a nerve-wracking match. During the match, In the first match Islamboth teams played brilabad Reds defeated the liantly as Mohammad Gujranwala division by 77 Rizwan scored 16 points

wins matches in Quaid-e-Azam Cup from Bilal Khan for the winning side.

In the fourth match, after a tough competition Islamabad Blues defeated Hazara Division by 60-56 points. Noman Khan 22, Shumail Shagri 14 points played a key role in the success of Islamabad Blues while Yasir Ghafoor, Khurram Aftab and Mohammad Mudassar supervised the matches. On the other hand Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) and Wapda qualified for the semi-final round in the Inter-Departmental National Basketball

Championship. Senior Vice President of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Imtiaz Rafi Butt, President Federal Basketball Association (FBBA) Ejaz Butt, PBBF

Casemiro has improved Man Utd: Maguire

LONDON: Casemiro scored twice as Manchester United turned on the style to beat 10-man Reading 3-1 and reach the FA Cup fifth round on Saturday as Tottenham forward Son Heung-min ended his recent goal drought. On a day lacking major shocks, there were wins for Premier League strugglers Leeds, Leicester and Southampton but Fulham were held by Championship side Sunderland. United - fourth in the Premier League and within touching distance of a place in the League Cup final - produced more compelling evidence they are back on track under new manager Erik ten Hag. The home side took the lead at Old Trafford in the 54th minute when Anthony produced a defence-splitting pass to find Brazil teammate Casemiro, who lifted the ball over goalkeeper Joe Lumley.

Four minutes later United were two up, when Casemiro let fly with a stunning strike from outside the box to find the bottom corner. With the home side brimming with confidence, substitute Fred produced an audacious flick from Bruno Fernandes' low cross to the near post to make the game safe. By then Reading were down to 10 men after Andy Carroll was sent off for a second booking but Paul Ince's side still managed to score a consolation goal. Manchester United captain Harry Maguire described former Real Madrid star

tary committees held under the chairmanship of Imran Khan. "We have decided to participate in the by-elections and Imran Khan will contest from all seats," the former foreign minister said, adding that PTI will not leave the political ground empty. He said that people had also supported PTI during the July 17 by-polls, and the party hopes that the masses would once again express their confidence in Imran Khan on March 16 with their votes. The PTI leader said that they were not in contact with the establishment. "The President of Pakistan tried to mediate but did not succeed. He has a constitutional role to play and he's doing that," he added. He said that ECP was mandated to hold elections within 90 days after seats become vacant, and it would be a violation of the constitution if they are not held on time. Talking about the meeting Qureshi said that the committees reviewed the country's political and economic situation. The meeting condemned the arrest of PTI leader Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, urging the Chief Justice of Pakistan to take notice. "We hope that Fawad Chaudhry would get justice and would be released soon,' he added. Fawad's wife Hiba Chaudhry said that the police were not letting her children meet their father despite the court's orders. She said that her husband was being tortured and was presented in court like a terrorist.

Inter-Divisional Basketball Tournament started here at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad According to Federal Bas-

ketball Association Secretary Ouj E Zahoor, Islamabad Red, Gujranwala, Peshawar, Hazara, Islamabad Blues and Faisalabad Division are competing the

points against 55 points. Mohammad Yasir scored 20 and Atiq Khan scored 14 points from Islamabad Reds, while Mohammad Ali scored 12 points from Gu-

jranwala division. In the second match, Faisalabad Division defeated Hazara Division by 62-61 points as Faisalabad team

and Ali Hassan scored 12 points from Faisalabad, while Mohammad Nawaz scored 24 points and Haris Khan scored 14 points for Hazara division. In the third match, Peshawar Division defeated Gujranwala by 90-56 points, thanks to 30 points from Naeemullah and 22 points

Associate Secretary Ouj E Zahoor, Former Pakistan Basketball Team coach Malik M Riaz, Pakistan Sports Board Deputy Director Generals Mansoor Ahmed Khan, Saeed Akhtar, Muhammad Azam Dar and sizeable spectators were witness the matches.

"You don't win what he's won without being a top player," he

said. "He's improved the team, the morale and the performance." Harry Kane was left on the bench for Spurs' match at Preston, meaning he missed out on the chance to break his tie with Jimmy Greaves and become Tottenham's all-time top goalscorer. In the absence of the England captain, Son stepped up with two fine finishes for a much-needed confidence boost. The South Korean, who shared the Premier League's Golden Boot last season, had scored just once in his previous 17 appearances for club and country. - Agencies

FROM PAGE 01 Islamophobe who committed a similar act in Sweden a few days ago. This repetition of the vile act leaves little doubt in the minds of Muslims around the world that freedom of expression is being blatantly abused to spread religious hatred and incitement to violence. It also calls into question the legal framework behind which the Islamophobes hide and spread hatred with impunity. At a time when there is an increasing need for inter-faith harmony and mutual respect for peaceful coexistence, the international community cannot turn a blind eye to these hate mongers.

