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Stoltenberg sees progress in Sweden's bid

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Pak, Uzbekistan sign \$1 billion trade agreement

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Briefs

Khan says JIT report being tempered

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE:Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan claimed on Friday attempts to sabotage the findings of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) in its report through deliberate tampering were under way. Taking to Twitter, the deposed premier recalled the assassination attempt on him, saying, "If anyone still has any doubts about who was responsible for my assassination attempt, just see what is happening with the JIT report." Speaking about the anti-terrorism court (ATC), Mr Khan said, "The JIT report should be submitted before the ATC." Mentioning the inquiry, Mr Khan said, "The prosecutor general, after an independent inquiry, found four officers guilty of destroying evidence and asked for action against them."

Arrest warrant for Rana issued

DNA

GUJRANWALA: An arrest warrant for Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah was issued by an anti-terrorism court in Gujranwala, reported media on Friday. A case was filed at the Industrial police station against the minister on August 5, 2022 on a complaint of PML-Q leader Shahkz Aslam for issuing threats to the then-Punjab chief secretary and his family members. According to the first information report (FIR), the complainant saw the federal minister on television hurling threats. The Gujranwala ATC dismissed the police report today (Friday) and directed them to present Sanaullah on March 7. The court also issued a show-cause notice to the officer concerned, DSP, and SP investigations and ordered them to appear before it on the same day.

Holiday Notice

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

Apex Committee meets Political stability crucial

The committee session expresses 'zero tolerance' against terrorism

ANSAR M BHATTI
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that political stability is crucial for economic stability as he chaired the meeting of the National Apex Committee – summoned to overview the country's law and order situation. Addressing the session, the premier said absolute state machinery would be utilized to stop the terrorist attacks in the country and the focus would be on operational preparedness, increasing the capability of the police. The PM praised, as sources said, the security forces for a successful operation against terrorists who attacked the Karachi police office while condemning in severe terms the incident. The committee, formed in 2015 after the Army Public School (APS) attack to oversee the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP), met in Islamabad as Pakistan grapples with a fresh wave of terrorism. The apex committee meeting – attended by the civilian and military leadership – was scheduled to discuss and formulate a strategy to deal with the terrorism wave in various parts of the country. The meeting came after Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and Director General of the Inter-Ser-

vices Intelligence Lieutenant General Nadeem Anjum visited Kabul to discuss the rise in militant activities, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) attacks. Such a high-level visit from Islamabad took place after a long pause. It is understood that the activities of the TTP using Afghan territory which is causing great harm to peace in Pakistan did come for detailed deliberations during the stay of the delegation in Kabul. The meeting also holds importance as the Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is holding its "Jail BharoTehreek (court arrest movement)" across the country – which also requires the attention of law enforcement agencies. "Unfortunately, there is still a segment of society that wants to get things done on the streets," the prime minister said, without naming the PTI – which was ousted from power in April and has been on the streets with intermittent intervals. He mentioned that after the APS attack, then-prime minister Nawaz Sharif had also invited Khan to attend a NAP meeting, but he refused to attend the moot even back then. The prime minister told the participants that after the Peshawar attack, which claimed

PTI says PDM trying to pressurize judiciary Inept PM brook 70 years inflation record: Farrukh

STAFF REPORT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) demanded investigation into the matter as how the note of Supreme Court (SC) Judge Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail containing of his reservations regarding the suomotu notice by the apex reached PPP leader Farooq H Naik. PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry, in his strong reaction to the unfortunate development on Friday, stated that it was very worrisome that Justice Mandokhail's note, which was yet to be made part of the order, reached Farooq Naik. He demanded that there should be an investigation into the matter and Farooq Naik should be asked who delivered this note to him. Lashing out the imported government for their inability to get the country out of the prevailing crisis, Fawad stated that the leadership of the ruling parties were well-trained fraudulent. He said that on one hand, Khawaja Asif has been shedding tears for half an hour that he could not audit Islamabad club, on the other, the membership of the club was sold for Rs. 10 million during the Zardari and

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ISLAMABAD: PM Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs meeting of the Central Apex Committee. – DNA

US sends 2 Gitmo Bay detainees to Pakistan

There were 40 detainees when President Joe Biden took office



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States has transferred two brothers from the Guantanamo Bay U.S. detention facility in Cuba to Pakistan, bringing the total number of people held at Guantanamo down to 32, the Pentagon said on Thursday. The Guantanamo camp was established by Republican President George W. Bush in 2002 to house foreign terrorism suspects following the 2001 hijacked plane attacks on New York and the Pentagon that killed about 3,000 people. It came to symbolize the excesses of the U.S. "war on terror" because of harsh interrogation methods that critics have said amounted to torture. There were 40 detainees when President Joe Biden, a Democrat, took office in 2021. Biden has said he hopes to close the facility. The federal government is barred by law from transferring Guantanamo detainees to U.S. mainland prisons.

Forces kill one terrorist

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces conducted an Intelligence Based Operation in District Awaran, Balochistan on a credible lead with regards to presence of a hide out of terrorists involved in recent IED attacks in the area.

Polls date suo motu Ruling parties call on SC to form full court

The request was made by Farooq H Naek, when nine-member bench resumed the hearing

Asif comes hard on judiciary in NA

SHUJAAT HAMZA
ISLAMABAD: Three ruling coalition parties – JamiatUlema-e-Islam Fazl (JUFI), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) – on Thursday asked the Supreme Court to form a full court to hear the suomotu notice taken by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on the delay in the announcement of a date for elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The request was made in a joint statement read out by lawyer Farooq H Naek, on behalf of the three parties when the nine-member bench resumed the hearing of the suomotu notice. The PPP lawyer also requested Justice IjazUl Ahsan and Justice SayyedMazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi to recuse themselves from the nine-member bench currently hearing the suomotu notice.

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US trade ties vital for Pakistan: Ned Price

Says America has been leading investors in Pak

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States said that its robust trade relationship with Pakistan was crucial as the country recovers from the effects of the devastating floods last year. Addressing a press briefing in Washington on Thursday, US State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said that the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council ministerial meeting hosted by the US Trade Representative Ambassador Tai exemplified American commit-

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Ukrainians vow to fight on, a year after invasion

"I'll repeat today what I said one year ago as Russia invaded Ukraine," Biden tweeted

G20 tussles over Ukraine war

NEWS DESK

BENGALURU: Finance leaders of the world's top economies sought on Friday to bridge differences over how to deal with Russia following its year-old invasion of Ukraine as the West stepped up sanctions against Moscow. U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen accused Russian officials at the two-day Group of Twenty (G20) meeting in the Indian city of Bengaluru of being "complicit" in war atrocities. But, underlining the split with those nations which have not joined efforts to isolate the Russian economy, meeting host India avoided mention of the year-long war in inaugural remarks and said the global economy faced a range of other challenges. "I would urge that your discussions should focus on the most vulnerable citizens of the world," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, adding that stability, confidence and growth had to be brought back to the world economy.

you, I'm on my own now and it's very, very hard," said ValentynaKrysan, 75, a shop employee in Kyiv. "I wish you a nice, peaceful day, and that such a thing will never be repeated in your lives." Allies around the world showed their support. Ukraine's blue and yellow colours lit up the Eiffel Tower, the Brandenburg Gate, the Empire State Building and the Sydney Opera House, and were painted on the street outside the Russian embassy in London. "There will be a life after this war, because Ukraine will win," Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo said. There were no major public events to mark the anniversary in Russia, which set off fireworks on Thursday for the annual "Defenders of the Fatherland" holiday and held a pop concert on Wednesday attended by President Vladimir Putin. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and soldiers on both sides are believed to have died since Putin ordered the invasion a year ago, saying it was necessary to protect Russia's security. Ukraine sees it as a bid to subjugate an independent state. Its outnumbered and outgunned forces repelled Russia's attempt to seize the capital Kyiv early in the war and later recaptured swathes of occupied territory. But Moscow still occupies nearly a fifth of Ukraine, which it claims to have annexed. Russian troops have destroyed Ukrainian cities, set a third of the population to flight and left behind streets littered with corpses in towns they occupied and lost. Moscow denies war crimes. In recent weeks, Russian forces, replenished with hundreds of thousands of conscripts in the first mobilisation since World War Two, have launched a

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PTI award's party ticket to Shahram Tarakai for NA-19 Swabi

DNA

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) has awarded party ticket to co-founder of Awami Jamhuri Ittehad Pakistan (AJIP) Shahram Khan Tarakai from district Swabi to contest by-poll on NA-19 Swabi scheduled for March. In his statement, Shahram Khan expressed gratitude to PTI chairman Imran Khan for endorsing trust in him and said that he would try to meet the expectations of the party leadership. Previously, he was a member of the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from May 2013 to May 2018. During his first tenure as Member of the KP Assembly, he served as Provincial Minister for agriculture, Health between June 2013 and May 2018. He was dismissed as a minister of health on January 26, 2020 by the Chief Minister on the instructions of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Tarakai first entered into politics in 2005 after coming from abroad when he ran for District Nazim in 2005 Local Government Elections and won the office by a huge margin. He co-founded Awami Jamhuri Ittehad Pakistan (AJIP) in 2010 and ran for the seat of National Assembly of Pakistan as a candidate of AJIP from constituency NA-13 Swabi-II in 2013 general elections against PTI's candidate Asad Qaiser but was unsuccessful. In the same election, he was elected to the Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a candidate of AJIP from Constituency PK-32 Swabi-II by receiving 20,111 votes and defeating Amir Rehman, a candidate of Awami National Party (ANP).

