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Briefs

Will not let PDM escape elections

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) officials from Lahore met the party Chief Imran Khan on Sunday to discuss the upcoming elections. The officials briefed Imran Khan about the elections and door-to-door campaigning. Chairman PTI directed them to mobilize organizations up to the block code level. Imran Khan directed them to be prepared for the upcoming elections. He said, "The nation is prepared to get rid of the mafia as they will not spare the politicians to escape from elections."

'Jail Bharo Tehreek' a flop show

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Petroleum Dr. Musadik Malik has said PTI's 'Jail Bharo Tehreek' has proven to be a flop show as not a single worker of the party courted arrest in Multan. Talking to a private news channel, Musadik Malik said instead of calling his workers to court arrest, Imran Khan should show some courage and court arrest himself first. He further said that Imran Khan considered it his political right to use offensive language against the state institutions. Musadik Malik asserted that the polarization in Pakistani politics had aggravated to an extent that it was impossible to have a critical and rational discussion.

Immunisation Strategy to be prepared

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services Abdul Qadir Patel said on Sunday that effective measures were being adopted to make further improvements in the national immunisation program. Addressing the annual meeting of the Federal Directorate of Immunisation, Qadir Patel said that a collaborative strategy was being formulated to ensure 100 percent results, by reaching everyone during every immunisation drive in the country.

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Jail Bharo Tehrik

PTI workers 'begging for release: Rana

"Eighty per cent of the arrested ones are asking to be released," says Interior Minister



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Sunday said that the government will first direct Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and workers - who voluntarily presented themselves for arrests - to far-off jails before sending them to prisons in Lahore or Rawalpindi. Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad, the minister said that between 100 to 150 people have thus far courted arrests as part of the PTI's 'Jail Bharo' movement - a drive that seeks to mark a protest against the government's policies and to put pressure on the ruling coalition to announce elections.

Several PTI men court arrest in Gujranwala

OUR CORRESPONDENT

GUJRANWALA: Several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers including the former federal minister Nazir Ar-Gondal, MPA Zafar Iqbal Cheema courted arrest in the ongoing jail-filling drive of the PTI. The workers voluntarily arrested themselves on the call of the PTI chief. Meanwhile, the PTI enthusiasts surrounded the prisoners van and the police took the PTI supporters with it. PTI's leader Yamin Rashid reached the central jail after the arrests and claimed almost 125 workers have presented themselves for the court arrest. She added the workers were giving their arrest voluntarily. She said that the police were facing a shortage of prison vans to shift the PTI workers to the jail.

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40 PAKISTANIS ON-BOARD THE SHIP

Pakistanis among 58 dead after shipwreck in Italy

NEWS DESK

ROME: Fifty-Eight people died, including some children, when a wooden sailing boat carrying migrants crashed against rocks on the southern Italian coast early on Sunday, authorities said. The vessel had set sail from Turkey several days ago with migrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and several other countries, and crashed in stormy weather near Steccato di Cutro, a seaside resort on the eastern coast of Calabria. The provisional death toll stood at 45, Manuela Curra, a provincial government official, told media. Eighty-one people survived, with 22 of them taken to hospital, she said. One survivor was arrested on migrant trafficking charges, the Guardia di Finanza customs police said. Cutro's mayor, Antonio Ceraso, said wom-

en and children were among the dead. Exact numbers for how many children had died were not yet available. His voice cracking up, Ceraso told the SkyTG24 news channel that he had seen "a spectacle that you would never want to see in your life ... a gruesome sight ... that stays with you for all your life". Wreckage from the wooden gulet, a Turkish sailing boat, was strewn across a large stretch of coast. Curra said the vessel left Izmir in eastern Turkey three or four days ago, adding that survivors had said some 140 to 150 were on board. The survivors were mostly from Afghanistan, as well as a few from Pakistan and a couple from Somalia, she said, adding that identifying the nationalities of the dead was harder. "Many of these migrants came from Afghanistan and Iran,

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NA 193: PTI's Mohsin Leghari defeats PMLN candidate Ammar

Mohsin served as the Finance Minister in former coalition gov't of PTI and Pakistan Muslim League Quaid (PML-Q) in Punjab

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: PTI's Mohsin Leghari has convincingly defeated PMLN candidate Ammar Leghari in the NA 193 Rajanpur by elections that took place on Sunday. There were total 237 polling stations in the area. Rajanpur is located in the South Punjab and is traditionally ruled by Legharis. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) earlier had turned down Punjab interim government's request for delaying by-election in the NA-193 Rajanpur. In a statement, the ECP stated that a control room had been established at the ECP secretariat to monitor the election. "The control room would be responsible for addressing the complaints regarding the polling", the ECP added.

As many as 11 candidates were in the run for the NA-193 seat which has 379,204 registered voters comprising of 206,495 male and 172,204 female voters, according to the data issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The constituency had 237 polling stations, of which, 68 were marked



as highly sensitive and all the remaining 169 had been marked as sensitive, the ECP data suggests. Of the 237 polling stations, as many as 80 polling stations were set up for male voters, 77 for female voters, and the remaining 80 polling stations were combined (where both male and female voters can cast vote,) according to the data. This seat fell vacant following the death of PTI's Jaffar Khan Leghari in December last year. Mohsin Leghari is the nephew of the late Jaffar Leghari. He is also regarded as the political successor of the late Leghari who was reportedly the most respected elder of the Leghari tribe. Mohsin served as the Finance Minister in the former coalition government of PTI and Pakistan Muslim League Quaid (PML-Q) in Punjab. He was elected to Punjab Assembly on a PTI ticket from PP-293 Rajanpur in the 2018 general polls. Ammar Awais Leghari is PML-N's candidate for NA-193. He is the grandson of the former president of Pakistan Farooq Leghari, the late chief of the Leghari tribe, and son of Awais Leghari from PML-N who remained a federal minister in 2017-18 in the then federal government of PML-N. Awais was then elected to Punjab Assembly's seat PP-292 Dera Ghazi Khan in the 2018 general elections.



ANKARA: Pakistan's embassy officials receive earthquake relief assistance reaching Malatya from Pakistan. — DNA

Four dead, several hurt in Barkhan blast

DNA

QUETTA: At least four people were killed and 12 others wounded in a blast that ripped through Rakhni Bazar in Balochistan's Barkhan area on Sunday. Barkhan Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Najeed Pandarani confirmed that four people had been killed as a result of a blast in Barkhan. He added that the explosion took place when an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), planted on a motorcycle, exploded in Rakhni Bazar when the area was crowded.

The blast damaged several cars, motorcycles and shops, said the police. Soon after the blast, a heavy contingent of security forces reached the incident area and cordoned it off to carry out an initial investigation. Deputy Commissioner Barkhan Abdul Khosa also confirmed casualties. Among the injured were also included two little girls. The dead and injured were shifted to the Civil Hospital. Hospital sources said that the condition of the injured was stated to be critical. Police said they were still investigating the nature of the blast. The security forces have cordoned off the area. President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday condemned a blast in Barkhan, Balochistan province which resulted in loss of precious lives. The president and the prime minister expressed their deep grief over the loss of lives and expressed condolences with the bereaved families. They also prayed for the high ranks of the departed souls and for the early recovery of the injured, President Secretariat and PM Office media wings said in their separate press releases. The prime minister summoned a report from the chief minister and inspector general of police over the incident.

People suffering due to PTI's wrong policies: Bilawal

Takes judiciary to tasks for exercising 'double standards'



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Sunday that the short-sighted policies of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf did not improve the condition of the country and the masses were suffering due to this approach of the PTI. He said the PPP was celebrating the golden jubilee of the constitution whose founder was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto while adding the country was democratic and the people had the right to elect their representatives to give the reins of power anyone they like. The FM said the PPP would safeguard the 1973 constitution as it was behind its formation and Pakistan would function properly only if it worked according to the constitution. The minister added the "selector" was dethroned from power by using purely constitutional manner because

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PSL matches to 'continue as scheduled', says Sethi

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Najam Sethi on Sunday announced that HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2023 matches in Lahore and Rawalpindi will "continue as scheduled". Sethi expressed his gratitude to Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi for being "kind enough to agree to share cost of lighting routes during PSL matches in Lahore". The Punjab government and PCB had remained locked in negotiations over security arrangements for the matches in Lahore and Rawalpindi with the former demanding Rs450 million for security.

The Punjab government had previously agreed to light up the route from the team hotels to the Gaddafi Stadium, but its standoff with the PCB had continued to drag on, making it seem like the PSL would be shifted from Lahore and Rawalpindi to Karachi after an agreement on security expenditure eluded the two sides, on Saturday.

The Punjab government had lowered its demand for security funds - from Rs450m to Rs250m - but the PCB was refusing to flinch, stating that it was the obligation of the government to provide protection to the teams, as per the agreements signed in 2014 for the restoration of international cricket in Pakistan.

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LHCBA elects first-ever woman secretary

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court Bar Association (LHCBA) on Saturday made history by electing a woman secretary for the first time since its inception way back in 1893. Sabahat Rizvi bagged 4,310 votes against her two male rivals to become secretary of the LHCBA in the election held for the year 2023-24. This was her first election. She has association with the Independent group, also known as Asma Jahangir group, however, a majority of the lawyers supported her beyond groupings. In another record of simultaneously making two women to represent it in the cabinet, the bar elected Rabbia Bajwa as vice president. Bajwa, who is a senior leader of the Hamid Khan-led Professional group, secured 3,590 votes against her five male rivals in the election. She was previously elected finance secretary of the bar in 2006.

The Professional group also notched the slot of the president in a massive victory as its Chaudhry Ishtiaq A Khan defeated Leharasib Khan Gondal of the Independent group with a big margin. Khan bagged 7,293 votes against 3,372 secured by

Gondal. Khan is a sitting member of the Pakistan Bar Council, a top regulatory body of the lawyers in the country, and a former president of the Lahore Bar Association. Being a member of the Insaf Lawyers Forum, he was supported by the Paki-



stan Tehreek-i-Insaf. This is the third election of a bar association won by the Professional group in a row. Earlier, the group

notched the top slots of the Supreme Court Bar Association held in October last and the Lahore Bar Association in January this year. It is believed that the current downfall of the Asma Jahangir group in the bar politics is the outcome of

Ashtar Ausaf Ali in the judicial commission. Tarar is a senior leader of the Asma Jahangir group. The bar had a consensus against the elevation of junior judges of the high courts to the Supreme Court. However, some see a bad choice of the candidates as a reason behind the defeats saying the outgoing president of the LHCBA belongs to the Asma group. Shahrukh Shahbaz Warraich was elected finance secretary of the LHCBA by getting 7,109 votes. His rivals Amir Sohail Bosal and Adil Naeem Sheikh obtained 2,442 and 1,073 votes, respectively. Other candidates who vied for the vice president were Iftekhar Ali Bhatti, Chaudhry Ahmad Khan Gondal, Abdul Rauf Bhatti, Mian Sardar Ali Gehlan and Waris Ali Saroya. Qadir Bakhsh Chahal and Mian Muhammad Irfan contested for the office of the secretary. As many as 10,776 out of 26,043 bar members cast their votes in the polling held on a biometric system. Chairman election board Chaudhry Imran Masood congratulated the legal fraternity on the conduct of a peaceful and transparent election.—Online

Azma warns PTI leaders against use of abusive language

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Azma Bukhari said on Sunday it had become a culture of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its leaders to misbehave and use abusive language against their political competitors. Addressing the media at Model Town here, she said that the PTI leaders had crossed all limits of indecency and their female leadership were continually using abusive language and low-standard quotes for senior leadership of PLMN, which could not be tolerated. Azma said that former provincial health minister Yasmin Rashid was trying to pretend as Dr Firdous Asiq Awan or Shahbaz Gill through her language, adding that the PML-N had always given respect to Yasmin Rashid being a senior political activist.—APP

Traders hail passage to export trucks via Ghulam Khan, Kharlachi trade routes

PESHAWAR: Traders community welcomed the government's decision of allowing export trucks through Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi trade routes along with the Torkham border, calling it a major step to speed up the process of export and boost economic and trade activities in the region. Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Muhammad Ishaq, and Director and Coordinator of PakAfghan Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, while talking to a group of reporters here on Sunday, said apart from the Torkham border, the allowing export trucks by Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi trade routes not only would expedite the process of export but also create job opportunities and open a new era of prosperity and development in the whole region. They told

the media that permission has been granted to export trucks through Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi border points following the directions of Chief Collector Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Saleem. They added the officials concerned have given complete assurance for the provision of all facilities for the promotion of cross-border and transit trade. They said the decision of the government and customs department was widely appreciated by the business community. Muhammad Ishaq and Ziaul Haq Sarhadi said that the export process was adversely affected owing to the situation that was created at the Torkham border in the past five days. They, however, said that the process of exports has now been completely restored via the Torkham trade route,

which is highly laudable. While keeping in view the difficulty of traders, leaders of the business community said Chief Collector Customs KP, Muhammad Saleem has allowed apart from the Torkham border, export trucks laden with sugar, and other Pakistani manufactured essential food commodities and goods had been allowed through Ghulam Khan and Kharlachi trade routes to Afghanistan and onward to Central Asian countries. Muhammad Ishaq and Ziaul Haq Sarhadi extended their special gratitude to Muhammad Saleem, Chairman FBR Asim Ahmad, Member (Customs) FBR Mukaram Jah Ansari, the high officials of National Logistic Cell, local administration and other relevant departments, authorities for their initiatives of facilitating cross border trade.—APP

Allottees irked by CDA's failure to remove encroachments

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The allottees of sector I-12 showed their displeasure over the encroachment of slum dwellers on their plots. They said CDA authorities have been failed to remove the illegal occupants. The inordinate delay in possession of the plots is the biggest concern of the allottees. An allottee Akhter Sait said, "Capital development authority has started development work in sector I-12 but the process of development work is going at snail's pace due to illegal encroachment. The

slum dwellers of subsector I-12/3 are moving to sub-sectors I-12/2 and I-12/4 and constructing illegal structures but the CDA is doing nothing for the recovery of their lands. CDA announced a khuli kachehri for the general public on February 23, 2023 at

G-9 cricket ground but no CDA officer came there to listen to the people. Complaints were dismissed and came back when Capital Development Authority did not hold Khuli kachehri against its promise."

