



# Islamabad POST

Monday, February 06, 2023

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**Azerbaijan opens for private sector initiatives: Envoy**

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**Pak nation fully supporting Kashmir cause**

Detailed News On Page-03



**Iftikhar smashes Wahab for six sixes in one over**

Detailed News On Page-06



**Briefs**

**COAS in UK on official trip**

DNA

LONDON: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir has reached the United Kingdom on a highly important visit on Britain's Ministry of Defence invitation to discuss security-related strategic issues. General Munir will be visiting the UK officially for five days starting from Monday. The senior military commanders will accompany him during the visit. They landed in the UK late on Saturday night. The visit is seen as highly important in view of the rising issue of Taliban militancy and the situation in the South Asian region. This is General Asim Munir's first visit to the UK after taking over as Pakistan's powerful army chief at the end of November last year. A security source said that both countries are attaching huge importance to the visit. The army chief will address the 5th joint UK-Pakistan stabilisation conference at Wilton Park between February 5-8. Wilton Park is an executive agency created by the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office to foster open dialogue between govts.

**J&K key pillar of foreign policy: FM**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has called upon India to end its gross human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and reverse its unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019 including demographic changes. In his message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, the Foreign Minister said India must repeal draconian laws, allow UN-mandated investigations into cases of extrajudicial killings and implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir. He said Jammu and Kashmir dispute will remain a key pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy. Finance Minister Ishaq Dar says Pakistan is committed to its unwavering political, moral and diplomatic support to the just struggle of our Kashmiri brethren for their right of self-determination.

## PM Shehbaz says IMF combing every book, every subsidy

The premier vows to break "this habit of begging" that country is embroiled in

STAFF REPORT / DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday reiterated that the country was facing substantial financial challenges, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "combing every book" during the ongoing negotiations over the ninth review of the \$7 billion loan programme. The IMF delegation, headed by Nathan Porter, and the government began the make-or-break discussions last week. Pakistan needs to complete the review to stave off default. Subsequently, the government had increased liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) price by 30 per cent and finalised a minimum of Rs6 per unit average increase in electricity rates between now and August. Over the weekend, the premier said the IMF delegation was giving a "very tough time" to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and his team. Addressing the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Assembly on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day in Muzaffarabad today, PM Shehbaz again said that the Fund was scrutinising the records of various ministries and reviewing "everything" and "every subsidy". "The IMF is looking critically at every book, be it petroleum, finance, commerce or the power sector," the premier said. "They are looking at each and everything. Every subsidy." The prime minister shed light on how the country has been on a "begging spree", calling for it to be stopped once and for all.

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## Deadlock persists over Rs900bn fiscal gap

BUSINESS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Amid the lingering stalemate over the fiscal gap, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has worked out a larger gap of approximately Rs900 billion, equivalent to 1% of the gross domestic product (GDP). It is a major stumbling block in striking a staff-level agreement. However, Pakistani authorities have contested such a huge fiscal gap in achieving the primary deficit and asked the IMF for incorporating flow of reduction under the revised Circular Debt Management Plan (CDMP) and reduced amount of required additional subsidy of Rs605 billion against the earlier target of Rs687 billion. Therefore, the fiscal gap stood in the range of Rs400 to Rs450 billion. Officials have completely ruled out any possibility of IMF condition about the signing of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan for reviving the Fund programme and said that no such discussions took place with the review mission.

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## PM, services chiefs condole death of Fmr president Gen (R) Musharraf passes away

Gen. Musharraf was given death sentence in 2019 under Article 6; since 2016 he was residing in Dubai

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: Former president General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf passed away in a Dubai hospital at the age of 79 after a prolonged illness, his family confirmed on Sunday. The former military ruler was undergoing treatment for amyloidosis at American Hospital Dubai. Musharraf's family has filed an application in the Pakistani consulate in Dubai to shift the former military leader's body to Pakistan. A special jet will fly to Dubai from Nur Khan airbase to bring Musharraf's mortal remains back to Pakistan. Last year, reports circulated of Musharraf's death but they were rubbished by the All Pakistan Muslim League (APML), which was the political party established by the former president. The party had refuted the news related to him being in critical condition or on a ventilator. It added that Musharraf was being treated for amyloidosis at his home and his condition was stable. Amyloidosis is a condition which is caused by a build-up of an abnormal protein in organs and tissues that prevents them from working properly.



Reacting to the news, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif offered his condolences on the former army chief's demise. Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJSC) General Sahir Shamshad, and tri-services chiefs also expressed heartfelt condolences on Musharraf's death. "CJSC and services chiefs express heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of General Pervez Musharraf, former president, CJSC and chief of army staff. May Allah bless the departed soul and give

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MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif laying floral wreath at Martyrs Monument, on Sunday. AJK PM Sardar Tahir Ilyas is also seen in the picture. - DNA

**PTI terms IMF accord a 'death warrant'**  
Political, economic structure of country destroyed - Habib

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Farrukh Habib termed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreement as a 'death warrant' for the people of Pakistan, media reported on Sunday. PTI held rallies across the country on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day. While addressing a rally in Lahore, Farrukh Habib said that the government is signing a death warrant for Pakistanis in the name of an IMF agreement. He said that the Indian forces' atrocities in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir are unacceptable. He urged the world for leaving the double standards and play a role in giving self-determination right to the Kashmiris in accordance with the UN resolution.

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**60 NA seats ECP ready for by-polls**

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: As the schedule for the 27 remaining NA seats will be announced next week, all pending elections for National Assembly seats will be held in March, reported media. The poll will take place on these seats in the last week of March. With this, all seats vacated by PTI members through resignations would be filled through by-polls. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP)

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## Imran Khan is to be blamed for all the mess: Maryam

Maryam says that the "government's hands are tied due to the IMF agreement"

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MULTAN: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice-President and Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz has launched a fresh spate of criticism against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan during the party workers' convention in Multan. In her address on Sunday, the PML-N stalwart said the party's "leadership feels the pain of the people who are suffering the brunt of economic challenges". "But we all know the reason behind this inflation. The Pakistani nation knows this very well," Maryam said, censuring the previous Imran Khan-led government without taking any names. Speaking about the injustices meted out to her family - particularly her father and PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif - Maryam said: "Allah and the nation gave the government to Nawaz Sharif thrice. The first time, he was sent home in two-and-a-half years,



**Fawad says 'I will be first from Jhelum to face jail'**

KAMRAN GUJJAR

JHELUM: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice President Fawad Chaudhry said on Sunday that they are ready to follow Imran Khan's call for the Jail Bharo movement and he will be the first to surrender from Jhelum. While addressing PTI workers in Jhelum, Fawad Chaudhry praised the former military ruler General Retired Pervez Musharraf who passed away in Dubai today. He said Pervez Musharraf did something good for Pakistan by ousting Nawaz Sharif. He said that he personally respects



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## Situation in E. Ukraine tough, says Zelensky

The UK's defence ministry says Ukrainian soldiers are becoming isolated

NEWS DESK

KYIV: The situation on Ukraine's eastern front lines is getting tough, President Volodymyr Zelensky has said. Ukrainian troops are facing a very difficult situation in three heavily contested towns in Donetsk - Bakhmut, Vuhledar and Lyman - Mr Zelensky said. The UK's defence ministry said Ukrainian soldiers are becoming isolated in embattled Bakhmut. It comes as Ukraine's defence minister reiterated the view that

a new Russian offensive is expected this month. At a news conference, Oleksiy Reznikov said not all Western weaponry will have arrived by then, but Ukraine had reserves to hold off Russian forces. Mr Reznikov said he expects the anticipated Russian offensive to prioritise taking the whole of the eastern Donbas region and create a land corridor across the areas it occupies, including Crimea, by launching offensives in the south and east of Ukraine.

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Israelis and Palestinians do what they do best, but for the wrong reasons - Page 05

Serena Hotels & Margalla Greens host Invitational Golf Tournament 2023 - Page 06

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## Economy continues to deteriorate and so does politics (I)

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: As it goes when misfortunes come, they come in battalions. Pakistan's political and economic condition has literally gone to dogs. While the nation was still trying to grapple with the monsters such as inflation; political instability, bad governance etc, then happened the Peshawar suicide blast that killed more than 100 people and left hundreds of injured. A lot of politics is now being played on the tragic incident as to who is responsible for that. As per practice, the TTP has claimed the onus of the attack but it is still a mystery how the TTP or for that matter any other terrorist outfit pronounces that it has committed the crime. The news suddenly appears on a TV channel or social media and then spreads like jungle fire. Nobody has ever tried to verify the veracity of the claim. Same thing happened in the recent episode. The TTP people denied any hand



in the Peshawar blast but certain quarters are hell bent upon fixing the responsibility on it. The TTP may be involved, nevertheless those at the helm of affairs need to look into other possible threats as well. Anyhow, the phenomenon of bomb blasts is nothing new for us. The Pakistanis have been bearing the brunt of this menace for decades. There are a number of conspiracy theories buzzing around after the blast, especially on social media, however this is the time to unite the nation instead of creating any divisions, as pleaded by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during the Apex Committee meeting held in Peshawar on February 3, 2023. The Apex Committee meeting attended by the top military and political leadership sans PTI, further vowed to reinvigorate the fight against terrorism and extremism. By and large we tend to hear such vows and loud commitments after every such incident. After a while everything is forgotten and life returns to normalcy, at least till the time any other tragedy of similar or even greater magnitude takes place. That is how things work here unfortunately. After the 2014 Army Public School at-

tack, the National Action Plan (NAP) was launched to crack down on terrorism and to supplement the anti-terrorist offensive in Federally Administered Tribal Areas. After the National Internal Security Policy 2014, it was the 2nd consensual policy document approved by the Government. The National Action Plan spelled out the specifics for the counter-terrorism drive in the country. There were 20 agenda items of National Action Plan 2014 and implementation of the death sentence of those convicted in cases of terrorism was at the top. But we know not even a single death sentence has been executed since then simply because Pakistan has agreed a moratorium on the death penalty with the EU particularly in order to reap benefits of the GSP +. Then in the Plan there was a provision to formulate a comprehensive policy to deal with the issue of Afghan refugees, beginning with registration of all refugees. This process has also not reached its logical end due to which people continue to sneak into Pakistan from the Northern and the Western borders without any check. The PTI government is blamed for allowing a huge influx of Afghans, mostly the TTP people, into the main-

stream areas of KPK. Another charge against the PTI gov't is that it freed even the 'dangerous terrorists' from jails simply because the government wanted to offer them an olive branch to win peace in the region. But according to their opponents the move backfired and those freed 'terrorists' have now let the hell loose on the innocent people. Revamping and reforming the criminal justice system of Pakistan is yet another challenge the Action Plan envisaged to deal with. The criminal justice system in Pakistan is known to be faulty, exploitative and inequitable. These problems are most certainly some of the main causes behind high crime rates. The Criminal Justice System comprises five components i.e. the police, judiciary, prisons, prosecution, probation and parole. And I don't think much has been done to improve working of this system ever since the promulgation of the National Action Plan in 2014. Rather, the situation seems to have gone from bad to worse when we talk about the criminal justice system. All political parties and respective governments have to share equal responsibility if this system has failed to heal wounds. Regrettably the criminal justice system in vogue

only serves as a stooge of the so-called elite class of this country. Revamping of the system ostensibly is a key to improving law and order. The APS tragedy should have rung alarm bells within the ranks of powers-that-be but to the disappointment of all no serious efforts were made in this regard. Consequently the Peshawar episode took place. Other important clauses in the NAP included special trial courts under the supervision of the Army. The duration of these courts would be two years; Militant outfits and armed gangs will not be allowed to operate in the country and NACTA, the anti-terrorism institution, will be strengthened. The military courts were established and sentences were handed down to culprits but after two years the courts had to wound up because the government did not extend their mandate. The government of the day came under pressure from its opponents for allowing a parallel judicial system in the form of the military courts hence calls were made to wrap it up. The incumbent government had no other option but to comply with the demand and thus military courts tenure came to an end.

To be continued...



## PML-N decides to contest NA by-elections in KP

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) on Sunday has decided to contest the upcoming National Assembly's by-elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The meeting of Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) representatives, under the chairmanship of Advisor to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam, took place in the provincial secretariat in Peshawar. During the meeting, it was decided to submit nomination papers for the upcoming National Assembly by-elections. Engineer Amir Muqam discussed the restructuring of the party and the current political situation in the country with the party officials. He emphasized the need for the strong organization at the Union Council and Village Council level in each district. The meeting also marked Kashmir Solidarity Day and expressed solidarity with the Kashmiris. The participants, including the advisor, strongly condemned the recent blast in Peshawar and offered prayers for the victims. Under the leadership of Engineer Amir Muqam, a strategy was formulated to make Maryam Nawaz's visits to Abbottabad and Peshawar materialized. The meeting was well-represented by officials from all districts in the province.—APP

## KP Govt for hiring CEO for KPT&GC

PESHAWAR: The provincial government has finalized a process for hiring the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Transmission and Grid Company (KPT&GC). It has allocated Rs. 96 million for the establishment of the new company in connection with the appointment of emergency staff for the company and the selection of the office building will be done soon. In this regard, a meeting of the sixth board of directors of KPT&GC was held under the chairmanship of Chairman Board/Secretary Energy and Power Nisar Ahmad Khan, said an official hand-out issued here on Sunday. In the meeting, the company's acting CEO/Special Secretary Tashfeen Haider, Additional Secretary Energy Abdul Hadi, CEO PEDO Engineer Naem Khan, Advisor Energy Engr. Tala Mohammad apart from other board representatives of finance department, member, CPO P&D Arbab Faiz Mohammad, chief planning officer energy department Ayaz Khan, deputy secretary E&P Ijaz Khan participated. The chair was briefed about the progress regarding the establishment of the company and problems faced with the federal agencies NEPA and NTDC regarding the establishment of the company was discussed. Important decisions were made regarding the inclusion of electricity in the new system.—APP

## Files Lost

Following files of plots number of Metro City Kharian have been lost: 00P-180, 01C 648, 01C6 49, KS 4482639, KL15 09508, MB1205289, K-W6591788, 05A-03A-653 and 047. If found please send to: Hafiz Muhammad Ahmed son of Noor Muhammad House # 278, Block-G/4, WAPDA Town Lahore

# All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders called on Prime Minister

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the entire Pakistani nation was standing shoulder to shoulder with their Kashmiri brothers in their struggle for freedom. He said that he had exposed the atrocities and brutalities committed by India against the Kashmiri people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) at different world fora. The prime minister was talking to a delegation of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) that called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister stressed upon forging of unity for



the national interests by leaving behind all political affiliations. He expressed that the freedom of Indian Illegally Oc-

cupied Jammu and Kashmir was not far off if they continued this unity on national issues. During the meeting, AJK Prime Minister Sardar

Tanveer Ilyas, AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, APHC leaders Mahmood Ahmed Saghir, Altaf Hus-

sain Wani, Muhammad Hussain Khateeb, Faiz Ahmed Naqshbandi, Syed Yousaf Naseem, Manzoor Ahmed Ilyas and Zia Hussain were

present. Federal ministers Khawaja Saad Rafique, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Murrum Aurangzeb, Murtaza Javaid Abbasi and Adviser to PM Qamar Zaman Kaira were also present on the occasion. The APHC delegation while warmly welcoming the prime minister expressed that the presence of the prime minister in AJK on the observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day and for the Kashmir cause was a good gesture.

