



Islamabad POST

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Croatian President slams Europe over Ukraine arms supply

Detailed News On Page-07

Palestinian Envoy calls for 2-state solution

Detailed News On Page-08



Nikki Haley to take on Trumpin 2024

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

COAS talks to Centcom chief

DNA
RAWALPINDI: During a telephonic conversation with Pakistan's Army Chief General Asim Munir, the United States (US) Central Command (Centcom) Wednesday expressed condolences over the loss of lives in Peshawar attack. Centcom Commander General Michael Kurilla held a telephonic conversation with Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, said a tweet. General Kurilla expressed his condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in Peshawar. The Pakistan-US military leadership also discussed counterterrorism and border issues.

Elahi's residence raided

GULZAR NOSHI
GUJRAT: The police on Wednesday morning raided the residence of former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi's in Gujrat, home reported. A heavy contingent of police raided Kunjah House, the residence of Pervaiz Elahi in Gujrat. Taking to Twitter, Pervaiz Elahi confirmed the raid and said that his employees were "searched" and "harassed" by the police. He also announced legal action against the caretaker gov't for carrying out illegal raid at his Gujrat residence. Taking to Twitter, Elahi's son Moonis said that a heavy contingent of police raided their residence.

Justice Isa questions talks with terrorists

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Senior Judge of Supreme Court (SC) Justice Qazi Faez Isa has remarked why the talks are being held with the terrorists. He gave these remarks during the hearing of the case here Wednesday. He observed we will fear from the terrorists for how long. It is said give this thing, that thing to the terrorists. Hold talks with the terrorists. Where is state during this, he observed.

PM blames PTI for surge in terrorism

Calls into question Rs 417 bln security funding for KP after fresh terror wave

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA
ISLAMABAD: Following the ghastly attack on the Police Lines mosque in Peshawar, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday launched a scathing attack on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), asking who brought terrorists back into the country. PM Shehbaz, giving a policy statement while presiding over the federal cabinet meeting, questioned the "misuse" of funds provided to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to develop its counter-terrorism capabilities. The premier said that the government has been giving funds to KP under the NFC awards since 2010 which makes the total amount of Rs417 billion. The premier questioned where the "big amount" was used, saying that the PTI has ruled in the province for 10 years. He said that everyone in the country is asking the same question. "Who brought them back? How did Pakistan's peace was disrupted again and how did KP come under attack, once again?" he told the cabinet. "Who said that they [terrorists] are jihadists and that they are friends of Pakistan? Who said that they have surrendered and will



Continued on Page 06

Imran slams govt for shifting blame

Says he isn't in power anymore; will not take words on Zardari back

BUREAU REPORT
LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan Wednesday slammed the government for shifting blame over rising terrorism and berating his party for its policy towards the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP). The government has claimed it was the PTI government's policy to negotiate with the TTP that eventually led to the outlawed group's strengthening in the country. "I am not in power anymore. Had I been in the government, then I would have been answerable," the PTI chief hit out at the centre during his address to the nation, while also claiming that terrorism was under control during his tenure.

Continued on Page 06

Punjab police foil terror attack

DNA
MIANWALI: The Punjab police on Tuesday night foiled a major 'terrorist attack' at a police station in the Isakkhel district of Mianwali, media reported. In a statement, District Police Officer (DPO) Mianwali said that a group of 20 to 25 heavily armed insurgents attacked the Makerwal police station in Isakkhel district. However, the DPO said, the terrorists were forced to flee after an exchange of heavy gunfire. "A few terrorists also were also injured in the retaliatory firing by the police," the official said. Meanwhile, Inspector General Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar constituted a four-member committee to probe the terror attack. The four-member team includes Additional IG Training, DIG IT and officials from Special Branch and Operations.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Hamad Obaid Alzaabi the Ambassador of UAE in Islamabad, meets Ishaq Dar, Minister of Finance & Revenues, and discusses matters of common interest and ways to enhance bilateral cooperation between the two countries. - DNA

UAE keen to enhance investment

Dar briefs envoy about government economic plans

ANSAR M BHATTI
ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salim Al-Zaabi during a call on meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue here Wednesday, Mohammad Ishaq Dar, said his country was keenly interested to augment its investment in new sectors of Pakistan economy. He said UAE was fully cognizant of the development-oriented economic policies of the country being undertaken by the present government. On the occasion, Dar stated that Pakistan and UAE were engaging in various areas including energy, refinery, petroleum and trade, however, still a lot of potential is unexplored.

Continued on Page 06

Ch. Fawad released from jail

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Fawad Chaudhry was released from prison on Wednesday evening after an additional sessions court granted bail to him in a sedition case. The bail was granted against a surety bond of Rs20,000. "I said in court as well. I stand by all that I said, and I will not back down," the PTI leader said upon his release, surrounded by PTI workers gathered outside

Continued on Page 06

FBI search Biden's home in Delaware

The investigation relates to a wider probe into classified documents

NEWS DESK
DELAWARE: The FBI is searching President Joe Biden's home in Rehoboth, Delaware as part of an investigation into classified documents, his lawyer says. In a statement, Mr Biden's attorney said the search was "planned" with the president's "full support". Media has reported that the investigation relates to a wider probe into the handling of classified documents. The FBI has not commented on the search. As it was consensual, no search warrant was sought. Mr Biden's lawyer, Bob Bauer, said the search was carried out "without advance public notice" in the interests of "operational security and integrity". The search is the latest in a series carried out at various locations, following the discovery of classified documents at the Penn Biden Center - an office space in Washington DC in November. This was not made public at the time. Additional documents were discovered at another of Mr Biden's homes in Wilmington, Delaware, in subsequent searches conducted in December and January. The precise number of classified records recovered remains unclear - although at least a dozen were discovered during the January searches alone. Mr Biden has said his team did "what they should have done" by alerting officials immediately, and that they are "co-operating fully and completely" with the investigation. Following the first of January's searches, Mr Biden told reporters the files were in a locked garage. "It's not like they are sitting in the street," he said. The announcement of the search comes one day after special counsel Robert Hur officially began his duties overseeing the probe into the documents. After the initial batch of documents was discovered in November, attorneys for Mr Biden immediately notified the office of the White House counsel on 2 November. The files were handed over to the National Archives the following day. Justice department officials were also immediately notified about the subsequent discoveries. Richard Sauber, special counsel to the president, described the documents discovered in November as "a small number". President Donald Trump and former Vice President Mike Pence have also been embroiled in controversy over the handling of classified documents.

US backs Pakistan's anti-terrorism efforts

The United States stands with Pakistan in condemning all forms of violence, says Antony Blinken

NEWS DESK
WASHINGTON: The United States on Wednesday again extended support to Pakistan's efforts to combat terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations" after the suicide blast in Peshawar claimed over a 100 lives. This was stated by US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken in a statement on Wednesday. "The United States strongly condemns the January 30 bombing at a mosque in Peshawar's Police Lines district," the statement said. "We extend our deepest condolences to the families of the many who lost their lives as a result of this senseless act of terrorism," he added. He noted that since the attack targeted police officers, "it only compounds the tragedy" because they had dedicated their careers to protecting and serving their fellow citizens. "The United States stands with Pakistan in condemning all forms of violence against civilians."

Inside...

- Wikipedia services degraded over unlawful content - Page 02
- Accessible kitchen and mess for persons with disabilities - Page 03
- President emphasises Ulema's role in social reform - Page 04
- Islamophobia makes democracies less safe for everyone - Page 05
- Islamabad wins Quaid-e-Azam Cup Basketball Crown 2023 - Page 06
- EU chief unveils plan to counter US green subsidies - Page 07
- Palestinian envoy calls for two-state solution - Page 08

'Cabal of 5' responsible for country's woes: Maryam

Says PML-N to steer country out of all PTI inflicted crises

CENTRELINE REPORT
BAHAWALPUR: PML-N Senior Vice-President Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday held a "cabal of five" responsible for the country's current predicament as she kickstarted a reorganisation tour to shape her party's narrative, days after her return to the country following a nearly four-month sojourn in London. Among the "cabal", she said, were PTI Chairman Imran Khan, former chief justices of Pakistan Saqib Nisar and Asif Saeed Khosa. She did not name the other two, simply referring to them as the two "crutches" of Imran. But it is evident that she was referring to the former COAS Gen @ Qamar Bajwa and former ISI Chief Lt. Gen @ Faiz Hameed. The senior PML N leader Shahid Khagan Abbasi while speaking in a TV show on Wednesday stated that Maryam was right when she named these five people. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief organiser and senior vice president Maryam Nawaz has said the "gang of five" has reached its logical end and her party will steer the country out of problems. Maryam, while mentioning zero load shedding during her father and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's tenure, stressed that the PML-N was making Pakistan stand on its feet again. She said the sugar was sold at Rs50 per kg during the PML-N's tenure. Turning her guns towards PTI chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan, the PML-N chief organiser said the incumbent government was bound to increase the price of petrol due to Imran Khan's agreement with the IMF. She claimed that the PML-N government had saved Pakistan from the brink of devastation. "It was easy for us to go to the polls, but instead we chose the difficult path to bring the country back on track," she added. "Those who think the PML-N is afraid of going into elections should know that we are in the field. I promise you that we will not only contest the next elections but will secure sweeping victory," Maryam said. Maryam urged party workers to become a voice of PM Shehbaz and Nawaz Sharif on social media. Nawaz Sharif crushed terrorists with operation Zarb-e-Azb but the terrorism had once again resurfaced.



'Minus-Imran' only through vote power: Rana Sanaullah

BAHAWALPUR: Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Wednesday that through vote power Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan would be knocked out of the political arena in next general elections. Addressing a workers' convention in Bahawalpur, Rana taking a dig at the deposed premier said that Imran Khan made people fool through his popularity mantra, adding that in recent long march calls, the whole nation witnessed the humiliation he faced in Islamabad. He added that the country would face more disasters if the PTI chief remains in politics. "We will knock Imran out of the political arena through vote power," added the minister. Blaming Imran Khan for "political victimisation" against PML-N, Sana said that in PTI's tenure, the party's top guns were in jail because they came into power just to take political revenge and to humiliate others. "In worst times, Maryam Nawaz took responsibility and kept the party united against Imran's goons," said Rana. Rana Sanaullah while urging the masses to have faith in PML-N leadership amid soaring inflation and fuel crisis said that the country is in its worst crisis due to the previous government but under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, PML-N would leave no stone unturned to pull the country out of the quagmire as he did in 2013 to 2018. - DNA

Wikipedia services degraded over unlawful content

Turkish officials at the time had said that the ban was needed as Wikipedia had failed to remove content accusing its government of assisting terrorist groups

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Wednesday "degraded" the services of the expansive online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, in the country claiming that the censorship was on "account of not blocking/removing sacrilegious contents", and warned of blocking the site if it fails to comply with the directions. In a statement, the telecommunication authority said that it had approached and urged Wikipedia to block or remove "sacrilegious" contents by issuing a notice under applicable law and court order(s). "An opportunity of hearing was also provided," the statement added, "however, the platform neither complied by removing the blasphemous content nor appeared before the Authority." As a result of the "intentional failure" on part of the platform to comply with PTA directions or to appear before it, its services were "degraded" through

out the country for 48 hours. Moreover, directions to block/remove the reported contents had also been given. The statement further stated that in the case of non-compliance by Wikipedia to remove the objectionable content, the platform will be blocked within Pakistan for a longer time. "Restoration of the services of Wikipedia will be reconsidered subject to blocking/removal of the reported unlawful contents. PTA is committed to ensuring a safe online experience for all Pakistani citizens according to local laws," the statement asserted. Taking to Twitter, the PTA wrote: "Press Release: PTA has degraded Wikipedia services in the country on account of not blocking/removing sacrilegious contents." It must be noted that this is not the first time that the encyclopedia has been blocked in the country or in other countries. The PTA had earlier issued notices to tech giant Google and the online encyclopedia Wikipedia for disseminating "sacrilegious content" through the platforms in 2020. In a press release, the regulator said that it was acting against Google after receiving "complaints regarding misleading search results associated with 'Present Khalifa of Islam' and unauthentic version of Holy Quran uploaded on Google Play Store". The PTA also said that it had received complaints against Wikipedia for "hosting of caricatures of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and dissemination of misleading, wrong, deceptive and deceitful information through articles portraying Mirza Masroor Ahmad as a Muslim". The PTA said that they have served Wikipedia with a notice after "extensive communication" to remove the "sacrilegious content to avoid any legal action". Before that, in 2017, Turkey had banned the platform citing a law allowing it to ban access to websites deemed obscene or a threat to national security. Turkish officials at the time had said that the ban was needed as Wikipedia had failed to remove content accusing its government of assisting terrorist groups. The ban was lifted in 2020.