Muhammad Habib, an allottee of sector I-12 said, "Sector I-12 is the kingdom of slum dwellers. They are occupying their plots. We went to attend khuli kachehri but CDA wasted our precious time because no one came at the spot to listen to us." Muhammad Ilyas Jan Bacha another allottee said, "CDA has badly failed to develop the sector well in time despite earning millions of rupees from the allottees. Another allottee Tahir Mahmood said that the allottees would approach every possible forum to explain their miseries in coming days.



TAXILA: Spouses of diplomats and defence attaches posing for a picture on the occasion of Orange Festival at Taxila on Sunday.—DNA

IGP Dr. Usman for stern action against land grabbers

QAZI SHOAIB KHAN

ATTOCK: The inspector general Punjab Police Dr. Usman Anwar while holding video conference here on Sunday has directed all the Regional Police Officers and District Police Officers to supervise the crackdown launched against the land grabbers, proclaimed offenders, court absconders, target killers, bandits, gangsters and other street criminals throughout the province. Inspector general Punjab Police Dr. Usman Anwar taking strong exception over the daily reports of the Punjab Police has also advised to all the regional and district police officers to combat with the wave of threats posing by the criminals on round the clock basis. The private and public properties should be retrieved from the clutches of the land grabbers besides initiating legal proceedings against them without any delay. IG also directed to all RPOs and DPOS to communicate their day to day performance reports to the Central Police Office. Meanwhile, on the recommendations of provincial cabinet, the Home De-

partment of Government of the Punjab on Sunday has imposed complete ban on illegal production of kites, hoarding, selling, purchasing, distribution, kite flying include metal wire, thread, nylon bone, sharp edge string along with other materials causing hazards to the human life within the inter provincial territorial jurisdiction of district Attock as well as other districts of the Punjab. These restrictions under section 144 will be executed with immediate effect for a period of one month. This was told by Deputy Director Public Relations, Attock Mr. Shahzad Niaz here on Sunday. Meanwhile, the District Police Officer Attock Dr. Ghias Gul Khan while putting the security high alert along the sensitive installations has directed the law enforcement agencies to remain vigilant over their entrance and exist checking points of the inter provincial bordering district Attock combating with the any untoward security threats of terrorism. He reiterated that Attock Police was fully committed to deliver speed justice to the common people without discrimination. The police officers concerned including PRO Mr. Sheraz Khanada were also present on

the occasion. Replying different questions of the media persons he said that crime rate in the society could only be minimized with the close working relations of the media and police being inseparable. He also discouraged thana culture in the changing scenario of modern age with the assurance that maltreatment with the complainants would never be allowed in the police stations or police posts. The District Police Officer Attock Dr. Ghias Gul Khan has advised the police officers to discourage tout mafia besides eradicating narcotics hubs, street crimes in their jurisdictions as they were duty bound to protect life and properties of the people being their top priority. He also directed all the SHO's to resolve public problems on merit and void any kind of deliberate delay failing which responsible will be fixed under police order 2002. The District Police Officer Attock Dr. Ghias Gul Khan also directed all the Sub Divisional Circle Officers, Attock, Pindigheb, Fatehjang, Hassanabdal, Jand, Hazro and SHO's of 14 police stations of the district to comply with the orders of the provincial government at all costs, police sources added.

COMSTech seeks nominations for Awards-23

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation has invited nominations for COMSTECH Awards in nine categories this year. The scientists and researchers, who are citizens of and currently working in OIC member states, are eligible to submit nominations for these awards by March 31, 2023. COMSTECH has invited applications for Lifetime Achievement Award in two fields of basic sciences, Physics and Mathematics, and for the Excellence in Science and Technology Award which includes, Young Researcher Award, Best Scientific Book Award, Best Patent Award, and Best Research Paper Award in biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics. COMSTECH recognizes outstanding research work carried out by scientists working and living in OIC member states through its prestigious awards. Each award carries a certificate, shield of honour and cash prize. The President of Pakistan confers the award to the basic sciences award winners.

Home Run Snow Festival concluded

SWAT: The Red Bull Home Run Snow Festival, organized by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority and district administration in collaboration with Simons Malam Jabba and Red Bull, was concluded at Malam Jabba Ski Resort in Swat here Sunday. During the Festival, competitions were held in different categories of snowboarding and skiing. On this occasion, Commissioner Malakand Division Shahidullah and Brigade Commander 6 Brigade Sajid Akbar were the special guests. They were accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Swat Irfan Wazir, officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and other important personalities. Local athletes from other

parts of the country including Chitral, Dir, Swat, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Malam Jabba participated in the Festival. More than 80 athletes from Chitral, Dir, Swat, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and other parts of the country and Malam Jabba participated in the Red Bull Home Run Snow Festival. In snowboarding, Samar Khan won the first position, Ayesha Khan won the second position, Iqra won the third position, Umis Hussain won the first position, Ali Hasnain won the second position and Gibran Aziz won the third position in the same. Ayesha Khan claimed the second position while Iqra grabbed the third position. In the Men snowboarding events, Amis Hussain won the first position, Ali Hasnain won the second position and Gibran Aziz won the third position. Bushra was declared the winner in the women skiing competition, while in the men skiing competition, Zahid Khan won the first place, Sher Ghani won the second place and Ilyas won the third place in Men skiing. — APP

MoITT, TikTok launch digital safety campaign

ISLAMABAD: TikTok and Zindagi Trust have announced an extension of their collaboration aimed at driving digital safety awareness with the support of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications (MoITT). The renewed partnership, which is a part of TikTok's global endeavours during Safer Internet Month, will impact over 50,000 beneficiaries across 100 public schools across all provinces in Pakistan. Additionally, the Pakistan Telecom Foundation has also become part of this partnership and will provide access to an increased number of schools for the campaign, said a news release. A signing ceremony took place between TikTok and Zindagi Trust in the presence of the MoITT, who endorsed the Digital Safety programme.

During the first phase of this partnership that was launched last year, over 20 workshops were conducted in the two adopted government schools of Zindagi Trust: SMB Fatima Jinnah and Khatoon-e-Pakistan benefitting around 1800 students, teachers and parents. The workshops contained comprehensive information on becoming digitally safe, including TikTok's Community Guidelines and safety policies. Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Syed Amin Ul Haque said: "To commemorate the Safer Internet month, the government deems it a priority to actively work towards providing safer digital spaces. The partnership between Zindagi Trust and TikTok is a step in the right direction for disseminating necessary awareness and guiding young people towards dig-

ital safety. We are looking forward to adding value to this partnership for the benefit of our younger generation." Farah Tukan, Head of Government Relations and Public Policy - Middle East, Turkey, Africa, Pakistan and South Asia at TikTok, said: "We are happy to extend our partnership with Zindagi Trust, especially after the impact we were jointly able to create around digital safety awareness during the first phase. This extension is another step in the right direction for ensuring our TikTok community in Pakistan remains digitally safe." Aisha Humera Moriani, Additional Secretary and Chief Executive Officer of the National Information Technology Board, said: "We are fully committed to building a cutting-edge digital infrastructure in Pakistan which promises a safe cyberspace and a

conductive regulatory environment for everyone. By supporting this partnership between TikTok and Zindagi Trust, we aim to nurture e-governance, transparency and financial inclusion, despite many challenges and threats associated with the internet including data privacy, security, cybercrimes and fake news." Dr Aamna Pasha, the Chief Academic Officer of Zindagi Trust, added: "At Zindagi Trust, we recognise that with opportunities come risks and it is important when providing access and possibilities to our students that we also prepare and support them to understand and mitigate potential risks. This is why we are particularly proud of this collaboration and lucky to have found wonderful partners like TikTok that enable us to continue our efforts of impacting public

schools." In the second phase of this collaborative programme, a digital safety toolkit will be developed to help raise awareness regarding digital safety amongst students, teachers, and parents. The toolkit will be a comprehensive guide incorporating necessary guidelines to navigate the digital realm responsibly through theoretical knowledge and interactive activities. Specific approaches will be provided to counter different problems online such as cyber harassment, bullying, scamming, fake news etcetera alongside teaching them responsible reporting and protection mechanisms. These toolkits will be disseminated during the digital safety workshops that will be conducted at different schools across Pakistan and will be available digitally as well.—APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY

Feb 04 / Sri Lanka National Day

Feb 06 / New Zealand National Day

Feb 06 / Uganda Defece Forces Day

Feb 11 / DPR Korea National Day

Feb 16 / Lithuania National Day

Feb 18 / Gambia National Day

Feb 19 / Nepal National Democracy Day

Feb 23 / Brunei National Day

Feb 23 / Guyana National Day

Feb 23 / Russian Federation National Army Day

Feb 23 / Tajikistan Armed Forces Day

Feb 25 / Kuwait National Day

Feb 27 / Dominican Republic Independence Day

Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133

Marriott.....051- 2826121

Monal.....0334-5421812

Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15

Bomb Disposal.....15

Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16

Emergency Ambulance.1122 & Rescue Services.4451122

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Motorway Police.9270601-20

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Cantt Hospital...9270907-11

DHQ.....5556311-4

RGH.....9290301-7

Holy Family.....9290322-7

PIMS.....9261170-79

Polyclinic.....9218300-09

Shifa International 4603666

Departments

CDA.....9221334-43

CDA.....9208301-04

Met Office.....9250360-6

RDA.....5555864

TMA.....5770886

Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224

Potohar Town.....9209224

Rawal Town.....5773343

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Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in construction work on IJP Road during development work in Federal Capital. —APP

