



Islamabad POST

Thursday, February 23, 2023

Pakistan's Credible Daily Newspaper

Price Rs. 25

Indonesian envoy calls for Pakistan-Indonesia academia linkages

Detailed News On Page-04

Pope Francis urges end to war in Ukraine

Detailed News On Page-07



Anderson becomes No.1 Test bowler

Detailed News On Page-06



Supreme Court to decide Who's responsible for holding polls in the Punjab, KP

Chief Justice takes suo motto notice; a nine-member bench will begin proceedings at 2pm today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Atta Bandial Wednesday took suo motto notice of the delay in elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. CJP has formed a nine-member larger bench for the hearing tomorrow. CJP Bandial will head the larger bench that also includes Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Athar Manullah. The questions referred for the consideration of the Hon'ble Bench if so deemed appropriate are, inter alia, as follows: a) Who has the constitutional responsibility and authority for appointing the date for the holding of a general election to a Provincial Assembly, upon its dissolution in the various situations envisaged by and under the Constitution? b) How and when is this constitutional responsibility to be discharged?

PML-N seeks recusal of 2 SC judges

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Wednesday the PML-N's legal team would ask the two judges of the Supreme Court to rescue themselves from hearing the cases against party supremo Nawaz Sharif and other leaders. In a series of tweets, the interior minister also revealed the names of the judges, saying they had biased attitude towards the leaders of the PML-N. He said one of the judges had been appointed a supervising judge in the case against Nawaz Sharif and the party had no expectation of justice from him. He claimed the

Continued on Page 06

c) What are the constitutional responsibilities and duties of the Federation and the Province with regard to the holding of the general election? CJP directed to register an appropriate suo motto case in the above terms and fix the same along with the petitions pending in the Court and fix the same before the Hon'ble Bench on 23.02.2023 at 2:00 pm. The apex court's suo motto notice came after Punjab and KP governors refused to set the date for elections while the Election Commission of Pakistan also failed to reach a decision. President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi has used his constitutional right under Article 57-1 of the Election Act 2017 to set April 9 as the date for holding the general elections. However, the ECP is still pondering whether to accept the presidential decree or not and had sought legal opinion from the Advocate General of Pakistan. AGP also gave verbal opinion to the ECP suggesting that after the passage of the 18th amendment, the power to announce the date for elections in the provinces lies with governors instead of the president.

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF KUWAIT



ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest Khurram Dastgir Federal Minister for Energy, Ambassador of Kuwait Nassar Abdulrahman J Almutairi, and others cutting cake on the occasion of the 62nd Anniversary of the Independence Day and 32nd Anniversary of the Liberation Day of the State of Kuwait. - DNA

President Arif Alvi, Ukraine President discusses ties, war

Zelensky asks President Alvi to back 'peace resolution' in UN



DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, made a telephone call to President Dr. Arif Alvi. The two leaders discussed the Pakistan-Ukraine political and economic ties, including energy and food security issues facing the developing world in the wake of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Both sides emphasized the need for enhancing economic and trade relations for the mutual benefit of the two countries. President Zelensky, referring to his ten-point peace formula, sought Pakistan's support on the draft resolution being tabled in the United Nations General Assembly for ending the Ukraine-Russia conflict. President Dr. Arif Alvi conveyed that Pakistan remained deeply concerned at the conflict in Ukraine. He added that Pakistan supported a peaceful solution to the conflict in accordance with the UN Charter. He further said that the contents of the draft resolution were being evaluated by the Government of Pakistan.

Cut in salaries and perks PM announces austerity measures to tackle inflation

Shehbaz emphasises these measures are necessary to address country's ongoing economic challenges

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: While eyeing an ambitious plan to save Rs200 billion annually, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced on Wednesday that federal ministers, advisors, and assistants will not receive salaries and other benefits as part of the government's austerity measures. Speaking to the press after a meeting of the federal cabinet in Islamabad, the prime minister stated that all federal ministers would now be required to pay their own electricity, gas, and water bills. The move is part of the government's broader efforts to cut expenses and reduce the budget deficit. PM Shehbaz emphasised that these measures were necessary to address the country's economic challenges, including the



rising inflation and debt. He noted that the government was committed to restoring economic stability and promoting growth. The decision to reduce ministerial benefits comes amid ongoing economic challenges for Pakistan, which is facing a high inflation rate and a large budget deficit. The government has already implemented a

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Dialogue vital to resolve issues

DNA

BUDAPEST: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari says dialogue and co-operation is the only way forward to resolve international issues. Addressing envoys conference in Hungary on Wednesday, he said the international community must stand united and rise above conflicts to tackle the common challenges faced by the mankind in the form of climate change. The Foreign Minister said we should not turn our back to diplomacy and peace. A day earlier, FM Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met his Lithuanian counterpart Gabrielius Landsbergis and held talks on expanding bilateral co-op in the areas of trade, investment and education.

Hate politics harming country

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PML-Q) supreme leader Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain said on Thursday the politics of hatred was hurting the country badly. Mr Hussain visited with PML-Q leader Chaudhry Shafay Hussain at party office in Davis Road. Mr Hussain received an overwhelming response from the party workers on his arrival. Mr Hussain stated on the occasion, "Whatever steps we have taken are in accordance with the PML-Q's law and constitution." The former premier emphasised the importance of taking initiatives to bring the country out of its severe economic hardship, adding there was an urgent need for all party leaders to stand united in dealing with the severe challenges.

'Jail bharo': Senior PTI leaders offer arrests

Qureshi, Asad Umar and Azam Swati entered the police van to be arrested

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: PTI leaders presented themselves for arrest on Wednesday as the party's 'Jail Bhare Tehreek' (court arrest drive) commenced from Lahore, which according to ex-premier Imran Khan is aimed at countering the "attack" on the party's fundamental rights and the economic "meltdown". The PTI shared footage of party leaders, including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Asad Umar and Senator Azam Swati, sitting inside a police van. The party also claimed that those responsible for making the arrests had "vanished". In a video shared on Twitter, Qureshi - speaking from inside the police van - said that it was a matter of great pride that he was the first to give himself up for arrest as promised earlier. "This movement will continue until the imported government puts an end to the lawlessness in the country" and is held accountable for the last 10 months in the people's court, he said. Meanwhile, PTI Vice President Fawad Chaudhry said that numerous party leaders and workers, including Qureshi, Umar, Ejaz Chaudhry, had given themselves up for arrest. "Around 500-700 PTI workers have given themselves up for arrest," he said in a video message.

Continued on Page 06

Imran slams govt over austerity measures

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Minutes after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif unveiled a host of austerity measures, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan heaped scorn at the Pakistan Democratic Movement-led (PDM) government, asking rulers to bring back the country's "looted money". "If you want to do something [for the country], then bring your [looted] money back from abroad," Khan said while addressing the nation via video link from his Zaman Park residence on Wednesday. At the same time, the PTI chief paid a tribute to his party workers and supporters in Lahore for participating in the 'Jail Bhare Tehreek' - the court arrest movement which kick-started earlier today. The incumbent government unveiled austerity measures to

Continued on Page 06

Restructuring Afghanistan links possible to bury failed policies

The busiest, historical and traditional crossing point between two neighboring countries Torkham is locked from last four days

SHAMIM SHAHID

LIKE successive governments in Afghanistan, the Taliban regime also called as Emirate Islami Afghanistan has lost its trust in Pakistan, which might be harmful to the latter's interests both internally and externally. The busiest, historical and traditional crossing point between the two neighboring countries Torkham is locked from last four days, thus making uncertain thousands of families especially healthy wealthy businesses uncertain. Hundreds of trucks loaded with perishable food items especially fruits and vegetables returned to Peshawar and Jalalabad, whereas Taliban directed the countrymen avoid travelling or visits to Pakistan via Torkham. Both the sides are nowadays engaged in war of words, clarifications and allegations.

Continued on Page 06

High-level delegation in Kabul

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD / KABUL: The Foreign Office (FO) said on Wednesday that a Pakistani delegation has arrived in Kabul for talks with officials of the interim Afghan government on security-related matters. "A high-ranking delegation led by the minister for defence is in Kabul today to meet with officials of the Afghan interim government to discuss security-related matters including counter-terrorism measures," it said in a tweet. In photos released by the Afghan prime minister's office, the Pakistani delegation - comprising Inter-Services Intelligence Director General Lt Gen Nadeem Anjum, Foreign Secretary AsadMajeed Khan, Chargé d'Affaires (CdA)

to Afghanistan UbaidurRehman-Nizamani and Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan Mohammad Sadiq - can be seen meeting Afghanistan's acting deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar alongside Defence Minister Khawaja Asif. A statement from the Afghan Council of Ministers (prime minister) said the two sides discussed economic cooperation, regional connectivity, trade, and bilateral relations. "Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighbours and should have cordial relations. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan wants expansion of commercial and economic relations with Pakistan as such relations are in the

Continued on Page 06

DISCOVER PAKISTAN

A LAND OF LAKES AND MOUNTAINS
Islamabad | Faisalabad | Quetta | Swat | Gilgit | Ahar, Hunza | Shigar | Khapla

SERENA HOTELS
HOTELS AND RESORTS
PALACE & PORTS

For reservations, please call 111-133-133 or email at sales@serena.com.pk

serenahotelsofficial
 serenahotelsofficial
 serena_hotels

Power shutdown notices for Peshawar

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) on Wednesday announced power shut down notices for different areas of Peshawar, Mardan, Abbottabad, Wana and Tarbela due to maintenance work on grid stations and power distribution lines.

According to PESCO, power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Wapda House Grid Station on February 23, and 28 from 09:00AM to 02:00PM, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Hassan Ghari feeders will face inconvenience.

Power supply will remain suspended from 132KV Rahman Baba Grid Station on February 23 and 27 from 09:00AM to 03:00PM, resultantly consumer of 11 KV Kachori, Sharif Abad, Jan Mast Colony, New Hazar Khwani, Surzai, Phandoo, Urmair-II, Yakatoot, New Chamkani, Ring Road, Beri Bagh, Rashid Ghari, and Akhonabad feeders will face inconvenience. —APP

ANP announces boycott of NA by-elections

PESHAWAR, Feb 22 (AP-): Provincial President Awami National Party (ANP) Aimal Wali Khan on Wednesday criticized politics of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and said that only PTI has created chaos in the country which incurred huge losses to national exchequer. In a statement issued here from Bacha Khan Markaz, Aimal Wali said that earlier PTI chief contested poles on nine national assembly seats and give a huge setback to country's economy. He said keeping in view current scenario of economic crisis it is important to save maximum finances and avoid contesting poles on NA seats as general elections would be held throughout the country after six months period. Aimal Wali Khan said that ANP was always ready to contest elections and had announced their candidates in 18 constituencies, earlier. However Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have also requested a postponement of elections. It was mentioned here that allied party of incumbent government, MQM had also announced by-elections boycott while PMLN and PPP have withdrawn nomination papers of their candidates contesting by-elections.—APP

Kazakhstan President to pay historic visit to Pakistan: Envoy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will visit Pakistan this year, which will start a new chapter of trade and economic relations between the two countries. This was said by H.E. Yezhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). The envoy said that the President of Kazakhstan is visiting Pakistan after 20 years, which will be a historic visit as 20 MoUs would be signed during his visit to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation in multiple fields between Kazakhstan and Pakistan. He said that Kazakhstan is launching direct flights between Almaty and Lahore from April and Almaty and Karachi from May this year that would help promote B2B and P2P relations. He invited the ICCI delegation to visit Kazakhstan to join the launch of direct flights. He appreciated the role of Zafar Bakhtawari, former



President ICCI for first-ever direct flights between the two countries. He said a delegation of businesswomen of Pakistan would also visit Kazakhstan to explore business cooperation with Kazakh counterparts. He said that Kazakhstan intends to sign a transit trade agreement and agreement between the banking sectors of both countries that would provide a legal

framework to the business communities of both sides for bilateral trade promotion. He said that Kazakhstan provides Pakistan easy access to Eurasian and Central Asian markets and Pakistan should take advantage of this potential. He said that a number of delegations from both sides would exchange visits this year that would take the bilateral relations of both

countries to the next level. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) offered that ICCI would like to host a dinner reception in honor of the President of Kazakhstan during his visit to Pakistan. He said that both countries should focus on improving trade ties as their current bilateral trade is quite low.

He welcomed the launch of direct flights and assured that the ICCI delegation would visit Kazakhstan to join its inauguration ceremony. He said that direct flights between Islamabad and Astana should also be started soon to connect the capital cities of both countries. He said that Pakistani ports provide the shortest route to land-locked Kazakhstan to the Arabia Sea and em-

phasized that both countries should also establish land and railways links to enhance business relations. He said that both countries can cooperate in many fields including construction, agriculture, energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, tourism, engineering equipment, machinery, banking & finance for mutual benefits. He invited the investors of Kazakhstan to explore JVs and investment in CPEC and in other sectors of Pakistan's economy and assured that ICCI would cooperate in connecting them with partners in Pakistan. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan are gateways for each other to get easy access to their respective regional markets and they should develop close cooperation to take advantage of this potential. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI termed the launch of direct flights a historic development between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. He said that Kazakhstan is an emerging power in Central Asia and Pakistan would like to develop close cooperation with it for improving trade and economic ties.