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ISLAMABAD: Canadian High Commissioner, Leslie Scanlona called on the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Economic Affairs Division.—DNA

Utility Stores announce increase in prices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In order to improve demand and supply and ensure uninterrupted supply of branded items, prices of certain branded items have been increased at all utility stores across the country. However, this increase is from branded companies, which is due to factors like market volatility/rising trend. Utility Stores Corporation does not manufacture or produce itself but purchases from reputed and certified branded companies of the country.

When raw material prices increase, production charges increase and transportation charges increase, the product cost also increases due to which the prices have to be revised. So that demand and supply improve and availability of these products is possible. It should be noted that the prices of these items were kept stable for the last seven to eight months. A spokesman for Utility Stores Corporation has added. That subsidy is still being given on certain items under the Prime Minister's relief package at all utility stores across the country. These items include flour, sugar, ghee, pulses and rice. Despite the increase, Utility Stores Corporations are active in ensuring the public supply of quality goods at affordable prices compared to the general market.

Canadian High Commissioner calls on Minister EAD

ISLAMABAD: Ms Leslie Scanlona, Canadian High Commissioner called on Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Federal Minister for Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Economic Affairs today. Secretary EAD and other senior officers from Economic Affairs Division attended the meeting. Minister for Economic Affairs warmly greeted the Canadian High Commissioner and highlighted long-standing bilateral ties between Pakistan and Canada. The Federal Minister apprised that Canada hosts a diversified Pakistani community which is commendably encouraging for

both countries. The Federal Minister for Economic Affairs appreciated the assistance of the Canadian government and thanked the Canadian High Commissioner for standing with Pakistan in this hour of need. It was shared that Canada has always been a source of support for Pakistan. While discussing the overall volume of trade between both countries, the Federal Minister shared that a lot of potential remains to be explored for further enhancing and deepening the ties. Canadian High Commissioner Ms Leslie Scanlona shared that Canada has un-

dertaken a number of bilateral as well as multilateral projects in Pakistan. It was further apprised that Canada is looking for elevating the trade and economic relation in various sectors in Pakistan for reaping the fuller potential of trade existing between both countries. The higher officials from both sides were on the same page for bolstering futuristic collaborations for the good of economies, cultural exchange and mutual assistance to achieve a significant comparative advantage. In conclusion, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to remain engaged to further boost bilateral relations.—Online

Police nabbed 10 criminals

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: Attock police nabbed 10 criminals involved in different cases including gambling, theft, court absconders, kite suppling at the outskirts areas of police stations Injra, Hazro, and Attock Khurd here on Wednesday. Police said that Hazro police arrested a thief named as Abdul Khaliq son of Abul Wahid of Akora Khattak along with recovery of booty amount of Rs.28 lacs taken away from the house of complainant Esa Khan of Qutba Kamra Cantt. Meanwhile, Injra police intercepted six gamblers identified as Mohammad Tayyab, Mohammad Aziz, Ameer Khan, Abdul Rehman, Mohammad Aqil, Mohammad Arshad along with stake money of Rs.692000 as well as two court absconders known as Fakhar Uddin son of Mabasir din and Anees son of Khyal Mehra from Mukhad road colony. Such as, Attock Khurd police arrested a kite supplier Mohammad Safdar son of Umer din of Madrota on the charge of possessing 282 kites, chemical wire 16, electric firki 06, old bundle of newspapers 03 carrying in raksha.

Swabi Police kill two master-mind terrorists

PESHAWAR: In an intelligence-based operation against terrorists, Swabi Police have killed two master-mind terrorists and arrested another one beside two suspects, said a press release issued on Wednesday. On a tip regarding the presence of terrorists, Swabi Police along with intelligence agencies carried out a joint operation at Hund. During the operation, two terrorists identified as Izharrullah alias Shiraz son of Attaullah resident of Asota Sharif and his accomplice Zeenat alias Saqib, resident of Bajaur were killed while another terrorist was arrested along with two other suspects. Terrorist Izharrullah alias Shiraz was wanted by both Swabi Police and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) in connection with terrorism related cases.—APP

Economy should be recognized as fifth pillar of state: FCCI

FAISALABAD: In a globally changing scenario, the economy had gained importance and now it should be recognized as the fifth pillar of state to drag out the country from economic upheavals, said Dr. Khurram Tariq, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). Addressing a delegation of under training officers of the 32nd Senior Management Course (SMC) at National Institute of Management (NIM) Peshawar, he introduced Faisalabad and FCCI in addition to responding to the multifarious questions from the participants and said that predominantly Faisalabad had an agro industrial base which made tremendous progress during the first century of its inception. He said that basic responsibility of the FCCI was to project and get resolved the problems confronted by its members through proactive business advocacy. He particularly highlighted the philanthropic aspect of Faisalabad and said he was in Kot

Addu last Saturday where FCCI intends to build one hundred houses for flood affectees in the first phase of its massive rescue plan. He also mentioned that series of relief activities and said; "We worked systematically and provided ration and woollies to the displaced persons and now we are going to construct 500 houses out of which first hundred would be provided to the flood victims of Kot Addu." He said that FCCI has an ambitious plan to develop a new civilian airport which could be used as a multi-transport model for the entire country. He said that secondary runway of the existing Faisalabad International Airport was nearing completion which would be inaugurated by the end of this month. The FCCI President said that wide bodied planes could land on the runway which would further attract international airlines to start their flights from this emerging hub of industry, business and trade. He also aspired to develop Faisalabad into a cen-

tre of Information Technology (IT) for which efforts had already been initiated to provide an ecosystem. Responding to a question, Dr Khurram Tariq said that generally four pillars had been identified but now the economy had emerged as the most powerful pillar of any state which provides financial support to the remaining four pillars. Commenting on the current economic scenario, he said that political uncertainty and inconsistent policies had played havoc with the economy which was in dire straits. He said that business leaders from all over the country had decided to raise their voice for the formal recognition of the importance of this fifth pillar with its practical involvement in policy-making at the highest level. Responding to yet another question, the FCCI President said that Pakistan's share in world textile trade was only one percent as we failed to switch over to the innovations.—APP



LAHORE: February 01 - Visitors taking keen interest in painting during the exhibition by Association of Pungab National Exhibition at Alhambra.—APP

Islamic financial system provide better services

LAHORE: Islamic financial system has potential to provide better banking and financial services than the conventional system, provided it capitalizes on its own inherent strengths and avoids following the conventional system. Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki expressed these views during a think tank session held at PCJCCI Secretariat on Wednesday. He added that business and commercial activities should be coherent with the Shariah Corridor and Islamic financial laws. Growth of Islamic banking in the country had been over 30 percent in the last few years, which was certainly above the average global growth rate of Islamic banking and finance. If this trend continues, then one should expect that in the next three years Islamic banking

assets would at least double from its current size of Rs 926 billion, he maintained. Referring to the Global Islamic Finance Report, Moazzam Ghurki said that Pakistan ranked number nine in the world in terms of development of Islamic financial services industry in the country. He mentioned that the country was second largest Islamic market (population wise) after Indonesia, and could become the most important player in Islamic banking and finance, if it attained 20 percent market share. PCJCCI Vice President Hamza Khalid said, "Time has come where we should look ahead and concentrate on developing innovative products which are more towards perfection and purity rather than only towards permissibility by Shariah." He stressed the need for strong role of Shariah Advisors in making the Islamic banking more Shairah compliant. Moazzam Ghurki added that at present, there were more than 600 Islamic banking branches throughout Pakistan and 19 Islamic banking institutions were offering Islamic commercial banking services. According to a report, he said, Pakistan comes after Iran, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Indonesia and Sudan. — APP

Jl announces protest march against inflation

ISLAMABAD: The Jamaat-e-Islami would hold three-day protest march against inflation from Febr ary 10, announced the JI secretary general Amirul Azeem, saying the party has set to resist the government moves to impose the IMF conditions on poor masses. The JI Emir Sirajul Haq, he told the press conference at Mansoorah on Wednesday, will lead the march from Lahore to Islamabad. Azeem demanded general elections instead of polls in two provinces, saying the government lost credibility to rule. The PDM and the PPP's unity government, he said, was brought to power and if it continued, only elite would survive. He also demanded release of the "Gwardar Rights Movement" leader Maulana Hidayatullah Rahman and his colleagues. He said the march agenda included the protection of the rights of the people of Balochistan. He said the ECP and the provincial governments must complete the local government institution, allowing representatives of the people to exercise their legal powers. Azeem said the judiciary failed to protect the rights of the weak in the country. He said the people in the government were getting clean chits against their past crimes. — DNA

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY

- Feb 04 / Sri Lanka National Day
Feb 06 / New Zealand National Day
Feb 06 / Uganda Defece Forces Day
Feb 11 / DPR Korea National Day
Feb 16 / Lithuania National Day
Feb 18 / Gambia National Day
Feb 19 / Nepal National Democracy Day
Feb 23 / Brunei National Day
Feb 23 / Guyana National Day
Feb 23 / Russian Federation National Army Day
Feb 23 / Tajikistan Armed Forces Day
Feb 25 / Kuwait National Day
Feb 27 / Dominican Republic Independence Day



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

- Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

- Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIAFlightInfo.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi..5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

- CMH.....5611111
MH.....561116
Dhnt Hospital...9270907-11
CHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International.4603666



Departments

- CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Accessible kitchen and mess for persons with disabilities

Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada performs inauguration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Directorate General of Special Education, Islamabad organized the opening ceremony of Accessible Kitchen and Mess for persons with disabilities (PWDs). Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada was the chief guest on the occasion. An accessible kitchen and mess, the first of its kind in Pakistan, has been prepared at the National Institute of Special Education for special people, which was inaugurated by Federal Minister for Human Rights.

On this occasion, he said that today is a great day for me that I am present among you people at the opening ceremony of Accessible Kitchen/Mess. Special people are the valuable asset of this country. And it is a fact that if they are provided with opportunities for education and training, these people are no less than anyone. Today is a good step in that direction, where special people will be able to live their lives in a better way by learning the skill of cooking without difficulty. He added that it is a matter of pride for us that today from education to the sports field special people have made a name for themselves.

Of course, this is a great success of our special education institutions. I am happy that our trained special people are performing their services with great dignity



and responsibility in different fields of Pakistan. We understand the importance and problems of special people very well and always try to solve it. The government of Pakistan will make more use of the country's resources for the education, training and employment of PWDs to make their lives easier. I am very happy to come here, when I see

visually impaired and wheelchair bound girls cooking in the kitchen with smiling faces like normal people. Happily, the whole of Pakistan is represented among the participants who came to learn. On this occasion, Sheikh Azhar Sajjad, Director General (Special Education) said in his welcome speech that the special education centres under the Directorate

General of Special Education are providing education, training and rehabilitation to the Persons with disabilities. The high quality digital assistive devices are also available for the study and teaching of Visually Impaired Persons. The state of the art orthopedic workshop is also there to prepare artificial limbs and assistive devices for Physically

Challenged Persons. Degree level classes have also been started for the Hearing Impaired Persons. The Director General also requested that the Accessible Kitchen and Mess like unique facility, the first one in Pakistan, should also be replicated and established at Provincial Capitals in first phase. Special persons, their parents, teachers, doctors,

therapists and even other members of the civil society are also trained in such a way that they can be beneficial in the rehabilitation of special persons. He further added that the Directorate General of Special Education intends to initiate such other projects for the education, training and welfare of the persons with disabilities in future.