Pakistan reiterates its considered position that freedom of expression comes with responsibilities. Pakistan also believes that it is the responsibility of the national governments as well as the international community to prevent these racist and Islampohobic acts.

Pakistan's concerns are being conveyed to the authorities in Denmark. We urge them to be mindful of the sentiments of the people of Pakistan and Muslims around the world and take steps to prevent such hateful and Islamophobic acts.

Ulema condemn Quran desecration in Denmark

FROM PAGE 01

legislate from the forum of the United Nations Organizations (UNO) to make an end to Islamophobia. The clerics also stressed that there should be legislation at the global level for the sanctity of all the heavenly religions and divine books. All those who blasphemies the sanctity of the Holy Quran, Prophets and Namoos-e-Risalat of Prophet Muhammad hurt the sentiments of 1.7 billion Muslims across the world. Ulema-Mashayakh made it clear that sacrilegious remarks about the sanctity of any religion cannot be termed as freedom of expression.

Bayern in 'results crisis': Nagelsmann

BERLIN: Bayern Munich coach Julian Nagelsmann said on Saturday his team were in a "results crisis" ahead of next month's Champions League last 16 first leg with Paris Saint Germain. Earlier, Nagelsmann's side were held 1-1 by Eintracht Frankfurt, the German champions' third consecutive 1-1 draw, a little over two weeks out from travelling to PSG on February 14. "If you don't deliver the results, then you are in a results crisis," Nagelsmann told Sky Germany. "There are worst things in life than that, but it's not a good run." Sitting four points clear atop the table during the winter break, Bayern's lead has been cut to just one.

Two of the three draws have come against sides outside of the top four and the 35-year-old coach said his outfit had few opportunities left to find form before the trip to Paris. "To be able to play big games, you also have to play the small ones in such a way that you are in a good run from a psychological point of view," Nagelsmann said. "We don't have too much time left before the really big games to get into that run. So we have to start at some point. The first step is always the hardest." PSG host Bayern in mid-February, with the return fixture in Munich on March 8 and the Germans are currently suffering with injuries to several key players. Goalkeeper and captain Manuel Neuer and defender Lucas Hernandez are out for the remainder of the season. while Nagelsmann said it is unlikely injured forward Sadio Mane will return for the first leg. - Agencies



DHAKA: High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh Imran Ahmed Siddiqui in a group photo with Champion runner up and other participants teams of 1st Pakistan-Bangladesh Friendship Badminton Tournament. - DNA

3 Factory owners booked...

FROM PAGE 01 Sindh health department earlier said the deaths took place over a period of two weeks - between Jan 10 and 25 - in Ali Muhammad Goth and Mowach Goth. Mochko Station House Officer (SHO) Chaudhry Shahid told Dawn. com that a first information report (FIR) had been registered against three factory owners. He said that the case was registered on the complaint of a citizen who had lost four family members while living in Ali Mohammed Goth, located on Suparco Road near Mowach Goth. "Among the three nomi nated suspects, only one has been arrested so far.' the officer said.

Djokovic wins in Melbourne to equal Nadal record Djokovic has not lost at Melbourne Park since 2018 - a streak spanning a record 28 matches in the men's singles. He has regained the crown which he was unable to defend last year after being deported from Australia following a row over his Covid-19 vaccination status

WEB DESK

MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic won a record-extending 10th Australian Open and a record-equalling 22nd Grand Slam men's title by using all of his talent and nous to see off Stefanos Tsitsipas. Serbia's Djokovic started strongly and dug deep in the second set on his way to a 6-3 7-6 (7-4) 7-6 (7-5) victory. The 35-year-old, who draws level with Rafael Nadal in major wins, will return to the world number one ranking. Greece's Tsitsipas, 24, continues his wait for a first Grand Slam triumph. "I have to say this has been one of the most challenging tournaments I have ever played in my life considering the circumstances, not playing last year, coming back this year," said Djokovic. "I try to pinch myself and really live through these moments. It's a long journey. Only the team and the family knows what we have been through in the last four or five weeks. "I would say this is probably the biggest victory of my life, considering those circum-

stances." Tsitsipas lost to Djokovic in his first major final at the 2021 French Open after relinquishing a two-set lead but, this time in Melbourne, he was always chasing the match. In the few precious opportunities he had to threaten Djokovic - notably a set point to level the match at one set all - the third seed was unable to take them. Djokovic has not lost at Melbourne Park since 2018 - a streak spanning a record 28 matches in the men's singles. He has regained the crown which he was unable to defend last year after being deported from Australia following a row over

his Covid-19 vaccination status. Tsitsipas showed resilience to save two championship points but Djokovic took his third chance - this time on his own serve when his opponent hit a return long.