Josh remembered on his death anniversary

ISLAMABAD: Today is the 41st death anniversary of Sahbibr Hasan Khan, also known as Josh Malihabadi, one of the most notable Urdu poets of the 20th century. Born in Malihabad near Lucknow in 1898, he met his death in Islamabad on February 22, 1982, at the age of 83. Josh inherited a legacy of poetry from his great-grandfather, grandfather, and father. He began writing poetry at an early age, and his work features a unique charged diction and a new set of implicated metaphors.

Josh's poetry was known for its acute sociopolitical concerns and romantic preoccupations, earning him the title, 'Poet of Revolution.' Throughout his life, he published numerous collections of poetry, including 'Rooh-e-Adab', 'Shola-O-Shabnam', 'Junoon-o-Hikmat', and 'Nawaareedaat-e-Josh'.

His renowned works of prose include 'Nujoom-O-Jawahar' and 'Ishaarat'. He left Hyderabad's Dar-ul-Tarjuma, Osmania University's bureau of translation and later joined Shalimar Pictures at Poona, where he wrote lyrics for films. He worked as an editor of Aajkal, a literary journal published by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, for eight years until he migrated to Pakistan in 1956.—APP

FIA arrests 3 suspects involved in Hundi

PESHAWAR: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa zone on Wednesday arrested three men for their alleged involvement in Hawala and Hundi business, and other illegal activities. The FIA team, led by Assistant Director Shafiqat Jamal and supervised by Deputy Director Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar Afzal Khan Niazi, arrested 3 suspects from Chowk Yadgar Peshawar. The arrested suspects, identified as Jafar, Ishaq, and Imran Khan, were found in possession of an amount of 8.31 million rupees. The accused have been booked under the relevant charges, and further investigation is currently underway. This move comes as part of the FIA's ongoing crackdown against illegal activities across the country. The spokesperson for the FIA has emphasized the agency's commitment to taking strict action against anyone involved in illegal practices and urged the public to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in curbing such activities.—APP

PTI's court arrest drive badly flopped due to least interest by people: Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Interior Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's drama of 'Jail Bharo' (court arrest) drive badly flopped as the people had shown least interest to stand by the 'cheaters'. The drive was, in fact, aimed at escaping from being jailed as no top PTI leader turned up to court arrest today, he said while addressing a press conference. Attaullah Tarar said PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his spouse would have to appear before the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in connection with the charges framed against them. There were past precedents, he added. The female family members of Aleem Khan, Jehangir Tareen and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had to face trials while Maryam Nawaz was even imprisoned.

He said Imran Khan's wife had sold out the Toshakhana gifts worth billions of rupees and her friend Farah Gogi was her accomplice in that crime. All of them would have to face accountability for the embezzlement of the national wealth, he added. The SAPM said Umar Farooq, who had purchased the watches stolen from the Toshakhana, had publicly presented the evidence, while the receipt made public by Imran Khan's family that the watches were sold to a vendor in Sector F-6 of Islamabad, seemed to be fake. Farah Gogi, he said, even used a private jet for money laundering and selling the state gifts abroad. She (Farah Gogi) and her husband minted money over postings and transfers (of bureaucrats) in Punjab, Tarar added. The SAPM said Imran Khan was scared of being imprisoned for the

crime of stealing gifts from the Toshakhana and others and that was why he was trying to evade court trials. He claimed that an amount of Rs 1.6 billion was embezzled and transferred to the accounts of Farah Gogi. A 'cash boy' of Farah Gogi was apprehended by the Federal Investigation Agency a few days back from the Islamabad Airport and an inquiry was underway in that regard. Tarar said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) appealed to the Chief Justice of Pakistan not to fix the cases of its leaders before the benches, including Justice Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan and Justice Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi. He welcomed the decision of lawyers' bodies, including the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) to file separate complaints of misconduct in the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against a Supreme Court judge after

the audio leak regarding his conversation with former Punjab chief minister Perwaiz Elahi about the fixation of a case before a particular bench or judge. He alleged, "A judge does not listen to the cases of Imran Khan, while another judge, whose audio leak has recently surfaced, is listening to the cases against the PML-N leaders." He said the PTI chairman had been using delaying tactics in various cases, including the Toshakhana case instead of facing them, but he would have to ultimately face indictment in the Toshkhana reference. The SAPM claimed that Imran Khan had allegedly contacted a former chief justice to use his contacts for relief to him in various cases. The former CJP should refrain from such matters as politicians would themselves resolve their matters.—APP

DPO Attock praises Constable Asim for bravery

QAZI SHOAB KHAN



ATTOCK: The District Police Officer Attock Dr. Sardar Ghias Gul Khan while extending rich tributes to the sacrifices of martyr Constable Asim Eshaq said that the bold constable was the proud of the police department who laid his life in police uniform when fighting against the street crimes of dacoits. A public relations officer of Attock Police while talking to the media person told here on Wednesday. The District Police Officer Attock Dr. Sardar Ghias Gul Khan eulogizing the martyrdom of the Constable Asim Eshaq rewarded a cheque of Rs.13.5 million to the bereaved under shaheed financial package here in his office. He said that the deceased had laid his precious life for the protection of life and properties of the citizen who was the real hero and beacon of hope for other police officials of the district police to follow when fighting against the crimes. DPO said that was shot dead by the bandits during his patrolling duties foiling the attempt of dacoity on 03.11.2021. He said that Constable Asim Eshaq was the proud of the police department whose services would always be remembered in golden words. He also saluted his bravery, honour, and stability besides assuring that police department will stand with aggrieved family who will never be left alone as and when required. On this occasion, the family of the shaheed Asim Eshaq also appreciated the efforts of the District Police with their thanks giving prayers to the chair, PRO added.

Amin inaugurates 'Gokina Smart Village Project'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque here on Wednesday inaugurated 'Gokina Smart Village Project'. The pilot project comes under the umbrella of Smart Villages of Pakistan, a nationwide initiative launched by the MoITT in 2021 together with Universal Service Fund (USF), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Huawei. Lauding the efforts of USF, ITU and Huawei, the minister said, "It is anticipated that the pilot projects and the Smart Pakistan Village initiative as a whole will help overcome key challenges that people in rural areas face such as limited access to healthcare, education, financial, and digital services,

unemployment and lack of income-creation opportunities, gender gaps, and a rural-urban divide exacerbated by uneven technology proliferation. The Smart Village Pakistan Projects will be initiated in all provinces very soon." Highlighting the Gokina Smart Village Project details, Amin said that three priority areas were identified through the needs assessment study in Gokina, a valley settlement located 21 kilometers from Islamabad. Initially, one Smart Village will be established in Islamabad, followed by one each in Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Gilgit-Baltistan. Education-Gokina village has a high school for boys and for girls. However, it was found that there were no science teachers, particularly in girls' school, which created hurdles



for students in getting benefits both, in terms of learning as well as competing for the future professional opportunities. The project has identified an e-education provider (Tele-Taleem) to bridge this gap. The minister said that there was a medical center in the village with limited to no medical services available. The health worker would be

responsible to provide very basic health advice and services to the community members. It was also highlighted that the biggest challenge in getting access to health services was that it was time consuming, as it involved commuting to Islamabad. The project has identified an e-health provider (Sehat Kahani) to bridge this gap. Digital Skills

& Entrepreneurship- It was found that there was a clear need and demand for digital skills enhancement and entrepreneurship, whereby community members can utilize a hybrid model of digital as well as non-digital tools to become entrepreneurs in the identified areas like fashion, stitching, handicrafts and other home businesses for women.

AIOU holds int'l moot on ECD

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Fourth International Conference on Early Childhood Development (ECD) commenced at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Wednesday with an emphasis on developing a comprehensive plan for ECD. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood presided over the inaugural session, while Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC), Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed was the chief guest. This conference is being organized by the Faculty of Education AIOU in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning Development and

Special Initiatives, UNICEF, World Health Organization, Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood, Rupani Foundation, Save the Children, Shifa Foundation, Sightsaver, Aga Khan Foundation, and Aga Khan University. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said that there was a special focus on higher education and professional education in Pakistan but early childhood education was being neglected. He said that in 2007, the Ministry of Planning and Development took steps in this direction to promote ECD across the country. He said that in this national cause, Allama Iqbal Open University and various organizations

including Rupani Foundation and Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood were playing a vital role. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said that a proper plan should be devised for the care and education of children. This conference on ECD is commendable and he appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders and organizers. VC, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood said that the recommendations of this conference would help the government in formulating a practical policy. He said that AIOU would continue the initiatives and activities to advance the mission of Early Childhood Development. He said that

the foundation stone of the ECD center building would be laid tomorrow in AIOU to provide a good foundation for the education of children. Khadija Khan, CEO of Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood, explained the objectives and background of the international conference on ECD. Chairman Rupani Foundation, Nasruddin Rupani said that our foundation had established ECD centers across the country, from which thousands had graduated so far. He said that with the help of the Ministry of Education and AIOU, the Early Childhood Development Network would be completed. Dr.

Nazir Ahmed explained in detail the services of the Ministry of Planning and Development for ECD. Other speakers of the conference included Country Representative of UNICEF, Abdullah Fadi, Country Representative of World Health Organization, Dr. Palitha Gunaratna Mahipala, Dean Aga Khan University, Dr. Adil Haider, Country Director Save the Children, Muhammad Khurram Gondal, Executive Director, Shifa Foundation, Dr. Khadija Azhar, Country Director Sightsaver Pakistan, Manza Gilani and Senior Advisor, Center of Excellence AIOU, Muhammad Rafiq Tahir.

Open House for Diplomatic Missions

Murree Brewery Company Limited located in Rawalpindi is an icon reflecting the past and the present history of the subcontinent. Murree Brewery Company is pleased to invite friends from diplomatic missions to visit us and share the experience of our efforts towards keeping it afloat for over 160 years of operation. We cordially invite diplomatic missions to visit us on any Saturday from 10 am to 1:30 pm to enjoy our hospitality and our products tasting. However, since, we are located in the Red Zone / Prohibited area and it will be mandatory to obtain No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs well in advance of the intended visit date. We look forward to welcoming you all soon.

For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

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 Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
DhQ Hospital.....9270907-11
CNT.....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

Indonesian envoy calls for academia linkages

Indonesia has a strong desire to enhance its economic relationship with Pakistan: Ambassador Tugio

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "There is a lot of untapped potential from Pakistan to contribute to the world market", said the Indonesian Ambassador, Adam M. Tugio during interactive session.

Indonesia has a strong desire to enhance its economic relationship with Pakistan noting its geo-economics strategy and its geographic location as gateway to land-locked countries in Central Asia and beyond, said Ambassador Tugio. The envoy showed pie

charts of economic complexity indicating industries where Pakistan manufactures have strong comparative advantage and export to fill global market, and corresponding market in Indonesia where Indonesia purchase them from many sources. He made reference to Pakistani products such as medical equipment, leathers, garments, and textile that could become important trade commodities not only to Indonesia market but also globally. The envoy emphasized the importance of building people-to-people connections between the nations, and he en-



couraged students in Pakistan to make use of scholarships being offered by Indonesian government

and many universities in Indonesia. Tugio welcomed the initiative of COPAIR and other think tanks in Pakistan to have collaboration with Indonesia's counterparts. "Such cooperation altogether will give contribution to strengthen cultural bridge between the two of biggest Muslim population countries in the world", added Tugio. Ambassador Tugio further said that Indonesia and Pakistan can work together to promote traditional herbal medicines which have great potential among youth and millennia in the world for they believe in could boost immu-

nity systems and simultaneously avoid side effects of synthetic medicines. He also exposed the potential of the halal cosmetics and herbal medicine industry which is still widely open. "Pakistan can utilize the current Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (IP-PTA) for exploring 640 million of ASEAN markets and encouraged think tank and business communities to work together in identifying untapped potentials of traded goods for making more broader trade in goods agreement", added Tugio.

HEC ink letter of intent (LoI) with Pink Pak Trust

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Pink Pakistan Trust, Karachi, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting breast cancer awareness and women's health in Pakistan. Breast cancer is one of the most common types of cancer among women in Pakistan. HEC and Pink Pakistan have joined hands to raise awareness about breast cancer and promote early detection and treatment. By working together, HEC and Pink Pakistan hope to make a meaningful contribution toward improving women's health and well-being in the country. The signing ceremony, held at HEC Secretariat in Islamabad, was presided over by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. The LoI was signed by President, Pink Pakistan Dr. Zubaida Qazi and Director General, National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) HEC Mr. Muham-



mad Faisal Butt, Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail also attended the ceremony. Under the LoI, HEC and Pink Pakistan will collaborate on a range of initiatives to raise awareness about breast cancer, including seminars, workshops, and awareness campaigns at universities and colleges across Pakistan. The two sides will also work together to promote research on breast cancer and develop resources and materials to support

women's health and well-being. HEC will also request the universities to grant priority to the research around breast cancer. Both sides will also deliberate facilitating a project in medical universities for initiating focused, robust, and ground-breaking research in the area of breast cancer. In his remarks at the signing ceremony, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed stressed the importance of addressing the issue of breast cancer

on priority, stating that "we need to take urgent action to raise awareness about breast cancer and to promote early detection and treatment. By partnering with Pink Pakistan, we hope to make a real difference in the lives of women and their families across the country." The Chairman also highlighted that HEC would fund research in various strategic areas including research on causes and treatments of breast cancer.

Pakistani rupee stages comeback against US dollar

In his winding-up speech, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said his economic team held talks with the IMF to revive the programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD After going down against the mighty US dollar, the Pakistani rupee on Wednesday staged a turnaround and gained Rs1.01 in early business in the inter-bank market.