Commissioner reviews services available at SDC

PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division, Mohamud Zubair Friday visited Service Delivery Centre (SDC) at Deputy Commissioner's Office and reviewed services available at various counters. Besides, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Shah Fahad, and other officers of the district administration were also present on the occasion. The Divisional Commissioner was given a detailed briefing regarding the performance of district administration. The Commissioner also visited the old record room at Tehsil Building and inspected the ongoing beautification work on it. During the visit to SDC, the Deputy Commissioner briefed him about the services available to the people. He also met applicants and after collecting firsthand information from the visitors about their problems, directed the staff for their immediate redressal. Commissioner Peshawar directed the officers and staff of the district administration to perform their duties with honesty and provide maximum relief to the people by disposing of their work. - APP

President for improving Pak-Kazakh trade, economic ties

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for improving Pakistan-Kazakhstan trade and economic relations, adding that both countries had great scope to expand cooperation in the areas of trade and economy. He pointed out that the potential of trade between the two brotherly countries was much greater than the current level of bilateral trade, and there was a clear need to explore new avenues to boost bilateral trade for the mutual benefit of the two countries. The President said that the potential for enhancing trade in the fields of agriculture and agro-products needed to be materialized, adding that maximum facilitation to investors from Kazakhstan should be provided to establish their businesses, in the already established Special Economic Zones across Pakistan. The President expressed



these views while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Kazakhstan, Mr Nauman Bashir Bhatti, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Talking to the Ambassador, the President said that Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Kazakhstan as both the brotherly coun-

tries shared historical and cultural bonds. He further stated that Pakistan was committed to build sustainable and result-oriented relations with the Central Asian Republic (CARs) under its "Vision Central Asia" policy, and enhancing regional connectivity with CARs constituted a pivotal part of Pakistan's

policy towards the region. He also stressed the need to keep up the momentum in taking forward regional connectivity initiatives with Kazakhstan, such as Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI) railway link. While emphasising the need to enhance people-to-people contacts

with Kazakhstan, the President called for increasing cooperation in the field of higher education through joint degrees, and student and faculty exchange programmes. He said that the Virtual University of Pakistan (VU) was offering on-line education, which was cost-effective and students from Kazakhstan could

benefit from it. He added that 8000 foreign students were already enrolled in VU's various virtual education programmes. The President asked the Ambassador-designate to convey his gratitude to the Government and the people of Kazakhstan for their generous assistance to the flood-affected people of Pakistan. The President asked the Ambassador to highlight the anti-Muslim and anti-minority policies of India, particularly the atrocities and human rights violations being committed by the Indian Occupation Forces against the Muslim population of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He also asked him to work for improving the country's image. The President congratulated Mr Nauman Bashir Bhatti over his appointment as Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Kazakhstan and urged him to take effective steps for further improving bilateral relations between the two countries.

PESCO notifies power suspension program in KP

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Friday notified power suspension from various grids of the province owing to unavoidable maintenance work. Power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Jamrud Grid Station on February 25 and 28 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumer of 11 KV Hayatabad 1,2,3,4,5, New Hayatabad, Health Care Hospital, Health Exultance, North West Hospital, Academy Town, RMI, Kacha Ghari, Karkhanoo, Gul Abad, PIC, Hayatabad Surgical, Peshawar General, Shakas 1, Health Net Hospital, Northern Bottling, Mohmand Steel feeders would face inconvenience. Power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Phase 7 Hayatabad Grid Station on February 25 and 28 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly consumer of 11 KV Hayatabad 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14, Old Hayatabad, Deans Heights, Shokat Khanan feeders would face inconvenience. Power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Nowshera City Transmission Line on February 26 from 9:00 a.m.

MOU signing ceremony to make Rawalpindi Green



RAWALPINDI: A memorandum of understanding has been signed at Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) with Parks & Horticulture Authority - PHA, Directorate of Education Colleges, Forest Department, and RCCI to make Rawalpindi Green

under the initiative of Government of Punjab. Punjab Interim Minister for Health Dr. Jamal Nasir, Education Interim Minister Mansoor Qadir, and Commissioner Rawalpindi Liqat Ali Chatha witnessed the MOU ceremony. President RCCI Mr. Saqib

Rafiq, signed and exchanged the MOU documents with the representatives from PHA, Directorate of Education Colleges and Forest Department at a ceremony held at Chamber house. Group leader RCCI Mr. Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Muhammad

Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, President Small Chamber Tariq Jadoon, Women Chamber President Riffat Shaheen, Sheikh Hafeez, executive committee members and members were also present on the occasion. -DNA

Bulgarian envoy inaugurates future "World MUN 2023"

DNA

Gancheva also highlighted the long-standing friendly and economic cooperation between Bulgaria and Pakistan and the opportunities for the two countries to further strengthen their ties. The Future World Model United Nations FWMUN 2023 provides a platform for students to come together and find solutions to problems through constructive debate and an exchange of ideas. The event is a mix of cultural diversity and an intellectual mindset. The exclusive "Future World Model United Nations (FWMUN) 2023 conference is a timely reminder that together as a nation, we can overcome any calamity, pandemic or disaster if we stand united. The event marks the beginning of the inspiration for the youth to help shape the world based on justice, solidarity, liberty, and peace for all. It opens opportunities for the students to be truly engaged in the learning process, living their learning experience as young diplomats. The Future World Model United Nations FWMUN 2023 promises to be a transformative experience for all participants and will play a significant role in sensitizing the international community and maximizing the skills of diplomacy amongst educated youth.

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Bulgaria in Pakistan Madam Irena Gancheva here on Friday inaugurated "Future World Model United Nations (FWMUN) 2023, with the theme of the promotion and protection of human rights in a digital age" The Ambassador expressed her delight in witnessing the event and emphasized the importance of investing in education for the country's future. She shared her own MUN experiences as a student and how they helped shape her diplomatic career said a news release. Ms.

Chairman Muslim Hands urges help for quake victims

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Muslim Hands Pakistan Syed Lakht-e-Hasnain Shah has urged the nation to come forward and help the people in helping the Turkish and Syrian brethren in this hour of need. In a video message, he said Muslim Hands is doing its efforts to do maximum rehabilitation and relief work for the victims of this disastrous calamity. He said helping those in need is a very noble deed. Chairman Muslim Hands also shed

a light on the work Muslim Hands is doing in earthquake affected areas of Turkey and Syria. A day earlier, on behalf of Commanding Officer 8th FP, the ceremony has been arranged in recognition of INGOs/NGOs providing relief support in Operation MADAD (floods-2022) with Pakistan Navy. Commander Coast Rear Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz HI (M) acknowledged the support and service of Muslim Hands in Sindh and Balochistan with the Pakistan Navy and ensured the same kind of support in the future for serving the vulnerable communities.

People will never accept minus Imran formula

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

ATTOCK: Central leader of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf, expected candidate for NA-50 Attock Syed Zulfiqar Abbas Bokhari (alias Zulfi Bokhari) while addressing a public gathering has also offered court arrest here on Friday in line with the jail filling call of PTI leader Imran Khan. He said that thousands of PTI workers from Attock were also ready to embrace shackles to join hands with their political party fighting against the anti-democratic policies of the imported government of PM-L(N) alliance. Zulfi Bokhari while lashing out the targeted operation against PTI workers and atrocities of the government said PTI is only national political in Pakistan which would never accept the minus one formula as Imran Khan is their red line. Speaking on the occasion, Central leader of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf, expected candidate for NA-50 Attock Syed Zulfiqar Abbas Bokhari (alias Zulfi Bokhari) claimed that PTI under the bold leadership of Im-

ran Khan will steer the country from the prevailing imbroglia of political economic default like situation of Pakistan after coming into power again. Among others, the public gathering was also participated by candidate for MPA Attock Sardar Mumtaz Hussain Mahjia, Col. (R) Mohammad Anwar, Vice President, PTI Malik Kamran Khaki, Sardar Farukh Khan, Malik Liaquat Ali Khan, Sardar Mohammad Ali Khan, as well as former chairmen, councilors and thousands of people from Tehsil Fatehang. Syed Zulfiqar Abbas Bokhari (alias Zulfi Bokhari) further has said that PDM alliance Government had compelled the poor people to beg before the political pundits for provision of bread and butters. These pundits are only desirous taking over the rule of the country at their own wish and whims pushing their people to the age of slavery but now time has come to get rid of all these political big wigs who were exploiting their masses for the last many decades. Mr. Zulfi Bokhari said that the political cheaters are exposed before the people.