Bhara Kahu Flyover

PM Shahbaz takes notice of shuttering collapse

Mr Sharif expressed condolence with the bereaved families of the labourers

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shahbaz took notice of collapsed shuttering of Bhara Kahu flyover which resulted two deaths and four others injured. PM also sought a report from the CDA chairman. He directed the authorities to taken stern action against those found negligent. In a message, Mr Sharif expressed condolence with the bereaved families of the labourers. He also prayed for the early recovery of the injured persons in the incident. Commissioner Islamabad Noorul Amin Mengal, who is also chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), ordered an inquiry and constituted an

eight-member committee. Mr Mengal claimed that during a preliminary investigation, it was revealed that there was a movement of two to three heavy trailers between 2am and 3am which hit the under-construction flyover. One of the trailers is still stuck there, he added. He pointed out that there could be safety and traffic violations behind the incident. However, he termed it was premature to talk about the reason behind the incident. The committee, under supervision of the deputy commissioner, was constituted to investigate the incident and fix responsibility, the chief commissioner

said, adding that legal action would be taken against those found responsible for the incident. It is difficult to close the area for construction and ban traffic around the site, he said, adding that there was also a movement of heavy traffic around the construction site. "However, we have to shut down traffic around the construction site," he added. "According to initial findings, some of the protocols have been violated. Moreover, there was negligence at the end of traffic police because during wee hours of Saturday, a heavy truck had hit the shuttering and a few more went through raging. Later, concrete was

filled in the shuttering and moments before completion of work it (shuttering) collapsed," said Mr Mengal. "We have got the CCTV footage in which it is clearly visible that a heavy truck had hit the shutting at 2am on Saturday. Earlier, two trucks had passed through raging. It was the job of the traffic police to ensure that heavy traffic would not pass from there. I have established a committee, headed by Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon, with a direction to submit a report within 24 hours. However, a report may be complied by Monday," he said. When asked if there was any chance of negligence in

construction work or flaws in the design, he said there were fewer chances of flaws in the design as 14 pillars were already constructed and each of them was weighing 300 tonnes. On the other hand, the driver of the trailer rejected the chief commissioner's claim and said they reached the area at around 3am to 4am and the shuttering collapsed at around 8am. His trailer broke down and as a result, he had parked it along the roadside, the driver added. CCTVs are installed around the site and anyone can check and see the trailer had not hit the shuttering, he added. A spokesperson for Polyclinic, Abdul Jabbar Bhutto,

while talking to Dawn said a dead body and an injured person were brought to the hospital. "The dead body was of Mohammad Fazil and the injured was Anis, son of the deceased," he said. Pims' spokesperson Dr Haider Abbasi said a body and two injured persons were brought to the hospital. "Both injured had head injuries but they were out of danger," he said. It is pertinent to mention here that PM Shehbaz Sharif had laid the foundation of the Bhara Kahu bypass on September 30 2022 and directed the National Logistics Cell (NLC) to complete the project within three months instead of four as mentioned in PC-I. **Online**

NUMS takes initiative to create nutrition awareness

RAWLPINDI: The National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) has taken an initiative to impart nutrition education sessions to school children in twin cities in its drive for creating awareness to help improve their health as 40.2 per cent of children in Pakistan are suffering from stunted growth, said head of NUMS Department of Nutrition & Dietetics, Dr Abdul Momin Rizwan Ahmed here on Sunday. Realising the dire state of nutrition indicators in Pakistan and the importance of spreading awareness about nutrition education at the grassroots level, NUMS Department of Nutrition & Dietetics (DND) started education sessions at different schools in



Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The series of such sessions were held at Roots International School, the Great Maple School, United Charter School, the International School System, and SLS Montessori School and college PWD campus, where NUMS's nutrition experts gave lessons for two days to students of Grade I to grades IV, and Grades V to VIII on the topics of "Importance of Breakfast and Healthy Eating - The Con-

cept of My Plate", he said. These educational sessions were conducted in accordance with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2) (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality education). NUMS Department of Nutrition & Dietetics aims to continue conducting such training sessions in various schools in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. According to the National

Nutrition Survey of Pakistan 2018-19, 40.2% of children in Pakistan are stunted (lower height for age), 17.7% suffer from wasting (lower weight for height), 28.9% are underweight (lower weight for age) while 9.5% are overweight. These indicators call for immediate interventions to bring about a long-term change in the eating habits and dietary choices of people at large. During NUMS educational nutrition sessions, school children were explained through videos the difference between healthy and junk foods. They were told as how the consumption of healthy and junk food affect their health. —APP

AIOU extends admissions deadline for matric, intermediate

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Nasir Mehmood after receiving hundreds of applications from prospective candidates across the country, approved the extension of admission deadline for matriculation, FA, and I.Com programmes with late fee charges. According to Director Syed Zia Al Hussain Naqvi, fresh applicants can apply till March 07, while continuing students can submit their admission application form by March 21. He informed that prospectuses and admission application forms for all the programmes are available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk), and also at the regional campuses and countrywide established prospectus sale points. Moreover, admissions in the second phase of spring semester 2023 will commence from March 01, he added. The director said that programmes offered in this phase included Post Graduate Diploma programmes in 10 disciplines, FA/FSc and BA/BSc based four-year BS programmes, Associate Degree in Arts (BA General), Associate Degree in Commerce (BCom), Associate Degree in Business Administration (Islamic Banking, Human Resource Management, and Marketing), BBA programmes 1.5, 2.5 and 4-Year B Ed programmes and certificate courses. —DNA

Amjad Islam Amjad a hallmark of Urdu poetry

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), Dr. Muhammad Yousuf Khushk lauded the valuable contribution of noted Urdu poet, dramatist, critic, columnist and fiction writer, Amjad Islam Amjad and said that the vacuum created by his death could never be filled. Sharing his views on Amjad's work, he said the great literary icon was a hallmark of contemporary Urdu poetry and due to his death, Urdu literature has lost an important romantic poet and fiction writer. He said Amjad Islam Amjad highlighted social, economic and political issues through his dramas and columns and his literary contributions would be remembered for age. Dr. Khushk said the legendary writer was of a multidimensional personality, who wrote several books and received ample recognition for his contributions to Urdu literature. He received several awards including the Pride of Performance in 1987 and Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 1998 and Writers Guild Award in 1976. Later on, he also received the prestigious Hilal-e-Imtiaz in 2022, he said. Dr Khushk said Amjad Islam Amjad was the author of about 40 books and through his writings, he bridged the gap and brought people closer to literature. —APP

Three-day Brand expo concludes

ISLAMABAD :The three-day Brand Expo concluded here successfully on February 26 after grabbing a lot of attention from the people of the twin cities. The expo, held at Parade Ground Islamabad, provided an opportunity for companies, talented entrepreneurs, and innovators from different industries across the country, to display their latest products and services. The event featured a lot of activities like musical performances of famous artists including Abrar-ul-Haq and Sehar Gul, exhibitors from across the country, and a wide range of innovative products, networking opportunities, and entertainment. Talking to APP, a young entrepreneur Khalid Ali said that Pakistani youth had immense potential and such events "provide us an opportunity to showcase our capabilities to local as well as international investors". He said that the event was highly appreciated by the visitors, adding such activities should be arranged more frequently throughout the country. —APP

"Week of Youth" celebrations to conclude on February 27

ISLAMABAD: The present government has declared 2023 as the "Year of the Youth" to celebrate the ten years' achievements of the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) through its vibrant schemes for their empowerment. The current week is being celebrated as "Week of Youth", featuring a number of programs including sports competitions, marathons and cheque distribution among successful applicants of the PM Youth and Agriculture Scheme. According to the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs, Shaza Fatima Khawaja that various programs are being organized to celebrate the decade-long achievements of PMYP during the current "Week of Youth". The week-long celebrations started on February 21 (Wednesday) with a competition for young start-ups, titled "Future Builder's Contest", arranged in collaboration with the UAE embassy while on February 22.—APP



RAWALPINDI: Provincial Minister for Primary Health Dr. Jamal Nasir inquires about health of a man injured due to kite flying. —DNA

Briefs

Boost in Pakistani mangoes, dates' exports to US

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States had comprehensive talks on a range of key issues, including enhancing the export of Pakistani mangoes and dates to the US and more market access for Pakistani textiles, Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar has said. Other matters discussed included boosting US investments in Pakistan's agriculture sector, especially in the development of hybrid, climate-resilient seeds as well as supporting Pakistani IT and tech industry, he told reporters Saturday at the end of his three-day visit to Washington during which he also co-chaired the meeting of Pakistan-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Ministerial Council. The minister said that significant progress has been made in some of the critical areas while further headway was expected during the course of the discussion that would follow. He said the TIFA meeting, held after a gap of eight years, reflected an understanding and commitment of the two countries to pursue a broad-based agenda and make mutually beneficial trade and investment ties an important pillar of the relationship. Naveed Qamar said that the two sides have agreed to have regular follow-up engagements during the current year to ensure progress on all issues to achieve tangible results. It was also agreed to convene the next TIFA Council Ministerial meeting in Islamabad in early 2024.—APP

IRSA releases 98,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 98,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 56,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1462.67 feet and was 64.67 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 15,000 cusecs while outflow as 50,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1113.25 feet, 63.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 17,900 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 57,000, 42,500, 30,400 and 6,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 15,700 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

IIUI committee reviews mechanism of fee collection

ISLAMABAD: A meeting to review the mechanism of the fee collection, facilitation of students and parents, identification and suspension of the fee defaulters and to explore ways for smooth financial accessibility was held here at the council hall of the new campus of International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) that was chaired by Prof. Dr. Nabi Bux Jumani, Vice President, Administration and Finance. It was also attended by the university's Vice President Academics, Professor Dr. Ayaz Afsar, Director Academics, Director Finance, Students' Advisor female campus, members of the offices of admission, examination and IT including other relevant officials. The committee agreed that facilitation of the students and parents in fee deposit shall be top priority. The meeting also discussed ways to facilitate students and the parents with flawless banking. It was agreed the fee deposit system shall be made easier and any complaints in this regard shall be addressed on priority basis. It was decided in the meeting that the registration date for the students that has already been conveyed by the Director Academics shall be extended till March 03.—DNA

Consumer association team visits PTA's consumer division

Chairperson Women Wing CAP expressed her appreciation for PTA's efforts towards safeguarding the interests of telecom consumers. Both parties agreed to further enhance their cooperation for the betterment of Pakistan's telecom consumers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Women Wing from the Consumer Association of Pakistan (CAP) led by Syeda Raafia Mamuje, the Chairperson of Women Wing, CAP, visited the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) headquarters in Islamabad. The delegation was welcomed by Mr. Abdul Samad, Director General of Consumer Protection Division at PTA. During the visit, the delegation was given a detailed presentation on PTA's role and functions, with a specific focus on initiatives taken for protecting the rights of



telecom consumers. The presentation also covered

the complaint processing/handling mechanism

and the various channels through which PTA raises

consumer awareness, including print, electronic

and social media.

The delegation was also briefed on the functions and working of the Consumer Protection Division (CPD) at PTA.

They were informed that CPD is ISO 9001:2015 certified, demonstrating PTA's commitment to maintaining high standards in consumer protection efforts. Chairperson Women Wing CAP expressed her appreciation for PTA's efforts towards safeguarding the interests of telecom consumers. Both parties agreed to further enhance their cooperation for the betterment of Pakistan's telecom consumers.

PM to unveil 100 MW Iran-Gwadar power supply project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif is all set to inaugurate the 100 MW Iran-Gwadar power transmission project to stamp out electricity woes in Gwadar. With this project, according to Gwadar Pro, Gwadar will import uninterrupted electricity from Iran. In this regard all preparedness has been given in collaboration with

officials of the Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), China Oversea Port Holding Company, Balochistan secretariate, Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) and National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC). According to the sources, final testing for the 100 MW power project has been conducted successfully. Supply will formally

commence after unveiling of project by the premier. Iran's high-level delegation from its power division has already reached Gwadar to seal the power purchase deal with Pakistan.

During his visit in Gwadar, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif will also inaugurate the project of first-ever facility of cross stuffing at Gwadar Port, commencement of dredging at Gwadar Port and distribution of

ermen of Gwadar regarding boat-engines.

New infrastructure has been put in place under the new project, which involves installing the 29-kilometre-long double circuit 132 KV transmission line from Kalatu (Pakistan city) near Gabd-Remdan (Pak-Iran border) to Jiwani Grid Station. A 75-kilometre-long double transmission line from Jiwani Grid Station to Gwadar Grid station has been laid down already.

