

# Islamabad Post

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### PM Shehbaz for more coordination over relief to Turkiye, Syria

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## Briefs

### Khagan opposes jail politics

NAZIR SYIAL



KARACHI: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Shaukat Khan on Sunday said that putting each other behind bars won't fit country's tanking economy. "Pakistan's economic situation can't be improved by putting each other behind the bars," Khan said during a press conference in Karachi. He suggested forming a commission to identify elements responsible for economic deterioration. The former premier regretted that the political system no longer had the competence to solve country's issues.

### Imran wants country to default

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Sunday said while the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) is striving to pull the country out of the multiple crises, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan wants to spread chaos, and is struggling for the country to default. Addressing the party's workers' convention in Rawalpindi, the minister said the gathering has been organized to prepare for the elections. Taking a swipe at Sheikh Rashid, he said the former minister has been saying the PML-N is running from elections.



Miftah says used to buy own petrol

DNA

KARACHI: Former finance minister Miftah Ismail has expressed his anger over saying that he used to buy petrol himself as federal minister, media reported on Sunday. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader made these remarks during a session of Karachi Literature Festival. Responding to a question, Miftah Ismail pointed out that he did not take BMW during his tenure as finance minister.



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## PUNJAB, KP POLLS ECP excuses itself from consulting President

### "The commission is well aware of its constitutional and legal obligations", states Secretary ECP Omar Hamid

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) responded to the second letter by President Arif Alvi on Sunday saying it could not enter into consultations with him over provincial assembly elections as the matter was in court. It may be noted that President Alvi on Friday had invited Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja for an 'urgent meeting' on February 20 for consultations on the dates for the polls in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab. The meeting was scheduled to take place at Aizawa-Sadr in accordance with Section 57(1) of the Elections Act, 2013, which provides that the president is entrusted to announce the date for the polls after consulting the ECP. "The commission is well aware of its constitutional and legal obligations and has already conveyed its response to the earlier letter, dated February 8, 2023, explaining the complete background of the matter," stated the letter penned by Secretary ECP Omar Hamid Khan. The electoral watchdog maintained that after

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BERLIN: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto holding meeting with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell. - DNA

## FM, EU VP discuss various issues

DNA

MUNICH: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met with the Vice President of the European Union Josep Borrell on the sidelines of Munich Security Conference in Germany on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with the European Union. The two sides agreed to promote multilateral relations and exchanged views on international and regional issues. Separately, Pakistan and Norway have agreed to jointly work to prevent growing incidents of Islamophobia in the world. The understanding reached during a meeting between Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and his Norwegian counterpart Anniken Huitfeldt on the sidelines of Munich Security Conference in Germany on Sunday. Both the leaders resolved to promote bilateral cooperation.

## MQM-P decides against contesting by-elections

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has decided not to contest by-elections in nine constituencies of Karachi on March 16, media reported on Sunday. The constituencies were among the 33 National Assembly seats which fell

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## "STRONG MEASURES NEEDED" IMF wants end to subsidies for upper class, more taxes

### MD IMF says Pakistan requires strong measures to ensure the country's stability

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has urged Pakistan to end subsidies for the upper class and increase tax collection from high earners. In an interview with DW, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva stated that Pakistan does not require debt restructuring, but rather strong measures to ensure the country's stability. Georgieva emphasized two key steps for Pakistan to take. The first step is to increase tax revenue, with both the public and private sectors expected to pay more taxes, particularly those who earn more. The second step is to provide subsidies only to those who genuinely require them. "We are urging Pakistan to take the necessary steps to enable it to function as a stable country and prevent it from reaching a point where it must be rebuilt," Georgieva stated. Pakistan has received financial assistance from the IMF in the past and is

## PTI to defend Judiciary at any cost: Imran Khan

### Requests Supreme Court to take up audio, video tapes issues

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Sunday said the PTI and its workers would defend the sanctity of judiciary at any cost. He requested the apex court of Pakistan to take up his plea seeking action against those who were releasing audio and videos. While talking to nation on the national hookup he said as per Article 114 of the Constitution everybody had privacy right. He said recording of audios and videos was

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## Maryam slams PTI's 'Jail Bharo' movement

### Maryam Nawaz berates PTI Chairman Imran Khan for using "women as a shield"

### Imran ridiculing judiciary, says Info Minister

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyam Aurangzeb said on Sunday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan was ridiculing and making mockery of the judiciary which was smart and making a statement, the minister said that Imran Khan used abusive language every day and threatened judiciary to get bail through bullying. She said that PML-N was now running a campaign to expose Imran and his facilitators. She said her party was now only campaigning against those who were damaging national economy and making people unemployed. The minister said that the PML-N was now only campaigning against foreign agents and "ToshaKhanathis". "PML-N is now only campaigning against those who are conspiring against the country", she remarked. - AFP

RAWALPINDI: In a harsh-hitting speech ahead of Imran Khan's 'Jail Bharo' Tehreek', Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice-President and Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz has dubbed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman as a "corrupt leader", saying he has been hiding in Zaman Park's "bunker" to avoid arrest. Addressing the PML-N workers' convention in Rawalpindi on Sunday, Maryam berated Khan for using "women as a shield" - in her apparent reference to

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## General elections or a technocratic setup?

ANALYSIS

ANSAR M BHATTI

THE PTI Chairman Imran Khan has announced the 'court arrest' movement from this Wednesday. As per the schedule the movement will kick start from Lahore and PTI workers shall flock to the police stations to offer their arrests. According to PTI sources thousands of workers have already registered their names for this movement. However, according to the Pakistani laws there is no provision that people offering this kind of arrest can actually be taken in custody until and unless they violate any laws or resort to hulla-balloo. The jail bharo or court arrest phenomenon is not new. Even in the past various political parties employed this gimmick in order to exert pressure on the government of the day. All such movements ended without yielding any desired re-

sults and the same is likely to happen in the case of PTI jail bharo movement. The PTI leadership also is very well aware of this fact but even then it still wants to try this drill in order to keep its workers engaged and charged, which appears to be a plausible move especially when the government and other concerned authorities are not in a mood to announce dates for the Punjab and KP elections. According to the conclusion that I drew during recent meetings with the senior PTI leadership, the party leadership is of the view that since the President of Pakistan had written a letter to the Election Commission of Pakistan and invited the CEC for a meeting today and in case of any deadlock the President may himself announce the date. If it happens then the court arrest movement will automatically be called off. The Election Commission has already responded to the President's letter. According to the contents of the letter the Commission is of the view that the President may not have any authority to give a date for the elections. The ECP contended the President can only give dates in case of dissolution of the National Assembly therefore the Commission does not consider it necessary to consult

with the President hence no meeting. These are the legal glitches that are likely to land in courts and it is presumed the apex court of Pakistan may ultimately make any decision about this. As regards the role of the President, even if it is not written in the Constitution, being the head of the state the President may intervene and he should intervene if he is convinced that the constitutional order is at stake. It is a point of concern that the constitutional bodies are reluctant to fulfill their constitutional role with regard to holding of two provincial elections within 90 days. Everybody is unanimous on this point that there is no such provision that allows elections to be delayed beyond 90 days yet nobody is ready to fulfill this statutory obligation. To go against the Constitution simply because the exercise may not under the required results for some particular forces shall ostensibly be an act that cannot be supported. Allow elections to take place on time and let the genuine triumphant take charge of the affairs. The best thing which the authorities responsible for holding elections can do is to ensure that the whole drill is executed in a free and fair manner so that a genuine setup

emerges as a result of this exercise. We have already suffered a lot at the hands of the forces of the status quo. This practice must come to an end now if the country is to be transformed into a true and representative democratic state. From the face of it, it appears as if the PML-N especially is scared of elections. First, being the leading party in the coalition, it has failed to deliver the goods. It is because of its lackluster performance that the PTI has once again emerged as the preferred choice of the people. Secondly, the party is facing severe internal rifts. The senior leadership including Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Saad Rafiq, Miftah Ismail, Ajaz Sadiq and others seem to have revolted against Maryam Nawaz, ever since she has been elevated to the post of senior vice president and the chief organizer of the party. With this challenge in hand the party certainly cannot afford to go for elections that may prove suicidal that is why it wants the elections to be delayed. Similarly, the PML-N leadership is quite aware of the fact that if the elections in the Punjab and the KP take place within 90 days then it would be very difficult for the federal government to remain in office. The PDM has decided not to take

part in the by-elections for two reasons perhaps. One, these parties fear ignominious defeat at the hands of the PTI which would severely hurt their return to the national assembly so that the house stands completed and the legislation carried out afterwards gets some credence. On the second option the party option is split nevertheless. I had pointed out in my earlier pieces as well that the powers that wish to have a technocratic setup for at least two years. There is no such provision in the constitution but it is possible if the courts allow that. I am personally in favour of this kind of setup for a limited period though. The bruised and battered economy of Pakistan needs some rest. For that it has to be kept out of reach of the politicians altogether for a while. But when we talk about a technocratic setup then it should be a true technocratic setup comprising people capable of carrying out the government business efficiently and impartially. It must not be like the one which has been installed in the Punjab of KP. It all depends on the forces that actually run this country. Let us hope they will come up with a solution that genuinely seeks to heal wounds.



## DCPS declares 460 drugs substandard, 150 spurious

**PESHAWAR:** Director Drugs Dr Abbas on Sunday said that the Directorate General Drugs Control and Pharmacy Services (DCPS), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has declared 610 medicines against the medical standard.

He said that on the directives of Director General DCPS, the performance report of the Directorate for the year 2022 was issued on the other day.

According to the report, the teams of DCPS inspected 14,803 medical stores among which 2,449 stocks of medicines were seized during the same period.

Furthermore, the samples of a total of 10,351 medicines throughout the province were examined among which 460 drugs were declared substandard and 150 medicines were declared spurious.

FIRs have been lodged against 35 persons over violating the drug act while 375 medical stores were sealed during the last year. Similarly, a total of 2,156 cases were lodged in Drug Courts out of which 488 were decided. DCPS also imposed fines of Rs120 million during the same period, the report added.

## Korean business tourism delegation visits Taxila

**WAH CANTT:** A 26-member Korean business tourism delegation, led by Dr. Song Jong-hwan, the chair professor at Kyungnam University and former Korean Ambassador to Pakistan here on Sunday visited the Taxila Museum and ancient sites.