PFOWA contributes to relief efforts

ISLAMABAD: PFOWA has donated assistance money for the earthquake-affected people of Turkey and Syria. President PFOWA Zunaira Asad while leading a delegation handed over the cheque of donation to Ambassador of Turkey Mehmet Pacaci and Syrian ambassador Ramez Alraee, FO said. President of PFOWA expressed heartfelt condolences on the tragic loss of lives and widespread devastation during the dreadful earthquake. She prayed for the departed souls and wished speedy recovery for the resilient brotherly people. The donations made by PFOWA demonstrate solidarity and support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the fraternal people of Turkey and Syria in this critical time of need. - APP

PRCS to broaden spectrum of its humanitarian services in Sindh province

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Red Crescent Society will broaden spectrum of its humanitarian services in Sindh province and National Headquarter will take all possible measures to strengthen Red Crescent Sindh to ensure efficient delivery of humanitarian services to the vulnerable communities, PRCS Chairman, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari stated this on his visit to PRCS Provincial Headquarters Sindh here on Thursday. Chairperson PRCS Sindh Branch Ms. Farzana Naik and branch management welcomed PRCS Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari on his visit to Sindh PHQ. Members of PRCS NHQ's Managing Body from Sindh including Am-



bassador Dr. Jamil Ahmed Khan, Mr. Khalil Ahmed Morejo, Bilal Aqeel, Syed Hashim A Hassan were also present on this occasion. PRCS Secretary General Muhammad Abaidullah

Khan gave a detailed briefing to all participants on the ongoing relief operation in Sindh. The success in rescue and relief work and the support of PRCS National Headquarters in this regard

was highly appreciated by all the participants. On this occasion, deliberations were made on strengthening district branches network. PRCS Chairman made special em-

phasized on improving the Sindh PHQ's capacity, its coordination with National Headquarters. "We have to make our district branches more dynamic, active and stable so that humanitarian services can be rendered to vulnerable communities in a more effective and efficient manner", Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari added. The Chairman assured full support and cooperation from the National Headquarters to make PRCS as a united, stable, active and dynamic National Society. He said all the challenges faced by the provincial branch would be solved on priority basis. "National Headquarters playing the role of a big brother, all the problems of the Sindh branch will be solved and its reputation and image will be increased through full cooperation", he added.

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For further information please contact the following.

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Briefs

Pak earns \$429 mln by exporting transport services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$429.900 million by providing different transport services in various countries during the six months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. This shows a growth of 14.38 per cent as compared to \$375.840 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding period of the fiscal year (2021-22), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the months under review, the exports of sea transport services witnessed an increase of 69.63 per cent, going up from \$55.080 million last year to \$93.430 million during the months under review. Among the sea transport services, the exports of freight services increased by 150.92 per cent from \$31.500 million last year to \$79.040 million whereas the exports of other sea transport services decrease by 38.97 per cent from \$23.580 million to \$14.390 million current year, the PBS data revealed.—APP

FGEHA allocates 1,188 category-I plots

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Housing Authority (FGEHA) has allocated around 1,188 category-I plots in Park Road Housing Scheme, Islamabad for allotment to federal government employees as per the approved layout plan. "As per the decision of the 142nd meeting of the executive committee of the authority, a 3.5 per cent quota was further segregated into constitutional serving (2.5 per cent), constitutional retired (0.5 per cent) and constitutional widows (0.5 per cent) categories with the criteria "age-wise seniority" and "length of service" respectively," said a document available with APP. It said a number of plots to be allotted as per the above-approved quota reserved in the Park Road Housing Scheme for the registered members of constitutional bodies/quota. The bodies included in the said quota were the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Islamabad High Court, Federal Shariat Court, Election Commission of Pakistan, Senate Secretariat, National Assembly Secretariat, Islamic Ideological Council, Waqaf Mohtasib Secretariat and Federal Tax Ombudsman Office, the document said.—APP

Barkhan incident probe be expedited: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday demanded that the Barkhan district incident should be investigated as soon as possible and the criminals involved in the incident should be severely punished. In a series of tweets, the federal minister expressed her resentment on the tragic incident of torture and killing of innocent people in the reported private jail of Balochistan Minister for Construction and Communications Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran. Sherry posted on her twitter handle, "Whatever the motives a 'What century do we live in where the powerful have built private prisons? Where people, women, and children are tortured and their bodies are thrown into a well?', she wrote. The senator said that the postmortem revealed heart-wrenching facts. "Nothing can undo what the victims and their families have gone through. Heinous violence, killings, and desecration of dead bodies have left us all bowed in shame", she said.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Japanese drummers perform on the occasion of the 63rd Birthday of the Emperor of Japan, at Islamabad Serena Hotel.— DNA

Int'l moot on climate change from March 13

RSGCC facilitates the establishment of dialogues leading to long-lasting technical cooperation amongst the scientists and engineers of developing and developed countries

ISLAMABAD: National Center of GIS and Space Applications (NCGSA) in collaboration with different partner institutions will hold International Conference on Remote Sensing, GIS and Climate Change (RSGCC-2023) from March 13-15. The conference, to be held at the University of Punjab, Lahore, is being arranged in collaboration with the Remote Sensing, GIS and Climatic Research Lab (RSGCRL) and the Association of Professionals for Remote Sensing, GIS and Climate Change (ARGC).

The conference will provide the participants with a golden opportunity to interact with world-renowned scientists, researchers, and academicians in person to discuss research challenges and solutions, unleash and share new ideas and avenues, and initiate joint projects and collaborations with industry and research institutes working in Remote Sensing, GIS, Climate Change and allied research domains. RSGCC facilitates the establishment of dialogues leading to long-lasting technical cooperation

amongst the scientists and engineers of developing and developed countries. According to an official source, the conference is an event to provide an international forum where scientists, researchers, engineers, academicians, industry professionals, entrepreneurs and students get a chance to interact and discuss the latest themes and trends related to remote sensing, GIS and Climate Change. This will provide a platform to share experiences, foster collaborations across industry and ac-

ademia, and evaluate emerging technologies and developments across the globe in the fields of space science, technology and their various applications. The conference will revolve around themes including Climate Change, Meteorology and the Atmosphere, Geo-hazards and Disasters, Agriculture and Food Security, Forest, Biodiversity and Ecosystems, Water Resources and Water Cycle, Marine and Coastal Environment Resources and Dynamics, Urbanization, Sustainable/Smart Societies

and Industrialization Public Health, Change and Adaption in Deltaic and High Mountain Hydrological Systems, Geological studies, mineral resources and applications, Data and Information Systems and Spatial Data Infrastructures, Capacity building, networking, resource sharing and other related fields. During the conference, the best paper and posters will be awarded with cash prizes, shields, certificates and membership of "The Association of Professionals for Remote Sensing, GIS and Climate Change (ARGC)".— APP

PR doles out Rs 2 mln for platform's upgradation

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has allocated around Rs 2 million more funds for completing the renovation and construction of a platform of Shaddadpur Railway Station, to be spent during the current financial year. "Shaddadpur Railway Station, operating with three platforms, is one of the important stations situated on mainline where most of the mail and express trains have their stoppages," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said the contractor had stopped the construction work due to non-payment of bills and funds, adding 50 per cent of the renovation work had been already been completed. However, the official said the requisite funds are being arranged for the remaining work. The official said the platform condition on the downside was dilapidated and therefore it was decided to carry out its repair under the head of improvement and welfare expenditure. He said the total budget for the construction and renovation work was Rs 22.686 million, out of which Rs 5.679 million was released and utilized by June 2022. To a question, the official said Pakistan Railways was a big organization comprising of around 63,000 employees and its network stretched across the country. He said the employees have well-cared under the welfare activities like health facilities through an intensive network of hospitals.—APP

China, Pak sign agreement to promote modern agri tech

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a move to promote China-Pakistan modern agricultural cooperation, a framework agreement on Belt and Road agricultural cooperation was signed at the China-Pakistan Symposium on Modern Agriculture Cooperation at Northwest A&F University, China. According to China Economic Net (CEN), the agreement was signed by the Northwest A&F University, China National Machinery Industry Corporation (SINOMACH), and the Office of Foreign Affairs Commission, Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee. The three sides agreed to work together in promoting international agricultural

technology cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, training agricultural talents, building overseas agricultural parks and enhancing agricultural industrial chain of BRI countries. Professor Zhang Lixin from Northwest A&F University told China Economic Net (CEN) reporter that to facilitate agricultural technology transfer, the University will establish a mechanism for expert exchange with agricultural universities and research institutes in BRI countries. A resource-sharing platform is proposed at the symposium to share and promote success models. Cooperation on agricultural industrial chain will also be stepped up. Projects including agricultural mechanization, deep processing of food, cross-border agricul-

tural trade, agricultural warehousing, international logistics and overseas agricultural parks will be promoted via SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) Demonstration Base for Agricultural Technology Exchange, Yangling Area of China (Shaanxi) Pilot Free Trade Zone and Yangling Comprehensive Bonded Zone. To support the above efforts, new scholarship programs are in pipeline to train agricultural talents. The overseas agricultural project bases under SINOMACH, including those in Pakistan, will offer opportunities to local students and researchers for study, internship, employment, and entrepreneurship. The university is also launching new research projects jointly with Pakistani partners.

