



Islamabad POST

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Saudi Arabia rules out Israel normalization

Detailed News On Page-08

January 20 marks massacre of civilians

Detailed News On Page-06



Swiatek into the 4th round at Australian Open

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Govt to steer Pak out of challenges

DNA



LAHORE: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira says coalition government is facing a daunting task to pull the country out of the crises. He was addressing a public gathering in Lahore on Friday. Expressing dismay over the rising inflation in the country, he said that PTI Chief Imran Khan over his poor performance during his regime, he said that economy faced irreparable loss due to his failed policies. He expressed satisfaction that relations with the friendly states have improved now due to smart foreign policy of the incumbent government.

Political adventure not required

DNA



KARACHI: Senoir Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) leader Ahsan Iqbal said on Friday the country could not afford any political adventure at present. Speaking to media in Karachi, he said the economy was facing a severe crisis however there would be no default because the decisions would be in the country's interests, while adding the incumbent government had inherited a vulnerable economy and Pakistan was compared to Sri Lanka but the economy was handled well. Highlighting the result of local elections, the PML-N's stalwart said the people of Karachi had rejected the divisive politics of PTI because Imran Khan did not provide relief the relief to Karachi during his tenure. He said all parties now needed to save the state instead of their own politics and the party that claimed of having 14 seats in Karachi was whitewashed in the polls.

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

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Russian oil import to start from March

Russian official says Pakistan will pay in 'currency of friendly countries'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PM invites UAE investment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Following a conclusion of the annual inter-governmental commission held between Pakistan and Russia, the two sides agreed on late March as the timeline for crude oil export. Confirming the news, Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik revealed that Pakistan wants to import 35% of its total crude oil requirement from Russia. The state minister also mentioned that currently, Russia does not have liquefied natural gas (LNG) for Pakistan. Meanwhile, Russia's Energy Minister Nikolay Shulginov, who is visiting the country, also said that Pakistan will pay for energy purchases from Russia, when they start in late March, in currencies of friendly countries. Pakistan's government last year sent officials to Russia, after which the Pakistani state minister for petroleum said Russia would sell crude oil at a discounted rate. Pakistan has not traditionally been a major importer of Russian oil and gas. During the talks, Islamabad and Moscow agreed that after consensus on the technical specifications was achieved, the oil and gas trade transaction will be structured in a way it has a mutual economic benefit for both countries. The officials also agreed to strengthen energy cooperation, enhance energy trade and broaden energy infrastructure investment based on strategic and favourable commercial terms. Both sides have agreed to work on a "Comprehensive Plan for Energy Cooperation", which would form the foundation for future work and is to be finalised in 2023.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has urged the businessmen of the United Arab Emirates to utilize the immense opportunities in Pakistan, a market of over 220 million people offering its investors a strong and large consumer market. "Energy, infrastructure, e-commerce, agro-based industry and IT sectors are up for grabs," he said in an interview with Khaleej Times during his visit to the UAE last week and published on Thursday. Besides meeting the UAE leadership, the prime minister also witnessed the signing of three memoranda of understanding in the fields of combating human trafficking, information exchange and cooperation between the diplomatic academies of both countries. Asked about the UAE and Pakistan trade relations, Prime Minister Shehbaz pointed out that the bilateral trade with the UAE had increased by 25.40 percent during 2021-22 as compared to the previous year, amounting to US\$10.60 billion. However, he said, "the current level of bilateral trade is still not a true reflection. We are looking to further strengthen our existing economic, trade and investment ties, he said and added

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Pakistan rules out talks with the TTP

Bilawal urges 'dialogue and diplomatic engagement' to resolve Ukraine conflict

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Accusing former prime minister Imran Khan's government of following a policy of appeasement towards the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that the new leadership - both political and military - have ruled out talks with terrorist organisations that don't respect the country's laws and constitution. "I am confident that if we can work with the Afghan interim government, which has influence over these groups, we will be successful in maintaining our security," he said in a wide-ranging interview with the Washington Post in

Davos, Switzerland, where he is attending the World Economic Forum. The foreign minister accused PTI chief Imran Khan of giving TTP a place to hide. He said that Khan not only released the TTP prisoners in Pakistan's custody but also engaged in dialogue with them. "He [Khan] has always been ideologically sympathetic to their point of view," the foreign minister added. In response to a question about whether Pakistan had hoped that the new Afghan government would act against the TTP, FM Bilawal said: "Our hope - and in fact, their agreement - was that their soil would not be used for terrorism. We do hope to cooperate with them to



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'Tanks for Ukraine needs agreement from allies'

German Defence Minister Pistorius said he could not say when there would be a decision on the tanks

AGENCIES

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE: Germany said it would need agreement from allies to give the green light for the delivery of German-made tanks to Ukraine to fend off Moscow's invasion, apparently dashing Kyiv's hopes for a quick decision. Defence ministers from NATO and other countries were meeting in Germany amid warnings that Russia will soon reenergise its almost 11-month-old invasion to seize parts of Ukraine's east and south it says it has annexed but does not fully control. The United States and Finland announced large new military aid packages before the gathering at Ramstein Air Base, where the focus was on whether Germany would allow countries in Europe that use its Leopard 2 tanks to re-export them to Ukraine. German Defence Minister Pistorius said he could not say when there would be a decision on the tanks but that Germany was prepared to move fast if there was consensus among allies.

US urges allies to increase military support

DNA

BERLIN: US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Friday called on Western allies to increase their military support to Ukraine, stressing that the war is entering into a "decisive" phase. "This is a crucial moment. Russia is regrouping, recruiting and trying to re-equip," Austin told his counterparts at the Ukraine Defense Contact Group meeting at Ramstein Air Base. "This is not a moment to slow down. It's a time to dig deeper. The Ukrainian people are watching us. The Kremlin is watching us. And history is watching us," he said.

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani welcomes Ambassador of United States Donald Blome for a meeting. - DNA

'Pak-US ties are mutually beneficial'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has said that Pakistan greatly values its multifaceted relationship with United States and desires to further expand the friendly ties for mutual benefit of the two sides. Chairman Senate expressed these views during a meeting with Ambassador of United States H.E. Donald Blome in Islamabad. A reception was also hosted in honor of the Ambassador at Chairman Senate's residence. During the call-on the dignitaries discussed matters of mutual interest, bilateral collaborations and development in the region. The Chairman Senate thanked the US government for its cooperation and collaboration with Pakistan in various fields and appreciated the role of US government in providing much needed support to the Pakistani flood affectees.

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ECP denotifies 35 more PTI MNAs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday denotified 35 more Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) members of the National Assembly (MNAs) following the acceptance of their resignations by NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. According to an ECP notification, the resignations of the PTI lawmakers have been approved from April 11, 2022. The denotified MNAs included Dr Haider Ali Khan,

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Ex-COAS to blame for all the crises, Imran reiterates

Says the coalition govt has failed to tackle the economic crisis

ALI HAMZA

LAHORE: As the country is facing enormous economic and political challenges, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan blamed former army chief General (retd) QamarJavedBajwa, claiming the uncertainty started the day his government was overthrown. "Due to the decision of one person, the PTHed government was toppled and the crisis started," the former prime minister said while addressing the "Rule of Law" conference via video link on Friday. Khan was ousted from power through a vote of no-confidence in the National Assembly in April last year. Without naming former army chief Gen (retd) QamarJavedBajwa, he said: "One person decided to change the [PTI] regime and hatched a conspiracy." The coalition government, he said, had failed to tackle the economic crisis as "it does not have any plan" to restore the economy". The PTI chief said

that never in the country's history had Pakistan faced a worse economic crisis than the one it "faces these days". He insisted that the crises were "deliberately manufactured". "It is not a natural crisis." "Everyone [in the government] is hoping to get money from Saudi Arabia and China," Khan said, adding that the rulers, in Geneva, requested the international community to provide them funds in connection with the devastation by the environmental changes. Until the 90s, Pakistan's economic indicators remained largely positive in the Sub-continent, the PTI leader said, adding that no one could have imagined that the "country's economy could fall to such levels".