They also appreciated the prime minister for exposing the atrocities and aggression of India before the world community and raising the voice of the Kashmiri people across the globe. They said that visit of the prime minister reflected his personal priority to the cause of Kashmir

## 'We Exhibit 2023' to be held on March 11

SIALKOT: Chairperson Legal Aid Committee Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Lubna Tabassum has said "We Exhibit 2023" will be held on March 11 at Family Park Sialkot Cantt. Talking to APP, she said women entrepreneurs would be given an opportunity to participate in the exhibition which was very important for business women. She said the exhibition would not only give women of the region an opportunity to display their manufactured products at local level but also help new entrepreneurs in determining their line-up business. She said the WCCIS had been serving women entrepreneurs with a mission of assisting them in commercial sector and creating a conducive environment for working women.—APP

## India to stop atrocities in IIOJK

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Caretaker Minister for Labour, Excise and Taxation Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi on Sunday asked the Indian government to stop the series of cruelties in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) immediately. Addressing a joint function regarding Kashmir Solidarity Day and Bara tragedy at Shah House Tehsil Bara, district Khyber, he said that the only solution to the Kashmir issue is the implementation of the UN resolutions, hence the international community should listen to its conscience and force the UNO to honor its promise of plebiscite, otherwise the peace of the world may be endangered due to the war between two nuclear countries. Manzoor Afridi said that the government and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are still in a state of mourning due to recent tragedies like Police Lines mosque explosion and Tandah Dam boat capsizing, but our commitment have become stronger than rocks and we are building the nation with renewed spirit, he concluded. Former Member of National Assembly and ex Senator Haji Muhammad Shah Khan, Mufti Muhammad Kafeel, Professor Abdul Ali Afridi and Haji Andar Gul also addressed the ceremony. On this occasion, the caretaker provincial minister gave award to Tehsil Chairman Mufti Muhammad Kafeel, who played a key role in recovering the martyred child Yahya from the deep well in the Bara tragedy.—APP

## Goodz Marketing achieves another milestone

ANWAR CHOHAN

KHARIAN: The agreement of Premium Partnership between Ghraana.com and Goodz Marketing and Developers has been signed. Under this partnership agreement, Gharaana and Goodz will work together in Punjab region on Projects Compliance. The two companies signed the agreement in a ceremony held at Lahore office of Gharaana.com. During the Signing Ceremony, CEO of Goodz marketing Kaleem Gillani appreciated the whole Team



for believing in the efforts of Goodz Marketing. Likewise, the country head

of Ghraana Nasir Malik said, "This partnership is going to be beneficial for

both parties while working in an integrated environment"

## Journalist community of Attock condemns Indian atrocities

STAFF REPORT

ATTOCK: Pakistani journalist fraternity of occupied Press Club Attock on Sunday while calling Narendra Modi an international terrorist have urged upon the Secretary General, UN Security Council Mr. Antonio Guterres and other human rights forums of the world to exert their constant pressure on the Indian Government for implementation of UN Resolution 47 adopted on April 21, 1948 granting right of self-determination to Kashmiri freedom fighting journalists of occupied Jammu & Kashmir. On this occasion, the journalistic community led by their

chief patron senior journalist Syed Raza Naqvi have also demanded of the Care Taker Chief Minister Punjab Mr. Mohsin Naqvi being their fellow journalist to get retrieved the occupied building of Attock Press Club and equipment worth rupees millions from the clutches of the district management Attock enabling them to continue their solidarity with their subjugated Kashmiri brethren till their liberation from the Indian Government. The speakers were addressing the protest rally held from Fawara Chowk Attock and disbursed before the occupied building of Attock Press Club peacefully. Among others, the rally was also participated by

hundreds of people from all walks of life, along with former parliamentarians, lawyers, doctors, political workers, Syed Ejaz Hussain Bokhari, Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, Malik Ameen Aslam, Syed Yawar Abbas Bokhari, Malik Hameed Akbar, Qazi Ahmed Akbar, senior journalists, Qazi Shoaib Khan, Hafiz Shahzad, Faisal Sheikh, Javed Sheikh. The protesting journalists from Attock said that the Kashmir dispute must be settled according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people and the UN resolutions which granted them the right to self-determination. They said that brutal Indian forces crossed all limits of barbarity and terrorism to dampen the courage of freedom fighters in

Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They further said that Kashmiri people were being killed in fake encounters in the occupied territory on daily basis to spread fear among the people. Even the working journalists were imprisoned in fabricated cases to deprive them of their all legal fundamental rights. The journalists said that the Indian government violated the mutual agreements between Pakistan and India and international laws by abrogating the special status of occupied Kashmir. The New Delhi was bent upon changing the demography of the occupied territory to convert Muslims majority into minority by issuing domiciles to non-Kashmiri settlers.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali and Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan in a group photo with students at Kashmir Solidarity Day.—APP

## Promoting concept of Green Entrepreneurship' stressed

PESHAWAR: While realizing climate change as a harsh reality badly impacting life on planet earth, there is a dire need of promoting the concept of 'Green Entrepreneurship' to combat the menace through diverting attention of enterprises towards social profit along with economic gains. This observation was made by Dr. Ansir Ali Rajput, Head of Entrepreneurship Development Center Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) in a podcast organized by the Institute of Urbanization (IoU), an organization striving for making cities green. IoU is holding on regular basis different events including workshops, webinars, podcast and journalists fellowship programme to

create awareness in society about adoption of modern practices aimed at protection of environment and achievement of sustainable development goals. "Green entrepreneurship refers to a special form of entrepreneurship that aims at creating and implementing solutions to environmental problems and to promote social change so that the environment is not harmed," he explains. "Due to our excessive money-conscious approach in the last several decades, the maximum focus of ventures remained tilted toward profit-making, ignoring the environment totally that ensued in harsh reaction from nature in shape of extreme events caused by climatic changes,"

opined Ansir Ali Rajput while informing about the concept of Green or Eco Entrepreneurship in the podcast. The hardships faced by humans throughout the globe in wake of climate induced disasters are mainly due to not giving due consideration to nature in our eco system which showed its reaction by causing catastrophic disasters like recent flooding in Pakistan, Dr. Ansir elaborates. Increase in natural disasters through out the world has made a realization among people at global level of giving due consideration to nature by including social profit in our priority list in parallel with economic gains, he continued.

and what role we can assign to youth of the country to assume in making its niche in developing green economy, Dr. Ansir asked. concept of Green Entrepreneurship is also creating a very big opportunity for our youth to work over sustainable governance for educating exporters through advocacy on this practice without adoption of which business cannot be continued in future, he opined. international markets, there is a visible realization among consumers of eco-friendly products and those who purchase items first ask as how much carbon footprints is emitted in its production. our exporters needed to be educated on fulfilling of international obligations and

importance of taking licence of sustainable governance for continuing their business at international level, Ansir stressed. does not mean that we have to manufacture products, it can take both sides including production and services. is fast switching towards services economy so we should concentrate on offering such services which can really help in reducing and mitigating climate change impacts, he suggested. In this regard, services entrepreneurship can be developed on educating sustainable governance and our youth can play very important role in this regard by utilizing modern gadgets they possess in learning of these skills besides passing on to others.—APP

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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  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi.....555489  
CAA.....9281092



### Hospitals

CMH.....5611111  
MH.....5611116  
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11  
DHQ.....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  
Rawal Town.....5773343

### Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# Pak nation fully supporting Kashmir cause, says Kaira

One minute silence was also observed during the walk to express their sympathies with the Kashmir people in this difficult time

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira Sunday said Pakistani nation was observing the Kashmir Solidarity Day on Sunday (February 5) across the world to give a strapping message of supporting the right to self-determination. Addressing a Solidarity walk jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, he said Kashmir is a jugular vein and an integral part of Pakistan, adding the whole nation is ratifying and endorsing the Kashmir cause since generations to generations. He said the country has always supported the Kashmir indigenous movement to get the right to self-determination and also urged the international community to play its pivotal role in resolving the lingering Kashmir issue as per the wishes of the Kashmiri people. The adviser said the sole objective of celebrating Kashmir Solidarity Day is to shake the conscience of the international community. He further said the world community should break silence over India's perpetrated atrocities and barbarism against innocent people of Kashmir. Reiterating government's resolve to support Kashmiris, Qamar Zaman Kaira said all walks of life including officials, students, journalists and others in Pakistan are supporting just the demand of Kashmiris for the right to self-determination. He said



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira addressing a public rally.—Online

India is using different tactics to suppress freedom struggle of Kashmiris but it will not succeed in its nefarious agenda. "Former Indian Prime Minister Nehru has made a promise with Kashmiris to resolve the dispute through United Nations (UNSC) resolutions and the Indian government should now fulfill his supreme leadership promise," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, senior leader All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter Ghulam Muhammad Safi thanked Pakistan and its people for supporting Kashmiris in their struggle for freedom. Observing the Kashmir Solidarity Day is a meaningful and fruitful to urge international community to pressurize India to

impede its tyranny against the oppressed Kashmiri people, he maintained. A large number of officials, students, journalists and other had also participated in the Solidarity walk commenced from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and concluded in D-Chowk Islamabad. The students of Pakistan Sweet Home (PSH) had specially participated

under the leadership its CEO Zamrud Khan. The participants had carried placards, banners and posters prescribing that Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan, the international community should break the silence, Kashmiris are waiting for international justice, Kashmir issue has become a human crisis and Pakistan would continue to

support the Kashmir cause. They also chanted slogans such as Kashmir wants freedom from Indian illegally occupation, struggle would remain to continue till freedom, and the entire nation is standing with Kashmir. One minute silence was also observed during the walk to express their sympathies with the Kashmir people in this difficult time.

# ICCI fears fiscal crisis may halt industrial sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan, which were over US\$ 16 billion at the end of January 2022, have tumbled down to US\$ 3.09 billion as of January 27, 2023. He said this precarious situation of forex reserves is creating a lot of concerns in the business community as the FX crisis may bring the industrial sector to a grinding

halt and unleash a new wave of unemployment. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that many industries including textile, pharmaceutical, cooking oil & ghee, automobile, poultry, light engineering, chemicals & plastics have to import inputs and raw materials for their manufacturing and assembling activities, but import consignments of many industries are help up at ports due to shortage of foreign exchange and many industries are unable to import the required inputs and raw materials due to which they are facing closure of their manufacturing activities. He emphasized that

the government should immediately start consultation with the private sector including the major chambers of commerce and industry to evolve a new strategy in order to steer the economy out of the current challenges. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that the economic activity has already come to a standstill with tough measures taken by the government to ban imports, put restrictions on opening L/Cs, record high-interest rates, and super tax imposed on existing taxpayers. He said that another major threat to the economy comes from the

poor performance of the power sector as its circular debt has reached Rs2.9 trillion. He said that any disruption in energy to businesses and industries would further reduce the commercial and industrial activities. Engr. Muhammad Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI said that the implementation of tough conditions being pushed by the IMF, would create more difficulties for the business community as well as the common man. He said that the business community should be taken on board on this issue to save businesses from further troubles.