"We are going to cultivate green chilies in Pakistan, particularly in Sindh and Punjab", Abdul Ghaffar Shar, a doctoral candidate of Northwest A&F University who has been studying in China for nine years told CEN, adding, "I brought from China linseed back to Pakistan last month. It is a variety most Pakistani farmers are not familiar with but can produce edible oil much needed in the country. Experiment has started at Sindh Agricultural University, Tandjam". He told CEN that delegations from Habib Bank Limited (HBL) and People's Bank of China (PBOC) Xi'an Branch also attended the symposium to concentrate on ways to facilitate Pakistani farmers to use China's high-yielding varieties.

FDI from China rises to over \$200 million in FY 22-23

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has received US\$ 200.2 million as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from China in the first seven months of the current Fiscal Year 2022-23, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday quoting the Board of Investment (BOI). China accounts for 29.3% of the total US\$ 683.5 million in FDI received by Pakistan in the current fiscal year 2022-23. Chinese FDI in Pakistan totaled US\$102.5 million from July to November. Pakistan received another US\$97.7 million from China in December and January, bringing the total investment to US\$200.2 million. According to BOI data, Japan was the second largest investor in Pakistan with US\$133.9 million between July and January, followed by Switzerland with US\$106.5 million, the UAE with US\$83.2 million, Hong Kong SAR with US\$46.4 million, the Netherlands with US\$45 million, the UK with US\$24 million, and the US with US\$9.2 million. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan received US\$531.6 (28.46% of the total) FDI from China in FY2021-22, while in FY2020-21, Pakistan received US\$751.6 (41.3%) million.—DNA

Shah urges UN chief to take cognizance of IIOJK's issue

ISLAMABAD: The incarcerated senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Shabbir Ahmed Shah on Friday urged the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to take cognizance of the grave situation prevailing in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, where people are being maimed, tortured, arrested and humiliated with impunity by Indian troops. According to Kashmir Media Service, Shabbir Ahmed Shah in his message from New Delhi's infamous Tihar jail termed the prevailing situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir as extremely critical where arbitrary, detentions, harassment by the Indian forces and snatching of local rights of people by the puppet regime have become a routine matter. Expressing serious concern over the upsurge in so-called cordon and search operations by the Indian forces and police personnel in IIOJK, he said the people of the occupied territory have been left at the mercy of over one million Indian troops, paramilitary and police personnel, enjoying unbridled powers under draconian laws to kill, arrest, torture and humiliate anyone with impunity. Rule of law is a distant dream and human rights have lost their meaning in IIOJK, he added. Shabbir Ahmed Shah also demanded that world human rights organizations play their much-needed role and stop the vicious cycle of violence, abuse.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Group Photo of ITU's Regional Director, Asia-Pacific region, Atsuko Okuda, Project Coordinator ITU, Rury Demsey with Member Finance PTA, Muhammad Naveed and PTA officers at PTA Headquarters, Islamabad. — DNA

Challenges to China's 'economic diplomacy'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's economic diplomacy is under strain because of intensified 'alliances politics' at the global level in general, and Asia-Pacific in particu-

lar. Geopolitical tensions are bound to impact negatively on China's peaceful economic rise. Pakistan needs to be better prepared for future crises. These were the views expressed by panelists at a roundtable discussion organized

by the Institute of Regional Studies on 'Challenges to China's Economic Diplomacy'. The session was moderated by Ms. Nabila Jaffer, Ph.D Scholar and a Research Analyst at IRS. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Aneel Salman, Chair Economic Security, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, said that 'while looking at the current situation, the way competition

between US and China is unfolding, it is impossible to predict what kind of 'world order' would emerge in the future', adding that, there was 'chaos vs order' because of contemporary shift in the 'centre of economic gravity' from global north to global south. Dr. Salman was of the view that though China had emerged as the biggest player at the global level.

Islamabad POST

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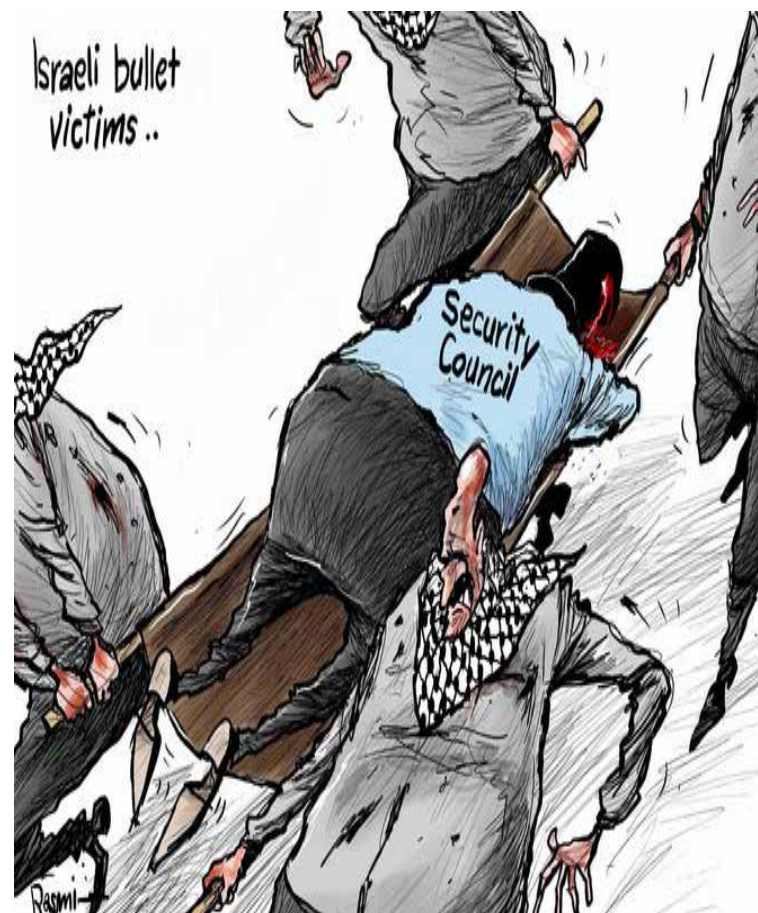
War in Ukraine: reshaping the world

The shock of Russia's full-scale invasion has been replaced, one year on, by horror at the toll that it has taken on Ukraine. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost, including those of civilians; tens of thousands have been injured, and more bear psychological scars. The country's infrastructure has been pulverised. In September, an estimate suggested that rebuilding Ukraine would cost upwards of \$349bn, a figure that will have risen sharply. Millions have fled their homes and often their country too.

The reverberations of Vladimir Putin's attack have been felt, too, far beyond its borders. This illegal act of aggression has entrenched a growing food crisis, claiming more lives and threatening stability in other nations. Its reshaping of international relations will define the decades to come.

Yet this was never, as some initially portrayed it, simply a story of Russia against the rest – nor even, as many in the west still believe, the emergence of a bipolar world in which the west and allied democracies face off against a Chinese-Russian bloc. (The Sino-Russian relationship is itself complex despite its strengthening, as China continues to try to straddle conflicting interests.) India abstained on a previous denunciation of Moscow at the general assembly; many of the countries that backed the resolution – such as Brazil – were unwilling to take further action.

The sense of hypocrisy is heightened by the lack of attention in the west to what has probably been a much deadlier war in Ethiopia, and the welcome given to Ukrainians compared with other refugees. For many, a swift end to the conflict also looks more attractive than the best outcome for Ukrainians. Russia seems no threat to them, and soaring food prices have hit the world's poorest the hardest. The contrast in perspectives stretches beyond the war itself to the kind of world that lies beyond it. Research published by the European Council on Foreign Relations shows that while Europeans and Americans think the future will probably be defined by US- and Chinese-led blocs, people in China, India, Turkey and Russia foresee a multipolar world, in which many powers shape outcomes. The report's authors point to a paradox: while the war has consolidated the west, the international realm is diversifying. Unlike in the cold war, trade and security partners may be quite distinct. Instead of looking back to the past, the west must prepare for the future. As repugnant as Mr Putin's war is, moralising about other countries' responses will be less useful than recognising and reflecting on the distinct interests of rising powers.