PNCA to hold Kashmir cultural festival from Feb 3

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan will mark Kashmir Solidarity Day through a three-day cultural festival here from February 3-5. The event will include speeches, tableaux, Mili Naghmay, puppet show, painting and photography exhibition, stage play, folk performances, music and songs of solidarity to highlight Kashmir issue through soft expressions of art and crafts and engage the youth

in healthy activities to promote Kashmiri cultural heritage and highlight problems faced by Kashmiris, said Director General PNCA, Ayub Jamali while talking to APP. The activities have been arranged to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people struggling for their right of self-determination in the Indian Occupied Kashmir through purely a cultural perspective. The program will focus on serving the fun lovers as informative entertainment through high-lighting cultural heritage

and traditions of the country and also pay tribute to the heroes of the freedom movement in sub-continent and Kashmir and the struggle of freedom fighters. These programs are a regular feature of PNCA to celebrate the national days by presenting a variety of cultural and entertainment activities to promote the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Pakistan. The programs aim to pay tribute to the Kashmiri freedom fighters and martyrs and show solidarity with the Kashmiri broth-

ers against Indian occupation and brutality. Different segments of the festival will focus on the atrocities by the Indian army in occupied Kashmir as artists will present Kashmiri folk and traditional music and songs to show solidarity with Kashmiris fighting for their due right of self-determination calling the international community to play their role in solving the issue through United Nations resolutions and stop Indians from violation of human rights in Kashmir, he said. - APP

Business community hails Bilawal's visit to Moscow

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Kyrgyzstan Trade House and Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis on Wednesday said Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhatto Zardari's visit to Moscow not only will help strengthen the existing bilateral trade relations between the two countries but also take them to the new heights. Talking to a delegation of industrialists and traders led by Faran Shahid, Meher said Bilawal Bhatto held delegation-level fruitful talks with Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov in Moscow on Monday that encompassed the entire range of bilateral relations with a special focus on trade and economic relations, energy cooperation as well as regional and global issues of mutual interest. He said ever increasing viable modern concept of regional economic cooperation worldwide is replacing globalization, adding that it's a good omen in the context of multidimensional cooperation between Pakistan and Russia as both sides agreed to further enhance mutually beneficial cooperation in the areas of trade, energy, education, culture, security and counter-terrorism. He said Bilawal Bhatto's visit will provide an impetus to business sector to gear up for taking advantage of fully exploring trade opportunities in Russian markets, including the Central Asian States, especially Kyrgyzstan. Speaking on the occasion, Kyrgyzstan Trade House President Dr Shahid Hassan said that frequent exchange of delegations from public, private sectors and government to government level will help build confidence among importers and exporters of both countries. He said it's need of the hour that Pakistan should also fully focus on improving regional connectivity to boost trade among members countries to offset the hovering impending threats of food insecurity and arrest the increasing inflation. - APP

Security forces to quell terrorism

ISLAMABAD: The business community across the country on Wednesday expressed solidarity with valiant security forces to frustrate the evil designs of anti-state elements and stamp out the menace of terrorism. Talking to a delegation of industrialists and traders led by Muslim Khan Buner, President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan is facing gigantic and myriad challenges including terrorism and the country is passing through a critical period of history since its inception. He said that with the proverbial resilience of our people, we were destined to overcome this challenge and would soon emerge as a stronger country. He said the government, the armed forces and the people are on one page to defend the geographical frontiers and flush out terrorism from the motherland. - APP

1,678 fine tickets issued over violation of one-way

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police fined a total of 1,678 fine motorists over violation of one-way during the last month, police said. Following the special direction of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, special squads had been constituted to curb traffic violations, said a police spokesman. He said that these squads were deployed exclusively on all major highways of Islamabad including Expressway, Srinagar Highway, Margalla Road, JIP Road, Murree Road, 7th Avenue and 9th Avenue. He said that Zonal DSPs were supervising the overall efforts for ensuring traffic discipline in the city and special awareness campaigns had also been launched on the risks of one-way and other traffic violations. - APP

'Imran Khan's corruption degraded Pakistan's ranking'

Senator Rehman said, During his four-year rule, corruption did not decrease but continued to increase. Before the PTI govt, Pakistan was ranked 117th in the Corruption Perception Index

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday said Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index Report 2022 was the last nail in the coffin of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's narrative as it revealed the country's degrading ranking in overall corruption index during Imran Khan's tenure. In a flurry of tweets, the minister slammed the PTI leadership and said Imran Khan and PTI's narrative regarding corruption was limited to speeches and publicity only. Senator Rehman said, "During his four-year rule, corruption did not decrease but continued to increase. Before the PTI government, Pakistan was ranked 117th in the Corruption Perception Index. During Imran Khan's rule, Pakistan rose to 120th in 2019, 124th in 2020 and 140th in 2021." The minister alleged that Pakistan had reached the 140th position in the ranking due to worst tenure of PTI, adding, "Clean and transparent corruption remained rampant in his tenure." Senator Rehman said because of his (Imran Khan) corruption, Pakistan went up 23 places in the corruption index overall. "He created false cases against his opponents while he himself was involved in mega corruption scandals," Sherry added. She said, "Now Imran Khan claims that no corruption scandal has surfaced during his tenure." - APP

PTCL launches OTT Platform

DNA

ISLAMABAD: February 1, 2023: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), a subsidiary of e&, (formerly known as Etisalat Group) has launched its new Over-The-Top (OTT) platform, SHOQ, to provide a superior and immersive viewing experience to all data users in Pakistan. SHOQ hosts a rich repository of selected content that is accessible to all, in line with PTCL's vision of empowering digital transformation for all.

The new platform was launched at a special event in Karachi, which was attended by President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone, Hatem Bamatraf, CEO, e&life, Khalifa Al Shamsi, CEO evision, Olivier Bramly; CEO and Co-founder, STARZPLAY, Maaz Sheikh, senior PTCL & Ufone officials, industry leaders, showbiz celebrities, media representatives, and prominent personalities from different backgrounds. SHOQ is bridging the gap in access to high quality content in Pakistan at affordable prices through its collaboration with evision, the media and entertainment division of e& life (part of e&). The partnership will provide PTCL and other data customers with access to media and entertainment content, blockbuster movies and seasons from major Hollywood studios such as Warner Bros, Paramount, 20th Century FOX, among others. SHOQ will also host one hundred most watched local and international live TV channels, Pakistani movies and originals to cater to the entertainment needs of the entire family.

ICCI delegation to visit Ethiopia

ISLAMABAD: Faad Waheed, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Africa is an untapped market for Pakistan and close cooperation with Ethiopia would help us in capitalizing on the potential business and investment opportunities in the huge market of the African continent. He said that the current volume of around US\$ 25 million bilateral trade between Pakistan and Ethiopia is negligible as compared to the actual potential of both countries and stressed that both countries should encourage regular exchange of trade delegations

to explore new areas of trade cooperation. He said this while talking to H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Faad Waheed said that the start of direct flights from Ethiopia to Pakistan is a welcome development as it would help improve people-to-people and trade ties between the two countries. He said that Pakistan is producing many quality products including medicines, surgical instruments, leather goods, sports products, rice, light engineering goods, IT products and others that can

find a good market in Ethiopia. He assured that ICCI would try to become part of Pakistan's delegation being formed for Ethiopia. Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Ethiopia said that the Prime Minister of Ethiopia has a strong passion to promote trade ties with Pakistan and in line with this objective, a business delegation of Pakistan is planned to visit Ethiopia from March 6-10, 2023. He invited the members of ICCI to join the said delegation in order to tap the Ethiopian market for trade and exports. - APP

CDNS digitized National Savings Certificates

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has digitized National Savings Certificates (NSCs) for the convenience of consumers and to modernize the institutional process. The CDNS and CDCP have signed an agreement to start a pilot project for digitization and dematerialize of NSCs, a senior official of CDNS told media. The senior official said this will increase investment in National Savings and increase consumer confidence. He said that this agreement between National Savings and CDCP is a part of automation and digitization of the institution. He said that the Federal Finance Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar has specially participated in

the signing ceremony and praised the process. Replying a question, he said the CDNS realized the target of Rs 765 billion in fresh bonds during the current fiscal year 2022-23 from July 1st to January 30th, 2023. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.3 trillion for the current financial year (2022-23) which will "promote the savings culture in the country", he said. In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said. Responding to another question, he said the CDNS surpassed its annual target in the previous fiscal year and set a historic record of Rs 1,250 billion in savings till June 30, 2022. - APP



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AIOU announces schedule of face-to-face workshops

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the schedule of face-to-face workshops on the teaching practice of MA Education and B.Ed./M.Ed. programs offered in the autumn semester of 2022. These workshops will start on February 8 and will be held in the regional offices/workshop centers of AIOU from 1:30 p.m to 6:30 p.m. Director General Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmed Khan said as per the instructions of the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Dr. Nasir Mehmood, all the regional directors have been directed to provide all possible facilities to the students in the workshop centers. AIOU has already sent letters to the students to attend the workshops. The schedule of these workshops is uploaded on student LMS portals and is also available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). Students are advised to contact the nearest Regional Campus for further information and details.—APP

60b revenue from Tobacco Health Levy can lessen Pak woes

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of Child (SPARC) has stressed the importance of the pending Tobacco Health Levy Bill to ease Pakistan's current economic crisis, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. According to details, Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) mentioned that the destruction caused by the tobacco induced non-communicable diseases to Pakistan's healthcare system was a fact. "But now, the situation has escalated into something far more difficult with the decline of national economy. Tobacco taxes in the country are low, with an average excise tax rate of only around 45 percent over time, cigarettes are becoming more affordable due to stagnant tobacco taxes that are not keeping pace with inflation and economic growth. The government needs to implement the pending health levy bill on tobacco". Once implemented, it can help generate PKR 60 billion of revenue and can relieve our national economy from shrinking further, he added.—APP

Authorities directed to accelerate development work

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatta said that Punjab government was taking all possible steps for the improvement of administrative matters. He directed the authorities concerned to speed up the construction work on development projects. The Commissioner said this while reviewing the working on the Rural Center Mall Hasanabdal during his visit to Attock District on Wednesday. He also presided over a meeting which was attended by officers of all the departments of the district. The Deputy Commissioner Attock gave a briefing to the Commissioner and informed about the historical, geographical, tourism, mining and agricultural importance of Attock district. The Commissioner was informed that 118 ongoing schemes including 26 of Highway department, 22 of Building department, seven Public Health, three Small Dams and two of Sports department would be completed at a cost of Rs 26376.82 million in the district under annual development program. The DC told that Attock district was at number one position in price checking activities and the administration was also taking strict action in accordance with the law against wheat and flour smugglers. The Commissioner was briefed about dengue, corona, polio and other important issues.—APP



ISLAMABAD: A view of Provincials historical places models displayed alongside a road at Bahria Enclave, in Federal Capital. — Online

President emphasises Ulema's role in social reform

The president said that Ulema should make concerted efforts to remove divisions from society, and should promote unity and solidarity within the country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called upon the Ulema and Mashaikh of the country to play their role in bringing positive social change, discouraging extremism, terrorism, and sectarianism. The president, talking to a delegation of the Ulema Mashaikh Yakjehti Council of Pakistan (UMYC), that called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, urged their role for inculcating ethical and moral

values in society, promoting the conservation of resources, national solidarity, religious tolerance, and inter-faith harmony and peace. He urged Ulema to play their role to eliminate extremism, terrorism and sectarianism by highlighting the true teachings of Islam in the light of the Quran, Sunnah and Ahadith of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He said the challenges of terrorism and militancy in Pakistan required a comprehensive action plan, coupled with concerted efforts on the part of the Ulema in

the areas of counter-extremism and counter-terrorism. President Alvi said that it was the responsibility of religious scholars to disseminate the true teachings of Islam among the people, especially youth, to bring in social reforms, and promote virtues, ethics, and morality in society. He said that Pakistan could achieve progress and its rightful place in the comity of nations through discipline, persistence, moral righteousness, and promoting social justice.

The president said that Ulema should make concerted efforts to remove divisions from society, and should promote unity and solidarity within the country. He said that youth should be educated on tolerance, forgiveness, and peace as these were the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The president said that Islam emphasized the conservation of resources and avoiding wastage. The Ulema should also help promote moderate, responsible and sustainable consumption of resources,

especially fuel and energy, through their Friday sermons in the mosques.

The delegation was led by Chairman UMYC, Qari Hidayat Ullah Mirani, and consisted of Muhammad Younas Qureshi, Molana Gul Wali, Major Ehtasham Uddin Kiyani, Prof Abdul Ghaffar Shah Bukhari, Abdul Rahim Abbasi, Noor Elahi, Fahad Maqsood, Hameed Ullah Khan, Sheikh Mazhar Hussain, Sheikh Zia ur Rehman, Alama Mufti Mehmood Ahmed Tabasam, and Jamal Khan.

HEC, Hult Prize to collaborate for promotion of entrepreneurship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan and Hult Prize Foundation, an international entity empowering youth to solve the world's most pressing issues through social entrepreneurship, have expressed a desire to jointly work for promotion of entrepreneurship in Pakistan. In this connection, the two sides held a virtual meeting to discuss potential of bilateral collaboration for strengthening a startup culture in the country. They agreed to formally sign a Letter of Intent and extend support to the Pakistani youth and entrepreneurs. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed

addressed the participants and shed light on the HEC efforts and initiatives to support academia-industry linkages and finance the Pakistani youth in their entrepreneurial endeavours. He assured that HEC will extend all-out support to Hult Prize Foundation in its intent to exploit the potential of Pakistani youth. Director Research & Innovation Division, HEC, Noshaba Awais said that Pakistan's population comprises over 60% of youth and HEC is committed to utilising the youth bulge in supporting the country's economy. Promoting entrepreneurship is the major step forward towards utilising the youth bulge, she affirmed. She highlighted HEC

programmes, including establishment of Offices of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation (ORICs), establishment of Business Incubation Centres (BICs), and Innovator Seed Fund (ISF), meant to develop a start-up ecosystem in Pakistan. She said Pakistani higher education institutions have 38 BICs which have so far incubated more than 800 startups. "This is the right time to promote collaboration with Hult Prize," she noted. Sharing the objectives of Hult Prize Foundation, Senior Director of Programs at the Hult Prize Mr. Hamdi Ben Elmi and Director of Human Resource at the Hult Prize Ms. Carla Osnaya said that the Foundation has been engaged in promoting social entrepreneur-

ship and empowerment of youth across a large number of countries. They said that Hult Prize challenges young people to solve the world's most pressing issues through Social Enterprise and, every year, one team receives \$1M USD in funding to make their idea a reality. They underlined that the Foundation has a great impact in Pakistan as it has been engaged with over 100 universities, more than 9000 student entrepreneurs, 10,000+ student volunteers and over 1000 experts. Muhammad Osama from Bfreeze, a Pakistani company which won Hult Prize in 2020, expressed his views about the role of Hult Prize Foundation in the success of his company's products.