Pak oil refinery policy 2023 presented to cabinet committee

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's "Oil Refinery Policy 2023" has finally been presented to the Cabinet Committee for approval in the form of a draft. This development marks a significant step towards the planned establishment of an oil refinery plant worth US\$4.5 billion by a Chinese company in Gwadar, as well as the construction of an oil refinery plant worth over US\$10 billion by Saudi Arabia and the UAE in Hub, Balochistan. According to Gwadar Pro, upon its formal approval, the cabinet committee is expected to provide tax exemptions and incentives to stakeholders and investors in the oil industry. The refining policy is divided into two components, one concerning the existing local refineries, and the other regarding investments in new refineries across the country. The policy has established a blueprint for exemption from an array of taxes and duties. This includes customs duty, surcharges, withholding taxes, general sales tax, any other ad valorem tax, or any other levies on imported equipment or materials intended for use in the refinery, without any prerequisite certification by the Engineering Development Board. Furthermore, the policy stipulates that the federal government will aid in the acquisition of comparable exemptions from provincial and local taxes. Exemptions will be available to foreign contractors or sub-contractors for the execution of services related to construction, operations, and engineering performed in Pakistan with respect to provincial and federal taxes. Refineries will be exempt from the withholding tax requirements under the Income Tax Ordinance 2001 for payments made to non-resident individuals, including contractors or their associates, for the acquisition of machinery or equipment to be installed in the project. According to the draft policy, if the pricing regime is deregulated between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2028, refineries will be allowed to retain the prevalent customs duty in the ex-refinery price.—DNA

'Pakistan will never compromise on Kashmir cause'

DNA



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Mushahid Hussain Syed has said that Pakistan will never compromise on the Kashmir cause and will stand by the Kashmiris. Mushahid Hussain Syed addressing the Pakistani youth on a Twitter space said that Kashmiris living all over the world and Pakistan's broadcasting institutions, newspapers, scholars, intellectuals, journalists and social media activists should highlight the Kashmir dispute. British Member of Parliament and Shadow Minister Dr Muhammad Afzal Khan said the situation regarding the Kashmir dispute is getting worse day by day and it is the duty of the developed countries to implement the United Nations resolutions and international laws. He said India, Pakistan and China are at war on this issue and all three are nuclear powers so the threat to this part of the world is huge. "This tension is destroying the lives of millions of Kashmiris. So I think that this issue needs to be resolved immediately and it is in everyone's interest," he maintained. Vice Chairman of Friends of Kashmir Abdul Hameed Lone said some groups are being organized who are launching a campaign against the army under orders received from across the border and are trying to sabotage the Kashmir dispute. Tehreek Kashmir UK President Raja Faheem Kayani said now is the time to resolve this lingering dispute through dialogue as this is the only way to settle this issue without bloodshed.

PMNH plans to construct "Outdoor Volcano Display"

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Museum for Natural History (PMNH) has planned to construct an "Outdoor Volcano Display" to provide education to the general public especially students about the natural history of the country. The Earth Science Division of PMNH will execute the plan of the development of a Volcano Display in the surrounding of Baluchitherium Model. Volcano, mountain or hill is formed by the accumulation of materials erupted through one or more openings (volcanic vents) in the earth's surface. Most volcanoes have steep sides but some can be gently sloping mountains or even flat tablelands, plateaus or plains. It stated that Volcano Display provides information to visitors about the process of volcanism in the oceans and on the continents. Volcanism usually takes place at plate boundaries due to the movement of tectonic plates. In Pa-

kistan, Koh-e-Sultan, Koh-e-Dail volcanoes of Cretaceous to Quaternary age (60 million to 02 million years old) at Pachin Koh, tehsil Nokkundi, Chagai district, Baluchistan are examples of past volcanic activity.

These areas present good economic mineral deposits particularly Iron, Sulphur, Molybdenum, Travertine marble and the world's largest deposits of Copper-Gold. Director General, PMNH, Dr. Saima Huma Tanveer said that the PMNH has planned the development of a Volcano Display keeping in view the importance of volcanoes in natural history and the mandate of PMNH to impart education to the students and the general public about the natural history of Pakistan. The DG was of the view that the Volcano Display will provide knowledge to the students and general public about the volcano eruption and clear their concepts. She said that the Chairman Pakistan Science Foundation is likely to inaugurate the Volcano Display in the month of March. Since a large number of students from different schools, colleges and universities visit this museum, which is only one of its kind in the country, this newly constructed facility will be another source of attraction and learning for them. The PMNH was established in 1976, under the patronage of Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), Ministry of Science and Technology, Pakistan. — APP

UAE Embassy organizes eco-friendly marathon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The UAE Embassy in Islamabad, in coordination with the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, organized an eco-friendly 10km Marathon to highlight the importance of Mainstreaming Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience for Collective Action. A large number of athletes from deferent nationalities, officials, ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic community participated in this healthy and Eco-Friendly 10 km run on Saturday 25th February 2023 at Constitution Avenue, Islamabad. H.E. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al Zaabi, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion said that the Marathon and remarkable participations from all walks of life reflects the longstanding brotherhood, partnerships, and shared values between

the two brotherly countries. Ambassador Al Zaabi added,

that as the UAE's is hosting the largest UN

Conference COP28 this year, the UAE will focus on

building bridges to advance international efforts that will



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al Zaabi giving trophy to the winners of marathon race.—Online

support the Global South and countries that are most vulnerable to climate change such as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and finding practical solutions that ensure energy security while reducing emissions.

The Ambassador stressed on economic development and conservation of environment as the UAE will focus at COP28 on ensuring inclusive sustainable progress that protects communities most impacted by climate change, and appealed the civil society to play its role in driving "Climate Action" across key sectors to reduce emissions and build resilience. He extended his thanks to the Government of Pakistan, Prime Minister Youth Program, Islamabad Administration and Gerry's Visa for the coordination and facilitations extended for the successful organization of the Marathon, and to Islamabad Running Club, Pakistan Red Crescent and SOS Children's village for their active participation in this Marathon.

Rs2474.87 mln released for aviation sector projects

ISLAMABAD: The government has so far released funds amounting to Rs 2474.87 million, under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23) against a total allocation of Rs2484.87 million to execute 15 different projects and schemes aimed at ensuring improved aviation sector services in the country. Out of the total authorization/disbursement of Rs 2474.87 million, around Rs462.39 million have been utilized on the aviation sector projects during a seven-month period (July-January) of the current fiscal year, according to official data available with APP. As per the PSDP document, an amount of Rs 2.303 billion had been allocated for 10 ongoing schemes, out of which Rs 60 million were meant for construction of Airport Security Force Camp at Islamabad International Airport, Rs 29.871 million for building barrack accommodation for ASP personnel along with Mess and allied facilities, ladies rest room, MT, Store, Kote Magazine, Quarterguard and OC accommodation/room at Skardu Airport, Rs4 million for construction of Barrack accommodation for ASF personnel along with Mess and allied facilities, MT, Store, Visitors Room, Ladies Rest Room, Kote Magazine, Quarter Guard, and OC accommodation/Room at Chitral Airport, Rs 5 million for construction of double storey Barracks for ASF at Faisalabad Airport, Rs 5 million for construction of Rain Water Harvesting Kasana Dam at Islamabad International Airport, Rs 25 million for for installation of Weather Surveillance Radar at Karachi, Rs580 million for installation of Weather Surveillance Radar at Multan, Rs 10 million for installation of Weather Surveillance Radar at Sukkur, Rs 2 billion for new Gwadar International Airport (NGIA project), Rs 150 million for up-gradation of ASF Academy, Karachi and Rs 15 million for up-gradation of ASF Academy, Karachi (Feasibility & Supervision). Similarly, Rs 181 million had been earmarked for five new schemes, out of which Rs 61 million had been specified for the construction of ASF (Airport Security Force) Accommodation at Turbat Airport, Rs10 million for the construction of Kote Quarter Guard & Magazine at Panjgur Airport, Rs 5 million for the establishment of Basic Aerodrome Facilities at Mansehra - Acquisition of Land for Construction/Establishment of Airport at Mansehra, Rs 5 million for the establishment of New Meteorological Observatory at Naran and Hostel for Operational Staff at Balakot and Rs100 million for extension/up-gradation of Bannu Airport for A320/B737 or equivalent Aircraft Operation Phase-I (Land Acquisition).—APP

Islamabad Rapid chess championship organized

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad open Rapid chess championship organized on Saturday at Bara Dar, F-9 park Islamabad. The championship was organized by Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration in collaboration with Islamabad Chess Association where players from all over the country participated. More than 100 players participated in the champions in three main categories including under-fourteen, professional and amateur, moreover, the budding juniors and women were also given the opportunity to enhance their game by playing with top-seed players. Member state Capital Development Authority (CDA) Afnan Alam, director of Sports, Culture and Tourism Jawad Haider Shah attended the prize distribution ceremony. According to the Islamabad administration spokesperson Dr M Abdullah Tabasum "Chief Commissioner women volleyball, Islamabad cycling championship, Punjab and Baloch culture days and auto shows would also be organized in the coming week. He added that ICT administration is determined to encourage sports enthusiasts and athletes to showcase their skills through ICT platform.—APP

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PCB, Punjab govt settled dispute

After the Prime Minister's assurance, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced that the matches of PSL 8 will be held in Lahore and Pindi as per the schedule. Patron Chief of Pakistan Cricket Board Najam Sethi said that the matches of Lahore and Pindi will be as per schedule, the cost of lighting of the route will be borne by the caretaker government. Najam Sethi shared this good news on the social networking site and said that the Chief Minister has agreed to contribute towards the cost of lighting the route. Najam Sethi also thanked caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on this occasion and called it a great news for the fans. After an assurance from the Prime Minister and a green signal from the PCB, the ninth and final match took place in Karachi on Sunday after which the broadcasters packed up their belongings, removing the digital boundary for the match. All the goods from National Stadium Karachi will go to Pindi Stadium, PSL matches ended with the victory of Kings in Karachi. Matters were settled between Punjab government and PCB According to sources, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the Punjab government have reached an agreement, according to which the cricket board will purchase the lights to be installed on the track of the teams, which will save crores of rupees in every future series. On the other hand, the sources said that the Punjab government has agreed to bear all the expenses except for the purchase of lights. . It should be noted that there was a deadlock between the Punjab government and the PCB on the issue of funds, on which Najam Sethi had indicated to shift the remaining matches to Karachi after consultation with the franchise owners. On Saturday, the PCB Management Committee and the franchises discussed the matter and "it was agreed that the Rs450 million in terms of security and other expenses would not be paid to the Punjab government." PCB's stance is if the Punjab government keeps asking the board for paying the said amount then it will shift the Lahore and Pindi matches to Karachi. Media reports said that this will save money both for the PCB and the six franchises of the PSL 2023. The financial capital Karachi has so far hosted eight PSL 2023 matches out of its share of nine with the last game to be held on Sunday between Multan Sultans and Karachi Kings.

President Bashar al-Assad on Sunday received a delegation of Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, which had participated in the Conference of Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and wrapped its activities in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad on Saturday. The delegation comprises Head of the Union, Mohammed Al-Halbousi and Heads of the House of Representatives in the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Palestine, Libya and Egypt, in addition to heads of Oman Sultanate and Lebanon delegations and the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union Secretary-General. President al-Assad stressed that the delegation visit to Syria today means a lot to the Syrian people as it indicates the support to the Syrians during in difficult to which they are exposed as a result of the terrorist war and the repercussions of the earthquake. The visit also affirms that there are effective Arab institutions capable of taking the initiative in various circumstances and moving in the interest of the Arab peoples, the President said, thanking the rapid response shown by the Arab countries at the popular and official levels to help the Syrian people overcome the effects of the earthquake.

President al-Assad considered that the strength of the institutions that represent peoples comes from the fact that they represent the different spectrum and forms of society, adding this diversity is an opportunity for dialogue and searching for common points of strength to be the basis for joint Arab action. President of Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, Muhammad al-Halbousi, considered that the delegation came to Syria on behalf of all members of the Union to stress to the Syrian people, in a practical step support and solidarity with Syria which opened its doors to all Arabs at various stages, and the importance of working at all levels for the return of Damascus to exercise its active role within its Arab surroundings. Members of the delegation affirmed their readiness to provide all possible support for the Syrian people to overcome this ordeal, because Syria has never stopped serving the causes of the Arab peoples, considering that the Syrian people are able to overcome the effects of the earthquake, as they were able to confront the war and the blockade imposed on the country.

The Kalash, the fading community of Pakistan

Justice Retd Ali Nawaz Chohan



In Bumburate, this festival is known as "Bhutrmishek" but has been abandoned since many years.