The delegation comprising the representatives from academia, tourism and industry sector is currently on week-long visit to Pakistan to explore the tourism and investment potential for Korean investors and business community. The delegation visited Taxila museum, ancient site of Dharmrajika and Sirkap and took keen interest in the heritage of Pakistan. Talking to newsmen, head of the delegation Dr. Song highlighted that there were ample opportunities of cooperation in cultural and tourism sectors between the two countries adding that sites like Taxila and Harappa can attract South Korean tourists. He said that in a bid to boost cultural interaction between Korea and Pakistan and to promote religious tourism, Korea was keen to establish a Buddhist study center in Pakistan. —APP

## CPO Operations visits Rescue-15

**ISLAMABAD:** The Capital Police Officer (CPO) Operations, Spel Shahzad Nadeem Bakht visited Rescue-15 in compliance with the special directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Dr Akbar Nasir Khan. On the occasion SSP Operations, SP Plan and Patrolling, SP Headquarter and other senior police officers were also present. During the visit, CPO Operations reviewed the steps taken for the facilities of police personnel and public. During the visit he also met with the staff of Rescue-15 and received a briefing on all administrative matters. CPO Operations also checked the records and visited the mess and issued directions to senior officers, stating that more steps should be taken to improve the quality of the mess. "The quality of food at the mess should be improved in accordance with prescribed hygienic standards, and residential facilities for police officials should also be ensured." —DNA

## Investment friendly initiatives attracting massive response

**PESHAWAR:** Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC) Javed Iqbal Khattak has said that initiatives taken by the company for attracting domestic and foreign investment are re-



ISLAMABAD: worker is busy in paint of fancy plants pots at his workplace in Federal Capital. —Online

## Negligence of Sindh forest department Forest principles neglected during sowing process

The dept ignored plant-to-plant distance. Fear of corruption in huge funds. Demand for investigation by the public

**MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI** ISLAMABAD: Under Ten Billion Trees' Tsunami Program TRITTP, plantation and sowing started in Sindh province as well as across the country, under TRITTP being sown in the riverine areas of Hyderabad and surrounding areas of Hyderabad, Sukkur and surrounding areas of Sukkur. According to forest principles, thinning is done to keep plant to plant spacing accurate after sowing and ensure that there are

726 plants per acre. The distance between plant to plant should be six feet. After random germination of the seeds after sowing, the forest department should have done thinning after random germination and ensured plant-to-plant distance, but they left the germination as it was. As a result of the sowing done three years ago, the germinated plants have now turned into



big trees. Now their thinning is not possible. Nowhere is the distance between the plants germinated from the sowing done on hundreds of acres of land accurate. In some places the distance between the plants is 3 inches and in some places it is 6 inches. Till date, those responsible for this negligence could not be determined and no inquiry

was held. The point of view of the Forest Department of Sindh is that the federal government has not provided funds in this regard. While according to the federal government, funds are being continuously provided. The people of Sindh have strongly protested and demanded that the federal government and the Sindh government conduct a high-level investigation in this regard and determine the forest officers guilty of negligence and punish them according to the law.

## 24 students complete internship program with traffic division

**DNA** ISLAMABAD: 24 students from Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) and Stuebed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto University of Science and Technology (SZABIST) completed their internship with the Islamabad capital police traffic division, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the directions of

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police are acquainting citizens and students about traffic rules through various programmes. Under one such programme, a batch of students from CUST and SZABIST completed their internship spanning 65 hours. Addressing the concluding ceremony, Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad said that efforts were under-

way to promote friendly policing in the city. "The young generation is our asset and their cooperation as well as responsible attitude is crucial for a safe road environment in the city," he said. The concluding ceremony was attended by University students as well as officials from the education wing of Islamabad capital police. The CTO Islamabad distributed certificates among the students and hoped that they

## New bride kills herself

**PESHAWAR:** In suicide attempt, a new bride of three months killed herself by firing in Peshawar on Sunday. According to details new bride, just after three months of marriage with person naming Imran, due to tiredness of her life has opened firing on herself which resulted her death. On last breaths she recorded the statement that some family members have made her life difficult which led her to attempt a suicide. Woman was shifted to hospital in critical situation where she lost her life. Inqab police station has registered the case under section 325 which later converted to section 322. —APP

## Languages festival concludes

**ISLAMABAD:** A three-day "Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival" concluded here on Sunday as it has become one of the important elements of Islamabad's cultural and literary scene for the last eight years. Indus Cultural Forum, a volunteer organization comprising literary and cultural enthusiasts arranged the festival in collaboration with Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), said a news release. The festival was supported by the National Heritage and Culture Division of Federal Government, Culture Departments of Governments of Sindh

and Balochistan provinces, Friedrich Nauman Foundation (FNF), Forum for Language Initiatives, Idr Bete Taleem-Ul-Taraji (IBT), Sindhi Language Authority, ECO Science Foundation, Society for Alternative Media and Research. Speaking at the concluding ceremony, Indus Cultural Forum Chairman Dr Manzoor Hussain Soomro said that the eight-year journey of the festival on a voluntary basis and with limited resources is a testimony that with hard work, enthusiasm, and dedication, we can do a lot to promote and protect Pakistan's true diverse face. He called for greater collaboration between the govern-

ment and other institutions to sustain such initiatives. ICF General Secretary Ashfaq Hussain Chaudhry said that the festival is a great source of bringing people from all language communities together. He said the exchanges of ideas and creative works between writers, artists, poets, and activists during these three days are further cultivated across the year and these three days become the source of years-long bonding and collaborations between them. Senior member of ICF, Munawar Hassan said linguistic diversity is the greatest strength of the country, which should be a cause to bring people together and not divide them.

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Javed Iqbal Khattak said that 18 companies including domestic and Chinese enterprises are establishing their industrial units in the Rashakai Special Economic Zone. Furthermore, he said that big groups from across Pakistan are also investing in it. Similarly, he said that another Special Economic Zone has been established on 434 acres of land at Hattar (Haripur) wherein 7 units have already become operational, while 35 more are under construction. —APP

## Call to complete projects within given time

QAZI SHOAB KHAN

**ATTOCK:** The Chief of Human Development, Minority Affairs and Planning Development Board Punjab Hafiz Muhammad Naseer while expressing his satisfaction over the pace of ongoing four development schemes in district Attock here on Sunday has directed provincial departments and executing agencies to submit their proposals of additional funds for completion of these projects within the stipulated period. He also accompanied by Deputy Director Development Attock Mr. Muhammad Zameer Jarjan, Deputy Director Social Welfare Attock Mr. Haseeb Khalid and SDO Buildings Mr. Mohamud Ahal. On this occasion, the Deputy Director Development Mr. Muhammad Zameer Jarjan highlighting the salient features the development projects has also briefed the visiting chief on the updated progress of the schemes. Earlier, the distinguished guest also took a round of 4 development schemes under social welfare and Rural Mil which include establishment of medical social service unit and modern children home, upgradation of shelter home/abode of peace-Attock, provision of residential facilities in industrial home Attock. The Chief of Human Development, Minority Affairs and Planning Development Board Punjab Hafiz Muhammad Naseer also appreciated the social services unit being delivered at Asandayar Bokhari District Headquarter Hospital Attock.

## President can't announce PA election date

**LAHORE:** The president can only announce elections for the National Assembly and the schedule for the provincial assemblies' elections can be issued only by governors. This was claimed by Pakistan People's Party Central Punjab Acting President Rana Parooz Saeed in a statement, issued here on Sunday. He said that Sheikh Rashid Afridi was installing President Arif Alvi for an unconstitutional step of announcing the provincial assemblies' elections. He said a single-seater politician should stop issuing directions to the Election Commission. He said the resident of Lal Haveli was speaking without taking into account the legal realities. He appealed to courts to take notice of the unconstitutional and instigating statements of Sheikh Rashid. He said that the PPP workers would not allow and spare anybody over use of dirty language against party chairman Bilawal Bhatti Zardari and Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari. —APP

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For further information please contact the following.

**Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman**  
Mobile: 0300 8553342

—APP



**National Days and Armed Forces Days**

**FEBRUARY**

- Feb 04 / Sri Lanka National Day
- Feb 06 / New Zealand National Day
- Feb 06 / Uganda Defec 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.....051-282821  
Mona.....0334-542812



**Airlines**

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



**Emergency**

Rescue (Police).....15  
Bomb Disposal.....15  
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16  
Emergency Ambulance 1122 & Rescue Services 441122  
Motorway Police.....9269944  
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222594  
Rawalpindi.....9270610-20



**Enquiry**

EdhiAmbulance.....115  
PIA Flight Info.....114  
PIA Cargo.....9280979  
Railway Inquiry.....117  
Railway Exchange 9270831-5  
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489  
CAA.....9281092



**Hospitals**

CMH.....561111  
MH.....561116  
Cant Hospital.....9270907-11  
DHQ.....5556311-4  
RGH.....9290301-7  
Holy Family.....9290322-7  
PIMS.....9291170-79  
Polyclinic.....9218306-09  
Shifa International 9630666



**Departments**

CDA.....9221334-44  
CDA.....9208301-04  
Met Office.....9250940-6  
RIA.....5555864  
TMA.....5770886  
Contentment Board 9270153-3



**Islamabad Metropolitan**

Corporation.....9209224  
Potshar Town.....9209224  
Rawal Town.....5773343

**Water Tank**

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

# DIG Operations assures to improve security in markets

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, met with Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation, met with Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari, Deputy Inspector General Operations of Islamabad Police and discussed issues of mutual interest with him. He commended the Islamabad Police for bringing the criminals of recent incident with a woman in F-9 Park to justice as it will create