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Interim Punjab CM: Its ECP's turn now

NA speaker's move 'illegal, immoral'

BUREAU REPORT

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Friday termed the decision of National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf of accepting the resignations of 35 more lawmakers as "illegal" and "immoral" and urged the government to announce a date for early elections. Earlier, the NA speaker accepted the resignations of PTI lawmakers, dealing a massive blow to Imran

LAHORE: The Punjab government and opposition on Friday failed to reach agreement on appointment of caretaker Punjab Chief Minister. Speaking to the media after parliamentary committee meeting on Friday, former provincial minister Raja Basharat said that the members of the opposition didn't agree on their opinion. Raja Basharat said that the decisions should be made that are acceptable to the masses, while the opposition bent on two names. The Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader went on to say that it has been decided that the names

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11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



National Days and Armed Forces Days

JANUARY

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



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

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



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CAA.....	9281092



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DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.....	4603666



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CDA.....	9221334-43
CDA.....	9208301-04
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RDA.....	5555864
TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board.....	9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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President for adopting green, sustainable building practices

The President was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Building Materials Exhibition 2023 organized by the IAP's Rawalpindi Chapter in Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: While addressing the Institute of Architects Pakistan (IAP) Exhibition 2023, President Dr Arif Alvi has called for adopting green and sustainable building practices in the country's housing and construction sector, promoting sustainable living and moderate consumption to conserve energy and limited natural resources. He added that rethinking, redesigning, rebuilding and reusing materials and resources had become critical for promoting climate-friendly and resilient infrastructure in the country. The President was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Building Materials Exhibition 2023 organized by the IAP's Rawalpindi Chapter, in Islamabad, on Friday. Chairman IAP, Architect Saad Mehmood Khan, Chairman IAP Rawalpindi/Islamabad Chapter, Architect Fawad Suhail Malik, architects, graduates, and members of the housing and construction industry attended the ceremony. Earlier, the President also inaugurated the Building Materials Exhibition 2023. Addressing the occasion, the President said that the discipline of architecture was important as it provided the basis for the construction industry and provided quality and aesthetically pleasing accommodations to the people. He said that the buildings should be designed with in-built mechanisms to make them differently-abled person friendly as well as by making rooftops



usable by growing vegetables and greenery, besides installing solar panels to provide green and clean energy. The President said that construction and development activities by the public sector contribute greatly in increasing economic activity and injecting liquidity into the system which further helped in the growth of industry and providing employment to the people. He quoted the examples of the Mughal dynasty and Sher Shah Suri who invested public money in developing roads, buildings, monuments, and other public places which greatly contributed to the

prosperity of the Indo-Pak sub-continent. The President said that the trend of parking money in buying plots and buildings prevented its circulation for promoting business, trade and investment, and contributed to slowing down the economic and financial activities in the country. He said that buildings and houses should be constructed with the underlying objective of providing decent and affordable living to all segments of society, including the poor and the underprivileged. He said that the use of black money for buying plots and buildings and investing in the construction sector should be

checked and discouraged, besides systems should be strengthened to disallow the creation of black money at all. The President said that it was surprising to note that almost \$13 billion of Pakistani wealth had been blocked and invested in Cyber currency which was depriving the economy of much-needed liquidity. He said that in Pakistan, frequent amnesty schemes had been announced to bring black money into the formal economy but instead of offering such schemes, efficient systems should be developed to tax the wealthy and convert the entire informal economy into the formal economy which would help in overcoming the financial and economic difficulties. The President said that water was a precious commodity and Pakistan was facing unpredictable fluctuations in the weather patterns, nonetheless, Pakistan received sufficient water through the weather system which needed to be preserved and efficiently utilized. He proposed that all buildings should be designed to harness and preserve rainwater to recharge the aquifers. He said that only a limited volume of water should be allowed to be discharged into the sea as was necessary to protect mangroves and prevent the encroachment of sea into the land while the rest should be efficiently utilized. He also stressed the need to set up water purification and sewerage treatment plants in every industry to prevent the discharge of toxic chemicals, pollutants and waste into the sea as it was negatively affecting the marine flora and fauna.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE Hamad Alzaabi posing for a picture with orphan kids during his visit to Orphanage. – DNA

BISP dynamic survey to be launched soon, says Faisal Kundi

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday said that the dynamic survey would start very soon to register more deserving beneficiaries living below the poverty line, under the Benazir Income Support Programme. In a meeting with a women's delegation from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa led by Senator Rubina Khalid, the minister gave a detailed briefing about the BISP initiatives. Speaking on the occasion, Faisal Kundi said that the BISP payment system was "fully transparent and digital". He said that around 8.8 million people had become part of the Benazir Kafalat program and were receiving the quarterly payment of Rs. 7000. The beneficiaries can withdraw quarterly installments from Bank Al-Falah and Habib Bank, he added. Faisal Kundi said, "It is our responsibility to convey correct information about the programme to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa." He stressed that all programmes including Benazir Noshonuma, Benazir Education Stipends, Benazir Undergraduate Scholarships were very important for the welfare of people. The queries of Senator Rubina Khalid and all members of the delegation about the BISP programs were responded in a satisfactory way. The delegation members thanked the Minister of State and all officials of BISP for having this much-needed interaction. – APP

Air Quality unhealthy in Capital: PaK-EPA

Senior Pulmonologist at PIMS, Dr Zia Ul Haq told media that dry and cold air was mainly the reason behind respiratory diseases during winters

ISLAMABAD: The air quality on Friday was reported unhealthy amid dry weather posing vulnerable and sensitive age groups comprising children, women and the elderly at risk of contracting respiratory ailments. Air pollution in the metropolis remained high since the onset of the fall season as prolonged dry weather, increased vehicular traffic, garbage and wood burning continued to surge. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (PaK-EPA) daily air quality report indicated heightened ratio of

air pollutants, recorded above permissible limits, and the air quality was unhealthy. The Agency is responsible to ensure the protection of the environment under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997.

The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), which was a hazardous atmospheric contaminant, remained 45.5 microgrammes per cubic meter on average which was higher than the NEQS of 35 microgrammes per cubic meter and denoted the air quality unhealthy. PM2.5 is generated through the combustion of an engine, industrial emissions, burning garbage or inflammable material and dust blown up by fast-moving cars plying on non-cemented patches of the roads.

Senior Pulmonologist at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Dr Zia Ul Haq told APP that dry and cold air was mainly the reason behind respiratory diseases during winters.

He said the respiratory tract consisting of the throat and lungs had internal surfaces possessing normal bacteria whereas there was no breach in it. However, he said the dry and cold air at different phases due to increased exposure of an individual in the outdoors caused breaches in the lining of the respiratory tract which used to lead to an infection and also damage the normal secretions taking place inside the breathing organs.

He said the pulmonologists usually advise the elderly above 50 years of age or patients of chronic heart, kidney, and lung diseases to get the flu vaccine during the peak winter season to avoid respiratory diseases.

The senior pulmonologists said the people were also advised to avoid unnecessary prolonged outdoor visits during the morning and evening timings of cold weather whereas in case of any visit they should properly cover their eyes, and face by wearing face masks and coverings. Moreover, he also directed the masses to ensure the intake of warm fluids as necessary beverages like warm water and hot tea etc. to control damage to the respiratory tract amid bad weather and air quality. – APP

Musadik hopes 'seamless' flow of energy from Russia, CARs

He said the geo-political reality confronted by all the regional countries had opened up "a new understanding, new opportunities, and new repositioning"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik on Friday expressed confidence that Pakistan would be able to get a 'seamless' flow of energy from Russia and Central Asian Republics (CARs), once various 'mechanisms' discussed during the IGC meeting were implemented. "We have discussed mutual relationship among Russia, Central Asian States and Pakistan; and come up with various mechanisms of connectivity to have

a seamless flow of energy from Russia and Central Asia to Pakistan," the minister said while talking to media at the conclusion of the eighth session of the Russia-Pakistan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) here. He said the geo-political reality confronted by all the regional countries had opened up "a new understanding, new opportunities, and new repositioning." Keeping these small constraints in the mind and actualizing our dreams, Musadik Malik said the IGC had come up with a plan in the energy sector "over the en-

tire value chain." During the three-day IGC meeting, the minister said Pakistan discussed with the Russian side the upstream areas of working, carrying out seismic studies, and using artificial intelligence in oil and gas production in Pakistan under mutual cooperation. "In the mid-stream area, we have discussed a very holistic and grand vision of how we basically can have energy sufficiency, unleashing the domestic energy market, and finally hopefully at some point in time, being an exporter of energy in the rest of the world," he said. – APP