Time to jointly press stop button on conflict

On February 24, 2022, when the first gunshot at the Russia-Ukraine border shattered tranquility, most people did not anticipate that it would evolve into the largest military conflict on the European continent since World War II. A year later, the Russia-Ukraine conflict has profoundly changed the international geopolitics, and severely weakened the foundation for international cooperation. Its spillover effects in various areas such as politics, security and the economy have far exceeded people's imagination. This geopolitical conflict has become a microcosm of the turbulence of this era.

On Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Joe Biden delivered speeches in Moscow and Warsaw, respectively, about the conflict. Both showed determination to achieve their respective goals. This may indicate that the conflict will continue for some time. Also during the past two days, the UN General Assembly resumed its 11th emergency special session to discuss the situation in Ukraine. The European continent is at a critical crossroads: on one side, if the confrontation continues to escalate, it could lead to unforeseeable catastrophic consequences, including the risk of using nuclear weapons; on the other side, there are increasing calls for a political solution to the crisis and for achieving peace as soon as possible, which has become a universal desire of the international community. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has a complex historical context, and ignoring this fact may lead to an incomplete understanding of the path to resolving the conflict, or even to unrealistic solutions. Ukraine was once a part of the Soviet Union and has a complicated domestic ethnic situation, coupled with its geographic location sandwiched between NATO and Russia. These objective circumstances require Ukraine to exercise extreme caution when dealing with its foreign relations, clarify and grasp its own interests, and become a bridge for promoting positive relations among major powers. There are no winners in conflicts or wars, and complex problems do not have simple answers. Confrontations between great powers must be avoided. This is the biggest warning left by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which should prompt deeper thinking about security in Europe and other parts of the world.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict should not continue any further. The parties deeply embroiled in the conflict need to calm down as soon as possible and stop pushing the narrative of the conflict toward a bloc rivalry. We need to be aware that the Russia-Ukraine conflict originated from a confrontation between camps, rather than so-called "democracy vs autocracy." Bloc rivalry only intensifies the conflict and makes the possibility of peace more remote. Resolving the conflict between Russia and Ukraine requires the establishment of a universal and sustainable security concept, rather than a unilateral and hegemonic one. While the international community is focused on the Russia-Ukraine conflict today, there are over 30 military conflicts and wars of varying scales happening in other parts of the world. The theme of peace and development requires serious reconsideration and readjustment by the society. It is now time for the international community to work together and press the stop button on this conflict.

Problems in the higher education of Pakistan

Wajhullah Fahim

All the stakeholders are responsible for the current condition of our higher education. Our attitude towards education is the basic problem for all the levels of education not only higher education and all stakeholders are involved in formulation such type of educational attitude. This attitude is based upon receiving knowledge which is memorizing and reproducing in exams. This issue is not a new issue, if we study our history, we can see our attitudes towards education are not up to the mark. During Mughal Empire, Muslim kings were highly busy in making of Taj Mahal and enjoying romantic poetries

Education promotes long-term economic growth, spurs innovation, strengthens institutions, and fosters social interconnection for any society. But in Pakistan university graduate students are facing serious problems and issues which become a barrier for the students in contributing well-being of themselves and as well as on whole society. The research findings of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) have revealed the education system in Pakistan especially the higher education system is facing serious crisis. The research findings showed more than 30% of university graduate students are unemployed and 50% of students want to leave Pakistan.

All the stakeholders are responsible for the current condition of our higher education. Our attitude towards education is the basic problem for all the levels of education not only higher education and all stakeholders are involved in formulation such type of educational attitude. This attitude is based upon receiving knowledge which is memorizing and reproducing in exams. This issue is not a new issue, if we study our history, we can see our attitudes towards education are not up to the mark. During Mughal Empire, Muslim kings were highly busy in making of Taj Mahal and enjoying romantic poetries. They did not focus on the construction of educational institutes. During British colonization, more than 8000 religious scholars issued fatawa against English education. This attitude also introduced obedience education among us which is conceptualized as not allowing questions. The obedience education has eroded the critical thinking of the students. Our education system doesn't allow challenging the existing knowledge. Along with this if any professor wants to inculcate critical thinking among students he/she expel from the university.

Another problem is politicized of the HEC. Since 2002 when HEC is established, the chairman of HEC is appointed based on political affiliation due to which he works according to willing of politicians, not for improving quality education. By chance when any chairman appoints on merit then he/she cannot work, such as in the case of Dr. Banuri. In addition to this HEC has no transparency and predictable policy. They appoint VCs of the university according to the direction of the government. There is no mechanism to evaluate the performance of university professors and lecturers. They get promotions on the number of their publications. The VCs of the university are appointed on the basic political support and affiliation. Due to which quality of the higher education in public sector universities is declining day by day.

During 2021-22 federal government reduced the budget for the HEC which created financial problems for the public sector universities. As there is no alternative source of funding for the public sector universities, they have started spring intake, weekend classes and evening/self-supporting programs due to the quality of higher education is deteriorating. With the increased student intake, the number of students is increasing while the numbers of faculty staff are constant.

The global standard of pupil-teacher ratio is 20:1 while in Pakistan this ratio is more than 30:1. Along with the increase in student strength, infrastructure development such as class rooms, libraries, hostels, transportations, and sport grounds also need to increase, but in Pakistan universities administration only focusing on increasing student strength. In addition to this, the numbers of university sub-campuses are also increasing. According to reports, there are more than 5000 university sub-campuses in Pakistan. This shows excess

demand for degree certification by students which further intensifying the poor quality of higher education.

Now we need to revisit our higher education policies. For quality higher education HEC along with universities should be given autonomous status. Political influences on the HEC and the university campus need to be neutralized. As the majority of public universities hold vacant land, they can use this as revenues generating opportunity. A proper accountability mechanism for university administration and faculty members needs to be designed. As university receives billion of rupees as development and research budget from HEC, but no one is accountable and the designed mechanism to evaluate and promotion of the teaching faculty is the number of publications which is not the appropriate way. Together with these, there is a requirement for evaluation programs for all universities (Public or Private), in which average and below average universities should be banned.

Along with HEC and university administration, the teaching faculty and students are also the main stakeholders. The professors and other teaching faculty should encourage students for critically thinking during classes and also in exams. Without the direct involvement of the student in the whole process, the current situation cannot change. Instead of using the top-down approach, bottom-up approach is needed in the current scenario. For the implementation of the bottom-up approach, the ban on student unions should be uplifted.

Along with higher education, we need to shift some attention towards vocational institutes. In 2021-22 allocated budget for vocational education was only PRS 3 billion which should be increased, so that people can acquire some skills according to market demand. In this way, we can reduce the youth unemployment rate.

Fading conventional sociology vs rising digital sociology

Sher Zada



The growth of digital data and the increasing use of algorithms and data analytics in decision-making processes also became an important area of study for digital sociologists. Researchers began to examine the social implications of big data, including issues related to privacy, surveillance, and social control. Digital sociology although reshaping the conventional scope area

Though we come across surface definition of the subject Sociology is a scientific study of human social behavior, relationships, and institutions. However, many of people don't consider that this is the subject encompasses a vast range of topics, including the examination of social institutions like family, religion, education, government, and economic systems. Sociology studies how social class, race, gender, and other forms of inequality impact individuals and society, and analyzes the factors that drive social change, including cultural, political, and economic shifts. Sociology investigates how social structures and processes shape individuals' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, exploring the ways in which social psychology are impacted by these structures. It studies population trends, migration patterns, and other demographic factors that impact society, as well as the beliefs, values, norms, and practices of different cultures and how they shape social behavior. Sociology also examines the social, cultural, and economic implications of globalization and how it affects different societies and cultures. It investigates various forms of social protest, resistance, and mobilization, including civil rights, feminist, and environmental movements.