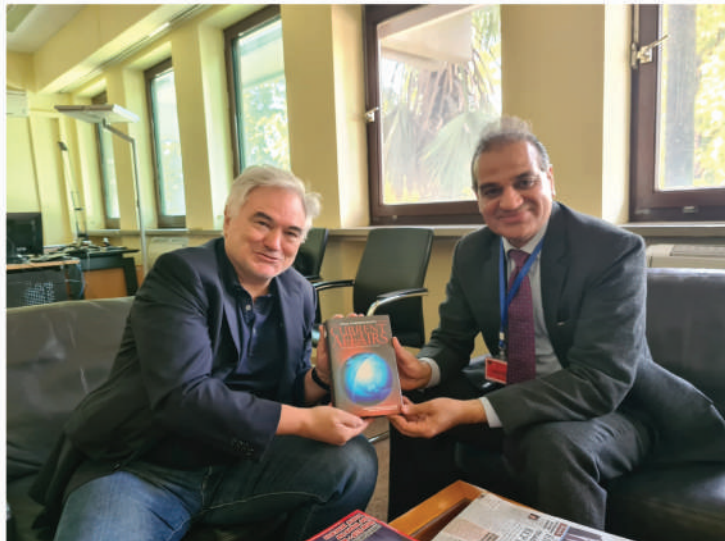
a better sense of security in women and they will be able to go to markets and parks with confidence. He said that it is necessary to deal strictly with the elements that harass women so that women can go out of their houses without fear and play their active role in the development of the economy and society. He said that ICCI is trying to install security cameras in the important markets of Islamabad in collaboration with market associations so that crimes in the markets can be eradicated, which

will give better promotion to commercial activities. He gave various suggestions to the DIG Operations to further improve the security situation in the commercial centers and assured that the business community would fully cooperate with the police in efforts to curb crimes in the federal capital. He also invited the DIG Operations to visit ICCI and various markets, which was accepted by Syed Shehzad Nadeem Bukhari. Speaking on the occasion, Syed Shehzad Nadeem

Bukhari, DIG Operations said that the business community is playing a key role in promoting the economy, so the Islamabad Police would always try to provide them with a peaceful and safe environment. He said that with the support of the Chamber, police will try to improve security in markets and industrial areas. Talking about the recent incident of F-9 Park, he said that harassers of women will be dealt with iron hands and the police will crack down with full

force on those who disturb the peace of the society. He said that it is our mission to make Islamabad a crime-free city, the cooperation of the citizens, including the business community, is necessary, so the police will make progress in this direction with their cooperation. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI offered useful suggestions for im-

proving security arrangements in industrial areas with the DIG Operations and hoped that they would be implemented to facilitate better promotion of industrial activities. Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI, Asad Aziz President Jinnah Supermarket, Raja Javed Iqbal President G-9 Markaz Karachi Company, Magsood Tabish, Sheikh Mohammad Ejaz, Akhtar Hussain, Khalid Chaudhry, Saif ur Rehman Khan and others were included in the delegation.



ISLAMABAD: Editor Daily Islamabad POST Ansar Mahmood Bhatti presenting his book to Ambassador of Germany Alfred Grannas-DNA

## Admin foils 15 bids to smuggle 10,835 wheat

RAWALPINDI: The Food Department Rawalpindi and the district police have foiled 15 bids to smuggle 10,835 wheat bags and 29 tons wheat flour besides arresting 18 accused, said an administration spokesman here on Sunday. He informed that the authorities of the Food Department along with Potshar Division police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up 18 accused on recovery of 10,835 wheat, fine flour bags and 29 tons wheat flour during last 48 hours. He said that the accused were trying to illegally ship

out wheat, flour and fine flour out of Rawalpindi division. To a question, he informed that Rawalpindi District Food Department was ensuring supply of nearly 57,000 wheat flour bags on daily basis in various markets and bazars across the district as 74 wheat flour sale points were set up in different areas of the district were directed to supply 500 each subsidized wheat flour bags weighing

10 kg to the citizens daily. He said the district administration teams were also monitoring the supply of wheat flour and action in accordance with the law was being taken against the violators of the order. In line with the directives of the district administration, the food department had launched a crackdown on flour mills which were not providing the required quota, he added. "The Food Department is taking action against hoarders and those involved in the wheat smuggling are causing price hike as we have a surplus of agricultural

commodities in Rawalpindi division," he added. He said, the Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi, were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids. The spokesman said that all the exit points of Rawalpindi division were being monitored 24/7 to control wheat smuggling as the administration had set up 14 check posts at exit points of the four districts of the division to check wheat smuggling.—APP

## J Salik to take part interfaith conference

ISLAMABAD: Convener, World Minorities Alliance (WMA) and former Federal Minister for Population Welfare, Julius Salik on Sunday welcomed the appreciation for the international interfaith conference to be held in Washington from all the stakeholders at the national level. The Convener WMA in a telephonic conversation from Washington DC told APP that he had received special messages of appreciation from various personalities including Chairman One-Man Commission on Minorities' Rights, Dr Shaukat Siddique, Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others. They have lauded the cause highlighted in the upcoming interfaith conference agenda and expressed best wishes to him for its successful execution, he added. The Convener WMA also J Salik said he was preparing a catalogue to be distributed among the participants for the conference carrying messages of various important personalities including the Prime Minister on interfaith harmony.—APP

## Govt releases over Rs 14 bln for 113 housing sector

ISLAMABAD: The government has so far released funds amounting to Rs 14,252 billion, under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2022-23) against a total allocation of around Rs 18,737 billion to execute 113 different projects aimed at ensuring the availability of affordable residential facilities. Out of the total authorization/disbursement of Rs 14,252.66 million, around Rs 3,191.77 million have been utilized on the housing sector projects during a seven-month period (July-January) of the current fiscal year, according to official data available with APP. The budgetary allocation included Rs 12,273.329 million for 107 ongoing projects and Rs 1,711.875 million for six new schemes. As per the PSDP document, an amount of Rs 523.108 million had been earmarked for the rehabilitation and construction roads in Hyderabad City (20 development schemes). Similarly, an amount of Rs 486.159 million had been kept for the construction of metalled roads in different areas of District Bahawalpur (24 development schemes, while Rs 406.211 million were specified for the construction of black top roads, Puzosa Daki and Rabhat villages, District Unki. Regarding the new development schemes, an amount of Rs 1,000 million was allocated for the rehabilitation and construction of roads in SITE Industrial Estate, Karachi.—APP

## CDA to plant saplings on retrieved land to increase green cover

*He said Islamabad was the only city in the world that had been developed on the concept of green city and "the CDA is taking concrete measures for conservation and enhancement of its green character."*

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to increase the city's green cover by planting saplings on billions of rupees of land it recovered from illegal occupants under the anti-encroachment drive. "The authority has recently launched a massive drive in the federal capital against the land grabbers to recover its precious land that had been unlawfully occupied by the mafia," an official said APP. He said the tree-plantation decision was taken on the direction of CDA Chairman Noor ul Amin Mergal, and the authority would

carry out a comprehensive drive aimed at preventing re-encroachment of retrieved land and increasing green spaces across the capital. The official said the CDA had retrieved land in several locations of Islamabad, including the Kurri Area, F-7, F-10, F-11, E-12 sectors, C-12 sector, Sarai Kharboza along the Grand Trunk Road, and the Margalla Hills National Park. He said the authority also launched an awareness campaign to educate people from all segments of society particularly students about

the importance of tree plantation so that green cover could be increased in the city by planting more trees. "On directions of the CDA Chairman, the civic agency is taking all possible steps to maintain the natural beauty of the capital city in collaboration with the citizens, particularly educational institutions," he added. He said Islamabad was the only city in the world that had been developed on the concept of green city and "the CDA is taking concrete measures for conservation and enhancement of its green character.—APP

## Citizens requested to use water carefully

RAWALPINDI: The citizens have been requested to use water carefully as the supply of water from Khanpur dam to Rawalpindi city and cantonment areas has been reduced due to the desilting project which started on Feb 15 and may lead to a shortage of water in many localities. The Khanpur dam canal desilting project would be completed till Feb 25. Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi, Rawalpindi and Chakdala Cantonment boards have urged the residents to use water judiciously in their daily routine to avoid shortage as water supply to Cantt and city areas from Khanpur dam had decreased due to the desilting project. According to Managing Director (MD) WASA, Muhammad Tanveer, the Khanpur dam annual canal desilting project would continue till Feb 25.—APP

## G-13 & 14 residents to get water from Shah Allah Ditta

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) is planning to start construction of the missing link of the main water supply line from the Shah Allah Ditta Reservoir for a sustainable water supply system in sectors G-13 and G-14. "The authority has already approved a PCI to complete a missing link of the main water supply line from Shah Allah Ditta Reservoir to provide a permanent water supply system in the two sectors," sources in the FGEHA told APP. They said that the main water line is about 14 km long, with the majority of it already laid out by the Capital Development Authority (CDA). The PCI for the two km long missing links has now been approved by FGEHA.

The sources said the project would be completed in a year on a priority basis as these regions now lacked 2.5 MGD of water, and the authority was planning to use this line to get an additional 1 MGD of water from Khanpur Dam.

Besides, the sources said these two sectors had been dealing with a severe shortage of drinking water for many years due to the lack of a water supply mechanism. It is pertinent to mention here that despite the passage of more than two decades, the sectors have been unable to provide water supply, and residents were forced to rely on groundwater and a few tube wells.

## HEC invites applications for accreditation of NRJ

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has invited applications for accreditation of Pakistan-based research journals for the year 2022-24 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2024). The applications can be submitted at research.hec.gov.pk before March 13, 2023. HEC facilitates national research journals published by registered entities through financial support and capacity building to enhance their academic and publication standards. These entities include universities/degree awarding institutions (DAIs), public sector Research and Development (R&D) organisations and non-profit academic societies with the mandate for research and journal registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and/or Registrar of Societies only. National research journals complying with HEC requirements for accreditation are recognised annually through an open call. Applications are invited for the above-said year from all Pakistan-based research journals, which meet the minimum eligibility criteria.—APP

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Briefs
Sehba Akhtar's literary contributions remembered

ISLAMABAD: Literary circles mark the 27th death anniversary of renowned poet and songwriter Sehba Akhtar who left a lasting impact on Urdu literature. Akhtar, who was born on 30 September 1931 in Jammu, spent most of his life in Bareilly and Aligarh, where he was brought up by his mother. Despite facing numerous challenges in his early life, Akhtar's love for poetry never waned and he continued to write throughout his life. Akhtar's early years were marked by financial hardships, which forced him to take on a number of short-term jobs. He eventually landed a job as an inspector in the government department, where he was later promoted to the post of ration collector. During this time, he began writing poetry and published his work under the pen name, Sehba Akhtar. Akhtar's literary career took off after he began working with radio and entered the world of films, where he composed songs that were both popular and enduring. He was also associated with the Herald for a period of seven years, where his Qasid were the highlight of Masriri. In addition to his work in poetry and songwriting, Akhtar was involved in many other aspects of literature and composed more than 100 ghazals. His patriotic songs and dohas were particularly popular among readers and listeners. On 19 February 1996, Akhtar passed away in Karachi, leaving behind a legacy that continues to inspire new generations of poets and writers. He was the author of several acclaimed collections, including Sar Kashada, Iqbal, Samander, and Mishra, and was awarded the President's Medal for his contribution to literature. As the literary community marks the 27th anniversary of Sehba Akhtar's passing, his life and legacy and the many ways in which he enriched the Urdu literary tradition is being remembered. His poetry and songs continue to resonate with audiences around the world and remind them of the power of words to bring comfort, and inspire literature lovers together.