According to the information extracted from the forex dealers, the Pakistani rupee gained Rs1.01 in its value against the greenback and was currently being traded at Rs261.50.

On Tuesday, Pakistani rupee's five-session appreciation run came to an end as the currency settled with a

decline of 0.24% against the US dollar in the inter-bank market. As per the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the currency closed at 262.51 against the US dollar, a fall of 63 paisas. The last cycle of currency devaluation pushed Pakistan's real effective exchange rate (REER) to 92.8 in January 2023 from 96.2 a month earlier, data from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) showed. The decline in the REER — an index of the price of a basket of goods in one country relative to the price of the same basket in that country's major trading partners — is driven by the rupee's massive depreci-

ation against the US dollar during the month of January. Amid other developments, the National Assembly on Monday passed the Finance (Supplementary) Bill, 2023, proposing additional taxes and duties of Rs170 billion to meet the understanding reached with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for its Extended Fund Facility. In his winding-up speech, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said his economic team held talks with the IMF to revive the programme, during which it agreed to take some tough decisions for streamlining the deteriorating condition of the economy.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Ms. Shaza Fatima and UAE's Ambassador distributing awards among the winners of Future Builders Contest. —APP

Political stability need of hour

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed of Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz (PML-N) on Wednesday stressed the need for a national consensus and political stability to steer the country out of the current economic and political challenges. Talking to a private news channel, he said it is the need of the hour to initiate collective efforts to combat economic challenges as the country's stability was an important task in the present situation. "Some political leaders were trying to create chaos and anarchy in the country to take political benefit", he said, adding, however, they should shun such attitudes in the larger interests of the country. All political parties and national institutions should focus on developing consensus as Pakistan is passing through a critical situation in its march toward the future, he added. Replying to a question, he said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was striving hard and working day and night to steer the country out of the crisis. "Imran Khan's government got historic loans in last four years, but did not spend a single penny on development works and for the welfare of the common man," he commented. The PTI-led government had destroyed the country and continued to loot the national wealth for four years, he added. The people could compare the performance of Imran Khan and Nawaz Sharif during their regimes in the past, he said, adding, PML-N is still committed to bringing Pakistan on the path of development. Replying to another question, he criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan had caused great damage to Pakistan's foreign policy and economy. —DNA

NEPRA allows hike in power tariff by 50 paise per unit

ISLAMABAD: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has allowed power companies to hike electricity prices by 50 paise per unit under quarterly adjustment. The NEPRA has completed hearing on request by power companies to hike the prices for the second quarter of the current fiscal year. The Authority will issue a detailed decision after going through the figures and statistics. Power companies had sought permission from the Authority to collect Rs17 billion from the consumers. The Power Division administration has requested for an immediate implementation on the decision with no more delay. The NEPRA administration said a hike of Rs3.58 was already in place and with new request for hike of more than Rs3 in power prices would be unfair with electricity consumers. The NEPRA chairman said two hikes in a month of more than Rs 6 would be a cruelty with power consumers which should not be done. The NEPRA Chairman said the difference of transmission charges adjustment was bigger in the current quarter. If these charges were not to be paid the amount to be received from power consumers would be lesser. He said capacity charges of PESCO were in minus, PESCO consumers complain that load shedding is being done whereas company says it is using electricity less than its capacity, so there is something wrong at the bottom, the chairman said. He said IPPs were being paid capacity payments but the electricity was not being used too. He said PESCO had been asked to explain why the electricity was not being utilized up to its capacity. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa member NEPRA said resorting to loadshedding was easy for the companies than to control the line losses. The NEPRA chairman said the report which was given on power blackout, had not been implemented. —DNA

Federal Secretary MOCC orders an inquiry

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Post reported that the Sindh Forest Department neglected to maintain plant-to-plant distance after sowing in riverine areas in Sindh under the Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Program (TBTP). Federal Secretary Climate Change has directed an inquiry on this news. Very soon an investigative report on the Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Program will be published, in which the facts that are still hidden from the public will be brought to the fore. Why are community nurseries established under TBTP being abolished? Why is there a huge difference between the reports of the internal monitoring teams and the reports of the monitoring teams formed by MOCC? How many Project Directors, Chief Conservators, Conservators, DFOs who are receiving huge TADA due to fake visits for inspections. Where was the overbilling done by manipulating the contractors in collusion? Maximum Eucalyptus plants were planted in which areas and for what purpose.

APHC bemoans imposition of autocratic rule

ISLAMABAD, Feb 22 (APP): In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has condemned the upsurge in cordon and search operations carried out by Indian forces and said that these repressive measures are designed to suppress the freedom sentiments of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in a statement issued in Srinagar said, Indian military and police along with non-Kashmiri bureaucrats are undemocratically ruling occupied Jammu and Kashmir while the people of the occupied territory are being suppressed for raising their voice for the inalienable right to self-determination. The APHC said that the use of brute military force has failed to dent the morale of Kashmiris and they are determined to continue their freedom struggle with valor and integrity. "The heavy deployment of more than one million occupation troops used against the civil population that has been demanding their legitimate rights is a brazen violation of international law and Human Rights Charter of 1948, adopted by the United Nations," it maintained. The APHC denounced the arbitrary arrests during the frequent cordon and search operations and said thousands of innocent people have been put behind bars without any legal trial. "There is no rule of law in the occupied territory and Bharatiya Janata Party backed administration is employing absolute autocratic rule." — APP

FEBRUARY 2023

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pl
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

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



Briefs

PTI's court arrest campaign only a farce

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Economy and Energy, Bilal Azhar Kayani on Wednesday claimed that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership only wants to create anarchy and chaos in the country as Khan sahib's so-called 'Jail Bhara Tehreek' would be the worst-failed event ever which is being started with bail applications. "Imran Khan's political narrative was only based on 'hate' against Pakistan Muslim League and Pakistan People's party for his personal interests," he said while speaking on PTV News. He said the PTI chief had launched the court arrest campaign but on the other hand, he himself submitted an application for bail. Replying to a question, Kayani said Imran Khan's four-year government had brought the punishment of economic destruction and inflation in the country, adding, it would take time to get rid of the devastation caused in the last four years. To another question, he said PML-N always showed respect for the courts and its leadership presented themselves for accountability.—APP

PM greets Saudi leadership on Kingdom's Founding Day

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday extended greetings to the leadership of Saudi Arabia on the Founding Day of the Kingdom. The prime minister in a tweet greeted the Saudi King, the Crown Prince, and the people of the Kingdom. "On behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan, I wish to extend our felicitations to King Salman bin Abdulaziz, HRH Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the people of Saudi Arabia on their Founding Day," he wrote on his social media Twitter handle. The prime minister said the day celebrates KSA's rich history and culture and highlights its remarkable transformation. The day celebrates the founding of the first Saudi State, the Emirate of Diriyah, by Imam Muhammad Bin Saud in 1727, which took place in February of that year. Last year on January 27, Custodian of The Two Holy Mosques King Salman issued a Royal Order to commemorate February 22 every year as the nation's Founding Day.

PNCA, ASG come together to enthrall Islooites

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Study Group (ASG) and the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) organized a comprehensive programme on the origin, history, evolution, art, popularity, tradition, and performance of Qawwali to entertain the audience of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad here late Tuesday. The show titled "The Story of Qawwali", renowned writer, speaker, and ethnomusicologist Ally Adnan conducted the programme, including demonstrations and short performances of Qawwali by the celebrated Ghayoor-Moiz-Mustafa Qawwal and Party. It covered topics including the origin and evolution of qawwali, the various genres and forms, Amir Khusrau's contribution, the etiquette of participating in a performance and the essential elements. In shedding light on Sufism, the music of Pakistan and Northern India emphasis was put on the importance for us to educate the world about the rich, syncretic culture of South Asia. "We have conducted more than fifty seminars about Qawwali, with Ally Adnan, all over the world, but this one was arguably the best one thus far," said Ghayoor Ahmed the leader of the Ghayoor-Moiz-Mustafa Qawwal. "The audience gave us its undivided attention for two full hours and listened to the programme with love, interest, and sincerity. Such an audience brings out the best in performing artistes, he added.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Vice Admiral Naveed Ashraf along with Ambassador of Russia witnessing an exhibition on the occasion of the Fatherland Day of the Russian Federation. — DNA

Dr. Alvi stresses efforts to enroll out-of-school children

Executive Director PIPS Muhammad Anwar said the institute established in 2008 focused on the orientation of legislators and training of parliamentary officers

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD, President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday termed as 'alarming' the 44 percent of the country's child population not attending schools and said the challenge needed broad-based efforts from the government to the individual level. The president said the serious situation meant half of the child population aged five to 16 was at risk of engaging in labour or begging. Addressing a seminar on out-of-school children in Pakistan, the president said education was the right of every child guaranteed by the religion and the country's constitution. The seminar organized by the Pakistan Institute of Par-

liamentary Services (PIPS) and Pakistan Teachers Forum (PTF) discussed the issues, challenges and the way forward to address the challenge of out-of-school children. President Alvi pointed out that with only 68 percent of children getting primary education, the country lagged far behind other South Asian nations including 100 percent in India, 99 percent in Sri Lanka and 98 percent in Bangladesh. He stressed that it was the collective responsibility of the government, legislators, elite, civil society and the general public to take steps at their ends for the promotion of education. He said Pakistan could achieve remarkable development with a specific focus on education and health. In this regard, he called

for setting priorities and taking effective decisions on the policies relating to matters of public interest. Dr Alvi said incentives such as school feeding programmes for students and disbursement of cash to the parents on their children's attendance could encourage the underprivileged population to get education. He expressed confidence that the bright young minds could bring laurels to the country if provided a level-playing field in areas, particularly education and health. The president stressed equal opportunities for girls and women to acquire education at par with their male counterparts. Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Education Aamir Ashraf Khawaja said the economy had

a significant link with education and pointed out that lack of investment in education, health and agriculture resulted in a big lag in development for the country. He said the federal government was striving to address the challenge of imparting education to out-of-school children through incentives such as school feeding programmes. On tele-learning, he said, four channels were being launched through Allama Iqbal Open University besides a mobile application for accelerated learning. Chairperson PTF Senator Fauzia Arshad, also an educationist, said the unfortunate challenge of out-of-school children was not only an educational crisis but also a violation of human rights. She emphasized the measures in-

cluding inclusive education, learning programmes and persuading parents to send their children to schools. In a span of three years, she said, the PTF as a social welfare organization of education professionals had entered into various accords of collaboration with the education ministry, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries. Executive Director PIPS Muhammad Anwar said the institute established in 2008 focused on the orientation of legislators and training of parliamentary officers. He mentioned that besides training of national and provincial assemblies, the launch of international courses was also on the cards.

Exports increase by 22.61% to Rs3.7 trillion in 7 months

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 22.61 per cent during the first seven months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. Exports during July-January (2022-2023) were recorded at Rs.3,705,935 million as against Rs.3,022,640 million during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 22.61 percent, according to provisional data released by PBS. On a year-on-year basis, exports from the country dur-

ing January, 2023 amounted to Rs.525,461 million as against Rs.460,856 million during January 2022, showing growth of 14.02 percent. On a month-on-month basis, the exports increased by 1.09 percent when compared to the exports of Rs.519,817 million in December 2022. The main commodities of exports during January 2023 were knitwear (Rs. 78,859 million), ready-made garments (Rs. 68,566 million), bedwear (Rs. 49,490 million), cotton Cloth (Rs. 37,225 million), rice other than Basmati (Rs.23,630 million), towels (Rs.21,338 million), cotton

yarn (Rs.15,891 million), madeup articles, Excluding towels and bedwear (Rs.13,203 million), rice Basmati (Rs.12,754 million) and surgical goods & medical instruments (Rs.9,350 million). On the other hand Imports during July-January, (2022-2023) totaled Rs. 8,106,466 million as against Rs. 7,939,363 million during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 2.10 percent. During the month of January 2023, the imports amounted to Rs. 1,141,525 million as against Rs. 1,158,313 million in December 2022 and Rs. 1,064,154 million during January

2022 showing a decrease of 1.45% over December 2022 but an increase of 7.27% over January 2022. main commodities of imports during January 2023 were petroleum products (Rs. 160,996 million), palm oil (Rs. 85,283 million), petroleum crude (Rs.75,929 million), natural gas, liquefied (Rs.56,845 million), iron & steel (Rs.51,158 million), plastic materials (Rs. 48,890 million), raw cotton (Rs.43,235 million), wheat unmilled (Rs.38,709 million), electric machinery & apparatus (Rs.34,902 million) and iron & steel scrap (Rs.26,323 million).—APP