Djokovic turned to his team and family members - including mother Dijana, although father Srdjan did not appear to be present - standing motionless before pointing to his head and his heart. After climbing into the box to celebrate with them, he broke into tears as the magnitude of his achievement hit him and continued sobbing under his towel when he returned to his chair. In the build-up to Sunday's final, Djokovic said he did not feel any different "in terms of stress" as he aimed

to create more history and move closer to cementing his place as the greatest player of all time. While such a title remains subjective and a topic for debate, the defining factor remains the number of major titles. Djokovic moved level with 36-year-old Nadal - and now only trails 24-time champion Margaret Court and Serena Williams, who has 23, on the women's side - and has showed in the past two weeks he has the capacity to win many more. Mentally and physically, his ability is showing few signs of diminishing. He had been hampered by a hamstring injury at Melbourne Park and also had to deal with controversy surrounding his father Srdjan before Friday's semi-final against American Tommy Paul. But time and time again he shows the stoicism to overcome difficult circumstances and produce in the biggest moments. This was the latest example. A confident and collected start against Tsitsipas - targeting the Greek's one-handed backhand, which can be beautifully effective but also liable to break down - set the platform for Djokovic to comfortably claim the opening set.

BUSINESS / WORLD

Briefs

French energy union in 'Robin **Hood action**'

PARIS: A French union plays "Robin Hood" by distributing free electricity and gas to protest a pension reform project - which includes gradually raising the retirement age from 62 to 64, accosting the country's largest union, CGT.

The project triggered outrage after the government announced plans.

Strikes and protests broke out across the country Jan. 19, with at least 2 million people taking part in mass demonstrations, according to CGT. The CGT said Thursday that members working in the energy sector have been in a "Robin Hood action" against the reform proposal, in the Parisian region and other cities, including Lille, Nantes, Lyon, Nice and Marseille. "Several hospitals and clinics, municipal skating rinks and swimming pools, public sports centers, ... libraries, middle schools, high schools, nurseries, collective heating of universities or HLMs (low-rent housings), public lighting of small and medium-sized towns and social housings have received free electricity or gas," said CGT.

Energy workers protesting the reform project also placed small businesses, such as bakeries, on reduced tariffs. "These actions of Robin Hood of the energy have only started," said the union Sebastien Menesplier, the head of FNME, the mines and energy branch of the CGT. told broadcaster BFMTV that workers have not cut the power of specific targets. The CGT previously suggested cutting gas and electricity in towns of elected representatives who support the reform proposal.-APP

Women drive fast train to Mecca

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia, Jan 29 (AFP/APP):Driver Tharaa Ali takes her seat t the neim of a high-speed train ferrying pilgrims to Mecca, a beneficiary of conservative Saudi Arabia's bid to employ its booming female workforce. Saudi women only gained the right to drive in 2018, and until recently 25-yearold Ali's transportation experience was limited to cruising around her native Jeddah in the family sedan. But last year she joined some 28,000 applicants vying for just 32 slots for women drivers on the Haramain High Speed Railway, which the 450-kilometre plies (280-mile) route between the holy cities of Mecca and Medina at speeds of up to 300 kilometres (186 miles) per hour.-APP

Retired Gen. Pavel wins Czech presidential election

Turnout in the country of 10.5 million people was unusually high at 70 percent

DNA

PRAGUE: Retired NATO general Petr Pavel beat a billionaire former prime minister in an election runoff to become the fourth president of the Czech Republic, official results showed. Pavel, a former paratrooper, won 58 percent of votes while Andrej Babis scored 42 percent, with 99 percent of the vote counted, according to the Czech Statistical Office. "I would like to thank those who voted for me and also those who did not but came to the polls, because they made it clear they honored democracy and cared about this country," Pavel said after the results showed his victory.

"I can see that values such as truth, dignity, respect and humility have won in this election," he added. The 61-year-old Pavel will in March replace President Milos Zeman, an outspoken and divisive politician who fostered close ties with Moscow before making a U-turn when Russia in-



vaded Ukraine last year. I can see that values such as truth, dignity, respect and humility have won in this election.Turnout in the EU and NATO member country of 10.5 million people was unusually high at 70 percent following an acrimonious campaign marked by controversy. Babis and his family have been targeted by death

threats, while Pavel was the victim of a hoax claiming he was dead as disinformation plagued the final campaign. "Our community is somewhat hurt by the presidential campaign, by the multiple crises we have faced and are facing, but also by the political style that has recently prevailed here," said Pavel. "This has to change, and you

have helped me to take the first step on the path towards this change." While the role is largely ceremonial, the Czech president names the government, picks the central bank governor and constitutional judges, and serves as commander of the armed forces. Voting for Pavel in the small town of Dobrichovice southwest of Prague, Irena Cihelkova said that the new president should "be forthcoming and friendly, an asset for the country, and not make problems abroad like some other Czech statesmen." Pavel will be the fourth Czech president since the country's independence following its peaceful split with Slovakia in 1993, four years after former Czechoslovakia shed four decades of totalitarian communist rule. His predecessors were Vaclav Havel, an anti-communist dissident playwright who led the country from 1993-2003, economist Vaclav Klaus and Zeman. A graduate of a military universi-

ty, Pavel was decorated as a hero in the Serbo-Croatian war when he helped free French troops from a war zone. He rose to chief of the Czech general staff and chair of NATO's military committee. Like Babis, Pavel was a member of the Communist Party in the 1980s. But the man with a carefully trimmed beard and white hair, who has a passion for powerful motorbikes, has since become a strong advocate of EU and NATO membership. "We have no better alternative. We should use all opportunities offered by membership and try to change that which we don't like," he said on his campaign website. "Czechia is a sovereign state and a full member, therefore we can't just sit quietly, nod and then slam the result. We have to be more active and, at the same time, constructive." Pavel has vowed to be an independent president unaffected by party politics and to continue to support aid to war-torn Ukraine as well as its bid to become an EU member. "Naturally, Ukraine first has to meet all conditions to become a member, such as progress in battling corruption. But I believe it is entitled to get the same chance we got in the past," he said.

