



# Islamabad POST

Saturday, December 31, 2022

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

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### Myanmar's Suu Kyi convicted of corruption, jailed for seven years

Detailed News On Page-08

### US House body releases Trump tax returns

Detailed News On Page-08



### Tributes pour in for football legend Pele

Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

### Qin Gang appointed Chinese new FM

DNA

BEIJING: Qin Gang, currently Chinese ambassador to the United States, was appointed as the country's new foreign minister on Friday, replacing Wang Yi. Wang, 69, was elected to the politburo of the Chinese Communist Party in October and is expected to play a bigger role in foreign policy. Qin is the 11th Chinese ambassador to the United States, assuming office in July 2021, CGTN reported. Prior to the ambassadorship, he was the vice foreign minister. A rising star in the foreign ministry, Qin rose through various positions, including as the ministry's spokesman and postings at the Chinese embassy in Britain. A trusted aide of President Xi Jinping, Qin also served as the leader's chief protocol officer between 2014 and 2018. He will now return to Beijing from Washington after 17 months as China's 11th ambassador to the US.

### Sherry says PTI back to square one

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior Pakistan Peoples Party leader Sherry Rehman said on Friday that the PTI had no other options. Taking to twitter, she said the PTI was incapable to play the role of opposition in the parliament and the people were fed with the PTI's style of politics. The PPP leader said that almost 20 million flood affected in the country were in need of aid and the PTI was not showing any sympathy for them. She added the priority of the PTI was to be relevant in politics only and it was incompetent to run the affairs of the country because its politics was based on division, abuse and blame game.

## Holiday Notice

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

## Inside...

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Pakistan hold New Zealand for a draw in first test match - Page 06

China shows commitment to strengthen Pak economy - Page 07

Myanmar's Suu Kyi jailed for 7 years over corruption charges - Page 08

# NSC reiterates Pakistan's integrity to be secured

## Terrorists are real enemies; NSC vows to respond to terror with full force

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The National Security Committee (NSC) meeting Friday decided to turn up the heat on the militancy with relentless counter and preemptive measures to neutralise the threats present in the country in any form. In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office said the NSC's participants expressed an unequivocal opinion that Pakistan's national interests will not be compromised and no one will be allowed to harm the national security. PM chaired the NSC meeting, which was attended by services chiefs, intelligence heads, and federal ministers, the statement mentioned. The meetings come after the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) announced an end to the ceasefire with Islamabad and ramped up attacks on security forces, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. During the meeting, the participants took into stock the country's economic and security situation, the statement said. The government and state institutions resolved that Pakistan's fundamental interests for existence, security and progress will be well-protected with bravery and lasting strategy. "Unequivocal opinion was expressed to defend the country's national interests and not allow

Continued on Page 06

## Terrorists storm police check post in DI Khan

BUREAU REPORT

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Terrorists armed with sophisticated weapons stormed Tikwara police check post in Dera Ismail Khan injuring three policemen late last night. However, in the ensuing gun battle, several militants were killed and police managed to repulse the attack. As many as 20 terrorists attacked Tikwara police check post last night. They opened fire using Kalashnikov guns from three sides. They also hurled rocket launchers and hand grenade at the police post. According to police, they also retaliated and traded fire. They fought bravely and forced the militants to retreat. In the gunfight which continued for almost 2 1/2 hours, several terrorists were killed and three cops got hurt. Police said that the retreating militants took with them their dead and injured men. After receiving information of the attack,

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs the NSC meeting, which is attended by services chiefs, intelligence heads, and federal ministers. - DNA

## Intel sources project PTI win

### PML-N may finish 2nd with 25 possible seats

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The sources have reportedly informed the federal government about the ground situation in Islamabad regarding upcoming local government elections. According to a notification, PTI is projected to win at least 63 Chairman seats in federal capital. While PML-N is expected to win 25, and independent candidates can win up to 16 seats. It is pertinent to mention here that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday postponed the local government elections scheduled for December 31 in Islamabad following a change in the union councils of the federal capital. The bench had reserved the verdict earlier in the day after arguments were concluded in the case.

# ECP asked to hold Islamabad LG polls today

## LG polls in the capital city were scheduled to be held on Dec 31

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday ordered the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold local government elections in the federal capital on Saturday (today). Earlier, the commission had informed the court that it was ready to hold the local government elections in the federal capital in four months. The top election body stated this in its reply as the high court ordered it to submit a timeline for holding elections in Islamabad. The LG polls in the capital city were scheduled to be held on Dec 31 but the ECP postponed these due to government's decision of increasing the number of union councils (UCs) in the city. The ECP said it was serious in performing its constitutional duty to hold election on time, while putting the blame of delay in the LG polls on

Continued on Page 06

## Govt expresses inability to hold LG polls

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: Minutes after the court's directives to conduct LG polls tomorrow (December 31), Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said Friday the federal government is not in a position to hold local government elections in Islamabad. "We respect the court [Islamabad High Court], but holding the elections is not possible as the arrangements cannot be made in such a short period," the federal minister told media.

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# PTI to win majority in Islamabad polls

## Chairman PTI welcomes IHC's decision

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: While welcoming IHC's decision to direct ECP to hold local government elections in the federal capital today (Saturday), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman urged the people of Islamabad to fully participate in the LG polls in order to inflict crushing defeat on these cabal of thieves. In a special congratulatory message to the people of the federal capital on Friday, PTI Chairman said that they got an opportunity to elect their local government in the wake of the IHC's decision. Imran Khan stated that it was really unfortunate that ECP always worked as facilitator of the corrupt gang imposed on the country, as the electoral watchdog often gave decisions against democracy just to benefit these thieves. However, he went on to say that the honorable courts always rejected all the illegal decisions taken by the Election Commission.

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## PTI starts protest drive against inflation

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) finalized a well-conceived strategy to launch protest movement in major cities across the country against the back-breaking inflation and sinking economy, which would be commenced from today (Saturday). The public miseries were increasing with each passing day due to flawed economic policies of the inapt imported government. As per the set plan, the PTI would start its massive protest rally drive against skyrocketing inflation from Gujranwala on December 31, which would be culminated in Sialkot on January 16. On January 1, major protest rallies would be

Continued on Page 06

## Russia offers blended crude oil to Pakistan

KARACHI: Russia has made an offer to provide blended crude oil to Pakistan as the country's refining sector is not able to process crude oil of one specification, media reported. The offer was made during a virtual meeting held between Pakistani and Russian authorities. The offer is a part of the 100,000 barrels per day crude oil supply. The Pakistani side, led by State Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik, comprised senior officials of the Petroleum Division. - APP

# Putin expects China's Xi to visit soon; Xi holds his line on Ukraine

## Although Xi called Putin his "dear friend", his introductory statement, at around a quarter the length of Putin's, was far more pragmatic in tone



NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday he was expecting Chinese President Xi Jinping to make a state visit early next year in what would be a public show of solidarity from Beijing as Russia's invasion of Ukraine falters. But an official Chinese readout of a video summit between the two leaders highlighted differences in approach to their developing alliance, making no mention

of a visit and stressing that Beijing, which has declined to back or condemn the invasion, would maintain its "objective and fair" stance on the issue. Since sending its troops into Ukraine in February, Russia has turned its back on the Western powers that have ostracised it economically and politically and armed Ukraine, courting the rising global power of long-time rival China instead. "We are expecting you, dear Mr Chairman, dear friend, we are expecting you next spring on a state visit to Moscow," Putin told Xi in an effusive eight-minute introductory statement broadcast on state television. "This will demonstrate to the whole world the strength of Russian-Chinese ties on key issues." He also said he aimed to boost military cooperation with China - although there was no mention of this in the Chinese state broadcaster CCTV's report of the call. Although Xi called Putin his "dear friend", his introductory statement, at around a quarter the length of Putin's, was far more pragmatic in tone. The two men had signed a "no limits" strategic partnership in February, informed by shared distrust of the West, a few days before Russia sent its armed forces into Ukraine in what it terms a "special military operation".

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# LHC orders PDMA to develop App to monitor pollution

The court ordered the closure of all markets and shops till 10 pm. However, the court allowed shopkeepers to open shops on Sunday from 3 PM to 10 PM

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court has ordered the Provincial Disaster Management Authority to develop an application to monitor pollution in the atmosphere. This order was issued by Justice Shahid Karim Friday during the hearing of a petition pertaining to anti-smog efforts being taken by the Punjab government. The judge ordered the Provincial Disaster Management Authority to develop an App on which any citizen

could register his/her complaint about pollution. He further directed that factories which were responsible for the pollution and smog, they should be warned only once. And in case, these factories again violate the rules, they should be razed, the judge added. During its last hearing on Tuesday, the Lahore High Court ordered to extend winter holidays in educational institutions for another week keeping in view the rising level of air pollution in the province. Earlier, on Dec 14, the court ordered the authorities concerned to

ensure implementation of its orders regarding closure of government and private schools thrice a week and work from home for private companies employees twice a week to protect citizens from the effects of smog. The court ordered the closure of all markets and shops till 10 pm. However, the court allowed shopkeepers to open shops on Sunday from 3 PM to 10 PM. The court ordered that restaurants should be closed till 10 PM from Monday to Thursday. However, restaurants can open from Friday to Sunday till 11 PM.

# Imran 'failed to deliver' in KP, says Amir Muqam

DNA

DIR UPPER: Adviser to the Prime Minister for Political and Public Affairs and Culture Division Engr Amir Muqam, here, on Friday, said that "Imran Niazi has failed to deliver for masses" despite his party's nine-year-long rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa". Addressing to the party workers and people of Dir Upper, after inaugurating electricity

projects, including an electrical feeder at Akhgram, Engr Amir Muqam said that "Imran Niazi has ruined the country's economy, and social values and was found guilty of taking foreign funding even though from rival countries in a bid to destabilize and bankrupt Pakistan". He said the people of KPK were now looking towards PML (N) for the resolution of their problems and would "reject the looter of Toshakhana" in the upcoming

general election. "Imran Khan has brought disgrace to the country after [allegedly] selling the Haram Sharif's model watch for monetary gains in the market," he said, adding that such expensive gifts were given to the prime minister by foreign dignitaries as a mark of respect and strengthening of friendship rather than selling it in the open market. Engr Amir Muqam said that even close friends of Imran Khan were now talking about how

he (Imran) was selected in the 2018 general election and imposed on the country. Terming Imran Khan as a "certified liar and king of U-turn", Engr Amir Muqam said the announcement of Imran Khan to dissolve KP and Punjab assemblies during his Rawalpindi's "flopped long march" was also proven false. He said that Imran Khan had neither fulfilled the promise of construction of five million houses nor provided jobs to 10 million youth.



ISLAMABAD: President A.J.K. Barrister Sultan Mahmood meeting with Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto. PM Adviser on Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira also seen in the picture.— DNA

## Court Notice

In the Court of Additional Commissioner Revenue Jhelum Appeal u/s 161 Land Revenue Act 1967 Case title Muhammad Javed Iqbal etc. VS. Matloob Hussain etc. Proclamation against: (1) Matloob Hussain, Mehboob Hussain, Abdul Rouf sons of Ghulam Ali, R/O Toor Tehsil & District Jhelum. As there is not possible to call the respondents through Summons in the instant Appeal so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear in the court on 05.01.2023, otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated. After this no excuse will be accepted.

# 9 officers replaced in major reshuffle

PESHAWAR: The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has ordered transfers and postings of 9 officials of BS-19 and BS-18 in a major reshuffle of the bureaucracy, said an official notification issued by Establishment Department here on Friday. According to the notification, Muhammad Nasir Khan (PMS BS-19), Additional Secretary, Information & Public Relations Department) has been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Tribal District Lower South Waziristan against the vacant post while Rehan Gul Khattak (PMS BS-19) Director Food Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been posted

as Deputy Commissioner, Tribal District North Waziristan by replacing Shahid Ali (PMS BS-18), who has been posted as Deputy Commissioner Buner. Similarly, Capt (Retd) Bilal Shahid Rao (PAS BS-18) Project Director, SCLR NMAs P&D Department has also been transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner Mansehra by replacing Adnan Khan Behtani (PAS BS-18), who has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary, Chief Minister's Secretariat, Peshawar against the vacant post. Abdul Haleem Khan (PMS BS-18) Additional Secretary, Home & Tribal Affairs De-

partment has been relieved and directed to report to Establishment Department while Capt (Retd) Sanaulah Khan (PAS BS-18) who was awaiting posting in Establishment Department has been posted as Additional Secretary Home & Tribal Affairs Department. Furthermore, Muhammad Yasir Hassan (PMS BS-18) Additional Secretary Zakat, Ushr & Social Welfare Department has been transferred and posted as Director Food Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Shabir Khan (PMS BS-18), Deputy Commissioner, Buner has also been directed to report to Establishment Department.—APP



MURREE: Children are playing with snow during first snow fall.—APP

## Zia hails KMU's approval for imparting FCPS training

He expressed hope that students of KP will benefit from measures taken by KMU for providing modern training and education in all the health related fields

### OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: President Abaseen Column Writers Association, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has hailed approval of Khyber Medical University (KMU) by College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPS) to impart FCPS training in the subjects of Public Health (Community Medicine), Anatomy, Biochemistry, and Physiology at Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar. In a press statement issued here on Friday, Zia Sarhadi said with approval from CPS, KMU has become the first medical institution in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to impart FCPS training and degree program in basic medical sciences. The decision will serve as a milestone in teaching of medical sciences in the province as students of the region who earlier used to go to other cities will get the facility in their province. Sarhadi said KMU under the dynamic leadership of its Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Zia ul Haq is fast heading towards achievement of its goal of becoming a leading university in the country in health education and research fields.