As sociology covers a wide range of human folds, that's why the era of evolution of sociology has been

divided to two sphere i.e. conventional sociology, contemporary sociology. Conventional sociology typically refers to the early, classical form of sociology, which developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is characterized by its emphasis on grand theories, such as functionalism and conflict theory, and its focus on macro-level analysis of society. Where it covers the macro picture of society, that how the institutions do function and how they affect our society, where the conflicts arise due to lack of access to resources and have hands to control the power. Conventional sociology is also known for its positivist approach, which assumes that social phenomena can be objectively studied and understood through scientific methods. Contemporary sociology, on the other hand, encompasses a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches, including both traditional and newer ones. It also encompasses a wide range of topics and subfields, such as race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, social stratification, and globalization, among others. Contemporary sociology is more diverse and pluralistic than conventional sociology, and it is characterized by a greater emphasis on micro-level analysis and interpretive approaches, as well as greater attention to issues of identity and power. However, the scope and popularity graph of above two categorical dichotomies are being gradually limited to academia and traditionally written paper books written by

classically trained authors, average writers and teaching faculties. The emergence of digital sociology has been reshaping every aspect of the subject matters covered by the former style of sociology, which has also been affecting the scope and directions of sociological analysis. Digital sociology is a relatively new field of sociology that emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s with the increasing prevalence of digital technologies and their impact on social life. The history of digital sociology can be traced through several key developments and milestones. Here, a brief sketch of elements which played roles to make sociology digital is presented. The excessive use of internet and the development of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s and its rapid adoption by individuals and organizations marked the beginning of the digital age and set the stage for the emergence of digital sociology. In the mid to late 1990s, the study of online communities became a focus of interest for sociologists. Researchers began to explore how these virtual communities were formed, how social ties were established and maintained, and how they were influenced by the broader social context. The rise of social media platforms such as Facebook (Meta), Twitter, and Instagram in the mid-2000s transformed the landscape of digital sociology. Sociologists began to examine how these platforms were changing patterns of social

interaction, social identity, and the formation of social networks. With the increasing prevalence of digital technologies, concerns about digital inequalities and the "digital divide" also emerged as a key focus for digital sociologists. Researchers began to explore how access to digital technologies and online resources was distributed across different social groups, and how these disparities were related to broader patterns of social inequality. The growth of digital data and the increasing use of algorithms and data analytics in decision-making processes also became an important area of study for digital sociologists. Researchers began to examine the social implications of big data, including issues related to privacy, surveillance, and social control. Digital sociology although reshaping the conventional scope area of the subject matters, and this is a problem of serious concerns for those who are attached with academia. However, the market is still not fully saturated; the flood of cyber world has opening new windows for all, including sociologists. Climate change and its impacts, rising conflicts, food insecurity, digital nomadism, biotechnology wars and several other problems are calling to be explored. However, zeal and passion are the only formulas that can keep one's energies on the right track.

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Briefs

EU's largest economy shrinks

BERLIN: The German economy shrank by 0.4% quarter-on-quarter in the final three months of 2022, the country's Federal Statistical Office reported on Friday. The contraction came in larger than the previously estimated 0.2% GDP drop.

Analysts attribute the worse than expected reading to persistently high inflation and lingering concerns over energy supplies, which are weighing heavily on household consumption and capital investment. Data showed that German household spending was down 1.0% in the fourth quarter, while investment in construction was down 2.9% and in machinery and equipment 3.6%. German exports of goods and services also dropped, by 1% against the third quarter, on lingering supply chain disruptions and high energy prices.

The weaker than expected performance signals a risk of recession, particularly given that the current quarter may also see a contraction, analysts say. Technically, a country is considered in recession after two consecutive quarters of negative growth. Europe's largest economy, Germany suffered from record inflation last year due to a surge in energy prices following the drop in supplies from Russia amid Ukraine-related sanctions.—APP

IMF advises against making crypto legal tender

LONDON: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) believes that crypto assets should not be granted official currency or legal tender status, according to a statement from its executive board released on Thursday.

The statement summarized discussions on the fund's nine-point action plan for how countries should treat crypto assets, dubbed "Elements of Effective Policies for Crypto Assets," held earlier this month. The paper provided "guidance to IMF member countries on key elements of an appropriate policy response to crypto assets."

According to the statement, the fund's major recommendation is to "safeguard monetary sovereignty and stability by strengthening monetary policy frameworks and not granting crypto assets official currency or legal tender status." The board noted that the widespread adoption of crypto assets "could undermine the effectiveness of monetary policy, circumvent capital flow management measures, and exacerbate fiscal risks." The IMF therefore urges countries to focus on adopting tax rules and laws regulating crypto assets, noting that failing to do so is now "untenable" given the recent implications of several crypto exchanges.—DNA

Russia biggest threat for Sweden

STOCKHOLM: The Swedish Security Service (Sapo) now sees Russia as the biggest threat to Sweden's security along with China and Iran.

Russia's war on Ukraine, which it launched a year ago this Friday, has fundamentally affected Sweden, said Sapo head Charlotte von Essen.

Tensions between Russia and Western democracies are constantly increasing, and Russia views Sweden as part of Europe and already as a member of NATO. Russia is unpredictable, and Moscow is willing to take big risks, according to Sapo. Von Essen said that Sweden and its actions, along with those of other authoritarian states, have become increasingly aggressive. She said extremism is growing, and the constitutional threat as well, noting that the mission to protect national security has never been more important but is also more difficult than ever. An increase in Russian intelligence activities and Russian threats against the security of Sweden are to be expected, she said.—Agencies

Pakistan, Uzbekistan sign \$1 bln trade agreement

Ishaq Dar appreciated the deeper interests of the Uzbek side and the strengthening of the relationship and lauded progress already made in the field of transport, and trade and welcomed Uzbek side to explore the areas in automobiles, information technology and natural minerals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Among other developments, Pakistan and Uzbekistan Friday signed \$1 billion trade agreement at Inter-governmental Commission (IGC), which will encourage the exchange of goods and services and will also ease the process of trade. The 8th Session of Pakistan-Uzbekistan Inter-governmental Commission (IGC) on Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation was co-chaired by Minister of Investments, Industry and Trade, Uzbekistan, Laziz Kudratov and by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Uzbekistan, according to a press statement received here. The commission mainly focused on bilateral economic cooperation in various sectors including commerce and trade, banking, industries and production, investment, textile industry, energy, oil and natural resources, transportation and communication, agri-



culture and tourism and culture development. The continuous efforts by both countries to encourage closer ties, especially in the fields of trade, transport, banking, and agriculture was appreciated by the Uzbek

side. On the occasion, Ishaq Dar appreciated the deeper interests of the Uzbek side and the strengthening of the relationship and lauded progress already made in the field of transport, and trade and welcomed Uzbek side to

explore the areas in automobiles, information technology and natural minerals. Both sides emphasized that there was huge untapped potential in investment cooperation and bilateral trade. Furthermore, the IGC

recognized the importance of closer collaboration in order to bring sustainable development through technology, innovation, and economic partnership. The IGC aims to increasing economic diversification, sustainable growth,

building supply chain resilience, and robust regulatory environment. The Commission expressed satisfaction on the bilateral trade volume between the two countries and desired to enhance it further in the future. Moreover, Uzbekistan showed commitment for enhancing bilateral connectivity through diverse modes. Among others, the meeting was attended Special Adviser to Prime Minister (SAPM), Tariq Bajwa, SAPM to Finance Minister, Zulfikar Younus, Federal Secretary Economic Affairs Division, Dr. Kazim Niaz, along with other ministry representatives from Pakistan and from Uzbek side, the session was attended by Minister of Sport and Youth Policy, Hamraev Oybek Nematovich and Chairman Chamber of Commerce of Uzbekistan, Ikramov Adham Ilhamovich.

Both the parties agreed to hold the ninth meeting of the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Inter-governmental Commission next year in Pakistan.

Stoltenberg sees progress in Sweden's NATO bids

BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday he saw progress in stalled talks with Türkiye on Sweden's membership after the two countries went through a period of high tensions due to anti-Türkiye and anti-Islam protests in Stockholm recently. Stoltenberg told media he and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had agreed that Türkiye, Finland and Sweden would meet at NATO headquarters in mid-March "to address the challenges we face when it comes to Turkish ratification of the Swedish accession protocol." Stoltenberg, who met Erdoğan last week in Ankara, sounded more upbeat on the topic than in past

months. "I see progress," he said in an interview. "My aim is to have both Finland and Sweden as full members by the NATO summit," due to take place in Lithuania from July 11-12. Sweden and neighboring Finland abandoned decades of nonalignment and applied to join NATO in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. All NATO members except Türkiye and Hungary have ratified their accession, but unanimity is required. Ankara accuses Stockholm of harboring members of terrorist groups and has demanded their extradition as a step toward giving Sweden's NATO membership its green light. Talks between Finland, Sweden and Türkiye have been stalled since January

any military threats from Russia without NATO reacting," he added. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said there would be no threat to Russia if Sweden and Finland joined NATO, but that Moscow would respond if the U.S.-led alliance bolstered military infrastructure in the two Nordic countries. He has repeatedly cited the post-Soviet enlargement of the NATO alliance eastward toward his borders as a reason for what he called Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine. Türkiye has frequently voiced that it does not oppose NATO enlargement but criticizes Stockholm for not taking action against elements posing a security threat to Ankara.—Agencies

Republican Party sets first presidential debate in Wisconsin

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The body that governs the Republican Party, one of two major political groups in the United States, has announced that its first presidential debate will take place in the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On Thursday, the Republican National Committee (RNC) decided to kick off its debates this August in the crucial midwestern swing state, which narrowly tilted in favour of Democrat Joe Biden in the last presidential election. Details such as the debate's date and location have yet to be decided. "At this time, no other debates have been sanctioned, nor has the final criteria for the first debate been decided," RNC Chair Ronna McDaniel wrote in a message to the party's members on Thursday. "We have a long way to go, but I am confident we will be able to showcase our eventual nominee in a world class fashion." In the weeks ahead, the RNC will lay out criteria for participation in the debates as the contest for the Republican presidential nomination starts to move forward. The committee is considering between 10 and 12 debates, to be held from August until the date of its national convention in 2024, when it will formally choose a nominee to represent the party in that year's presidential election. Only two Republican candidates have launched their campaigns so far, one of whom is former President Donald Trump.