Japan's monthly COVID deaths **cross 10,000**

IslamabadPOST

Monday, January 30, 2023

TOKYO: –Japan logged 252 new coronavirus deaths over the past 24 hours, exceeding the monthly figure of 10,000 for the first time, the Health Ministry said on Sunday. The new fatalities have brought the death toll for January to 10,124, Kyodo News agency reported, citing a tally based on prefectural reports. Previously, over 7,600 people died in December, the highest monthly total at that time. The nation has seen a rapid surge in coronavirus deaths since November. Around 54,800 new infections were reported nationwide on Saturday, with 533 patients in critical condition, according to prefectural governments. Daily infections have been declining since the middle of the month. Tokyo has decided to downgrade the legal status of coronavirus in May to the same category as seasonal influenza and other common infections, a crucial move that will lead to a normalization of social and economic activities in one of the world's top industrial countries.-DNA

5.9-magnitude quake rattles northwestern Iran

TEGRAN: A 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck Iran's northwestern province of West Azerbaijan on Saturday with shockwaves felt in many cities, emergency officials said. The quake was reported at around 9.44 p.m. local time (1814GMT) at a shallow depth of 7 kilometers (4.34 miles), with its epicenter near the city of Khoy. According to local officials and media reports, the high-intensity quake was felt in multiple cities, including the provincial capital and largest city Urmia, with multiple aftershocks.

Casualties and damage to properties are feared, especially in Khoy, although there is still no confirmation on the number and extent. Moitaba Khaledi, the spokesman of Iran's Emergency Organization, told state TV that preliminary

Invest in Pak tourism sector, Masood urges Pakistani Americans

He urged the community members to encourage fellow Americans to go to Pakistan as it was a safe place to enjoy it's tourist attractions.

NEW YORK: Pakistan has the most beautiful and undiscovered touristic sites with huge untapped tourism potential, Ambassador Masood Khan said Saturday, urging members of the Pakistani community to help boost tourism in their motherland by investing in this potentially lucrative sector. Masood Khan, who is Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, was speaking at a well-attended reception for the Pakistani delegates to New York's Travel and Adventure Show at the Consulate here. Pakistan, he said, was not only home to ancient and modern civilizations, but also vast untouched coastal areas, deserts, and a rich cultural heritage - all making the country as one of the top travel destinations in the world. Ayesha Ali, the Pakistani consul general, welcomed the visiting delegates, saying they did a great job in setting up the impressive Pakistan Pavilion at the two-day Travel and Adventure show

Greek PM survives

no-confidence vote

ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis sur-

vived a no-confidence vote filed by the main opposition

SYRIZA party for his alleged links to a surveillance scandal.

Taking to the floor of parliament before Mitsotakis, main

scandal, which he called the greatest deviation in the coun-

try since 1974 when democracy was restored. "Ultimately,

the time of crisis comes at some point, for everyone and

everything," he said and added that Mitsotakis has been

conducting concealments, blackmails, intimidation and nu-

To cover up, he argued: "You unleashed an unprece-

dented wave of intimidation against those who know of

it." "You knew everything and for six months you lied

everywhere," he said and argued that the premier is the

mastermind of the parastatal organization which put

many journalists, businessmen, generals and politicians

under illegal surveillance. He accused the prime minis-

ter of "selling cheap patriotism" and drew attention to

He claimed some of the arms are not necessary or wanted

by military leadership. Mitsotakis focused on comparing the

"achievements" of his government in many sectors - includ-

ing the fight against irregular migration, foreign policy and

the economy - with the Tsipras government that ruled from

2015 -2019. He accused SYRIZA of causing divisions and

consequently harming Greece. In reference to elections that are expected in late spring or early summer, Mitsotakis

said "Democracy will be protected with the victory of the

(ruling) Nea Dimokratia." The motion of no confidence was

which did not benefit the local industry.

eventually rejected 156 to 143. - Agencies

merous kinds of illegalities to avoid facing "this moment."