Moreover, my interaction with the Kalash revealed that there are multiple socioeconomic factors and pressures, which may be nudging Kalashas towards abandonment of their culture and religion such as land grabbing, intolerance towards religious minorities in Pakistan, the looming threat of border incursions by Taliban into Chitral from Afghanistan, limited opportunities

I visited the Kalash valley to study the culture and difficulties being faced by the Kalash people. When I asked a convert as why he had changed his religion. His reply was that he had no other choice as this was a matter of his survival. The Kalash need immediate attention of the KPK Government as well as the Federal government for protection of their unique culture/civilization. The British account of the Kalash reflects a certain degree of discrimination and stigmatization of Kalash people. According to "Military Report and Gazetteer on Chitral, 1928" Kalash was once the rulers of the "whole Chitral but were gradually driven into their present narrow limits. The Kalashis are a very degraded branch of the Kafir race. It may be noted as showing the former subordinate position of the Kalash Kafirs, that a Kam Kafir on his way to Chitral walks into a Kalash village and claims his food, etc, as a matter of right... The Kalash at present do a great deal of dirty work for the mehtar". This British version of Kalash provides important insight into the historical marginalization of this community and indicates that they may be vulnerable to further exploitation in recent times. The advance of Islam into the mountains, starting from the sixteenth century, gradually brought about the conversion of the whole area by the end of the nineteenth, with the sole exception of the Kalasha of Chitral who still practice their ancient religion to this day. Although paraded and exhibited for decades, by Pakistan's Government and media, as a well preserved, happy and hospitable indigenous stock of people, the Kalash have rarely come under the microscope in terms of their socioeconomic problems. For decades, the Kalash made the headlines only for the celebration of their seasonal festivals, as if they had no life, needs and requirements except merry making and dancing. But recently, focus of the mainstream human rights discourse in Pakistan has shifted to the genuine problems of the Kalash after the realization that there may not be any indigenous culture left to celebrate due to the rapid conversions of the Kalash people to Islam and the increasing number of Muslim settlers in the valleys of Bumburate, Rambur and

Birir. The aforesaid demographic changes in Kafiristan can be attributed to the encirclement of Kafirs by Islam for the past three centuries and the ensuing cultural diffusion i.e. the spread of cultural beliefs and social activities from one group to another. All the material and ideological transgressions and encroachments from the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan have gradually withered away the traditional ways of Kalash community. The traditional festivals of Kalashas, holding great religious and spiritual significance are Zhoshi, Ratnat, Po'n'(Phool), Chawmos and Madaik. However, Kalashas are facing difficulties in celebrating these festivals in some form or the other because of security situation, pressure from nonKalasha neighbours and inappropriate behaviour of the tourists. For instance, the festival of Ratnat has not been celebrated for the past 10 years. Similarly, the festival of Rhuzhias, celebrated to punish the King Satan, is only celebrated in Birir after three years.

In Bumburate, this festival is known as "Bhutrmishek" but has been abandoned since many years. Moreover, my interaction with the Kalash revealed that there are multiple socioeconomic factors and pressures, which may be nudging Kalashas towards abandonment of their culture and religion such as land grabbing, intolerance towards religious minorities in Pakistan, the looming threat of border incursions by Taliban into Chitral from Afghanistan, limited opportunities of socio-economic progress and poor infrastructure of roads, health and education.

The Kalash, today, face a lot of pressure on this culture and with the non-Kalash population overwhelming them, they face threats of extinction. Some of the immediate threats are unwilling conversions and cajoled marriages with non-Kalash. They have become vulnerable in this context because it is an open society and women partake with men, the husbandry, and all the rest of day-to-day life. They join in music and dance as a part of their festivity and because of their accessibility they are exploited. Another is the settlement of land, which took place about five years back and in which they did not participate – with a protest – that has taken away their rights in land and forest. Their

customary law is a spoken word, which will ultimately be forgotten if it is not recorded. Since they do not have a script, a methodology has to be evolved for codification of their customary law before some of the well-versed elders in the matter die. I have offered to codify the customary law, based on my experience of the GAMBIA where I was the Chief Justice. I'm still awaiting the response from the KPK government. In the meanwhile, the Kalash contrary to their beliefs are being made to read Islamic history.

The education system is the same as for the Muslims of the KPK. As there is no specific operational quota for their employment in government services this is causing hardship. No standard college exists in the valleys of the Kalash. The school education is also poor. Unfortunately, the Kalash are not taught anything of their culture. Is it conversion through subtle indoctrination? Or is it lack interest on the part of the provincial government or the Ministry of Heritage in the federation? This conundrum shall have to be answered. Now we have about 4,000 of the Kalash reflecting diversity and uniqueness of a culture bedecked in the beautiful valleys of the Kalash; handsome people with pretty dress and wonderful health needs the caress of the state for their preservation. I think their preservation is like a S.O.S. call and it cannot be overlooked. The Kalash are a people and a culture from which there is much yet to learn, but if these problems are not resolved it will be very hard for Kalash culture to thrive. The time for Kalash is now and there is not a moment to waste, for we fear that there is much to lose. As an example of the diversity of our great nation, it is on individuals and institutions to raise their voices in unison to protect the rights of a minority that has prospered in these valleys for centuries and now are face-to-face with an existential threat.

The Writer is Formerly Chief Justice of The Gambia, Intl judge of the UN at the Hague, Chairman NCHRP Pakistan, Justice Lahore High Court, visiting scholar to intl. Universities ,co.chair UNESCO legal board etc.

The balloon that blew over the USA

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The Chinese surveillance balloon hovering over the US has added to the growing tension between the two superpowers. After the US shot down a Chinese spy balloon, Beijing has tried to downplay the balloon incident, but it's becoming harder to do so as alarm bells and accusations mount. At home, China has tried to present the conflict as a sign of American

On February 2, a high-altitude Chinese balloon assumed to be loaded with sensitive surveillance gear traveled over Alaska, Canada, and the northern United States. It turns out to have been one of several over time and the Pentagon watched it travel over Montana, home of one of the US military's land-based, nuclear-tipped Minuteman III missile fields. The Pentagon has confirmed that the balloon is Chinese, and that China has asked for "calm" about the incident. Aftermath of the spy balloon the tension has amplified between the US and China, even as new revelations about the incident reveal the depth of the confusion about it. Chinese authorities did nothing about the balloon as it passed over the continental United States, including nuclear missile silos atop Montana, for several days after senior US diplomats visited the Chinese for the first time in private. Pentagon spokesperson Brigadier General Pat Ryder said, "Instances of this activity have been observed over the past several years. We acted immediately to protect against the collection of sensitive information."

But there three questions are arisen:

- If they knew about the balloons, why were they permitted to continue flight?
- What weight does China's call for "calm" carry with the administration in light of a military violation of our borders?
- What if it wasn't "surveillance equipment" at all? The administration wants us to agree that a Chinese intrusion into US airspace is not a big deal. And a high-altitude balloon can, indeed, be used for surveillance. But it can also carry weapons – for example, a nuclear EMP (electromagnetic pulse) weapon intended to create a crisis over an American nuclear site. The Pentagon made three points of its own. First, that the balloon was operating well above the al-

titude of commercial aviation, but the incident only became public because it was, in fact, spotted by a passenger on a commercial flight.

Second, the military opposed shooting down the balloon because there might be debris that could injure civilians, but the population density of Montana undermines the point.

Third, the administration had determined that the balloon didn't give China any additional surveillance capability beyond what it already had through spy satellites orbiting the Earth.

This leaves the EMP question aside. It also leaves aside the possibility that China wasn't looking for additional surveillance information but was checking out how well America's continental air defenses actually work. The answer would be, "Not well, apparently." That is both a military and a strategic comment.

On the military side, the only air defense system the US has deployed in Alaska is the Ground Based Interceptor (GBI). The Pentagon says it was tracking the balloon over Alaska, Canada, and Montana, but how far beyond America's land border was it first sighted? Could it have been destroyed over the Pacific before it transited Alaska?

America's newest fighter, the F-35 has a service ceiling of only 50,000 feet (15,240 meters) so it probably would have no chance against the Chinese balloon perhaps operating at 75,000 feet (22,860 meters).

But either the F-22 or the F-15 could potentially have been used to intercept it, depending on its operational altitude. The service ceiling of both planes is approximately 65,000 feet (19,810 meters). Firing at an upward angle an air launched missile might have been able to hit the intruder. An intercept is not a sure thing, but nothing is.

A US AEGIS warship in the Pacific,

equipped with interceptor missiles, might also have taken out the balloon, but whether any AEGIS cruiser was in the right place at the right time isn't known.

On the political side, the fact that the US launched no weapons against the balloon suggests two things: first, maybe the GBI system doesn't work against slow-flying balloons, which would certainly be something China would want to know. Or that the administration made a decision to allow an adversarial and increasingly aggressive country to enter our airspace, which would also be something Beijing might find interesting.

The Pentagon apparently had not planned on having this discussion. The security establishment would have stayed mum had not a passenger on a civilian airliner exposed what is now understood to be one Chinese incursion among others. The Biden administration needs to explain the political rationale for keeping China's intrusions secret as well as why there was no official American protest.

China has exposed massive security vulnerability over US territory, and whether that vulnerability is military or political or both, the American people deserve better answers.

The Chinese surveillance balloon hovering over the US has added to the growing tension between the two superpowers. After the US shot down a Chinese spy balloon, Beijing has tried to downplay the balloon incident, but it's becoming harder to do so as alarm bells and accusations mount.

At home, China has tried to present the conflict as a sign of American decline. As more unidentified objects are shot down in recent days, experts warn that there is an "endless" variety of potential targets crowding the skies over the United States. The globe has unleashed a wave of dismay and fear in Asia.

Briefs

PTI workers
'begging
for release:
Rana

FROM PAGE 01

"Eighty per cent of the arrested ones are asking to be released," said Sanaullah as he revealed that all participants of the PTI's drive have been taken into custody for 30 days.

"You wished to go to jail, so you have been sent there," he said mockingly, "we are having you visit jails so that you can acquaint yourselves with the conditions there". It may be noted that several petitions have been filed at the Lahore High Court (LHC), expressing fears that the arrested PTI leaders and workers may be falsely accused of involvement in unlawful activities to cause them "maximum harm", adding that they have been transported to "some unknown place" to "torture" them.

Without referring to the matter that remains subjective, Sanaullah said "we will first fill jails in far-off areas and afterward fill the jails of Lahore and Rawalpindi".

"We hold the judiciary in utmost respect and regard," he added as he stressed that "weakening" the judiciary would be synonymous with "increasing the difficulties of the country". However, the interior minister simultaneously stressed that "bench-fixing" allegations must be probed, hinting at a series of controversial audio leaks attributed to former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervez Elahi.

Sanaullah urged the apex court to take suo motu notice over the alleged close ties that Elahi maintains with a Supreme Court judge. Turning his attention towards former premier Imran Khan, he said that "he is a trouble-maker, and never once did something for the betterment of the country. He noted that first Imran was bringing a sea of people to tread on the capital, then he said he was going to fill the jails, "but now the people know him for what he is".

People
suffering
due to...

FROM PAGE 01

Imran Khan destroyed institutions for his interests and he did not play any role for the betterment of the nation. Talking about the political uncertainty, he said undemocratic forces took advantage of the lack of political stability and also terrorists also used the uncertain atmosphere to instill fear in the minds of the people. He said the people were hoping that the parliament and judiciary would provide them some relief by giving them justice, while adding there should be rule of law as the court waited for the "Zaman Park prime minister" for a week.

Several PTI
men court...

FROM PAGE 01

She added that the local police barred female workers of the party from boarding the prison van.

Thousands
without power
amid California
storms

NEARLY 85,000 households and businesses were without power in the Los Angeles area on Saturday, as storms continued to pummel parts of California, bringing snow to higher elevations and dumping rain and hail in the flatlands. Interstate 5, the largest highway leading north out of the city, remained closed at the steep grade known as the Grapevine due to heavy snow, while several more southern points of the freeway in and around Los Angeles were closed due to flooding, the California Department of Transportation said. In Northern California, San Francisco was expected to experience record cold temperatures on Saturday, and the National Weather Service warned residents of the state capital of Sacramento to avoid travel from Sunday through Wednesday as rain and snow started up again after a reprieve on Saturday. — Agencies

SOP organized 8th Lakson Investments Unified Marathon

The SOP chairperson Ronak Lakhani also expressed her gratitude to the participants and organizers of the marathon and vowed to organize the marathon next year with more enthusiasm

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP) organized the colourful eight edition of Lakson Investments SOP Unified Marathon at Defence Housing Authority (DHA) Karachi to show solidarity with the special athletics of the society. The marathon consisted of 21km marathon, 10km, 5km races and 1km unified walk in which a large number of People from different walks of life, representatives of educational, social, charitable, business institutions and organizations, foreign diplomats, seniors citizens, artists and athletes participated in different categories. The wheelchair walk of special people was the focus of special attention of the participants while special athletes including the dumb, deaf and mentally challenged special people also made their presence felt in the marathon.

Special Olympics Pakistan ambassador Sarwat Gilani and musician Faisal Kapadia also participated in the event to show solidarity with the special people. President and CEO Faysal Bank Yousaf Hussain was the chief guest of the concluding ceremony along with the Chairperson of Special Olympics Pakistan Ronak Lakhani distributed prizes and medals among the successful participants as cash prizes of Rs 15,000 to the first position winners, Rs 10,000 to the second position and Rs 5,000 to the third position winners were awarded. On this occasion, Yousaf Hussain announced the sponsorship of five national team players by Faysal Bank for the Special Olympic World Games to be played in Berlin, Germany from 17 to 25 June this year. The SOP chairperson Ronak Lakhani also expressed her gratitude to the participants and organizers of the marathon and vowed to organize the marathon next year with more enthusiasm.