42 journalists murdered in last 4 years: Senate told

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Friday informed the Senate that 42 journalists were murdered in the last four years across the country. Responding to the question of Jamaat-e-Islami's Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, he said that it was a critical situation and the government should take prompt action against the culprits and journalists should be provided special security. Abbasi directed the Ministry of Interior to prepare a consolidated report on the matter and present it to the House within the period of two months. Balochistan Awami Party's Senator Danesh Kumar pointed out that there were more than 10 journalists who were murdered in Balochistan instead of three shown in this report. To this, the minister said that this report was compiled after a thorough consultation with all the quarters concerned of the provinces and if someone had given a wrong figure, he must be accountable as it was a sensitive matter. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl's Senator Kamran Murtaza proposed the minister that the journalists who had lost their lives in line of their duty, should be properly probed on which subject they were working before their murder. To this, the minister assured the House that the report would be a comprehensive one. According to the statistics, 15 journalists were murdered in Punjab while 11 in Sindh, 13 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 3 in Balochistan. – APP

Police hand over 13 stolen motorcycles, a car to owners

RAWALPINDI: Potohar Division Police have handed over 13 stolen motorcycles and a car recovered from the possession of the arrested bike and car lifters to their owners. According to a police spokesman, Potohar Division Police in line with the vision of Inspector General of Police Punjab, Aamir Zulfiqar Khan had accelerated their ongoing operations against outlaws including bike and car lifters. He informed that Superintendent of Police, Potohar Malik Tariq Mehbob had handed over 13 stolen motorcycles and a vehicle recovered by different police stations of the division to their owners. He said police managed to bust 11 gangs allegedly involved in heinous crimes during this month and arrested their 35 members besides recovering stolen goods including 13 motorcycles and a vehicle.

City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari said that Rawalpindi Police had set an example of tracing several cases including blind swiftly and professionally. He said that some of these cases were of heinous nature including robbery, dacoity, murder and others. In the ongoing month, 11 gangs were busted and 35 accused persons were sent behind the bars. – APP

Home cooked food business at surge for its taste, hygiene

ISLAMABAD: The rise in demand for home-cooked has fascinated many entrepreneurs including women to offer hygienic, tasty, and delicious food meals at reasonable prices. Talking to APP, cook, and baker Samiya Rasheed said that twin cities are the second home of many students and job holders, and their desire for home-cooked meals makes the food business a success. She expressed that professionals, as well as those having a little background in the food industry, are exploring business opportunities in home-cooked food work. She said one kilogram of rice serves up to eight people and bulk purchase offers the opportunity to earn better profits. Samiya said that the advent of food delivery applications has further strengthened this business as people are increasingly opting for home-cooked meals for their hygiene and taste. – APP

Briefs

OGRA takes notice of overcharging of LPG

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has taken serious notice of the complaints regarding overcharging of end consumer LPG Price. OGRA Enforcement Teams have been mobilized to take cognizance of the matter and to ensure sale of LPG at notified prices to provide relief to the end consumers and to initiate action against the violators under the applicable Rules/Laws. OGRA-Enforcement Teams have visited various LPG Plants recently in the vicinity of Lahore & Islamabad to check/ monitor LPG Prices and safety. During the visit, all LPG Plants were directed to ensure proper display of LPG prices at prominent places and to ensure that they will not overcharge LPG prices from end consumers. Further, written instructions to this effect have also been issued to all LPG Plants across the country. OGRA has also decided that its enforcement teams along district administration will remain in field during the ongoing winter season to ensure sale/ availability of LPG on OGRA's notified prices.—DNA

Chairman WAPDA visits Tarbela

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Engineer Lt Gen (Retd) Sajjad Ghani visited Tarbela 4th Extension Hydel Power Station (T4) and inspected operational and maintenance (O&M) activities of the power station, commissioned in 2018. He also had a detailed round of the under-construction Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project (T5) to review construction activities on the sites, said a press release issued here Friday.

The GM (Tarbela Dam), accompanied by the project management, briefed the Chairman about progress on the project. Consequent upon the permission accorded by IRSA for closure of Tunnel No.5, construction activities are being carried out simultaneously at five sites of T5 including intake, power house and switch yard. Electricity generation from the project is scheduled for July 2025 with completion of its first unit. Unit No.2 and 3 are likely to be completed in August and September 2025 respectively, it was further briefed.—APP

SC stops PPSC from using term of disable

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday stopped the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) to use the term of disable for the special persons and said that state was responsible to protect their basis rights. An eight pages judgment was issued by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah in a case regarding quota of minorities and special persons in recruitment of BPS-17 employees in Punjab. The court said that the top court had already ordered in another case that the term of disable wouldn't be used for special persons. The court said that the constitution of Pakistan ensured rights to all citizens without any discrimination. It said that according to the international reports, the special persons hanged back in life due to negative social attitudes and difficulties in access to the offices.—APP

Marriyum grieved over demise Zameer Nafis

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the death of senior journalist and columnist Zameer Nafis. In her condolence message, she said that the services of Zameer Nafis in the field of journalism will always be remembered. The minister expressed her condolences to Syed Fawad Kazmi, son of the deceased. She prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to be-veaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Students of English debate competition pose for group photo with Chief guest Harris khaleeq in a ceremony held at Islamabad model college for girls F7/2 on Friday.—DNA

Mental well-being has become an integral part of society

The School Director said that, "Ms. Samina Jamshed is a natural healer and always brings joy and happiness to children"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As it has been discovered that mental well-being has become an integral part of the society, whether 1st world countries or 3rd world countries, the traumas are the same with a little difference in situation. All humans are suffering. This is a bold step taken by Ms. Samina Jamshed for the year 2023 to reach worldwide with a series of workshops on Peace & Art through healing circles and art therapy workshops. May it be women, children, girls, boys, men, transgender or you name it, and she is there. It maybe refugees, SGBV survivors, beggars, addicts, PSEA and communities. Samina has a passion for art therapy and helps people in need with a most creative subtle manner, therefore in spite of working with Community World Service Asia, she manages to

venture on these voluntary missions of Peace & Art, all over Pakistan and abroad. Our team managed to attend this second healing circle conducted by Samina for refugee children with multiple issues of health, education, protection and basic needs of a child. The first circle was with the SGBV survivor girls. Ms. Jamshed is a well-known internationally acclaimed artist, sculptor, motivational speaker and art therapist. She has mastered the art of walking with all her expertise clubbed together. She has conducted more than 1000 workshops nationally and internationally for the people in need. During her workshop Ms. Jamshed started with a story telling session with the children as an ice breaker. The children immediately jelled with her, she has that aura as our team witnessed it. The group of 30 children have left a comfortable life



back in their country, facing problems and starting all over again in Pakistan. This workshop is a series of many workshops to come as Samina shared with our team that she revisits back from time to time so that

the wounds are stitched slowly one at a time that is the healing process. In the process she trains 5 teachers who will continue working with the children making it an ongoing journey of healing. The age group was

from 5 years to 12 years boys and girls. The story narration was with voice effects which the children thoroughly enjoyed, leading to a dialogue session in which children created stories in groups venting

out their fears, phobias and deprivations, making it easy for Samina to reach out to them on an individual level in the upcoming workshops. According to our team the children thoroughly enjoyed the two sessions and the room was filled with laughter and smiles. Leading to the final session which was bringing their thoughts on paper and adding color to their thoughts, Ms. Jamshed shared that she calls it "Talking with colors and painting your thoughts" which was true. After the workshop concluded the Samina shared exercises with the school teachers, so that they are able to continue with the healing journey and then she will revisit them in one month's time. Then there was an open discussion session with the children during which Samina again amazed our team and the children by asking them about their one special wish.—DNA

China's support helps Pak to cut oilseed imports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China continues to help Pakistan to cut its oilseed imports amid economic challenges., China Economic Net (CEN) reported quoting Experts. As Pakistan has been confronted with severe economic challenges especially after massive countryside floods, with the shrinking foreign exchange reserves, the country's various imports are putting additional financial strain. Statistics from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) show that in FY2021, Pakistan's imports of soya beans, whether or not broken, reached about \$1.145 billion, a strong growth of about 50% year-on-year, exhibiting the country's urgent demand for soybeans.