Why older people shouldn't take Xanax

ISLAMABAD: Use of a class of sleep aids called benzodiazepines increased in recent years in Beijing, according to Chinese researchers, including in older adults. This occurred in spite of guidelines and expert consensus recommending against "routine" use of these medications in older adults due to the risk of adverse effects among this age group. In contrast, a study by U.S. researchers found a drop in the prescribing of sleep medications in the country. However, this study ended before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted sleep. Trusted Source for many around the world. Sleeps aid use increased in China in a study/Trusted Source published Feb. 17 in JAMA Network Open, researchers examined data from over 550,000 adult outpatient visits for insomnia made to primary health care facilities in Beijing between 2016 and 2020. They included only patients who received at least one prescription for a benzodiazepine receptor agonist/Trusted Source (BZRA), a class of medications used to treat insomnia and anxiety. Because some of these medications are also used to treat anxiety, researchers excluded patients who had been diagnosed with anxiety or depression. BZRAs include benzodiazepines such as triazolam, estazolam and temazepam. These drugs are effective for treating insomnia, but have a number of adverse effects, including a risk of dependency. Another group of BZRAs are known as nonbenzodiazepines, or Z-drugs. This includes eszopiclone (Lunesta), zaleplon (Sonata) and zolpidem (Ambien). These drugs also work as treatments for insomnia, but appear to have fewer adverse effects than benzodiazepines. In the study, researchers found that the overall rate of prescriptions for benzodiazepines increased from 34.8% to 62.8% during the study period. The largest increases occurred in patients 85 years or older, increasing to 68.3% in 2020; and in 75- to 84-year-olds, rising to 65.4% in 2020. In 2020, prescriptions for benzodiazepines increased with patient age. In addition, older adults received prescriptions with a similar daily dosage as younger adults, researchers found.—Online

First lady performs ground breaking to build homes for poor

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi performed ground breaking to kickstart work on phase-II of a major social welfare initiative of Taaray Zameen Per (TZP) trust to build homes for the poor homeless people here Wednesday. Addressing the ceremony she said, she was delighted to lay foundation of second phase of shelter homes (Dar-ul-Sukoon) to provide 36 more homes to the poor destitute people like widows and those who survive under the porous roofs of husk cottages. She appreciated Fadia Kashif, the Chief Executive Officer of TZP Trust, for the social welfare initiatives the trust was undertaking in aid of the downtrodden segments of society. Mrs. Samina Arif Alvi said that Multan is known as the city of saints who rendered their whole life to illuminating society with Islamic teachings. "And I am happy the people in Multan were working with a similar spirit." She said, she was happy to note that Multan being one of the oldest living cities on earth was progressing in every sector. "Now it is the venue of Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches and international famed cricketers are here to demonstrate their prowess." She said, being herself a social worker, she believed that every individual was important for country's development and can play role to help Pakistan prosper. She said, she felt delighted to see another 36 families to find shelter at Dar Ul Sukoon which already had brought about a change in the lifestyle of 31 poor families already living here with their 200 kids getting free education.—APP

36 kite sellers, flyers arrested in special crackdown

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police on the directives of City Police Officer, Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani here on Wednesday continued a special crackdown against kite sellers and flyers and managed to net 36. According to a police spokesman, all police stations of the district had been directed to accelerate ongoing operations against kite-flying ban violators while special teams constituted to control kite-flying under the supervision of senior police officers were conducting raids in different areas. Police teams recovered over 1200 kites and kite flying string rolls from the possession of arrested kite sellers and flyers, he said. Rawal Division police arrested 23 accused on recovery of 596 kites and string rolls while Potohar Division police netted eight and seized 146 kites and string rolls. Similarly, Saddar Division police in their crackdown against the violators arrested five for possessing 499 kites and string rolls. Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations, Capt. @ Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi said that all available resources were being utilized to control kite flying. He said strict vigilance would be maintained like in previous years to maintain law and order in the city and to curb the dangerous kite flying.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini Ambassador of Iran met with Georg Steiner, Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan. — DNA

Petroleum sector gets Rs899.62

ISLAMABAD: The government has released funds amounting to Rs 640.19 million to advance nine ongoing petroleum-related projects during a seven-month period of the current fiscal year under the Public Sector Development Pro-

gramme (PSDP 2022-23) against a total allocation of Rs1.48 billion. Out of the total disbursement of Rs899.62 million, around Rs29.75 million have been spent on petroleum projects to accelerate oil and gas exploration ac-

tivities from July to January, according to official data available with APP. As per the PSDP document, the incumbent government had earmarked Rs150.560 million for the establishment of the National Mineral Data Centre (NMDC) Directorate General of Minerals, Rs303.700 million for expansion and up-gradation of Pakistan Petroleum Corehouse (PETCORE) for its sustainable opera-

tions to facilitate oil and gas exploration research in Pakistan (HDIP), Rs100 million for Geological Mapping on 50 Toposheets, out of 354 unmapped Toposheets of Outcrop Area of Balochistan Province, Rs70 million for Legal Consultancy Services for drafting of Model Mineral Agreement and updating of Regulatory Framework (Federal and Provincial Minerals/Coal Departments).—APP

Islamabad POST
Now Available in
SERENA HOTELS
PESHAWER

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 03 Issue: 173

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

Ukraine: one year on, no end yet in sight

When Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin spoke in Warsaw and Moscow on Tuesday, the gulf between Russia and the west and its allies stretched a little further. Yet at the heart of two starkly different speeches lay a shared assumption: that this war will not end soon. The Russian president assumed it would be over in days when he launched his brutal full-scale invasion of Ukraine a year ago on Friday. He was hardly alone. The courage and resolve of Ukrainians, and the rush of support from the west and its allies, were remarkable. Each day that Ukraine fended off defeat counted as a victory. Yet the parameters have shifted. In a war of attrition, time is usually on the aggressor's side. Millions have been forced to flee their country. More than 7,000 civilians have died, hundreds of them children, and the US estimates that there have been well over 100,000 Ukrainian military casualties. But Russia failed in its lightning strike and then lost land it had grabbed to Ukrainian counteroffensives. Mr Putin has united Ukrainians, brought the US back to Europe, strengthened European unity, revived and expanded Nato, and cost his country dearly in economic, military and human terms, with tens of thousands of Russian soldiers killed. Yet sanctions have not been as punishing as hoped, and an autocrat is not answerable as democratic leaders are. With propaganda and political repression to promote his alternative reality, support for the war and the president remains high within Russia. And while Ukraine battles the Russian military, Russia is targeting Ukraine in its entirety. Mr Putin's suspension of the New Start nuclear arms control treaty is a worrying step, though the US had already said Russia was not complying with its terms and the war economy is currently struggling to produce enough conventional weaponry. Though the treaty covers strategic rather than tactical nuclear capacity, the announcement served to underscore concerns about Moscow's potential use of nuclear weapons. The danger of escalation is no less real than in the early days of this conflict. The extraordinary consumption of ammunition has led only to a scramble to increase production. The US has already highlighted its concerns that China will supply arms. Mr Putin's assumption that western resolve will soon fade has yet to be realised – as Mr Biden's trip to Kyiv and declaration of continued support demonstrated this week. Though there is growing discussion in the US of what the end might look like, and more concern about what the 2024 election could mean for support, the administration seeks a durable peace. Ukrainians, more than anyone, want this war to end. But the conflict's vast costs have yet to reach the stage where they point towards swifter resolution of the war instead of its perpetuation.



Whole world pays price for US sanctions

While US President Joe Biden reiterated the need for additional sanctions on Russia in a speech in Poland on Tuesday, Deputy Treasury Secretary Wally Adeyemo was a little more specific in a speech he delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington on the same day. Attributing the reports that Russia has had to turn to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran to resupply its military with drones and surface-to-surface missiles to the effectiveness of the US-led sanctions, Adeyemo said that the United States plans to announce additional sanctions this week targeting Russia's military manufacturing industry. "While we have far more to do, we are succeeding in reversing the course of Russia's budget and undercutting its military-industrial complex," said Adeyemo, pledging that the additional sanctions will focus on cracking down on sanctions evasion and putting economic pressure on countries and corporations that continue to do business with Russia. Over 30 countries have imposed price caps on Russian energy exports, instituted export controls, frozen Russian funds and restricted its access to SWIFT, a global financial transaction system. However, the sanctions are being imposed without the United Nations' authorization and have no legitimacy in international laws. The great lengths the US is going to in its efforts to claim the moral high ground by portraying the sanctions as actions for democracy indicate how desperate it is to cover up the nature of the sanctions, which are simply geopolitical weapons wielded by Washington in a bid to bleed Russia's economy in world trade and Russian military on the battlefields in Ukraine. Although those following the US' lead in imposing sanctions represent more than half the world's economy combined, they only account for about one-sixth of the number of countries and regions in the world and they are mostly developed economies. In weaponizing trade, technology and finance with the sanctions, the US has formed a gang at the top of the global supply, industry and value chains so that it can impose its will on the rest of the world through long-arm jurisdiction and replace the rules of the international order in various sectors with US rules. Yet Russia's economy is performing better than expected. This year, its economy is projected to outperform the UK's, growing 0.3 percent, while the UK faces a 0.6 percent contraction, according to the International Monetary Fund. It is clear that the sanctions bite both ways if not more on those that impose them – an energy shortage has forced some leading European economies, including Germany, to remap the upgrading path of their industries. The IMF reported last month that Russia's economy would contract by just 2.2 percent in 2022, far less than the 8.5 percent envisaged by the West in March 2022 when it started imposing large-scale sanctions on the country. The report also projects that business activity in Russia will grow by 0.3 percent in 2023 and 2.1 percent in 2024, directly outpacing the 1.6 percent projected for the eurozone. Now is the time for the world to ask for how long will it continue to tolerate, if not pay for, the US continuing to manipulate the international rules through illegal sanctions under a noble disguise for its own hegemony.

UAE's mastery of playing both sides against the middle has its limits

James Dorsey

Since Mr. Bin Zayed's first trip to Damascus in November 2021, Mr. Al-Assad has visited the UAE and, this week, traveled to Oman. Similarly, the UAE has so far flown under the radar in a European Parliament corruption scandal that implicates Qatar and Morocco in bribing deputies. Belgian and Dutch media reports suggest that the UAE may also be implicated in the scandal and charged that it was not averse to using its financial muscle to persuade European parliament

The United Arab Emirates has mastered playing both sides against the middle. In the game's latest iteration, the Gulf state earned significant brownie points in Washington this week by withdrawing a draft United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlement activity. The replacement of the draft resolution, which if adopted would have been legally binding, with a non-binding statement by the Council's president, backed by all members, including the United States, allowed the Biden administration to appear to be castigating Israel without creating a political storm. Moreover, the UAE maneuver shielded President Joe Biden from potential allegations of hypocrisy as he focused attention on the first anniversary of the Ukraine war with his visit to Kyiv and in the United Nations. The UAE further helped Mr. Biden avoid deepening differences over Israel in his Democratic Party. By tabling the resolution, in response to Israel's authorisation of nine Jewish settler outposts in the occupied West Bank and planned mass construction of new homes in established settlements, the UAE put Mr. Biden in a Catch-22. The United States would not have emerged from a Security Council vote smelling like roses, irrespective of whether it abstained or vetoed the resolution. Voting in favour was never an option. A veto would have highlighted the question of why the US backs Ukraine against Russian occupation and is not as vigorous in opposing 56 years of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, the longest occupation in post-World War Two history. An abstention would have rattled Israel's supporters and signaled that the Biden administration would seek to capitalise on mounting unease even among Israel's staunchest backers about policies of the far-right government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that threaten the independence of the country's judiciary. In a reflection of the unease, US Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat, plans to visit Israel in the coming days, more because of concern about Mr. Netanyahu's proposed judicial overhaul that this week passed its first reading in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, than Israeli policy to-

wards the Palestinians. It wasn't clear whether Mr. Schumer and his delegation would meet the Palestine Authority during their visit. At the same time, the UAE was offering Mr. Biden a helping hand, and as the US president made his historic visit to Kyiv, The Wall Street Journal reported that Chinese-made DJI drones were being sold to Russia via the UAE.

In a video posted in June on social media, one of many viewed by the Journal, a group of gun-toting, khaki-clad, pro-Russian volunteers in southern Ukraine said they were about to receive "heroic shuttles" – a term for DJI drones – from the UAE paid through Russia's sanctioned state-owned Sberbank. Konstantin Kuznetsov, a gun dealer in Orenburg, Russia, who supplies the Russian military, said on social media that DJI drones were available in the UAE for 500,000 Russian rubles (US\$6,800). While the Chinese-manufactured drones are commercially available, the UAE is one of the world's foremost surveillance states, in which it is unlikely that the sales to pro-Russian fighters would have gone unnoticed. The disclosure of the drone sales came three weeks after a US Treasury Department official visited the UAE and other Middle Eastern nations to warn that they could lose US and European market access if they do business with entities subject to US sanctions. Last month, the US sanctioned a UAE-based firm, Kratol Aviation, for support of the operations in Africa of the Wagner Group, a Russian mercenary force linked to President Vladimir Putin that plays an important role in fighting in Ukraine. The Journal report was the latest incident in which the UAE, like with the withdrawal of its Security Council resolution, has capitalized on its political capital in Washington, which was significantly boosted by its recognition of Israel in 2020, to pursue policies that diverge from the US approach. The UAE's expanding military cooperation with Israel further enhanced the Gulf state's political capital. The UAE and Israel this week unveiled a jointly developed unmanned vessel that boasts advanced sensors and imaging systems for surveillance, reconnaissance, and the

detection of mines.

Meanwhile, UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed used this month's devastating earthquake in eastern Turkey and northern Syria to further the Gulf state's goal of returning Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to the international fold despite US opposition. Earlier this month, Mr. Bin Zayed became the first senior Arab official to visit Damascus after the earthquake, his second trip to the Syrian capital in 16 months. He was followed within days by Jordanian foreign minister Ayman Safadi. In a reversal of Saudi opposition to conciliatory moves toward Mr. Al-Assad, Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud said this weekend that Arab states agreed that isolating Syria because of its brutal conduct of the country's civil war and ties to Iran was not working. Mr. Al-Saud advocated opening a dialogue with the Al-Assad regime.