Latham and Conway lead NZ fightback to frustrate England

WELLINGTON: New Zealand are contemplating the possibility of a rare Test win after following on, having dug in with the bat on Sunday to set up an absorbing last two days of the second Test against England.

The Black Caps unearthed some much-needed tenacity to reach 202-3 in their second innings at stumps on day three in Wellington, closing within 24 runs of the tourists. Their gritty response after being asked to follow on was founded on half-centuries by openers Tom Latham and Devon Conway. Kane Williamson was a patient 25 not out at the close, needing just four more runs to surpass Ross Taylor as New Zealand's greatest Test run-scorer. The former skipper will resume on Monday alongside Henry Nicholls (18 not out) with New Zealand harbouring slim hopes of squaring the two-match series on a Basin Reserve pitch starting to offer turn and variable bounce. Only England (twice) and India



have achieved the feat of winning a Test after following on. Latham says his team have belief they can topple the tourists if they can carry momentum into day four. "Absolutely, you've always got to look at ways to win a Test match," he said. "We certainly know there's a lot of work to do to reach that

point but whether it's 200 or 250 (target), you never know what's enough. "We've seen with the wicket, whether it's the old ball or the new ball, there's plenty of turn there. "To be close to parity at this point is really pleasing." A New Zealand victory looked a distant prospect when dismissed for 209 in their first

innings midway through the morning session, 226 runs behind England's 435-8 declared. Latham (83) and Conway (61) combined to frustrate England for 149 runs before the first wicket fell, unveiling combative qualities that had been absent in a series dominated by England's impressive seam bowling.—Agencies

Duplantis sets new world record

FRANCE: Armand Duplantis of Sweden set a new world pole vault record of 6.22 metres at an indoor meeting in France on Saturday, describing it as "almost an out-of-body experience". Olympic champion Duplantis improved his own record of 6.21m that he set in winning the world title outdoors in Oregon last year. Competing at the All-Star Perche meeting in Clermont-Ferrand, central France organised by 2012 Olympic pole vault champion Renaud Lavillenie, Duplantis cleared the new record at his third attempt to the delight of the 4,000-strong crowd. Duplantis, 23, said: "When you have moments like this, when the energy is so high, and you're going down there for the record, it feels like levitating, it feels like my body never even touched the ground the whole jump. "There's something about it that just feels overwhelming right now, and I really think it's because Renaud means so much to me, he's meant so much to me since I first started, he's been my biggest inspiration, biggest idol. "He really motivated me, made me believe that I could break the world record. So for me to break the world record here, his hometown, his competition that he hosts..." US-born Duplantis entered the competition at 5.71m, clearing that height at his first attempt. He passed at 5.81m and managed 5.91m on his second try before winning the competition by clearing 6.01m on his first attempt before having the bar raised to the record height. It was the sixth time that Duplantis has broken the world record. He set the first in Torun in February 2020, when he cleared 6.17m to add a centimetre to Lavillenie's previous world record of 6.16m that had stood since 2014. "Each world record feels like it brings something a bit different out of me," Duplantis said. "Maybe the first one might have been a bit crazier, but this might be number two right now, it's really unbelievable."—Agencies

Medvedev halts Murray heroics to take Qatar title

DOHA: Daniil Medvedev beat fellow former world number one Andy Murray 6-4, 6-4 in the Qatar Open final on Saturday to win his second ATP title in a week. The 27-year-old, who won in Rotterdam last Sunday, convincingly ended his 35-year-old opponent's comeback heroics that saw Murray fight four three-set battles and overcome eight match points to reach the final in Doha. Medvedev broke Murray's first serve in each set as he remained unbeaten in three encounters between the two. His 17th career title should see him move up one place to seventh in the new world rankings. Medvedev said both players struggled to find their rhythm in the wind but also complained about new match balls used on the tour. "Honestly now I can say this now that the tournament is over, and also I won, I think that these balls are not good for hard courts," said the Russian. "They changed something this year and I don't like them. I heard a lot of other players are struggling with shoulders, elbows and wrists. "Myself I had wrist problems in Australia. Generally I think I was struggling all week to find the perfect rhythm with these balls, but I am happy to win." Medvedev fired down five aces but also committed six double faults. Murray repeatedly shouted at himself and his support team after errors. Medvedev had seemed to be cruising to victory in the second set until he was serving at 3-2 up with two game points. —APP

Dutchman Max Verstappen eyes 3rd consecutive title

LONDON: With Red Bull's flying Dutchman Max Verstappen targeting a third consecutive world title, the 2023 Formula One season is all set to kick off in Bahrain on March 5. The upcoming 23-race season will be the longest in F1's 73-year history, meaning, much like last year, plenty of drama is in store for motorsports fans around the world. Not in their wildest dreams could Max Verstappen and Red Bull chief Christian Horner have ever imagined their gloriously relentless push to last year's world titles. In 2022, Verstappen won 15 of 22 races, including nine of the last 11 as he swept to back-to-back world titles. His final points tally of 454 was comfortably 146 ahead of second-place Charles Leclerc of Ferrari. Verstappen is an odds-on shot with the bookies for a three-peat, with Red Bull at comparably skinny odds to win the constructors title again. Talk of a 'Verstappen era' surfaced after the

25-year-old Dutchman wrapped up his second title four races out in Suzuka. "I hope not," said Leclerc while Lewis Hamilton suggested "it is too early to say," pointing to Ferrari's fast qualifying pace but noting his Mercedes' team had "a much, much bigger step and steeper hill to climb, but hopefully not impossible." Their silver-arrows blunted, dethroned eight-time constructors champions Mercedes, seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, and the prodigiously gifted George Russell are back in black livery meaning business. Team chief Toto Wolff described last term as "character building," as his team more than any other struggled to cope with the new ground effect rules. The capricious W13 car has been given pride of place in reception at their UK home "to remind us every single day how difficult it can be" said Wolff. Hamilton, 38, approaching his 17th year in the fast lane, is as hungry as

he has ever been, and is in the process of negotiating a new contract with the team he is backing to supply him with a record eighth-world drivers crown. As for Ferrari, they had a car to match Red Bull but were time and again let down by reliability and questionable strategy on race day, with team principal Mattia Binotto paying the price. Under his successor, Fred Vasseur, Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz will be out to exploit their car's evident speed to knock Verstappen off his pedestal. Between them, they annexed 12 pole positions to Red Bull's eight in 2022, but only four wins to Verstappen's and Sergio Perez's total of 17. The Chinese Grand Prix may be missing for a fourth straight season and no replacement found, but F1 will still stage a record 23-race season as it taps into a resurgence in its global popularity since Liberty Media's takeover.—APP

PSL 8: Karachi Kings thrash Multan Sultans

KARACHI: Karachi Kings thrashed Multan Sultans by 66 runs to secure their second win in the 14th match of the ongoing eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at the National Bank Cricket Arena in Karachi on Sunday.

Put to bat first, Karachi posted a competitive target of 168 runs before bowling out Multan for 101 runs in 16.3 overs, thanks to a half-century from Tayyab Tahir and an exceptional display of spin bowling from Tabraiz Shamsi, Shoaib Malik, and Imad Wasim. In reply to the target, Multan's batters couldn't find the momentum as Karachi's spin bowling shined and didn't let their opponents settle. Opener Shan Masood departed after scoring 25 runs in 16 balls with the help of four boundaries. The batter fell to Akif Javed after an inside edge. Meanwhile, Rilee

Rossouw was cleaned up by a beauty from spinner Shoaib Malik. The left-hander could only score seven runs in six balls. The next batter to fall was David Miller, who was sent back by his compatriot

Tabraiz Shamsi after scoring seven runs. Veteran all-rounder Malik struck again in his third over as he sent Multan's skipper Mohammad Rizwan (29) back to the pavilion. The

wicketkeeper-batter tried to play a sweep shot to the leg side, but the ball hit the edge, and the rest was done by debutant Tayyab Tahir, who took a sensational catch. It was spinners' day in Ka-

rachi as Shamsi delivered again for his side, bowling out Khushdil Shah (4) with a brilliant delivery. The South African spinner claimed his third wicket by dismissing Usama Mir after

he scored 10 runs. In the following over, skipper Imad Wasim joined the party and bowled out Carlos Braithwaite (1). The left-arm spinner dismissed Akeal Hosein (2) in the same over. The left-handed batter opted to go for a six but was caught by Ben Cutting. Anwar Ali, who scored 12 runs of 12 balls, was the ninth batter to fall. The right-handed batter got out to Akif. Malik ended Multan's innings by trapping Abbas Afridi for a lbw. For Karachi, Malik and Shamsi claimed three wickets each, while Akif and Imad secured two scalps each. Earlier, Karachi Kings finished on 167-3 in their allotted 20 overs. At one stage it seemed as if Karachi will post a massive total on the board but the Multan bowlers bowled exceedingly well in the death overs to get back into the contest. —Agencies



PSL 8th Edition



MONDAY 07:00 PM
FEBRUARY 27, 2023

Gaddafi Stadium,
Lahore, Pakistan

Pakistanis
among 58
dead after...

FROM PAGE 01

fleeing conditions of great hardship", Italian President Sergio Mattarella said. Initial reports from ANSA and other Italian news agencies, spoke of 27 bodies washed up on the beach and more found in the water. Ignazio Mangione, an Italian Red Cross official, told SkyTG24 that very few of the children believed to have been on the boat survived.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni expressed "deep sorrow" for the deaths. Blaming human traffickers, she vowed to block migrant sea departures to prevent such disasters.

Her right-wing administration has taken a hard line on migration since taking office in October, mostly by restricting the activities of migrant rescue charities with tough new laws that won final parliamentary approval on Thursday. Meloni accuses charities of encouraging migrants to make the dangerous sea journey to Italy, acting as so-called "pull factors". Charities reject this, saying migrants set off regardless of whether rescue boats are in the vicinity. "Stopping, blocking and hindering the work of NGOs (non-governmental organisations) will have only one effect: the death of vulnerable people left without help," Spanish migrant rescue charity Open Arms tweeted in reaction to Sunday's shipwreck.

In a separate statement, Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi said it was essential to stop sea crossings that he said offer migrants the "illusory mirage of a better life" in Europe, enrich traffickers, and cause such tragedies.

Pope Francis, the son of Italian immigrants to Argentina and long a vocal advocate for migrants' rights, said he was praying for everyone caught up in the shipwreck. Italy is one of the main landing points for migrants trying to enter Europe by sea, with many seeking to travel on to richer northern European nations. The so-called central Mediterranean route is known as one of the world's most dangerous. The United Nations Missing Migrants Project has registered more than 17,000 deaths and disappearances in the central Mediterranean since 2014. More than 220 have died or disappeared this year, it estimates.

PM forms
body for
austerity...

FROM PAGE 01

PM's advisor on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira and Minister of State for Power Division Hashim Notezai. The committee will review the implementation of the decisions taken during the federal cabinet meeting of February 22, it said. The principal accounting officer of each ministry, division, and department will submit recommendations before the committee by February 27 on the implementation of these decisions.

On Wednesday, PM Shehbaz announced a broad range of measures aiming to tighten the government's belt but warned people to brace for more price hikes due to the tough conditions imposed by IMF. The prime minister spoke to the media himself to unveil the austerity measures approved by the federal cabinet and expressed the hope that the government would be able to take the masses out of the current economic crisis. "There will be more inflation in the country," he cautioned. However, he added that the government was taking measures to mitigate the sufferings of the poor, by continuing various subsidies for them.