Ashrafi appeals for economic, stability

LAHORE: Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Affairs Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi has appealed to all stakeholders to play their role for bringing about political and economic stability in the country. He was addressing a press conference along with Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Alam Zahir Abid, Maulana Tahir Ahmad, Maulana Tahirul Hassan, Maulana Aslam Nadique and others at the Lahore Press Club, here on Sunday. Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), said that the current challenging situation of the country was demanding from all political and religious parties to reach consensus on a way out to steer the country out of crisis. He asked all stakeholders to create a congenial environment and sit together at a table to remove their differences and put the country on the road to progress. He said that the PUC was playing its role for interest and interfaith harmony across the globe, adding that it would continue its efforts to establish the system of Khilafat-e-Rashida in the country, as it was based on justice and equality. Ashrafi said that elections would prove useless if political parties did not introduce electoral reform and make it mandatory for all contesting parties to accept the results of elections openly. He raised the question that what would be the solution if someone did not accept the mandate of any winning party in the election? He said spending of huge funds on the process. People had no money and they were already overburdened due to inflation and the International Monetary Fund's conditions, he said.—APP

ICI calls for privatizing loss making SOEs to get rid of debt

Sardar Tahir President, Zahid Rafiq Secretary General Islamabad Estate Agents Association and others also spoke at the occasion and emphasized that the government should adopt austerity measures and reduce all unnecessary expenditure to overcome fiscal and current account deficits

DNA ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bahadwari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has said that the government is spending billions of rupees every year to bail out the loss-making State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) including PIA, Pakistan Steel, Pakistan Railways and DISCOs, which show that these entities are a big burden on the national exchequer and stressed that the government should privatize these entities to big businessmen of the country that would reduce government expenditure, improve the performance of those organizations and enable the country to decrease its debt. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest a dinner reception hosted



By Zahid Rafiq, Secretary General, Islamabad Estate Agents Association. Ahsan Zafar Bahadwari said that there are many reputed businessmen in the country who have the financial capacity and capability to turn the loss-making SOEs into profit generating organizations and emphasized that the government should hand over these SOEs to them on the condition that they would pay off all the debts of the country

within 10 years and after that these SOEs should be transferred to their name. He said that deregulation and privatization of banking and telecom sectors have made significant improvement in their performance and these two sectors are among the pillars of rupees in taxes to the government. He said that the best option of transforming loss-making SOEs into profit generating entities is to privatize them as soon as possible. Zafar Bahadwari, former President ICCI speaking at the occasion, said that rising debt servicing obligations are consuming a major share of our total revenue due to which the country is unable to spend more on development and public welfare projects. He said that Pakistan cannot achieve sustainable economic development without controlling the rising debt burden. He stressed that the government should

make policies to control debt and reduce non-development expenditures. He called upon the business community to work hard to promote trade and exports in order to improve the economy. Sardar Yasir Khan, former President ICCI said that the government should focus on improving the regulatory framework for commercial organization and reduce its footprint in the business field by handing over the loss-making organizations to the private sector. Sardar Tahir President, Zahid Rafiq Secretary General Islamabad Estate Agents Association and others also spoke at the occasion and emphasized that the government should adopt austerity measures and reduce all unnecessary expenditure to overcome fiscal and current account deficits.

PTI Islamabad members to court arrest next week

ISLAMABAD: As part of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) 'Jail Bhao' Tehreek, the party announced on Sunday that its members in the federal capital will voluntarily give their arrests to the authorities next week. The announcement was made at a meeting of the PTI Islamic Region Advisory Council, chaired by former MNA Ali Nawaz Awan. Hundreds of party members including Asad Umar, Awan and Raja Khuram Nawaz will present themselves for arrests in Islamabad. Awan stated that if the police do not make arrests, the PTI members will stage a protest in front of the police station. "We are fighting for the future of Pakistan," he said. On Friday, PTI Chairman Inran Khan had announced that the Jail Bhao Tehreek would start in Islamabad next week in protest against economic instability and the alleged crackdown on party leaders and workers. "I am directing my members to start preparations for the launch of the movement on February 22, Wednesday," he said. "We will start the movement from Lahore, and then kick it off in all other major cities every other day and we will fill all the jails." The former prime minister had warned that after the Jail Bhao Tehreek, the country's rulers would find no place for its prisoners. Inran had said that the movement is in response to the government's roughshod tactics to make the opposition party through "politically motivated" cases. He had pointed out that several party leaders in custody were tortured. "Shabbaz Gill was tortured, Azam Saeed was stripped naked. Such actions are a blatant violation of fundamental rights in the past," he had said. "If they desire to arrest us, we will fulfill it through the 'Jail Bhao Tehreek'." "Don't scare us with jails. When our movement starts, there will be no space left in jails," he had said. "I will break the idol of fear." According to the details of the Jail Bhao Tehreek released by the PTI, arrests will be given in phases. On the first day of the movement, 200 workers and five leaders from Lahore and on the second day, 200 party workers and five leaders from Peshawar would take part in the movement.—Online

Vocational Institute announces diploma courses

DNA ISLAMABAD: As the joint efforts between the two brotherly countries have started bearing fruits, the Pak-China Technical & Vocational Institute (PCT&VI) in Gwadar on announced admission in various diploma courses, according to former PCT&VI has been recently operationalized by the University of Gwadar (UG) and Shandong Institute of Commerce & Technology

(SIC&T), China. As per the announcement, the institute has announced 12-month diploma programs in Maritime and Port Management, Hotel Management & Tourism, Information Technology, Financial Literacy, and E-Commerce. Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) and UG would provide fully funded merit-based and need-based scholarships to deserving students. Students with at least 45% marks in matric or equivalent are eligible for all di-

ploma programs. They will have facilities including fully furnished hostels for males and females), transport, library, internet and study tours, and exposure visits. The last date to apply is March 24 with admission tests to be conducted on March 27 while classes will be started on April 3. The state-of-the-art PCT&VI has been built with the Chinese Government's grant under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the port city of Gwadar. The people of Gwadar are the main stakeholders of Gwadar. Their participation in the operation and management of the deep-sea port, participation in industrial and commercial businesses, and urbanization processes is key to all long-term developmental initiatives. PCT&VI is designed to shape and enhance the skills of the active population of Gwadar to participate in the growth of the port city.

PM pays tribute to welfare organizations

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has paid rich tribute to the humanitarian welfare organizations of Pakistan over providing rescue and relief services in Turkey and Syria. He stated this while chairing a meeting in Lahore on Sunday. He said that country's philanthropic organizations have made the nation proud over rendering the relief service in Turkey and Syria. He further said that all the aid going from Pakistan should be integrated through sending it by the NDMA. He said that the better provision of relief goods in Syria and Turkey is possible through NDMA. He directed the authorities concerned to dispatch goods in Turkey and Syria as per their requirement. On the directives of the Prime Minister, a sub-committee headed by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has been constituted to exchange the information with government institutions and human welfare organizations regarding goods to be dispatched in Turkey and Syria.—APP

No, dark chocolate is not a health food

ISLAMABAD: Just do a simple Google search and you'll find multiple articles highlighting the health benefits of dark chocolate. Headlines from media outlets — both obscure and mainstream — expound upon how healthy the delicious treat can be. But just how much of this "healthy" nosh is the product of somewhat deceiving campaigns to boost chocolate's image as something more than an indulgence? The reality behind benefits of dark chocolate. Indeed, dark chocolate isn't all bad. The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health reports that dark chocolate contains 50 to 90 percent cocoa solids, cocoa butter and sugar. It doesn't look that great when measured up to its competitors. Those percentages are significantly greater compared to the 10 to 50 percent of cocoa solids, cocoa butter, sugar, and some form of milk that comprise milk chocolate. What's the good news? Cocoa full of flavanols, chemical compounds found in many vegetables and fruits that have been found to have health benefits, including antioxidant properties that can benefit heart health. Flavanols have been shown to constrict the creation nitric oxide within the inner cell lining of blood vessels, which can improve blood flow and lead to lower blood pressure. Beyond this, the Harvard Chan School says that flavanols have been shown to increase proprioception sensitivity, suggesting a possible reduction of diabetes risk. If you're to believe the hype out there, you'd be ready to accept dark chocolate as a foolproof way to fight off everything from diabetes to a heart attack. However, that image is deceiving. Very recently published a detailed article interrogating the prevailing notion of dark chocolate as a miracle "safe food." In the article, journalist Julia Belluz took a look at 100 Mars-funded (yes, the makers of the popular chocolate bars) health studies that hunted at the health benefits of consuming cocoa- and chocolate-rich food items. Belluz quotes New York University Pauline Goddard Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, emerita, Marion Nestle, PhD. "MPL is saying that companies like Mars 'made a conscious decision to invest in science' in order to make their product seem less like a tasty snack and more like a 'health food.' " You can now sit there with your (chocolate bar) and say, 'I'm getting my flavanols!' Belluz told Vox. It's something of a marketing masterstroke that candy companies were able to take a treat your parents might've scolded you for having too much of as a child and repackaged it as a fail-safe preventive ailment for serious health conditions. Nestle says that Mars & M&M's set up the Mars Center for Cocoa Health Science, a research arm of the candy company to examine and disseminate, in part, information on the health benefits of cocoa.

Ali Malik for promoting exhibition to attract investment

ISLAMABAD: Chairman United Business Group in Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Shaahzad Ali Malik Sunday said exhibitions primarily promote businesses as the country's products and brands offered at competitive rates that also attracted local and foreign investment. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the mega expo arranged by Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry he said a country like Pakistan needs more of these exhibitions to showcase its specialties, industrial outputs and goods. He said products could catch the attention of traders and buyers in expos, participants could get an overview of what the industry offered. He said some expos could have hundreds of exhibitors in one show, with each stand displaying something party in the election. He said it was a good opportunity to conduct market research into current trends in products and customer preferences. He said exhibitors can also be aware of their competitors were offering and how they could compete. "The importance of exhibitions allows you to reach a larger audience and promote your product or service," he said. "He said depending on the industry, exhibitors could hold exhibitions to gather business feedback before introducing their products to the public.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Artists performing traditional dance during last day of Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival 2023 at PNCA in Federal Capital. — ONLINE PHOTO.