Since Mr. Bin Zayed's first trip to Damascus in November 2021, Mr. Al-Assad has visited the UAE and, this week, traveled to Oman. Similarly, the UAE has so far flown under the radar in a European Parliament corruption scandal that implicates Qatar and Morocco in bribing deputies. Belgian and Dutch media reports suggest that the UAE may also be implicated in the scandal and charged that it was not averse to using its financial muscle to persuade European parliament members to do its bidding. Radoslaw Sikorski, a Polish assembly member, did not deny that he had received monies from and paid travel to the UAE but insisted that he had reported his ties to the Gulf state in line with European Parliament regulations. So far, the UAE has successfully leveraged its political capital in Washington to hedge its bets to pursue an independent, at times opportunistic, foreign policy. However, that may become increasingly tricky as the United States tightens its screws. Moreover, a crisis in US-Israeli relations provoked by Mr. Netanyahu's judicial reform and/or his potential inability to keep his coalition's far-right and ultra-conservative religious members in check would narrow the UAE's ability to project itself as a shining knight.

Grief from Türkiye quakes should help transform global disaster response

Mukesh Kapila

That means localising aid as much as possible. As it is local and national organisations that do most of the groundwork, foreign donors, including UN agencies, should fund them directly to minimise wasteful transactional costs along the way. Public trust and confidence rely on the fairness, consistency, and transparency with which the humanitarian job gets done. As it happens, it was in Türkiye that a grand bargain of reforms was initially agreed upon at the first-ever World Humanitarian

experience of disasters spanning three decades, including in Türkiye during the 1992 Erzincan quake, never has the world moved so quickly and wholeheartedly as now. This is human solidarity at its best, starting with courageous local first responders and a massive Turkish national mobilisation supplemented by rescue and relief from over a hundred nations. Communities only too familiar with adversity were at the forefront: Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh knitted blankets and sweaters, poverty-struck Afghans collected thousands of dollars, and rescue teams from war-torn Ukraine pulled out survivors from the rubble. These are doubly valuable humanitarian acts. Because they are spontaneous and unconditional. They are not calculated reciprocity for Turkish aid building hospitals for wounded Rohingya in Cox's Bazaar, sending emergency aid trains to Afghanistan, or facilitating the shifting of millions of tons of food from Ukraine to feed the world's hungriest. They are part of Türkiye's support in 150 countries through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). Türkiye was ranked second in humanitarian giving in 2021, totalling US\$5.6 billion or about 1 percent of its GDP, including the hosting of 3.5 million Syrian refugees, according to the latest Global Humanitarian Assistance Report. Of course, for desperate quake survivors at home, help can never come fast enough. And it is no consolation to those who lost loved ones that this response was bigger and faster than previously seen in Türkiye or elsewhere. And that it utilised the best available tools, technologies and organisational arrangements. There are always lessons to learn for future improvement, but Türkiye has done very well under prevailing extreme circumstances. As foreign emergency teams go home and the painstaking work of comforting and rehabilitating survivors gathers pace, global solidarity will continue to be tested. Türkiye will need even greater support in the period ahead as grim statistics are revised for the worse when the quakes' impacts are fully quantified. The Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation estimates a cost of \$84 billion – a staggering 9 percent of Türkiye's \$942 billion economy (in nominal terms) in 2022. But with the expected post-quake reconstruction efforts, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development projects a modest overall 1 percent GDP loss in 2023.

However, minimising the quake's longer-term economic impact will require an investment of perhaps treble the value of the losses because it will be much more costly to build back better to comply diligently with Türkiye's improved earthquake resilience construction code unveiled in 2018. As too much of Türkiye's housing stock is old, retrofitting will be a big but necessary investment

to reduce future tragedies. Meanwhile, cold financial calculations do not convey the hidden impacts of wholesale population trauma, which is always worse after quakes than other types of disasters. That includes grief reactions and mental stresses, physical injury complications, infectious disease risks and worsened chronic diseases. Millions of days of schooling and employment loss are inevitable as emotional and physical recovery take their course. Doubtless, there will be vigorous recovery and reconstruction debates and where the financing comes from. The European Union is planning a donors' conference in March. The international financial institutions are key, and the World Bank's lead in providing US\$1.78 billion while preparing to follow up with another US\$1 billion is welcome. Also stepping up will be the private sector and special government financing initiatives, including reconstruction bonds that people can subscribe towards. Türkiye is an upper-middle-income G20 member with a GDP per capita in purchasing power terms of \$30,737 in 2021. That Türkiye will rise again is not in doubt. But the quality of recovery and diminishing avoidable suffering along the way depends on humanitarian assistance for at least two years. The United Nations has appealed for \$1 billion to assist 5.2 million people for three months via 15 UN agencies, nine international NGOs and several national bodies. With around 100,000 homes destroyed and more to be demolished on safety grounds, numerous families have lost everything. Thus, the appeal's largest requirement is \$254 million for shelter – tents and other accommodations, clothes, blankets, essential kitchen and household items, and supporting those temporarily housed in public buildings. \$203 million targets health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene, including deploying emergency medical teams, mobile clinics and laboratories, rehabilitating salvageable health facilities, providing trauma and essential medicines kits, infectious disease control and public health measures. Particularly vulnerable are women and children, the mentally traumatised, and the disabled needing special care and rehabilitation services. Moving on requires cleaning up to create the conditions for returns and rebuilding. \$148 million is set aside for debris removal and its recycling or safe management, which process also creates labour-intensive livelihoods. Preserving and reconstructing key cultural heritage to avoid permanent loss and damage is vital to reviving social morale. Due to the Ukraine-Russia war, food prices worldwide are at a historic high. In south-eastern Türkiye, crops and livestock production and transport have been decimated. \$107 million is sought for feeding people and agricultural inputs to farmers and herders to start the next growing season.

Crises always create insecurity for unaccompanied children, older people, and women who are at risk of violence and trafficking. \$105 million is provisioned for protection services, including safe spaces, family reunification, and violence prevention. The UN appeal is paralleled by \$375 million sought by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, channelled through the hyper-active Turk Kizilay, Turkish Red Crescent, with 279 branches and 211,000 volunteers and staff present everywhere. Humanitarian agencies have moved at super speed to conduct assessments and design appeals. Donors must respond with equal urgency because timely delivery on the ground depends on full pipelines procured in advance. They must also streamline reporting and control requirements. But without compromising accountability to ensure that the maximum proportion of the humanitarian dollar goes to the needy. Both aid agencies and donors must remain flexible because evolving needs necessitate rapid adjustments. Meanwhile, with so many organisations involved, coordination is vital so that the right aid goes at the right time to the right place. This is appropriately led by the Turkish National Disaster Agency, AFAD, which should be beefed up to strengthen its information and clearinghouse functions working with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which facilitates international cooperation. Efficient humanitarian delivery with minimum overhead and leakage is not just about management. It is a moral responsibility to ensure that maximum life-sustaining benefits accrue to the greatest possible numbers of people at a time of huge need when resources are inevitably stretched. That means localising aid as much as possible. As it is local and national organisations that do most of the groundwork, foreign donors, including UN agencies, should fund them directly to minimise wasteful transactional costs along the way. Public trust and confidence rely on the fairness, consistency, and transparency with which the humanitarian job gets done. As it happens, it was in Türkiye that a grand bargain of reforms was initially agreed upon at the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016. Unfortunately, there is little further progress on how to better organise for the increasingly-frequent moments of crisis in a disaster-prone world. Major catastrophes are opportunities for reflection, reform, and renewal. As we dig deeper in our pockets to help quake survivors, what would be a more worthy tribute to the perished than to transform the system on which is predicated the chances of living or dying in future tragedies? Let the pain and grief from the Türkiye earthquakes not be wasted.

—Courtesy:— TRT World

France's big pension dilemma and Macron's disconnect with reality Türkiye's catastrophe is an opportunity to improve the international humanitarian system, global financial institutions, as well as the private sector. Türkiye is no stranger to earthquakes. But the massive February 6 temblors had the destructive power of several atomic bombs and triggered an entirely different magnitude of devastation. At least 13 million people across approximately 110,000 square km of southeast Türkiye were directly affected, with tens of thousands killed. Swaths of neighbouring Syria were also devastated. There was an instinctive global understanding that no nation could prepare sufficiently or respond adequately to such a catastrophe. In my own ex-

Briefs

PML-N seeks
recusal of
2 SC judges

FROM PAGE 01
irrefutable evidence of other judge's audio leak had come out, raising questions on his impartiality. Mr. San-ullah said both judges had issued several "opposing" verdicts against Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in dozens of cases, including Panama, Ramzan Sugar Mills and Pakpattan Land Allotment. He said that it was a legal and judicial tradition that "controversial" judges voluntarily separate themselves from the bench when the aggrieved party raised questions. He said the PML-N legal team would approach the judges to ask them to recuse themselves from the cases involving the party leaders.

Restructuring
Afghanistan
links...

FROM PAGE 01
No doubt to mention that meaningless involvement or interference on the part of Pakistan military establishment has now led to building up huge gaps between Kabul and Islamabad. Never ever in past, even during presence of former Soviet Union troops in Afghanistan, were almost 18 traditional crossing points locked for a single day. But now the situation is different. Closure of Torkham and Chaman crossing points is becoming a routine. And closure or shuttering of these check points started somewhere in 2015-2016 last when Pakistan initiated implementation of one-sided border and visa restrictions. Earlier, the affairs of Torkham and all other crossing points between the two neighboring countries remained in control of civil administration. For over a century, personnel of traditional Khasadar forces who are no other than from local tribes have guards in positions but now almost all affairs are handed over to the personnel of security forces, almost all of whom are non-locals and unaware of local traditions, thus fueling distrust amongst people from both sides.

Due to closure of Pak Afghan border at Torkham thousands of trucks and trollers loaded with millions of US dollars' worth commercial goods are in queues right from Torkham till Peshawar on eastern side and up to Jalalabad on western sides. The office holders of joint trade and business circles from both sides are in contacts with each other's but the responsible high ups from Islamabad and Kabul are reluctant to approach each other for settling the issues and reopening of the border. This time no other than, Pakistan's security personnel are responsible for closure of the crossing point as they have allegedly crossed away all limits of insulting the Afghans. In fact, beating, abusing, insulting and detention of the Afghans who are either entering or leaving Pakistan at hands of Chitral and Gilgit Scouts and Punjab Regiment Personnel is a routine from last several years. The affected Afghans including tribesmen are regularly holding protests and processions against inhumane and rude attitude of these personnel from last several years.

Zia Ullah Sarhadi who is Joint Vice President of Pakistan and Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries said, "I am in contact with counterparts from Afghanistan but no one either from Islamabad or Kabul is showing interests in settling the issue." He said closure of Torkham border has inflicted millions of dollars' losses to traders and businessmen from both sides.

'Jail bharo':
Senior PTI...

FROM PAGE 01
Chaudhry claimed that the police had arrived prepared with police vans but were "worried after seeing the thousands of people and contemplating what they should do". He thanked PTI workers for their response and said the movement would move forward, adding that today's protest would be limited to Lahore and would continue till the evening before moving to Peshawar today (Thursday).

Pakistan embassy Minsk hosts
Gymnasium School's students

Ambassador Khan also took the opportunity to brief the students on the Kashmir dispute, its legal status, and the ongoing situation

DNA

MINSK: The Embassy of Pakistan in Minsk hosted an exciting and informative event for students from Gymnasium (School) 146, Minsk City. Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan gave a detailed briefing on Pakistan, covering topics such as its geography, arts, culture, and education system, among others. Ambassador Khan also took the opportunity to brief the students on the Kashmir dispute, its legal status, and the ongoing situation. The students showed great interest in learning about Pakistan and engaged in an interactive Q&A session with the Ambassador.



In addition, the Gymnasium also held a drawing competition on Pakistan, in which 30 students participated.

Nine of the best students were awarded prizes for their outstanding work, which showcased their creativity and knowledge of Pakistani culture.

The students were also treated to a taste of Pakistani cuisine, which they greatly enjoyed. The event was a great success, with the students leaving with

a deeper understanding of Pakistan and its people. Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan said, "We are delighted to have hosted such bright and enthusiastic students at the Embassy today. It is always a pleasure to share our culture and traditions with people from around the world. We hope that the students have gained a better understanding of Pakistan and its people through this event."

The Embassy of Pakistan in Minsk is committed to promoting cultural exchange and building bridges between Pakistan and Belarus. Such events play an important role in strengthening the bonds of friendship between our two nations.

Iga Swiatek urges WTA to
continue push for pay equality

DNA

DUBAI: World number one Iga Swiatek said she hopes the governing body of the women's game can do more to boost the tour in 2023 and further reduce pay disparity between the sexes outside the sport's biggest tournaments. Tennis has sought to be a leader in the battle for equality in the last couple of decades with equal prize money offered to men and women at the four Grand Slams. WTA Tour events, however, still often offer less prize money than those on the men's tour which operates its own circuit. Swiatek said one of the top priorities for the tour as it celebrates its 50th anniversary should be to ensure events are more attractive for players, sponsors, organisers and fans. "For sure, I'd like to see the WTA expanding business-wise, getting



more popular, cutting the difference between WTA and ATP in terms of prize money and attracting fans," Swiatek told reporters in Dubai. A report in The Financial Times said the ATP Tour as of midway through last year offered players 75% more prize money in tournaments - excluding the Grand Slams - than the women's tour. "Our tennis brings the same emotions

as men's tennis... There's something you can find in women's tennis that you're not going to find on the ATP," Swiatek said. "Right now, after a couple of years of hearing we're not consistent, we're actually consistent. There are top players who are playing great in most of the tournaments." In a move expected to cost the association hundreds of millions of dollars in broadcasting

and sponsorship, the WTA suspended lucrative tournaments in China over concerns for former doubles number one Peng Shuai. She accused a senior Chinese government official of sexual assault in a 2021 social media post that was removed from the country's internet. She later denied making the accusation. American Jessica Pegula, the world number three and a member of the WTA player council, echoed Swiatek. "I hope we can keep pushing for equal prize money at all events, being on TV more," Pegula said. She pointed to the United Cup mixed team tournament earlier this season as a way to achieve that. "We're starting to see slowly, more of it, especially with the United Cup, the response of everyone wanting to see men and women playing on the same court, on the same team, which was really fun for us. People love to see that."