## Balochistan govt creates parliamentary commission

QUETTA: The Balochistan government on Friday formed a parliamentary commission of inquiry on missing persons, a hand out issued by the Directorate of Public Relations (DGPR)said. The commission has been formed on the directives of the Balochistan High Court. The hand out said that Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Mir Ziaullah Langau will be the chairperson of the commission and Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem will assist him as the secretary of the commission. Members of the provincial assembly Asad Baloch, Zahid Reki, Malik Naseer Shahwani and Zamrukh Achakzai have been notified as members of the commission. The parliamentary commission of inquiry is tasked to examine each missing person case.—DNA

# Chinese Envoy lauds Pakistani staff working at CPEC Projects

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Nong Rong addressed the Awarding Ceremony for Outstanding Pakistani Staff of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Projects 2022. Addressing the occasion, the Ambassador wished a happy New Year to everyone. "I am very glad to attend the Award Ceremony 2021 for Outstanding Pakistani Staff of the CPEC Projects 2022," he said. He added that it was also a year witnessed the deepening of all-round cooperation between the two countries. In particular, against the

challenge of global economic downturn and historical floods in Pakistan, the CPEC projects have made sound achievement. He also expressed his heartfelt thanks to Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, for all the efforts and contributions he and his team have made to CPEC! He also thanked Pan Jiang and NDRC colleagues, for their input and guidance to this landmark cooperation. "My thanks also goes to the Chinese friends, Pakistani brothers and sisters, whoever works for the smooth construction and operation of CPEC projects.

And thank All Pakistan Chinese Enterprises Association for the positive role it plays. I shall also thank our media friends and think tank experts for attendance. It is important to pool all our resources and strength together, and brand the CPEC in a more visible way, Ambassador Nong Rong remarked. During this year, he said, the CPEC has always been the highlight of bilateral relations between the two countries. On November 2, President Xi Jinping met with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan during his official visit to China.

# KPRA awards top 5 withholding agents

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) has awarded the top five withholding agents on the basis of their outstanding performance in revenue collection. A taxpayers' appreciation ceremony was held at the KPRA headquarters here where the representatives of the best-performing taxpayers were invited. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Finance Taimur Jhagra was the chief guest at the ceremony which was also graced by the members of KPRA's policy board including provincial ministers, secretaries and private members of the board. The award-winning taxpayers were including businesses run by indi-

viduals, and associations of persons and companies from both the corporate and non-corporate sectors. Besides this, certificates of appreciation were also given to the KPRA's best-performing officers during the financial year enabling the KPRA to achieve its targets. To recognize the role of its taxpayers, KPRA presented awards to the top contributing taxpayers in the financial year 2021-22. KPRA presented mementos to a total of 51 taxpayers selected from 10 different sectors and awarded the top five withholding agents on the basis of their revenue contribution to KPRA in the financial year 2021-22 and their tax overall compliance

level. KPRA Director General Muhammad Kabir Afridi welcomed the taxpayers and members of the KPRA's policy board in his remarks and appreciated the role of the taxpayers and the team of the KPRA for their contribution in enabling the Authority to achieve its revenue and non-revenue targets. "Our aim is to make our province fiscally self-reliant so that our government has enough funds for its developmental schemes for the uplift of the province," Kabir Afridi said adding that the number of registered taxpayers has exceeded 19,000 which shows the trust of the taxpayers on the KPRA and the provincial government.—APP

# All set to kick start maiden anti-polio drive

### OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: The first National Immunization Drive (NID) against the crippling polio disease has been planned to kick start in two phases in the province with the first phase starting from January 2, 2023 in Bannu and D. I Khan Divisions wherein 1.08 million eligible children will be administered two drops of polio vaccine along with Vitamin A supplement for children between 6 to 59 months. This was decided in a readiness meeting held here at Emergency Operations Center Khyber (EOC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with Additional Secretary Health (Polio Eradication) / Coordinator EOC, Asif Rahim in the chair. Deputy Coordinator EOC, Muhammad Zeeshan Khan, Acting Team

Lead UNICEF KP, Dr Tufail, Acting Team Lead WHO KP, Dr. Sarfaraz Afridi, Technical Focal Person EOC KP Dr. Imtiaz Ali Shah, Team Lead N-STOP Dr. Hafizullah and relevant officials of health department were also present on the occasion. The chair was briefed that the January round of anti-polio campaign will be conducted in two phases in the province with the first phase starting from January 2, 2023 in Bannu, Lakki Marwat, North Waziristan, D. I. Khan, Tank and South Waziristan (Upper & Lower) while in rest of 29 districts of the province the campaign will start from January 16, next. Total target of the first phase of the campaign to be conducted in Bannu and D. I Khan Divisions stand at 1082369 for which a total of 5782 teams have been constituted

out of which 5216 are mobile teams, 279 Fixed and 287 Transit/Roaming teams while 1409 Area Incharges and 312 Union Council Polio Eradication Committees (UPEC) Chairmen have been deployed to ensure quality of the campaign. Likewise, in rest of 29 districts of the province 6,254,718 eligible children will be vaccinated against polio for which a total of 21892 teams have been established out of which 19240 are mobile teams, 1629 fixed teams, 1023 transit/roaming teams while 5132 area incharges and 1443 Union Council Polio Eradication Committees (UPEC) Chairmen will be deployed for campaign monitoring. The meeting was informed that training of the teams have been completed while all necessary security arrangements have been made to ensure safety to the teams

as more than 42000 law enforcement agencies personnel will be deployed at various plugging points and with teams in the campaign. Speaking on the occasion, Asif Rahim, Coordinator of Provincial Emergency Operation Centre emphasized that the anti-polio campaign required collective and coordinated actions at all levels to stop virus circulation and wipe out the menace from the region adding that our aim is to ensure timely and repeated vaccination of all eligible children in every campaign. He said that southern parts of the province are prime focus of the programme and special strategy titled "Ring Strategy" has been chalked out by the provincial government with the support of partners to eliminate the virus from south KP while protecting the rest of the

region from the virus transmission. "I particularly urge all parents and caregivers to get their children vaccinated instead of refusing to take the necessary drops during all vaccination drives and extend all support to the vaccination teams", he stated. He said that it is important to realize that the polio virus still exists in our surroundings and no child is safe until all children are vaccinated," adding that repeated polio vaccination campaigns are imperative for building immunity among children and preventing possible death or lifelong paralysis. The provincial manager of the programme said that the "Sehat Tahhafuz" Helpline 1166 and 24/7 WhatsApp Helpline 0346-777-65-46 are available to assist parents and caregivers in reporting missed children.

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## National Days and Armed Forces Days

### December

Dec 01 / Romania	National Day
Dec 02 / UAE	National Day
Dec 02 / Laos Republic	National Day
Dec 05 / Thailand	National Day
Dec 06 / Finland	Independence Day
Dec 07 / India	Armed Forces Flag Day
Dec 09 / Tanzania	National Day
Dec 11 / Oman	Armed Forces Day
Dec 12 / Kenya	Independence Day
Dec 12 / Turkmenistan	Neutrality Day
Dec 16 / Bahrain	National Day
Dec 16 / Kazakhstan	Independence Day
Dec 18 / Qatar	National Day
Dec 18 / Niger	National Day
Dec 23 / Philippines	Armed Forces Day
Dec 23 / Japan	National Day



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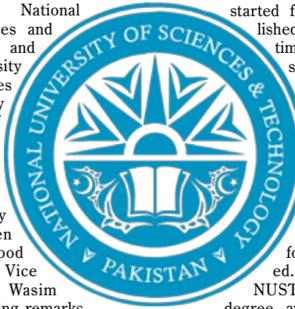
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# NUST, NUMS ink DoU for co-op in health sciences

## DoU was signed by Rector NUST, Lt Gen Eng Javed Mahmood Bukhari and NUMS Vice Chancellor, Lt Gen Wasim Alamgir

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) and National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) on Friday signed a document of understanding (DoU) for enhancing collaboration in the field of health sciences. The DoU was signed by Rector NUST, Lt Gen Eng Javed Mahmood Bukhari and NUMS Vice Chancellor, Lt Gen Wasim Alamgir. In his opening remarks, Vice Principal, NUST Institute of Health Sciences, Salik Javed Kakar said the NUST has emerged as the top university of the country, one of the leading in the region and 374th in the world. It offered hundreds of programmes ranging from artificial intelligence (AI) to architecture. Kakar said that the NUST health sciences department



started from scratch and established its recognition in a short time period of six years. He said the DoU would bring positive outcomes as partnerships were very important between the varsities. It would help improve youth engagement, quality research and improved cooperation that would help NUST to become as a force multiplier, he added. At its inception, the NUST was created with six degree awarding institutions of the tri services and these six constituent colleges laid the foundation of the varsity. However, the Army Medical Corps was also part of it whereas after the creation of the NUMS in 2016 the health sciences faculty was shifted to it, he added. An interdisciplinary approach was adopted to develop the institution of health sciences as the varsity

realised a gap in 2016 and decided to set up a dedicated medical sciences programme that was named as NUST School of Health Sciences. The Rector NUST also informed the participants that the board of governors (BoG) of NUST had allowed the establishment of a teaching and training medical college, dedicated health sciences programme, and affiliation with a public hospital. He added that it also restricted the University to develop a 500 bedded teaching and training hospital within its campus that would be created on a 50-acre land as per the master plan. The NUST had selected Polyclinic Hospital after consultation with all stakeholders and role leading from Law Ministry to HEC to start its first batch of medical sciences in January 2023, he said. The Rec-

tor NUST also proposed NUMS to take lead for all health sciences-related programmes as it wanted to have strong collaboration and capitalize on each other's strengths. VC, NUMS, Lt Gen Wasim Alamgir endorsed the recommendations raised by the Rector NUST and assured his complete support on behalf of his institution. He said the NUST as an institution owned huge resources and since NUMS was its offshoot so it was better for the former to take the lead. He underlined that the country needed enhanced healthcare facilities as it required more doctors, nurses and critical medical infrastructure. The Rector NUST also presented a memento to the Vice Chancellor NUMS as a token of thanks at the end. - APP

## Senate body briefed over relief to flood affectees

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on poverty alleviation and social safety on Friday was briefed on financial relief granted to the flood affectees by NDMA. The committee presided over by Senator Naseebullah Bazai expressed displeasure over the absence of the Federal Minister, Secretary of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, and the NDMA Chairman. The NDMA official informed the committee that 19 districts were declared as "Calamity Hit" districts across the country during the recent flood, where 1,739 persons lost their lives and 12,867 individuals suffered injuries. Committee was further informed that some 768,598 houses were fully damaged and 1,280,191 houses were partially damaged in these districts according to the survey data conducted by PDMA and verified by Pakistan Army and NDMA. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Senior Advisor Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan Dr. Arslan Subuctageen addressing a press conference at FTO Headquarters regarding annual performance of FTO. - APP

## Pakistan's green initiative in south Punjab schools recognized by UN, UK

ISLAMABAD: The maiden initiative Pakistan's south Punjab school education department set into motion two years back to prepare a generation well-versed and aware on environmental issues has won the country recognition from United Nations and the United Kingdom. "School education department south Punjab has bagged another international honor" after it became the first region in the world to introduce a book on the adverse effects of climate change part of syllabus, says an official release issued here Friday. The "Green Book" on climate change is being taught to 7th graders in schools for the last two years. "The British Minister of Education has contacted the School Education South Punjab through a zoom meeting to get information about Green Book curriculum and contents while the United Nations has praised this good initiative," says the release. Taking the initiative a step ahead, the South Punjab education department has established Miyawaki forests in 257 schools and the officers and teachers who played their role in teaching "Green Book" and participated in Miyawaki forest initiative were honored at a ceremony at Multan Arts Council on Friday. Incharges and trainers of 257 schools of South Punjab attended the ceremony. Secretary School Education Department South Punjab Dr. Ehtesham Anwer, Additional Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, all CEOs, DEOs and Deputy DEOs of South Punjab Education Department were also present. Dr. Ehtesham Anwer heaped praise on teachers who participated in teaching the "Green Book" and in the Miyawaki forest campaign. He said, they started giving insights to class seven students two years ago through Green

Book with the aim of making the new generation aware of the adverse effects of climate change, a phenomenon that hurt the country's agriculture and daily life the most, recently in south Punjab and other provinces where rains, floods caused devastation. This adverse impact proved fears of the School Education Department South Punjab to be true, Dr. Ehtesham said adding that rains and floods have caused a loss of 30 billion dollars to the country. Dr. Ehtesham Anwer said, the "green book" is not a theory but a compilation of stories about climate change. He said that the second edition of the book has been launched after the recent floods. The natural forest grows in 100 years but the result can be achieved in just 10 years in the case of the Miyawaki forest that is 30 times denser than the natural forests, said Dr. Ehtesham. - APP

relevant rules inter alia relating to imposition of penalties" Currently, there exists guidelines on imposition of financial penalties. Under Section 57 of the Act, the Commission, with the approval of the Federal Government, has the power to make rules. The Supreme Court proceedings pertained to CCP's Order where in CCP found that PPA had inter alia discussed and approved the advertisement of prices of certain poultry products (concerning broiler chicken and chicken eggs) in the national press, which was prohibited under the Competition Act. Against CCP's Order, the first appeal was filed by PPA before the Competition Tribunal and its decision was authored by the Member, Technical, Mr. Ahmed Owais Pirzada. The Competition Tribunal held that: "...By advertising prices of the poultry products in the national press the appellant has clearly prevented, restricted and reduced competition within the relevant market, which is a clear violation of section 4 of the Act." It was further observed that the findings recorded by CCP were "based on proper appraisal of relevant provisions of Competition Law as well as other material brought on record. The same are, therefore, maintained." PPA had