However, in the first quarter of FY2023, Pakistan's soybean imports were \$269 million, down about 18% year-on-year, which may have been affected by the decline of the country's foreign exchange reserves. Soybean production should be adequately considered by Pakistan because of the country's over dependence on imports of soybeans. Lack of high-quality seeds, high-yielding planting patterns and machinery restricting Pak soybean production "We are dependent on imports. It is very expensive which causes increase in the price of feed, oil etc. day by day. It is our need to plant it in our country," Hafiz Saad Bin Mustafa, Oilseed Scientist, Ayub Agricultural Research Institute said. According to him,

In Pakistan, all crops are non-GMO except cotton. "Most foreign varieties that we import are of mild areas and GMO. They can neither be planted here nor can they survive here. So seeds of local varieties should be multiplied and should be promoted in the potential areas that we have identified by our trials and adaptability studies," Hafiz said. As he sees it, since soybean is mostly cultivated in such countries as America, Brazil and Argentina where there is mild climate, Pakistan needs to develop its own non-GMO soybean varieties that can perform well in high temperatures. "We do not produce good quality seeds, and the total seed production is twenty percent in different crops. There is a huge gap. At present

we are dependent on imported seeds for different crops even for wheat, rice, cotton and vegetables, and the same is with soybeans. We should produce it locally," Dr. Zahir Ahmad, In-charge, Soybean Breeding Lab, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) said. According to Dr. Zahir Ahmad, farmer needs specific planters, harvesters and threshers. "Mechanization is one of the best approaches by which we can increase soybean production. In this way we need less labor, less time and less storage time," he said. Talking about the latest progress of soybean production in Pakistan, Dr. Zahir Ahmad emphasized that now their focus is intercropping-specific soybean promotion, which is a high-yielding technology from China.

Book of Pakistan in the eyes of geologists published in China

ISLAMABAD: A book entitled "Pakistan in the Eyes of Geologists", a scientific monograph led by China-SCO Geosciences Cooperation Research Center, was published by Geology Press. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, the book is divided into six parts, which took the Chinese and Pakistani teams three years to complete. The teams include China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences, the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, the Geological Survey of Pakistan, Bahria University, Chang'an University, Xi'an Liangji Yuhe Brand Culture and Creative Co., Ltd., China Huaye Duddar Mining Co., Ltd., China Metallurgical Group Resource Development Co., Ltd. and other Chinese-funded enterprises in Pakistan. From the perspective of geoscientists, it describes the natural scenery, geological evolution, mineral resources, and highlight projects of northern Pakistan all the way to the south, with Karakoram, China-Pakistan Friendship Highway as the main line. Epitomizing Chinese geoscientists serving the construction of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and supporting overseas investment and cooperation of mining enterprises, it introduces the history of China-Pakistan geoscience cooperation over the past ten years with a combination of graphics and text.—DNA

Differences with IMF making the economy lifeless

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Friday said it is impossible to stabilize the rupee in the presence of a broken economy. Oil price freeze by the former government and efforts to stabilize the rupee and bring down the value of the dollar by the incumbent government has damaged the economy and annoyed the IMF, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that even after the failure of the experiment to bring down the value of dollar artificially, the same policy is being followed which is surprising. How the country's condition can change when there is no change in the important economic policies, he said, adding that IMF is being annoyed which can jeopardise the disbursement of approved loans and grants by other institutions that Pakistan cannot afford. The business leader noted that the focus of policymakers is on reducing the current account deficit by holding back imports but they are forgetting that exports also require imports. The economy cannot improve unless the exports grow otherwise the government will have to repay the loans through fresh borrowing, he added.—DNA

Poor, not billionaires should get government support

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Friday said packages are given to the poor in western countries but billionaires get support packages in Pakistan. The sole purpose of packages doled out to the rich is to increase their fortunes on the cost of the poor, it said. Masses are always told that packages given to industrial, agricultural, stock market or real estate sectors are necessary for national development which is contrary to the facts, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of PEW. He said that there is no concept of tax amnesty schemes in civilized countries, but every government in Pakistan provides an opportunity for the rich to whiten their black money. Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the former government announced the construction package by promising affordable housing for the poor but not a single house could be built for the poor. The scheme helped the builders' mafia earn billions of rupees and it resulted in increased prices of plots, houses and construction materials.—DNA

Two bids to smuggle 480 wheat flour bags foiled

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on Friday foiled two bids to smuggle 480 wheat flour bags. According to a district administration spokesman, the authorities of the food department along with Potohar Division police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up two drivers namely Anwar Khan and Ehtesham with 480 wheat flour bags. He informed that the accused were trying to illegally ship wheat flour bags out of the Rawalpindi division. He said the Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids.—APP

Police arrest 5 gamblers; recover money

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district Police arrested five gamblers and recovered Rs 12,230 stake money, five mobile phones and valuables from their possession here on Friday, a police spokesman said. He informed that Gujran Khan police conducted a raid and arrested five gamblers namely Khalid, Shahid, Malik Arab, Masood and Adil who were allegedly involved in betting over quail fights.—APP

3.5m displaced students require support: PCE

"The 3.5 million students who were displaced as a result of last year's floods in Pakistan belong to same group of marginalized children whose education was most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic"

ISLAMABAD: The civil society of Pakistan welcomed the pledges of more than \$9 billion made by the international community for flood recovery efforts in a recent UN conference and urged for swift action to rehabilitate those affected by the floods. This was said in a joint statement issued by the civil society here in Islamabad. Special emphasis was laid on prioritizing education in the distribution of disaster aid to support the swift recovery of the education system in the affected areas. The press statement was jointly issued by the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE), an initiative of the Society For Access to Quality Education, Centre for Peace and Development Initiative (CPDI), Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA), United Global Organization of Development (UGOOD), and re-

nowned educationist, Dr.A.H. Nayyar. The statement was accompanied by a joint call to action asking state and non-state actors to take immediate measures to bring the displaced children back to school. This entails diverting sufficient disaster aid towards education as well as providing conditional cash transfers to the affected households to facilitate the education of their children. The call-to-action also stressed the need to make Pakistan's education system resilient to future emergencies by speedy and quality reconstruction of damaged school infrastructure complete with basic facilities such as boundary walls, washrooms, clean drinking water, utilities, multiple classrooms, teaching aides, and a minimum number of trained teachers. Building back better also demands

making a strong preparedness and disaster-risk management component inherent to the education system at the federal, provincial, district, and school levels. Finally, the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) needs to be revised so that it can impart age-appropriate "green", Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) education to students. "The 3.5 million students who were displaced as a result of last year's floods in Pakistan belong to the same group of marginalized children whose education was most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were an estimated 22.8 million out-of-school children (OOSC) in Pakistan. The majority, or 77% of these OOSC, hailed from rural areas and 54% of them were girls," shared Zehra

Arshad, the National Coordinator for PCE. "It is also important to highlight here that 96% of all the children living with various forms of disabilities in Pakistan have no access to education at all." She also added that a significant portion of these funds should be allocated towards providing resilient education in flood-affected areas to ensure that children could continue their education and rebuild their lives in the aftermath of the floods. The statement stressed for the disaster aid to be used effectively, and efficiently and called for its equitable distribution among the most vulnerable communities. The CSOs also called for proper monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure across-the-board transparency. The statement highlighted that an

estimated 930,000 school-going students in Pakistan dropped out as a direct consequence of prolonged school closures after the pandemic, spiking the percentage of out-of-school children by 4.5%. "As per data emerging from Pakistan, a dramatic fall in enrollment was observed among 14-16-year-olds in the poorest households. The loss of learning was also 50% worse for children belonging to underserved socio-economic backgrounds," shared Areebah Shahid, Executive Director of PYCA. If the COVID-19 pandemic wasn't sufficient to reveal the inadequacies of our education system, the 2022 floods have laid them bare. Shedding light on the crisis emanating from the floods, Mukhtar Ahmed Ali, Executive Director of CPDI said, "Over 25,000 schools have been fully destroyed or partially damaged.—APP

Briefs

Russian oil import to...