# Exercise restores brain insulin sensitivity

ISLAMABAD: The link between brain insulin insensitivity and diabetes is well-established, but the exact nature of that connection is still being studied. New research from researchers at the German Center for Diabetes Research, Tübingen University Hospital, and Helmholtz Munich in Munich, Germany, explores the effect of exercise on brain insulin sensitivity. The study found that healthy levels of brain insulin sensitivity were restored in participants after an 8-week exercise program. The findings were recently published in JCI Insight. "This study reinforces the fact that physical activity is needed to restore the mind-body metabolic pathways in patients with obesity, prediabetes, diabetes, and metabolic disease in general," Dr. Ana Maria Kausel, an endocrinologist and co-founder of Anzara Health, not involved in the study, told Medical News Today. 8 weeks of exercise restores insulin sensitivity. For the study, 21 healthy participants with overweight and obesity were enrolled in an 8-week supervised aerobic exercise program. The cohort included 14 men and 7 women with a body mass index (BMI) ranging from 27.5 to 45.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. The participants led sedentary lifestyles and were deemed at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Three times a week, participants were led through 1-hour endurance training sessions. Each session included a combination of cycling and walking to bring individuals up to 80% of their peak oxygen intake, or VO<sub>2</sub> max. Using functional MRI after administering an insulin nasal spray to each individual, researchers assessed their brain insulin sensitivity at the start of the study and after 8 weeks. The exercise program increased insulin action in the brain's striatum and strengthened functional connections in the hippocampus to levels of people without overweight or obesity. The researchers found that improved insulin sensitivity in the brain had positive effects on participants' metabolism and reduced their sensations of hunger. Participants also decreased their amount of visceral fat, which further benefited their health. Ryan Glatt, CPT, NBC-HWC, personal trainer and brain health coach for the Pacific Neuroscience Institute at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, CA, not involved in the study, noted the following to MNT: "This was an interesting study — however, the sample size was very small (21 people), with twice as many women as men, which make the study underpowered, especially in the absence of a control group." Diabetes and brain insulin resistance Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that helps the body regulate blood sugar levels. In type 1 diabetes, for instance, the immune system attacks cells that produce insulin in the pancreas. In type 2 diabetes, the body becomes resistant to the insulin it produces.—Online

# CDA asked to develop G-9 Markaz on modern lines

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that Chamber is trying for resolving the key issues of the business community so that businessmen can be facilitated in promoting business activities. He said that ICCI would work with FBR and CDA to address the tax issues and development works of all major markets including G-9 Markaz, Islamabad. He said that the CDA has identified a

site for the construction of a parking plaza in G-9 Markaz and stressed that the civic body should start work on this important project to resolve the long-standing issue of traders of the market. He expressed these views while speaking as Chief Guest at the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of the Traders Welfare Association, G-9 Markaz, Islamabad. Raja Javed Iqbal took oath as President, Haji Zafar General Secretary, Chaudhry Abdul Ghaffar Senior Vice President, Chaudhry Anam Saeed, Sherzada Kakakh-

il, Javed Khan and Sheikh Alamgir as Vice President. Ahsan Bakhtawari said that we have already announced the filtration plant for G-9 Markaz whose work is in progress. He said that sewerage issue and other development works of G-9 Markaz will also be taken up with CDA on priority basis to get them resolved. He said that the unity among the traders of G-9 Markaz is unprecedented which is very welcome because only through unity and consensus, the traders can get their problems resolved effectively. Speaking on this

occasion, Raja Javed Iqbal, who was elected for the third time in a row as President of Traders Welfare Association G-9 Markaz, said that in the form of Ahsan Bakhtawari, a talented and young business leader has taken over the affairs at ICCI, which is a good sign for the businessmen. He said that due to his performance and positive approach, Ahsan Bakhtawari has won the hearts of the traders of G-9 Markaz. He said that his association and the traders of G-9 Markaz would always be cooperating with ICCI for resolving the issues of trading community.

# PCAA marks Kashmir Solidarity Day befittingly

Banners and stands were placed at Karachi, Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad airports inscribed with slogans in favor of giving Kashmiris their right to self-determination without any further delay

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) on Sunday expressed complete solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), facing suppression at the hands of brutal Indian forces for more than the last 75 years. The authority

marked the Kashmir Solidarity Day in a befitting manner, placing banners and banner stands at the country's major airports to highlight the indigenous struggle of the people of Kashmir they launched for their legitimate right of self-determination and draw the special attention of the

world community towards ever-increasing human rights violations in IIOJK. The PCAA paid tribute to martyred Kashmiris and reiterated Pakistan's unflinching stance to continue supporting the just cause of Kashmir by extending all possible political, diplomatic and

moral support to the people of IIOJK. The banners and stands were placed at Karachi, Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad airports inscribed with slogans in favor of giving Kashmiris their right to self-determination without any further delay.—APP

## Experimental vaccine turns cancer cells against themselves

ISLAMABAD: Researchers are working on an experimental cancer vaccine that turns cancer against cancer. "Our team has pursued a simple idea: to take cancer cells and transform them into cancer killers and vaccines," said Khalid Shah, MD, who leads the team at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital, in a statement to Gizmodo. "Their experimental vaccine candidate uses tumor cells modified to deliver a toxic payload to the rest of the cancer, while also making it easier for the immune system to target and remember the cancer in the future," Gizmodo wrote. Initial results, against brain cancer in mice, have been promising. The study was published this week in the journal Science Translational Medicine. Most cancer vaccines typically treat existing cancers or prevent their return, Gizmodo wrote.—Online

## Pakistan Steel Industry Appeals State

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The steel industry in Pakistan is facing a severe crisis, and has made an urgent appeal to the State Bank of Pakistan to open letter of credits for the import of essential raw materials. The industry is on the brink of collapse due to a combination of factors, including the shortage of raw materials, the increase in international scrap prices, and the successive depreciation of the rupee over the last 18 months. The steel industry is a crucial sector for the country's economy, directly employing over 200,000 people and supporting numerous downstream industries. However, the lack of raw materials and the collapse of the industry's trade finance limits have caused severe production disruptions and put the entire industry in jeopardy. Experts suggest that this crisis could put 7.5 million jobs at risk. "We are facing a dire situation, and we need the support of the State Bank to help us secure the imports we need to keep our factories running," said Wajid Bukhari, Secretary General of Pakistan Association of Large Steel Producers (PALSP). "Every day that we are unable to secure these imports, we are losing ground, and the future of our industry is in serious jeopardy.—DNA

## Pak Steel Industry Appeals State

DNA

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## Briefs

## Shah Faisal Mosque becomes attraction for local, int'l tourists

ISLAMABAD: Shah Faisal Mosque, one of the country's biggest mosques, is attracting foreign dignitaries and domestic tourists at large, due to its architectural beauty in the heart of scenic Margalla Hills.

Talking to APP, Zulfiqar Ali, a resident of G-9, said he along with his family visited and offered prayers in the Shah Faisal Mosque, whereas its magnificent architecture left them spell bounded, as it was designed in a very unique style.

"The mosque's cleanliness and location besides Margalla hills is a source of inspiration for visitors and they love offering the prayers to deliver their religious obligation."

"The lovely winter season and peaceful atmosphere is also a key factor for our trip," he added.

He said the security arrangements, book and food stalls made their day so pleasant and marvelous, adding despite of cold weather, the people were visiting and feeling relieved after hearing Azaan and by offering prayers there, as the practice made them feel spiritual and refreshed. Sajid Ali, a resident of Karachi, said, "Visits to the mosque exemplify the religious enthusiasm of women, children, young adults, students of various universities and elders." He stressed the need to allow the women to enter in the main hall of the mosque. He further said, "There is a dire need to further improve and modernize the cleanliness system, security arrangements and availability of hot water for ablution during the winter season." It is pertinent to mention here that the Shah Faisal Mosque nestled at the foot of Margalla Hills, is one of the most massive and quintessential structures located in capital. Named after its benefactor Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the mosque is not only one of the country's largest mosque but in the world and it is among the most popular and historically significant tourist attractions.—APP

## World Pulses Day to be marked on Feb 10

ISLAMABAD: World Pulses Day will be marked on February 10 across the globe including Pakistan to recognize the significance and nutritional benefits of pulses (also known as "legumes") pulses are not only nutritional, they can also contribute to the development of sustainable food systems towards eradicating world hunger and poverty. According to the UN, this is an effective strategy for achieving its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims at strengthening global peace and enhancing food security. Pulses—also known as legumes—refer to the edible seeds of pod-bearing plants, such as dry peas, dry beans, lupins, lentils, and chickpeas. While pulses exist in various shapes, varieties, sizes, and colors and remain a large part of dishes from across the world, the most popular and widely-consumed types of pulses are dried beans, peas, and lentils. By definition, pulses strictly comprise dried seeds of leguminous plants cultivated for food and exclude vegetable crops harvested while still green.—APP

## Man shot dead in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: A man was shot dead in Chakra area of Rawalpindi due to unknown reasons here on Sunday. The rescue 1122 team were immediately rushed to crime scene. According to the relatives, a boy ran away after shooting at the mobile phone shop. The victim was identified as 35-year-old Nabeel. According to preliminary information, Nabeel, the victim, was shot at his shop. The victim suffered multiple gunshot wounds to the chest. Rescue personnel rescued the victim from Chahar Chowk in a private vehicle and shifted the body to the hospital after necessary procedures.—APP

## MPs laud CPEC during tour of various projects

Mushahid says 'Pakistan's natural wealth key to reviving national economy instead of perpetual dependence on IMF'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentarians visiting CPEC projects in Sind, termed Thar as 'bulwark of Pakistan's future Energy Security'. The delegation was organised by Pakistan-China Institute (PCI), in cooperation with Power China in Port Qasim and Shanghai Electric and Sind Electric Coal Mining Company (SECMC) in Thar. Pakistan-China Institute launched this initiative to mark 10 years of CPEC. The delegation was led by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Senate Defence Committee and PCI. During the 3-day visit, the delegation first visited the Power China project at Port Qasim, which generates 1320 megawatts of electricity. Power China CEO Guo welcomed the delegation and briefed them on the project. The Port Qasim power plant, an Early Harvest project of CPEC, provides electricity to over 4 million homes through clean energy, and it emits environment-friendly white smoke, using supercritical technology. The project has generated jobs, provided revenue to Pakistan worth over \$ 600 million in taxes and duties, and contributed to resolving Pakistan's chronic



energy shortage. Then on day two of the Sind CPEC projects tour, the delegation flew to Thar where it first toured the Sind Electric Coal Mining Company (SECMC), which is a joint private-public partnership with support of the Sind government and China, witnessing the driving of dumper trucks by Thari women, in a living example of Women's empowerment. The delegation also visited the newly established 1320 megawatts power plant

established with investment from Shanghai Electric. China's total investment has been \$ 26 billion, generating 85,000 jobs, including 12,000 in Thar, plus 28,000 Pakistani students now study in China, resulting in a huge socio-economic transformation of the country, thanks to CPEC. Over 5000 megawatts of electricity have been added to the national grid and some 700 kilometres of road infrastructure have knit the Federation of Pakistan closer

together facilitating easier and faster travel. Speaking to the workers of CPEC projects in Port Qasim and Thar, Senator Mushahid Hussain termed CPEC as 'single most transformative initiative for economic development in the last 30 years, as it provided a basis for energy security, employment, and changing lives and livelihoods of the people of Pakistan'. Senator Mushahid Hussain said that 'Pakistan huge natural resources, including min-

eral wealth, natural gas and maritime wealth which needs to be exploited for the blue economy. Thar alone has 175 billion tons of coal reserves, more than the oil reserves of Iran and Saudi Arabia put together. Thanks to CPEC, this 'black gold' is now contributing to the national economy. The natural gas reserves in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are several times higher than these reserves in Sui'. The Senator added, 'if we truly exploit and utilise our mineral wealth,

natural gas, and offshore blue economy, cumulatively worth almost a trillion dollars, Pakistan can bid goodbye to the IMF handouts, which we have received for 23 times, without bringing about quality change'. He urged the need to change national economic priorities instead of policies that undermine national sovereignty and people's dignity. Parliamentarians belonging to different political parties lauded CPEC as a guarantor of a better tomorrow for Pakistan and thanked China, as a trusted 'all weather friend', for reposing such confidence in the future of Pakistan by investing in CPEC projects in Pakistan. They also lauded the role of these companies in promoting people-centric development through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The parliamentary delegation included Mahesh Mailani, MNA, Minister of State for Health, Senator Dr Zarqa Suhrwardhy, Qaiser Sheikh, MNA, Chairman of National Assembly Finance Committee, Senator Quratul Ain Marri, Muhammad Abubakar, MNA, Chairman of NA Parliamentary Affairs Committee and Senator Muhammad Akram Baloch.

## PMA congratulates PIMS new management

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Islamabad chapter on Sunday congratulated the new management team of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). The PMA delegation led by its President Dr. Akhtar Ali Bandesha and General Secretary Dr. Mubashir Mush-taq Doha visited the PIMS hospital and met with the new management to offer their full support.

The delegation members said that all outstanding problems of medical practitioners will be resolved on a priority basis. They said that the PMA is fully aware of the major issues being faced by doctors and offered their full assistance to resolve these matters. The PMA delegation also discussed other matters related to the doctors and other medical staff of the hospital.

The new member of the PIMS management team, including Executive Director PIMS Dr. Naeem Ahmad Malik, Joint Executive Director Dr. Iqbal Durrani, and Deputy Executive Director Dr. Naveed Sheikh thanked the delegation for visiting PIMS and offering their support to all PMA members including Prof Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan, Prof Dr. Imran Sikandar, Dr. Riaz Shahbaz Janjua, Prof Dr. Mumtaz Khan Niazi, Dr. Abid Ali Shah, and others.—APP

## Oranges have highly nutrient content

ISLAMABAD: Health Expert Dr Mehreen Raza Sunday underlined the need to take oranges in daily routine meals as this content rich in vitamin B complex and minerals like sodium, potassium, calcium and copper and it contains about 2.5 times more calcium than other citrus fruits.

Talking to private news channel, she said the antioxidant properties of orange may help reduce chances of cancer as well as risk of contracting HIV. It can promote anti-ageing properties and help keep the skin healthy.

She further informed that oranges are packed with several vitamins and minerals, including vitamin C, thiamine, folate, and potassium. One medium-sized orange has about 70 mg of vitamin C, which is 78% of that daily recommended intake. Some studies suggest that oranges may help reduce the formation of free radicals that cause cancer. A compound called D-limonene present in orange is also known to help in cancer prevention, she added.