Briefs

Zelenskyy
open to
meeting Xi
Jinping

KIEV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says he wants to meet with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping to discuss Beijing's calls for a cease-fire and peace talks between Russia and Ukraine on Friday. China claims to have a neutral stance in the war that began one year ago, but has also refused to criticise Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, or even refer to it as an invasion. It has accused Ukraine's western allies of provoking the conflict and "fanning the flames" by providing Ukraine with defensive arms. "I believe that the fact that China started talking about Ukraine is not bad," Zelenskyy said. "But the question is what follows the words. The question is in the steps and where they will lead to." "As far as I know, China has historically respected territorial integrity, and so it should do everything so that the Russian Federation leaves our territory, as it's in this that the gravity of sovereignty and territorial integrity lies." In a 12-point document released Friday, Beijing's foreign ministry outlined its proposals to halt the fighting in Ukraine. It called for peace talks and for both sides to respect national sovereignty. The statement did not however call for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine.—APP

Craig raises
\$120M for
quake victims

LONDON: British actor Daniel Craig helped raise over 100 million pounds (\$119 million) in donations to support those affected by the Kahramanmaraş-centered earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, which claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people. As he bid farewell to his iconic role as James Bond in his fifth and final film appearance, Craig issued a message of thanks to all those who contributed. The funds raised will go toward assisting those impacted by the disaster, and Craig's support has been crucial in driving the success of the fundraising effort. The 54-year-old actor, in collaboration with the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), which brings together fourteen charities in the United Kingdom, announced that donations have been collected since the first day of the devastation. In his speech, Craig said, "The public's generous response to the DEC's appeal for earthquake survivors in Syria and Türkiye has been incredibly moving to see." "The earthquakes lasted seconds, but the aftermath will last for years. Since I filmed the broadcast appeal, the numbers of people confirmed killed or injured have gone up by tens of thousands," he lamented.—DNA

Twin cyclones
may hit NZ
next week

AUCKLAND: Already reeling from the impact of cyclone "Gabrielle," New Zealand may be hit by a pair of tropical cyclones next week, meteorologists said on Sunday. The pair may form in the South Pacific next week, with a potential risk of more rain and swells for eastern parts of New Zealand, local English daily New Zealand Herald reported citing MetService, the country's official meteorology department. However, unlike Gabrielle, the chances of another direct hit on the country are considered low at this stage, the newspaper reported. According to the MetService, a tropical low moving westward towards South Pacific Ocean county, Vanuatu, this afternoon was likely to develop into a tropical cyclone early this week. "Potentially 2 tropical cyclones developing this week. At this stage, the risk of either directly impacting New Zealand is relatively low. However, there is a lot to happen before the track becomes certain so things could change," it said in a Twitter post. Police on Sunday continued the search for at least eight people still missing after Gabrielle struck the nation two weeks ago, authorities said.—Agencies

ICCI calls for focusing on IT industry to increase its exports

Event also provided a good opportunity for entire tech ecosystem of Pakistan along with leaders from the public & private sectors to gather under one roof and witness biggest tech festival of the country

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The rapid adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is very important for better socio-economic development and promoting Pakistan as a digital economy, therefore, the government should focus on this industry to increase its annual exports to at least \$10 billion per annum. This was said by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) while expressing views during a visit to the 22nd ITCN Asia 2023 being organized by the Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan Pvt. Limited at Pakistan-China Friendship Centre. ICCI is one of the strategic partners in this event.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan has a huge pool of young talent



and by providing them training and education in IT field, the country can make rapid increase in its IT exports. He said that

Pakistan's neighbors are earning billions of dollars from IT exports, but our IT exports are still far behind our actual potential as

Pakistan's exports of ICT services, including telecommunication, computer and information services, reached \$2.6 billion in FY

2022. He stressed that the government should make more conducive policies for the IT industry to bring a new revolution in this high

potential sector. The 3-days action-packed has provided an excellent platform to the IT industry players to showcase the solutions for all important issues of the economy related to the government, cloud, data centre, cyber-security, ERP, education, banking & finance, health & pharma, ecommerce, artificial intelligence, and robotics. The series of conferences were also organized on the sidelines of the event to provide a learning environment for the like-minded people to share knowledge & experiences. The event also provided a good opportunity for the entire tech ecosystem of Pakistan along with the leaders from the public & private sectors to gather under one roof and witness the biggest tech festival of the country.

Removal from FATF grey list rewards Morocco's proactive actions

DNA

PARIS - Morocco's removal from the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) "grey" list on money laundering and terrorist financing is the crowning achievement of the Kingdom's efforts and proactive actions to strengthen its local legal arsenal. In recent years, Morocco has been keen to strengthen its legal arsenal in the fight against money laundering. In this sense, several draft laws have been adopted, while the country's institutions have strengthened the mechanisms designed to prevent such practices. Morocco's actions have focused on a battery of legislative, organizational, awareness and control measures, implemented by the various national authorities and institutions concerned, under the coordination of the National Financial Intelligence Author-

ity, in partnership with legal entities subject to public or private law.

In order to keep up with the constant changes in the international anti-money laundering system, Morocco is also working, under the enlightened leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, to adapt its laws to international standards, in line with the developments of the FATF recommendations. Marking the Kingdom's commitment to strengthening the national anti-money laundering and combating the terrorism financing in accordance with the evolution of international standards in this area, Morocco's delisting from the FATF's "gray" list will have a positive impact on sovereign ratings and the local banks' ratings. This is in addition to the numerous international rankings established by rating institutions that place Morocco in pole position among countries where it is good to

invest. This major step forward will also strengthen Morocco's image and positioning in negotiations with international financial institutions, as well as foreign investors' confidence in the national economy. This decision confirms the right choices made in terms of economic policy and the relevance of the measures taken in terms of governance and fiscal transparency, in accordance with international standards. By joining the very small club of countries that have demonstrated positive developments in their tax laws and practices, Morocco strengthens its attractiveness and reassures investors of the soundness of its legislation and taxation. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has decided, unanimously by its members, to remove Morocco from the grey list, during the FATF General Assembly, held in Paris on February 20-24, 2023.

‘Interest rate hike by 2% will be too much’

ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh on Sunday said interest rate hike by 200bps on IMF demand will be too much. The move will increase cost of doing business and bankrupt many businesses but it will also reduce inflation and strengthen rupee, he said. Pakistan has assured the IMF it will raise its policy rate by two percentage points in order to meet the conditions set by the lender to revive the loan programme, he added. Atif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as Chairman PVMA said in a statement that the virtual negotiations between both sides continued and details regarding reforms in the power sector are being finalised which will lead to a staff-level agreement. The dysfunctional power sector has become one of the major stumbling blocks between Pakistan and the IMF. Pakistan has also briefed the lender in detail on external financing till June, the sources said, adding that the IMF was also holding talks with the concerned countries for assurance. Our authorities have been negotiating with the IMF since early February over policy framework issues and are hoping to sign a staff-level agreement that will pave the way for more inflows from other bilateral and multilateral lenders. Once the deal is signed, the lender will disburse a tranche of more than \$1 billion from the \$6.5 billion bailout agreed to in 2019. Pakistan has already taken a string of measures.—DNA

FPCCI seeks proposals for Budget

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI)'s United Business Group (UBG) Sunday sought viable proposals for Budget 2023-24 from the country's business community for timely submission to the federal government. The proposals must be aimed at boosting growth-oriented economic activities in the wake of Russia-Ukraine conflict and flood devastation, said a press release issued here. Talking to a delegation of leading industrialists and traders, led by Waseem Ullah Anjum, UBG President Shahzad Ali Malik said Pakistan was passing through crucial times due to the side effects of coronavirus pandemic and Russia-Ukraine conflict. At this uncertain time, the business community should come forward with a clear vision to help the country overcome the challenges, he added. He further said that chambers and elected bodies should make such proposals that would help the government to revive the economy through the upcoming budget. He said the private sector wanted to supplement the government's efforts, focusing economic revival of the country, adding that joint proposals would help make the budget business-friendly, which would ultimately result in robust export-led growth. Shahzad Ali Malik urged the government to focus on ease of doing business in the upcoming budget, which would help attract the much-needed investment to trigger economic growth in the country. "The government is highly appreciative of the contribution of the traders and the business community towards strengthening the economy and promoting tax culture", he added.—Agencies

Arab lawmakers in Syria for talks with Assad

FOREIGN DESK

DAMASCUS: A number of Arab parliament speakers and senior legislators have arrived in Damascus, amid attempts by certain countries, above all Iraq, to restore Syria's membership in the Arab League, more than a decade after it was suspended from the 22-member bloc. The high-profile lawmakers landed at Damascus International Airport on Sunday and were officially received by Speaker of the People's Assembly of Syria Hammouda Sabbagh. "The atmosphere at the 34th conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in the Iraqi capital city of Baghdad was very positive. It focused on unity



among all Arab countries and underlined the need for Syria's return to the Arab diplomatic fold," Sabbagh told reporters. He added that the visit also stresses the fact that Syria lies at the heart of any joint Arab action to confront current challenges and crises. Calls to reinstate Syria to the Arab League are once again

renewed after it had been suspended from the League following the start of the country's foreign-sponsored conflict in 2011. For his part, Speaker of Egypt's House of Representatives Hanafy el-Gebaly said, "We are here in Damascus to show our support for the brotherly nation of Syria, and demonstrate our solidarity with it in the

aftermath of the devastating [February 6] earthquake." "We are the same soul. We will stand by Syrians during the current difficult situation," Gebaly noted. On Saturday, Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives Mohammed al-Halbousi called upon "all Arab countries, both at parliamentary and state levels.

BAKU marks 31st anniversary of Khojaly massacre

DNA

BAKU: On Feb. 26, Azerbaijan will observe the 31st anniversary of the Khojaly tragedy, the mass killing of Azerbaijani civilians by Armenian forces in the town of Khojaly. To mark the event, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry issued a statement calling the 1992 Khojaly genocide one of the "gravest crimes" committed against the civilian population during the decades-long aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan. The ministry said the Khojaly tragedy, the "indiscriminate killing" of the civilian population, is only a part of the policy of "ethnic hatred racial discrimination and systematic violence," implemented by Armenia against Azerbaijan for many years at the state level. The statement also published a list of the international documents, violated by Armenia during its aggression against Azerbaijan. The ministry said that it is possible to open an international investigation against Armenia under the international law, adding that to date none of those involved in the massacre was brought to justice in Armenia. The ministry recalled incriminating remarks by Armenia's then Defense Minister and ex-President, Serzh Sargsyan, who told British journalist Thomas de Waal that "before Khojaly, the Azerbaijanis thought that ... the Armenians were people who could not raise their hand against the civilian population. We were able to break that

(stereotype)." According to the Justice for Khojaly project, at the end of 1987, then Armenian Soviet Republic openly laid claim to the territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of the Azerbaijani Soviet Republic. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in Oct. 1991, Khojaly, a district located in the mountainous Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, home to some 7,000 people, was completely surrounded by Ar-



menia's armed forces. On the night of Feb. 25-26, following massive artillery bombardment, Armenia's military together with former USSR's 366th Motorized Infantry Regiment occupied Khojaly. According to the Justice for Khojaly, of 7,000 Khojaly residents, 5,379 were deported and 613 people, including 63 children, 106 women and 70 elderly citizens, were murdered by the Armenian occupation forces. Besides,

1,275 residents were taken hostage and tortured, 487 were injured, while the fate of 150 captives, including 68 women and 26 children remains unknown. The actions of the Armenian armed forces tore families apart. Eight families were completely wiped out, 130 children lost one parent and 25 children lost both parents.

According to the Azerbaijani authorities, the parliaments of 18 countries, 24 US states, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Organization of Turkic States adopted a number of documents, condemning the mass killing of civilians in Khojaly and characterizing it as a "crime against humanity and an act of genocide." Memorials dedicated to the Khojaly tragedy have been erected in several cities of Azerbaijan, including capital Baku, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Israel, Mexico and Türkiye. Meanwhile, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry expects that measures taken at the national level, also effective from the point of view of international law, will serve to end impunity and bring to justice those responsible for "serious crimes committed during Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan." "There has to be a legal assessment on the Khojaly genocide and those who committed this terrible tragedy should receive its proper punishment. "We engrave the victims of the Khojaly tragedy in our national memory and honor their reminiscence. Rest in Peace!" it said. February 26 is one of the most tragic days of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov told reporters during his visit to the Khojaly genocide memorial.

40 migrants
die in boat
wreck off
Italy

ROME: At least 27 migrants died after their boat sank at dawn off the Italian coastal city of Crotona in the southern region of Calabria, Italian media reported on Sunday. News agency ANSA said at least 30 people were believed to have drowned. The search for survivors was continuing, hampered by stormy seas. AGI news agency quoted a rescue worker as saying a baby of just a few months old was among the victims. It said the migrants' vessel was overloaded and had split apart because of the violent waves.

Italian coast guards declined to comment when contacted by AFP.

The latest such tragedy comes just days after the hard-right government pushed through parliament a controversial new law on rescuing migrants.

Far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, the leader of the post-Fascist Brothers of Italy party, won power in October, partly on a promise to stem the flow of migrants reaching Italian shores.

The new law forces migrant aid vessels to make just one rescue attempt at a time, which critics say risks increasing the number of drownings in the central Mediterranean.

The route is considered the most dangerous crossing in the world for people seeking asylum in Europe.