Russia will not fire
hypersonic missile
during naval exercise

MOSCOW: Russia will not fire its new generation Zircon hypersonic missile during a joint naval exercise with South Africa and China, a senior Russian naval officer has said. The 10-day Mosi II exercise, which is taking place off South Africa's eastern coast and coincides with the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has raised alarm among Western governments. Russia's TASS news agency reported earlier this month that a frigate participating in the drills - the Admiral Gorchkov - would perform a training launch of the Zircon missile system during the exercise. However, Captain Oleg Gladkiy, who is heading the Russian contingent, told reporters on Wednesday that no test launch would take place. "The hypersonic weapon will not be used in the context of these exercises," Gladkiy said. "There is no hidden meaning in the exercises that we are performing today." Russian President Vladimir Putin has called the Zircon, which can travel at more than five times the speed of sound, "unstoppable". Despite their name, analysts have said the main feature of hypersonic weapons is not speed - which can sometimes be matched or exceeded by traditional ballistic missile warheads - but manoeuvrability. The weapons are seen as a way to gain an edge over any adversary as they can potentially evade missile shields and early warning systems. Russia is in a race with the United States and China to develop them. Gladkiy's remarks came precisely halfway through the maritime drills being staged from Durban and Richards Bay, ports in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province. Media coverage of the exercise, which runs until February 27, has been restricted. South Africa has faced domestic criticism for participating. The opposition Democratic Alliance said it shows the government is not neutral in Russia's war in Ukraine. - Agencies

Northern Ireland EU
deal must address
democratic deficit

LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak indicated Wednesday that no deal is imminent with the European Union to overhaul Northern Ireland's post-Brexit trade, vowing to "keep fighting" for a satisfactory outcome. Facing strong criticism from pro-UK unionists in Northern Ireland and headline Brexiters in his own Conservative ranks, Sunak talked tough as he was challenged in parliament over the drawn-out talks with Brussels. "We are still in intensive discussions with the European Union to ensure we can find agreement to meet the tests that I have set," the prime minister said. "I have a good understanding of what is required and I will keep fighting until I get it," he added. Sunak highlighted three priorities for the negotiation: guaranteeing democratic sovereignty for Northern Ireland, safeguarding its status in the wider United Kingdom, and finding "practical solutions" to problems facing companies. Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) opposes the protocol, which kept the province in the EU's single market for physical goods after the rest of the UK left. The party is refusing to re-enter a power-sharing government in Belfast. DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson said the protocol must be not just reformed but replaced "by rewriting the legally binding treaty text" with the EU. One key issue exercising the DUP and Tory right-wingers is the prospect of the EU's European Court of Justice retaining oversight of the protocol, without input from Northern Irish lawmakers. But Sunak is also under pressure to rebalance strained ties with the EU as a way of revitalising the troubled UK economy. It has been hit hard by reduced trade since Brexit as well as by the Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The prime minister said he had heard "loud and clear" the DUP's demands before the party would agree to restore the legislative assembly in Belfast, which is set for the first time to be led by the pro-Irish party Sinn Fein. Plugging a "democratic deficit" surrounding the protocol was at "the very heart of the issues that must be addressed" with the EU, Sunak added. - APP

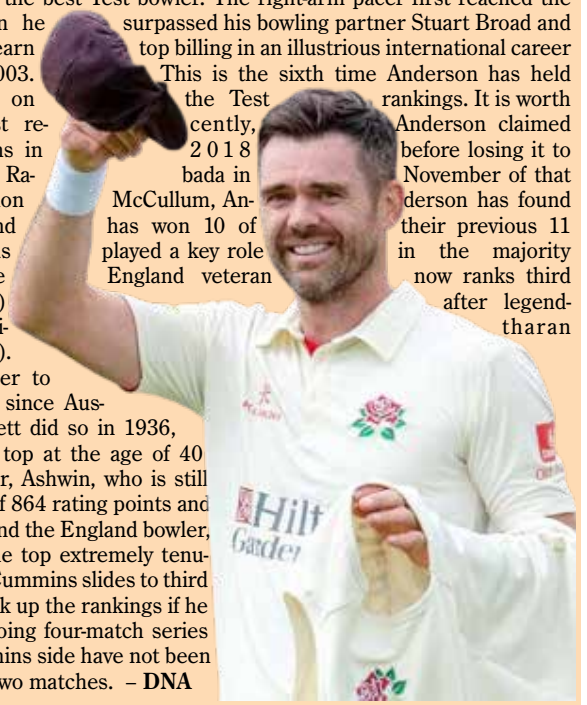
Neymar
suffers ankle
ligament
damage

DNA

PARIS: Brazil forward Neymar has suffered ligament damage to his injured ankle, Paris Saint-Germain said on Tuesday, two weeks before the French club's Champions League last 16, second leg with Bayern Munich. Neymar, 31, was taken off on a stretcher with an ankle injury in the second half of PSG's extraordinary 4-3 Ligue 1 win over Lille on Sunday. "New examinations taken today confirm a sprained ankle for Neymar with ligament damage," PSG said in a statement. PSG confirmed after the victory a scan had shown no fracture, but said further tests would need to be carried out on the damage to the ligaments in the coming days. His injury immediately built fears he could miss the return leg with Bayern on March 8. The French champions will head to Germany looking to overturn a 1-0 deficit from the first leg, when Kylian Mbappe was restricted to a second-half cameo as a substitute on his return from a thigh injury.

Anderson, 40,
becomes number
one Test bowler

LONDON: Veteran England bowler James Anderson overtook Australian pacer Pat Cummins to become the number one ranked bowler after the latest ICC Men's Test Rankings. Anderson, 40, topped the rankings after taking seven wickets for England in their convincing 267-run victory over New Zealand last week in Mount Maunganui, overthrowing Cummins' four-year reign as the best Test bowler. The right-arm pacer first reached the summit in May 2016 when he surpassed his bowling partner Stuart Broad and top billing in an illustrious international career. This is the sixth time Anderson has held the title of the top bowler on mentioning here that most recently, the Test bowler Anderson claimed the top title for five months in 2018, when he overtook South African pacer Kagiso Rabada in the Test rankings. Anderson claimed the title after losing it to McCullum, Anderson has won 10 of their previous 11 England Test matches. Anderson has played a key role in the majority of England's Test victories, and the all-time in Test wickets (682) England veteran Muttiah Murali (800) and Shane Warne (708). He is also the oldest bowler to claim the number one spot since Australian great Clarrie Grimmett did so in 1936, thanks to his ascent to the top at the age of 40 years and 207 days. However, Ashwin, who is still in second place with a total of 864 rating points and is only two rating points behind the England bowler, makes Anderson's lead at the top extremely tenuous. With 858 rating points, Cummins slides to third but has a chance to move back up the rankings if he delivers for Australia in ongoing four-match series against India. Though, Cummins side have not been up to their best, losing first two matches. - DNA



Real Madrid routs Liverpool 5-2 in UCL last 16 clash

DNA

LONDON: Real Madrid came back from a deficit to secure an incredible 5-2 win over Liverpool in the UEFA Champions League Round of 16 first leg in England. Hosts Liverpool scored an early opener at Anfield as the Reds' Uruguayan forward Darwin Nunez beat Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois by flicking a backheel in the area. Liverpool doubled the gap in the 14th minute when their Egyptian star Mohamed Salah took advantage of Courtois' huge mistake. Courtois had time to clear the ball, but the Belgian goalkeeper didn't do it. Salah struck the loose ball to finish. In the 21st minute, Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior was in the box to fire a right-footed shot that beat Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker, making it 1-2. Real Madrid's Austrian left-back David Alaba was injured to go off. Nacho replaced him. Vinicius made it 2-2 in the 36th minute as Alisson aimed to pass to one of his teammates but the ball bounced off the Brazilian attacker before going into Liverpool's net. Visitors Real Madrid came back

in the first minutes of the second half with a close-range header by Brazilian defender Eder Militao, making it 3-2. In the 55th minute, the Spanish club's French forward Karim Benzema scored in the box and made it 4-2 for the Whites

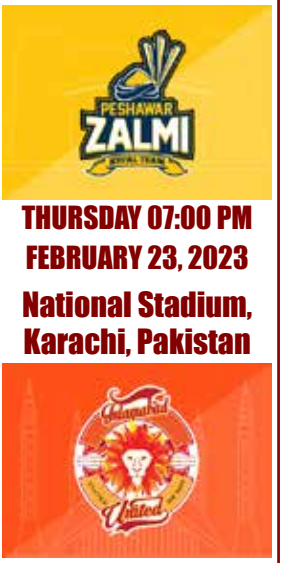


to stun Liverpool. But the Spanish powerhouse did not stop. On a quick counter-attack, Real Madrid scored their fifth goal in the 67th minute. Croatian midfielder Luka Modric started the Madrid team's attack to find Vinicius. After a pass by Vinicius, Benzema skipped past Alisson to make a calm finish even though there were three Liverpool players standing in front of the French forward, making it 5-2.

Real Madrid came from 2-0 down to dominate Liverpool 5-2 in the away match. UEFA confirmed that Vinicius was named the Player of the Match.

In a post-match interview, Real Madrid star Benzema said they started "a little poorly" but turned the tables then. "We knew that the Anfield fans were going to put us under pressure, but after those first 15 minutes, we saw the true Real Madrid. Football at this level is hard. They started better than us, but this was a big game and we were ready," he said, and thanked Real Madrid fans for their support. "We'll need them (Real Madrid fans) again in the second leg, and we'll need to produce a great match in the Bernabeu," he added. For the first time since 1966, Liverpool conceded five goals in a single European competition match. Dutch club Ajax previously hammered Liverpool 5-1 in a European Cup match in that year. Joyous Real Madrid returned home with a big advantage and confidence.

PSL 8th Edition



THURSDAY 07:00 PM
FEBRUARY 23, 2023
National Stadium,
Karachi, Pakistan

High-level
delegation
in Kabul

FROM PAGE 01
interest of both countries," the statement quoted Mullah Baradar as saying. He noted that political and security issues should not affect trade and economic matters between the two countries and be kept separate from political and security problems. The statement said that the Afghan deputy prime minister asked the Pakistani delegation to release Afghans detained in jails across Pakistan. He also urged Pakistan to ensure facilities for Afghan passengers at the Torkham and Chaman-Spin Boldak borders, with special consideration for emergency patients. A Pakistani delegation meets Afghanistan's Acting First Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Abdul Ghani Baradar on Wednesday. Photo from Afghan Prime Minister's Office The statement added that the Pakistani side assured the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to resolve the problems. The delegation said that the concerned ministries and committees would be asked to step up efforts for solutions to these problems. The meeting comes as the Pakistan-Afghanistan Torkham border - the main trading and border crossing point between the two countries - remained closed for the third straight day on Tuesday after a deadlock over starting a dialogue prevailed between border officials. Earlier this week, the Afghan Taliban had shut the border crossing, accusing Pakistan of renegeing on its commitments.

Imran slams
govt over...

FROM PAGE 01
save Rs200 billion - aimed to keep the country afloat as the nation buckles up to meet the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) terms to unlock the next tranche worth \$1.1 billion loan facility. Two days ago, the lower house of parliament also unanimously approved the government's much-needed Rs170 billion 'mini-budget' - a move mandatory for seeking the global lender's loan. Coming down hard on the PDM, a group of nine political parties, coalition government, Imran Khan said the rulers should "stop fooling people" by sharing plans to cut down the number of government vehicles and sell land. "I thought there would be a big decision. [They must be] worried about the nation." He also reiterated the government's promise to fix the country. "Even an enemy won't do what has happened [in the country] in the last 10 months." The coalition government came into power after overthrowing the Imran Khan-led PTI government through a vote of no-confidence in last April.

PM Shehbaz
announces..

FROM PAGE 01
number of austerity measures, including reducing development spending and raising taxes. Prime Minister Shehbaz has emphasised the need for all citizens, including government officials, to do their part in addressing the country's economic challenges. He has urged Pakistanis to embrace a culture of frugality and to work together to overcome the country's economic difficulties. When asked how the cabinet members will survive, PM Shehbaz said that they will live their lives as they used to live [before coming into power]. "Luxury vehicles are being recovered from the cabinet members and they will be auctioned and the proceeds will go to the national exchequer," he added.

Briefs

Cyclone
Freddy hits
Madagascar,
four killed

MONITORING DESK

ANTANANARIVO: A powerful cyclone tracked across Madagascar on Wednesday, killing four people, as it headed towards Mozambique, disaster management authorities said.