She said the folate acid in orange can boost the development of brain function. Its anti-inflammatory properties also make it an excellent food to reduce the risk of arthritis or any joint-related issues. The high fiber content in orange can help improve digestion as well as help you lose weight by keeping you feeling full for longer. Orange contains flavonoids and polyphenols that help the body fight viral infections, she added.—APP

## Chinese companies help reduce Pakistan's mobile device imports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese companies occupied the top four spots in the list of top ten phone manufacturers in Pakistan in 2022, as per the latest statistics from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), according to a report published by Gwadar Pro. Chinese companies have assembled/manufactured a major portion of 21.94 million phones locally produced in Pakistan in 2022. Itel Mobile Pakistan remained the country's top mobile phone manufacturer for the second consecutive year in 2022 with 3.03 million units. In 2022, the company locally assembled/manufactured 3.03 million sets whereas the same Chinese company assembled/

manufactured 4.40 million units in 2021. In 2020, the firm was 9th in the list of top ten manufacturers with 0.34 million mobile sets; however, in 2021 it topped the list of local manufacturers and retained its position in 2022. As per the PTA statistics, China's VGO TEL has retained its second position in the list of ten mobile manufacturers in 2022 with 2.40 million mobile phone sets. VGO TEL had assembled/manufactured 3.17 million mobile phone sets in 2021 while in 2020 the company stood third with 1.63 million sets. In 2022, China's Vivo jumped to third position pushing Infinix, another Chinese company, from 3rd to 4th position. In 2022, Vivo has assembled/manufactured over 1.72 million

mobile phones while Infinix is standing with 172 million (the margin of difference is very little; however, Vivo stands third). In 2021, Infinix was 3rd with 3.00 million phone sets while Vivo had assembled/manufactured 2.76 million phones. China's Tecno mobile company has slipped from its 5th position in 2021 to 8th position in 2022. Chinese smartphone giant OPPO has also emerged as the 6th largest mobile phone maker in Pakistan during 2022 by assembling/manufacturing 1.34 million mobile phones. Similarly, Finland's Nokia and South Korea's Samsung rank the 5th and 7th mobile phone brands in the list of top ten mobile phone manufacturers in 2022. Nokia and Samsung assembled/

manufactured 1.46 million and 1.19 million phone sets respectively. OPPO, Nokia, and Samsung were not included in the list of top ten phone manufacturers in 2021. According to PTA, at least 21.94 million phone sets were assembled/manufactured in Pakistan while 1.53 million mobile phones were commercially imported by the country. In 2021, the number of locally assembled/manufactured phone sets was 24.66 million while the country commercially imported 10.26 million sets. Due to growing local manufacturing, the number of commercially import sets has drastically come down i.e. in 2020, Pakistan imported 24.51 million phone sets which came down to a mere 1.53 million in 2022.

## Aviation sector gets Rs2474.87 mln

ISLAMABAD: The government has so far released funds amounting to Rs 2474.87 million, under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23) against a total allocation of Rs2484.87 million to execute 15 different projects and schemes aimed at ensuring improved aviation sector services in the

country. Out of the total authorization/disbursement of Rs 2474.87 million, around Rs450.50 million have been utilized on the aviation sector projects during a six-month period (July-December) of the current fiscal year, according to official data available with APP. As per the PSDP document, an amount of Rs 2.303 bil-

lion had been allocated for 10 ongoing schemes, out of which Rs 60 million were meant for construction of Airport Security Force Camp at Islamabad International Airport, Rs 29.871 million for building barrack accommodation for ASP personnel along with Mess and allied facilities, ladies rest room, MT, Store, Kote Magazine, Quarter Guard, and OC accommodation/Room at Chitral Airport, Rs 5 million for construction of double storey Barracks for ASF at Faisalabad Airport, Rs 5 million for construction of Rain Water Harvesting Kasa-nam Dam at Islamabad International Airport, Rs 25 million for installation.—APP

Magazine, Quarterguard and OC accommodation/room at Skardu Airport, Rs4 million for construction of Barrack accommodation for ASF personnel along with Mess and allied facilities, MT, Store, Visitors Room, Ladies Rest Room, Kote Magazine, Quarter Guard, and OC accommodation/Room at Chitral Airport, Rs 5 million for construction of double storey Barracks for ASF at Faisalabad Airport, Rs 5 million for construction of Rain Water Harvesting Kasa-nam Dam at Islamabad International Airport, Rs 25 million for installation.—APP

## Reg process of transgenders continues

Decision of including transgender community in Benazir Kafalat program has been taken in view of the economic difficulties

ISLAMABAD: The process for registration of the transgender population in the Benazir Kafalat program being executed under the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) was continued across the country. The decision of including the transgender community in the Benazir Kafalat program has been taken for the first time in the history in view of the social and economic hardships faced by the transgender community. According to the National Socio-Economic Register (NSER) survey carried out by BISP, the total number of transgender persons is 53,800. Despite the limited number, the community is denied of their basic rights and has been facing various challenges. The transgender community is constrained to rely on begging as their main source of livelihood or they get associated with a profession that is scorned upon. Bajo and Sumera, who are transgenders, said that some people close their doors when we come around in the streets and others push us away. Talking to APP, they said that, "people ask why we do not work since we look healthy and fit. Who will give us jobs?". "They all make fun of us," they said while thanking the BISP for including them in the Benazir Kafalat program. Another transgender named Saba said that "I am thankful to the BISP that they thought of us and include us in Benazir Kafalat initiative. No one has ever thought about us. Thanks to BISP". Due to unacceptable behavior of the society, the transgender community is compelled to live a miserable life, below the poverty line. Collective efforts are needed at all levels to enable this community to live a dignified life. The objective of BISP is to provide financial support to people living below the poverty line as around nine million families are being provided a stipend of Rs. 7000 every quarter. The decision of including the transgender community in Benazir Kafalat program has been taken in view of the economic difficulties and the discrimination they face and in order to ensure that no vulnerable segment is left out of BISP.—APP

## Experts urge revolutionary measures to avert default

DNA

ISLAMABAD - Speaking at a webinar on Saturday, the economists warned of historic hard-times ahead for Pakistan even after the bailout package agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that is likely to be approved by the coming week. It would be a milestone that would pave the way for the release of an additional \$1.2 billion in loans and unlock more funding from the IMF and other friendly countries. They said Pakistan has to swallow the bitter pill but all the brunt shall not be on the general public. All the key stakeholders shall voluntarily come forward to take revolutionary economic measures to stop the drainage of the national exchequer. The immediate solutions are not less than to prevent public funds from embezzlement, to broaden the tax-base including the agricultural lords too, banning the luxury imports, and to ration-

alize the national consumption patterns. All types of mafia shall be taken to task. The IMF is demanding to increase the General Sales Tax by one percent, from 17 percent to 18 percent. Government is also proposing to increase Federal Excise Duty on the purchase of business class air tickets and levy an additional 50 paisa FED per cigarette stick. The demand for circular debt reduction will also have an impact on the energy tariffs which may go by at least 25 percent. The levy of GST on Petroleum products is also being considered which will increase the prices by at least 17 percent. All of these will increase inflation rate and will further erode purchasing power of the masses. The webinar was organized by the Devcom-Pakistan (Development Communications Network) and DTN on Saturday on the subject "IMF-Pakistan Deal: Impact and the Way Forward". Pakistan's Former chief econ-

omist Dr Pervez Tahir was the keynote speaker. The guest speakers included economist and Deputy Executive Director Sustainable Policy Development Institute Dr. Sajid Amin, Prime economic research institute Executive Director Ali Salman, development economist from Sri Lanka Dr. Rohantha Athukorala, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed. Dr. Pevez Tahir said with the rate of inflation at 27.6 percent and expected to rise steeply, food beyond the reach of the poor and the lower middle class and the fuel cost hitting even the middle and upper middle class, the common perception seems to be that things have to get worse before they get better. He said Tax the rich and the privileged directly and target the poor and the low-income groups for subsidies. In the past, the governments got away with serious deviations and lukewarm reform efforts by pressuring

the IMF through the US and European members of its Board in exchange for services rendered as the most allied ally during the Cold War and the non-NATO ally in the War on Terror. Since the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the West has lost interest in pushing the IMF around. Dr. Sajid Amin said the IMF deal will add more to inflation, hence, the government shall take necessary measures to prevent the large segment of the public from the inflationary impact. There shall be no politics on the economy and avoid populist approach, rather all parties shall have consensus on the economic measure to avert default-like situation. The public expenditure shall be rationalized and made more efficient. He suggested withdrawing the subsidies from different sectors for the targeted ones including food, energy and patrol.

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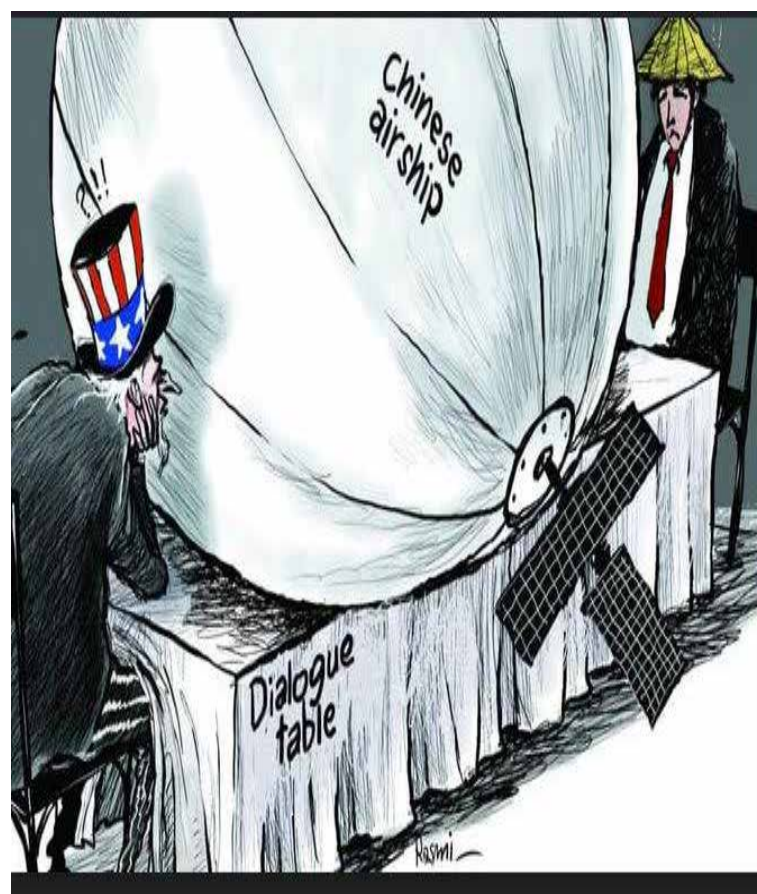
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## NATO and Japan

The meeting between visiting NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida last week must have made the guest feel relieved as it enabled him to avoid the embarrassment of returning to Brussels empty-handed from his Asian trip, the first of its kind by a NATO chief in history. The two sides said they welcomed progress toward Japan transitioning into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's new Individually Tailored Partnership Program, which is expected to elevate bilateral cooperation "to new heights that reflect the challenges of a new era". That merits the attention of the whole Asia-Pacific, which should be alert to what it might herald. Japan, which is pursuing greater global status through militarism, is doing nothing but offering the rapacious Cold War transatlantic alliance the means to gain a foothold in the Far East to maintain the order based on "rules" that serves the United States, something the US, their common patron, is of course happy to encourage. Stoltenberg claims that the Asia-Pacific is being threatened by the "authoritarian pushback against the international rules-based order" by Beijing and Moscow, which only sets the stage for him to try and sell the argument that "transatlantic and Indo-Pacific security is deeply interconnected". The proposition that Russia and China form an evil axis threatening the "rules-based international order" is something strategists in Washington are trying hard to peddle around the world. The way the NATO chief called on Japan to understand the scale of the "challenge" from China and address it together clearly makes China a common "adversary" to them, his denial of that notwithstanding. Were it not for Japan's readiness to jump onto the US' China-containment bandwagon, which can provide it with a cover to "normalize" its status on the world stage, it would have been difficult for Stoltenberg to find a crack into which to drive NATO's wedge in the region. In that sense, Japan has sacrificed the whole region's interests by letting the wolf into the fold with the sheep in the otherwise peaceful and stable Asia-Pacific. The tensions in Sino-US relations have given the right-wing political forces in Japan an opportunity to retake the stage. They have prompted the country's once relatively rational and pragmatic China policy to fade fast, and Japan has now become the most active wholesaler of the "China threat" theory in Asia. Colluding with NATO will prove to be only a beginning for the sufferings Japan will inflict upon the whole region and itself.



## Real threat behind China's spy balloon

It must be admitted that the flap over an enormous Chinese balloon that flew or blew, unannounced, over the US and Canada last week has a certain funny side. Pentagon generals went on high alert, fearful that their missile silos in Montana were being spied on. Joe Biden, not normally a trigger-happy man, had to be persuaded not to shoot it down, and then changed his mind. Republicans accused the president of being weak on balloon defence. Red-faced officials in Beijing scrambled to talk the over-excited Americans down. The balloon, most likely a clandestine surveillance device, was ultimately deemed not to pose a physical threat. The Chinese, while insisting it was a weather device accidentally gone astray, nevertheless apologized. This incident says a lot, none of it good, about the jittery state of US-China relations. The world's two most powerful countries are at loggerheads over numerous issues, big and small. When the balloon went up, mutual trust, cool heads and timely communication were woefully lacking. This is not funny at all. The decision by Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, to postpone an ice-breaking weekend visit to Beijing is regrettable. But, given the opportunistic yet potent anti-China furor that has blown up on the American right, calm, sensible dialogue might have proved impossible. Unforeseen crises of this sort vividly demonstrate why resumed talks to foster improved mutual understanding are essential. The context is growing global competition, some call it confrontation, between Washington and Beijing. Donald Trump's presidency took relations to a new low, with numerous rows over trade, US sanctions, spying and security. Only last week, the CIA chief, William Burns, declared that the US knew, "as a matter of intelligence", that Xi had ordered his forces to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027. The US air force general Mike Minihan went further, urging troops to be ready to defend the island by 2025. Elections in Taiwan and the US next year could provide pretext and cover for a Chinese attack, he predicted. As the balloon storm shows, miscalculation is just as dangerous as any planned policy. It's unlikely that China's leaders deliberately torpedoed Blinken's visit. Indeed, there are signs that Xi, under economic and pandemic pressure, wants to reduce tensions. Xi's ultranationalism, expansionist policies and wolf warrior diplomacy have backfired badly, prompting countries such as Japan and South Korea to harden their defences. The US is actively exploiting his mistakes. Last week, it signed a military pact with the Philippines. Fear of China has facilitated closer US security ties with India, Australia and across south-east Asia. In this respect, Xi is his own (and China's) worst enemy. Biden's America has a lot to lose too, if it listens to the hawks, relies on military options and allows relations with the world's biggest trading nation and nascent superpower to deteriorate further. So does a watching world. Washington and Beijing should treat the wandering balloon as a warning from on high – and quickly find better ways to get along.