A large number of people fleeing conflict and poverty for what they hope will be a better life in Europe cross from Africa via Italy.—APP

Japan boosts
earthquake
aid for
Türkiye, Syria

TOKYO: Japan, after initially sending \$16 million (TL 302 million) in emergency aid for disaster-ravaged Türkiye and Syria, has extended it even more by boosting its humanitarian support to around \$27 million since the Feb. 6 earthquakes.

"With this assistance, the Government of Japan will implement humanitarian assistance activities for those seriously affected by the disaster in Türkiye and Syria in areas such as shelter, food, nonfood items, early recovery (removal of debris, etc.), health and medical care, protection, and water and sanitation," said a Foreign Ministry statement issued late Friday. Tokyo says it will continue to work closely with relevant countries and international organizations to implement disaster relief and support in areas affected by the twin earthquakes.—DNA

EU sanctions
Wagner for
abuses
in Africa

BRUSSELS: The EU announced additional sanctions against individuals from Russia's Wagner paramilitary group Saturday for "human rights abuses" in three African countries.

Eight individuals and seven entities tied to the group were added to the bloc's sanctions list for asset freezes and travel bans in the Central African Republic, Mali and Sudan, according to a statement from the European Council. Wagner's security arm, which remains an issue of great concern in West Africa, was already sanctioned by the bloc in 2021. The latest measures are "in view of the international dimension and gravity of the group's activities, as well as its destabilizing impact on the countries where it is active," it said.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Wagner's activities are a threat to people in countries where it operates and the EU. "They endanger international peace and security as they do not operate within any legal framework. The EU is determined to continue taking tangible action against breaches to international law," he said.

Those sanctioned came under the EU's Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime for activities in the Central African Republic and Sudan while one person came under the EU sanctions regime specifically applied to Mali. Subjected to the EU sanctions in Mali is the head of Wagner's forces in the country, where the EU said Wagner's fighters "have been involved in acts of violence and multiple human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings."—Agencies

Briefs

Fresh rain system to enter in Balochistan on Tuesday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Met Office on Sunday forecast entry of a westerly wave in Balochistan on Tuesday (February 28th). Under the influence of this system rainfall with thunderstorm and hailstorm is expected in several parts of Balochistan from Feb 28 to 01st March, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department. Quetta, Khuzdar, Nasirabad, Dera Bugti, Zhob, Barkhan, Harnai, Qila Saifullah, Qilah Abdullah, Chaman and Pishin districts will receive rainfall.

Rain will likely to be received in Sukkur, Jacobabad and Larkana districts of Sindh under the influence of the westerly wave. The weather system likely to grip upper and central parts of country on 01st March and may persist over northern areas till 02nd March.

Thousands rally for peace in Italy

ROME: Several thousand people turned up for peace demonstrations in the Italian cities of Genoa and Milan on Saturday. Union members and left-wing activists claimed, among other things, that authorities in Rome have breached national law by sending weapons to Ukraine.

The rally in Genoa drew nearly 4,000 participants from across the country as well as from Switzerland and France, local media reported. Organized by the Collective Autonomous Port Workers (CALP) group with the support of the Italian communist party, the protest took place under the slogan "Lower weapons, raise wages." CALP's Riccardo Rudino was cited in the media as saying that the "conflict in Ukraine did not begin last year" but rather "in 2014, with the massacre of the Russian-speaking population in Donbass." The demonstrators filed through the port of Genoa, demanding an end to the use of the facility for arms shipments destined for Ukraine. - APP

Jordan hosts Israel-Palestine talks amid violence

AMMAN: Jordan is hosting a meeting between top Israeli and Palestinian officials in a bid to halt a surge in deadly violence in the occupied West Bank that has stoked fears of a wider escalation, according to officials. The meeting on Sunday is being held in the Red Sea port of Aqaba and will be attended by representatives from the United States and Egypt. The planned talks come days after Israeli forces carried out a raid in the occupied West Bank city of Nablus that killed 11 Palestinians. The death toll in Wednesday's raid was the highest since the second Intifada of 2000-2005. The intensifying violence has killed 62 Palestinian adults and children since the start of this year. Ten Israelis and a Ukrainian tourist have died in the same period. - Agencies

NATO taking part in Ukraine conflict with arms supplies

Putin suggested that America's "satellite states" are also well aware of these "egoistic" intentions. However, for the time being, they have chosen to turn a blind eye to this due to "various reasons connected first and foremost with huge dependence in the economic sphere and defense"

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin has said the US-led NATO was an indirect accomplice to the crimes committed by Ukraine, as the west keeps supplying the ex-soviet country with lethal armaments. In an interview for Russian TV channel aired on Sunday, Putin said that Moscow should take into account the nuclear potential of not only the US, but all other NATO countries as well, as the alliance considers Moscow's strategic defeat its key goal, "In today's conditions, when all the leading NATO countries have declared their main goal as inflicting a strategic defeat on us, so that our people suffer as they say, how can we ignore their nuclear capabilities in these conditions?" Putin told the state television, according to TASS. According to Putin, if Moscow did not interfere with the policy of Western countries, the fate of the people of Russia could change dramatically, and above all, the fate of the Russian people. Putin also accused the West and NATO of taking part in the Ukraine conflict by donating

arms to the country, and also targeted the West for its sinister plans to break up and liquidate Russia. "They are sending tens of billions of dollars in weapons to Ukraine. This really is participation," Putin was quoted as saying. "They supply arms worth tens of billions of dollars to Ukraine. This is the participation in a way. Why? Because it is not simply military-technical cooperation, since they do not receive money for it," Putin noted "They have one goal: to disband the former Soviet Union and its fundamental part - the Russian Federation." "If we opt for [Russia's disintegration], I think that the destinies of many peoples of Russia, and first of all the Russian people, of course, may change drastically," he said, adding that: "I even doubt that such an ethnic group as the Russian people will survive as it is today, with

some Muscovites, Uralian and others remaining instead."

Moscow is striving to create a multipolar world rather than one that is centered around the US, Russian President Vladimir Putin has said. He argued that Washington was trying to mold the world exclusively to fit its own agenda. Putin suggested that America's "satellite states" are also well aware of these "egoistic" intentions. However, for the time being, they have chosen to turn a blind eye to this due to "various reasons connected first and foremost with huge dependence in the economic sphere and defense," the Russian leader said. Some of Washington's allies also see confrontation with Russia as a unifying cause, eclipsing any differences between them and the US, he added. As an example, Putin cited the US government's efforts to attract European businesses to American soil, as well as a submarine deal last summer, which saw



ISLAMABAD: An attractive view of seasonal flowers flourishing and blooming alongside Faisal Avenue to mark the spring season, in Federal Capital. - Online

Five killed in medical plane crash in Nevada

NEW YORK: All five people aboard a medical transport flight, including a patient, were killed in a plane crash Friday night in a mountainous area in northern Nevada. The Lyon County Sheriff's office said authorities began receiving calls about the crash near Stagecoach, Nevada, around 9:15 p.m. and found the wreckage two hours later. Stagecoach, a rural community home to around 2,500 residents, is about 45 miles (72 kilometers) southeast of Reno. Care Flight, which provides ambulance service by plane and helicopter, said the dead included the pilot, a flight nurse, a flight paramedic, a patient and a patient's family member. Barry Duplantis, president and CEO of the company, said Saturday afternoon that relatives of all five victims had been notified, the Reno Gazette Journal reported. "We send our deepest

condolences to their families," Duplantis said, The Associated Press reported. The crash occurred amid a winter storm warning issued by the National Weather Service in Reno for large swaths of Nevada, including parts of Lyon County. The weather service said it was expecting heavy snow, wind gusts of up to 65 mph (105 kph) and periods of whiteout conditions between 4 a.m. Friday and 4 a.m. Sunday. "It's a pretty mountainous region," Lyon County Sgt. Nathan Cooper said. "Especially with the weather being the way it is right now, it's not very good." The National Transportation Safety Board said Saturday morning on Twitter that it is sending a seven-member team of investigators to the crash site. The NTSB is expected release more information Sunday at a news conference. - Agencies

Macron to visit China, seek Xi's help

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron has said he will visit China in April to seek the Chinese government's help with ending Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The announcement on Saturday came after China published a 12-point position paper that called for a ceasefire and a "political settlement" to end the year-long conflict. Macron, speaking on the sidelines of an agricultural show in Paris, said he would visit China in "early April". "The fact that China is engaging in peace efforts is a good thing," the French leader said, stressing that peace was only possible if "Russian aggression was halted, troops withdrawn, and

the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine and its people was respected". "China must help us put pressure on Russia so that it never uses chemical or nuclear weapons ... and that it stops its aggression as a precondition for talks," he added. Beijing has sought to position itself as a neutral party on the conflict, even as it has maintained close ties with Russia and helped scuttle a joint statement condemning the war at a G20 gathering in India. The Chinese position paper, published on the anniversary of the conflict, said war benefits no one and urged all parties to "support Russia and Ukraine in working in the same direction and resuming direct dialogue as quickly as possible". Released by the foreign ministry, the plan urges an end to Western sanctions against Russia, the establishment of humanitarian corridors for the evacuation of civilians and steps to ensure the export of grain after disruptions caused global food prices to spike last year. - DNA

Turkey widens probe into building collapses

ANKARA: More than 600 people are now being investigated in Turkey over buildings that collapsed in the deadly earthquake on 6 February, the government has said. On Saturday, Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag said 184 suspects - including construction contractors and property owners - had already been arrested. For years, experts warned that endemic corruption and gov't policies meant many new buildings were unsafe. The confirmed death toll in Turkey and Syria has now exceeded 50,000. Mr Bozdag made the televised remarks from south-eastern Turkey, where the 7.8 magnitude quake struck and was followed by another powerful tremor just hours later. His comments showed how the investigation had widened - two weeks ago, the authorities said that 113 arrest warrants had been issued. Among those that have been arrested is a mayor of one of the towns close to where the tremors hit, Turkish media reported. - Agencies

Energy crisis to cost Germany \$1 trillion

BERLIN: Germany's government will have to allocate more than \$1 trillion by 2030 to deal with the risks and challenges that have arisen due to the energy crisis, Bloomberg reported on Sunday, citing its primary research service. The enormous costs are expected to include investments in modernization of the country's power grids and a planned phase-out of its nuclear and coal plants. Berlin will reportedly face growing demand from electric vehicles and heating systems. Moreover, the German authorities are obliged to meet climate commitments. The increase in power demand by some 30% from the country's current consumption will take to about 250 gigawatts the new capacity projected to be installed by 2030, according to data provided by the country's network regulator and think tank Agora Energiewende, as quoted by Bloomberg. The planned transition is also expected to require the installation of solar panels covering the equivalent of 43 soccer fields and 1,600 heat pumps every day, according to the news agency's analysts. On top of this, the nation's ambitious plan would need to see 27 new onshore and four offshore wind farms built per week. Earlier this month, Brussels-based think tank Bruegel reported that EU nations had splashed out nearly €800 billion (nearly \$846 billion) on support measures as the region continues to reel from climbing energy costs. According to the analysis, €681 billion was allocated for subsidizing households and businesses to help them in covering soaring electricity costs. - DNA



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EU approves 10th package of sanctions against Russia

"The EU stands united with Ukraine and Ukrainian people. We will keep supporting Ukraine, for as long as it takes"

DNA

BRUSSELS: The European Union, after hectic last-minute haggling, has approved a tenth package of Russia sanctions on the anniversary of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, the Swedish EU presidency said late on Friday. "Together, the EU member states have imposed the most forceful and far-reaching sanctions ever to help Ukraine win the war," the presidency announced on Twitter. "The EU stands united with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We will keep supporting Ukraine, for as long as it takes." The

package includes tighter export restrictions regarding dual-use goods as well as measures against entities supporting the war, spreading propaganda or delivering drones used by Russia. With two hours to go until midnight, EU member states made it across the finish line with little time to spare after Poland earlier threw a spanner into the works. All member states need to approve sanctions for them to be enacted, making negotiations among the 27 often tedious and lengthy. The EU has said the 10th round of sanctions against Russia since the war started was designed to make financing the war more difficult and starve

Russia of tech equipment and spare parts for arms used against Ukraine. Measures were also meant to blacklist more individuals including what the West says are Russian propagandists, those Kyiv holds responsible for deporting Ukrainian children to Russia and those involved in the production of Iranian drones deployed on the frontline, according to Reuters. The package was also designed to cut off more banks including the private Alfa-Bank and the online bank Tinkoff from the global system SWIFT and cut trade between the EU and Russia by more than 10 billion euros, according to the bloc's executive.