in which 185 countries are taking part. The reception followed the inauguration of the Pakistan pavilion at the show, depicting the country's tourism potential, by the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Tourism and Sports, Aun Chaudhry. Aun Chaudhry cut a green ribbon to open the pavilion to visitors, saying, "Pakistan is open for tourism." The PM's aide also said that the pavilion showcased the culture of all provinces of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, with a sharp focus on scenic Gilgit-Baltistan as well as its historical past. Present at the inaugural ceremony at the show, among others, were the Minister for Tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan, Raja Nasir Ali Khan, the Azad Kashmir Tourism Minister, Faheem Akhtar, Ambassador Masood Khan, Consul General Ayesha Ali, and the Managing Director of the Pakistan Tourism and Development Corporation (PTDC). Aftab Rana. In his remarks at the reception. Ambassador Masood Khan said he was very impressed by the dynamism and the energy of the officials and delegates manning the stalls at the Pakistani pavilion while briefing tourism lovers about

the ancient and cultural sites in Pakistan as well as the facilities

'Ideology of hate' consuming India, says Gandhi's great-grandson

MUMBAI: India's rising tide of Hindu nationalism is an affront to the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, his great-grandson says, ahead of the 75th anniversary of the revered independence hero's assassination. Gandhi was shot dead at a multi-faith prayer meeting on January 30, 1948, by Nathuram Godse, a religious zealot angered by his victim's conciliatory gestures to the country's minority Muslim community. Godse was executed the following year and remains widely reviled, but author and social activist Tushar Gandhi, one of the global peace symbol's most prominent descendants, says his views now have a worrying resonance in India.

"That whole philosophy has now captured India and Indian hearts, the ideology of hate, the ideology of polarisation, the ideology of divisions," he told AFP at his Mumbai home. "For them, it's very natural that Godse would be their iconic patriot, their idol." Tushar, 63, attributes this tectonic shift to the rise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Modi took office in 2014 and Tushar says his government is to blame for undermining the secular and multicultural traditions that his namesake sought to protect. "His success has been built on hate, we must accept that," Tushar added.

"There is no denving that in his heart, he also knows what he is doing is lighting a fire that will one day consume India itself." Today, Gandhi's assassin is revered by many Hindu nationalists who have pushed for a re-evaluation of his decision to murder a man synonymous with non-violence. A temple dedicated to Godse was built near

Turkish firm chosen for NATO intelligence software

ANKARA: All NATO facilities around the world will soon be using an intelligence infrastructure software developed by a Turkish defense firm. STM, a Turkish state-run defense company, announced it has secured two major contracts regarding the direction, collection, process, dissemination, and use of intelligence information within NATO. The decision was taken by the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCI Agency), which handles all acquisition, deployment, and maintenance of communications and information systems for the alliance's leaders and commanders. STM beat out competition from several leading software companies from NATO member states to land what it said was "one of the largest software development projects ever assigned by NATO to Türkiye." STM and the NCI Agency signed two contracts after pre-award negotiations regarding the projects, officially named Intelligence Functional Services (INTEL-FS 2), read a statement issued on Saturday. "The software that will be developed by STM will support the NATO commands in the direction, collection, process, dissemination, and use of intelligence information," the company said.-APP

provided for tourists. He urged the community members to en courage fellow Americans to go to Pakistan as it was a safe place to enjoy it's tourist attractions. The ambassador said efforts were being made to further ease the grant of visas to tourists. Raja Nasir highlighted the services available in Gilgit-Baltistan for adventure sports like skiing, paragliding, ice hockey and polo.-APP

New Delhi in 2015, the year after Modi's election, and activists have campaigned to honour him by renaming an Indian city after him. Godse was a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a still-prominent Hindu far-right group whose members conduct paramilitary drills and prayer meetings. - APP

of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The voting started at 8am local time but thou-

sands started arriving at the centre from around

7am. Thousands of Sikhs formed queues in Mel-

bourne's Federation Square to cast their votes

for Khalistan Referendum voting at the sprawl-

ing local arts centre. Within an hour, the queue

stretched to around two kilometres going past

the Flinders Train Station to the deep town. Sikh

youth, men, women and elderly formed queues

carrying banners and flags of Khalistan. They

chanted slogans of Khalistan Zindabad (Long Live

Khalistan), Ban Kay Rehay Ga Khalistan (Khal-

reading "Khalistan Referendum, Punjab, Shim-

la Capital" and "Khalistan Referendum, Seces-

sion of Punjab from India'. Sikh men arrived in

jeeps, cars and coaches to take part in voting.

Outside the venue, a group of dholists played

traditional Punjabi dhol, Sangat songs and

chanted slogans for the martyrs of 1984 Op-

eration Blue Star and for the freedom of Punjab.

Voting in the referendum, which started in Octo-

ber 2021 in seven cities of the United Kingdom,

has so far been held also in Switzerland, Italy and

two Canadian centres.-Agencies



TEHRAN: Foreign Minister of Iran inquires about health of the security guard injured during an armed attack on the Azerbaijan embassy in Tehran. Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Iran Ali Alizada briefs the minister about the attack.-DNA

reports suggest damage in Khoy as a result of the quake, adding that ambulances have been dispatched from nearby cities of Urmia and Tabriz. The teams of the Red

Crescent Society in the province, which borders Azerbaijan, have also been dispatched to the worst-hit areas to assess the damage, officials said. Zabihullah Kazemi, governor of Khov, was quoted as saying by the state news agency that 15 teams have been sent to the quake-hit areas to assess the extent of damage and provide relief to people. The province was jolted by a 5.4-magnitude earthquake earlier this month, which shook the city of Khoy and caused extensive damage to properties there.