A 27-year-old man drowned in rising sea waters just before Cyclone Freddy made landfall on the Indian Ocean island on Tuesday evening, packing winds of around 130 kilometres (80 miles) per hour. The authorities on Wednesday morning said the toll had risen to four. Around 16,600 people were affected and more than 6,750 homes damaged, the National Risk Management Office (BNGRC) said, also giving a provisional assessment.

France's weather service Meteo-France said Freddy weakened as it began its path across the island, and now had an average wind speed of 55 kph, gusting to 75 kph. Risk management senior official Faly Aritiana Fabien described Freddy as "one of the strongest cyclones" in recent times to hit the island, which is typically lashed several times during the annual November-April storm season. The storm brought less rain than feared but still ripped roofs off buildings and flattened rice fields and fruit trees.—APP

'Iran has
thwarted US
schemes'

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: The commander of the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the country has managed to thwart the United States' attempts to establish a foothold in West Asia and bring nations under its control.

"Although former US president [Donald Trump] openly admitted to Washington having spent 7 trillion dollars and lost at least 7,000 forces in Afghanistan, what brought such an ambitious project to an abrupt failure was Iran's Islamic establishment and the Islamic Revolution's culture," Brigadier General Esmail Qa'ani said in an address to the Assembly of Experts in Tehran on Wednesday.

He noted that Iran – irrespective of the vicious plots hatched by the enemies, above all the US and the Israeli regime – continues to tread the path of progress, has become a source of influence in the region and the world, and has notched notable achievements under the Islamic establishment. The IRGC commander pointed out that American statesmen changed their strategies in West Asia in cooperation with a number of regional countries and created the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group. "The deviant Daesh outfit, which was a fake copy of the resistance front, had the capacity to transform the status quo of the region in favor of Americans. It was, however, because of the endeavors and sacrifices made by Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani that the fiendish conspiracy fell short," Qa'ani said.

Pope urges
end to war in
Ukraine

ATHENS: Pope Francis Wednesday urged an end to the "absurd and cruel" war in Ukraine. The day after tomorrow, Feb. 24, will mark one year since the beginning of the war, a sad anniversary, he said during his general audience in the Vatican on Ash Wednesday morning, according to the Vatican News. "The toll of dead, wounded, refugees, those isolated, destructions, economic and social damage speaks for itself," added the pontiff. He called on "those in authority over nations to make concrete efforts to end the conflict, reach a cease-fire, and start peace negotiations." "Whatever is built on rubble can never be a true victory," he added. Ash Wednesday ushers in the period of Lent for many Catholics and other believers, a 40-day season of prayer and fasting, and leads up to Easter Sunday, marking the biblical resurrection of Jesus, the son of God in the Christian faith.—Agencies

OIC event highlights
HRs violations in IIOJK

Today's event is yet another manifestation of OIC's unequivocal support to the cause of the Kashmiri people and its commitment for realization of their right to self-determination

DNA

JEDDAH: The Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, organized a special event and a photo exhibition today at the OIC Secretariat to commemorate the Kashmir Solidarity Day and highlight the gross human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). OIC Secretary General, H.E. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, participated as the Chief Guest. Senior leadership of the OIC Secretariat including humanitarian crisis in IIOJK. Condemning India's unilateral and illegal actions of 5th August 2019, PR emphasized that the OIC should take concrete actions for the realization of the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people as per the relevant resolutions of UN Security Council. He exhorted the Secretary General for appointment of a panel of international eminent personalities to explore legal,



political and diplomatic avenues for peaceful settlement of Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Expressing solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the Secretary General OIC, Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha reiterated the OIC's rejection of India's illegal and unilateral actions since August 5, 2019 aimed

at altering the demographic composition of the occupied territory. He highlighted that the OIC has persistently called India out for its egregious human rights violations in the IIOJK and expressed the urgent need for the resolution of the J&K dispute. He assured to take all possible measures for resolution of the dispute

in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and OIC declarations. In his remarks, Assistant Secretary General and Special Envoy on Jammu & Kashmir, Mr. Yousef Al Dobeiye referred to his recent visit to the Line of Control and the stories of plight of the victims of Indian forces.

He reassured OIC's firm support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir for realization of their dreams. Secretary General's Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir, Assistant Secretary General for Palestine/Al-Quds Affairs, Assistant Secretary General for Science and Technology and Permanent Representatives of

OIC Missions along with representatives from Saudi and Pakistani media outlets were present at the event. Pakistan's Permanent Representative to OIC, Ambassador Syed Mohammad Fawad Sher, briefed the audience about the atrocities being perpetrated by Indian occupation forces and the magnitude of the Consul General Khalid Majid thanked the OIC for its consistent support for the Kashmiri people and expressed the hope that OIC will take concrete measures to stop human rights violations in IIOJK. Chairman Kashmir Committee Jeddah, Mr. Masood Puri, in his remarks, highlighted the plight of Kashmiri people and urged the Secretary General to redouble OIC's efforts for the just resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Today's event is yet another manifestation of OIC's unequivocal support to the cause of the Kashmiri people and its commitment for realization of their right to self-determination.

Meloni reiterates Italy's
support for Ukraine

KYIV: Rome "does not intend to waver" in its support for Ukraine, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said during her visit to Kyiv Tuesday. "I wanted to do it (come to Ukraine) to reiterate Italy's full support for Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression, to reiterate that Italy does not intend to waver," Meloni told a joint press conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. With the first anniversary of the Russian invasion just days away, the Italian leader also visited Irpin and Bucha, towns just outside Kyiv that were devastated during Moscow's unsuccessful bid to seize the capital last year. "It's different, seeing it with



one's own eyes. I will do everything to tell every Italian what I've seen," she said. NATO member Italy has provided cash and weapons to help Ukraine, and earlier this month agreed to send mobile surface-to-air missile systems that it has jointly developed with France. But Meloni said sending jets is "not on the table" for the mo-

ment and it's a decision to be made "in consultation with international partners." Zelenskyy criticized earlier remarks of former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who has a personal relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin going back years. "Mr Berlusconi ... his house was never bombed with missiles daily, I suppose. And thank God his partner from Russia did not drive into his yard on a tank and did not destroy his family and friends," Zelenskyy said. Meloni took office in October and leads the far-right Brothers of Italy party but has also distanced herself from the more pro-Russian partners in her govern-

ing coalition. Berlusconi, whose Forza Italia party is the junior partner in the coalition, has sought to shift blame for the war away from Moscow, most recently earlier this week when he criticized Zelenskyy. Meloni's office responded by emphasizing its "firm and committed" support for Ukraine. Meanwhile, Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini, leader of the far-right League party, has in the past spoken admirably of Putin and even worn a T-shirt bearing the Russian president's face. Former Italian premier Mario Draghi visited Kyiv in June 2022 with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.—Agencies

China outlines
diplomatic goals
with Russia

MOSCOW: Moscow and Beijing are seeking to strengthen ties and remain committed to building a "multipolar" world, Chinese State Councilor Wang Yi said on Wednesday. The comments came as China's top diplomat met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Moscow. "Despite the volatility of the state of international affairs, China and Russia... are firmly and resolutely working towards a multipolar world," Wang said, as quoted by RIA Novosti. Wang, who heads the Chinese Communist Party's Foreign Affairs Committee, added that Beijing would continue to conduct an independent foreign policy based on "the spirit of mutual benefit." He stated that China is seeking to "open new horizons in terms of further cooperation not just with Russia, but other countries as well." Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said Moscow and Beijing are "ready to stand in defense of each other's interests on the basis of respect for international law and the central role of the UN." During his trip, Wang met with Nikolay Patrushev, the head of Russia's Security Council. The diplomat went on to hold a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. China has refused to impose sanctions on Moscow and has accused the US of stirring up the conflict in Ukraine. In a press briefing on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin branded Washington "the top disruptor" of international order.—Agencies

Iran's FM
hails Iraq's
efforts to
restore ties
with KSA

FOREIGN DESK

BAGHDAD: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has expressed his gratitude to the Iraqi government for its endeavors to restore Tehran's relations with Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Speaking at a joint press conference with his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein in Baghdad on Wednesday, Amir-Abdollahian thanked Hussein and the Iraqi government for their attempts to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between Iran and Saudi Arabia as well as Iran and Egypt. "Within the framework of boosting cooperation with Muslim countries and the region, we welcome the restoration of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia and Egypt," he said. "We express gratitude to Fuad Hussein's efforts in closing the gaps between the two sides." The top Iranian diplomat also said that he had discussed with his Iraqi counterpart the continuation of cooperation within the framework of mutual agreements and based on the 1975 Agreement, particularly the issues related to the dredging of Shatt al-Arab (Arvand Roud) and the determination and repositioning of the thalweg line with the aim of developing the river's neighboring provinces.

Malcolm X's
family to sue
CIA, FBI

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The family of slain civil rights leader Malcolm X is planning to sue the CIA, FBI, the New York Police Department and others for \$100 million, over their alleged role in his death. The announcement came Tuesday as family and followers commemorated the anniversary of his 1965 assassination on Tuesday. Two of his daughters, Ilyasah Shabazz and Qubilah Shabazz, were joined by attorney Ben Crump at a news conference at the site of the former Audubon Ballroom in upper Manhattan, where Malcolm X was fatally shot as a crowd gathered to hear him speak on Feb. 21, 1965.

For decades questions have circulated over who was responsible for his death. Three men were convicted, but two were exonerated in 2021 after a renewed investigation into the cases against them showed the evidence used to gain convictions was shaky and that authorities had held back some information.

Ilyasah Shabazz, the co-administrator of her father's estate, filed notices of claim, which is the first step in the process, saying that the agencies "conspired with each other and with other individuals and acted, and failed to act, in such a way as to bring about the wrongful death of Malcolm X."—Agencies

Shamima bid
to regain UK
citizenship
rejected

LONDON: The British judges ruled on Wednesday that the removal of UK citizenship of Shamima Begum, who joined Daesh/ISIS in 2015, was "lawful." Begum lost her appeal against the UK government which revoked her British citizenship when the Special Immigration Appeals Commission gave its decision. The commission rejected Begum's appeal on all grounds and ruled that she cannot return to the UK. The 23-year-old woman still remains in a refugee camp in northern Syria. In 2021, the UK Supreme Court ruled that Begum, who lost her citizenship because she joined Daesh/ISIS in 2015, should not be allowed to return to the country to legally fight for her citizenship. Dubbed a "Daesh bride" for having left the UK to marry a member of the terror group, Begum lost the first stage of her court appeal against the Home Office's decision to strip her of British citizenship, which was revoked on national security grounds after she was found in a Syrian refugee camp in 2019. fifteen years.—Agencies

Zong 4G, ITCN bring
Asia's largest IT
event to Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G continues its mission to bring Pakistan into the digital era by partnering with ITCN as the title partner for the 22nd rendition of Asia's biggest Tech and Telecom conference taking place in Islamabad at the Pak-China Friendship center from the 23rd to the 25th of February. The event serves as a unique gathering of Pakistan's tech ecosystem. Key stakeholders, such as Government Officials and Chief Level Executives, will be present at the event along with Innovators and Decision Makers from multiple fields and industries, discussing the future of technology and innovation. As the largest 4G and data network in Pakistan, Zong 4G always makes an effort to promote initiatives such as ITCN which help in fostering the growth and advancement of the Digital Technology industry in the country. Keeping in line with its focus of "Let's get Digital" Zong 4G will be displaying its digital business solutions that are aimed at optimizing businesses' performance and growth along with digitalizing their operations. The official spokesperson of Zong 4G said about the event, "ITCN Asia is a great opportunity for all tech-oriented and innovative minds to come together and create an environment that promotes learning and digital growth. Zong 4G is proud to align itself with ITCN as we are on the cusp of a new digital revolution and events such as these play an essential part in creating awareness for the progress that has been achieved in the fields of technology and telecom." Currently, the event has an expected footfall of 25,000+ attendees and 100+ conference speakers.—DNA



BAKU: Federal Minister of BoI, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Minister of Industries, Syed Murtaza Mahmud, Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Malik hold a meeting with Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan Mikayil Jabbarov.—DNA

'If US stops arms deliveries, war will end'

"If Russia stops its special operation, without achieving victory, there will be no Russia, it will be torn apart. If the US stops supplying weapons to the Kyiv regime, the war will end," Medvedev wrote

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: If the US stops supplying weapons to Kyiv, the war in Ukraine will end, said the deputy head of the Russian Security Council on Wednesday. Commenting on speeches given by Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Joe Biden on Tuesday, Dmitry Medvedev said on Telegram that Putin announced a long-overdue decision to suspend Russia's participation in the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), while Biden "addressed the Russian people in front of a crowd of Poles." Medvedev, also a former president and prime minister, said Russia walking away from the

New START treaty will have a huge resonance all over the world in general and in the US in particular. According to the official, so far the US has been supplying "gigantic volumes of arms" to Ukraine, working "to defeat, contain and destroy Russia" and at the same time was leaving strategic security as a separate topic "not concerning" relations between the two countries. "This conclusion (security stability is separate from the conflict in Ukraine) is worse than a crime – it is a gross mistake of the Americans. A mistake born of their 'mania grandiosa.' Their sense of superiority and impunity. "After all, it is obvious to all reasonable forces that if the US wants to defeat Russia, then we

are on the verge of a global conflict. If the US wants to defeat Russia, then we have the right to defend ourselves with any weapon, including nuclear weapons," Medvedev stressed. He added that Russia suspended its participation with the treaty so that the West could not defeat it on the battlefield and urged US elites "to think what they've done." "We will also monitor the reaction of other nuclear powers participating in NATO: France and Britain. Their strategic nuclear forces were usually not included in the balance of nuclear warheads and carriers in the preparation of agreements between the US and the USSR (which signed the START treaty in 1991, and it is high time to do this," he noted. Medvedev called Biden's speech in Warsaw "a sermon in the traditional for America Messianic way, adjusted for senile senility." "It looked unfair and ridiculous. Who is this strange old man, speaking with a confused look from Poland? Why does he

appeal to the people of another country at a time when he has a lot of domestic problems? "What is our reason to listen to a politician from a hostile state that exudes hatred for our homeland? Why should Russian citizens believe the leader of the US, which unleashed the biggest number of wars in the 20th and 21st centuries, but reproaches us with aggressiveness?" Medvedev asked. Medvedev said the US is heading the international efforts united by a goal of "inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia" and called Biden's remarks about the end of war in case if Russian troops withdraw "refined lies." "If Russia stops its special operation, without achieving victory, there will be no Russia, it will be torn apart.

appeal to the people of another country at a time when he has a lot of domestic problems? "What is our reason to listen to a politician from a hostile state that exudes hatred for our homeland? Why should Russian citizens believe the leader of the US, which unleashed the biggest number of wars in the 20th and 21st centuries, but reproaches us with aggressiveness?" Medvedev asked. Medvedev said the US is heading the international efforts united by a goal of "inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia" and called Biden's remarks about the end of war in case if Russian troops withdraw "refined lies." "If Russia stops its special operation, without achieving victory, there will be no Russia, it will be torn apart.