## Israelis and Palestinians do what they do best, but for the wrong reasons

James Dorsey

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Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has put Israel's closest allies and some of his key partners on the spot. So has a generation of Palestinian youth that has nothing to lose and no longer sees fruitless engagement with and acquiescence of the Jewish state as a means of realizing their national and socio-economic aspirations. It's not that young Palestinians have necessarily given up on a compromise resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the contrary, however, they believe that armed resistance with the Jenin refugee camp on the West Bank as its focal point will provoke a situation the international community will no longer be able to ig-

nore. Jenin is home to a black market for pistols, AK-47s, Kalashnikovs, and M16s, and thousands of youths caught in a Catch-22 in which they are ineligible for Israeli work permits because they are on a terrorism list. So far, the Palestinian youth strategy appears to be working, even if US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's visit to the region was aimed at calming tensions rather than solving problems. Similarly, that was the message that the heads of Egyptian and Jordanian intelligence reportedly gave President Mahmoud Abbas on the same morning that the Palestinian president met with Mr. Blinken. The intelligence chiefs' bosses, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Jordanian King Abdullah, are in good company as they brace for the fallout of escalating Israeli-Palestinian violence. So is United Arab Emirates President Mohammed bin Zayed who in recent years spearheaded greater Arab engagement with Israel without a prospect for a resolution of the Palestinian problem, and the kings of Bahrain and Morocco, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and Mohammed VI, who followed the UAE leader's lead. Returning from a rare visit to Sudan this week, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said the two countries would establish formal diplomatic relations by the end of this year. Unlike Mr. al-Sisi and the Bahraini and Moroccan monarchs, Mr. Bin Zayed may be less concerned about domestic unrest in response to the Israeli-Palestinian violence but worries that regional security could be compromised by the potential fallout of Israel's harsh response to Palestinian militancy compounded by a more aggressive Israeli posture towards Iran. Struggling with an economic crisis, Egypt and Jordan, where Palestinians account for roughly half of the country's 11 million people, are particularly vulnerable to the Palestinian plight becoming a catalyst for anti-government protest. This week, Moroccans protested in several cities against their country's forging two years ago of diplomatic relations with Israel. The protests were in anticipation of Morocco's hosting in March in the disputed Western Sahara a meeting of the foreign ministers of Israel, the United States, the UAE, and Bahrain to celebrate the anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Arab and Jewish states. Last month, Jordanian security forces and protesters, angry about rising fuel prices and poor governance, clashed in the southern city of Maan. "Such demonstrations have a life of their own, and in a moment, they can turn into a protest against the government, poverty, and waste, and we have a direct confrontation whose results can be lethal," said an Egyptian journalist. All of this plays into the hands of militant Palestinian youth. So does Mr. Netanyahu, as he accommodates hardline Jewish nationalist and ultra-conservative religious figures in his Cabinet who are in charge of national security and Palestine-related affairs. To be sure, Mr. Netanyahu, in response to last Friday's killing of Jewish worshippers at a synagogue, refrained from striking back with a sledgehammer as Israel typically does. Mr. Blinken's visit may have been

one reason for Mr. Netanyahu's reticence. Israeli officials suggest that behind closed doors, Mr. Blinken and other recent US visitors, including National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and CIA Director Bill Burns, made clear that even if the US and Iran were on one page regarding Iran for the first time in years, their immediate concerns were related to Palestine and the threat to Israeli democracy posed by Mr. Netanyahu's plans to undermine the independence of his country's Supreme Court. "It is a tragedy that we are forced to deal with less important and burning issues at this time. Our mind is on Iran, but our feet are stuck in Silwan," said a senior Israeli security official, referring to the east Jerusalem neighborhood that is a hotspot of Palestinian-Israeli violence. "The Americans are exerting heavy pressure on the Palestinian issue and equally heavy pressure on the threat to Israeli democracy arising from the Netanyahu government's legislative blitz. We're talking to them about Iran and Saudi Arabia, while they want to talk about Jenin and Shireen Abu Akleh and democracy," a former diplomatic official added. The former official was referring to last week's Israeli raid in Jenin, where 10 Palestinians were killed, and the killing last year of Al Jazeera journalist Abu Akleh. Adopting a more aggressive stance against Iran, Israel is believed to have last month attacked a long-range missile production plant in the Iranian city of Esfahan as well as truck convoys along the Iraq-Syria border convoys carrying ammunition and weapons for Hezbollah, the pro-Iranian Lebanese militia. Moreover, last week, the US and Israeli militaries staged their most significant and complex exercise to date in the Eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, Mr. Blinken sent mixed messages during his visit, the Israeli assessments of their talks with Mr. Blinken and the two countries' closer military ties notwithstanding. For the first time on a visit by a secretary of state, Mr. Blinken met with Israeli civil society organisations focused on LGBTQ rights, integration of ultra-religious Jews and Palestinian Israelis in the Israeli workforce, and Jewish-Palestinian co-existence. No human rights or other groups working towards an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank were invited. Even so, the militants and the policies enunciated by the Netanyahu government can take credit for the US focus. The militants' resorting to arms, Israel's harsh response, and Israeli policies that ever more flagrantly violate international law and the Geneva conventions make it increasingly difficult for the United States and Europe to look the other way and for Arab states that maintain diplomatic relations with the Jewish states to limit themselves to verbal condemnations. Israel's response so far includes trying to push through legislation that many Palestinians say would amount to collective punishment. It would result in the expedited demolition of the homes of family members of Palestinians who've carried out attacks and plans to make it eas-

ier for Israelis to get guns. That has not stopped Azerbaijan from dispatching its first ambassador to Israel in three decades of diplomatic relations with the Jewish state amid escalating tensions with Iran, its southern neighbour, or Chad inaugurating the African country's first embassy in the country during a visit to Israel by President Mahamat Deby. Some analysts argue that the militants' tactics may be a double-edged sword. Their tactics could backfire, and the militants could fall into a trap if the United States and others effectively remain on the sidelines.

"The deepest tragedy is that the Israeli extreme right seems to be counting on Palestinian rage and desperation to provide them with the opportunity to go as far as they can in their twin goals of annexation and expulsion," cautioned columnist Hussein Ibish. In a twist or irony, hardliners on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide may find that escalation serves both their interests, even if those interests are diametrically opposite. Palestinian militants see increased Israeli brutality and violations of international law and the Geneva conventions as making it more difficult for the United States and others to stay on the sidelines or go through the motions of seeking to calm the situation. So far, the US way to do so does not even amount to a band-aid, let alone a solution. The US is pressuring 86-year-old President Mahmoud's Palestine Authority to revive security cooperation with Israel and take back control of Jenin and the West Bank city of Nablus.

The US proposition misses a key point: much like West Bank Palestinian militancy in the past, Palestinian youths' despair is fuelled as much by Israeli policy as it is by the rejection of corrupt and ineffective Palestinian leadership. "Twenty years ago, we made peace with Israel, but they don't respect any of it. So, we're done. We want destruction," said Ahmad Qassem. A 24-year-old resident of Jenin. Mr. Qassem has not found work since finishing ninth grade, his last year of school. He was last year released from an Israeli prison after a two-year administrative detention, during which he was never charged or granted a trial.

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## Kashmir Conundrum: South Asia's security dilemma

Gul.i.AyshaBhatti



The present worsening of relations between the two countries mirrors a recurrent pattern of conflict that has heightened tensions throughout South Asia. Diplomacy or regional cooperation can overcome the accumulated grievances and disputes of the last many years and can open

Professor John H. Herz coined the phrase "security dilemma" in his published works and since then, this phrase has been commonly employed in state rivalry and mistrust. When a state chooses certain security methods to maintain its own safety, its neighbours' safety is not assured. To make up for its compromised security, the adjacent state adopts matching security measures. These counter-strategies undercut the state's initial security policy, hence jeopardising its security. Consequently, both parties face a "security dilemma." Unless one party possesses a decisive

military edge (such as strategic nuclear weapons or a ballistic missile defence system that can ensure its safety), the two will remain at odds. The nation can circumvent the security challenge. After entering the security dilemma, the endless recurrence of the game between the two sides resembles a prisoner's dilemma. The chaos in which both parties currently find themselves prevents them from resolving the security issue without the intervention of a more powerful force. Because of the mistrust between the two parties, it is necessary to make the most malignant assumptions about each other's motives and behaviours, and the acts of both parties amplify this sense of unease. In this cycle, the perceived insecurity arises from the disparity between the two sides (e.g., in terms of weaponry or population), and this impression of insecurity amplifies the psychological impact. Even though the disparity between the two sides is the root cause of the security issue, the impact of this impression of insecurity is exacerbated, which decides whether the security dilemma will worsen or improve. Such ambiguous impressions might lead both sides of a problem to assume that the other side would develop security at their expense, hence aggravating miscommunications.

India and Pakistan are the major players in South Asia and they define the regional security environment. Traditionally, this region is known as a region of mistrust and conflict that has unresolved traditional and non-traditional security challenges. These numerous security challenges and inter and intra state level conflicts pose serious threat to the regional strategic stability. Both the states share a bloody history of antagonism; ups and downs in their relations further complicate the regional security environment. Their relative security challenges range from traditional to non-traditional; conventional to sub-conventional; and limited war options that add to the threat perception. Kashmir lies at the heart of the dispute between India and Pakistan, creating a security conundrum in South Asia. Kashmir is situated between Pakistan, India, China, and Afghanistan in the northernmost region of the South Asian peninsula. By way of the neighbouring former Soviet country of Tajikistan, Jammu & Kashmir provides an important link to the Central Asian area. As the source of the subcontinent's

river system, Kashmir is a lifeline for Pakistan and the surrounding regions. Kashmir is larger and more populated than many United Nations members, spanning over 86,000 square miles with six religiously and culturally diverse regions and an estimated population of 12 million. More than 70 percent of the population is Muslim, and in 1947, in accordance with the right to self-determination, these Muslims decided to join Pakistan (the newly formed Muslim state). Numerous military confrontations and battles have erupted between India and Pakistan as a result of Kashmir's unusual demographics (the majority of the population is Muslim, while the rulers are Hindu). There have been many international efforts to amicably resolve the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India while providing amicable solutions to the Kashmir issue. However, Pakistan's counterterrorism operations, which are viewed by the Indian side as "war to feed war," and the Uri event, which proved that political trust between the two sides is highly fragile and has led to speculation on the other side, which leads to misconceptions rather than understanding, have been unable to alter the existing situation. Later on, Pulwama attack which led to war anxiety in the region is another example of the lack of CBMs. These misconceptions exacerbate the issue, so setting the stage for a greater confrontation to ensue. Under Modi government, Indian policy towards Kashmir brought major illegal and inhuman crisis in the region. Human Rights Watch announced in 2022 that after losing the region's special autonomous status, the Indian government is curtailing freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and other fundamental rights in Jammu and Kashmir. The vulnerability of Kashmiris has worsened due to the government's oppressive policies and refusal to investigate and prosecute reported security force atrocities. The Modi government, pledging security and reform, withdrew Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional autonomy and divided the state into two federally ruled regions on August 5, 2019. Hundreds of individuals are arbitrarily detained, including pro Indian political leaders, there is a complete communications blackout, and there are significant limitations on freedom of movement and peaceful assembly. Since then authorities have expanded their assault on the media and civil society organisations, including regular use of counterterror-

ism and public safety legislation.

Kashmir has placed India and Pakistan in an impasse from which they cannot remove themselves. Occasionally, the two sides have attempted peaceful solutions to security challenges and economic collaboration, but Kashmir has set them against one another. The security challenge has begun to take shape due to a long-standing lack of trust between India and Pakistan, which has been compounded by repeated military conflicts and wars. And this growth of forces would cease when both sides reached their deployment limitations. The two sides will now compete in other areas, such as military equipment and military facilities. Without the participation of a more formidable army, neither side can resolve the Kashmir security challenge. When both parties define their security in terms of the disputed area, it is impossible to overcome or ease this security issue. The challenge of greater security is not simply of a military nature, but also has political and economic implications for both sides. In this sense, the fragile state of diplomatic relations and the lack of communication channels between the two sides make them more attuned to one another's actions. This, in turn, exacerbates the security predicament. Extremist Hindu Nationalism Modi government is incapable to come up with a peaceful conflict resolution settlement with Pakistan. And Kashmir, as the epicenter of the Pakistan-India conflict and a critical part of the security dilemma, is likely to spark a new war. However, Pakistan has recently asked UAE and the rest of the friendly states to arrange a peaceful dialogue between the two states stuck in security dilemma for the greater good of the region. The threat to world peace and security is crucial by the fact that both India and Pakistan are nuclear weapons powers. The present worsening of relations between the two countries mirrors a recurrent pattern of conflict that has heightened tensions throughout South Asia. Diplomacy or regional cooperation can overcome the accumulated grievances and disputes of the last many years and can open the ways further for regional economic and diplomatic coordination and peaceful South Asia.

—The Writer is PhD Scholar International Relations Islamabad



## Briefs

## IMF combing every book, every subsidy

FROM PAGE 01  
We have to stay alive but only how alive nations live and not by begging," he said. "This has been going on for 75 years. We have to put a stop to this." The premier vowed to break "this habit of begging" that country was embroiled in. "This will stop when the entire nation [stands] united to fight inflation and vows to produce their own resources," he said. "It was very easy to say so but doing it was harder. We deliver speeches but after an hour I forget what I had said." Kashmir cause Talking about revitalising the Kashmir cause, PM Shehbaz stressed forging unity and solidarity by shunning all political differences. "The founder of Pakistan Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had declared Kashmir the jugular vein of Pakistan," he said.