100 MW to Gwadar: all works to be completed in 15 days

ISLAMABAD: More than 0.4 million people in Gwadar will be relieved of appalling power woes as all electrification and configuration work for receiving 100 MW Iranian electricity to power up Gwadar will be completed in 15 days. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday, the project cost approximately Rs. 500 million. Gwadar City, Gwadar Port, Free Zones, and Gwadar District will have access to electricity beginning March 1st. All electrification works consist of the installation of a double circuit 132 KV transmission line from Kalatu (Pakistan city) near Gabd-Remdan (Pak-Iran border) to Jiwani Grid Station, erection of around 70 power polls, evacuation, foundation concreting and backfilling foundations, earthing and civil works. Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), operating as a power distribution company and dealing with the power supply system, National Transmission National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) have collaborated to complete the project. According to a QESCO official, infrastructure has been completed on the Iranian side for many years. Infrastructure was also ready from Jiwani to Gwadar, according to him. "However, transmission line equipment from the Pakistan-Iran border area of Kalatu near Gabd-Remdan to Jiwani was missing," he added. It is expected that the remaining procedures and formalities will be completed in 10 to 15 days, and the project will be inaugurated on March 1st, ensuring a stable and low-cost 100 MW power supply from Iran to Gwadar.—DNA

COMSTECH international conference kicks off

The Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary extended a very warm welcome to the participants and the experts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH International Conference/Workshop on "Science Communication and Community Engagement" inaugurated at COMSTECH on Wednesday. The chief guest of the inaugural session was the honorable Mr. Justice Dr. Syed Muhammad Anwer, Acting Chief Justice of Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan. He said that being a Muslim, to acquire knowledge and to educate ourselves and our future generations is our religious duty and to fulfill this duty, Science Communication, which is considered as the practice of informing, educating and raising awareness of science related topics in a community is not only the need of the time but our religious duty too. He said the holy Quran is not a book of science but guides to live in harmony with the nature. He said Quran teaches us to explore through scientific research the cosmological scientific principles and realities about ourselves, the climate and environment around us and the universe in general. He said that the Quran invites us to pursue scientific research in order to explore the scientific principles of the universe. He said that Allah has given us a direction to think over the coordinated working of the universe. He said that it is our religious duty to relentlessly and continuously pursue scientific knowl-

edge which ultimately results in finding the scientific principles working therein. He said that we Muslims generally are not fulfilling the responsibility bestowed upon us by Allah through Quran to acquire, possess and promote scientific education in our communities. The Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary extended a very warm welcome to the participants and the experts. He informed that speakers from 7 countries with long experience and notable contributions in communication of

science will address this conference. He informed that over 460 participants got registered to attend this conference with different backgrounds, from science, media, policy makers, social work, to arts and cultures, diplomacy and environment. He mentioned that we often perceive Science and Society as two separate worlds, far away from each other, but they are not. He said that indeed they are two sides of the same coin, there is an organic relationship between the two. Society benefits from scientific

discoveries and scientific values. Where-as science needs social and political support. Without each other, none can flourish or sustain. He suggested that during the economic crises, strong public support for science is crucially important for the survival of scientific enterprise. Prof. Choudhary concluded that society must shape the path of science, rather than science shaping societies. Society should help determine how its resources are deployed to fund scientific work, encouraging beneficial research, and discouraging others. Science should serve the interests and needs of the society. Associate coordinator of the conference, Prof. Dr. Syed Javid Khurshid gave a comprehensive introduction of the conference. He said that the basic aim of this conference is to develop a bridge between scientists and journalists to develop awareness in the general public. In the first session of the conference, Mr. Michael Wadleigh, Coordinator UNESCO and Oscar award winner film maker gave lecture on "UNESCO open data to stop global social economic collapse", Mr. Kamran Akhtar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs talked on the 'role of science communication in international diplomacy, and Dr. Mahalactchumy Arujan, Director Malaysian Biotechnology Information Center (MABIC) gave lecture on 'science communication as an approach to future global crisis preparedness.



ANF arrests four on recovery of drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting five counter-narcotics operations seized 163 drugs-filled capsules, 610 grams narcotics and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman.

He informed that in two operations at Islamabad International Airport, ANF recovered 80 heroin-filled capsules from the possession of a Dubai-bound passenger, resident of Waziristan, going on flight no PA-210 and 52 charras and 31 Ice drug filled capsules from the possession of a Doha-bound passenger, resident of Mardan going on flight no PK-287.

He informed that in third operation conducted near a university in Islamabad, ANF recovered 510 grams charras from the possession of a drug peddler resident of Islamabad allegedly involved in supplying drugs to students.

In fourth operation, ANF and ASF recovered 70 grams charras from the possession of a Sharjah-bound passenger resident of Swat arrested at Bacha Khan International Airport Peshawar. The arrested accused was going on flight no G-555. In fifth operation conducted at a private courier office on Empress Road Lahore, ANF recovered 31 grams weed from a parcel booked for Norway.

The spokesman said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

SMEDA to organize webinar on February 07

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) is going to organize a webinar on "Managing Human Resources in SME Businesses" for profitable business growth on February 07 (Tuesday). The session is being offered by SMEDA under National Business Development Programme (NBDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to an official source. The objectives of the training include HRM for the SME sector, HRM's role as a competitive agent, the status of HRM practices for SMEs in the Asian markets, and how to make SMEs more competitive and successful. The training session would be attended by small business owners and their staff, emerging and existing entrepreneurs, and professionals in human resources management.—APP

Pak should benefit from the potential of blue economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said Pakistan can develop its economy by benefiting from the potential of the blue economy. Blue economy refers to social and economic development by using the seas and oceans while protecting the marine environment and linked communities. Mian Zahid Hussain said that blue economy includes fisheries, aquaculture, marine life, transportation, marine tourism, coastal welfare, and other coastal and marine matters. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that farming plants and marine life, and fishing provide seventeen percent of animal protein to the entire human population. The blue economy also includes marine and offshore wind energy, seafood industry, tourism, and exploitation of oil and gas reserves in the sea, but the present major part of Pakistan's blue economy consists of marine transport only. Global maritime trade accounts for US\$2.5 trillion and Pakistan exports seafood worth only 430 million dollars annually, which is plagued by various problems.

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Violence in Palestine

The question is no longer whether a third intifada could happen, but what can be done to avert it. In a recent poll, 61% of Palestinians and 65% of Israeli Jews believed it was on the horizon. As violence escalates, the crisis of domestic political leadership demonstrates why others must step up; but Antony Blinken has demonstrated that no one should expect the US to do so. The secretary of state flew to the Middle East this week for talks with the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Palestinian president and prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas and Mohammad Shtayyeh, but vague calls for calm won't end the crisis. Some have argued that a third intifada is under way already. Last year was the bloodiest on record in Israel and the West Bank and Jerusalem since the second intifada ended in 2005, with about 150 Palestinians and 30 Israelis killed, and another 49 Palestinians killed by Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip in August. Then, last Thursday, the deadliest Israeli army raid in the West Bank in decades killed 10 Palestinians. A day later, a Palestinian gunman shot dead seven Israelis outside a synagogue – the worst such attack in years. Further copycat and retaliatory attacks have followed. Two developments heighten the current danger. The first is that illicit firearms are circulating far more widely in the West Bank. The second is the state of politics. Israel has the most far-right and anti-Arab government in its history. Its national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, was once convicted of inciting racism; don't expect an arsonist to douse the flames. On Sunday, he pledged to make it easier for Israeli civilians to carry guns. The government has set its sights on the judiciary, which could put at risk limited legal constraints on settlement expansion and facilitate annexation, and is pursuing collective punishment – illegal under international law – even more enthusiastically than before. Joe Biden has given unstinting support to Israel throughout his political career, and as vice-president he saw the Obama administration's halfhearted attempt to re-engage with the issue go down in flames. Dealing with Iran and maintaining pressure on Moscow are bigger priorities. Far from trying to rein in the Israeli government, the US – along with the UK and others – denounces Palestinians for attempting to pursue accountability in legal forums. Undemocratic Arab states have moved steadily closer to Israel. Escalating violence is not inevitable. But every sign points in the wrong direction, without anyone willing to take real action to pull things back from the brink.



Sanctions won't crush China's hi-tech rise

To further strangle China's technology sector, the United States is reportedly considering banning all sales to Chinese telecommunications equipment giant Huawei by US suppliers, including Intel and Qualcomm. Such a move would tighten the restrictions already imposed by Washington on sales to Huawei in 2019 on the unwarranted grounds of national security concerns. US suppliers have since then had to ask for government approval to sell their products to China's first major global brand, greatly limiting the company's access to processor chips and other technologies. Yet under the new policy that Washington is set to roll out, all license requests to supply Huawei would be denied. Such a practice, which runs counter to the principles of a market economy and tramples on the basic rules that govern international trade, reflects how desperate Washington has become as it goes to great lengths to try to suppress China's technological progress. Last week, the Joe Biden administration also reportedly persuaded the Netherlands and Japan to join the US in restricting exports of semiconductor technology to China. Yet the stepped-up crackdown also in a way attests to the futility of Washington's strategy to keep Chinese technological companies at bay. Take Huawei for instance. Despite being squeezed by US sanctions globally over the past several years, the company has largely pulled itself "out of crisis mode" by launching new business lines serving factories, self-driving cars and other industrial customers that are less vulnerable to US pressure. Its revenue last year was forecast to be little-changed from 2021 at 636.9 billion yuan (\$91.6 billion), according to Eric Xu, one of its executives, in a December letter to employees. "US restrictions are now our new normal, and we're back to business as usual." Meanwhile, the US high-tech sanctions are also hurting US suppliers as well given that China is the world's largest consumer of semiconductors, and the lion's share of revenue from purchasing these chips go to foreign companies. For example, China consumed \$143.4 billion worth of semiconductor wafers in 2020, and less than 6 percent of them were produced by companies headquartered in China. Rather than crushing China's high-tech advancement, the increasing US pressure on Chinese technological companies will only propel them to strive for self-reliance through indigenous innovation. The country was already on track to produce around 5 percent of the world's memory chips by the end of 2020, and is now widely believed to be on the brink of a breakthrough in its efforts to become self-sufficient in semiconductors. "What doesn't kill you, makes you stronger". That saying is apt for China's nascent yet unstoppable high-tech rise.

Islamophobia makes democracies less safe for everyone

Dalia Mogahed

This followed an incident over the weekend in which Rasmus Paludan, leader of the Danish far-right party Stram Kurs (Hard Line), burned a Quran near the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm. Signalling that the incidents in Sweden and the Netherlands are part of a coordinated campaign of hate speech, as he tore and crumpled a page from the Quran, Wagenveld said, "Soon, there will be registrations for similar actions in several cities". "Time to answer disrespect from Islam with disrespect," he added. On cue, and as the provocateurs intended, protests erupted across the Muslim-majority world

Earlier this week in the Hague, in an act that made America's right-wing politicians look like paragons of religious tolerance, Edwin Wagenveld, the Dutch leader of the far-right Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (PEGIDA) group, publicly desecrated a copy of Islam's holy book and published a video of the hateful act on social media. This followed an incident over the weekend in which Rasmus Paludan, leader of the Danish far-right party Stram Kurs (Hard Line), burned a Quran near the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm. Signalling that the incidents in Sweden and the Netherlands are part of a coordinated campaign of hate speech, as he tore and crumpled a page from the Quran, Wagenveld said, "Soon, there will be registrations for similar actions in several cities". "Time to answer disrespect from Islam with disrespect," he added. On cue, and as the provocateurs intended, protests erupted across the Muslim-majority world. Western leaders then responded by lecturing Muslims on the subtleties of free speech and "respect" for diverse opinions. Beyond this familiar pattern of Islamophobic provocation-Muslim rage-Western condescension, do such acts of provocation targeting vulnerable minorities have any effect on the societies in which they occur? Should non-Muslims living in Western societies care if a holy book they don't believe in is used in a hateful publicity stunt? Yes, they should. Because the propagation of Islamophobia makes democracies less free and less safe – not only for Muslims, but for everyone. I lead research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), a Washington, DC-based non-partisan think tank that provides research and education about US Muslims and the policies that affect them.