FROM PAGE 01
The Russian side was invited toward potential projects of the federal and provincial governments of Pakistan, including in public-private partnership mode and requested the Russian businessmen to explore these possibilities.

PM invites UAE...

FROM PAGE 01
the average annual trade between the two countries stood at US\$8 billion making the UAE the largest trading partner of Pakistan in the MENA region.

US urges allies to...

FROM PAGE 01
Around 50 defense ministers and senior officials are attending the meeting, including Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

Ex-COAS to blame for...

FROM PAGE 01
Referring to the deepening economic crisis, Khan said the country's reserves had fallen to a historic low, adding, "We do not have money to open the Letters of Credits (LCs)."

NA speaker's move...

FROM PAGE 01
Khan's plan to dislodge the Shehbaz Sharif government through a trust vote. A total of 70 resignations were accepted this week after the PTI chief announced to return to the assembly.

Maria Khan scores stunner

Pakistan finishes 2nd in KSA four-nation cup

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has also congratulated to the national team for finishing second and also praised skipper Maria Khan for her spectacular goal

DNA

RIYADH: Pakistan women's football team finished second in the Saudi Arabia 4-nation football tournament after an exciting 1-1 draw against the home side in the final match of the competition.



of a wonder goal by captain Maria Khan in the 65th minute. From then on, Pakistan took the charge and threatened the Saudi Arabian defense and almost snatched a victory at the last minute of the game as yet another freekick caused confusion in the box. Unfortunately,

the tournament. Before that, they defeated Comoros by 1-0 in their opening encounter. Celebrations broke out in the Saudi camp as they lifted the title while Pakistan held their head high with a marvelous performance throughout the competition.

Australian Open-2023 Swiatek into the 4th round as Lehecka beats Norrie



MELBOURNE: Top seed Iga Swiatek continued to carve her way through the Australian Open draw on Friday, dismantling Cristina Bucsa 6-0 6-1 in bright sunshine on the Margaret Court Arena to reach the fourth round at a canter.



The 21-year-old world number one, who is looking to add a first Melbourne Park crown to the French and U.S. Open titles she won last year, was all business as she whipped through the first set in 23 minutes. World number 100 Bucsa had

simply no answer to Swiatek's all-court game and the Spaniard only managed to avoid the dreaded 'double bagel' 6-0 6-0 scoreline by holding her last service game. "My main goal was to keep my focus till the end because sometimes it's hard when you feel like you control everything, your mind can wander off," Swiatek said.

Israeli settlers storm al-Aqsa, perform provocative dances

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Dozens of Israeli settlers stormed the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East al-Quds, in yet another provocative move against Palestinian worshippers.

Danny Ings joins West Ham from Aston Villa

WEST Ham have signed Aston Villa striker Danny Ings in a £15m deal. The Hammers have paid an initial £12m for the 30-year-old, which will rise to £15m if David Moyes' side avoid relegation from the Premier League.

Schedule for HBL PSL season eight unveiled

SCHEDULE OF MATCHES (afternoon matches will start at 2 pm; evening matches in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi will start at 7 pm. Evening matches in Multan will begin at 6 pm except for the tournament opener, which will commence at 8 pm)

ta Gladiators, National Bank Cricket Arena
• 19 Feb - Multan Sultans v Islamabad United, Multan Cricket Stadium; Karachi Kings v Lahore Qalandars, National Bank Cricket Arena

na; Lahore Qalandars v Peshawar Zalmi, Gaddafi Stadium
• 27 Feb - Lahore Qalandars v Islamabad United, Gaddafi Stadium
• 1 Mar - Peshawar Zalmi v Karachi Kings, Pindi Cricket Stadium

League Exhibition Match 1, Pindi Cricket Stadium; Peshawar Zalmi v Quetta Gladiators, Pindi Cricket Stadium
• 9 Mar - Islamabad United v Lahore Qalandars, Pindi Cricket Stadium
• 10 Mar - Pakistan Women's League Exhibition Match 2, Pindi Cricket Stadium; Peshawar Zalmi v Multan Sultans, Pindi Cricket Stadium

Pakistan remembers victims of January 20 tragedy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Azerbaijan in Pakistan, together with the Institute of Political Studies, one of the leading think tanks of this country, held a seminar dedicated to the memory of the martyrs of January 20.

ple against the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis from their historical lands in the territory of Armenia and Armenia's groundless territorial claims against Karabakh.

violating the norms of international law and the laws of the country. Kh.Farhadov emphasized that despite the fact that the January 20 tragedy was called "Black January", this event was a heroic page in the history of the struggle for freedom and independence of the Azerbaijani people.

showed solidarity with our people, strongly condemned this crime, demanded a political and legal assessment of the massacre, and punishment of the guilty.

sovereignty will always be resolutely responded to, Ambassador Muzaffar emphasized that the brave Azerbaijani Army under the leadership of Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev ensured the territorial integrity of our country as a result of the 44-day Patriotic War.



Pakistan rules out...

FROM PAGE 01
deal with terrorists that are a concern to us." Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday advised world powers to create space for "dialogue and diplomatic engagement" to resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Tanks for Ukraine...

FROM PAGE 01
"All pros and cons must be weighed very carefully," Pistorius said, adding that the issue had been discussed on Friday but no decision had been made.

Pak-US ties are...

FROM PAGE 01
He also emphasized on increasing trade links, enhancement of bilateral relations in different sectors. The Chairman Senate said that the multilateral nature of relations between Pakistan and the United States spans across decades.

ECP denotifies...

FROM PAGE 01
NA-2 Swat-I; Saleem Rehman, NA-3 Swat-II; Sahibzada Sibghatullah, NA-5 Upper Dir; Mehboob Shah, NA-6 Lower Dir-I; Muhammad Bashir Khan, NA-7 Lower Dir-II; Junaid Akbar, NA-8, Malakand Protected Area; Sher Akbar Khan, NA-9 Buner; Ali Khan Jadoon, NA-16 Abbottabad-II; Engr Usman Khan Tarakai, NA-19 Swabi-II; Mujahid Ali, NA-20 Mardan-I; Arbab Amir Ayub, NA-28 Peshawar-II; Sher Ali Arbab, NA-30 Peshawar-IV; Shahid Ahmed, NA-34 Karak; Gul Dad Khan, NA-40 Bajaur-I; Sajid Khan, NA-42 Mohmand; Mohammad Iqbal Khan, NA-44 Khyber-II; AamerMehmoodKiiani, NA-61 Rawalpindi-V; Syed Faizul-Hassan, Ch Shoukat Ali Bhatti, NA-87 Hafizabad-I; Umar Aslam Khan, NA-93 Khushab-I; Amjad Ali Khan, NA-96 Mianwali-II; KhuramShahzad.

Interim Punjab CM...

FROM PAGE 01
proposed by both the parties will now be sent to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The former provincial minister further said that they will approach judiciary if any controversial figure is chosen to become the caretaker CM.