## Deadlock persists over Rs900bn...

FROM PAGE 01  
"Differences still persist over ascertaining the exact fiscal gap between Pakistan and the visiting IMF review mission during the technical levels talks. Once it's finalised with the IMF, then the additional taxation measures will be firmed up, which will be unveiled through the upcoming mini-budget. In view of this a lack of reconciliation over the figure of fiscal gap, the technical level talks will continue on Monday and then policy level talks are expected to commence from Tuesday," sources confirmed while talking to a select group of reporters in the background discussions on Saturday. They said the government agreed in principle with the IMF to abolish electricity and gas tariff subsidies for the export-oriented sector because such kind of dole out was completely unacceptable to the lender. The exporters' scheme will be revised by bringing major changes to it, said the official. However, the IMF agreed to the Kissan Package and required a power subsidy, 60,000 tube-well subsidies for Balochistan and a subsidy meant for AJK.

## Fawad says 'I will be first from...

FROM PAGE 01  
Pervez Musharraf and considers him a true patriot. Chaudhry slammed Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) for blaming Musharraf for a constitutional violation. He questioned whether the Constitution is being exercised in the country. He said that the incumbent government is committing constitutional violations for nine months. Fawad Chaudhry said that Pervez Musharraf had sensed the truth that the country cannot see the rule of the Constitution in the presence of Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari. He said Nawaz and Zardari had been granted NRO at the behest of the United States (US) and Saudi Arabia.

## Situation in E. Ukraine...

FROM PAGE 01  
The defence minister also confirmed that troops will start training on German-made Leopard tanks from Monday. Mr Reznikov also said Ukraine had negotiated the supply of new long-range missiles with a 90-mile (150km) range and pledged not to use them against Russian territory - only against Russian units in occupied areas of Ukraine. The head of Russia's notorious Wagner group said there are fierce battles for every street in some areas of Bakhmut. Russian forces have been attempting to seize control of the town for months - making it the longest battle since Russia invaded Ukraine almost a year ago. Taking the area is important to Russia in furthering its aim of controlling the whole of the Donbas region in the country's east. It would also signify a turnaround in Russia's fortunes after it lost ground in Ukraine during recent months.

## Serena Hotels &amp; Margalla Greens host Invitational Golf Tournament 2023

The President Dr. Arif Alvi lauded Serena Hotels management, on organizing the successful tournament and their continuous effort in promoting tourism and a softer image of Pakistan via engaging national and international communities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels hosted its annual Invitational Golf Tournament in collaboration with Margalla Greens Golf Club, under the Sports Diplomacy Initiative, on the 4th of February 2023. The Categories included Diplomatic, Government & Armed Forces, Corporate and Women. The weather was ideal for the golfers who thoroughly enjoyed the game under sunny weather. The event started with a lavish breakfast followed by the tee off. The players displayed amazing skill and technique in all categories, a total of 120 golfers participated, including 12 seasoned women golfers. Dr. Arif Alvi, President of Pakistan, graced the occasion as the guest of honor and also participated in the tournament along with the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral M Amjad Khan Niazi NI(M) S Bt prominent members of the community including ambassadors, the business sector, honorable members of the armed forces, bureaucrats and corporate sector. The golfers competed on the golf course under four different categories. Serena Hotels honored the winners of the competition with prizes that included stays in the Heritage properties and other Serena Hotels properties across Pakistan. Addressing the closing ceremony the president emphasized the need to promote



healthy and nature-based activities in the country. He said the game of golf brings man closer to nature, exercise and physical activity is essential for human health. The President Dr. Arif Alvi lauded Ser-

ena Hotels management, on organizing the successful tournament and their continuous effort in promoting tourism and a softer image of Pakistan via engaging national and international communities.

Aziz Boolani informed the participants about his hotel's sports diplomacy initiative for the promotion of sports in Pakistan, especially golf. The president of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi appreciated the sports diplo-

macy initiative of the hotel for conducting a successful golf tournament in Islamabad. The event culminated with a glorious prize distribution ceremony followed by an exquisite spread for guests and participants.

## Ten Hag fumes over Casemiro red card in Man Utd win

LONDON: Erik ten Hag criticised "inconsistent" VAR after Manchester United's Casemiro was the only player sent off following a mass brawl in Saturday's 2-1 win against Crystal Palace. Bruno Fernandes' early penalty and a Marcus Rashford strike put United on course for a 13th successive home win in all competitions. But Ten Hag's team had to survive a nervous finale at Old Trafford after Brazil midfielder Casemiro was dismissed before Palace's Jeffrey Schlupp scored to reduce the deficit. Just prior to his goal, Schlupp had shoved United winger Antony off the pitch, sparking a fight involving both sets of players which ended with Casemiro receiving a straight red card for violent conduct. Referee Andre Marriner was advised to check the pitchside monitor by the VAR to review images of Casemiro grabbing Palace's Will Hughes by the throat.



"It was a really high level first 70 minutes until the incident takes place and then you see this team stands for each other," Ten Hag said. "It's such a good spirit for the team and they don't accept when a player from us can be badly injured. That is the way Antony got treated.

"This team sticks together, but of course you have to control your emotions, but it's really difficult in such a moment." Then I see two teams fighting each other, I see two teams where players, several players, are crossing the line and then one player is picked out

and sent off. For me, that's not right." United's victory consolidated their grip on third place in the Premier League. Gloss was taken off the result by Casemiro's red card and Ten Hag said Schlupp took a "big risk" by shoving Antony off the pitch, saying he could have been "badly injured". The Dutchman also claimed Palace's Jordan Ayew should have "definitely" been sent off for his actions in the fight that followed, with the recent lack of VAR consistency infuriating him. "You bring it up, but that was one of the players who did even worse, I would say, than Casemiro," Ten Hag said of Ayew. "With Casemiro, you freeze the moment and he's crossing the line there, but I do definitely. "You have to be consistent as a VAR. Last week we missed Christian Eriksen (who is out for three months) by a bad foul. No interference from VAR. - Agencies

## Shaheen furious after post-Nikah photos leaked

KARACHI: Expressing his extreme disappointment after the post-Nikah photos of his were leaked on social media, Pakistan star pacer Shaheen Afridi Saturday expressed disappointment and noted that despite repeated requests, their "privacy was hurt and people kept sharing it without any guilt". Afridi's Nikah Friday was solemnised with former skipper Shahid Afridi's daughter, Ansha, at a local Karachi mosque. Maulana Abdul Sattar performed the Nikah at the Zakaria Mosque, while the bride's rukhsati will take place later. Soon after the Nikah, a reception was also held where cricketers Babar Azam, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Naseem Shah and Shadab Khan, as well as squash legend Jahangir Khan, were among the attendees. Meanwhile, leaked photos of the newly-wed couple started doing the rounds on the internet which hurt the sentiments of the pacer as he asked the people to respect their privacy. Taking to the micro-blogging site Twitter, the pacer wrote: "I would like to humbly request everyone again to kindly coordinate with us and not try to spoil our memorable big day." - DNA

## Iftikhar smashes Wahab for six sixes in one over

QUETTA: Quetta Gladiators' Iftikhar Ahmed on Sunday rocked Quetta's Bugti Stadium as he smashed six consecutive sixes to Peshawar Zalmi's Wahab Riaz in an exhibition match played ahead of Pakistan Super League's (PSL) eighth season. Earlier, Peshawar's captain Babar Azam elected to bat first as he won the toss against Quetta's Sarfaraz Ahmed. Pacer Wahab Riaz provided best possible start for the Zalmis as he dismissed Ahsan Ali and Umar Akmal in the second over of the innings but Quetta fought back in the second half of the innings to post a competitive total on the board. However, Riaz finished 3-47 from his four overs as he was smashed for 6 sixes by veteran Iftikhar Ahmed. The right handed batter scored 94 runs from 50 balls. - Online

## Former president Gen (R)...

FROM PAGE 01  
strength to the bereaved family," the military's media wing said. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry offered his condolences, saying: "Musharraf was a great person [...], 'Pakistan first' was his theory and vision." Former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi, while pouring in condolences, said that Musharraf's services to the Pakistan Army and the country cannot be forgotten. Expressing deep sorrow over the former president's death, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said that he shares his grief with the bereaved family. Musharraf was born on August 11, 1943, in Delhi, British India. He got his commission from the Pakistan Military Academy Kakul on April 19, 1961.

## Imran Khan is to be...

FROM PAGE 01  
the second time he was sent home in three years, while the last time he was thrown out of the office within four years [of rule] for not taking a salary from his son. But you all are witness to how Pakistan progressed whenever Nawaz Sharif was in power." While talking about the massive rise in inflation, the scion of the Sharif political dynasty said the increase in commodity prices is a result of the agreement that Imran Khan signed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during his tenure which he later violated.

## PTI terms IMF...

FROM PAGE 01  
Talking about the political situation in Pakistan, the PTI leader said that the situation after the regime change conspiracy is not hidden from anyone. He said that during nine months, the political and economic structure of Pakistan was destroyed and the constitution and law were flouted. He told PTI supporters that the 'Jail Bharo' movement was carried out in protest against the arrests of PTI leaders by the coalition government. While addressing the rally, he said that in the last nine months, Pakistan is being pushed toward a dead end in which all inflation records were broken and flour is not available even at Rs160 per kg.

## ECP ready for by-polls

FROM PAGE 01  
announced its schedule for holding polls on 33 seats first and also shared its plan for 31 more seats. No election will be possible from April till the completion of the tenure of NA in the third week of August this year. sources in the ECP told The News electoral body had stepped up its efforts for preparations for the general elections in October/November this year.

## Tourists spots in Pak can fetch huge foreign exchange

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday said Pakistan can earn huge foreign exchange from tourism industry by offering world class services to foreign and local tourists especially during winter season when snow capped peaks are centre of attractions of tourists. Talking to CEO Discover Pakistan Dr Kaiser Rafiq, he said if snow capped peaks in other global destinations can be accessed during peak winter season why flights to Pakistan's northern area are disrupted with every weather forecast. He said local tourists operators should be facilitated to manage chartered flights to northern areas to attract foreign and local tourists. He said what's tourists want is security coupled with better service laced with trained guides in addition to best living conditions accompanied by hygienic foods. He said air connectivity to far flung areas in winter of otherwise needs to be improved significantly which will promise an influx of tourists. He said a sizeable number of foreign tourists spend whole of season at one spot where they feel comfortable with facilities and package. - APP

## PSG in talks with Messi over renewing contract

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's football advisor Luis Campos says he will be "delighted" if Argentine superstar Lionel Messi agrees to extend his contract with the French champions. The 35-year-old seven-time Ballon D'Or winner achieved his lifetime ambition of winning the World Cup in December but has maintained a decent run of form on his return to scored a key goal in the 3-1 win over Montpellier and then notched his 10th Ligue 1 goal of the season on Saturday as PSG, missing Kylian Mbappe and Neymar through injury, came from behind to beat Toulouse 2-1. Messi joined PSG in 2021 on a two year contract, with the option of renewing it for another, after an emotional farewell to Barcelona where he had spent his whole professional career. "We are in discussions. I cannot hide that, I would love to have him involved in this project, that he can continue with us," Campos told

French broadcaster TF1. "I would be delighted if he does so, but we are talking at the moment trying to achieve that goal, that Leo Messi remains with us." Campos lauded Messi's recent contributions to the team especially in the win over Montpellier. "At half-time I said to him 'Leo it is imperative you drag the others with you'. He replied: 'keep calm' and he produced an exceptional second-half." Messi's form is just the boost PSG require with Mbappe's injury due to see him miss their Champions League Last 16 first leg clash with Bayern Munich on February 14. "Losing Kylian of course is tough, I saw he was very sad about the injury," said Campos. "However, then I then saw him working out in the morning so as to recuperate as fast as possible. - Agencies

## Atletico draw with Getafe, Elche finally win

Yannick Carrasco flashed a shot wide after a surging run down the left flank as Atletico chased a late winner. The Belgium winger wildly hammered another effort over bar from distance with Simeone urging his team forward from the sidelines

MADRID: Atletico Madrid were unable to tighten their grip on fourth place in La Liga as they suffered a 1-1 draw with lowly Getafe on Saturday. Angel Correa sent Atletico ahead in the derby clash but Enes Unal clinically converted a penalty to level for the relegation-battling visitors. Saul, who was Atletico's star last weekend off the bench, scoring the winner against Osasuna, became the villain at the Metropolitan. The Spanish midfielder handled Borja Mayoral's header in the box to concede the penalty a few minutes after coming on. "We went in front making a great effort, we tried in every way, we played the game we wanted to play," Atletico coach Diego Simeone told DAZN. "Circumstances are not predictable, we didn't get the second goal and what appears in football appeared - a penalty in a play which was not dangerous. "But we have to keep improving." Simeone's side dominated the first half but failed to create many clear chances. However they moved ahead on the hour mark when Correa fired home after Thomas Lemar's shot was saved. The goal was initially flagged offside but was awarded after checking on VAR, by which time Correa had been substituted, celebrating his strike already wearing a big coat on the sidelines. "The play for the goal was a

bit weird," Correa told DAZN. "They thought it was offside, there were doubts about it, then Cholo made the change and in the end it was a goal, it was a bit strange." Correa also said he thought his team deserved a penalty when Getafe's Djene Dakonam appeared to drag down Alvaro Morata in the area in the first half. "I think it was a clear penalty on Alvaro and a second yellow card for the defender," added Correa. "But it's always the same for us. We don't want them to

gift us anything, just be fair, because it was a clear penalty." Atletico's joy was shortlived, with Unal firing home from the spot in the 83rd minute after Saul's handball. Yannick Carrasco flashed a shot wide after a surging run down the left flank as Atletico chased a late winner. The Belgium winger wildly hammered another effort over the bar from distance with Simeone urging his team forward from the sidelines. Atletico striker Memphis Depay, on as a substitute, angrily

appealed for a penalty when he tangled with Djene in the box but referee Mateu Lahoz ignored him. Getafe goalkeeper David Soria made a fine save to keep the Dutch forward at bay at the death. Atletico stay fourth but missed a chance to move closer to Real Sociedad, third, four points above the Rojiblancos with a game in hand. Getafe are 19th on 18 points, two from safety. La Liga's bottom side Elche stunned Villarreal 3-1, winning their first game all season. The Yellow Submarine, provisionally fifth, are chasing Champions League qualification but were sunk by a Pere Milla hat-trick at the Manuel Martinez Valero Stadium. Elche did not manage a win in the first half of the season but finally triumphed in their 20th game, with Milla firing home in the third minute to open the scoring. Gerard Moreno levelled but Elche moved ahead in stoppage time at the end of the first half. Milla converted a penalty after Jorge Cuenca brought down Ezequiel Ponce to restore the advantage for Pablo Machin's side. The forward then netted again from the spot after he had been fouled in the second half to seal his team's win, although he was taken off injured before the hour mark. Elche, on nine points, are 11 from safety and have played a game more than Valladolid, 17th, who face Real Sociedad on Sunday. - Agencies