In October, a 5.4 magnitude earthquake in the city of Khoy injured nearly 400 people and partially or fully damaged hundreds of urban and rural residential properties. Iran is located in a seismically active zone and has seen many catastrophic earthquakes in the past years.-APP

UK premier sacks Conservative chief Zahawi

LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Sunday fired Nadhim Zahawi as the chairman of the Conservative Party after an ethics probe into his tax affairs. Sunak said an investigation by his independent ethics adviser, Laurie Magnus, found that "it is clear that there has been a serious breach of the ministerial code." "As a result, I have informed you of my decision to remove you from your position in His Majesty's Govern-ment," he said in a letter to Zahawi published on istan will be formed at any cost) and Hindutva Sunday. Zahawi had been Namanzoor (Hindutva Unacceptable). At the under mounting pressure entrance of the centre, large banners hung to resign after it emerged that he paid a penalty over unpaid taxes in a multimillion-pound dispute while he was chancellor last year. The dispute was related to the polling company YouGov that Zahawi co-established in 2000 before he became a member of parliament, according to local media reports.-DNA

Over 55,000 Sikhs vote for Khalistan referendum and Shaheed Bhai Kehar Singh - the assassing

MELBOURNE: More than 55,000 Sikhs voted for Khalistan Referendum in a strong show of defiance to the Indian government's attempts to stop the local Sikhs from taking part in the democratic voting system to raise demand for the creation of Khalistan in Indian Punjab. The organising group Sikhs For Justice and independent observers said the total number of Sikhs who cast their votes stood between 55,000 to 60,000 by the time the doors were closed by the centre's management as well as the Punjab Referendum Commission (PRC). While a large queue was still in place outside stretching from the voting centre all the way to the Flinders Street station. While over 55,000 Sikh men and women - over the age of 18 - were eligible to cast their votes, an estimated 15,000 voters were unable to cast their votes due to time limitations. There was a stampede when those standing in the queue crashed the entrance gate and made their way to the voting hall to cast their votes in the last 10 minutes. Thousands more stood outside in queues waiting to get in, but were stopped by the PRC members as a time to extend voting was not allowed. Addressing those waiting outside, a local Sikh leader Gurminder Singh said that they will be able to participate in the voting for their homeland of Khalistan on a separate voting date, which will be announced in due course. He regretted that thousands waited in queues and

had to be turned back, as voting ended at 5pm. The Khalistan Referendum campaign is being run across the world by the pro-Khalistan group, SFJ, whose counsel general Gurpatwant Singh Pannun welcomed the turnout at Melbourne's Federation Square. "The first phase of Khalistan Referendum voting in Melbourne has established the fact that Sikhs are for Khalistan and will continue the peaceful and democratic process under the United Nations Charter to liberate Punjab from Indian occupation.Khalistan is the only solu tion

as successive Indian regimes from Indira Gandhi to Narendra Modi have committed the genocide of Sikhs with impunity," Pannun stated. He added: "After seeing Sikh people's support for Khalistan. the liberation of Punjab from Indian occupation is inevitable and we do agree with Modi that India should be only Hindu country and [Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] BJP-RSS also should continue with Hindutva agenda."The Melbourne Khalistan Referendum voting centre was dedicated to Shaheed Bhai Satwant Singh









BriefsPope condemns increasing 'death spiral' in ME

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis on Sunday condemned a resurgence of violence in the Middle East, calling on both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to engage in a "sincere search for peace." "The death spiral that increases day by day only closes the few glimmers of trust that exist between the two peoples," said the pope following his traditional Angelus prayer in St. Peter's Square.

Francis, 86, cited 10 Palestinians, including a woman, killed in an Israeli army raid on a refugee camp in the West Bank, and an attack Friday by a Palestinian gunman that killed seven Israelis outside a synagogue in east Jerusalem. "Since the beginning of the year, dozens of Palestinians have been killed in clashes with the Israeli army," said the pope. "I appeal to the two governments and the international community to find other ways without delay, including dialogue and the sincere search for peace." "It is with great sorrow that I learn of the news coming from the Holy Land," he said. – APP

Strikes to disrupt public transport in France

Agencies

PARIS: Public transport in France will be heavily disrupted on Tuesday due to labour union strikes protesting the government's planned changes to pension, Transport Minister Clement Beaune said on Sunday. "It will be a difficult, very difficult day for public transport... We expect major disruptions," Beaune said on LCI TV. He added that the government remained open to talks with the unions but he said that the government would maintain the core tar get of the change proposed by President Emmanuel Macron; the increase of the retirement age by two years to 64. "The heart of the reform will not change," he said. The government wants to gradually increase the retirement age by three months per year from September, until 2030. From 2027 workers will also have to make social security contributions over 43 years rather than 42 years in order to draw a full pension. The additional year was already foreseen in a 2014 reform but the government is accelerating the pace of transition. Unions - including the moderate CFDT union - are united against the reform and have vowed to continue strikes and demonstrations until the government drops its plans.