Briefs

Suicide rate up in Japan

TOKYO: The suicide rate among the unemployed people in Japan almost doubled last year while the overall trend also increased in the country of around 126 million people which is also grappling with an aging population, accounting for 28.5% of its total population. Government data released on Friday showed the suicide rate among men also has increased, for the first time in the past 13 years. Suicide among the unemployed in 2022 nearly doubled to 1,038 people, while among those living on pensions or employment benefits rose by 705 to 5,347, the data showed. It added the number of men who committed suicide last year rose by 604 to 14,543, leading to 21,584 overall suicides in the country – an increase of 577 from the previous year. The number of suicides had seen a fall for around a decade through 2019 at 20,169, but since the pandemic, the trend saw an uptick. “The rise in men in their 40s through 60s, as well as pensioners or those who are unemployed, stands out,” an unnamed Health Ministry official told Tokyo-based Kyodo News. “Suicides by famous people may also have had an effect.”—APP

Lula to meet with Biden in February

BUENOS AIRES: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will meet with his US counterpart Joe Biden in Washington, D.C. on Feb.10. Lula met in early December with White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, where he received an invitation to meet with Biden. According to the G1 news outlet, Lula's invitation to the US was reinforced in a phone call between his Foreign Affairs Minister Mauro Vieira and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Lula's first official trip abroad since assuming office on Jan 1. will take place next week, when he heads to Argentina on Jan. 24, where the former union leader will meet with Argentine President Alberto Fernandez. In Argentina, Lula will participate in the summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and also visit Uruguay. In the near future, Lula is also expected to head to China and Portugal, although no dates have been confirmed according to G1. Lula has previously highlighted the need to strengthen Brazil's position internationally following what analysts have described as former President Jair Bolsonaro's isolationist policies regarding the South American nation's foreign policy. Last month, Vieira touched on Brazil's foreign policy, underscoring that Lula is keen to “rebuild bridges” with “traditional partners” including the US, China and the European Union and resume cooperation with Africa. China and the US are two of Brazil's biggest trade partners.—APP

French unions call for more protests

NICE: Trade unions in France called for fresh protests and strikes on Jan. 31 to ramp up pressure on the government to withdraw its controversial plan to hike the age of retirement. The call came as hundreds of thousands poured out for massive nationwide protests on Thursday, which brought transport services and life in general to a virtual standstill in major cities. According to the country's largest union CGT, at least 2 million people protested across France, including some 400,000 in the capital Paris. The Interior Ministry, however, claimed the number was significantly lower at around 1.12 million. In a meeting on Thursday evening, union leaders urged workers to “intensify actions everywhere in the country” as the government looks to formally adopt the proposal at a Cabinet meeting on Jan. 23. “We are united and determined to get this project withdrawn,” unions said in a statement cited by local media, calling for “a fair retirement system.” Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, who unveiled details of the reform plan on Jan. 10, said last week that the minimum pension amount would rise to 85% of the minimum wage, meaning around 1,200 (\$1,288) per month.—APP

Subsidized flour should be provided through markets

He assured that efforts will be made to supply wheat to flour mills in Islamabad through Passco so that they do not face any shortage of wheat

DNA

Islamabad: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that flour is the staple food of the people, but due to the wheat and flour crisis, the prices of flour have increased manifold in Islamabad like the whole country due to which the common man is facing great problems. He said that the strategy of providing subsidized flour from specific points has not delivered the desired results as many people have to go without buying flour despite standing in long queues. He stressed that the subsidized flour should be provided to the people through shops in markets to ease the troubles of people. He said this while talking to Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon during a meeting with him along with a delegation including the representatives of Flour Mills. ICCI Senior Vice President Faad Waheed,



Vice President Engineer Muhammad Azharul Islam Zafar, representatives of flour mills including Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Abdul Rahman Khan, Chaudhry Mukhtar Ahmad, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Saifur Rahman Khan and others were in the

delegation. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the government should make all possible efforts to stabilize the prices of flour. He said that the flour mills of Islamabad are facing difficulties in procuring wheat from Punjab because sometimes their quota is reduced which not only makes the flour expensive

but also affects the business of the flour mills. ICCI Senior Vice President Faad Waheed emphasized that instead of Punjab, the government should supply wheat to the flour mills of Islamabad through Passco to save any flour crisis in the federal capital and keep the prices stable.

ICCI Vice President Engineer Muhammad Azharul Islam Zafar said that supply of required quantity of wheat to the flour mills is an important responsibility of the government and stressed that the government should evolve a system in consultation with the flour mills to ensure their regular supply

of what in order to avoid any flour crisis in future. Addressing the delegation, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon said that the flour crisis has been overcome in Islamabad due to the better efforts of the administration. He said that in order to improve the supply of flour to the people, 50% of the quota is being given to the shops, while 50% will be provided through specific points, while the ban on the supply of flour would be lifted soon after the improvement of the wheat supply system. He assured that efforts will be made to supply wheat to flour mills in Islamabad through Passco so that they do not face any shortage of wheat. Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Abdul Rahman Khan, Ch. Mukhtar Ahmed, Dr. Muhammad Usman, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Ameer Hamza, Khalid Chaudhry, Sai fur Rehman Khan and others also spoke at the occasion and gave useful proposals to overcome the flour crisis in the city.

Western media's 'dictatorship' craze returns ahead of Turkish vote

NEWS DESK

ISTANBUL: “Empire” and “dictatorship” conveniently made their way into prominent London-based weekly The Economist's cover ahead of yet another election in Türkiye with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the country's helm. Weekly's report accompanying the body which reads “Turkey's Looming Dictatorship” claims Türkiye is on the brink of a disaster as it may go from a “deeply flawed democracy into a full-blown dictatorship.” The piece, again conveniently, ignores more than two decades of democratic elections the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) and its leader Erdoğan easily won, mainly with a landslide victory, with the

opposition admitting defeat. Upcoming elections are critical for the opposition and seemingly for foreign media obsessed with tagging democratically elected presidents as “dictators.” For the opposition, it is the last chance to unseat Erdoğan from office as their vote erodes with every election they lose. For foreign media, it means the West will have to face an uncompromising Türkiye which pursues global diplomacy while “sticking to its guns” and improving its local defense industry against multiple security threats it is subject to. Thus, they hope that an early exit will be better for Erdoğan as a recent article on Foreign Policy called for. “(His) political legacy would have been different if he stayed less committed to holding power and resigned

willingly earlier,” the article says. However, it is forced to acknowledge that Türkiye is “still a functioning representative democracy.” This line is more or less adopted by most major media outlets, from The Guardian to the New York Times whose opinion pieces or news reports repeatedly highlight the so-called “authoritarian” or “autocratic” regime of Türkiye, usually before every election. “An English magazine cannot determine Türkiye's fate, it is my nation that will determine it,” President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said in remarks to reporters in Istanbul on Friday in response to The Economist's cover. These were similar to his comments earlier this week when he signaled that 2023 elections might be held on May 14, on the anniversary of the 1950 elections, the first time Türkiye had a multi-party vote, more than two decades after the declaration of the Republic. Communications Director Fahrettin Altun slammed The Economist for engaging in “cheap” anti-Türkiye propaganda, over its latest issue. “Here we go again! The Economist recycles its intellectually lazy, dull, and purposefully ignorant depiction of Türkiye. It seems like they feel obligated to announce the end of Turkish democracy through regurgitating clichés, misinformation and blatant propaganda. Outrageous headlines and provocative imagery might help them sell their so-called journal, so we congratulate them on their ingenious marketing techniques! But we must

remind audiences that this is sensationalist journalism based on cheap propaganda and disinformation,” Altun said on Twitter. “Turkish people have demonstrated their commitment to democracy, equality, and freedom time and again. Our political system has undergone many tribulations including a treacherous coup attempt in 2016 when our people spilled their blood to save our democracy. When our President Erdoğan called on our citizens to resist the putschists, their response was a lesson for the ages. The so-called journalists and editors at the Economist obviously never bothered to engage in decent journalism on our people's struggle for our democracy,” Altun said.