## Briefs

## Islamophobic graffiti trigger backlash from Bosnians

BELGRADE: Islamophobic graffiti and murals painted in Capljina in Bosnia and Herzegovina triggered a backlash from residents Saturday. Threatening articles such as "Kill Balija (an expression used to insult Bosnian Muslims)" and "We will slaughter Muslim women and children," were written on the Franje Tujman Bridge in Capljina, where the Croat population is concentrated. "The murals were written by irresponsible people who aim to humiliate the Bosniak population and spread hatred, intolerance and division among the residents of Capljina. We hope that the perpetrators are found and the different institutions react," said City Administration spokesperson Danijela Nogolica. She urged residents to be responsible to themselves and others and added the city government condemned the action and the graffiti was painted over. Capljina police said an investigation was launched to find and punish the perpetrators. Vandals attack a mosque last weekend in northeastern Bosnia Herzegovina that sparked backlash and widespread criticism.—APP

## Ankara detains 15 for Daesh links

ANKARA: Police in Istanbul arrested 15 Daesh suspects on Saturday who allegedly received instructions to attack some consulates and places of worship for Jews and Christians. Istanbul Police Department's counterterrorism branch teams have been working on deciphering the activities of the Daesh terrorist organization and apprehending possible suspects. The arrests came after the so-called Khorasan Province (ISKAP) leadership of the terrorist organization Daesh allegedly ordered acts against the Swedish and Dutch Consulates in Istanbul and places of worship belonging to Christian and Jewish citizens following the recent burning of Islam's holy book, the Quran, the Istanbul police department said in a statement. The police said it was determined that the suspects had a connection with the terrorist group and conflict zones but "concrete threats" against foreign missions and places of worship "could not be detected." Sweden and the Netherlands have been the subject of angry protests in Türkiye and worldwide after the Quran burnings.—Agencies

## Sweden deliberately endangers NATO process

Sweden is deliberately endangering its process of entering NATO, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said on Saturday after frequent anti-Türkiye and anti-Islam provocations were not hindered in Stockholm, causing resentment in Ankara. "Terrorist organizations are laying mines ... and Sweden is deliberately stepping on them. They can clear them if they want," Çavuşoğlu said in the southern Turkish province of Antalya. On provocations of terrorist groups targeting Türkiye and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Sweden, Çavuşoğlu said: "It is for Sweden to decide whether to clear the mines or step on them. If you step on them, they will explode." Terrorist organizations are "roaming in your country," he said, adding that if Sweden fulfills its commitments made in a tripartite memorandum for NATO accession, "we will sit down, talk and keep our word." Tensions escalated between Sweden and Türkiye after a range of anti-Türkiye and anti-Islam provocations in the country. In one of the acts that took place in Sweden, Erdoğan's effigy was hanged on a lamppost outside Stockholm's City Hall. In another incident, a far-right activist burned a Quran outside the Turkish Embassy. Türkiye postponed the next tripartite meeting slated for February in Brussels with Sweden and Finland on their NATO bids while also canceling a parliamentary.—Agencies

## Pak High Commission Canada marks Kashmir Solidarity Day

Local ethnic television and radio channels, including Toronto 360 TV, Canada One TV and eawaz, also ran dedicated programmes and documentaries highlighting human rights abuses in IIOJK

DNA

OTTAWA: Pakistan High Commission Canada along with the Pakistan Consulates in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal arranged a series of events comprising pictorial exhibitions, demonstrations, and roadshows to mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day. The main event was held at the Pakistan High Commission in Ottawa where \*High Commissioner Zaheer A. Janjua\* addressed a gathering of Pakistani and Kashmiri diaspora on the significance of Kashmir Solidarity Day. He pointed out that the Jammu and Kashmir was one of the oldest, internationally recognized disputes on the agenda of the UN Security Council. He said there were 11 UN resolutions on this issue, but India had consistently blocked all efforts for holding a free, fair and impartial plebiscite in IIOJK as enshrined in the UN resolutions. The High Commissioner also highlighted the woes and suffering of the Kashmiris following the illegal and unilateral Indian actions of 5th August 2019. He said that India's ruling BJP was implementing the Hindutva agenda of RSS in



Kashmir by assaulting the Kashmiri culture and identity. He said the Kashmiris were being disempowered, disenfranchised and being turned into a minority in their own land through new state and federal laws, domicile rules, delimitations of constituencies, grant of domicile status to non-Kashmiri Hindus, seizure of Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board and forcible singing of Hindu hymns at schools. Zaheer Janjua maintained

that the BJP government of India had demonstrated that its Hindutva-inspired political tendencies and actions not only threaten Kashmir's political identity and historical legacy, but also pose a danger to regional peace and a global order based on international norms of choice and freedom. "We believe that durable peace, security and development in the region hinges on peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute ... it is imperative that the Kashmiris exercise their right to self-determination through a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations," he said, adding Pakistan would continue to extend all possible support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters towards a just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

Later, a pictorial exhibition was arranged at the High Commission to bring out the range of various atrocities and reign of terror unleashed by the Indian forces against the defenceless Kashmiris, particularly after the revocation of special status of IIOJK in August 2019. The recently released BBC documentary on Earlier in the day, of

ice-bearers and members of Kashmir Committee

Ottawa arranged a protest demonstration in front of the Canadian Parliament. Braving the freezing temperature touching minus 30 during the day in Ottawa, the protestors raised placards and chanted slogans calling for an end to Indian brutalities in the occupied Kashmir, and calling on the government and the people of Canada to support the just demand of the Kashmiris for their inalienable right to self-determination. Consulate General of Pakistan Toronto arranged a pictorial exhibition as well as a well-attended webinar to highlight Indian oppression in IIOJK. A truck exhibiting different themes of Kashmir Solidarity Day through giant electronic screens installed on all sides of the trailer also drove through the city. Similarly, in Vancouver a pictorial exhibition and two separate webinars were arranged by the Consulate General of Pakistan. Local ethnic television and radio channels, including Toronto 360 TV, Canada One TV and eawaz, also ran dedicated programmes and documentaries highlighting the human rights abuses in IIOJK.

## Pakistan missions across globe observe Kashmir Solidarity Day

Sabina Aliyeva, Ombudsperson of Azerbaijan paid tribute to the martyrs for the Kashmir cause, adding that their sacrifices will bear the fruit of freedom as justice can be delayed but not denied

DNA

MOSCOW: On the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day on 5th February, a solemn ceremony was held at the Embassy of Pakistan, Moscow. Pakistan Ambassador to the Russian Federation HE Mr. Shafiq Ali Khan, officers and officials of diplomatic corps and representatives of Pakistani community participated in the ceremony. The ceremony began with recitation from Holy Quran, followed by National Anthem. A special documentary on Kashmir was displayed for the audience covering the Indian atrocities committed against the Kashmiri population. The documentary also highlighted the Indian designs and its historical background. Messages of the President of Pakistan and Prime Minister on Kashmir Solidarity Day were read out by Third Secretaries Mr. Muhammad Tayyab and Mr. Jetha Nand respectively. A photo exhibition depicting atrocities by the Indian occupying forces in the IIOJK was also arranged for the participants. The event ended with resolve from the participants to continue support to Kashmiri brethren in their struggle against Indian occupation. Photo Exhibition held in Baku

The Embassy of Pakistan in Baku, in collaboration with the ADA University, organized an International Conference on Kashmir on Friday 3 February 2023 to



highlight the significance of Kashmir Solidarity Day. A Photo Exhibition depicting the plight of the Kashmiri people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) was also organized on the side line of the Kashmir Conference. Since Azerbaijan is an active member of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir, a

large number of Azerbaijani nationals representing various walks of life including academia, media, think tanks and students attended the Kashmir Conference. Speakers from Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Türkiye addressed the event. Ms. Sabina Aliyeva, Ombudsperson of the Republic of Azerbaijan was the keynote speaker. Member

of the Milli Mejlis (Parliament) and member of the Human Rights Committee of the Parliament Mr. Razi Nurullayev and Head of prestigious think tank Center of Analysis of International Relations Mr. Farid Shafiyev also spoke on the occasion. Mrs. Mishal Malik, spouse of Kashmiri leader Yasmin Malik and a human rights activist from

Türkiye addressed the conference through video link. Ambassador Bilal Hayee, in his opening remarks, recounted the historical events of India's occupation of Jammu & Kashmir and its unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 to alter the disputed status of the territory in a bid to change its demographic structure & identity.

## Protests continue against Netanyahu's government

TEL AVIV: Thousands of people took to the streets in Israeli cities Saturday for a fifth straight week to protest the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu concerning proposed judicial reforms. Demonstrators from non-governmental organizations, lawyers, and technology sectors staged the protests/Police closed roads leading to squares in Tel Aviv during the day and took security measures in the surrounding area. Thousands of demonstrators of different ages carried Israeli flags on Eliezer Kaplan Street in downtown Tel Aviv. They chanted "No to dictatorship" and "Democracy" as former politicians, artists, and prominent figures took the roads. About 50,000 people attended demonstrations in Tel Aviv, according to media reports. Demonstrators in Tel Aviv also protested Israel's occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and carried Palestinian flags and a banner that reads "A nation that occupies another nation can never be free." Protestor Mischa Raichman told Anadolu that demonstrators wanted to "draw the attention of the crowd here to Israel's occupation." "If people do not talk about the occupation and we cannot end this occupation, there will be no democracy. There cannot be a democracy with occupation. These people are here to fight for democracy and against the government," he said. "There can be no democracy when there is occupation." He said demonstrators came to increase the number of people who stand against the occupation. Amita Becker said she joined the demonstrations to protest the government's recent judicial regulation.—APP

## US shoots down Chinese 'spy' balloon

BEIJING: The US shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon on Saturday which had been spotted above US airspace off the coast of South Carolina. An operation is underway to recover debris from the balloon in the Atlantic Ocean. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the decision was made at the direction of US President Biden. "U.S. fighter aircraft assigned to U.S. Northern Command successfully brought down the high altitude surveillance balloon launched by and belonging to the People's Republic of China (PRC)," he said in a statement. "The balloon, which was being used by the PRC in an attempt to surveil strategic sites in the continental United States, was brought down above U.S. territorial waters. On Wednesday, President Biden gave his authorization to take down the surveillance balloon as soon as the mission could be accomplished without undue risk to American lives under the balloon's path, it said. "Today's deliberate and lawful action demonstrates that President Biden and his national security team will always put the safety and security of the American people first while responding effectively to the PRC's unacceptable violation of our sovereignty."—APP

## Munir Akram clarifies remarks on Pakhtun culture

NEW YORK: Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram on Saturday clarified his controversial remarks regarding Pakhtun culture after heavy backlash from Pakhtuns and human rights activists in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. After the statements made by Ambassador Akram received hefty criticism, he clarified that the intentions were not to target anyone and his remarks were misunderstood. In response to the queries of a media outlet, Mr Akram said he "regrets if his remarks were misunderstood or hurt anyone's feelings. There was no disrespect meant to Pashtun culture which is highly progressive and deserves full respect across the world". Mr Akram made the controversial comments during a briefing at the UN in New York on Wednesday, in which the ambassador linked the Taliban government's restrictions on women with the Pakhtun culture. He stated that, "The restrictions that have been put by the Afghan interim government, flow not so much from a religious perspective as from a peculiar cultural perspective of the Pashtun culture.—DNA

## Trade and industry to resist IMF pressure

DNA

KARACHI: As the International Monetary Fund has been pushing the government to increase the general sales tax rate to a minimum of 18 percent, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has announced to resist such destructive and harsh move, as the country's debt servicing cost might escalate to alarmingly Rs5.2 trillion, with inflation accelerating to 29% and economic growth rate slowing down to 1.5 percent in the current fiscal year. FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar stated that the IMF's demand to consider increasing the GST rate by 1% to 18% in the current fiscal year would prove to be highly inflationary and 1% increase would push the prices of all goods upwards. The higher inflation and

lower economic growth would cause higher unemployment and poverty in the country, he added. He expressed his dissatisfaction about the government's ability to raise \$8 billion from capital markets and foreign commercial banks in these challenging times. He said that the government has already spent Rs2.56 trillion on debt servicing during July-December period of the current fiscal year. The central bank last month increased the interest rates to 17%, which might not help contain inflation but will surely further bleed the budget. He raised questions about the inflationary impact of the planned increase in electricity prices to lower the circular debt. The government's estimates were that due to further increase in the electricity prices, inflation could jump to 29%. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported that inflation hit the 48 years' highest level of 27.6% in January. The

likely acceleration in the index would bring more misery for the trade and industry which was facing difficulties in meeting soaring cost. He asked the government to inform the IMF that due to floods, tight monetary policy, high inflation, and a less conducive global environment, the economic growth rate might slow down in the range of 1.5% to 2% - a pace that was even lower than the population growth rate and would cause more unemployment in Pakistan. He said that the agriculture sector would contract, the industrial sector might show nominal growth but the services sector was likely to grow around 3%. Compared to old estimates of generating about 1.5 million new jobs, the government had now realized that the additional jobs in the current fiscal year might not be more than half a million. According to some estimates, about two million new entrants came in the market in search of jobs every

year and a low additional employment number suggested that there would be a higher jobless rate in Pakistan. The government claimed that it had made arrangements for the \$30 billion gross external loans for this fiscal year, as the country's economic viability was at stake, as its gross official foreign exchange reserves plunged to \$3.1 billion. The government still believed it would raise \$1.5 billion by floating Eurobonds and had made it part of the external financing plan. As against the budgeted over \$7 billion foreign commercial loans, the Ministry of Finance still saw \$6.3 billion materializing in the current fiscal year. The IMF was of the view that in present circumstances, it would be difficult to raise \$8 billion from the capital markets and foreign commercial banks. There were also questions whether the government could arrange at

least \$4 billion for making upcoming debt repayments, excluding rollovers. It hoped to receive a total \$11 billion from the multilateral creditors during the current fiscal year but its materialization depended upon the revival of the IMF program. So far, the Asian Development Bank had been helping Pakistan in a major way, but the World Bank was looking towards the IMF. There is also issue about the low FBR's tax-to-GDP ratio, which was now estimated at around 8.4% at the inflated size of the economy. On the projected old size of Rs78 trillion, the ratio was 9.6% of the GDP, which the IMF did not endorse. Presently, the total cost of the debt servicing could peak to a whopping Rs5.3 trillion in the current fiscal year 2022-23 while the government had budgeted Rs3.94 trillion but the revised projections were Rs1.3 trillion higher than the budget estimates.