Our researchers, in partnership with academic institutions and advisers, created the ISPU Islamophobia Index which measures the degree to which different groups in America endorse key anti-Muslim tropes. In the past five years, we have measured the Islamophobia Index among Americans of different races, ages and faiths and no faith. We've also explored what predicts and protects against Islamophobic bias, and for which policies anti-Muslim bigotry manufactures public consent. The results paint a complex picture, but in the end expose a simple truth: Islamophobia threatens democracy. We found that endorsement of anti-Muslim stereotypes is unsurprisingly linked to favouring state policies that target Muslims, such as mosque surveillance and the so-called "Muslim ban" – a Trump-era policy that barred travel to the US from several Muslim-majority countries. But believers in Islamophobic ideas aren't just ready to take rights away from Muslims. Our research showed that they are also willing to give up their own: higher scores on the Islamophobia Index are a prediction of acquiescence to authoritarianism. People who endorse anti-Muslim tropes like "Muslims are partially responsible for acts of violence carried out by other Muslims" or "Muslims are less civilised than other people", all else being equal, are more likely to approve of curtailing freedom of the press and suspension of checks and balances in the wake of a terrorist attack. In short, the propagation of Islamophobia undermines the very foundation of a free society; a dissenting and well-informed citizenry. Moreover, Islamophobia begets other bigotries. We found that anti-semitism and anti-Black racism are among the leading predictors of Islamophobia. Our research also

demonstrated that Islamophobia doesn't just make democracies less free and more bigoted. It makes them less safe – and not just in the ways many assume.

Yes, deviants claiming to act in the name of Islam do use Western anti-Muslim political rhetoric to recruit people to their violent cause. But that's far from the greatest risk. We found that endorsing anti-Muslim ideas like "Muslims are more prone to violence than other people" or "Most Muslims are hostile toward the United States" ironically coincides with condoning the very acts those who hold these views pin on Muslims: deliberate attacks on and killing of civilians by a military, considered a war crime, and also by a small group or an individual, usually called "terrorism". The rise in white supremacist violence in the United States as the number one terrorist threat to American lives in the Trump era should therefore be no surprise. All this does not mean hate stunts like those we witnessed in Europe during the past week should be made illegal as some have demanded. As a believing Muslim who reads the Quran daily, and as a student of history, I know that the messenger of God endured far worse and that the book of God does not need our feeble protection – it was revealed as a protection for us. Moreover, we should not feed the image of these otherwise irrelevant provocateurs as "rebel free speech heroes" by censoring them. The worst punishment we can give them is to assign them the attention they deserve: none. Political speech aimed at fermenting Islamophobia should be viewed by the rest of society for what it is, not a defence of democracy, but an act which undermines it.

–Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Palestine will always be central to Arabs' beliefs

Ramzy Baroud

More than three-quarters of all respondents to the poll, which is carried out annually by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, said that Palestine is a cause for all Arabs, not Palestinians alone. Three important points must be kept in mind when trying to understand this number. First, Arabs are not merely expressing sympathy or solidarity with Palestinians. They are irrevocably stating that the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation is a collective Arab struggle. Second, these views are the same across all sections of society throughout the entire geographic expanse

The newly released Arab Opinion Index 2022 is yet more proof that Arab societies are diverse in every possible way, from their assessment of their economic situation and living conditions to their take on immigration, state institutions and democracy. There is just one exception: Palestine. More than three-quarters of all respondents to the poll, which is carried out annually by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, said that Palestine is a cause for all Arabs, not Palestinians alone. Three important points must be kept in mind when trying to understand this number. First, Arabs are not merely expressing sympathy or solidarity with Palestinians. They are irrevocably stating that the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation is a collective Arab struggle. Second, these views are the same across all sections of society throughout the entire geographic expanse of the Arab world, from the Gulf to the Maghreb. Third, equally important is that the public opinions that have been examined in the poll come from countries whose governments have either full diplomatic ties with Israel or vehemently reject normalization. The study is quite extensive, as it included 33,000 individual respondents and was carried out between June and December 2022. Once again, the Arab people collectively reject normalization with Israel, with Algeria and Mauritania topping the list at 99 percent each. Though some might discount the detailed study by claiming that Arabs inherently hate Israel due to their supposed deep-seated aversion to the Jews, the study also breaks down the reasons why Arab masses have such a low opinion of Israel. When they were asked why they reject diplomatic ties between their countries and Israel, the respondents mostly cited "Israel's colonial and expansionist policies, as well as its racism toward the Palestinians and

its persistence in expropriating Palestinian land." Only 5 percent cited religious reasons for their position, but that cannot be dismissed as mere religious zealotry, as many Arabs formulate their views based on the moral values enshrined in their religions; for example, the need to oppose and speak out against injustice. It must be stated that this is hardly new. Arabs have exhibited these views with an unmistakable consistency since the start of the Arab Opinion Index in 2011 and, one would dare argue, since the establishment of Israel atop the ruins of Palestine in 1948. But if that is the case, why are the latest poll results deserving of a discussion? While examining the American public view of Russia, the state of democracy in the US or the greatest threat to national security, opinion polls often fluctuate from one year to the next. For example, 70 percent of all Americans considered Russia an "enemy" to the US last March, compared to only 41 percent in January. The massive jump in two months was not directly related to the Russian war in Ukraine, since Ukraine is not a US territory, but because of the anti-Russia media frenzy that has not ceased for a moment since the beginning of the war. However, for Arabs, no matter the shifts in media priorities, internal politics, class orientation or any other factor, nothing seems to alter the status of Palestine as their leading priority. In 2017 and 2022, two American presidents visited the Arab region. Both Donald Trump and Joe Biden, respectively, labored to execute a major shift in the region's political priorities. Biden summed up his agenda in a meeting with six Arab leaders in Jeddah last July by stating: "This trip is about once again positioning America in this region for the future. We are not going to leave a vacuum in the Middle East for Russia or China to fill." None of these self-serving priorities seem to

be paying any real dividends.

That said, the pressure to dismiss the centrality of Palestine as an Arab cause does not only come from the outside. It is also guided by the internal dynamics of the region. For example, some pan-Arab news networks, which had put much focus on Palestine in previous years, have been purposely ignoring Palestine as an urgent daily reality, in favor of other topics that are consistent with the regional policies of host countries. Yet, despite all of this, Palestine remains at the core of Arab values, struggles and aspirations. How is this possible? Unlike most Americans, Arabs do not necessarily formulate their views of the world based on the media agenda of the day, nor do they alter their behavior based on presidential speeches or political debates. On the contrary, their collective experiences have made them particularly cynical of propaganda and fiery speeches. They formulate their views based on numerous grassroots channels of communication, whether using social media tools or listening to the Friday sermon in their local mosque. The struggle for Palestine has been internalized in the everyday acts of the average Arab woman or man; from the names they choose for their newborn to the quiet muttering of prayers. No amount of propaganda can possibly reverse this. Though some Arab governments are listening to their people and thus condition normalization on Palestinian freedom and sovereignty, the US and Israel insist on ignoring the Arab masses, as they have done for many years. However, if Washington believes that it can simply compel the Arabs to hate Russia and China and love Israel, even though the latter continues to kill Palestinians and occupy their land, it will be sorely disappointed, not only today but for many years to come.

–Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

PM blames PTI for surge in terrorism

FROM PAGE 01
participate in the development of Pakistan?" "No other province received that kind of money except KP. The province has received Rs40 billion annually," he highlighted. The PM added that he is stating facts only and not levelling accusations. The PM further said that National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and CTDs were established, and to say that they don't have funds is an attempt to "distort the facts". PM Shehbaz said that even after that, the KP government laments that there are weaknesses in their Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and that they have no equipment. The PM warned of terrorism spreading in other areas of Pakistan once again if "appropriate steps are not taken". However, he assured that the government will control terrorism with "collective efforts". PM Shehbaz recalled that defeat was inflicted on the terrorist elements through Radd-ul-Fasaad and Zarb-e-Azb operations because of which peace was restored in the country. He said people belonging to different walks of life, including politicians, rendered their lives in the war against this menace. "However, the resurfacing of terrorist elements is a matter of concern," he said. He was especially appreciative of the sacrifices rendered by the people of KP in the war on terrorism. He said KP has remained our front-line province in this war and its sacrifices will always be remembered in history. "Benazir Bhutto was also martyred as a result of terrorism," he added.

Punjab police foil terror attack

FROM PAGE 01
The committee will plan search and combing operations against terrorists in collaboration with Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sargodha. He also directed to launch search and combing operations in adjacent areas of Makerwal police station. The terrorist attack came a day after a powerful blast triggered by a suicide attack rocked a mosque in Peshawar's Police Lines during the afternoon prayers. According to the latest figures, at least 100 people have been confirmed to have lost their lives in the attack, while almost 169 people were wounded. Security officials said the explosion took place around 1:40pm on Monday as Zuhr prayers were being offered as a result of which the roof of the mosque caved in. The rescue operation is still underway at the mosque site to retrieve the victims.

Ch. Fawad released from jail

FROM PAGE 01
Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail to welcome him. Fawad thanked PTI members as well as leaders from other political parties who had spoken up against his arrest. To a question, he responded that he had never spoken against the institutions, of which he is the biggest supporter. "I never talk against the institutions. I am the biggest supporter of our institutions, and I never said anything against them. That is why I reiterate that whatever I said was right," he said. The PTI leader lambasted officials of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) who had suggested to the chief election commissioner to file a sedition case against him. The PTI leader said that his party had time and again brought up the issue of terrorism in the past six months, but to no avail. He said that it was the need of the hour that all political parties and stakeholders united against the scourge of terrorism. "If we keep going with the policy of 'minus him or her', we will go nowhere. Pakistan needs unity. We need to move forward with the policy of 'plus-everyone' and take everyone along in solving the issues being faced by the country," he said. He said Pakistan was going through difficult times, and that the only solution was holding general elections in the country.

Islamabad wins Quaid-e-Azam Cup Basketball Crown 2023

Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Ehsan Mazari distributed prizes among the players in the closing ceremony and also appreciated the efforts made by Pakistan Basketball Federation and Federal Basketball Association for the promotion of basketball

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad defeated Faisalabad Division by 52-49 points after a nerve-wracking match to win the crown of Quaid-e-Azam Cup Inter-Divisional Basketball Tournament here at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad. Islamabad Red, Gujranwala, Peshawar, Hazara, Islamabad Blues and Faisalabad Division participated in the tournament based on pool rounds matches organised by the Federal Basketball Association (FABA). Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Liaison Ehsan Mazari was the chief guest of the closing ceremony of the tournament while Commander North Rear Admiral Masood Khurshid, Acting Director General Pakistan Sports Board Mohammad Abrar, Secretary General of Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Khalid Bashir, Secretary Organizing Committee Uj



E Zahoor, Senior Vice President PBBF Imtiaz Rafi Butt, President Federal Basketball Association Ejaz Butt, former coach of national basketball team Malik Riaz and others witnessed the final match. In the decisive final, there was a tough competition between Islamabad Reds and Faisalabad

Division was seen as until half-time, Faisalabad was leading by 26 points against 24. Islamabad players Yasir Abbas and Attique Khan took four consecutive points in the last minute of the final to play the vital role for Islamabad to become champion of the tournament, beating Faisalabad by 52-49 points. Yasir Abbas scored 22, Attique Khan 14, Rizwan Khurshid scored 12 points respectively for Islamabad victory. Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Ehsan Mazari distributed prizes among the players in the closing ceremony and also appreciated the efforts made by Pakistan Basketball Federation and Federal Basketball Association for the promotion of basketball. Earlier in the semi-final round Faisalabad Division defeated Peshawar Division by 54 points against 50 after a tough competition while Islamabad Reds won against Islamabad Blues by 41-49 points and ensured their access to the finals.