Iran says attack should not affect Azerbaijan ties

Iran and Azerbaijan disagree on whether Friday's attack on the Azeri embassy in Tehran constituted a 'terrorist act'

News Desk

TEHRAN: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi has told his Azerbaijani counterpart that bilateral relations should not be affected after an attack on Baku's embassy in Tehran that left one person dead. The attack took place on Friday when a man rushed the embassy with an assault rifle and opened fire, killing the head of the security staff and injuring two other guards. Raisi and President Ilham Aliyev had a phone call on Saturday to discuss the issue, during which the Iranian president expressed his condolences and said an investigation is under way.

"The governments of Iran and Azerbaijan will not allow bilateral relations to be affected by the suggestions of those who wish ill on the two nations," Raisi was quoted as saying on his official website. The Iranian president's website also quoted Aliyev as saying "this was an unexpected crime, but cooperation between the two countries on this must be in a way that no one will find an opportunity to disrupt friendly bilateral relations using such incidents as an excuse". But the readout of the call by the Azerbaijani presidency made no mention of this, further stressing a point concerning the attack that has divided Tehran and Baku. Ilham Aliyev strongly condemned the terrorist act and stressed that

had it not been for a second guard who tackled the gunman, "he would have targeted other employees of the embassy and their family members living in the apartment section of the embassy compound".

CCTV footage released by Iran showed the attacker hurriedly arriving at the scene with his car and crashing into another vehicle parked in front of the embassy. After exiting the car with the rifle in hand, he passes an unarmed Iranian guard sitting in a booth and enters the embassy shooting. While shooting at two Azerbaijani guards, a third tackles him, eventually disarming the attacker. Aliyev had immediately condemned the incident as a "terrorist act" while the Azerbaijani foreign ministry summoned Iran's envoy to Baku and said it will evacuate its diplomatic staff. Many countries, including Pakistan, Russia, Turkey and the United States condemned the attack and called for a transparent investigation.

called for a transparent investigation. Iran, home to millions of ethnic Azeris, has long accused Baku of fomenting separatist sentiments in the country and has also taken issue with some of its plan following the Nagorno-Karabakh war that could affect its borders with Armenia. Tehran has also repeatedly warned Baku against its expanding military cooperation with Israel, saying Israel could potentially use Azerbaijani territory as a bridgehead against Iran.

US Police unit disbanded after murder accusations

WEB DESK

MEMPHIS: The Memphis Police Department has disbanded the so-called Scorpion special unit, whose officers are accused of murdering Tyre Nichols. Scorpion stands for

"Street Crimes Operation to Restore Peace in Our Neighborhoods". The unit is a 50-person

team tasked with bringing down crime levels in particular areas.

But now it is being abolished after its officers were seen beating Mr Nichols, 29, in the videos from 7 January.

In a statement, the department said "it is in the best interest of all to permanently deactivate" the unit.

Chatter ongoing to create One-Unit: Raza Rabbani

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Senate chairman Raza Rabbani on Sunday said that speculations with regard to presidential system and change in basic structure of the constitution have surfaced again. "There is chatter with regard to an attempt to rollback 18th Amendment and create the One Unit again," Rabbani has said.

"No effort will be allowed to rollback 18th Amendment," Senator Rabbani said. "We were thinking that the existing parliament was thinking about the new parliament but this parliament thinking to roll back the parliament," Raza Rabbani said. "Don't play with the basic structure of the constitution," he advised. He had also expressed opposition to the passage of the Foreign Investment (Promotion and Protection) Bill, 2022 which paved the way for the signing of a settlement deal *"We were thinking that the existing parliament*

was thinking about the new parliament but this parliament thinking to roll back the parliament," Raza Rabbani said. "Don't play with the basic structure of the constitution"

on Reko Diq mining project as he termed the legislation an "attempt to rollback 18th Amendment". Raza Rabbani, who is a senior leader of the Pakistan People's Party, earlier observed that the parliament's powers were encroached upon by the executive. Through subordinate legislation, an attempt is being made to roll back the 18th Constitutional Amendment", he observed. Rabbani was one of the four senators from the treasury benches who had opposed the bill in the Senate. – **DNA**

Status Status

Iranian military factory hit by drone attack

Ukraine says it repels attack around Blahodatne

Poliovirus detected again in Lahore sewage

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Health (NIH) on Sunday confirmed the detection of poliovirus from Lahore's environmental samples for the second time this month.