## Diversity, in Media awards launched

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Research, Advocacy and Development (IRADA), the Digital Media Alliance of Pakistan (DigiMAP) and the Women Journalists Association of Pakistan (WJAP) on Friday launched Diversity and Pluralism in Media Awards 2022. The awards were given to media persons for the best stories on the given topic. A ceremony was arranged on the occasion of second anniversary of Digital Media Alliance of Pakistan. IRADA, DigiMap and WJAP arranged a series of workshops for women journalists on "Tackling Marginalization through Women's Visibility in Digital Journalism" to highlight the issues related to marginalized communities, including women, minorities, transgenders and others. The purpose of the training was to highlight issues of marginalized communities in digital media, women with religious minority backgrounds, human rights, persons with disabilities and how to report these issues by media persons, said organizers. - APP

## 34 Pakistanis win CPEC's awards for outstanding performance

ISLAMABAD: Thirty-four Pakistanis working on different CPEC projects were awarded here by the Chinese embassy, recognizing their outstanding services, professional expertise and strenuous contribution during 2022 to make the CPEC a tangible reality and helping Pak-China relations get stronger. The award-giving ceremony was addressed by Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong, Yang Minghao, Deputy CEO of Thar coal block-1 Power Generation Company and representatives of the employees, Mir Arslan Ali Mohammad, Hamza Khalid and Sha-keela Kosar. Whereas, Pan Jiang, Deputy DG National Development and Reforms Commission also addressed the event through online link from Beijing. It was noted that in 2022, the CPEC projects have achieved major progress, ensuring economic stability, and well-being of the people. It has also continued to train high-quality talents for the country. All Pakistani staff at CPEC projects, through their hard work, make these progress possible. The Pakistani workers from Gwadar Port and sectors of energy, infrastructure and industrial cooperation. CPEC is an important pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative and a demonstration project of China-Pakistan cooperation. It was further stated that it is significant to deepen China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership for the building a closer community of shared future. During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China, leaders of the two countries agreed to advance CPEC with greater efficiency, and make CPEC an exemplar of high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. The Minister during his keynote address said that the achievements of CPEC are not possible without joint efforts of staff from both China and Pakistan. CPEC, as a landmark project of China-Pakistan cooperation and a successful regional economic cooperation platform, provides a broad stage for people to display their talents and realize personal values. He termed the award-winners as hero of CPEC. - DNA

## SC upholds finding of cartelization in poultry sector

CCP has time and again highlighted collusive/anti-competitive practices in the poultry sector. First in 2010 where CCP issued show cause notices against 25 poultry association members and imposed a fine of PKR 50 million on PPA for contravention of Section 4 of the Competition Act

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: While deciding the first ever cartel case, the Honourable Supreme Court of Pakistan has decided the civil appeal filed on behalf of Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA) against the judgement of the Competition Appellate Tribunal, that upheld the Order of CCP dated 29 February 2016 with respect to price fixing in contravention of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010. CCP had imposed a fine of PKR 100 Million on the Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA) for price fixing

of poultry products, in violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010. The Honourable Supreme Court, to this extent, has allowed PPA's appeal and reduced the penalty from PKR 100 million imposed by CCP in its Order to PKR 25 Million, taking into account that the said advertisements by PPA were discontinued after a few days, i.e., "after two days for eggs and five days for poultry". The Honourable Supreme Court has directed PPA to pay the penalty amount of PKR 25 million within a period of 15 days from the date of the Order. Moreover, the Supreme Court has directed CCP to "frame and notify

relevant rules inter alia relating to imposition of penalties" Currently, there exists guidelines on imposition of financial penalties. Under Section 57 of the Act, the Commission, with the approval of the Federal Government, has the power to make rules. The Supreme Court proceedings pertained to CCP's Order where in CCP found that PPA had inter alia discussed and approved the advertisement of prices of certain poultry products (concerning broiler chicken and chicken eggs) in the national press, which was prohibited under the Competition Act. Against CCP's Order, the first appeal was filed by PPA before the Competition Tribunal and its decision was authored by the Member, Technical, Mr. Ahmed Owais Pirzada. The Competition Tribunal held that: "...By advertising prices of the poultry products in the national press the appellant has clearly prevented, restricted and reduced competition within the relevant market, which is a clear violation of section 4 of the Act." It was further observed that the findings recorded by CCP were "based on proper appraisal of relevant provisions of Competition Law as well as other material brought on record. The same are, therefore, maintained." PPA had

filed an appeal against the said Competition Tribunal order before the Supreme Court. CCP has time and again highlighted collusive/anti-competitive practices in the poultry sector. First in 2010 where CCP issued show cause notices against 25 poultry association members and imposed a fine of PKR 50 million on PPA for contravention of Section 4 of the Competition Act. In 2021, the show cause proceedings against the said poultry association members also resumed after the Honourable Islamabad High Court had set aside the stay order(s) granted after a period of over 10 years.

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## NLC develops modern TOS for border crossings

ISLAMABAD: The National Logistics Cells (NLC) is developing the latest Terminal Operating System (TOS) for all border crossing points (BCPs) to further enhance efficiency, ensure transparency and reduce dwell time. According to the official sources, the processes of cargo handling and information sharing will be fully automated including plugging time and cost slippages with implementation of the system. Laboratory test of the Terminal Operating System was already completed successfully at HQ NLC while Beta version was being deployed at Kharlachi Border Terminal (BT). "First of its kind on any land port, the TOS will be deployed on all Border Terminals by April 2023," the official said. The TOS will provide real-time information of terminal operations to all relevant stakeholders connected with the system through their API (Application Programming Interface) for sharing required data. The system will enable seamless conduct of terminal operations. It will help in effective yard management by sharing instant information including but not limited to scanned images of containers, weight, arrival and departure of cargo and crew members. The operational modules of the system include RFID management, gate-in management, vehicle inspection, 3rd party integration (WeBOC, Health Dept etc), yard management, (for parking & vehicle identification at any time), warehouse management, vehicle tracing and gate-out management. - APP

## Weekly inflation slides down slightly

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a slight decrease of 0.09 percent for combined consumption group during the week ended on December 29, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group, was recorded at 217.20 points as compared to 217.39 points during the past week, according to PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 29.30 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732 witnessed 0.07 percent decrease and went down to 225.44 points from last week's 225.59 points. Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888 and Rs 22,889-29,517 declined by 0.12 percent and 0.03 percent respectively whereas it witnessed slight increase of 0.02 percent for consumption group from Rs 29,518-44,175 and declined of 0.12 percent for consumption group above Rs 44,175. - APP

## 'Abbottabad police arrest three robbers'

ABBOTTABAD: Abbottabad police have arrested three robbers involved in robbery cases at tourist point Thandiani road in a dramatic manner. District Police Officer (DPO) Abbottabad Umar Tufail told this while addressing a press conference at Abbottabad Press Club here Friday. He further said that the accused looted 1 lakh 45 thousand rupees and 6 mobile phones on gun point at Thandiani road by placing huge boulders on the road which stopped the vehicle belonging to Chamyali school teachers. The DPO said that the arrested three suspects included Sheeraz and Yasir sons of Javed and Rashid son of Ayub. During the investigation, two pistols and three looted mobile phones were also recovered from their possession, he added. He said that Abbottabad police was committed to provide foolproof security to the masses and any incident would be promptly responded. - APP

## Briefs

## Pakistani entertainment industry marks a historic comeback

ISLAMABAD: As 2022 is about to take its final bow, adding a fair share in the revival of the Pakistani entertainment industry while bringing audiences back to cinemas, Pakistani films got the cash registers ringing at the box office. With back-to-back hit films smashing global records, Pakistani cinema staged a comeback in 2022 like never before which made Pakistan a pivotal part of global entertainment. Starting with Bilal Lashari's directorial 'The Legends of Maula Jatt', the cinematic masterpiece became the highest-grossing Pakistani film of all time with a total of 2.38 billion worldwide collections. Re-writing the history of Pakistani cinema, the film has been honored as the second-highest-earning film in the UK for the year 2022 as well as the most-watched South Asian film in Norway. Adding to the list, Humayun Saeed starrer 'London Nahi Jaunga', a spin-off of the 2017 'Punjab Nahi Jaungi', became the second-highest-grossing Pakistani film and the third-highest-grossing Pakistani film of all time. Versatile starlet Humayun Saeed, added another feather to his cap as he paved his way to Netflix's cult web series 'The Crown', portraying Dr Hasnat Ahmed Khan, a British-Pakistani heart surgeon. Apart from the highest-grossing films, 2022 marked the international debut of top-notch Pakistani celebs such as Sajal Aly made her debut at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) with Jemima Goldsmith's film 'What's love got to do with it' while Fawad Khan, Mehwish Hayat along with the veteran actress Samina Ahmed enchanted the international audience with their stellar performance in 'Ms Marvel'.—APP

## 4 vehicles impounded over substandard condition

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Transport Authority (ITA) on Wednesday impounded four public transport vehicles and issued challans to the other twenty-nine over fitness issues. Secretary ITA during the inspection at various bus and wagon stations found four vehicles unsafe to run on the road, the vehicles were impounded and tickets were issued to the drivers, said a press release issued. During the inspection, 38 vehicles were inspected and Rs. 8,000 were fined to various vehicles over substandard conditions and not having a fitness certificate. ITA officials also fined smoke-emitting vehicles, warned public transport drivers of stern action, and said that vehicles without fitness certificates would not be allowed in Islamabad.—APP

## IRSA releases 30,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 30,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 40,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1490.46 feet and was 92.46 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,400 cusecs while outflow as 10,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1117.90 feet, which was 67.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,900 cusecs and 4,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 13,000, 13,800, 14,900 and 500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari meeting with the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.— DNA

## Project for cultural promotion of Gandhara launched

Professionals from all heritage departments of Pakistan are cordially welcomed and imparted modern techniques to polish their skills in the field of conservation and promotion of Gandhara heritage sites

ISLAMABAD: To promote the artistic activities of Gandhara, Department of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM) and Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation (KCHF) launched a project under the title of "Support of the Development Cultural Promotion and Tourism resources of the Gandhara culture". The duration of this heritage oriented project is 5 years. The project is funded by the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Rep. of Korea. Both KCHF and DOAM are well aware of the significance of Gandhara heritage art and architecture and endeavor to protect and conserve these iconic pieces of art, said an official of DOAM.

Pakistan is home to diversified Cultural heritage spans on the period of thousands of years. The heritage of Pakistan starts from Stone Age to later Islamic period of Sub Continent. Pakistan is home to great Indus civilization, fabulous Gandhara grave culture, wonderful Buddhist art and architecture amazing Islamic art, calligraphy and countless artistic activities of various periods of human history. Korea and Pakistan are engaged in Cultural heritage activities and Korea has always extended great support in the protection, conservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of Pakistan especially Gandhara Buddhist heritage.

Gandhara Pakistan was the hub of Buddhist cult and artistic activities and possesses the significant honour of producing the first ever Buddha sculpture. Buddhism spread from Gandhara to Korea and Japan. The main activities performed under the project is the formulation of a team of experts for the Development of the Gandhara culture tourism resource centre which has been devised with the induction of professional experts in the designated fields. The expert team has carried out impeccable research and field activities in their assigned tasks and has produced inventories of Gandhara heritage located in the Taxila

valley. This research-oriented information will play a vital role in conservation upkeep and fresh research on these Gandharan sites. The Korean expert team has launched various programs for the capacity development of the technical and professional management of Gandhara heritage sites. The management has made the most of this expertise and greatly appreciated the on-going professional efforts of the Korean experts. These technical professional efforts have almost changed the course of conservation on the sites of Taxila and modern techniques imparted by Korean experts for the purpose of conservation have boast the

professional activities at the sites. These efforts will further promote the Gandhara cultural heritage and will become a great attractive place to visit for Buddhists, researchers, students and people from all walks of life. The establishment of the Gandhara Research Centre at DOAM has ameliorated the professional research activities in the field of conservation up gradation and promotion of Buddhist heritage sites. Professionals from all heritage departments of Pakistan are cordially welcomed and imparted modern techniques to polish their skills in the field of conservation and promotion of Gandhara heritage sites.—APP