Legendary film actor Agha Talish remembered

ISLAMABAD: Legendary Pakistani actor Agha Talish, known for his portrayal of character actors and villain roles, is being remembered on his 23rd death anniversary on Sunday. Agha Ali Abbas Qureshi, most commonly known as Agha Talish was a legendary Pakistani actor who was widely recognized for his portrayals of character actors and villain roles. Talish was born in Ludhiana, British India in 1926 and went on to have a prolific career in the Pakistani film industry. Talish made his debut in 1947 and his on-screen performance in the hit song "Daro Maghe Masaf Bahko Mein Nashe Mein Hoon" from Saifuddin Saif's 1957 film Saat Lakh, was widely admired. His biggest hit film was Shaheed, released on 5 January 1962. The highlight of the film was the instant hit song "Uss bewafa la shchr his sur lam him dostab" by renowned poet Munir Niazi, with music also by Rashid Attre. Talish's 40-year-long film career earned him six Nigar Awards, in 1961, 1962, 1965, 1972, 1975, and 1984. He was also awarded the Pride of Performance Award by the President of Pakistan in 1989. Despite his success, Talish faced a long illness towards the end of his life and passed away on 1 February 1998, in Lahore, Pakistan.—APP

Two-day education summit at RCCI from March 4

RAWALPINDI: A two-day International Education Summit 2023 organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) will be held from March 4 to 5 at a local hotel in Rawalpindi. President RCCI Saqib Rafiq said that the Education policy has not been formulated keeping in mind the demand of the industry in Pakistan. Be it development in any field in the world, be it knowledge economy or science-based development, be it traditional business development or IT sector development, education is fundamental in all these systems and development. It is very unfortunate that in Pakistan only 1.77 per cent of GDP was spent on the education sector whereas developed countries are spending more than 5% of GDP on education, he added. It is a disappointment that the product we are developing in educational institutions has no market value. We did not understand the market and did not consult the stakeholders, he further added. Saqib Rafiq said that, "We have a gap between industry and academia which has created problems, and work has to be done to address them." Our students have more talent and ability than the rest of the world. If they are shown the right direction, given training and opportunities to advance, it will be of great benefit, he added. Chairman of Expo Waqas Bin Mahmood has said that in the two-day Expo where stalls will be set up by various universities, a conference will also be held on the sidelines of the Expo. He said that the Rawalpindi Chamber is going to organize this kind of Expo for the first time. The aim of the conference is to increase connectivity between industry and academia in view of contemporary challenges, discuss and find solutions to the problems related to emerging technology and employment opportunities, e-commerce, scholarships and industry demand.—DNA

Chairman CDA distributes free fruit plants during ceremony

DNA ISLAMABAD: Dated February 19, 2023; Chairman Capital Development Authority Captain Nour ul Amin Mengal inaugurated a ceremony here to distribute free of cost fruit trees in connection with Spring Tree Plantation 2023 drive. Ceremony was attended by civil society, citizens especially large number of children. Upon the instructions of the Chairman CDA, fruit plants are being distributed among citizens for planting in their homes. These plants include peaches, apricots, pomegranates, and other fruit plants that are compatible with the local climate and environment. In this regard, about 5 thousand plants will be distributed free of cost this week and about 20 thousand plants during the next 15 days. Moreover, on the instructions of Chairman CDA, a target of planting 5 lakh saplings has been set in this year's spring plantation drive. In this context, the Environment Wing has been directed to involve all stakeholders including educational institutes, civil society and private institutions in this campaign. These institutes will be provided free of cost plants. In this regard, special teams have been constituted for the first time to ensure the survival rate of plants. They will inspect the plants supplied to different institutions every two months to see if the plants are growing well or not. Through this initiative not only survival rate of plants will be improved but will also help establish a self-sustainable system in the process. In line with instructions of Chairman CDA, various places will be provided free of cost plants from citizens can easily get plants.

Kite flying poses serious threats to human lives

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Kite Flying Volunteers Association has raised the alarm on the dangers posed by kite flying, and called for self-regulation among citizens to abstain from indulging in this activity. Talking to APP here on Sunday, AKFV representative Yasir Farooq Usmani said that kite flying poses serious risks, particularly to human lives and birds. "The strings used for kite flying are made of strong and sharp materials that can cut the throats of unsuspecting people and birds," he said. The kite flying season usually started in February, and law enforcement agencies were making efforts to apprehend the kite sellers, as well as the kite fliers, and to remove kite flying people from engaging in this activity. Yasir highlighted that kites flown in close proximity to one another often result in serious injuries to the people operating them. Kites could become entangled in power lines, leading to electrical outages and the risk of electrocution for the person operating the kite, he added.—APP



War in Ukraine, one year on: an even more dangerous phase may await

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began a year ago this week, was an extraordinary and unexpected event that has changed the world in which we live. Long-held assumptions about peace in Europe, post-cold war relations with Moscow and Nato's diminished standing were shattered overnight. The war has revolutionised German defence policy, silenced French talk of "strategic autonomy", boosted EU unity, revived US commitment to the transatlantic alliance, dramatised the global north-south divide, reduced the UN to the role of hand-writing bystander and given the UK an opportunity, after Brexit, to show it still has an international role to play. Europe's over-dependence on Russian gas and oil was painfully exposed. As western sanctions bit, Putin deliberately weaponised energy prices, attempted nuclear blackmail and sought a closer alliance with China. The war has revealed the divided loyalties and moral confusion of many fence-sitting governments, including India, Israel, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey. It also delivered a cruel blow to the foundations of international law: the UN charter and a paralysed security council. While both sides are accused of atrocities, the behaviour of many Russian soldiers, involving murder, torture and systemic rape, has been and is appalling. Investigations into Russian war crimes, genocide and the crime of aggression are in train. But it remains uncertain whether those chiefly responsible, from Putin down, will face justice. Almost 100 US, European and Nato leaders meeting at this weekend's Munich security conference (from which Russia, unusually, has been excluded) appear to understand a critical moment is approaching. Zelenskyy is demanding urgent action to help Ukraine weather the coming storm. Rishi Sunak is listening. He urged western countries to join the UK in "doubling down" on military support, and to offer Kyiv a closer, longer-term relationship within Nato and the EU. Britain can be proud of the support it has given Ukraine, which included £2.2bn in military aid last year. Unlike Boris Johnson, his Churchill-mimicking professor, Sunak has not sought to exploit the war for personal political purposes. The wider debate concerns how this war ends. What, exactly, is the western democracies' endgame? There is as yet no agreement. Future scenarios include a Ukrainian victory and/or 1917-style Russian collapse, total defeat of Ukraine, escalation leading to direct Nato-Russia conflict in Europe, expanding warfare across the country, or a frozen conflict - in effect, a stalemate - similar to the situation after Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea and the Donbas. Only the latter outcome could lead, hypothetically, to the negotiated settlement many western politicians and analysts believe must eventually be attained. Any such future "peace" deal would necessarily involve painful Ukrainian concessions. It would be seen by many, in Kyiv and Europe, as a betrayal, and by Putin as a vindication. That is a dreadful thought. But we are not there yet, and may never be. Right now, both sides are intent on strengthening their positions through military successes. So the war goes on.

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China-US tensions: distrust? Then verify

In the closing years of the cold war, as relations between the Soviet Union and the US warmed, Ronald Reagan adopted a Russian proverb: trust, but verify. These days, with Sino-US relations chilling rather than warming, there is precious little trust, and limited ability to read the other's intentions accurately. Relations were deteriorating long before the Chinese balloon floated into US airspace and the military shot it down. Everyone knows that the US spies on China and vice versa: it is also obvious, despite Beijing's signed outrage, that it would take swift action against a US device appearing in its skies. Instead of promising jets are ready for action, countries would do better to reconsider what trade-offs they have made in security for convenience and cost - as with the Chinese cameras used by British police. Much more concerning than the actual events was the reaction to them. The Biden administration stayed calm: less so Congress and the media. China decided to blame the US, and its defence secretary refused to take a call from his counterpart, Lloyd Austin. The cancellation of the US secretary of state's trip to China was inevitable but too new, since the hope was that it would put a floor under relations. Antony Blinken may now meet his counterpart at the Munich security conference and Joe Biden has said he will speak to Xi Jinping to "get to the bottom" of the affair. But the trajectory is worrying. Yet if this much of a storm can be generated over one dringible, recall the 2001 Hainan Island incident, when a US surveillance plane and People's Liberation Army fighter jet collided, resulting in the death of the Chinese pilot and a 10-day standoff before the American crew were released. Now imagine that in the age of social media, conspiracy theories, amped-up nationalism and a vastly more confident China. It isn't difficult: the US and others have accused Chinese military aircraft of increasingly dangerous behaviour in international airspace near its territory. The best hope is currently to contain rather than reverse the deterioration in relations. The political climate in the US will only become more charged as the 2024 election approaches. China's years of untrammeled economic growth are well behind its nationalist narrative for the party. And while it has somewhat reined in its diplomatic rhetoric, it refuses to recognise that its increasingly aggressive foreign policy is the primary cause of the militarisation and tilt towards the US in Asia which angers it. All of these are a challenge for Britain and other powers, which have those interests and values are aligned with, but certainly not identical to, Washington's. The debate about how to characterise China continues in the US and the UK. But the bigger problem than the objective differences and substantive disputes may be mutual distrust - the increasing conviction on each side (but especially in the US) that the other is coming for them. China has been easier to read, and does not want to hear the US. But taking - and, indeed, intelligence-gathering - is essential, if only so that each may better understand the other. Distrust is all the more reason to verify.