Myanmar streets empty in protest on coup anniversary

YANGON: Streets emptied and shops closed in protest across Myanmar on Wednesday, the second anniversary of the coup that toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's government, with the junta hinting it may extend a state of emergency and delay new elections. Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military's power grab and bloody crackdown on dissent, which has sparked fighting across the country and tanked the economy. Western powers launched a fresh broadside of sanctions against the generals on the anniversary but previous rounds have shown little sign of throwing the junta off course. Streets in the commercial hub Yangon largely emptied from late morning, AFP correspondents said, after activists called for people across the Southeast Asian country to close businesses and stay indoors from 10 am to 4 pm (0330-0930 GMT). Roads leading to the famous Shwedagon pagoda – a Buddhist shrine that dominates Yangon's skyline and is usually thronged by worshippers – were largely deserted. Most buses on roads elsewhere in the city were empty and there was a heavy security presence. It was similarly quiet in the second city of Mandalay, a resident told AFP. "There are a few people walking here and there in neighbourhoods but almost no activity on the main roads," the resident said, requesting anonymity. – Agencies

Riots, sanctions two sides of same coin, says Raeisi

DNA

TEHRAN: President Ebrahim Raeisi says Iran's enemies plotted the recent riots across the country out of outrage at the failure of their sanctions in impeding the Islamic Republic's economic and developmental progress. Raeisi made the remarks in a televised interview on Tuesday, calling the foreign-backed riots and the sanctions two sides of the same coin. The president noted how the sanctions had failed to bring production in the country to a standstill, prevent the country from experiencing five-percent economic progress, and creation of close to one million

jobs across the nation. "Whatever it (the enemy) was after [stifling], has been [contrarily] realized thanks to the nation's will and the government's intention to serve [the people]," Raeisi said, adding, "Therefore, it is natural that the enemy should be angry at us." "One of the reasons [behind the enemy's fomenting] of the recent riots was the very fact that it was witnessing that its sanctions have been neutralized thanks to the efforts of our statesmen and the steadfastness of the people," the chief executive added. "While the enemies are trying to stop the country's progress, our people have resolved to move forward," he remarked, asserting that

the course of the country's advancement would gather further momentum every day owing to the nation's willpower and the government's determination to be at the nation's service. Elsewhere in his remarks, the president enumerated his administration's successful performance in various areas, including its managing to bring down the country's 60-percent inflation level to 40 percent, its success to eliminate the budget deficit, and its increasing the economic growth level from four percent to 4.4 within just six months of taking office. The administration, he added, was also trying to de-dollarize the staples so a potential increase in the dollar's

exchange rate would not adversely affect the cost of the commodities. Raeisi identified smuggling and suppliers' under-provision of the staples as two main reasons behind the increase in prices. He said the recent riots had played a role in reducing income generation levels across the country, and, in turn, increased the dollar's exchange rate, but assured the nation that the country's foreign exchange reserves currently stood at a "good and reliable" level. Raeisi urged those active in the field of exports to return their foreign exchange income to the country so the Central Bank would be capable of exercising more control on foreign reserves.



LAHORE: PCB Chairman and ICC Director Najam Sethi presents Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year and ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year award to Pakistan captain Babar Azam. – DNA

Serie A title fever sweeps Naples

NAPLES: Serie A title fever is sweeping Naples as the football-mad city hopes that rampant Napoli will end more than three decades of waiting to be crowned kings of Italy. Sunday night's 2-1 win over Roma and the sudden collapse of defending champions AC Milan's title defence allowed Napoli to extend their lead at the top to a whopping 13 points. No team has had such a huge advantage on the chasing pack after 20 games played since Serie A switched to three points for a win in 1994, and the chance of a first Scudetto since the days when Diego Maradona wore Napoli's blue has filled fans with both anticipation and trepidation. "At this point only we can lose it now. It's all in our hands," one supporter, Mirko Brandini, told AFP. The 18-year-old travelled to Naples from Tuscany with three friends and hung around outside Napoli's

Stadio Maradona to bathe in the euphoria of a thrilling win against one of their fiercest rivals. Napoli have dropped just seven points all season and on Sunday came through a tough test against resilient Roma. The visitors' forward Stephan El Shaarawy equalised Victor Osimhen's opener to silence the boisterous home crowd before super-sub Giovanni Simeone grabbed the win with an 86th minute goal. It was Napoli's eighth straight home league win, the longest winning run in Naples since they racked up 11 on the bounce between December 1989 and April 1990 – the season Napoli last won the title. However despite their massive advantage and a four-match winning streak since losing at second-placed Inter Milan at the start of the month, anxious Neapolitans won't believe it's over until it's really over. – DNA

Chelsea complete record £107m Fernandez deal

LONDON: Chelsea have signed Benfica's Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez for a British record 121m euro (£107m) transfer fee. The deal eclipses the £100m Manchester City paid for Jack Grealish in 2021. Fernandez, who only joined Benfica for a reported £10m in August, was named young player of the tournament during Argentina's World Cup triumph in Qatar. The 22-year-old's arrival takes Chelsea's January spending to £289m, according to

transfer website Transfermarkt. He has signed an eight-and-a-half year contract at Stamford Bridge. The deal follows an outlay of £270m in the summer – a record for a British club in the summer window – taking their total spend under new American owner Todd Boehly to more than £550m on 17 new players. It is the joint-sixth most expensive signing of all-time, equalling the 120m euros Barcelona paid for France forward Antoine Griezmann in 2019. Fernandez, signed by Benfica from Argentine side River Plate, has scored four goals in 29 appearances for the Primeira Liga side. Benfica confirmed on Tuesday night that River Plate will earn 25% of the transfer fee, around 30m euros. – APP

Imran slams government for shifting blame

FROM PAGE 01

The PTI chief, while also mentioning that he wasn't responsible for terrorism and rising inflation, said that he was devastated over the attack in Peshawar. Khan – who was ousted from the government in April last year through a no-confidence motion – said those in power, and who ruled for 30 years before him, were responsible for the ongoing crisis. "I feared instability in Afghanistan [...] there were 30,000-40,000 fighters in Afghanistan. Then, a decision was taken by the parliament members and the armed forces that these fighters would be settled in Pakistan." The PTI chief then added that as he feared instability, his government tried to negotiate with the group to ensure that Afghanistan's fall-out does not affect Pakistan. Khan claimed that had the coalition parties not removed his party from power, then the situation would have been completely different. "Why did they remove my government when they could not run the country?" The PTI chairman added that the incumbent rulers' only reason for coming into power was to get their corruption cases worth Rs1,100 billion "closed". Khan added that his relationship with former army chief General (retired) Qamar Javed Bajwa was smooth, and they were on the same page for some time. But then, Khan mentioned, that after the ex-army chief was granted an extension in his tenure in 2019, he wanted the PTI government to forgive the cases against then-opposition leaders. "I did not listen to him." The second bone of contention, he said, was the removal of Lt Gen (ret'd) Faiz Hamid Inter-Services Intelligence chief. "There was a fear of war in Afghanistan which is why I wanted Faiz Hamid to retain his position. Moving on, Khan said that when Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari goes to court against him, he will be asked what "reputation" was damaged. "Asif Zardari will have to take an oath and inform the court about how many people he had murdered.

Australian HC meets Imran Khan

FROM PAGE 01

increasing agricultural production. In the meeting, there was also a detailed discussion on other important topics including environmental changes and tourism. The Australian High Commissioner expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives as a result of the terrorist attack in the police line. Pakistan and Australia have close diplomatic relations, the Australian High Commissioner said. The Australian High Commissioner considers mutual cooperation as the ladder of bilateral development and prosperity. Australian government and people want peace and security in Pakistan, Australian High Commissioner Insaif values relations and cooperation with Australia, Chairman Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran Khan said. Climate change is a global challenge, Tehreek-e-Insaf governments have taken effective measures to counter it, Imran Khan added. Poverty and illegal transfer of resources, especially capital, from developing countries to developed countries creates extraordinary complications in the problems of these countries, Imran Khan said. The rule of law opens the doors of development and prosperity to nations, Imran Khan said.

UAE keen to enhance investment

FROM PAGE 01

The minister highlighted various avenues in which both countries can trade and invest. Both the sides shared the historical and long-standing ties between both countries and exchanged views on further boosting and strengthening these economic ties. They exchanged views on the recent visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan to the UAE and his meetings with the UAE leadership and discussed the timely implementation of decisions taken in these meetings for furthering the brotherly relations between the two countries.

Palestinian Baseball Team visits HEC

Addressing the team, the Chairman HEC referred to the 15th West Asia Baseball Cup final between Pakistan and Palestine and underlined the importance of sports activities for youth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The baseball team of the State of Palestine, currently in Pakistan for the 15th West Asia Baseball Cup, visited the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and held a meeting with Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. The visiting team was accompanied by First Secretary Embassy of the State of Palestine in Islamabad Mr. Nader al-Turk, while Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail and other senior HEC officers were also present in the meeting. Addressing the team, the Chairman HEC referred to the 15th West Asia Baseball Cup final between Pakistan and Palestine and underlined the importance of sports activities for youth. He said that HEC/Pakistan University Sports Board is committed to providing all possible sports facilities to student players. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed informed the dignitaries that an international Vice Chancellors conference of the Islamic world universities will be held in the near future. He

added that the Islamic countries are considering launching a fully-funded scholarship programme for the Muslim youth. He said, "We feel the pain of Palestinian brethren and our leadership always does whatever possible for the Palestinians." In his remarks on this occasion, Mr. Nader al-Turk appreciated the Pakistani nation for extending support to the Palestinian cause. "We acknowledge Pakistan's continuous support to the State of Palestine," he underscored. He stated that the Palestinians in Pakistan do not feel themselves to be foreigners, rather they feel at home owing to the affection and respect they receive from Pakistanis. He appreciated the Palestinian team for qualifying for the final. It is pertinent to mention here that seven teams, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Palestine, Sri Lanka, and Nepal took part in the West Asia Cup held in Islamabad. Pakistan sealed the victory over Sri Lanka by 16-1, whereas Palestine defeated Bangladesh by 14-3 in the semifinals.



Briefs

Croatian president slams Europe over weapons supply

ZAGREB: Croatian President Zoran Milanovic criticized European countries that have decided to send more weapons to Ukraine. "A war based on a treaty against a nuclear power, like Russia, cannot be won. Europe is endangered within the framework of hysteria and hatred," Milanovic told Croatian media during his visit to Petrinje on Tuesday. He said Russia is an extremely dangerous country and Europe, which is preparing to send weapons to Ukraine, is endangered. Concerning the Moscow-Kyiv war and similarities between Crimea and Kosovo, Milanovic said the international community and Croatia annexed Kosovo and took it from Serbia. "We and the international community did that," he said. "Unfortunately, this is a painful fact and a danger. We annexed Kosovo. We and the international community. It was taken from Serbia. Who made it but us? Have we recognized Kosovo? It's not annexation, it's expropriation. What is it called? Extraction." "Likewise, Crimea will never be Ukraine again. That's what the leading German generals are saying," he added.—APP

6.0-magnitude quake rocks southern Philippines

GENERAL SANTOS: A 6.0-magnitude earthquake rocked the southern Philippines on Wednesday, the US Geological Service said, with local authorities warning of aftershocks and possible damage. The quake struck at 6:44 pm (1044 GMT), near Monkayo municipality in Davao de Oro province on Mindanao island. There were no immediate reports of major damage in the remote and mountainous gold mining region. Monkayo police Staff Sergeant Harvey Asayas told AFP the quake was strong in the beginning but gradually weakened and stopped after 40 seconds. "The authorities are now conducting patrols around to assess damage including the fire personnel and disaster officers," Asayas said. Police Corporal Lucita Ambrocio, who is based in the nearby municipality of New Bataan, described the quake as "quick". "After 10 minutes, our colleagues went back to the building," said Ambrocio, who raced outside with her colleagues when the police station started shaking.—APP

Chinese, Pakistani institutes to cooperate on water-energy-food

BEIJING: The project "Assessment and Regulation Mechanism of Climate Change Impacts on Water-energy-food Linkages in typical Regions of China and Pakistan", jointly submitted by Chinese and Pakistani research institutes, has been successfully approved recently. As an international (regional) cooperation and exchange project under China's National Natural Science Foundation, it was jointly applied by Changjiang River Scientific Research Institute (CRSRI) and Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences. It is also the second such project of CRSRI approved in nearly 20 years. Based on its research on "Water Cycle Patterns and Effects of Water Conservation and Emission Reduction in Irrigation Areas of Yangtze River Basin", CRSRI plans to cooperate with its Pakistani counterpart to explore the impact of climate change on water-energy-food linkages between China and Pakistan. In addition, the project will provide technical support for realising the sustainability of natural resources, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. To address future extreme events linked to climate change, systemic water-energy-food plans.—APP

EU chief unveils plan to counter US green subsidies

While countries like France support state aid expansion, others argue that would help only richer member states and fragment the single market. EU leaders will discuss the proposals at a summit in Brussels next week

NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: The EU on Wednesday unveiled proposals to counter the threat to European industry from US green subsidies and unfair competition from China, with measures including a controversial expansion of state aid. The bloc is racing to compete with the United States and China to avoid businesses relocating to Asia or North America where energy costs are cheaper, but there has been division among EU member states on how to respond. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen outlined the bloc's proposals but said there would be no immediate new EU funding. "At the moment we need to work with what we have right now. And focus it on the clean tech

industry," she said. The majority of the EU's response involves repackaging already existing funds, a stop-gap measure that has earned much criticism. German MEP Markus Ferber described the proposals on Wednesday as "old wine in new bottles" and "predictably disappointing". Von der Leyen left the door open to a new EU sovereignty fund being created in the future. But that idea has already been strongly opposed by some member states including Denmark and Finland which oppose throwing money at the problem, or boosting borrowing to resolve it. "If you have state aid, the other side of the coin has to be funding at the EU level," von der Leyen said during a news conference. The new measures give flexibility on providing aid to companies in the green and renewable energy



sector and those involved in the decarbonisation of industry. There will also be tax benefits available for investments in production facilities in defined, strategic net-zero sectors. The measures are a response to a landmark US spending bill last year that funnels \$370 billion into subsidies for America's energy transition - including tax

cuts for US-made electric cars and batteries, which left European manufacturers dismayed. European countries are unnerved by parts of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) since it offers lavish advantages for US buyers of electric vehicles if they "Buy American". The EU's response was worked out against a backdrop of disagreement among member states on how best to protect Europe's businesses, and fears of triggering a trade war.