## Floods push economic growth below budgeted target: Economic Outlook

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The economic growth for the fiscal year 2022-23 is likely to remain below the budgeted target due to devastation created by floods, finance ministry said in a recent report released here Friday. "This combination of low growth, high inflation and low levels of official reserves is particularly challenging for policy makers," says the Monthly Economic Update and Outlook for December 2022. It says, as in many other countries, Pakistan's economic activity remained currently below potential, implying a negative output gap. At the same time, again as in many other countries, inflation remained substantially above targets. Furthermore, as is also the case in several other emerging economies, the global energy crises, which has pushed up global commodity prices, also puts downward pressure on international official reserves. According to the report, in the short run, demand management policies by Pakistan's central bank and

government were designed to fight inflation and protect official reserves and protect inclusive growth. During first five months of FY2023, Pakistan's economy showed signs of resilience to domestic and global challenges. Despite facing inflationary pressures, trade and current account deficits are continuously showing improvement, which is a sign of relief for financing challenges. On fiscal front, fiscal consolidation is top-most priority to achieve targeted fiscal deficit despite government is facing the unprecedented challenge of providing relief to people in flood-hit areas. But in the long run, the government aims to stimulate the supply side to elevate the long run potential growth rate of the economy. Increasing the long run growth trends of output, per capita real incomes and employment can only be achieved by stimulating investments in new production capacities and improving overall productivity. According to the report, the inflationary pressure has started easing out as the Month-on-Month (MoM) Consumer Price In-

dex (CPI) inflation declined from massive high of 4.7 percent in October 2022 to 0.8 percent in November. The same trend is witnessed in Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) which decelerated for three consecutive weeks in December that would also be transmitted into CPI inflation of the current month. Moreover, the recent government's decision to provide relief to the masses by slashing the prices of petroleum products is expected to translate into lower cost of food and non food for general public. SBP has announced the increase of 100 bps in policy rate in order to curtail the inflationary expectation while the declining international commodity prices are expected to offset the inflation spikes that emerged due to domestic supply shocks. On agriculture productivity, the report says, standing water due to recent floods may create problem in achieving the assigned wheat sowing target, however, the federal and provincial governments are working hard and committed to enhance wheat productivity. The Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) output came in somewhat lower than expected on the

basis of a baseline scenario. It says, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) reached \$ 430.1 million during July-November FY2023 against \$ 884.9 million last year, showing decrease of 51.4 percent. On MOM basis, FDI was recorded at \$ 81.8 million in November 2022 as against inflow of \$ 94.9 million in October 2022. The net FBR revenues increased by 9.2 percent to Rs 1317 billion during Jul-Oct FY2023 against Rs 1205 billion last year. Tax collection grew by 16.8 percent to reach Rs 2139 billion in the first four months of FY2023 up from Rs.1830 billion in the comparable period of last year. In Jul-Nov FY2023, workers' remittances recorded at \$ 12.0 billion against \$ 13.3 billion last year, a decrease of 9.6 percent. Pakistan's total liquid foreign exchange reserves increased to \$ 12.0 billion on December 21, 2022, with the SBP's reserves stood at \$ 6.1 billion. Commercial banks' reserves remained at \$ 5.9 billion. The KSE-100 index closed at 42,349 points as on 30 November 2022 while market capitalization settled at Rs 6,768 billion.

## Estate Office to launch operation against encroachments

"The purpose of the operation is to clear the government residences of encroachments," he added

ISLAMABAD: The Estate Office, Ministry of Housing and Works has decided to take action against encroachments and illegally constructed structures in government residences in the federal capital. "The final notices will be issued to the residents of the government residences otherwise the Estate office is going to cancel their allotment," an official in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP. The official said that the ministry has also decided to vacate government quarters from retired and relatives of late employees, who continue to occupy residences. "The purpose of the operation is to clear the government residences of encroachments," he added. He said the ministry has also sought help from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the government residences fall under the administrative control of the Estate Office. The official said the ministry has decided to take action against the construction of extra rooms by the employees and their kith and kin that are living in government-allotted houses. He said that at present over 17,000 government houses in Islamabad were under the management of the Estate Office and additional rooms had illegally been constructed by the allottees in over 2,400 residences. According to the sources, over 25,000 government employees were currently on the general waiting list to get accommodation but they could not be provided with the same as retired employees, their relatives, and relatives of even late government employees who continue to live in government quarters. The sources said they have constructed either an extra room or an entire floor on a government house. It has been decided to remove these encroachments from government residences, and soon a major operation will be launched against these illegal structures, the sources said. The Estate Office will also take action against the illegal use of land for commercial purposes and other types of encroachments.—APP

## Poet Shabnam Romani remembered on 94th birthday

ISLAMABAD: Mirza Azeem Baig Chughtai, known in literary circles by his pen name Shabnam Romani, was remembered here Friday on his 94th birthday for his services and contribution to the Urdu language and literature. Romani was born in Budaun, India, but moved to Pakistan and lived most of his life in Karachi. He is known for writing nazam, ghazal and short Urdu stories. Shabnam Romani wrote a number of books, including Masnavi Sair-e-Karachi, Jazeera, Tohmat, Doosra Himala, Hyde Park, Mozay Chilghozay, and Hurf Nissbat hajira. He was also the publisher and editor of Quarterly Aqdar, a literary Urdu magazine, and wrote a regular column in 'Daily Mashriq' Karachi. At the age of 80, Romani died on February 17, 2009, after a long illness. Faisal Azeem, one of Romani's two sons, is a poet based in Canada and his book 'Meri Aankhon say Dekho' was published in 2006.—APP

## No positive change in economic situation in 2023

DNA

Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Friday said 2022 has been a difficult year for the people, while political and economic instability will remain at its peak in 2023, due to which the problems of the people will increase. Inflation and terrorism may increase in the coming year while the clouds of default will continue to hover over the country, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement that the country will face challenges in the new year as well and our economy will face worst conditions. It will be difficult for the country to be out of the quagmire of problems as the political leaders agree to disagree on important matters. The country has reached the brink of economic collapse and now Pakistan is considered among the weakest countries in the world. After the destruction of the agricultural sector at the hands of floods, the industrial sector is being destroyed with negative policies while the policymakers are making temporary arrangements that will backfire. The business leader said that the current economic managers are doing new experiments instead of taking the country out of the worst economic crisis. Their performance has really been slipping over the past few months, and they are no longer meeting the expectations of the masses.—APP

Govt releases Rs 4.21b for IT project in 5 months

ISLAMABAD: The government has released funds amounting to Rs 4.21 billion to execute Information Technology related projects during the first five months of the current fiscal year under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2022-23. According to official data available with APP, the government has authorized the utilization of development funds amounting to Rs 4,211.21 million out of a total allocation of 5,731.70 million for various ongoing and new projects of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. Out of the total authorized/distributed amount, the total amount spent on the development projects during the corresponding period (July-November) stood at Rs 3,579.25 million. According to the disbursement mechanism of the Planning Division, the development funds allocated in the federal budget are released at the rate of 20 percent in the first quarter (July-September), followed by 30 percent each in the second and third quarters and the remaining 20 percent in the last quarter (April-June) of a fiscal year.—APP

## ANF seizes over 68 kg drugs; arrests five

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting four counter-narcotics operations seized over 68 kg drugs, 100 heroin-filled capsules and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed in an operation near Peshawar Hayatabad, ANF recovered 40 kg heroin from secret cavities of a pick-up vehicle. In another operation at Islamabad International Airport, ANF recovered 100 heroin-filled capsules from the possession of a Sharjah-bound female passenger going on flight no PK-209. He informed that ANF also recovered four kg Ice drug from the trolley bag of a Bahrain bound passenger resident of Sargodha going on flight no GF-771. In a joint operation, ANF and FC conducted a raid in Khyber and recovered 18.4 kg Ice drug and six kg charras from the possession of two accused residents of Khyber. Separate cases have been registered at respective ANF Police Stations and further investigations are under process.—APP

## 7 teams to control one-wheeling on New Year

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi have finalized arrangements to control one-wheeling and car stunts by youngsters on eve of New Year's night and seven special squads have been formed. According to a CTP spokesman, CTP had decided to take strict action against traffic rules violators. CTP on the directives of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan would take

action in accordance with the law against the violators. 320 Traffic Wardens would be deployed on city roads to ensure a smooth flow of traffic and control one-wheeling. The CTO had instructed the Traffic Wardens to net those involved in the one-wheeling and car-racing. He said that the CTP, in this regard, had formed seven special squads to arrest the violators and impound their vehicles.

He informed that several arrangements were made to curb the activity aimed at protecting the youngsters as one-wheeling is one of the causes of death and severe injuries for the riders. He said that they would conduct night operations on Benazir Bhutto Road near Nawaz Sharif Park and the Committee Chowk underpass to apprehend one-wheelers. The cases would be filed against one-wheelers.

"Efforts are being made to curb the activity (one-wheeling) as it had claimed several precious lives and a number of youngsters had sustained serious injuries due to it," he added. He said, one-wheelers were not only endangering their own lives but were also a threat to other road users. The spokesman urged the parents to come forward and play their role in curbing the activity.—APP

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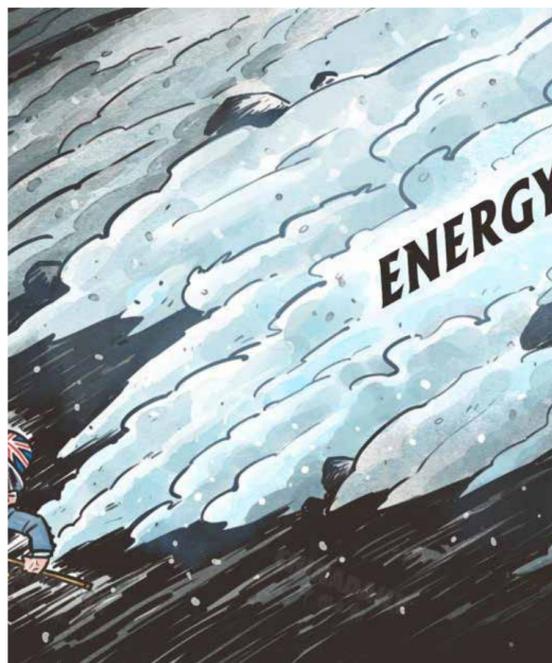
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## Reopening will help revitalize global economy

With COVID-19 formally downgraded from a Category A to Category B infectious disease, China will no longer require passengers arriving from abroad to quarantine starting Jan 8, although they will still need a negative nucleic acid test result 48 hours before departure, the National Health Commission announced on Monday. The move marks a major step forward in China reopening its borders nearly three years after the country imposed strict entry restrictions to prevent imported novel coronavirus infections. Inbound international travelers currently have to quarantine for five days at a centralized facility, followed by three days at home, a requirement that is already down from up to four weeks in the past. The policy shift is a timely response to the fast-changing epidemic situation, which has entered a new stage with the more transmissible yet less virulent Omicron variant of the novel coronavirus. This is also in answer to the increasing calls of Chinese residents to travel abroad and foreigners to come to China for work and business after three years of pandemic-induced disruptions. Outbound flight bookings reportedly surged by more than 250 percent early on Tuesday in the wake of the lifted restrictions, according to online travel booking platform Trip.com, with the most popular destinations including Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand. China has always been a major driving force behind economic globalization and is itself a beneficiary of the increasingly integrated global economy. According to a report released by the National Bureau of Statistics last month, China contributed up to 38.6 percent to world economic growth from 2013 to 2021, more than the G7 industrialized nations combined. That China is reopening its borders will instill confidence that the country is resolved to continue to work with other countries to uphold free and fair trade, and ensure the stability of global industry and supply chains. Despite the rising trend of protectionism and anti-globalization in some quarters, China remains committed to its fundamental national policy of opening up to the outside world. Yet the latest step China has taken to facilitate cross-border personnel flow has prompted some countries such as Japan and India to tighten their border controls targeting Chinese passengers, who will have to test upon arrival. Hopefully countries will take a coordinated approach with China and base their response on science to ensure safe and smooth cross-border travel, and help contribute to the world's economic recovery.

## Pandemic recovery

Three years after a new coronavirus began to spread through Wuhan, and at least 6.6 million deaths later, the world is just beginning to understand its impact. The pandemic is not over, of course. Covid is ripping through China, where it originated but was suppressed, following the lifting of strict controls. Even in the UK, the number of cases rose above 1 million again in mid-December. Despite vaccines and improved treatments, some people remain highly vulnerable. On an average day in the third quarter of this year, almost 3,000 patients were in hospital primarily because of Covid-19. An estimated 2 million people are living with long Covid. For many, however, the frustration or even despair comes from the realisation that there can be no simple return to pre-Covid life. Alongside the economic damage – and the UK's recovery has lagged behind other G7 nations – have come the health and social consequences. The NHS is struggling with backlogs and the fallout from the pandemic and lockdowns on health. "There are worrying signs that rather than imposing a one-off, time-limited shock ... Covid-19 has dealt a lasting adverse hit to NHS performance," the Institute for Fiscal Studies warned this month. Young children have been especially affected, with delayed social development and increased behavioural problems, as well as academic repercussions. The full impact may only become evident years or decades from now. "For the rest of our lifetimes we will see the consequences of this," says the disaster recovery expert Prof Lucy Easthope. "We are all disaster survivors now." In the earliest months of this pandemic, people began to talk about the need to "build back better". The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development called for "strong, inclusive, green, resilient" recovery. Peter Hennessy, in his book A Duty of Care, sensed a widespread belief that there had to be a better Britain to emerge from it, clearly reminiscent of the atmosphere that gave rise to postwar reconstruction. The personal, social, health and economic effects of the pandemic are not separate but interrelated. The psychotherapist Graham Music has written that "if we had to create perfect conditions for emotional shut-down, for fear, anxiety and distrust – and, indeed, for addictive traits to flourish – we could hardly do better than Covid-19 ... Solitude, isolation, the lack of touch are ... proven risks to health and morbidity." But it does mean recognising that policy and practice should be shaped and guided by the public, not just officials and politicians. It is not too late. Alongside the devastation caused by Covid came crucial lessons, from the importance of resilience to the need for green spaces and the possibility of making events and services more accessible. In financial terms, Britain can afford to build back better. In every sense, it cannot afford not to do so.