Japanese inflation hits four-decade high

TOKYO: Japan's core consumer inflation index hit a 41-year high last month as companies continue to pass rising energy costs continue on to households, government data showed on Friday. The consumer price index (CPI), which excludes fresh food but includes energy costs, jumped 4.2% in January from a year ago, up from the 4.0% reading the previous month. It was the biggest increase since September 1981, when the country suffered from a spike in fuel costs due to the Middle East oil crisis. On a monthly basis, consumer prices grew 0.4% in January, following a 0.3% rise in December. Core inflation has now been well above the Bank of Japan's (BoJ) 2% target for nine months in a row. This is largely attributable to continued increases in the cost of fuel and raw materials, which Japanese companies are passing on to consumers. "Inflation will probably peak in January but may not fall back below the BoJ's 2% target for some time. But there are questions as to whether the rise in inflation will be sustainable, as it is still driven largely by food and fuel costs," Yoshimasa Maruyama, the chief economist at SMBC Nikko Securities, told Reuters.—APP

UK expands blacklist against Russia

LONDON: The United Kingdom has expanded sanctions against Russia, adding 92 individuals and legal entities, including those affiliated with Rosatom, to its blacklist, the British government said in a statement released on Friday. "UK sanctions on Russia top 1,500 as FCDO (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office - TASS) targets 92 individuals and entities, including those connected to Rosatom," the statement said. The United Kingdom has imposed sanctions on several members of the management of the Russian state corporation Rosatom. "Also sanctioned today are senior executives at Russian state-owned nuclear power company Rosatom, plus executives from Russia's two largest defence companies, four banks, and other Russian elites. Rosatom has deep connections to the Russian military-industrial complex - including through Alexander Novak who is both a member of the supervisory board and the Deputy Prime Minister in [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's administration," the British Cabinet said in a statement.—Agencies

Russia warns US, NATO, and Ukraine over Transnistria

MOSCOW: Any action by Ukraine or the West that poses a threat to Russian peacekeepers or nationals in the Moldovan breakaway region of Transnistria will be seen as an attack on Russia, the country's Foreign Ministry has stated. It warned Kiev and its Western backers against carrying out "provocations" there. In a statement released on Friday, Russian diplomats cited data from the country's Defense Ministry, according to which Ukraine has amassed considerable numbers of military personnel, as well as hardware and artillery on its border with Transnistria. In light of this, Moscow warned the "US, NATO member states and their Ukrainian underlings against any further adventurous steps." While Russia favors "political-diplomatic" ways of resolving issues, "no one should have any doubt that the Russian armed forces will react appropriately to any provocation by the Kiev regime," the statement reads. Moscow stressed that it is determined to protect its citizens, peacekeepers, and military personnel stationed in Moldova's breakaway region. The report of a Ukrainian military buildup along the country's border with Transnistria was issued by the Russian Defense Ministry on Thursday. The territory on the left bank of the Dniester River proclaimed independence from Moldova in the early 1990s, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Around 1,100 Russian soldiers are stationed in Transnistria as peacekeepers in order to monitor a 1992 ceasefire between Moldovan and local forces.—APP



REYKJAVÍK: Saadia Altaf Qazi presented her credentials as Ambassador of Pakistan to Iceland to Guni Th. Jóhannesson, President of Iceland. Both sides discussed reconstruction after last year's devastating floods. — DNA

Tehran, Baghdad stepping up security coop

Furthermore, the top Iranian diplomat held another meeting with Hadi al-Amiri, head of the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance, where the two sides discussed a range of issues of mutual interest. "Future is bright and the best will come by the grace of God and efforts of all of us," Amir-Abdollahian later wrote in a post on his Twitter account

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has discussed security cooperation with Iraqi sides during his ongoing visit to the neighboring state, stressing that this cooperation will improve the security and stability of both countries. The Iranian minister, who is in Iraq for an official visit, held separate meetings with a number of Iraqi officials on Thursday, discussing a range of topics of mutual interests, including security cooperation. Talking with Iraq's National Security Advisor Qassim al-Araji, Amir-Abdollahian said he was pleased that Iran and Iraq have succeeded in forming a high-security committee to dispel some existing concerns in the Iraqi

Kurdistan region. He noted that Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Ali Shamkhani is also set to travel to Iraq to sign a security cooperation agreement with Baghdad. Describing the presence of any anti-Iranian and separatist group in the Kurdistan region as "unacceptable", he said that this will pose a threat to Iran, Iraq and even the Kurdistan region. For his part, al-Araji described recent plots to deal a blow to the Islamic Republic of Iran as a delusion, stressing that any threat from Iraq's soil to Iran will be "unacceptable and deplorable". The advisor also pointed to the importance of regional cooperation, noting that if interactions among regional countries are improved, there will be no room for the presence of extra-regional countries.

The remarks come as anti-Iranian terrorist groups residing in the Iraqi Kurdistan region have increased their malign activities, especially in border areas. Responding to the activities, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has launched several rounds of airstrikes against their positions since September 24 last year, vowing to continue attacks till the groups are unarmed. Iran has, on countless occasions, warned the Iraqi Kurdistan's local authorities that it will not tolerate the presence and activity of terrorist groups along its northwestern borders, saying the country will give a decisive response should those areas become a hub of anti-Islamic Republic terrorists. Amir-Abdollahian also held talks with Faleh al-Fayyad, head of Iraq's

Hashd al-Sha'abi. Expressing gratitude for the efforts and struggles of Hashd al-Sha'abi forces in battling Daesh and restoring stability and security to Iraq, he said stability and security in Iraq equal stability and security in Iran. Payyad, for his part, appreciated Iran for its unwavering support for the establishment of stability on the borders and across the entire region, stressing the need for the Iranian and Iraqi governments to keep up security cooperation. In a separate meeting with Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council Faig Zidane, Amir-Abdollahian thanked Baghdad's efforts to form a high-security committee between the two countries, noting that the presence of terrorist groups is a threat to all parties, including Baghdad. The Iranian foreign minister

also called on the Iraqi judiciary official to finalize their actions regarding the case of anti-terror commanders General Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Muhandis who were assassinated by US forces in January 2020. Zidane, for his part, explained the inclusive judicial measures by the Iraqi side to issue an indictment against the perpetrators and orchestrators of the assassination, noting that Iraq is determined to put those who did the attack on trial. Furthermore, the top Iranian diplomat held another meeting with Hadi al-Amiri, head of the Fatah (Conquest) Alliance, where the two sides discussed a range of issues of mutual interest. "Future is bright and the best will come by the grace of God and efforts of all of us," Amir-Abdollahian later wrote in a post on his Twitter account.

Briefs

North Korea
test-fires
cruise
missiles

SEOUL: North Korea test-fired four strategic cruise missiles during a drill designed to demonstrate its ability to conduct a nuclear counterattack against hostile forces, its state media said on Friday.

The exercise on Thursday involved an apparently operational strategic cruise missile unit of the Korean People's Army, which fired the four "Hwasal-2" missiles in the area of Kim Chaek City, North Hamgyong Province, towards the sea off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula, state news agency KCNA said. Other units conducted firepower training at hardened sites without live firing, it added. The four strategic cruise missiles hit a preset target after travelling the "2,000km-long (1,243 mile) elliptical and eight-shaped flight orbits for 10,208 seconds to 10,224 seconds," the report said.

The drill demonstrated "the war posture of the DPRK nuclear combat force bolstering up in every way its deadly nuclear counterattack capability against the hostile forces," KCNA said, using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The missile launches were not announced by South Korea or Japan, which are often the first to detect and publicly report such launches. - Agencies

China coal
mine death
toll rises
to six, 47
missing

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China's Inner Mongolia region ordered inspections at all of its open-pit mines on Friday, after at least six people were killed in a landslide at a coal mine, with 47 others still missing. The mine, operated by small local firm Xinjing Coal Mining Co, collapsed in an avalanche of rock on Wednesday, leaving workers buried under a pile of debris. Six people had been pulled out alive by 10:30 p.m. (1430 GMT) on Thursday, state media reported. The mine was buried under a pile of debris half a kilometre (1,600 feet) wide and an estimated 80 meters (260 feet) high, said state broadcaster CCTV.

A second landslide halted rescue efforts, state media reported, with the risk of more collapses very high. Around half of Inner Mongolia's coal mines are open-pit operations. It was unclear if the mines will continue operating during the safety inspections.