The tragedy of the earthquake and the power of humanity

Yossi Mekeberg

We hold our breath as we watch rescue teams pull survivors out of the rubble, be it a child, a pregnant woman or an elderly person, and for a split second our hearts are filled with joy and gratitude toward those brave women and men for their dedication under such dangerous conditions, and with the hope of miraculously finding more survivors. Suddenly people around the world are united in pain in the face of immeasurable suffering. Old differences, even enmities, are put aside, and instead our humanity is pouring out. Rescue teams rush in from far and wide

In the midst of a period in world history that is characterized by fragmentation and discord, it takes a tragedy of the magnitude of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria to unite us in a common understanding of what is really important for all of us, as human beings and as societies, but equally in our relations with other nations and their people. In an era of 24-hour news and constant social media feeds we watch in horror a disaster that has already claimed more than 45,000 lives and left many more injured, causing unimaginable devastation as it unfolds before our eyes like a horror movie, but in this case it is real life and real suffering. We hold our breath as we watch rescue teams pull survivors out of the rubble, be it a child, a pregnant woman or an elderly person, and for a split second our hearts are filled with joy and gratitude toward those brave women and men for their dedication under such dangerous conditions, and with the hope of miraculously finding more survivors. Suddenly people around the world are united in pain in the face of immeasurable suffering. Old differences, even enmities, are put aside, and instead our humanity is pouring out. Rescue teams rush in from far and wide, and millions of people are opening their wallets and donating whatever they can in support of international organizations that deliver humanitarian aid. Dozens of countries dispatched rescue teams and other forms of aid immediately after the earthquake hit, and billions of dollars have already been pledged by the international community for the eventual rebuilding process, although due to the political conditions in Syria that country has benefited less from the outpouring of both material and spiritual generosity. While the very humane response of being deeply touched by this disaster and wanting to help is moving and should be taken as a most natural response that is only to be expected, it also begs the question: Why is this sense of camaraderie, deep empathy, altruism and international cooperation prompted in the face of certain events and not others, especially if those others are man-made, and why doesn't that same reaction last? There is something about the random nature

and the ferocity of natural disasters, and the fact that they are clearly no one's fault, that unites us in grief but also in wishing to support the victims in any way we can, be it by donating money, food, blankets, clothing or tents, or rushing to the scene to rescue, comfort, and eventually help rebuild these devastated communities. This response deserves respect, even admiration, but should be extended beyond such cruel disasters, as a norm for other issues that could save millions more lives and improve the quality of even more, but instead countries and societies fall into the trap of believing that in cooperating on such issues they are compromising their national interests, and in supporting others they deprive themselves of resources, while being unable to see the bigger picture and acknowledge that mutual support means the sum is bigger than its parts. It is one of the greatest challenges of our times to completely demolish the Hobbesian "state of nature" idea that in a natural condition is a state of war, a view that has been taking hold of our way of thinking and consequently dictates that we see others as potential threats and enemies rather than friends and allies. In dealing with the big challenges that pose a threat to our survival, we instead need to translate Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "social contract" into a global contract, in which collaboration according to an agreed set of rules ensures our physical survival and improves our standard of living and wellbeing. While natural disasters, because they appear suddenly with little warning and great destructive force, lead us to focus our attention on taking actions that limit their consequences, inexplicably, crucial existential issues such as the climate change crisis, wars and conflicts, or the need for political, social and economic development, hardly manage to prompt such actions. To a certain extent this discrepancy can be attributed to our attention span, especially with the 24-hour news cycle and the social media stream, but this would be to oversimplify and overlook much deeper flaws in us as human beings and as part of the state-based system. We are driven partly by instincts, but to a much greater extent by education, socialization and in-

doctrination, to be less trusting and more suspicious of one another, and to prioritize ourselves, even when there is a room for cooperation or generosity toward the "other." It takes a disaster on the scale of the Turkish and Syrian earthquake to arouse our empathy, and to show with it a readiness to forego those distrustful traits in favor of the greater good. Couldn't this fleeting, even though genuine, outburst of care and support and clear vision on how to improve things while mobilizing different segments of society and resources for a worthy cause, be applied to other areas of our lives? We are witnessing this to an extent in the war in Ukraine, but while most of the world sides with Ukraine against the Russian aggressor, it remains a divisive issue that a year later is still unnecessarily spilling the blood of thousands of innocent people. But since it is a man-made disaster, instead of finding common ground and stopping it, reconstructing, rehabilitating and aiding recovery from its traumatic effects, the conflict is being fueled not only by the aggressor, but also by those who support it. Similarly, while there is agreement in principle on how to address global warming, and despite a looming disaster of a magnitude that might bring humankind to extinction, the implementation of these agreements suffers from partisan and parochial interests. By establishing a united front in dealing with global warming, with a sense of purpose and the allocation of adequate resources, disasters on an even bigger scale than the earthquake in Turkey and Syria could be averted, but this would require putting aside vested interests, something that is far beyond the current state of affairs. It seems that when it comes to disasters inflicted by our own doing, although they are preventable, we are reluctant to apply the same logic, empathy and selflessness as we show when natural disasters hit us. For this approach to change before it is too late, we need to rethink both the way we perceive what it means to be part of humanity as a whole, and also how it needs to be preserved and accordingly build the institutions and tools to facilitate this.

Courtesy: Arab News

I want justice for my brothers who Israel killed

Ru'a Rimawi

I am a doctor and before November 29, I dreamed of becoming a paediatrician. That seems trivial now that the Israeli occupation has murdered my brothers. But in this dreadful darkness, I choose to search for the light. I choose to have faith in humanity and in the human urge to speak up against oppression. I dream that people reading this will demand justice for Jawad and Thafar and for the people of Palestine. The killing has to stop. The world loses so much of its potential each time a young, smart, and caring individual is brutally killed by the Israeli

In the early hours of November 29, heavily armed Israeli soldiers raided yet again the village of Kaf Ein in the occupied West Bank, just a few kilometres from where we live, in Beit Rima village. They started shooting tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition at the local people. My brothers Thafar and Jawad joined other youth in defending the community, throwing stones at the soldiers. This cost them their lives. The Israeli soldiers first shot my little brother, Thafar. Then, when Jawad ran to help him, Israeli soldiers hit him with an explosive bullet, too. At 5am, my mother woke me up screaming that Israeli soldiers had injured Jawad and Thafar, and that they had been taken to the hospital in the nearby town of Salfat. Jawad was rushed into surgery, with arteries and intestines destroyed. Thafar needed to be transferred to a different hospital in Ramallah where there was a thoracic surgeon able to operate on him. My mother stayed with Jawad while I went in the ambulance with Thafar. My brother was bleeding to death in front of my eyes and while our priority was to keep him alive, everyone in the vehicle was fixated on finding a route without military checkpoints. If we were to encounter a checkpoint, we would be stopped by Israeli soldiers for questioning and risked my brother dying as we waited to be let through. As we arrived at the hospital 20 minutes later, my mother called me to tell me that Jawad had been pronounced dead. Thafar was without a pulse and doctors performed CPR on his lifeless body, but despite their efforts, he tragically died, too. I remember my mother telling me over the phone, "Jawad is gone, Jawad died. He is no longer alive. Please tell me that Thafar is okay. I

can't take losing them both," she begged. That's when it hit me that Thafar would never wake up, either. How could he? He never left Jawad's side. We had lost them both. My brothers will never come home. For the foreign media this was yet another episode of "clashes" in the West Bank, the victims being nameless, faceless Palestinians. But these clashes are in reality asymmetrical confrontations in which young men and children, with rocks and slingshots, face off with one of the strongest armies in the world. Many, like my brothers, pay with their lives. Some outsiders ask why Palestinians throw stones when they know they may be killed for it. Instead, the question should be: What else would you do if you were born under a brutal occupation and suffered its violence all your life? Israel's military brutality makes up my earliest memories. I remember killings by Israeli soldiers, I remember our family fearing that our house would be bombed, I remember hearing gunshots and explosions at night, I remember walking past Israeli snipers positioned on rooftops or under the barrel of an Israeli soldier's gun. When I was three years old, the Israeli army raided our village with tanks and helicopters; five people were killed and several houses demolished. When I was five years old, Israeli soldiers burst into our house, arresting and blinding my father in front of us. Jawad, who was four at the time, hid behind my back and cried. Those moments of dread never left me or my brothers. All Palestinians living under the longest military occupation in modern history have experienced them. When you witness injustice, the loss of loved ones, and wars, what choice do you have other than to try to defend yourself because you know

that no one else will? To say I lost my brothers on November 29 is not enough. I lost my closest friends, my favourite humans, two amazing boys with kind, sincere souls, beautiful in every way. Now my family and I will wake up every day for the rest of our lives without them. Jawad had graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 2021 with dreams of opening a business. Thafar's dream was to travel the world. But because they were boys born in Palestine, their lives were always in jeopardy. Jawad was killed at the age of 22 before starting his own company and Thafar, at 18, having never left the country. I am a doctor and before November 29, I dreamed of becoming a paediatrician. That seems trivial now that the Israeli occupation has murdered my brothers. But in this dreadful darkness, I choose to search for the light. I choose to have faith in humanity and in the human urge to speak up against oppression. I dream that people reading this will demand justice for Jawad and Thafar and for the people of Palestine. The killing has to stop. The world loses so much of its potential each time a young, smart, and caring individual is brutally killed by the Israeli army. Palestinians deserve to live in dignity without being oppressed, and without constantly losing their loved ones. Those responsible for killing my brothers must be held accountable. The Israeli occupation must end and its war criminals must be taken to court. How many more tragedies does the world need to see in order to act?

Courtesy: Al Jazeera



**Briefs**  
**ECP excuses itself from consulting president**

FROM PAGE 01  
The dissolution of the Punjab and KP assemblies, the governors were approached for the appointment of election dates as per the dictates of the Constitution. It added that while the governors have responded to the letters sent by the ECP, neither has thus far announced a date for the polls. In compliance with the Lahore High Court (LHC) orders, the commission said, a consultation was held with the Punjab governor on February 14, but he "regretted to appoint a poll date and informed that he would avail legal remedy against the judgment of the LHC as it was not binding on him".

The ECP also made mention of the intra-court appeals it has filed against the order as it was asked by the LHC to hold the consultation without any such provisions having been provided in the Constitution, alongside other writ petitions presently pending in the Peshawar High Court.

"It is clarified that the Constitution does not empower the ECP to appoint a poll date in case of the dissolution of a provincial assembly by the governor or due to a defect of time as provided in Article 112(1) of the Constitution," the letter highlighted, stressing the subjective nature of the matter, the ECP regretted saying that it "may not enter into a process of consultation with the office of the president" but maintained that "the final decision in the matter will be taken by the commission in its meeting scheduled to be held on Monday" (tomorrow).

**Constitution being abrogated, Dr Arif Alvi**

FROM PAGE 01  
PTI Chairman Imran Khan should be questioned about the extension of retired general Qasim Rizvi's term, adding he [Alvi] had no discussion with the sitting army chief about Imran Khan's letters. The PTI chief also didn't discuss with him the allegations against Asif Ali Zardari. Alvi cautioned that country's situation would worsen with the arrest of Imran Khan. "I cannot take any action against the governors on the issue of delay in the election."