## US-Israel developing joint military capabilities

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



These contacts saved lives in Afghanistan. Likewise, the move to CENTCOM did not completely eliminate Israeli capability from Europe. Israel has used its status as a "major non-NATO ally" to provide intelligence to Kyiv about Iranian drones being used by Russia to attack Ukraine. Heading into 2023, the US military clearly sees its Israeli counterpart as an important part of the US security equation

Although government-to-government relations between the US and Israel are sometimes strained, in contrast, there is a clear understanding between the militaries of the two countries that their relationship will continue and that both countries' interests are mutually beneficial. The final moments of the 20-year American presence in Afghanistan until August 2021 were unpleasant. Maj. Gen. Chris Donahue, commander of the 82nd

Airborne Division, boarded the last U.S. military flight from Kabul days after 11 U.S. Marines, a Navy corpsman, an Army special operations soldier, and more than 100 Afghans were killed on Karzai Airport. According to an Israeli journalist wrote in 2022 that an Israeli intelligence officer realized that a car bomb was already on its way to the convoy. Taliban operatives attached themselves to the US convoy and detonated hundreds of kilograms of explosives on the Marines. The Intelligence Division is the direct channel to its colleagues at US-CENTCOM, the US military's central command. Israeli intelligence knew what the caravan had to do to avoid the volcano and they moved quickly. On November 15 of this year, CENTCOM Commander General Michael "Eric" Kurilla made his fourth visit to Israel since taking office just seven months earlier. He didn't just go to talk about Iran rather than his visit to the Northern Command of Israel on the Lebanese border. It is also included to assess Alpha Line threats between Israel and Syria on Rosh Hankara and the Golan Heights, particularly Hezbollah weapons in southern Lebanon, and the arms and explosives smuggling routes between Lebanon and Syria. According to General Michael Eric, the Israeli Air Force maintains world-class air power with the most advanced systems, the highest level of professionalism and first-class combat capability, including our long-standing, iron-clad partnership are critical to regional security and stability. All these visits to the region make aware of the threats and challenges to each country faces and the capabilities available. The visit reinforced the importance of this relationship and the many opportunities before us for the Middle East. During General Eric's visit, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kohavi said the two countries were "rapidly developing joint military capabilities" against Iran and "other threats in the Middle East". In November, Kohavi arrived in Washington for talks with senior US officials. According to an Israeli military journal, the talks included the possibility of joint action against the Islamic Republic of Iran. "We are working together

on all fronts and to prepare for this." In late November, anonymous sources told the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot that Israeli defense officials said the United States would support an Israeli attack to destroy the Iranian nuclear program. Sources said that US decision-makers realize that Iran is a threat to world peace and the world order. The recent joint exercises and a joint missile defense test. In July, Israel has tested its entire defense array against rockets and ballistic missiles. In parallel, the US also has tested its Patriot, AEGIS, and THAAD systems. The Defense Ministry said the replica was housed in a unique testing facility to provide real-time data and enable in-depth debriefing. In November, the US and Israeli air forces have conducted three-day exercises over the Mediterranean Sea and Israel. Unlike previous joint exercises with CENTCOM in the Red Sea, this one was may not designed to provoke Iran. However, the capabilities they used will certainly worry Tehran. "They are practicing fighter escort and aerial refueling," said Brig. According to Pentagon spokesman General Pat Ryder "This is a long planning exercise and it is also not something that is unusual". This is not true at all. Although the Biden administration has seemingly abandoned its intention to use diplomacy to re-engage Iran and find a path to a revised JCPOA, the idea that the U.S. military might take a different path proceeding with the exercises is, in fact, unusual. There was a time when CENTCOM officials were ordered not to visit Israel, part of the US European Command (EUCOM), until 2021. Joseph Votel became the first commander to make an official visit in 2018. Even when Israel was still in EUCOM, it already had contacts in CENTCOM that worked to the US's advantage. These contacts saved lives in Afghanistan. Likewise, the move to CENTCOM did not completely eliminate Israeli capability from Europe. Israel has used its status as a "major non-NATO ally" to provide intelligence to Kyiv about Iranian drones being used by Russia to attack Ukraine. Heading into 2023, the US military clearly sees its Israeli counterpart as an important part of the US security equation, regardless of the political equation.

## Forest and climate change

Abdul Samad Mugheri



Memories of the devastating flash floods of 2010 still haunt those who suffered due to that cataclysmic phenomenon. Environment scientist believe that if 'hothouse gas' emissions are not reduced or controlled the global temperature might register a rise between 1.1 °C to 6.5 °C by the end of the 21st century

Global warming is our current reality and we should be responsible for doing so much harm to our planet earth. People should cut power consumption in order to reduce the effects of global warming. We should less polluting cars, get more efficient refrigeration and reduce water heating requirements. A lot of people all over the world suffer from respiratory diseases. Clean and Green Pakistan needs nearly 20 percent tree cover. It has five percent. The changing climate pattern around the globe poses a formidable threat to dwellers of the earth and though there is a growing consciousness about this potential weapon of mass destruction, very little has been done in concrete terms to prevent this disaster. Not only small and developing countries like Pakistan are the worst sufferers in view of their inability to cope with weather-related disasters like flash floods, it is also adversely affecting the affluent countries as well, in the shape of freak weather, hurricanes and severe flooding of settled areas. Pakistan is seventh in the list of ten countries which have been badly affected by climate change. Memories of the devastating flash floods of 2010 still haunt those who suffered due to that cataclysmic phenomenon. Environment scientist believe that if 'hothouse gas' emissions are not reduced or controlled the global temperature might register a rise between 1.1 °C to 6.5 °C by the end of the 21st century with all the accompanying cataclysmic consequences for the entire humanity. The major contributors to the global warming are the USA, China, Russia, the UK, Germany, Australia, Canada and Japan. Forest and climate change.

## Fixing the unfixed

Abdul Rashid Shakir



Pakistan is also in hectic negotiations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Qatar, Russia and other friendly Middle Eastern countries to buy petroleum and gas products to ensure uninterrupted and reliable energy supplies for running its industrial units to spur economic growth. To wrap up, it can be said with certainty that all the growth-necessary paraphernalia is in place

A paradigm shift in the statecraft, a strong commitment to institution-building, a pressing push for policy stabilisation, and making the governance model more responsive to public aspirations by weaving away its inherent red tapism - are some of

the potential interventions that could set the course right for our long-awaited journey towards progress, prosperity and socio-economic development. It is encouraging to note that 'the parties in power' have rightly ascertained need of following the constitutional framework of trichotomy of power between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary for running business of the state. All serious stakeholders of the system are on one page in this regard, at least for the time being. Concerns for political certainty, continuity of economic policies and above all sticking fast to the principle of 'Division of Labour' between different organs of the state, as enshrined in the Constitution, have aptly surfaced in our national discourse. Moreover, our cogent prioritisation of geo-economics over geopolitics has all the right reasons to believe that it would contribute significantly to our socioeconomic development as a nation. A living example of a similar economic miracle in the recent history can be found in the unprecedented economic development and GDP per capita growth of People's Republic of China, that has lifted out of extreme poverty its 800 Million impoverished people in a short span of 04 decades, just because of stability in political order and consistency in economic policies over these years. In a desire to emulate the Chinese economic development model, Pakistan has joined China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Launched in 2013, it is an iconic infrastructure development project, connecting China with the East and the West through "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", in order to reap dividends of shared economic development. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Spanning over 3000 KMs, it connects Pakistan's Gwadar seaport on the Arabian Sea to Kashgar in China's North-West Xinjiang province. With signing a comprehensive Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation between the two countries in February 2022, CPEC has entered second phase which aims at industrial growth through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), industrialization and development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Accordingly, Pakistan has successfully realigned its investment ecosystem to make it more business-friendly by adopting necessary changes in the regulatory framework and tax laws. The system is now perfectly poised to attract huge foreign investments for rapid industrialisation and relocation of labour-intensive Chi-

nese industries, which find themselves less competitive back in China because of high labour rates there. This win-win arrangement between the two brotherly countries, Pakistan and China, is mutually beneficial because on one hand it would afford a lot of rewarding employment opportunities to Pakistani workforce, and on the other hand would also help in making the Chinese products more competitive internationally by reducing their labour input cost. Additionally, it would also prove to be instrumental in making the Pakistani manufacturing industry more competitive through technology transfer and capacity building of its manpower. This sort of symbiotic relationship is, no doubt, stable, reliable and mutually rewarding not only in interpersonal but also in international relations. This rightly is the bedrock of "higher than Himalayas, deeper than ocean and sweeter than honey" Sino-Pak diplomatic relations, spanning over more than seven decades now. In order to make maximum out of this industrial cooperation arrangement between the two countries, it is high time Pakistan secures cheap, clean and sustainable sources of energy. Cognizant of its importance, the government has started a 10,000MW solarisation project in order to reduce its reliance on expensive imported fossil fuels that cost the country around \$25 billion annually. During his recent visit to China, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has aggressively advocated Pakistan's cause to attract Chinese investments in Pakistan's solar energy projects, besides undertaking work on the up gradation of Karachi-Peshawar Railway Track (ML-1) and Karachi urban mass transit system, Karachi Circular Railway (KCR). Pakistan is also in hectic negotiations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Qatar, Russia and other friendly Middle Eastern countries to buy petroleum and gas products to ensure uninterrupted and reliable energy supplies for running its industrial units to spur economic growth. To wrap up, it can be said with certainty that all the growth-necessary paraphernalia is in place and ready to kick start industrial development through Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by foreign companies, especially the Chinese. The only ingredient missing in the recipe is political certainty and stability of the entire system. It is hoped that sanity prevails and all stakeholders of the governance system would behave more responsibly to avert further damage to the political and socio-economic order, a prerequisite of economic growth in the country.

## Briefs

## Pakistan's integrity to be secured

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anyone to undermine the key concept of national security." Participants of the meeting also paid tribute to the great sacrifices of martyrs and extended their condolences towards their families. It was determined in the meeting that terrorists are Pakistan's enemies and the entire nation is united on the single narrative of standing against terrorism. "Those challenging writ of the state will get a full force response.", the statement read. The NSC meeting will continue on Monday January 2 in which further decisions will be taken in light of the proposals shared in Friday's huddle.

## Terrorists storm police check post...

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the DIK DPO rushed to the scene. He himself rescued the injured policemen and shifted them to the hospital. Police said it was the most organized attack by the terrorists in DIK. However, the police defeated the nefarious designs of the militants with the help of their best policy. Due to worsening security situation and rising terrorist attacks in the country, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to call a meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) on Friday. The decision to summon the meeting of the NSC was taken in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz and Chief of Army Staff Gen Asim Munir on Thursday. Over the past few months, the law and order situation in the country has worsened, with terrorist groups like the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the militant Islamic State group, and Gul Bahadur Group executing attacks with near impunity across the country.

## PTI to win majority in Islamabad...

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PTI Chairman stated that this corrupt group was afraid of the people; hence they were always for escape route to avoid the elections because they cannot face the people. Imran Khan said that these cabal of thieves bought consciences of people through horse-trading by spending their corruption money to prolong their rule. However, he made it clear that the mafia had left with no option as the masses badly rejected them. "I strongly urge the people of Islamabad to fully participate in the LG polls tomorrow," he added. "I hope, God willing, the people of the federal capital will defeat this corrupt group," he vowed.

## PTI starts protest drive...

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taken out in Lahore from Azadi Chowk to Choburji Chowk, Multan, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad against increase in prices of daily use commodities at breakneck speed. Similarly, on January 2, a massive protest rally against unbridled price hike would be held in Shahr-e-Iqbal, Sialkot. Likewise, PTI would hold protest rally in Attock on January 3. As per the set plan, on January 4 and 5, protest demonstrations against inflation and dwindling economy would be held in Jhelum. On January 6, PTI would hold protest demonstration in DG Khan and on January 7 in Sheikhupura. On January 8, a protest rally against inflation would be organized from Thokar Niaz Baig to Chungi Ferozepur Road in Lahore and similar protest demonstrations would also be held in Multan, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi on the same day. According to the schedule plan, protest demonstration would be held in Sialkot on January 9 and in Gujarat on January 10 against the imported government for compounding the public miseries manifolds.