23rd Jan Int'l Day of Education to Afghan girls

NEW YORK: Barring girls and young women from classrooms in Afghanistan could wipe out huge gains made in education and create ‘lost generation’, the UN's educational and cultural organization has warned. The Paris-based UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced on Thursday that it was dedicating the International Day of Education on January 24, to the Afghan women and girls. “No country in the world should bar women and girls from receiving an education. Education is a universal human right that must be respected,” UNESCO's Director-General Audrey Azoulay, said in a statement. “The international community has the responsibility to ensure that the rights of Afghan girls and women are restored without delay. The war against women must stop,” she added.—APP

UK ambulance workers announce 10 fresh strikes

BIRMINGHAM: As the UK's pay dispute continues, a union representing ambulance workers said their members will stage 10 more strikes in the coming weeks and threatened additional walkouts unless a resolution is reached. The announcement of fresh strikes came ahead of the latest day of industrial action with the Unite's ambulance workers set to walk out next Monday. In a written statement, the union's general secretary Sharon Graham said: “Rather than act to protect the NHS (National Health Service) and negotiate an end to the dispute, the government has disgracefully chosen to demonize ambulance workers. Ministers are deliberately misleading the public about the life and limb cover and who is to blame for excessive deaths.” Unite national lead officer Onay Kasab said: “The resolution to this dispute is in the government's hands. This dispute will only be resolved when it enters into proper negotiations about the current pay dispute.” Ambulance workers will bolster the ranks of their paramedic colleagues with the GMB, a general trade union, which announced that over 10,000 of their members in England and Wales will also strike on the same dates.—DNA

Inflation hits poorer families in Germany hardest

BERLIN: Poorer families in Germany were hit the hardest by inflation in December, at 9.8%, while single people with very high incomes got off relatively easy with 7.1%. The figures come from the monthly inflation monitor published by the Hans Bockler Foundation's Macroeconomic Policy Institute (IMK), based in Dusseldorf. According to the German Federal Statistical Office, annual consumer inflation in Germany in December was 8.6%, down from 10% in November. The authors of the IMK study attribute the decline from November to a one-time state subsidy for natural gas and district heating. But according to the study, this measure was not able to fundamentally narrow the gap between the highest and lowest household-specific inflation rates. Over the course of 2022, inflation for low-income families was 8.8%, significantly higher than the general inflation rate of 7.9%. The reason IMK gives for the heavier burden on poorer households is that they have to spend a larger percentage of their income on energy and food than wealthier ones. However, due to the energy crisis in Germany, price hikes in these areas in particular have recently been above average.—APP

Amazon saw worst deforestation levels in 2022

BUENOS AIRES: Brazil's Amazon experienced its worst levels of deforestation in 15 years in 2022, losing the equivalent of nearly 3,000 soccer fields a day, a report found. The report, released Wednesday by the Brazilian non-profit research institute Imazon, which promotes conservation and sustainable development in the Amazon, found that the region registered a fifth consecutive record in felling. The report said that between January and December 2022, deforestation reached 10,573 square kilometers (4,082 square miles), while overall deforestation from 2019-2022 reached 35,193 km (13,588 square miles). Bianca Santos, a researcher at Imazon, said she hopes the administration of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva will prioritize the protection of the Amazon. Amid the high levels of deforestation, Santos underscored the need for effective measures to combat the ecological degradation, including “the demarcation of indigenous lands, the restructuring of inspection bodies and the incentive to generate income with the standing forest.”—APP

'No appetite for return to conflict'

LONDON: There is “no appetite for return to conflict or violence” across Irish society, nationalist party Sinn Fein leaders say, expressing hope towards a “unified Ireland.” Northern Ireland has been one of the talking points in UK politics once again this week as an extended deadline to form a power-sharing devolved government is passed without any sign of an Executive. As the 25th anniversary of 1998 Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, which ended sectarian violence after 3,500 deaths, is fast approaching, political tension between Irish nationalists and unionists is still alive. Sinn Fein's historic election win in Northern Ireland last May is still to be crowned with governing the country from the seat of the first minister for the first time in history – the Democratic Unionist Party's (DUP) resistance and a prerequisite of scrapping the Northern Ireland Protocol is delaying the process. In an exclusive interview with Anadolu, Sinn Fein leaders spoke on the latest developments regarding the Northern Ireland Protocol and their well-known ideal of a “unified Ireland.” Mary Lou McDonald, leader of the party, said there is “a real spirit of change” all across Ireland after 25 years peace with the Good Friday Agreement. “We on the one hand reflect on everything that has been achieved, but we also ask ourselves the question what next, what is the next chapter for the Irish story,” she said. McDonald stressed that the last election result in Northern Ireland was one of the examples of change. “In the May election in the north of Ireland, as you know, a historic election for the first time as Sinn Fein woman, Michelle O'Neill, is returned as first minister-designate, meaning that I can't overstate how significant that is, but you see the evidence of that change beyond that right across the country.”—APP



BERLIN: Pakistan ambassador to Belarus, Sajjad Haider visits Pakistan embassy Germany and meets ambassador Dr Muhammad Faisal. - DNA

No military solution to end Kashmir conflict

WEB DESK

ANKARA: There is no military solution that could resolve the yearslong conflict over the contested Jammu and Kashmir region, said Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry, president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). In an exclusive interview with Turkish Newspaper during Chaudhry's visit to Türkiye, the president called for a dialogue, reiterating that unrest has dominated the region since Jammu and Kashmir's status was changed four years ago. “Since then, there has been a struggle, a movement in occupied Kashmir. Currently, it is like a direct rule of Delhi in occupied Kashmir,” Chaudhry said, describing the latest situation in the region, adding that there

have been “human rights violations and arrest” of many leaders participating in the freedom movement.” He said that many young people have been imprisoned while prominent Kashmiri pro-independence leader Mohammed Yasin Malik was sentenced to life in prison last year. “Still the resistance movement is there,” Chaudhry added, saying that millions of people are part of such movements. Muslim-majority Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since British colonialists granted it independence in 1947. Both countries claim the region in its entirety and have fought two wars over its control. Tensions escalated again when India unilaterally revoked the autonomous status of its part of Kashmir in 2019. In 2019, Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi's government reorganized Jammu and Kashmir, then India's only Muslim-majority state, into two federally administered territories, aiming to spur development. For many of Jammu and Kashmir's Muslims, the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) policies upending decades of autonomy and privilege represent a dangerous new phase in what they see as a nationwide push to champion the rights of the Hindu majority over minority groups. “They are changing the demography of the region,” Chaudhry said in an accusation toward India, likening the process to the Israeli policies in occupied Palestine. “Moreover, they are settling non-Kashmiris into occupied Kashmir, such as Indian Hindus and other Indians,” the president high-

lighted. Chaudhry further accused New Delhi of engaging in changes that would enable it to elect a Hindu chief minister in the region. “As the region is Muslim-majority – they (India) just want to show the world that a Hindu chief minister can be elected,” Chaudhry added, saying that the move indicated their intentions. Jammu and Kashmir is divided into two parts. Jammu has about 5.3 million inhabitants, 62% of whom are Hindu while Kashmir Valley has 6.7 million, 97% of them Muslims, according to a 2011 census. Estimates from survey officials and senior bureaucrats suggest the population stood at 15.5 million in 2021. From 1954, the Indian region enjoyed special status under India's Constitution. The shift in the political landscape came in 2019 when the BJP-led

parliament in New Delhi revoked this status, which had denied rights to many Hindu communities not considered indigenous to the region. Until the region's special status was revoked, secular left-of-center parties with Muslim leaders controlled the local assembly and whoever governed India from New Delhi tended not to dabble in the region's political autonomy. The assembly, which controls the state budget, spending, employment, education and economic activity, was dissolved and a lieutenant governor was appointed to run the region until local elections can be held – which could be as early as this spring. Chaudhry said that due to such contested developments in the region, there is no dialogue between India and Pakistan. “The sit-

uation is getting dense in the meantime.” On the other side, he indicated that the Indian policies caused minorities to suffer not only in Kashmir but also within India. “It is damaging the Indian reputation. Once upon a time, India was claiming it is the largest democracy and a secular state in the world. No more,” Chaudhry said. “We are always up for a solution,” the president underlined and warned of the consequences that could arise from further conflict between the two archrival nuclear powers. “Any small incident or accident could trigger a war. If there would be a war, it could be a nuclear war. It would not only affect India, Pakistan and South Asia, it would be a catastrophe for the entire world,” he emphasized.

Briefs

PTI devises strategy to deal with 'minus-Imran Khan plan'

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership held a meeting on Friday and devised a strategy to deal with the 'minus-Imran Khan plan'. The PTI's senior leadership concluded its session in which the party leaders discussed thwarting every strategy to minus Imran Khan from Pakistan's politics. According to sources, the leaders prepared an action plan and considered making Imran Khan patron-in-chief of the PTI. The move will enable Imran Khan to head the political party with maximum powers as the patron-in-chief. Sources said that currently there is no post of patron-in-chief in PTI, however, there will be no need to amend the constitution for creating a new position. Yesterday, former premier and PTI Chairman Imran Khan said that his political party's vote bank will not be affected by his disqualification as the people will vote for his party's narrative. Imran Khan, while talking to senior journalists, said that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) failed to deliver to the Pakistanis on all fronts. He directly blamed Finance Minister Ishaq Dar for intensifying the crises. He said that voices are being raised within the ruling Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N). "I still have many cards to surprise the PDM. The dissolution of the Punjab Assembly was a brilliant stroke against the PDM which will be remembered for decades."