While countries like France support state aid expansion, others argue that would help only richer member states and fragment the single market. EU leaders will discuss the proposals at a summit in Brussels next week, and final decisions on the bloc's response are expected in March. The EU is pushing the United States to make exemptions

for European companies. But a special joint taskforce set up to address Brussels' concerns has yielded little fruit. Environmentalists criticised the EU's plan, saying the measures did not go far enough. "Green subsidies are good but not enough to have a meaningful effect on climate. Without cutting fossil fuel subsidies, pricing carbon properly and introducing measures to reduce demand, these financial efforts will be toothless," Luke Haywood, head of climate policy at the European Environmental Bureau, said in a statement. Von der Leyen last month also slammed "aggressive attempts" by China to persuade Europe's clean technology companies to relocate and take advantage of its cheaper labour and more lenient regulations.



OSLO: Pakistan ambassador to Norway, Saadia Altat Qazi received Abrar Ghauri, Asset Ownership Manager of Scatec, a Norwegian power company, for a detailed briefing on the company's ongoing 150 MW solar power project in Sindh, Pakistan.—DNA

UK hit by biggest strike action

BIRMINGHAM: Tens of thousands of school teachers, university staff and lecturers, train drivers, and many other civil servants from various fields are among the workers walking out as part of Wednesday's nationwide strike in the UK. Such widespread strike action has not taken place since a previous pay dispute back in 2011, when more than a million workers walked out. The National Education Union says around 300,000 teachers across England alone are striking as they have experienced at least 23% real-term pay cuts since 2010. Like many others in different sectors, teachers are also demanding an increase above the soaring double-digit inflation rate in the country. While a majority of schools are either fully or partially closed, travel is also disrupted with workers setting up picket lines and rallies. The Trades Union Congress (TUC), which represents all the unions in the country, has announced rallies across the UK for Wednesday. Most of those who are on strike were expected to join nationwide demonstrations where workers protest against the government's anti-strike legislation that was passed in the lower house of parliament on Tuesday. The bill imposes restrictions on industrial actions in certain sectors, as the government says it supports the right to strike but also wants to take into account the interests of the public. "Members of the opposition who object to minimum safety levels, well, they'll need to explain to their constituents why it is that if you have a heart attack, a stroke, or life-threatening illness on a strike day there are no minimum safety standards in place," British Business Secretary Grant Shapps said while defending the new legislation.—APP

Azerbaijani, Russian FMs discuss Lachin Corridor

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, discussed the ongoing situation in the Lachin Corridor during a telephone call Tuesday, according to the Azerbaijan foreign ministry. Bayramov and Lavrov discussed bilateral issues, measures to ensure peace and stability in the region and the current situation around the Lachin Corridor, it said in a statement. Bayramov noted that contrary to the tripartite declaration, protesters' demands to stop illegal economic activities and illegal use of the Lachin road in the territory of Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are stationed, have still not been fulfilled. He said allegations regarding the blockade and the humanitarian situation have no basis. Since Dec. 12, Azerbaijani ecologists representing nongovernmental organizations had been protesting Armenia's illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Karabakh region, where Russian peacekeepers have been stationed since the end of the fall 2020 conflict and a January 2021 pact with Azerbaijan and Armenia.—DNA

EU delegation visits Gaza to assess humanitarian situation

GAZA CITY: A European delegation arrived in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday to assess the humanitarian situation in the blockaded territory. "A delegation of 22 ambassadors and representatives of European Union countries arrived in Gaza on Wednesday morning," Shadi Othman, a communication officer at the European Union office, told Anadolu. The "visit comes to view the humanitarian situation in Gaza and to visit projects funded by the European Union," he added. According to Othman, the delegation will hold meetings with the Egyptian mission in Gaza as well as Palestinian civil society figures. The delegation crossed into Gaza through the Beit Hanoun-Erez crossing and visited an UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) run school there upon arrival, according to an Anadolu reporter. Home to nearly 2.3 million Palestinians, the Gaza Strip has been reeling under a years-long Israeli blockade since 2007, badly affecting livelihood in the enclave.—APP

Muslim American group calls for systemic reform

NEW YORK: Muslim groups in the US are calling for systemic law enforcement reform at the local, state, and federal level after the police killing of another Black American man, 29-year-old Tyre Nichols, on Jan. 7. The US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO) released a written statement on Tuesday stating that they welcomed the Memphis police department and local prosecutors' relatively quick action to dismiss and charge the perpetrating police officers. "Again, another helpless victim was killed while surrounded by heavily armed men, pleading for mercy and calling out to his mother - whose home, was less than one hundred yards away. Again, a group of rogue police officers, after a pretextual traffic stop, dragged a man from his car, and delivered brutal blows, boot kicks, and punches to his body," the statement said. "A militarized police officers has beaten to death yet another unwell man (Tyre suffered from Crohn's disease that had reduced his six feet three frame to an emaciated hundred and forty-five pounds), and in the crucial time afterward did not deliver care to him for more than twenty minutes," it added. The statement stressed that all sectors of society seek rigorous legislative reforms by limiting law enforcement at the local and federal levels.—APP

Pope condemns 'economic colonialism' in Africa

ROME: Pope Francis strongly denounced the "economic colonialism" which "is unleashed" in Africa and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), on the first day of his visit to the country. "After political colonialism, an equally enslaving economic colonialism was unleashed. This country, largely plundered, therefore fails to take sufficient advantage of its immense resources", he lamented Tuesday in Kinshasa. His very political speech in front of the authorities and the diplomatic corps was met with applause. "Take your hands off the Democratic Republic of Congo, take your hands off Africa! Stop suffocating Africa: it is not a mine to be exploited nor a land to be plundered," he said again in the gardens of the presidential palace. This appeal resonates particularly in the DRC, a country with immense wealth and fertile soil, where two thirds of the approximately 100 million inhabitants live on less than 2.07 a day. "Economic colonialism" was the work of multinationals and distant countries, but neighbouring countries of the DRC are now also accused of having taken over from the plundering of the resources of the DRC, which benefits them economically and fuels the conflicts which bloody the country. It was an eagerly awaited response to the endemic conflicts that plague the east of the country, particularly in North Kivu. The pope urged the Congolese not to "slide into tribalism and confrontation" and encouraged the ongoing peace processes "so that commitments are kept". Angola has initiated mediation to try to ease tensions between the DRC and Rwanda, accused of supporting the M23 rebellion which has seized portions of North Kivu territory since last year. The fighting continues to oppose loyalist forces and armed groups. For its part, Kenya is trying to encourage dialogue between the authorities in Kinshasa and the dozens of armed groups that have been active in the east for almost 30 years. But these processes have so far not been accompanied by concrete progress on the ground. The Argentine pope also did not spare the country's ruling class, calling for "favoring free, transparent and credible elections" in the face of the threat of corruption, as the country prepares for a decisive presidential election in December. "We do not allow ourselves to be manipulated, and even less bought, by those who want to keep the country in violence in order to exploit it and do shameful business".—APP

Erdogan rules out NATO support for Sweden after Quran burning

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reiterated his criticism of Sweden on Wednesday following the desecration of Islam's holy book - the Quran - and vowed they would not allow the Nordic country into NATO as long as it tolerated such acts. His remarks came after Danish far-right politician Rasmus Paludan burned the Quran in a provocative act outside the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm. "Don't even bother, Sweden! As long as you allow my holy book, the Quran, to be burned and torn, and you do so together with your security forces, we will not say 'yes' to your entry into NATO," Erdogan said in a speech at his ruling Justice and Development Party's (AK Party) parliamentary group meeting. Erdogan's remarks were short, unlike his previous statements on the issue, but they were harsher in tone, while he also reaffirmed that their support for Finland's NATO bid was unchanged. Finnish media outlets have reported earlier that the Finnish police would not allow any public desecration of the Quran in the country, citing laws against violation



of religious peace. Sweden and Finland need approval of fellow member Türkiye for joining the security alliance, amid an ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, whose spillover Europe fears. Paludan's scandalous act followed a series of demonstrations by the supporters of the PKK terrorist group in Sweden, including one where they hanged an effigy of Erdogan outside Stockholm city hall. Ankara has already been critical of Sweden over tolerance for terror suspects, particularly over its refusal to extradite wanted mem-

bers of Gülenist Terror Group (FETÖ). Swedish government officials have distanced themselves from the protests but also cited that the country had "freedom of speech." The strongest criticism was from Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson who denounced the activists who carried out the demonstrations as "useful idiots" for foreign powers who want to inflict harm on the Scandinavian country on the path to NATO. "We have seen how foreign actors, even state actors, have used these manifestations to inflame the situation in a way that is directly harmful for Swedish security," Kristersson told reporters in Stockholm, without naming any country. Sweden and neighboring Finland abandoned decades of nonalignment and applied to join NATO in the wake of the Russia's invasion of Ukraine. All NATO members, except Türkiye and Hungary, have ratified their accession, but unanimity is required. Earlier on Wednesday, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said Ankara has fewer problems with Finland becoming a NATO member than with its neighbor Sweden. He stressed, however, that it was up to the military alliance to decide whether to accept one country only or the Nordic duo together - something that both countries are committed to. On the possibility of NATO deciding to deal with the membership processes of the Nordic neighbors separately, Çavuşoğlu said, "(Türkiye) will then of course reconsider (ratifying) Finland's membership separately and more favorably, I can say," said during a joint news conference with his Estonian colleague in Tallinn. He did not specify a time frame.—APP

Facilitation is the need of time to enhance trade

Afghan delegation greatly appreciated the invitation and arranging the stakeholders meeting, giving the opportunity to discuss bilateral trade between the two neighbours

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Subsequent to PAJCCI's stakeholders meeting held at Chaman Border last week, the Afghan delegation arrived via Torkham had meeting today at border and in Peshawar. The meeting was attended by large number of business community members of both sides, Government officials consisting of M. Ashfaq, Collector Peshawar, Ather Naveed, Additional Director, Directorate of Transit Trade Peshawar, Representative of Banks, FIA, Custom Enforcement & Appraisal and media. In response to recent complaint raised by PAJCCI of slow cross border clearance of empty containers, AD DTT informed that

in last couple of days, it has been tackled and all congestion / backlog is cleared. It was brought to light that Afghan size is charging exorbitant prices on containers for transiting to CIS, additionally backlog increases as they work half day on Thursday and Friday is off. Both sides shared the issues and potential of economic relationship between the two countries. The problems raised included high labour charges, mishandling of cargo while loading and unloading issues on Afghan Side including tax on transit goods, slow clearance rate of empty containers, restricted hours at border crossing for clearance and movement, delay & high rejection of visa processing for Afghan businessmen, pendency of 47000 TI forms by Afghan

side since a year despite several reminders and communication. The documentation issue & high valuation was raised on which Pakistan Customs and Kabul counterpart are in discussion. Chairman PAJCCI Zubair Motiwala urged immediate resolution of the issue as due to this at least 500 trucks changed route to Bandar Abbas for transit cargo which is alarming and loss of revenue for both governments. Afghan delegation greatly appreciated the invitation and arranging the stakeholders meeting, giving the opportunity to discuss bilateral trade between the two neighbours. Afghan businessmen shown dejection on high level visa rejection despite providing all relevant documents, they mentioned

that from traders, investment documents are sought which is un-called for. This has affected 'parochial business' (general trading) significantly as visas are allotted to businesses if they have investments, discouraging handpicked trading / small businesses which was highly significant and now it is drifted to Iran and China. Another significant complaint was of slow processing at Karachi for GDs which previously took a day or 2 but now 5-6 days on minimum, leading to increased time and cost of doing business as delayed returns are affected by detention and demurrage charged further aggravated by rising fuel prices and dollar parity. TAD and Cross stuffing rules were already notified after persistence by PAJCCI

but still not put in effect. Pakistan businesses raised concerns about PVC exports, turkey and Iran are still using this corridor for their PVC sector whereas Pakistan is not given preference. Collector Peshawar, assured his support in resolving the issues promptly. The house jointly agreed that bilateral efforts are required including visa facilitation, 24 hours border operations, mutually agreed future procedures & rules to ensure trade continues. Participants appreciated PAJCCI's initiative of conducting these sessions, witness on the ground activities and issues being faced by business community and bring to notice of all concerned. The event was organized and facilitated by The Catalyst, event partner of PAJCCI.