KARACHI: A delegation of Turkish Navy presenting salute after laying floral wreath at Mazar e Quaid. – DNA

## Pakistan hold New Zealand for a draw in first test match

Wasim showed his batting exploits and skills at probably best time in his early days as an international cricketer when he not only survived 57 balls but also scored 43 runs with five fours and a six. Mir Hamza kept NZ bowlers at bay for 34 balls while scoring three not out

KARACHI: Pakistan ended their four-match losing streak at home after brave and gutsy half-centuries by Imam-ul-Haq, Saud Shakeel and Sarfraz Ahmed denied New Zealand a chance to go 1-0 up in the two-Test series at the National Bank Cricket Arena on Friday. Resuming the fifth and last day at 77 for two and still needing 97 runs to make New Zealand bat again, Pakistan looked down and out when they slipped to 206 for seven (32 runs ahead) with 49 overs still remaining in the match. However, the eighth and ninth wicket partnerships between Saud Shakeel and Mohammad Wasim Junior, and Saud and Mir Hamza, respectively helped Pakistan to declare their second innings at

311 for eight. That set New Zealand a daunting but an achievable 138 runs target in 17 overs, and when both the teams shook hands due to a fading light, the visitors were 61 for one in 7.3 overs. New Zealand, who had last won a Test in Pakistan in Lahore in 1969, were on course to break the 53-year win drought when they left Saud Shakeel to battle out the remaining 49 overs in the day with the tail-enders. Saud had twice squandered the opportunity to help Pakistan win Tests against England earlier this month, but this time he was equal to the task when he returned undefeated on 55 from 138 minutes of watchful and laborious batting during which he received 108 balls

and struck seven fours and a six. Saud not only conjured up his fifth half-century in fourth Test, he added 75 runs for the eighth wicket from 111 balls (71 minutes) with Mohammad Wasim Junior, while he put on 34 runs from 82 balls (50 minutes) for the unbroken ninth wicket with Mir Hamza. Wasim showed his batting exploits and skills at probably the best time in his early days as an international cricketer when he not only survived 57 balls but also scored 43 runs with five fours and a six. Mir Hamza kept New Zealand bowlers at bay for 34 balls while scoring three not out. Earlier, Pakistan starting the day at 77 for two, plunged into a crisis when nightwatchman Noman

Ali (four) and captain Babar Azam (14) returned to the dressing room in a space of 34 balls to leave the home side in a bother at 100 for four and still needing 74 runs to make New Zealand bat again. Both the batters were adjudged leg before off Michael Bracewell and Ish Sodhi, respectively. At that stage, Imam and Sarfraz got together in a rescue act and added 85 runs for the fifth wicket before crisis struck Pakistan again. Sarfraz, immediately after reaching his second half-century of the match, paid the price for attempting a shot to a wide Sodhi delivery and was caught at the wicket, first innings centurion Salman Ali Agha missed a wrong-un from Sodhi and was bowled be-

fore Imam's fighting knock ended when he was deceived by Sodhi to be smartly stumped by Tom Blundell. Sarfraz's 53 came off 76 balls and included seven fours, while Imam was unlucky to miss his fourth Test century when he was dismissed for 96. His 206-ball knock was laced with 10 fours and a six. New Zealand were brilliant in the field on the fifth day. Ish Sodhi recorded his maiden five-fer while finishing with career-best figures of 36.5-11-86-6, while wicketkeeper Tom Blundell accounted for three Pakistan batters in the second innings to finish with seven dismissals in the match. The second Test will commence at the National Bank Cricket Arena on Monday, 2 January.

## Pakistan Cup semifinals to be played over the weekend

LAHORE: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will aim to complete a hat-trick of Pakistan Cup final appearances when they will take on defending champions Balochistan in the second semi-final on Sunday, 1 January, at Karachi's State Bank Sports Complex. However, in the first semi-final on Saturday at the State Bank Sports Complex will be a Punjab Derby when 2020-21 finalists and table-toppers Central Punjab will take on fourth-placed Southern Punjab. Both the semifinals will be live-streamed on the PCB YouTube Channel. Southern Punjab, who were at the bottom of the table after the ninth and penultimate round, sneaked into the last four stage ahead of Sindh on net run-rate after defeating Northern by eight wickets.

Mohammad Umair (four for 19) and Sharoon Siraj (three for 32) shared seven wickets between them to bowl Northern out for a modest 120, which Southern Punjab batters Mohammad Shehzad (60 not out) and Sharoon (37) chased down in 15.1 overs. In the double round-robin league matches, Central Punjab won the opener by 25 runs before Southern Punjab drew level with a 97-run victory. Central Punjab's Tayyab Tahir (444 runs at 44.4) and Qasim Akram (396 at 44) and Ahmed Shehzad (361 at 45) have been the leading run-getters, while bowling honours have been shared between Usama Mir (22), Aamer Yamin (13) and Zafar Goher (10). In contrast, Southern Punjab's Usman Salahuddin has been their lead

run-getter with 339 runs at 48.4, while Arafat Minhas (291) and Zain Abbas (254) have been the other notable contributors. Amongst the wicket-takers, Hassan Khan is the pick of their bowler with 14, followed by Mohammad Ilyas (11) and Faisal Akram (10). Sunday's semi-final will be a repeat of the 2021-22 final when Balochistan defeated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by eight wickets. In the ongoing competition, it is 1-1 between the two sides with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa winning by six wickets and Balochistan clinching the repeat match by seven wickets. Balochistan's Haseebullah is the leading run-getter of the Pakistan Cup with 504 runs at 50.4 with two centuries and three half-centuries. – APP

## Kvitova beats Pegula but US win United Cup tie

SYDNEY: Petra Kvitova upset world number three Jessica Pegula Friday at the United Cup, but fellow top 10 players Maria Sakkari and Caroline Garcia both earned victories. Two-time Wimbledon champion Kvitova clinched a thriller, saving seven set points in the first set before winning 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 at the Ken Rosewall Arena. It was not enough to save the tie for the Czechs, though, as the United States took it 4-1. In Perth, the sixth-ranked Sakkari and WTA number four Garcia from France both came through with victories Sakkari gave Greece an unassailable 3-0 lead over Bulgaria when she beat Viktoriya Tomova 6-3, 6-2. "I was a little nervous in the beginning, especially being 2-0 up in the tie, I knew my match was crucial in winning the tie," said Sakkari. "She was very solid, but I found my game and got better." Her teammates Stefanos Tsitsipas and Despina Papamichail won their matches on Thursday. Garcia, winner of last month's year-end final in Texas, hammered Argentine Nadia Podoroska 6-2, 6-0, finishing with a leaping overhead smash after 64 minutes to give France a 3-0 success after two opening-day wins. "Our team members all have the same goal," Garcia, who ranked 74th a year ago due to injury, said. "Let's see where it brings us. We want to get some more points, we want to go for it." After the Americans won the opening two rubbers on Thursday, Kvitova's victory gave her country hope in the inaugural tournament, which features two men's and two women's singles matches along with a mixed doubles. But the US clinched the tie when Tomas Machac injured his ankle against 19th-ranked Francis Tiafoe and was forced to retire hurt while down 6-3, 2-4. Kvitova, ranked 16, looked back to her best against Pegula, who burst into the top 10 in 2022 by winning the WTA 1000 tournament in Guadalajara for the biggest title of her career. After a topsy-turvy first set that could have gone either way, she got a double break at the start of the second set and while the American got one back, Kvitova was able to hold on and take the match in two hours. "It was a high-level match for a solid two hours, it got kind of physical towards the end," said Pegula. – APP

## Aqeel, Shoab advance in Serena Hotels Tennis Tournament

ISLAMABAD: Top-ranked Aqeel Khan and Muhammad Shoab cruised into the semi-finals of men's singles event of the 7th Serena Hotels National Ranking Tennis Tournament 2022 after beating their respective opponents in the quarter-finals here at the PTF SDA Tennis Complex on Friday. Aqeel Khan outclassed Barkatullah 6-2, 7-6(3), while Shoab overpowered Heera Ashiq 6-4, 6-2. In another quarterfinal, Muhammad Abid toppled Mudassir Murtaza

6-1, 3-6, 6-4. Earlier, Yousaf Khalil had moved to the semi-finals on Thursday after outshining Muzamil Murtaza 6-3, 1-6, 6-1 in the quarter-final. Contests in other categories were also held on Friday. Results: Men's Doubles Quarter-Finals: Mudassir Murtaza / M. Abid bt Abdullah Adnan / Imran Bhatti 6-0, 6-4; Heera Ashiq / Yousaf Khalil bt Mahmood Khan / Talha Waheed 6-4, 6-3 Ladies Singles Quarter-Finals:

Noor Malik bt Natalia Zaman 6-2, 6-7(3), 6-3 Boys Singles 18 & Under Quarter-Finals: Sami Zeb Khan bt Uzair Khan 6-2, 6-2; Hamid Israr bt Asad Zamir 6-0, 7-5; Bilal Asim bt Rahim Veqar 6-2, 6-2; Mahatir Muhammad bt Ahmed Nael Qureshi 4-6, 7-6(4), 6-0 Boys Singles 14 & Under Quarter-Finals: Amir Mazaribt Nabeel Ali Qayum 6-4, 6-0; M. Hamza Asim bt Sameer Zaman 6-4, 6-3; Abdul Basit bt Haziq Asim 6-3, 6-0. – APP

## Tributes pour in as football legend Pele dies at 82

"Thanks for his flair and his class. He left a mark even on the generations who weren't lucky enough to see him play. Today the whole world mourns a legend named Pele." – Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni

BRAZIL: Brazilian Football legend Pele lost his fight to colon cancer and passed away at the age 82, his daughter, Kely Nascimento, announced Friday on Instagram. "Everything we are is thanks to you," Nascimento wrote in a post on her official account. "We love you infinitely. Rest in peace." Seen as the greatest player of all time and even named "the greatest" by FIFA, Pele helped Brazil win a record three World Cups in 1958, 1962, and 1970. Over his distinguished career, Pele netted 77 goals in his 92 caps for Brazil. Nicknamed "the Black Pearl," he also holds the record of most career goals with 1,283 in 1,363 games, including friendlies. Pele's death

triggered a flood of sorrow from the world of football. "A simple goodbye to the eternal King Pelé will never be enough to express the pain that hits the entire world of football at this moment. An inspiration for so many millions, a reference of yesterday, today, always. The affection he has always shown for me was reciprocal in every moment we shared, even at distance. He will never be forgotten and his memory will last for ever in each and everyone of us football lovers. Rest in peace, King Pelé." – Cristiano Ronaldo, Portuguese soccer star. "Your place is on God's side. My eternal king. Rest in peace." – 1970 World Cup winner Roberto Rivellino and teammate of Pele on the Bra-

zilian national team. "Before Pelé, '10' was just a number. I read that somewhere at some point in my life. But that line, beautiful, is incomplete. I would say that before Pelé, football was just a sport. Pelé changed everything. He transformed football into art, entertainment. He gave voice to the poor, to the Black and above all he gave Brazil visibility. Football and Brazil elevated their standing thanks to the King! He is gone, but his magic will endure. Pelé is eternal!" – Brazilian star Neymar. "I had the privilege that younger Brazilians didn't have: I saw Pelé play, live, at Pacaembu and Morumbi (stadiums). Play, no. I saw Pelé give a show. Because

when he got the ball he always did something special, which often ended in a goal. I confess that I was angry with Pelé, because he always massaged my Corinthians. But, first and foremost, I admired him .... Few Brazilians took the name of our country as far as he did." – Brazil's President-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. "For a sport that brings the world together like no other, Pelé's rise from humble beginnings to soccer legend is a story of what is possible. Today, Jill and I's thoughts are with his family and all those who loved him." – US President Joe Biden. "Pelé was one of the greatest to ever play the beautiful game. And as one of the most recognizable athletes in the world, he understood the

power of sports to bring people together. Our thoughts are with his family and everyone who loved and admired him." – Former U.S. President Barack Obama. "The king of football has left us but his legacy will never be forgotten. RIP KING." French player Kylian Mbappé. "With the death of Pelé, soccer has lost one of its greatest legends, if not the greatest. Like all legends, the King seemed immortal. He made people dream and continued to do that with generations and generations of lovers of our sport. Who, as a child, didn't dream of being Pelé?" – Didier Deschamps, former player and manager of the French national team. "It will be very difficult to find another Pelé. Pelé had

## Turkish Navy Ship conducts drills with Pak Navy

DNA

KARACHI: The Turkish Navy Ship TCG BURGAZADA on Friday visited Karachi Port and participated in bilateral naval Exercise TURGUTREIS - VII. The Turkish ship port was earlier called Karachi harbour and was welcomed by senior officers of the Pakistan Navy along with officials of the Turkish Consulate, a Pakistan Navy news release said. During the stay at port, the Commanding Officer of the Turkish Ship called on Commander Pakistan Fleet and matters of mutual interest and bilateral collaboration were discussed. In port activities, joint professional interactions including the planning of bilateral exercises at sea, tabletop discussions on professional topics, sports & social events including a wreath laying at the Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam were conducted with an aim to strengthen mutual cooperation and integration between the two navies.

## Putin expects China's...

FROM PAGE 01

Since major Western economies responded to the invasion with an unprecedented, coordinated barrage of sanctions, Russia has been forced to seek other markets, and has overtaken Saudi Arabia as the top crude supplier to China. Bilateral trade has soared and financial ties have been expanded. On Friday, Russia's Finance Ministry doubled the maximum possible share of Chinese yuan in its National Wealth Fund (NWF) to 60% as Moscow tries to "de-dollarise" its economy and end dependency on "unfriendly" nations including the United States, European Union members, Britain and Japan.

Moscow has also publicly backed Xi's position on Taiwan and accused the West of trying to provoke a conflict over the status of the self-governing island, which China claims as its own. Putin told Xi: "You and I share the same views on the causes, course and logic of the ongoing transformation of the global geopolitical landscape, in the face of unprecedented pressure and provocations from the West."

## ECP asked to hold...

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the federal and provincial governments. It pointed out that untimely amendments made by the governments in the laws created impediments in the path of LG polls, adding that the ECP had announced schedule for the polls in Islamabad but it was declared null and void by the high court. The ECP had also proposed amendments to the Election Act 2019 and Article 140-A of the Constitution, arguing that the change would bar the governments from amending the laws when the elections are near.

On Thursday, the IHC instructed the top election body to submit the local government elections' new timeline on Friday after holding consultation with the federal government. Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, who heard the pleas filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Jamaat-e-Islami, challenging the commission's notification of postponement of the LG elections in the federal capital, also sought written arguments from the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) and the ECP.

## Government expresses...

FROM PAGE 01

He added that as many as 1,000 polling stations needed security, election material is still not deployed at the stations and the polling staff will also be needed. "This isn't possible." The Islamabad High Court (IHC) had earlier directed the Election Commission of Pakistan to hold local government elections in the capital on December 31 after it accepted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamaat-e-Islami's (JI) petitions seeking to nullify ECP's decision to postpone the local polls.