42 journalists murdered in last 4 years: Senate told

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Friday informed the Senate that 42 journalists were murdered in the last four years across the country. Responding to the question of Jamaat-e-Islami's Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, he said that it was a critical situation and the government should take prompt action against the culprits and journalists should be provided special security. Abbasi directed the Ministry of Interior to prepare a consolidated report on the matter and present it to the House within the period of two months. Balochistan Awami Party's Senator Danesh Kumar pointed out that there were more than 10 journalists who were murdered in Balochistan instead of three shown in this report. To this, the minister said that this report was compiled after a thorough consultation with all the quarters concerned of the provinces and if someone had given a wrong figure, he must be accountable as it was a sensitive matter. Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-Fazl's Senator Kamran Murtaza proposed the minister that the journalists who had lost their lives in line of their duty, should be properly probed on which subject they were working before their murder.

CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS



ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Poverty Alleviation Faisal Karim Kundi, Xing Lijun Third Secretary Chinese Embassy, Zhao Li Ru, Executive Vice President ZTE, CEO Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal and others cutting cake to celebrate Chinese New Year at the Asian Wok restaurant. – DNA

Netherlands mulls sending F-16 to Ukraine: Media

DNA

AMSTERDAM: The Dutch government may consider supplying F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine in case of a request by Kyiv, according to local media on Friday. Speaking at Thursday's parliamentary debate, Dutch Foreign Minister Wopke Hoekstra said the Cabinet would look at such a request by Kyiv on F-16 jets with an "open mind," NL Times reported. He said there are "no taboos" for the delivery of regular equipment, adding that the Netherlands only sends items that Ukraine asks for. According to the report, D66 party lawmaker Sjoerd Sjoerdsma asked the Cabinet to supply F-16 jets and infantry fighting vehicles to Ukraine. Meanwhile, some countries like the US and UK have already announced to accelerate military support to Ukraine.

France to boost defence spending by a third

DNA

MONTE DE MARSAN: President Emmanuel Macron on Friday announced plans to increase France's defence budget by a third for the next seven years, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year rattled Europe. The announcement came a day after more than a million people protested in France against a proposed reform to cut pensions deficits. Macron said he would ask parliament to approve a new budget of more than 400 billion euros (\$430 billion) for 2024-2030, up from 295 billion euros for the 2019-2025 period. "After repairing the armed forces, we are going to transform them," he told soldiers at the southwestern air base of Mont-de-Marsan. "We need to do better and do it differently," Macron added. We need to "privilege rapid action and increasing power because we won't choose the conflicts we will have to wage." Macron also said the budget for military intelligence would be increased by 60 percent for the same period, and he hoped to double the country's ability to respond to major cyber-attacks.

Saudi Arabia rules out Israel normalisation

The West Bank and the Gaza Strip plus Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem were long touted as the basis of a Palestinian state in a "two-state" solution to the long-running conflict

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will not normalise ties with Israel in the absence of a two-state solution with the Palestinians, the kingdom's top diplomat has said, according to a tweet by the foreign ministry on Friday. The comments by Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu discussed normalisation with Saudi Arabia in talks with White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan in Jerusalem on Thursday. "True normalisation and true stability will only come through... giving the Palestinians a state," Prince Faisal told Bloomberg at the summit. Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, is a close partner of the United States but it has repeatedly refused to normalise ties with US-ally Israel due to its occupation of Palestinian territories. The US-brokered Abraham Accords in 2020 saw the kingdom's neighbours – the United Arab Emir-



ates and Bahrain – establish full diplomatic ties with Israel. Netanyahu has repeatedly expressed his desire to see Saudi Arabia join the list. In their talks on Thursday, Netanyahu and Sullivan discussed "measures to deepen the Abraham Accords... with an

emphasis on a breakthrough with Saudi," the Israeli leader's office said. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip plus Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem were long touted as the basis of a Palestinian state in a "two-state" solution to the long-running conflict.

But that goal has become ever more distant, with the occupied West Bank fragmented by Jewish settlements. Netanyahu plans to pursue a policy of increased settlement expansion in the West Bank, with ultra-Orthodox Jewish parties in his coalition advocating the annexation of some of the territory. Meanwhile, Israeli troops shot dead two Palestinians, including a 57-year-old school teacher, in the occupied West Bank on Thursday during a dawn raid in the flashpoint city of Jenin, officials and medics have said. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh has called on the world's countries to intervene and try to prevent the crimes of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people. He also held Israel fully responsible for the continuation of such crimes. Teacher Jawad Bawakna, the father of six, and Adham Jabarin, 28, were both shot in the Jenin refugee camp. The two deaths bring to 17 the number of Palestinian fatalities since the start of the year, including four children. Nine of the fatalities have been in Jenin. Fifteen people were arrested during the raid.

IHC orders FO to assist Dr Aafia's sister

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In the case pertaining to the return of Dr Aafia Siddiqui – a Pakistani neuroscientist jailed in the United States – the Islamabad High Court Friday directed the Foreign Affairs ministry to ensure assistance to Dr Fauzia Siddiqui, younger sister of the imprisoned scientist, at the legal front. The government, while ensuring the provision of assistance for Dr Aafia, apprised the court about its officials' meeting with the American Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome regarding the matter. The government told the court that the case of the Pakistani national's release has been raised at the diplomatic level in the US. Last month, the court had directed the Foreign Affairs ministry to raise Dr Aafia's matter with the American envoy while shar-

ing its dissatisfaction towards the efforts for her release and sought a signed report from the ministry and its secretary. Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan held the hearing of the plea filed by Dr Fauzia for her sister's return to Pakistan, while the petitioner arrived at the court with her counsel. Responding about the government's action in the case, Additional Attorney General Munawwar Iqbal Dogal said that Pakistan's officials had met the US diplomat following the court's orders. Justice Ejaz said that "neither the foreign secretary nor the foreign minister is aware" of the court's orders. The court sought details of the meeting's proceedings questioning if it was merely held over "coffee and cake". "Any idea what happened in this meeting?" he asked Iqbal to which he responded by saying that the matter had been raised at the diplomatic level.

China plays down Covid outbreak with holiday rush at full tilt

That policy U-turn, which followed historic protests against the gov't's tough anti-virus curbs, unleashed Covid on a population of 1.4 bln that had been largely shielded from disease since it emerged in city of Wuhan in late 2019

WEB DESK

BEIJING: People across China crowded into trains and buses for one of its busiest days of travel in years on Friday, feeding fears of new surges in a raging Covid-19 outbreak that officials say has hit its peak. In comments reported by state media late on Thursday, Vice Premier Sun Chunlan said the virus was at a "relatively low" level, while health officials said the number of Covid patients in hospitals and with critical conditions was on the decline. But there are widespread doubts about China's official account of an outbreak that has overwhelmed hospitals and funeral homes since Beijing abandoned strict Covid controls and mass testing last month. That policy U-turn, which followed historic protests against the government's tough anti-virus curbs, unleashed Covid

on a population of 1.4 billion that had been largely shielded from the disease since it emerged in the city of Wuhan in late 2019. Some health experts expect that more than one million people will die from the disease in China this year, with British-based health data firm Airfinity forecasting Covid fatalities could hit 36,000 a day next week. "Recently, the overall pandemic in the country is at a relatively low level," Sun said in comments reported by the state-run Xinhua news agency. "The number of critical patients at hospitals is decreasing steadily, though the rescue mission is still heavy." She spoke on the eve of one of the most frenetic travel days in China since the start of the pandemic, as millions of city-dwellers travel to their hometowns for the Lunar New Year holiday that officially begins on Saturday. More than 2bn trips are expected to take place across China between January 7 and February 15, the government estimates.