## Briefs

### Vladimir Putin promised that he will not kill Zelenskyy

TAL AVIV: Former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has said he received a promise from Russian President Vladimir Putin not to kill his Ukrainian counterpart. According to news reports on Sunday, Bennett had asked Putin about whether he intended to kill Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during the early days of the war. "I asked 'what's up with this? Are you planning to kill Zelenskyy?' He said 'I won't kill Zelenskyy.' I then said to him 'I have to understand that you're giving me your word that you won't kill Zelenskyy.' He said 'I'm not going to kill Zelenskyy.'" Bennett said he then called Zelenskyy to inform him of Putin's pledge. "Listen, I came out of a meeting, he's not going to kill you," he asks, "are you sure?" I said "100 percent he won't kill you." - Online

### EU to fund projects for green inclusive growth

ISLAMABAD: President Pak-British Friendship Council North West Chapter Muhammad Arbab Khan Sunday said the European Union will fund three new development programmes worth €87 million to support green and inclusive economic growth in Pakistan. Talking to Chairman UK-Pakistan Joint Business Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq, he said the programmes are part of the European Union's support to Pakistan in post-flood rehabilitation and reconstruction and are designed in close cooperation with the federal and provincial governments. He said these projects will focus on KP, GB, and Balochistan and aims at improving agricultural value chains, providing access to clean energy and enhancing the availability of the skilled labour force, said a press release. He said they are also part of the broader coordination efforts by the EU and its member states materialised through the Team Europe Initiative and contribute to EU's Global Gateway, an overarching initiative to link the digital, energy and transport sectors and to strengthen health, education and research systems across the world. - APP

### Maryam pays tributes to Kashmiris' struggle

LAHORE: Senior Vice President and Chief Organiser Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Maryam Nawaz expressing solidarity with Kashmiris of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK) paid tributes to spirit of its people for continuing struggle for the right to self determination. In her message on the Kashmir Solidarity Day on Sunday, she said despite illegal occupation of Indian forces, hearts of the Kashmiri people were with Pakistan. The Kashmiris wanted implementation on the United Nations Security Council's resolutions besides continuing their struggle for their rights as per the UN resolutions, she added. Maryam Nawaz said Indian government had been deviating from the UN resolutions but could never suppress voice and struggle of the Kashmiris. - APP

### Sanjrani condoles death of Pervez Musharraf

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Sunday expressed his deepest sorrow and grief over sad demise of former President Gen (Retd) Pervez Musharraf. In a condolence message, the Chairman expressed his sympathies to the bereaved family saying, he shares his grief with the family members of Pervez Musharraf also. The Chairman Senate prayed to Allah Almighty to raise his ranks and grant courage to Musharraf's family to bear this shock with courage and patience. - APP



**MUZAFFARABAD:** Leaders of all Political Parties of Azad Jammu and Kashmir called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Muzaffarabad on 5th February, 2023. PM AJ&K Sardar Tanvir Ilyas and Speaker, Legislative Assembly Chaudhary Anwar Ul Haq were also present in meeting. - DNA

# Azerbaijan opens for private sector initiatives

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan have good diplomatic relations but we have yet to succeed in translating these ties into maintaining sound bilateral trade

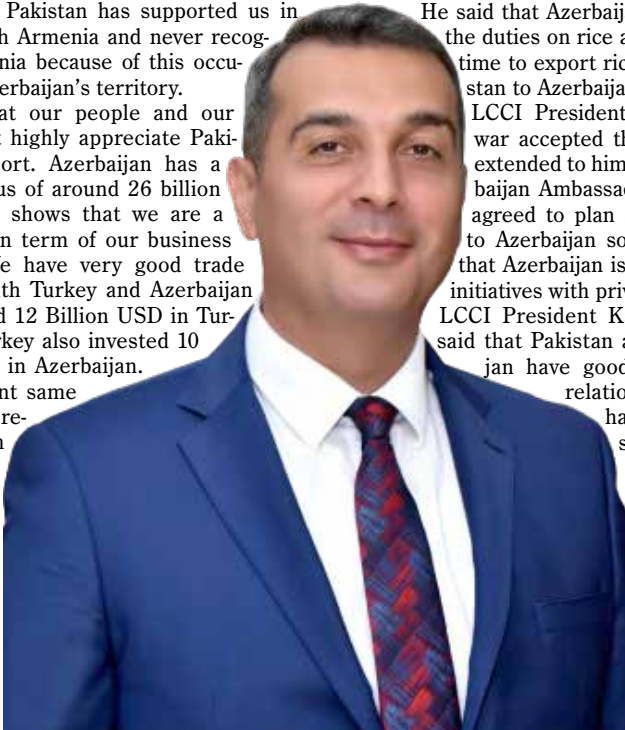
DNA

LAHORE: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov has said Azerbaijan has started direct flights from Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad to Azerbaijan and as a result, 50 thousand Pakistanis flown to Azerbaijan last year. This has also helped to increase the trade turnover three times. He was speaking at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry. LCCI President Kashif Anwar, 3rd Secretary, Embassy of Azerbaijan Behbud Gadali and LCCI Executive Committee Members spoke on the occasion. The Ambassador said that in the last 1.5 years, since he came to Pakistan as an ambassador, this is his third visit to LCCI which shows our intent for the business and trade relations with Pakistan. He said that Lahore Chamber is a biggest chamber and also represents the provincial capital of the largest province of the country. This also shows the possibilities and opportunities both countries possess. The Ambassador also emphasized on the need for exhibitions which he termed most important and significant to increase bilateral trade. We have already delegations from Islamabad and Gujranwala Chambers and we hope to see a delegation from LCCI very soon. He said that we have a very easy visa process which takes only three hours to get Azerbaijan visa. Trade is not only government's or business community's task but all the segments of society can also help in this regard as we believe that today's tourists can be a tomorrow's trad-

er or student or a high government official. He said that Azerbaijan has established a few working groups and also increase the number of those working groups and we are already working to cooperate in energy, health and agriculture sector of Pakistan. He said that private sector must take an active role as relations of both the countries are unique. Pakistan has supported us in our war with Armenia and never recognized Armenia because of this occupation of Azerbaijan's territory. He said that our people and our government highly appreciate Pakistan's support. Azerbaijan has a trade surplus of around 26 billion USD which shows that we are a successful in term of our business projects. We have very good trade relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan has invested 12 Billion USD in Turkey and Turkey also invested 10 billion USD in Azerbaijan. We also want same economic relations with Pakistan so that the three flags of Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Turkey can fly together. He said that we are already im-

porting rice from Pakistan and Pakistani rice has a huge market in Azerbaijan. He said that we want trade relations in the favor of Pakistan and want to sign Preferential Trade Agreement with Pakistan to boost economic relations. He said that more than 300 businessmen have visited Azerbaijan which is encouraging to see. He said that Azerbaijan has lifted the duties on rice and it is high time to export rice from Pakistan to Azerbaijan. LCCI President Kashif Anwar accepted the invitation extended to him by the Azerbaijan Ambassador and also agreed to plan a delegation to Azerbaijan soon. He said that Azerbaijan is open for all initiatives with private sector. LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan have good diplomatic relations but we have yet to succeed in translating these ties into maintaining sound bilateral trade. He said that according to the trade figures tak-

en from the State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan's exports to Azerbaijan in 2021-22 were 6.3 million dollars which considerably dropped from 15.5 million dollars in 2020-21. However, the imports from Azerbaijan improved to 1.5 million dollars from 0.7 million dollars during that period. He said that there is a need to explore the ways of increasing trade between both countries. The main reason of such a low level of trade is lack of proper information about each other's markets. He said that Pakistan's exports to Azerbaijan are mainly comprised of Rice, textile, and frozen meat while we import Petroleum gas from Azerbaijan. There is definitely a need of finding new products lines and new avenues of cooperation for enhancing trade between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. The LCCI President said that Pakistani products including pharmaceuticals, surgical instruments, sports goods, value-added textiles, leather products, home-made crafts, processed food and engineering goods have great scope in Azerbaijan. There is a great potential of Joint Ventures in tourism sector. Azerbaijan can also benefit from the expertise of Pakistan in IT sector. He said that the commercial sections of our respective embassies have to play a positive role in this connection. Similarly, in order to increase private to private contacts and bilateral trade, the embassies and chambers should provide every possible assistance. He said that both countries should plan to organize exchange of trade delegations and also holding single country exhibitions on reciprocal basis.



# China condemns US strike on suspected spy balloon

BEIJING: The United States has shot down a suspected Chinese spy balloon off the coast of the US state of South Carolina, a week after it entered US airspace and triggered a dramatic spying saga that worsened relations between Beijing and Washington. The military attack on Saturday drew an immediate rebuke from China, which warned of "necessary" responses and insisted the "unmanned civilian airship" was a weather research balloon that had strayed into US airspace "completely accidentally". US defence officials said multiple fighter and refuelling aircraft were involved in Saturday's mission, but just one - an F-22 fighter jet from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia - took the shot at 2:39pm (19:39 GMT) using a single AIM-9X supersonic, heat-seeking, air-to-air missile. The balloon, which had been flying at about 18,300 metres (60,000 ft), was shot down about six nautical miles off the coast of South Carolina. US President Joe Biden told reporters that he had issued an order on Wednesday to take down the balloon, but the Pentagon had recommended waiting until it could be done over open water to safeguard civilians from debris crashing to Earth. "We successfully took it down, and I want to compliment our aviators who did it," Biden said in Maryland. The shootdown came shortly after the US government ordered a halt to flights around the South Carolina coast due to what it said at the time was an undisclosed "national security effort". Flights resumed on Saturday afternoon. Television footage showed a small explosion, followed by the balloon falling towards the water. The Associated Press news agency said an operation was under way in US territorial waters in the Atlantic Ocean to recover debris from the

balloon. Reuters quoted a US military official as saying that the debris field was spread out over 11km (seven miles) of ocean and that multiple military vessels were on site. US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin called the operation a "deliberate and lawful action" that came in response to China's "unacceptable violation of our sovereignty". He said the balloon was being used by China "in an attempt to surveil strategic sites in the continental United States". Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau praised the operation, tweeting, "Canada strongly supports this action - we'll keep working together ... on our security and defence." The balloon first entered US airspace in Alaska on January 28 before moving into Canadian airspace on Monday, January 30. It then re-entered US airspace over northern Idaho on January 31, a US defence official said. Once it crossed over US land, it did not return to open waters, making a shootdown difficult. China's foreign ministry condemned Saturday's hit on the balloon, expressing Beijing's "strong dissatisfaction and protests against the use of force by the United States to attack the unmanned civilian airship". It criticised the US for "an obvious overreaction and a serious violation of international practice" and said it "will resolutely uphold the relevant company's legitimate rights and interests, and at the same time reserve the right to take further necessary responses". The balloon's presence in the skies above North America has dealt a severe blow to already strained US-Chinese relations, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken abruptly cancelling on Friday a high-stakes Beijing trip aimed at easing tensions. - DNA



**LAHORE:** The Director of the Italian Development Cooperation Luca Maestriperi calls on caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. - DNA

### Iraqis protest after father kills YouTuber daughter

NEWS DESK

BAGHDAD: Iraqi activists protested Sunday to demand a law against domestic violence, days after a YouTuber was strangled by her father in a killing that has outraged the conservative country. Tiba al-Ali, 22, was killed by her father on January 31 in the southern province of Diwaniyah, interior ministry spokesman Saad Maan said on Twitter on Friday. Maan said there had been an attempt to mediate between the young woman and her relatives to resolve a "family dispute". The father later surrendered to the police and confessed to murdering his daughter. On Sunday, security forces prevented some 20 activists from demonstrating outside the country's Supreme Judicial Council, and they gathered instead at a road leading to the building, an AFP journalist said. Some held placards saying "Stop killing women" and "Tiba's killer must be held to account". "We demand laws to protect women, especially laws against domestic violence," 22-year-old protester Rose Hamid told AFP. "We came here to protest against Tiba's murder and against all others. Who will be the next victim?" Another demonstrator, Lina Ali, said: "We will keep mobilising because of rising domestic violence and killings of women." On the sidelines of Sunday's demonstration, human rights activist Hanaa Edwar was received by a magistrate from the Supreme Judicial Council to whom she presented the protesters' grievances. Tiba al-Ali had lived in Turkey since 2017 and was visiting Iraq when she was killed, a security official in Diwaniyah told AFP. In Turkey she had gained a following on YouTube, posting videos of her daily life in which her fiance often appeared. Recordings have been shared on social media by a friend of Ali, and picked up by activists, reportedly of conversations with the father, angry because she was living in Turkey. In the recordings, she also accuses her brother of sexual harassment. AFP could not independently verify the authenticity of the voice recordings.

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