It should be noted that President Arif Alvi wrote a second letter to the Chief Election Commissioner for consultation on the election while expressing his displeasure with the Election Commission for not responding to the letter. Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah censured President Dr Arif Alvi, asking him to respect his constitutional stature as he has nothing to do with the date for elections. In a statement, he said Alvi should act as the president of Pakistan and not as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's spokesperson.

The PML-N leader stated that the former prime minister, prior to this, made the president, speaker, deputy speaker and governors do unconstitutional things. He said Alvi was intruding into the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) domain, regretting that Khan was pressuring the electoral body while using the name of the president. The minister said that President Alvi was an accomplice in PTI's foreign funding case.

**Kristoffersen wins world slalom gold**

OURCHEVEL: Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen won world gold in a dramatic men's slalom in Courchevel on Sunday as Alpinist claimed silver for Greece's first-ever championship medal. Kristoffersen, just 15th fastest in the first run, laid down the speediest second leg for a winning aggregate of 1min 39.50sec.

Athens-born Ginnis, who competed for the US team before switching allegiance to the country of his birth, came in second, at 0.20sec, with Italy's Alex Vinster claiming bronze (+0.28).

Manuel Feller had raised hopes of bagging Austria's first gold medal in the final event of the World Ski Championships by topping the first run. - APP

**PSL 2023: Multan Sultans defeat Islamabad United**

Rassie van der Dussen top-scored with 49 runs in 32 balls, with the help of five fours and a six. Pacer Abbas Afridi was the pick of the bowlers for Multan with figures of 4-22 in three overs



MULTAN: Multan Sultans have outclassed Islamabad United by 52 runs during the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season eight match at the Multan Cricket Stadium on Sunday. Chasing a target of 191 runs, Islamabad were all out for 138 in 17.5 overs. Islamabad, who at one stage were 112-4, lost their last six wickets for just 26 runs. Rassie van der Dussen top-scored with 49 runs in 32 balls, with the help of five fours and a six. Pacer Abbas Afridi was the pick of the bowlers for Multan with figures of 4-22 in three overs. Meanwhile, Usama Mir also denied Islamabad's run-chase with two wickets in one over, which included scalps of Colin Munro and Shadab Khan. Mohammad Ilyas and Ihsanullah also claimed two wickets each. Earlier, the home side posted 190-4 in their allotted 20 overs, with the help of fifties by David Miller and Mohammad Rizwan. Miller scored 52 runs in 25 balls, laced with three fours and four maximums, to provide his side with some quick runs at the back-end of the innings. During his impressive knock, the South African also smacked Islamabad captain Shadab Khan for three sixes in a row. Meanwhile, skipper Rizwan notched up 50 runs in 38 balls which included five fours and a six. Rilee Rossouw, who scored fifties in the previous two games, added 36 runs in 39 balls. Whereas, Kieron Pollard remained unbeaten on 32 runs from 21 balls. It must be noted that Islamabad United had won the toss and decided to bowl first against Multan Sultans. Ruzman Rassees, Mohammad Wasim, Shadab and Tom Curran bagged one wicket each for United.

**PSL 8th Edition**

MONDAY 07:00 PM  
FEBRUARY 20, 2023  
National Stadium  
Karachi, Pakistan

**Maryam s'lams PTI's 'Jail Bharo' movement**

FROM PAGE 01  
PTI workers and supporters gathered outside Lahore's Zaman Park residence to put resistance to any attempt to arrest their leader. The party chairman has been arrested there since being shot in the legs on November 3 last year.

Taking a jibe at the deposed prime minister, who was removed from power in April, the PML-N stalwart asked her party workers: "Can a coward man be the leader of the Pakistan nation?" Referring to a frosh audio leak purportedly between PTI leader Yasmin Rashid and Lahore Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Chohan Mahmood Dogar, Maryam said: "Khan urges people to fill the jails, [but on the other hand] he shoots Dogar and asks if the police are coming to arrest him."

Bashing the PTI-led former government, the PML-N senior leader claimed that Imran Khan's regime received loans more than the country took in the past 75 years. According to her, only PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif could steer the country out of the crisis. In the same breath, Maryam said it would take a few years to recover the economy. "Inflation and Imran Khan would be thrown out of the country together."

**Taliban plans to turn former bases into SEZs**

KARUL: The Taliban administration will move ahead with plans to turn former foreign military bases into special economic zones for businesses, the acting deputy prime minister for economic affairs said in a statement on Sunday. The acting commerce minister had told Reuters in December that his ministry was working on the plan for former American bases and would submit it to both the economic committee led by acting deputy PM Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and to the cabinet for approval. "Following a thorough discussion, it was decided that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce should progressively take control of the remaining military bases of the foreign forces with the intention of converting them into special economic zones," Mullah Baradar said in the statement.

He added a pilot plan would begin to convert bases in the capital Kabul and in northern Balkh province. Afghanistan's economy has struggled and aid agencies are warning of a severe humanitarian crisis since the Taliban took over in 2021 as foreign troops withdrew after 20 years of war. Japan, South Korea foreign ministers meet on sidelines of Munich Security Conference. The takeover sparked a cut in development funding, the freezing of foreign-held central bank assets and sanctions enforced on the banking sector. The Taliban administration's decision to bar most female NGO workers from work last year prompted many aid agencies to partially suspend operations while millions remain dependent on humanitarian aid. - Agencies

**Neymar taken off injured before Messi scores winner**

SPORTS DESK  
PARIS: Neymar was carried off on a stretcher before the 31-year-old, a goalscorer in the first half, was lashed on his calf and then went over on his right ankle five minutes into the second half. He looked in great pain with his hands over his face as he was carried off at the Parc des Princes.

The result means PSG are eight points clear at the top of Ligue 1, although second-placed Marseille will cut the gap to five if they win at midtable Toulouse later on Sunday (19:45 GMT). PSG came into this match on a three-game losing run following a 2-1 loss to Marseille in the last 16

of the French Cup, a 3-1 Ligue 1 defeat by Monaco and a 1-0 home loss to Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 tie.

But they looked in complete control against Lille. And they were 2-0 ahead after only 17 minutes. Mbappe showed great skill to jink past Tsgo Djalo and Diakite to score the first goal, before Neymar doubled the advantage, scoring from a rebound after Vitinha's effort bounced off goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier. But Lille, beaten 7-1 at home by PSG in August, pulled one back through Diakite's 24th-minute

glancing header. PSG had already lost left-back Nuno Mendes to injury before Neymar was carried off.

David's penalty, following a foul by Marco Verratti, made it 2-2 and Bamba's powerful strike put the visitors ahead in the 68th minute. However, Lille could not hang on. Mbappe hit a low shot into the corner with three minutes of normal time to go for his 15th Ligue 1 goal of the season, before Messi's late winner provided the final piece of drama in this screen-goal thriller. PSG are next in action on 26 February, when they play title rivals Marseille away from home.



ISLAMABAD: Players of Nishtar Hockey Club including Mahmood Ahmed, Azeem Jutt, Rizwan and others posing for picture with the Runners-Up trophy at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, on Sunday. - DNA

**Afridi lashes out at Wasim**

MULTAN: Former flamboyant all-rounder Shahid Khan Afridi lashed out at Wasim Akram after his team Karachi Kings lost three back-to-back matches in Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 8. Speaking in a tv show, Afridi said Akram should fall on his responsibility and give his time to Kings. "Wasim Bhai should give time to Karachi Kings if he has taken responsibility. It's not possible to lead the team from Australia. It's part of professional, you should give your time," he highlighted. Afridi said Kings have good combination, they just need confidence, "I would suggest Wasim Bhai to be with the team. It's not right to come and join an already prepared team," he added. - DNA

**Kohli becomes fastest player to complete 25,000 int'l runs**

SPORTS DESK  
NEW DELHI: Indian star batter Virat Kohli became the fastest player to complete 25,000 runs in international cricket during the second Test against Australia at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi on Sunday. Kohli needed 549 international matches to achieve the feat and overtake the legendary Sachin Tendulkar (34,437), who reached the milestone in 577 innings. In the second session of day three of the second Test against Australia, Kohli joined the lucrative club, Jacques Kallis reached the 25,000-run milestone in 594 innings, while former Australian captain Ricky Ponting did so in 588 innings. Legendary Sri Lankan players Kumar Sangakkara (608 innings) and Mahela Jayawardene (701 innings) come after Kallis and Ponting.

**Former US President Carter to receive hospice care**

WASHINGTON: Former US President Jimmy Carter will end medical treatment and enter hospice care at his Georgia home, his foundation announced. The Carter Center said Mr Carter had decided to "spend his remaining time at home with his family," but did not say what had prompted the decision. Mr Carter, 98, has suffered from recent health issues, including a melanoma that spread to his liver and brain. The country's oldest living leader, he served one term in office from 1977-81. During his tenure as president Mr Carter faced a spate of foreign policy challenges and the Democrat was defeated in his re-election bid by Ronald Reagan. "He has the full support of his family and his medical team. The Carter family asks for privacy during this time and is grateful for the concern shown by his many admirers," the Carter Center said in a statement on Saturday.

Terminally ill patients may seek hospice care instead of going through further medical treatment. The priority is not to provide further treatment, but to provide comfort towards the end of a patient's life.

**Turkiye: Rescue effort ends in all but two areas**

"In many of our provinces, search and rescue efforts have been completed," the disaster agency's chief, Yunus Sezer, told reporters in Ankara

WEB DESK  
ANKARA: Turkey has ended rescue efforts in all but two provinces, almost two weeks after a massive earthquake killed tens of thousands of people, the country's disaster agency said. Searchers will continue in Kahramanmaraş and Hatay, the agency's chief said.