Briefs

NA underlines need of unity to defeat terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The House, on the second consecutive day on Wednesday, resumed discussion on recent incidents of terrorism, particularly in Peshawar. Taking part in the debate, Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Raja Riaz called for unity to defeat terrorism. He assured the armed forces and other law enforcement agencies that the entire nation is standing behind them to curb terrorism from the country. Criticizing the policies of the past, he said we should come out of the notion of good or bad Taliban. He said the theory of good or bad Taliban has proved as wrong. He said that the decision to bring terrorist elements from Afghanistan and let them settle in Pakistan was also wrong. Commenting on the misappropriation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in last ten years, Raja Riaz said that 414 billion rupees were given to the provincial government during the last decade with an average of 40 billion rupees per annum. He said unfortunately, the previous rulers of the province received hefty amounts, but they did not bother to install close circuit TV cameras to make Peshawar a "Safe City." He opined that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could have been better equipped to avert terrorist incidents in the province, had that money was not plundered.

Ukraine raids home of billionaire

AGENCIES

KYIV: Security services searched the home of one of Ukraine's most prominent billionaires on Wednesday, moving against a figure once seen as President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's sponsor in what the authorities called a wartime anti-corruption purge. The action, days before a summit with the European Union, appears to reflect determination by Kyiv to demonstrate that it can be a steward of billions of dollars in Western aid and shed a reputation as one of the world's most corrupt states. It came as Kyiv has secured huge pledges of weapons from the West in recent weeks offering new capabilities - the latest expected this week to include rockets from the United States that would nearly double the firing range of Ukrainian forces. Photographs circulating on social media appeared to show Ihor Kolomoisky dressed in a sweatshirt and looking on in the presence of an SBU security service officer at his home. The SBU said it had uncovered the embezzlement of more than \$1 billion at Ukraine's biggest oil company, Ukrnafta, and its biggest refiner, Ukratnafta. Kolomoisky, who has long denied wrongdoing, once held stakes in both firms, which Zelenskiy ordered seized by the state in November under martial law.

Cold wave to grip most parts of country: PMD

ISLAMABAD: Cold wave will continue gripping most parts of the country during the next 24 hours, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). According to the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country. "Cold and dry weather is expected in most parts while very cold in north Balochistan and upper parts of the country", the met office said. Light rain/light snowfall over the hills is expected at isolated places in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. Fog is likely to occur over plain areas of Punjab during night and morning hours. During the last 24 hours, cold and dry weather prevailed in most parts of the country. While very cold in the upper parts and north Balochistan. - APP

Palestinian envoy calls for two-state solution

The Palestinian ambassador sincerely thanks the people of and successive Pakistani governments for their steadfast support

ISLAMABAD: The Palestinian ambassador to Pakistan, Ahmed Jawad Rabie, said that implementing UN Resolution 181 - which provides for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict - was the only way forward to resolve the long-running intra-Arab conflict. Palestinians and Israeli Jews. During an exclusive interview the Palestinian ambassador said that the UN and world powers in general facilitated the emergence of Israel out of nowhere in 1948 (under Resolution 181) but left the Palestinians in a quandary just to face fodder. The Israeli artillery and bombardment, which has left tens of thousands of Palestinians dead and hundreds of thousands injured over the past seventy-five years or so. He said that the Israeli forces continue to kill Palestinians in the occupied West Bank with impunity, and that the world is looking forward without doing anything to stop the bloodshed of innocent Palestinians, including children and women. Almost daily, Rabie said, Israeli forces raid homes, apartment complexes, streets and villages to hunt down and kill unarmed Palestinians, who have few weapons to confront the powerful and armed Israeli forces. He said that Israeli forces have set up 700 checkpoints in the occupied territories, including the West Bank. He said Israeli forces have 12 checkpoints between Hebron and Betulim, just 12 kilometers away. As well as between all cities and villages. "From this point of view, you can understand



how the Palestinians live in a completely suffocating and suffocating environment," Rabie said. The Palestinian ambassador said that the world, especially the United States and other world powers, claim to work for a two-state solution, but, in practice, they have failed to rein in Israel, which continues to seize more Palestinian lands. and implementation

of settlements. "Israel, through these illegal settlements, wants to change the demographics (of Palestine), and they are working on the plan with the world watching as a spectator. He said that the Israelis even uprooted trees in the Palestinian territories and uprooted three million olive trees. He said that Israel is working on a plan to expel the Palestinians from their lands. The ambassador said the Palestinians want their own independent state and have pushed the issue in the internal forum, including at the United Nations and the International Court of Justice. He said that Al-Aqsa Mosque is under continuous Israeli occupation and allows Muslims to pray in the Grand Mosque with difficulty and harassment and attempts to divide Al-Aqsa Mosque. He said that Western and other countries are talking about resolving the Palestinian issue, but in practice they have done nothing to establish an independent Palestinian state according to the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Security Council and the United Nations. He said that Tel Aviv has been under Israeli occupation since 1948 and Jerusalem since 1967 and that more and more Palestinian lands are being illegally occupied. The Palestinian ambassador expressed his sincere thanks to the Pakistani people and successive Pakistani governments for their unwavering support for the Palestinian cause, noting that the Palestinians always go to Pakistan when they are in deep trouble.

- Courtesy Worldch.net

Haley, once Trump's envoy, to take him on in 2024

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: Former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley will launch her candidacy for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination on Feb. 15, squaring off against her one-time boss, former President Donald Trump, according to a source familiar with her plans. Haley is expected to release details about her White House bid in an invitation to supporters later on Wednesday, according to local news outlet The Post and Courier, which first reported the planned announcement. The daughter of two Indian immigrants who ran a successful clothing store in a rural part of the state, Haley has gained a reputation in the Republican Party for her ability to address issues of gender and race in a more credible fashion than many of her peers. She has also pitched herself as a stalwart defender of American interests abroad, having served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under Trump from 2017 to 2018.

Gold price surges as inflation hits record high

DNA

KARACHI: Gold price in Pakistan rebounded Wednesday to resume its stellar run after record-high January inflation spurred a fresh rush towards the safe-haven asset, as the precious metal is the investment of choice during economic uncertainty.

Data released by the All-Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA) showed that the price of gold (24 carats) increased by Rs3,500 per tola and Rs3,000 per 10 grams to settle at Rs205,000 and Rs175,754, respectively. On Tuesday, gold price registered its highest single-day drop as the rupee slightly recovered against the US dollar and investors also kept a close watch on the US Federal Reserve's interest rate hike decision and policy outlook.

China expresses solidarity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China is deeply shocked by and strongly condemns a deadly attack at a mosque in Pakistan's northwest Peshawar city, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mao Ning said. "We express our deep condolences for the loss of life in the attack and extend sympathies to the injured and the bereaved families," Mao told a press briefing in Chinese capital Beijing, Gwadar Pro reported. She said China firmly opposes terrorism in any form and firmly supports Pakistan's efforts in fighting terrorism, defending national stability, and protecting people's lives. Meanwhile, the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan separately issued a statement to denounce the terrorist attack. Embassy of China strongly condemns the terrorist attack at the mosque in Peshawar.

Ukraine allies under pressure to send warplanes

PARIS: Western countries have only just approved sending battle tanks to Ukraine, but Kyiv is already requesting F-16 warplanes to help repel the Russian invasion. While the United States has for now ruled that out, a few European nations appear more open to the idea. US President Joe Biden on Monday appeared to draw the line on supplying American fighter jets to Kyiv. "No," he said when asked by reporters at the White House if he was in favour, though the next day he said he would talk to his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskiy about his latest requests for advanced weaponry. In the early months of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Kyiv's partners were reluctant to provide too much military aid, eager to avoid a more direct confrontation between the West and Russia. - APP

Kyrgyz president to visit Pakistan

Both sides agreed to further cement bilateral relations

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov is likely to visit from Pakistan in the first half of this year. Ulanbek Totuaev Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan announced this during his meeting with the met with the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif. He added, during the meeting, the parties considered a wide range of topical issues of Kyrgyz-Pakistani bilateral cooperation, paying special attention to qualitative organizing upcoming visits and events at the highest and high levels, strengthening military-technical, trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian cooperation between the two countries, as well as the implementation of important regional projects, such as CASA-1000. Ulanbek Totuaev informed the Pakistani side about the interest of the Kyrgyz Republic in the comprehensive development of interstate cooperation and proposed to intensify work on political contacts, increase the volume of mutual trade, intensify investment cooperation and establish effective logistics routes between Central and South Asia.



Indonesia envoy woos Pakistan businessmen

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Indonesian Ambassador, H.E Mr. Adam M. Tugio, paid a visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Wednesday and had a discussion with Acting President ICCI Mr. Faad Waheed and executive members of ICCI. The meeting discussed ways to explore new avenues of collaboration between the Indonesian and Pakistani business communities for mutually beneficial trade transactions. Ambassador Tugio encouraged Pakistani business delegation to visit Indonesia to make personal observations on its potential for international trade and investment. He added that Indonesia and Pakistan share a rich history of friendship and mutual cooperation and the visit by the ICCI would further strengthen B2B relations between the two brotherly countries. Ambassador Tugio emphasized the significance of

utilizing the existing Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement and working towards establishing a Free Trade Agreement between two countries.

The envoy also highlighted the importance of ASEAN market and stated that Indonesia offers an ideal platform for Pakistani businesses to access ASEAN market of over 650 million consumers due to its strategic location and well-established trade and investment ties with the ASEAN region. "We are eager to showcase the tremendous investment opportunities Indonesia has to offer and I am confident that the visit to Jakarta will result in significant trade and investment deals between business community of both nations", he said. The envoy also mentioned the interest of the business community of Indonesia to invest in Special Economic Zones in Pakistan noting the improved infrastructure of CPEC and some are actively pursuing cooperation agreements with companies in Sialkot and Karachi.

IHC suspends police notice against Rasheed

The petitioner had named IGP Islamabad and SHO Aabpara Police Station. Sheikh Rasheed appeared before the court along with his legal team. The petitioner said that the police had no authority to serve such notice prior to filing of a First Information Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday suspended the summons notice of Islamabad police against Awami Muslim League leader Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed and served notices to the respondents for comments. Justice Tariq

Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case filed through the lawyers Naeem Haider Panjutha and Intizar Hussain Panjutha. The petitioner had named IGP Islamabad and SHO Aabpara Police Station. Sheikh Rasheed appeared before the court along with his legal team. The petitioner said that the police had no authority to serve such notice prior to filing of a First Information Report. He prayed the court to turn down the police notice and stopped the police from allegedly harassing him. The lawyer read out the police notice and application for registration of FIR. The court questioned that how an application could be filed on the name of SSP Operations and instead, it should be in the name of SHO. The court asked the lawyer to read out the Section-60 of Criminal Code. The lawyer said that notice could be served if an FIR was registered against his client. The court adjourned further hearing of the case till Monday. - APP

'Abbasi tenders resignation to give space to Maryam'

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi had said that if slot is given to Maryam Nawaz then he and senior leaders of party would move back, he added



ISLAMABAD: Former Finance Minister (FM) Miftah Ismail has said Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has tendered resignation as senior vice president of PML-N to give space to Maryam Nawaz. "what agreement I had made with IMF was broken by Ishaq Dar. We have been injured by our own dagger, he said this while talking to a private TV channel here Wednesday. He went on to say "Shahid Khaqan Abbasi had talked to Nawaz Sharif three years back and had said if the key of the party is given to Maryam Nawaz then he would resign. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi had said that if slot

Ahsan sees digital PSDP important step

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said on Wednesday digital Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) would be an important step towards establishing digital Pakistan and ensuring transparency. Speaking to a session on digital PSDP, he said Planning Commission performs PC-1 [a planning tool for the development and execution of any projects in the government departments] for every project carried out under the umbrella of the PSDP would be available on the commission's website for inspection. "An accountability office is also being established in the ministry to curb corruption in the development budget", he added. The whole nation, he said, needed to act as a team to get out of the present economic crisis. - DNA

given to Maryam Nawaz then he and senior leaders of party would move back, he added. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi is senior politician of the party, he said adding now Maryam Nawaz has become senior. Abbasi preferred to remain silent and he moved aside. Abbasi said he would remain with party. What rumors are circulating in this regard

have no substance. What agreement I had made with IMF, ISHAQ Dar broke it, he remarked. It is as if we have got injured with our own dragger. When any FM enters into agreement with IMF, the other breaks it. IMF has to see credibility with Pakistan. He underlined when Pervez Musharraf quit the slot then PPP kept on leveling allega-

tion against him. When PML-N came into power its allegation was the same what PPP had leveled. Ministers and bureaucrats are good but the mode of governance is not good. He observed removing the ministers from their slots is prerogative of head of the party. We have no way other than resorting to IMF. The repayment of our loan is only possible through IMF. He said IMF tranches are not important but staying in IMF program is important. We are under the burden of loans since the last 30 years. He underscored IMF has set harsh conditions. We will have to hike the power tariff. The condition of scaling up electricity tariff is embarrassing for government. The prospects for dip in inflation look remote due to inflation. We are going to IMF even after 45 years too. He indicated that Qatar, UAE, UN and Asian Development Bank talked of making investment in Pakistan. Pakistan repays loan by obtaining loan, he held. Our mode of governance is bad since last 30 years. No one talks on women, children, economy, health, education, inflation and unemployment, he underlined. - Online