## Briefs

## Business Council floats proposals to save energy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) has forwarded a set of proposals for the conservation and curtailment of energy, including suggestions to work from home three days a week in big cities including Karachi, impose ban on driving vehicles on Sundays and to restrict the speed limit on highways to 10 km. It was also suggested that car sharing would not be permitted and short distance will be covered on foot or bicycle. Under the proposals, it was also recommended to reduce business travel requirements where alternatives are available and to employ high speed trains rather than airplanes for travelling at night. Pakistan should also follow the 10 points of the International Energy Agency.

On the other hand, Chairman of All Karachi Traders Union Atiq Mir has expressed his conditional consent to the government's decision of early markets closure. While expressing her conditional consent, he said: "It is such a positive sign that traders were also consulted for the first time regarding early market and business closure." He, however, voiced his reservations stating that the decision to close the markets at 8 pm will be wrong as it will lead to a clash between traders and the police. Then, in an effort to provide relief to market owners affected by, he demanded a change in market closure time, calling for a 9 p.m. closing time. He also proposed that Government should devise an alternative energy saving plan.

## Dar seeks report on gas sector circular debt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has directed the Committee constituted for the settlement of circular debt in gas sector to finalize their report within three working days to settle the issue of circular debt in gas sector. He was chairing a meeting on reforms in Energy Sector in Islamabad on Thursday. The Finance Minister emphasized the priority of the government to address the issue of energy sector including circular debt to bring financial sustainability of the sector and economic growth of the country. The Government earlier constituted a Committee convened by Ashfaq Yousuf Tola for the settlement of circular debt in gas sector. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has conferred the status of Minister of State on Chairman, Reforms and Resource Mobilization Commission (RRMC) Ashfaq Tola.

## South Africa fuel tanker blast death toll climbs to 34

DNA

JOHANNESBURG: The death toll from a fuel tanker explosion in a South African city east of Johannesburg last week has climbed to 34, the health ministry said on Friday. A truck carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) became stuck under a bridge in Boksburg last Saturday, triggering a leak and blast that instantly killed 10 people. "The death toll from (the) Boksburg explosion incident has risen to 34," the ministry said on Friday, after 24 people died over the following days of severe burns or other wounds. Among the victims were people who had approached to see the truck stuck under the bridge before being caught in the blast, as well as "11 health workers" at the nearby Tambo Memorial Hospital, it said. Dozens at the hospital, including patients and staff members, sustained serious burns after the explosion blew out its windows and caused the roof to collapse. Videos on social media showed a huge fireball under the bridge, which the tanker appeared to have been too high to go under.

## China shows commitment to strengthen Pak economy

The establishment of new hospitals, medical universities, research centres, pharmacies, and caregiving organisations will be the focus of this corridor

DNA

Islamabad: China showed unflinching commitment to strengthen Pakistan's economy during 2022, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Amid economic instability, Net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan dropped 52.1% during the first four months of the ongoing fiscal year (FY23), clocking in at just \$348.3 million, revealed State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) data. Details showed that, during the same period, the highest FDI inflows came from China during the July-November period, amounting to \$102.5 million. Despite the economic and political crises, the all-weather friend of Pakistan, China, remained the largest investor during the last fiscal year, as it made notable investment in its ongoing power, telecom, and financial projects. China made the single largest

investment of net \$532 million in Pakistan in FY22, followed by the United States which injected net \$250 million during the year. More recently, CPEC has given Pakistan a rare chance to boost FDI and private investment and restructure its economy. In 2022, China and Pakistan announced three new corridors including Green, Digital and Health corridors which will usher in a new era of development in Pakistan. Agriculture, food security, and green development will be the focus of the Green Corridor. Moreover, given the skill of our young people, we can state without a doubt that Pakistan has enormous potential in the digital corridor. China has been a technical powerhouse in recent years, and its investment in the creation of suitable training facilities in the nation will help Pakistan maximise the potential of the youth. Similar opportunities exist for collaboration in the health and



medical fields. The establishment of new hospitals, medical universities, research centres, pharmacies, and caregiving organisations will be the focus of this corridor. Some significant investments have been discussed in this article. A Chinese company, The East Sea Group has planned to build an oil refinery with an annual processing capacity of 8 million tons in Gwadar, with a huge investment of \$4.5 billion. Similarly, in December 2022, Opay, a Chinese corporation with operations in several nations, including Nigeria, pledged to invest \$100 million in

Pakistan's digital payments industry by boosting the number of points of sale (POS) from 10,000 to 100,000. Opay has already invested \$4 million in Pakistan. Earlier in 2022, Chinese brand in the home appliances category, Midea has expanded its assembly line with two new products. Speaking at the launching ceremony of Midea in Pakistan, Consul General of China in Karachi Li Bijian voiced hope that the new assembly line would lead to import substitution for Pakistan, besides reducing its import bill and trade deficit. In February 2022 Pakistan and China inked the Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC Joint Working Group (JWG) on Industrial Cooperation was established in 2016 and an MoU was signed between both parties in 2018. With the passage of time and as CPEC entered its second phase, the

need for a comprehensive Framework Agreement became imperative. A major milestone regarding Chinese mining investment in Pakistan was achieved in November 2022. At an international conference on the lithium battery business held in Sichuan, China, a strategic agreement was struck between the China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences and Tianqi Lithium Co. to better examine and research lithium reserves in Pakistan. According to the strategic agreement, both sides would work together to study and utilise Pakistan's lithium deposits. As Pakistan is going for clean, green, and affordable energy, China has come again. A Beijing-based multinational wind turbine manufacturer, Goldwind corporation, launched Pakistan's first solution factory in Pakistan. Additionally, China is helping Pakistan set up a waste-to-energy facility in Lahore.

## CG Zhao confers 21 "Friendship awards"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Consulate Lahore has conferred 21 "Friendship Awards 2022" to prominent Pakistani individuals and institutions in a ceremony held at Lahore Gymkhana Club, Gwadar Pro reported it on Friday. This year, the Consulate has, based on the merits and contributions of the relevant stakeholders and taking representation into account, chosen 17 excellent individuals and 4 institutions from different fields and areas as the Friendship Award recipients. Institute of International Relations and Media Research (IIRMR), a think-tank dedicated to Sino-Pak relations, global diplomacy, CPEC and BRI, is also among the recipient of "Friendship Awards 2022". Speaking on the occasion, Chinese Consul General Lahore Zhao Shiren said that the



year of 2022 almost drawing to a close, it is high time to celebrate wonderful efforts and great endeavors made by 21 individuals and institutions in strengthening Pak-China bilateral relations and enhancing practical cooperation in various sectors. He said that Prime Minister Shehbaz paid his successful maiden visit to China, and CPEC is gaining new momentum into its high-quality development.

"Although our two countries are facing and dealing with various kinds of difficulties, challenges and problems on both domestic and international fronts, the state of our bilateral relations is strong and will remain so and even grow stronger in the coming days. Against this backdrop, the Consulate General of China in Lahore has also made its tireless efforts in promoting mutual trust, business

cooperation, cultural and educational exchanges between China and the Punjab," he opined. "With the support and efforts of Pakistani friends, brothers and sisters of the media houses, think tanks, universities, business chambers, public institutions, consular corps, law enforcement agencies and Chinese associations, we are forging ahead together to make things happen," he concluded.

## EU urges more checks for COVID-19 variants given surge in China

BRUSSELS: The European Union should consider immediately scaling up genomic sequencing of COVID-19 infections and monitoring of waste water, including from airports, to detect any new variants given the virus surge in China, the bloc's health chief said. In a letter to health ministers of the EU's 27 members, Stella Kyriakides said the bloc should be "very vigilant" as China lifted travel restrictions on Jan. 8 as reliable epidemiological and testing data for China were quite scarce. Kyriakides advised ministers in the letter, to assess their current practices on genomic sequencing of the coronavirus "as an immediate step." If sequencing had been scaled down, countries might want to consider scaling it back up, she wrote, adding that it was important to continue or start surveillance of waste water, including sewage from key airports. If a new variant appeared, the bloc needed to detect it early to be able to react quickly, the commissioner wrote. The commissioner's letter, dated Dec. 29, followed an online meeting of over 100 representatives from EU members, EU health agencies and the World Health Organization to discuss how to deal with the outbreak in China. Health experts are expected to hold a crisis response meeting next week, according to an EU source. Italy has urged the rest of the European Union to follow its lead and test travelers from China, but most EU members have said they saw no need to do so. Kyriakides said some EU members had proposed measures such as the random testing of travelers. Spain said on Friday it would join other countries setting new restrictions by requiring travelers from China to test negative or show they have been fully vaccinated. The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control says it does not currently recommend measures on travelers from China. It said the variants circulating in China were already in the European Union, EU citizens had relatively high vaccination levels and the potential imported infections were low compared to the number of daily infections in the EU, with health care systems currently coping.

## Indonesia lifts COVID-19 related restrictions

JAKARTA: The Indonesian government has decided to lift COVID-19 related public activity restrictions nationwide, President Joko Widodo announced on Friday. The decision was made based on the latest infection figures, the president said at the presidential palace in Jakarta. After more than 10 months of deliberation and consideration of the numbers available, the government has decided to put an end to the public mobility restriction protocol, locally known as PPBM, Widodo said. "There will be no more restrictions on gatherings and movements," the president said. However, the president called on the public to stay vigilant despite the PPBM termination. "I advise all sectors of the nation to be careful and alert. The public must increase their awareness of vigilance against the risk of COVID-19." He also recommended that people should continue to wear face masks in crowded places or indoors.—APP

## Ukraine says repelled Russia nighttime drone attack

KYIV: Ukraine said on Friday it repelled a nighttime drone attack from Russia, a day after Moscow launched a new wave of missile strikes in the run-up to New Year celebrations. The attacks came 10 months into Moscow's conflict with Ukraine. In recent months, Russian strikes have targeted the energy grid, leaving millions in the cold in the middle of winter. A total of 16 drones were launched from the southeastern and northern directions and they were "all" destroyed by Ukraine's air defence, it said. The presidency said that Ukraine "withstood" the new drone attacks, which targeted infrastructure facilities. In the capital Kyiv, city authorities announced an air alert shortly after 2:00 am local time. Mayor Vitali Klitschko later said seven drones had targeted the capital. Two were shot down "on approach" and five over the city. There were no casualties, but falling debris damaged windows in two buildings in southwestern Kyiv, he added. One of the drones hit a four-storey administrative building, starting a fire that was later extinguished, said Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the presidential office.—APP

## Macao's unemployment rate drops to 3.7 pct

MACAO: Macao's general unemployment rate for the period from September to November decreased by 0.2 percentage point to 3.7 percent from the August-October period, the special administrative region (SAR)'s statistics department said on Friday. The latest report from Macao's Statistics and Census Service (DSEC) said that the unemployment rate for local residents was 4.7 percent for the September-November period, down 0.3 percentage point from the August-October period, thanks to a number of large events held in November that increased the demand for manpower. The underemployment rate dropped by 2.2 percentage points to 4.3 percent, while the labor force participation rate was 68.9 percent, the report added. The labor force living in Macao totaled 375,900 people for the period from September to November this year. Total employment decreased by 1,100 from the previous period to 361,900, while the number of employed residents totaled 282,000, an increase of 1,100. The number of unemployed dropped by 700 from the previous period to 14,000. Meanwhile, the proportion of people seeking their first job decreased by 3.0 percentage points to 11.4 percent of the total unemployed. The number of the underemployed decreased by 8,200 from the August-October period to 16,200. In comparison with the period from September to November 2021.—APP

## Pak should learn from China for development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday said Pakistan should learn from China for economic and technological development. To ensure economic development, the country should have a peaceful environment adding "we must first ensure political stability, continuity of policies, and social solidarity because economic development does not take place in an atmosphere of conflict and polarization. The minister made these remarks while addressing the award ceremony held

in recognition of outstanding Pakistani staff of the CPEC Projects 2022 at the Chinese Embassy here. He said that everyone thought that CPEC is an impossible mission. But people on the ground made it possible, which is remarkable. Highlighting the friendship bond between Pakistan and China, the minister said that the changes in world affairs have also brought changes in relationships. World orders bring countries together and the world order changes. The countries' friendships also drift apart. He said that the Pakistan and China friend-

ship has defied all rules of international affairs and diplomacy. There are no two countries that have phrases like iron brothers, he added. All these phrases describe the depth and strength of Pakistan-China friendship and brotherhood. The minister said that Pakistan and China were historically very close in political relations, security cooperation, and other fields except for economic cooperation. However, in 2013 when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited China after resuming office, the economic MoUs of \$46 billion were signed between China and Pakistan

## Online Khuli kachehri at Pak embassy Moscow

DNA

MOSCOW: An online Khuli Kachehri was held by Charge d'Affaires (CDA) Mr Rana Summar Javed at the Embassy of Pakistan Moscow this afternoon. The online Kachehri was attended by officials of the Consular and Diplomatic Wings of the Embassy of Pakistan. Pakistanis living in Russian Federation participated in the online Kachehri. The participants informed the CDA about the payments issue being faced by some Pakistani students due to a problem with banking channels. The prospects for student exchange programmes were also discussed. Mr Rana Summar Javed informed the participants about the special steps taken by the Embassy of Pakistan for streamlining the passport delivery to the Pakistanis. He further noted that the Russian Government has increased



the number of scholarships for Pakistani students wishing to study at various programmes in Russian universities to 45. He added that further progress in Pak-Russia cooperation on education might be expected

as this issue would be specially addressed at the upcoming Pakistan-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission scheduled to be held in Islamabad in January 2023. In his closing remarks, Mr Rana Summar

Javed reiterated the resolve of the Embassy's staff to provide maximum facilitation to the Pakistani citizens in Russia and reminded about the need to abide by the laws and rules of the host country.