Poland says
it has sent
Leopard tanks
to Ukraine

WARSAW: Poland has sent its first German-made Leopard 2 battle tanks to Ukraine, a government spokesman has said. "The first Leopards from Poland went to our neighbours from Ukraine. Today's visit by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has a measurable character for the security of Ukraine and Europe," Polish minister Piotr Muller wrote on Twitter. Morawiecki is visiting Kyiv on the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Poland has pledged to send 14 Leopards to Ukraine and crews are already being trained how to use them, these are on top of over 250 Soviet-era tanks given by Warsaw over the last year. Speaking at a joint press conference with Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv, Morawiecki said the tanks would help protect Ukrainian troops on the battlefield and more would be on the way "in a few days". Polish PM also told reporters that 60 PT-91 tanks would also be sent to Ukraine in coming days, the Unian news agency reports. - APP

Joining NATO
Hungary wants more talks
on Finland, Sweden bids

"Regarding Turkey, they are also our allies, and therefore we need to hear their voice," Orban says

NEWS DESK

BUDAPEST: Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban said on Friday that more talks between parliamentary groups were needed before lawmakers vote on the ratification of Finland and Sweden's NATO membership bids which they will begin debating next Wednesday. Speaking on public radio, Orban said he had asked lawmakers of his nationalist Fidesz party to support their bid, adding however that some deputies were "not very enthusiastic" about the expansion and sought further discussions on the matter. The parliaments of all 30 members of NATO have to ratify any membership bids for the alliance. Hungary's lawmakers are scheduled to vote on the matter on March 6, according to the parliament's agenda published online. Orban added that in the end, it should be made clear that Hungary supports Finland and Sweden's NATO membership, but said Turkey's concerns regarding Sweden's entry should also be heard, otherwise the expansion effort could fail. Sweden to send up to 10 Leopard tanks to Ukraine "Regarding Turkey, they are also our allies, and therefore we need to hear their voice," Orban said.

Ankara says Stockholm has harboured what Ankara calls members of terrorist groups. Turkey recently indicated it would approve only Finland for NATO membership, while Hungary says it has been delayed by a flurry of



legislation required to unlock European Union funds. "We need to pay attention to Turkey as in the end, the entire process will stall. Unless there is a solution to Turkey's problem, then the expansion could fail." German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock last week



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif presenting a shield to H.E Donald Blome US Ambassador to Pakistan in Federal Capital - APP

Pak Army USAR team
receives appreciation

The USAR team searched a total of 91 sites while showing the essence of their professional skills in the rescue operation at 39 locations

ISLAMABAD: The Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team of the Pakistan Army returned to the country after winning the hearts of the people of Türkiye on Friday. The rescue team was recognized by the international and Turkish media for being the first to reach the earthquake victims in Türkiye and the last to leave. The 35-member team - that reached Türkiye immediately after the earthquake - returned on Friday morning after carrying out successful rescue operations in the quake-hit areas of Türkiye. The USAR team searched a total of 91 sites while showing the essence of their professional skills in the rescue operation at 39 locations. Some eight people, including small children, were saved alive by day and night efforts. Besides the solo operations, the team also recovered five other alive persons with the help of other rescue teams. Moreover, the team recovered 138 people who died under the debris and handed them over to Turkish administration. The team also cleared two sites completely for camping. The USAR team of Pakistan Army was also appreciated by international and local news channels of Türkiye. - Agencies

Pakistan, US to
enhance economic
relationship

ISLAMABAD: Concluding the ninth meeting of Trade and Investment Framework Agreements (TIFAs), Pakistan and United States decided to further enhance bilateral economic relationship for shared prosperity of both the countries. The TIFA meeting was co-chaired by US Trade representative Katherine Tai and Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, according to joint press statement issued at the conclusion of discussions.

Both the sides discussed issues and concerns related to agriculture, digital trade, intellectual property protection, enforcement, labor rights, good regulatory practices, and women's economic empowerment. They decided to increase dialogue on these sectors to deepen bilateral economic relationship and promote prosperity of working people in both the countries. Recognizing the importance of agricultural and digital trade to the economic relationship, the concerned officials were directed to intensify engagement in these areas in advance of the next TIFA Council meeting. The US appreciated Pakistan's efforts in improving workers' rights, protections and strengthening of its intellectual property regime. Both sides affirmed the importance of an effective IP regime, achieving high labor standards, and following good regulatory practices. - DNA

Pakistan, China, India abstain
as UN demands Russia withdraw

"Today, United Nations General Assembly has just spoken very clear," said European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. "This vote shows that the international community stands with Ukraine."

NEW YORK: The United Nations voted overwhelmingly to demand Russia immediately and unconditionally withdraw its troops from Ukraine, marking the one-year anniversary of the war with a call for a "just and lasting" peace. Ukraine earned strong backing in a nonbinding vote that saw 141 of the 193 UN members in support, seven opposed and 32, including China, India and Pakistan abstaining. Coming on the eve of the first anniversary of the brutal war, support for Kyiv was little-changed from that of last October when 143 countries voted to condemn Russia's declared annexation of four Ukraine regions. "Today, United Nations General Assembly has just spoken very clear," said European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. "This vote shows that the international community stands with Ukraine." President Joe Biden's national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, called the vote "a powerful call for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the principles of the UN Charter." The vote came after two days of debate during which Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba urged the international community to choose "between good and evil." He rejected the idea that Kyiv only enjoyed the support of the West - the European Union, the United States and their

key allies. "The vote defies the argument that the Global South does not stand on Ukraine's side, because many countries representing Latin America, Africa, Asia voted in favor today," Kuleba said. "The support is much broader, and it will only continue to be consolidated and to be solidified," he added. Andriy Yermak, chief of staff to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, expressed gratitude to all those "who stood up for Ukraine on the anniversary of the unprovoked Russian aggression." "The world understands whose side the truth is on," he said. The resolution reaffirmed support for Ukraine's "sovereignty" and "territorial integrity," rejecting any Russian claims to the parts of the country it occupies. It also demanded "that the Russian Federation immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders," and called "for a cessation of hostilities." The vote showed Moscow's continued isolation on the world stage after 12 months of war. It only earned support from six other nations: Belarus, Syria, North Korea, Mali, Nicaragua, and Eritrea. Despite its limited backing, Russia has used its veto power to block any binding motions against it in the UN Security Council. - DNA

Sherry
demands
speedy
probe in
Barkhan
killings

DNA

ISLAMABAD, FEB 24 (DNA) - Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday demanded that the Barkhan district incident should be investigated as soon as possible and the criminals involved in the incident should be severely punished. In a series of tweets, the federal minister expressed her resentment on the tragic incident of torture and killing of innocent people in the reported private jail of Balochistan Minister for Construction and Communications Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran. Sherry posted on her twitter handle, "Whatever the motives and reasons behind the tragic and condemnable incident of Barkhan, it is a question mark on the overall consciousness of our society." "What century do we live in where the powerful have built private prisons? Where people, women, and children are tortured and their bodies are thrown into a well?" she wrote. The senator said that the post-mortem revealed heart-wrenching facts. "Nothing can undo what the victims and their families have gone through. Heinous violence, killings, and desecration of dead bodies have left us all bowed in shame", she said.

UK bans
export of
items used by
Russia in war

DNA

LONDON: Britain marked the one-year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine by issuing more sanctions against Russia, including export bans on every item it has used on the battlefield and import bans of iron and steel goods. Britain has frozen assets and targeted a wave of Russian officials and companies in the last year in an effort to cripple Moscow's economy and curb its ability to wage war on its neighbour. In a statement on Friday it said it would target another 92 individuals and entities, including allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin such as the boss of Nord Stream 2, Matthias Warnig.

Taiwan sees China
taking lessons
from Russia's war

TAIPEI: China's military is learning from Russia's invasion of Ukraine that any attack on Taiwan would have to be swift to succeed, but the Taiwan Strait would make that challenging, the island's defence minister said on Friday. The possible impact of the war on China's military thinking on Taiwan and how China might attack the island, which Beijing sees as sovereign Chinese territory, has been widely debated in official circles in Taipei. Taiwan Defence Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng said the Chinese military would have taken notes from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began one year ago. Russia tried but failed to capture the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, in the war's opening days. "The Russia-Ukraine war has brought great lessons for them - they will definitely seek speed," Chiu told reporters on the sidelines of parliament in Taipei, referring to China's military. He said even if Chinese forces were planning a speedy attack, they would face difficulties trying to take the island in a sudden move as they would have to cross the Taiwan Strait that separates the two. "They would still have to overcome this," Chiu said. "It wouldn't be as fast as a week or two." China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control and continues to mount almost daily military patrols near the island. "I've said it before - as soon as the guns sound we will keep going to the end. But we absolutely will not provoke."

Taiwan's democratically elected government says only Taiwan's people have the right to decide their future. While Ukraine has won widespread public support in Taiwan, and Taiwan's government has sent humanitarian aid, China has declined to condemn Russia. The two countries announced a "no limits" partnership shortly before Russia launched what it calls its "special military operation" on Feb. 24 last year. China has said that it is a "naked double standard" to seek to conflate the issues of Taiwan and Ukraine as the island has always been part of China and is entirely a domestic matter. - Agencies