Briefs

Two dead, over 50 missing in China mine collapse

BEIJING: At least two people were killed and more than 50 are missing, state media reported, after an apparent collapse at a coal mine in northern China's Inner Mongolia region on Wednesday. State broadcaster CCTV said a collapse occurred at a mine in the western part of the Alxa League region around lunchtime, with other outlets and government agencies describing it as a "landslide". "Currently, the incident has caused the deaths of two people and injured six, with 53 missing," CCTV said in a social media post.

A video on social media purportedly posted by a coal truck driver appeared to show rocks cascading down a slope, kicking up clouds of brown dust that engulfed several vehicles. "The whole slope has collapsed... How many people must be dead from that?" a male voice can be heard saying in the background.

"If I'd lined up over there today, I'd have died in there, too," he said. CCTV reported earlier on Wednesday that the incident had affected a "wide area" of an open-pit mine operated by the Xinjing Coal Mining Company. "A number of working staff and vehicles have been buried," the broadcaster said at the time, adding that rescue personnel have been sent to the scene. - APP

Security forces kill one terrorist

RAWALPINDI: On 22 February 2023, fire exchange took place between security forces and terrorists in general area Spinwam, North Waziristan District. During intense exchange of fire, one terrorist was killed. The killed terrorist remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and civilians.

Locals of the area appreciated the response and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the area. Meanwhile, security forces personnel arrested six terrorists including a would-be suicide bomber and four facilitators during an operation in North Waziristan District.

The arrested terrorists have confessed to their crimes. Most of the arrested terrorists were students at seminars in Karak, Hangu, Kurram and Tal. More arrests are expected following extracting information from the nabbed militants. The authorities have advised parents of the children to thoroughly investigate before getting their kids admitted in seminars. Three would-be suicide bombers and 28 facilitators have so far been arrested in North Waziristan District during the current year. - Agencies

SC rejects plea seeking probe of cipher

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday rejected all three pleas seeking an investigation into a cipher - presented by PTI Chairman Imran Khan in March 2022 as evidence of a "foreign conspiracy" to oust him.

Justice Qazi Faez Isa pronounced the verdict after conducting an in-chamber hearing on pleas filed by Advocate Zulfiqar Ahmed Bhutta, Syed Tariq Badar and Advocate Naeemul Hasan last year.

The petitions had sought the constitution of a "high-powered commission" to probe the alleged "foreign conspiracy" that Imran claimed was hatched to topple his government.

They had named the Federation of Pakistan through the law and justice secretary, the prime minister, and the cabinet secretary as respondents in the case. However, the applications had been returned earlier over objections by the Registrar's Office. Subsequently, the petitioner filed fresh pleas in the court against these objections.

Star-studded Sarangi event by Serena Hotels

Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels lauds the talented performers and encouraged others to participate in the Season 7 competition



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels under its Cultural Diplomacy hosted Sarangi season 6 finale at the Sheesh Mahal of Islamabad Serena Hotel, an evening dedicated to promoting the hidden talents of Pakistan by providing them the hotel's platform to showcase their musical talent with a wider audience; an opportunity to become the nation's rising stars.

Sarangi, a music initiative has been encouraging young and talented individuals or group of people to celebrate our cultural heritage through their music.

For season 6, over a total of 400 participants submitted their entries in the competition, of which 5 were selected by professional jury members.

The five shortlisted contestants from varying background provided an intriguing mix of musical talent on display, included Asma Aslam from Karachi, Muqaddas Younas from Lahore, Minhas Khan from Islamabad, Sajjad Ali Hussain from Faisalabad, and Rahat Francis from Quetta. Their experience and training were reflected in their styles as they performed in front of more than 300 guests, including a large number of Diplomats, Government functionaries, Corporate heads,

Businessmen and music lovers, proving their mettle to the highly acclaimed musical genius Sarmad Ghafoor whose well known works include Atif Aslam's two platinum albums including Jal Pari and he is the man behind the music of last year's cinematic hit 'The Legend of Maula Jatt.' The other members of the jury panel consist of illustrious Qawwal Asif Ali Santoo, who was in the tutelage of the Great Legend Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, along with the melodious Aima Baig, who rose to fame with the 2017 songs from the movie 'Lahore se Aagey' and has since been mesmerizing the audience with her electrifying performances.

The jury unanimously decided on Sajjad Ali Hussain from Faisalabad as the Winner of Sarangi Season 6, whose album will be made through the professional music house by Serena Hotel. The other artists were also presented with the awards by the Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan (Retd) along with the judges. Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels lauded the talented performers and encouraged others to participate in the Season 7 competition. He also appreciated the three jury members for their voluntary services for this wonderful community initiative and presented them with mementos on the occasion.

US lauds Pakistan's economic policies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States has expressed confidence in the policies and programmes of Pakistani government for economic sustainability and socio-economic uplift of the people. The expression was conveyed by US ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome during his meeting with Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar in Islamabad on Wednesday. The meeting discussed matters of common interest and ways to enhance the existing bilateral relations between the two countries. The Finance Minister reiterated Pakistan's desire to further strengthen bilateral trade and investment with the US. Noting that the two countries enjoy deep rooted historic and durable relations in economic and trade realms, the Finance Minister shared various economic avenues in which these relations can be further deepened. He informed the US ambassador about economic policies and priorities of the government to address the challenges in country's economy and set it on right trajectory. Ishaq Dar said the government has devised pragmatic plans related to revenues and expenditures for meeting its national as well as international financial obligations.

IHC directs Imran to appear before banking court

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday rejected the request of PTI's chief Imran Khan for attendance through video and directed him to appear before the banking court till February 28, in prohibited funding case. The court, however, extended its stay order against the verdict of the banking court on interim bail of former prime minister.

A two-judge bench comprising Justice Mohsin Akhter Kayani and justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the petition of Imran Khan against the order of banking court. At the outset of hearing, Imran Khan's lawyer Barrister Salman Saffdar produced the fresh medical report of PTI's chief.

He said that the Lahore High Court (LHC) had also granted bail to his client on basis of the medical grounds. The lawyer said that a request was filed to the session court seeking to form a medical board, adding that although they welcomed the medical board but there was no need of it. Special Public Prosecutor Rizwan Abbasi said that nine other bail petitions were also pending in the same case. - APP

Protest in Quetta continues for 2nd straight day

DNA

QUETTA: Marri tribesmen continued their sit-in outside the Red Zone in Balochistan's Quetta for the second consecutive day on Wednesday after bullet-riddled and charred bodies of a woman and her two sons were found in a well near Barkhan. The situation stemmed from the discovery of the bodies late on Monday night - said to be the wife and two sons of one Khan Muhammad Marri.

"These are the bodies of my wife and two sons who were kept in a private jail in Haji Kot for the last four years," he said, identifying them as his 40-year-old wife Granaz, and sons Muhammad Anwar (22) and Abdul Qadir (15). Marri, who was once employed as a security guard with a provincial minister, alleged that his wife and sons were being held in the private jail of Balochistan Minister for Communication and Works Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, adding that five more of his children, including his 13-year-old daughter, were still languishing there.

MPs call BBC India offices searches 'intimidation'

MONITORING DESK

LONDON: British MPs have described searches of the BBC's offices in India by tax authorities as "intimidation". Some staff were subjected to overnight questioning when premises in Delhi and Mumbai were targeted last week. The BBC, which is cooperating with the investigation, recently aired a documentary critical of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the UK. Foreign Office minister David Rutley said the government was following the matter closely. Labour shadow minister Fabian Hamilton said "criticism cannot be shut down unnecessarily" in a democracy during a Commons debate on Tuesday.

The Labour MP expressed concern about the motive behind the India searches "regardless of the official narrative as to why they took place". He continued: "The BBC is a globally respected broadcaster rightly renowned for its high-quality, trustworthy reporting, it should be free to report and operate without intimidation." The DUP's Jim Shannon described the searches as "a deliberate act of intimidation following the release of an unflattering documentary about the country's leader". He called on the government to summon the Indian High Commission over the issue. Conservative Sir Julian Lewis also described the searches as "extremely worrying". Foreign Office minister David Rutley declined to comment on the matter directly but added: "Respect for the rule of law is an essential element of an effective democracy, so too is an independent media and freedom of speech."



BUDAPEST: Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan Béla Fazekas greets Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari upon his arrival at Budapest. - DNA

Nablus: Ten Palestinians killed during Israeli raid

WEB DESK

OCCUPIED WEST BANK: Ten Palestinians, including an elderly man, have been killed during an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank, witnesses and Palestinian health officials say. Explosions and gunfire sounded as troops raided the heart of Nablus, triggering armed clashes with gunmen. It is understood heavy Israeli fire was directed at a house, killing two senior

Palestinians inside. The Israeli military earlier confirmed its troops were operating in Nablus. Palestinian health officials say a 72-year-old civilian was among those killed outside the besieged house, amid the gun battles. Video footage showed a body in a street next to bags of bread, in what is usually a busy market area of the old city. More than 100 people were also wounded by gunfire, according to the health officials. Seven of them are in a critical condition in local hospitals. A spokesman for Pales-

tinian President Mahmoud Abbas said he condemned the raid and held Israel's government responsible for "this dangerous escalation, which is pushing the region toward tension and an explosion". The Palestinian group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, warned that it was "monitoring the escalating crimes conducted by the enemy against our people in the occupied West Bank and is running out of patience". Nablus and nearby Jenin have been a focus of search, arrest and intelligence gathering raids that Israel has intensified over the last year amid a spate of deadly Palestinian attacks. This latest one comes despite reports this week of an understanding brokered by the US aimed at calming tensions.

Chinese bank approves \$700m to Pakistan

Finance minister says SBP expected to receive loan by this week



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday announced that the board of China Development Bank (CDB) approved a loan of \$700 million for Pakistan. Earlier this month, the country's foreign exchange reserves slipped to the alarming level of below \$3 billion for the first time

Rupee stages comeback against US dollar

ISLAMABAD: After going down against the mighty US dollar, the Pakistani rupee on Wednesday staged a turnaround and gained Rs1.01 in early business in the interbank market. According to the information extracted from the forex dealers, the Pakistani rupee gained Rs1.01 in its value against the greenback and was currently being traded at Rs261.50. On Tuesday, Pakistani rupee's five-session appreciation run came to an end as the currency settled with a decline of 0.24% against the US dollar in the inter-bank market. As per the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the currency closed at 262.51 against the US dollar, a fall of 63 paisas. The last cycle of currency devaluation pushed Pakistan's real effective exchange rate (REER) to 92.8 in January 2023 from 96.2 a month earlier, data from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) showed. The decline in the REER - an index of the price of a basket of goods in one country relative to the price of the same basket in that country's major trading partners - is driven by the rupee's massive depreciation against the US dollar during the month of January. - DNA

in nine years, reducing import capacity to slightly over two weeks. As the government seeks to revive the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, Pakistan has sought to secure assurances from Saudi Arabia and China for more loans.

When Ishaq Dar took over as finance minister in September, his first preference was to avoid IMF's tough conditions by seeking financial assistance from friendly countries. In November, the minister claimed to have secured a \$13 billion bailout from China

and Saudi Arabia with \$5.7 billion in fresh loans. Dar was confident that the cash would come before the IMF programme revival. However, it became clear with time that Islamabad's old allies refused to dole out more cash without the country first agreeing to the Fund's conditions. That was when Pakistan had to invite the IMF mission to negotiate the deal.

The country is now hoping that its friends would come to its rescue as it has done all the hard yards to convince the IMF. Dar took to Twitter to announce that CDB has decided to lend Pakistan its support. "Formalities completed," announced the financial czar, adding that \$700 million was expected to reach the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) by this week. He maintained that the loan will "shore up" Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves. On the other hand, Islamabad has agreed to implement the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP), which contains policy suggestions by the IMF. Sources have revealed that the staff-level agreement between the fund and the government is expected next week.