## Dubai Courts orders extradition of British citizen Shah to Denmark

The UAE also supports global efforts and implements international policies to counter financial crimes

DUBAI: The Dubai Court of Appeal issued a ruling to extradite British citizen, Sanjay Shah, to Denmark after being accused by Danish authorities for alleged fraud and money laundering. The appeal by Chancellor Essam Issa AHumaidan, Attorney-General of Dubai, comes after a previous ruling rejecting Shah's extradition, wrote state news agency WAM. The Court of Cassation decided to return the case to the Court of Appeal for reconsideration by a different judicial body. Public Prosecution handed over to the Court of Appeal all the necessary documents submitted by officials in Denmark against Shah as proof for his fraudulent behavior. The suspect was arrested earlier this year following the extradition request sent by Danish Authorities to the UAE. The arrest and ruling align with the emirate's commitment to combat illegal financial activities, which includes money laundering. The UAE also supports global efforts and implements international policies to counter financial crimes.—APP

## Briefs

### Putin sends New Year greetings to heads of state

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday extended holiday and 2023 New Year's greetings to heads of foreign states and governments, including Türkiye, as well as leaders of international organizations. Putin "warmly congratulated Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the upcoming New Year, emphasizing that mutually beneficial relations between Russia and Türkiye are developing very dynamically, despite the difficult international situation," the Kremlin said. "Vladimir Putin stated that in the past year, bilateral cooperation in many areas has been significantly expanded, major joint projects designed to ensure long-term regional energy security are being successfully implemented," it added, citing the construction of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant in southern Türkiye as well as the creation of a Turkish regional gas hub. Putin said that acting together, Moscow and Ankara will be able to ensure further expansion of the entire complex of Russian-Turkish cooperation for the benefit of their peoples, in the interests of strengthening stability and security on the Eurasian continent. - APP

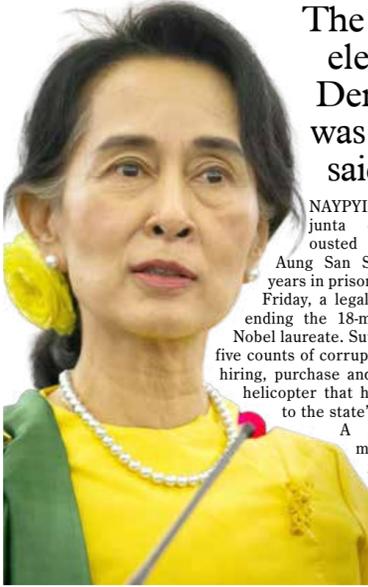
### Turkiye 'neutralizes' 8 PKK-YPG terrorists in Syria

ANKARA: Turkish security forces "neutralized" eight PKK/YPG terrorists in northern Syria, near the Turkish border, the National Defense Ministry said on Friday. The terrorists were targeted in the Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch zones, the ministry stressed in a statement. Turkish authorities use the term "neutralize" to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. PKK/YPG terrorists hide out in northern Syria, near the Turkish border, where they plan or stage attacks on both locals and nearby settlements in Türkiye. Since 2016, Ankara has launched a trio of successful anti-terror operations across its border in northern Syria to prevent the formation of a terror corridor and enable the peaceful settlement of residents: Euphrates Shield (2016), Olive Branch (2018), and Peace Spring (2019). In its more than 35-year terror campaign against Türkiye, the PKK - listed as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the US, and EU - has been responsible for the deaths of over 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants. The YPG is its Syrian branch. - APP

### US House committee releases Trump tax returns

WASHINGTON: A Democratic-controlled U.S. House of Representatives committee released six years of former President Donald Trump's tax returns to the public on Friday in an extraordinary move days before Republicans are due to take control of the chamber. Release of Trump's redacted returns for 2015 through 2020 caps a multi-year battle between the Republican former president and Democratic lawmakers that was settled only last month by the U.S. Supreme Court. It is the latest blow for Trump, 76, who was impeached twice by the Democratic-led House only to be acquitted both times by the U.S. Senate, and now faces multiple legal woes as he mounts a 2024 reelection bid. Earlier this month, the House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by his supporters asked federal prosecutors to charge him with four crimes including obstruction and insurrection for his role in the deadly riot. - Agencies

# Myanmar's Suu Kyi jailed for 7 years over corruption charges



The military alleged widespread voter fraud during the Nov 2020 election, won resoundingly by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party, although international observers said the poll was largely free and fair. The junta has since cancelled result and said it uncovered more than 11 million instances of voter fraud

NAYPYIDAW: A Myanmar junta court sentenced ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to seven years in prison for corruption on Friday, a legal source told AFP, ending the 18-month trial of the Nobel laureate. Suu Kyi was jailed on five counts of corruption related to the hiring, purchase and maintaining of a helicopter that had caused a "loss to the state", the source said. A prisoner of the military since the 2021 coup, Suu Kyi, 77, has been convicted on every charge levelled against her, ranging from corruption to illegally possessing walkie-talkies and flouting Covid restrictions. "All her cases were finished and there are no more charges against her," said the source, who requested anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media. Suu Kyi - who has now been jailed for 33 years - appeared in good health, the source added. Journalists have been barred from attending the court hearings and Suu Kyi's lawyers have been banned from speaking to the media. Since her trial began, she has been seen only once - in grainy state media photos from a bare courtroom - and has been reliant on lawyers to relay messages to the world. Many in Myanmar's democracy struggle, which she has dominated for decades, have abandoned her core principle of non-violence, with "People's Defence Forces" clashing regularly with military across the country. Last week the United Nations Security Council called on the junta to release Suu Kyi in its first resolution on the situation in Myanmar since the coup. It was

a moment of relative unity by the council after permanent members and close junta allies China and Russia abstained, opting not to wield vetoes following amendments to the wording. The military alleged widespread voter fraud during the November 2020 election, won resoundingly by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party, although international observers said the poll was largely free and fair. The junta has since cancelled the result and said it uncovered more than 11 million instances of voter fraud. Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military seized power, ending the Southeast Asian nation's brief experiment with democracy and sparking huge protests. The junta has responded with a crackdown that rights groups say includes razing villages, mass extrajudicial killings and airstrikes on civilians. More than one million people have been displaced since the coup, according to the United Nations children's agency. - APP

### No-trust against Elahi: PML-N to hold party meeting

DNA  
LAHORE: In the backdrop of Punjab Assembly imbroglio, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz will hold its parliamentary party meeting in the first week of January to deliberate on the issues of trust vote and no-confidence motion against the chief minister. The PML-N has directed its members of the Punjab Assembly to reach Lahore on January 2. A parliamentary meeting of the party will be held in the first week of January and the meeting will hold discussion on no-trust motion against Chief Minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi. The PML-N huddle will also deliberate on the no-confidence motions against the Punjab Assembly speaker and deputy speaker. During the meeting, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will apprise the party MPAs regarding their next strategy.

## PM condoles death of Indian PM Modi's mother

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed his condolences on the sad demise of mother of his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. In a tweet uploaded on Friday, Shehbaz Sharif said there was no greater loss than losing one's mother, offering his condolences to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the passing away of his mother. Earlier, Narendra Modi's mother Heeraben Modi had died at the age of 99. "A glorious century rests at the feet of God," Mr Modi tweeted on Friday morning. He lit his mother's funeral pyre in Gandhinagar in western Gujarat state - where Heeraben lived - on Friday. Heeraben had been admitted to hospital on Wednesday after her health deteriorated. The Indian prime minister often visited his mother to seek her blessings on important occasions and festivals. Her life and sacrifices had "shaped" his mind, personality and self-confidence, Mr Modi wrote on 18 June when Heeraben turned 99. "My mother is as simple as she is extraordinary. Just like all mothers," he wrote. They were last seen together in public on 4 December when Mr Modi visited her house during the assembly election in Gujarat, his home state. Heeraben lived with Mr Modi's younger brother and his family. Several politicians and ministers have expressed sorrow over her death on social media. Defence minister Rajnath Singh tweeted that he was "deeply pained" by the news. "The death of a mother leaves such a void in one's life that is impossible to fill," he wrote. M Venkaiah Naidu, former vice-president of India, also expressed his condolences. Heeraben was born in Visnagar in Gujarat's Mehsana district in 1923. "Her childhood was one of poverty and deprivation," Mr Modi wrote. As a teen, she was married to Damodardas Mulchand Modi and moved to

Defence minister Rajnath Singh tweeted that he was "deeply pained" by the news. "The death of a mother leaves such a void in one's life that is impossible to fill," he wrote. M Venkaiah Naidu, former VP of India, also expressed his condolences

the town of Vadnagar a few kilometres away. "In Vadnagar, our family used to stay in a tiny house which did not even have a window, let alone a luxury like a toilet or a bathroom," Mr Modi wrote in his blog. He described his mother as punctual, neat and a hard worker. "While working, she would hum her favourite bhajans and hymns," he wrote. Heeraben never attended public programmes, Mr Modi wrote, adding that she had only accompanied him to two events - the second one was in 2001, when he first took oath as the chief minister of Gujarat. "Since then, she has never accompanied me to a single public event," he wrote. Though he became India's prime minister in 2014, Heeraben visited him in Delhi only two years later. Mr Modi had tweeted photos of himself showing her around his official residence. Months later, when Mr Modi's government controversially banned 500 and 1,000 rupee notes in a bid to crack down on undeclared wealth, Heeraben was photographed visiting a bank, like millions of Indians, to exchange old notes. - DNA

## Law minister rules out govt of technocrats

ISLAMABAD: Amid rumours of a technocrat setup being brought in, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday ruled out its possibility and said that it can be "someone's wish" but is not possible practically. "There is no room for a technocratic government in the constitution," said Tarar in an informal conversation with journalists. The law minister said that the constitution is clear that if assemblies are dissolved before their stipulated time, then elections will be held in 90 days. If the assemblies are dissolved on time then the poll will be held in 60 days, he added. The minister also stated that once the assemblies are dissolved then a caretaker government will come in and there was no other option apart from that. "Technocratic government can be someone's wish but is not practically possible. Steps can be taken for the country's economy by staying within the constitution," said the minister. He added that no one's wishes and thoughts can be banned. To a question about PTI leader Asad Qaiser's claim about the government suggesting a technocratic government, Tarar replied: "As of now, there is no such thing in my knowledge, although I have seen it on TV. A day earlier, former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser had claimed that the government offered the PTI a long-term interim government set-up. However, no extra-constitutional demand will be accepted in any shape, he said. Asad Qaisarsaid the PTI is ready to hold talks if the government announces an election date. He said that the Constitution has no provision for a long-term interim government and that such an extra-constitutional offer must be rejected at all costs. He said that they are ready for talks with the govt if it gives an election date. - DNA

## President Alvi for enhanced Pak, Norway cooperation

DNA  
ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday emphasized the need for accelerated engagements and cooperation with Norway in diverse sectors, including trade, business, investment, and green energy. The president, talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Norway Sadia Altaf Qazi, who called on him here, also

called for bilateral cooperation in the fields of education, skill development, defence and exports of Pakistan's cost-effective but highly prized fruit and vegetables. He said that there was a need to substantially enhance bilateral trade from its existing volume of US\$ 128.404 million, which did not represent the true potential, by promoting exports of traditional and non-traditions products and services to the rich and affluent market of Norway. The president advised the ambassador-designate to proactively engage and interact with Pakistani expatriates, provide them proactive counsellor services and, through their platforms, not only promote bilateral trade and investment but also take meaningful steps for increasing people-to-people contacts and promotion of Pakistan's rich, diverse, social and cultural values and tourism opportunities.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Norway, Ms Sadia Altaf Qazi calls on President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

## Palestine rejects racist policy of Israeli new govt

International peace and security are under attack, requiring quick and unequivocal international mobilization at bilateral and multilateral levels, including the Security Council

RAMALLAH: The State of Palestine has rejected the annexationist, violent, racist, and incitement to ethnic cleansing policy guidelines of Israel's new government. The State of Palestine considers this agenda an existential threat to the Palestinian people and their inalienable and inviolable rights. This coalition of avowed racists and rejectionists have openly and unapologetically adopted an agenda of colonial expansion, racial discrimination, and apartheid thus demonstrating their complete disdain towards the international community, international law, United Nations resolutions, and the international consensus for peace. In light of the Israeli government's audaciously clear and objectionable agenda, the international community must carry out its responsibilities and reject any dealings with a government committed to carrying out international crimes, including annexation, political persecution, and racial discrimination. States must not give credence or legitimacy to this government's deplorable platform, which embodies the antithesis of the values and political principles the international law-based order and principles of self-determination, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and

political independence. International peace and security are under attack, requiring quick and unequivocal international mobilization at the bilateral and multilateral levels, including the Security Council. Of immediate urgency, the international community must ensure the protection of the Palestinian people from Israel's ongoing campaign of dispossession and displacement, colonization and annexation, ethnic cleansing and persecution. States that have long used their political clout to shield Israel from any accountability and ensure its exceptional treatment as a state above the law must also cease this irresponsible policy of direct and indirect complicity in Israeli crimes. The Palestinian people will not relent in their rightful quest for freedom and self-determination. The Palestinian people will not be deterred or dissuaded from attaining their rights by such criminal policies and conduct of the colonizer. The attainment of our inalienable human rights, including our legitimate right to exist and live in our homeland is non-negotiable. The realization of these rights are also binding obligations on all states. Any derogation from these obligations is simply inexcusable. - DNA

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