According to the NIH, the poliovirus was detected in sewage water in the Multan Road area, on January 16 and in samples taken from Gulshan Ravi Lahore on January 2. – **APP** The attack "has not affected our installations and mission...and such blind measures will not have an impact on the continuation of the country's progress'

TEHRAN: A loud explosion struck a military industry factory near Iran's central city of Isfahan overnight, in what Tehran said on Sunday was a drone strike by unidentified attackers. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, which came amid tension with the West over Tehran's nuclear work and supply of arms for Russia's war in Ukraine, as well as months of anti-government demonstrations at home. The extent of the damage could not be independently confirmed. Iran's Defence Ministry said the explosion caused only minor damage and no casualties. Iranian media video showing a flash of light at the plant, which the official IRNA news agency described as an ammunitions factory. Footage showed emergency vehicles and fire trucks outside the complex. "Around 23:30 (2000 GMT) on Saturday night, an unsuccessful attack was carried out using micro Aerial Vehicles (MAVs) on one of the ministry's workshop sites," the Defence Ministry said in a statement carried by Iran's state TV. It said one drone was shot down "and the other two were caught in defence traps and blew up. It caused only minor damage to the roof of a workshop building. There were no casualties." The attack "has not affected our installations and mission...and such blind measures will not have an impact on the continuation of the country's progress." Seperately, IRNA reported early on Sunday a massive fire at a motor oil factory in an industrial zone near the northwestern city of Tabriz. It gave no information about the cause of that blaze. - DNA

Tunisia votes again in 2nd round of elections

In December's first round of voting, 23 candidates were elected to 161-member parliament. Special elections will be held later for seven constituencies with no candidates

TUNISIA: Tunisian voters are heading to polling stations on Sunday for the second round of parliamentary elections in a country embroiled in a deepening political crisis. Polls opened at 8 a.m. local time (0700GMT) and are set to close at 6 p.m. (1700GMT).

More than 10,000 ballot boxes have been placed at 4,222 election centers across the country, according to government figures. A total of 262 candidates, including 34 women, are in the running for 131 seats. In December's first round of voting, 23 candidates were elected to the 161-member parliament. Special elections will be held later for seven constituencies with no candidates. The early polls are the latest step in a series of exceptional measures taken by President Kais Saied, which started in July 2021 with ousting the government, dissolving parliament, and drafting a new constitution. With around 9.2 million eligible voters, the first round saw a meager turnout of 11.22%, fueling more calls from the opposition for Saied to step down. – **DNA**

Netanyahu criticized for easing'shoot at Palestinians'

Israeli PM's plan to expedite gun permits for Israelis gives the 'green light' to inflict more violence on Palestinians, analysts say

DNA

JERUSALEM: A rise in violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem is feared following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to make it easier for Israelis to acquire firearms. On Saturday, Netanyahu said he would expedite gun permits for Israeli citizens and to step up efforts to collect "illegal weapons". His office also promised new steps to "strengthen" illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. The announcements were made after a meeting of Netanyahu's security cabinet – filled with hardline politicians – over two shootings that included an attack in occupied East Jerusalem. Seven people were killed in the shooting outside an East Jerusalem synagogue on Friday. The shootings took place towards the end of a month of growing confrontation and follow an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin that killed nine Palestinians and exchanges of fire between Israel and Gaza. In all, Israeli forces have killed 32 Palestinians this month.

In all, Israeli forces have killed 32 Palestinians this month. The new Israeli government, inaugurated last month, is the most right-wing in the country's history and has sparked fears for Palestinians living under illegal Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and in Israel proper, as well as left-wing Israelis. Part of the new government are national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and finance minister Bezalel Smotrich, both outspoken about their intention to expand illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank and the annexation of Palestinian land, and are notorious for inciting violence against Palestinians. "And you also have a prime minister who's making it clear that people should be armed and they're going to do nothing to stop the killing of Palestinians are going to be killed."

KYIV: Ukraine's military said on Sunday its forces repelled an attack in the area of Blahodatne in the eastern part of the Donetsk region, while Russia's Wagner private military group said it took control of the village. "Units of Ukraine's Defence Forces repelled the attacks of the occupiers in the areas of ... Blahodatne ... in the Donetsk region," the General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces said in its daily morning report, referring to fighting on Saturday. It added that its forces repelled Russian attacks in the areas of 13 other settlements in the Donetsk region. The Wagner Group, designated by the United States as transnational crimi-

nal organisation, said on the Telegram messaging app on Saturday that its units had taken control of Blahodatne. With fighting heating up in the Donetsk region, the exact line of contact has been unclear, especially around the town Bakhmut where some of the heaviest fighting of the war has been taking place in recent weeks. The Wagner Group has made premature success claims before. Ukraine has said that the Russian offensive on Bakhmut has not culminated, but the situation along the front line there has been growingly difficult. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Friday that it was acute.

Four civilians were killed, one in Bakhmut, and 17 wounded in Russian attacks on the region on Saturday, Pavlo Kyrylenko, governor of the Donetsk region said on the Telegram messaging app.

Ukraine has won promises of Western battle tanks and is seeking fighter jets to push back against Russian and pro-Moscow forces, which are slowly advancing along part of the front line. On Saturday, Zelenskiy's top aide said that expedited talks were under way between Ukraine and its allies about its requests for long-range missiles to prevent Russia from destroying Ukrainian cities. – Agencies



A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE BY MURREE SPARKLETTS LET THE CUSTOMER DECIDE!

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