Survivors were still being pulled from the rubble on Friday, but hopes are fading of finding anyone else alive. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Turkey on Sunday. His trip had been planned before the disaster. The epicentre of the 7.8-magnitude earthquake on 6 February was in Kahramanmaraş. More than 44,000 people are reported to have lost their lives in south-eastern Turkey and northern Syria. The death toll is expected to climb, with about 345,000 apartments in Turkey known to have been destroyed and many people still missing. Neither Turkey nor Syria has said how many people are still unaccounted for, but it is expected to be his first trip to Turkey since he took office more than two years ago. He will travel to Hatay to see humanitarian efforts before travelling to meet President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday. The pair are expected to discuss issues including Turkey's refusal to ratify Sweden and Finland's NATO membership applications. Twelve days after the earthquakes, rescue workers from Kyrgyzstan saved several members of a Syrian family of five on Saturday from the rubble of a building in Antakya in southern Turkey. Three people, including a child, were rescued. The mother and father survived, but the child died later of dehydration, the rescue team said. An older sister and a twin did not make it. "We heard shouts when we were digging today an hour ago. When we find people who are alive we are always happy," Ayg Osmanov, a member of the rescue team, told Reuters news agency. Ten ambulances waited on a nearby street that was blocked to traffic to allow the rescue work. Workers asked for complete silence and for everyone to crouch or sit as the teams climbed on top of the building's rubble where the family was found to listen for any more sounds using an electronic detector. Teams have been finding survivors all week despite them being stuck for so long under the rubble in freezing weather, but their numbers have begun to just a handful in the past few days. Al Jazeera's Sineem Koseoglu reporting from Ankara said many survivors were hoping the search and rescue operations would continue for longer. "Some people didn't bear anything from their relatives. They don't know whether they're dead or alive, or in the hospital. They have no information," she added.

**MQM-P decides against contesting by-elections**

FROM PAGE 01  
vacant after Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf accepted the resignations of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had announced March 16 as the election date on all 23 NA seats—including the nine in Karachi.

MQM-P co-leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has confirmed the decision of the party's coordination committee, media reported. Sources privy to the development said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had contacted Siddiqui and requested him not to participate in the by-polls owing to the ongoing economic crisis in the country. MQM-P called a meeting of its coordination committee over the matter which lasted for two days. The participants of the meeting, the sources added, unanimously decided that since the country was going through an economic crisis, contesting elections was not a wise decision under the circumstances.

**PTI to defend Judiciary at any cost: Imran Khan**

FROM PAGE 01  
welfare projects including the health card service. He said they [the rulers] cannot even face the public after the record breaking inflation as the poor are suffering and the workers have seen their true faces and why are they running from elections. Shehbaz Sharif had contacted Siddiqui and requested him not to participate in the by-polls owing to the ongoing economic crisis in the country. MQM-P called a meeting of its coordination committee over the matter which lasted for two days. The participants of the meeting, the sources added, unanimously decided that since the country was going through an economic crisis, contesting elections was not a wise decision under the circumstances.



**Briefs**  
**China's used car market expects steady rebound**

BEIJING: China's used car market is expected to see a steady recovery this year, with a sales volume possibly reaching 20 million units, industry data showed. In January, about 1.25 million second-hand vehicles were traded in China, with a total transaction value of 78.03 billion U.S. dollars, according to the China Automobile Dealers Association. The trade volume went down 15.93 percent year on year, said the association, noting that the drop was due to a shorter trading period as most dealers closed shops early in the return to their hometowns for family reunions during the Spring Festival. Meanwhile, it emphasized the increase in demand before the week-long Spring Festival holiday, saying the expansion of traffic to stores and quicker inventory clearing indicated a sound recovery of the market. The association also forecasted a year-on-year sales growth in February and projected a rebound of the industry in 2023. Survey data showed that about half of the used car dealers expected more than 20 percent of the growth in trade volume this year, it said.—DNA

**'China, EU should strengthen cooperation'**

MUNICH: Faced with a world of change and in order, China and Europe should strengthen cooperation to inject more stability into the world, Wang Yi, a senior Chinese diplomat, said on Saturday. Wang, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks when meeting with the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell during the 59th Munich Security Conference. Wang, also a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, said that China and the EU are partners, not rivals, and their consensus far outweighs their differences. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and the EU. Both sides should remain committed to the partnership, respect each other's core interests, cherish the fruits of cooperation, and usher in an even better next two decades, he noted. China has successfully pulled through a pandemic and is ready to fully restart exchanges with Europe and the rest of the world, Wang said.—APP

**Italian PM to visit Kyiv to meet Zelenskiy**

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni will travel to Kyiv on Monday to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, a political source said on Sunday. Meloni, who took office in October, had said she planned to visit Kyiv before the Feb. 24 anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. Despite friction on the issue within her rightist ruling coalition and divided public opinion, Meloni has been a firm supporter of Ukraine. Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, leader of the conservative Forza Italia party that is part of Meloni's coalition, last week said he would not seek a meeting with Zelenskiy if he were still head of government, because he blames the Ukrainian President for the war with Russia. The European People's Party (EPP)

**Red Cross lead visits Türkiye's quake zone**

Kizilay provided blood and blood products needed by hospitals in the quake-hit region and called on people to donate blood, with voluntary donations to the Red Crescent on the first day surpassing 40,000 units, it said in a separate statement the day after the earthquakes struck

**FOREIGN DESK**

ANKARA: Türkiye on Sunday started the head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), who was visiting earthquake-hit areas in the country to examine the humanitarian assistance activities carried out by the Turkish Red Crescent. Visiting the southern province of Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş, Secretary-General Jagan Chapagan voiced his support and solidarity with Türkiye in a meeting with Kerem Kinkil, the head of the Turkish Red Crescent, or Kizilay, in Kahramanmaraş province, the IFRC said in a statement.

"The scale of the damage and destruction is absolutely unimaginable," Chapagan said, calling the level of destruction, and the damage "heartbreaking." On Kizilay's efforts on the ground, he said the organization "swung into action immediately in the middle of this destruction." "Thousands of volunteers and staff were mobilized on day 1 all over the earthquake-affected areas to bring food because that was a really immediate need. And now they are expediting their services of shelter, health, water, sanitation, and so on. Thanking the volunteers and staff of Kizilay for their dedication and commitment, he said: "I also know



that many of them have lost some of their family members. But their commitment is not shaking. They are still here." Chapagan also said that the IFRC was extending its support to Kizilay, which, he underlined was a "very difficult job in terms of nutrition services, shelter and psychosocial support, humanitarian aid logistics and storage and transfer," he added. During his visit to provinces affected by the earthquakes, Chapagan visited Kizilay's disaster kitchen and a tent complex. He was also informed about the work in the mobile coordination vehicle. At least 40,642 people have been killed and over 108,000 injured in two powerful earthquakes that rocked southern Türkiye on Feb. 6, according to the latest official figures. The 7.7 and 7.6 magnitude earthquakes, centered in the Kahramanmaraş province, affected more than 13 million people across 11 provinces, including Adana, Adıyaman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye, Zlatig and Sanliurfa.

people impacted by the earthquakes, adding that the urgent need for blood donations had been resolved in the first days of the disaster thanks to "the intense support of our citizens." Kizilay provided blood and blood products needed by hospitals in the quake-hit region and called on people to donate blood, with voluntary donations to the Red Crescent on the first day surpassing 40,000 units, it said in a separate statement the day after the earthquakes struck. With its professional team and volunteers, Kizilay did a lot of work in terms of nutrition services, shelter and psychosocial support, humanitarian aid logistics and storage and transfer, he added. During his visit to provinces affected by the earthquakes, Chapagan visited Kizilay's disaster kitchen and a tent complex. He was also informed about the work in the mobile coordination vehicle. At least 40,642 people have been killed and over 108,000 injured in two powerful earthquakes that rocked southern Türkiye on Feb. 6, according to the latest official figures. The 7.7 and 7.6 magnitude earthquakes, centered in the Kahramanmaraş province, affected more than 13 million people across 11 provinces, including Adana, Adıyaman, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, Malatya, Osmaniye, Zlatig and Sanliurfa.

**Israeli missile attack kills 5 people in Damascus**

DAMASCUS: At least five people were killed, 15 wounded, and several residential buildings heavily damaged in Israeli air strikes on Syria's capital. The raids early on Sunday hit a building in central Damascus's Kafr Sousa neighbourhood near a large, heavily guarded security complex close to Iranian installations, witnesses said. The strike, a rare one aimed at a residential area in the heart of the city, damaged several buildings in the densely populated district close to Omayyad square. Loud explosions were heard around 12:30am (21:30 GMT Saturday), and the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported air defence confronted hostile targets in the sky around Damascus. Citing a military source, SANA reported five people had been killed, among them a soldier, along with "destruction of a number of residential buildings." It caused damage to several civilian homes and material damage to a number of neighbourhoods in Damascus and its vicinity. "The army said in a statement. Footage posted on state media showed a badly damaged 10-story building, the structure crumpled to its lower floors.—DNA

**China, Pak launch Int'l Industry education cooperation alliance**

**DNA**

BEIJING: The China-Pakistan International Industry-Education Cooperation Alliance Initiative was launched at the China-Pakistan Seminar on "Internet+ International Education and Industry-Education Integration" held here. According to China Economic Net (CEN), Pakistan's Ambassador to China Mohi ul Haque addressed the seminar, which is hosted by China Education Association for International Exchange and Organized by TANG International Education Group and Pakistan's Embassy in Beijing as part of the 23rd China Annual Conference & Expo for International Education. "A large number of Chinese enterprises are working in Pakistan

such projects. They need skilled labor force," the Ambassador said, adding, "Recently, I had the opportunity to visit some big names in Shenzhen, China and was impressed by their innovation, hard work, and focus on people training. China has emerged as one of the world leaders in AI, computing, IoT, and big data. We would like to consolidate the achievements of China in Pakistan." It is learned that almost 100 percent of the youth in Pakistan are unemployed and have no vocational, technical and commercial skills. Meanwhile, with the progress of CPIC, the demand for skilled labor force is becoming more and more urgent. It is under such backdrop that the seminar was hosted. "Chinese colleges' investment on modern in-

ternational education platforms and digital curriculum resources has helped train local Pakistani teachers and provided a large number of scholarships and living allowances for the poorest students in Pakistan to access to learning and life-changing opportunities," said Mr. Li Juncong, President of TANG International Education Group. In the same spirit, the China-Pakistan International Industry-Education Cooperation Alliance will facilitate the introduction of 210 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) disciplines in China to Pakistan, the establishment of 36 TVET excellence centers, the provision of international courses, and the opportunities of pursuing further studies and jobs in China in its following work.

**IMF bailout alone cannot put economy back on track: BMP**

ISLAMABAD: As the annual inflation rate has hit the new high of 38.42% for the position week the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel has warned that a bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) alone was unlikely to put the country's economy back on track, as the minimalist would further deteriorate the financial situation in the country. Amidst continuous hike in cost of production in the country, what the Pakistan's economy really needs is persistent and sound economic management, observed FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Asim Nisar. He asked the authorities for undertaking economic reforms and improving the regulatory environment to boost foreign investment so that financial stability can be achieved in the long term. The Businessmen Panel (BMP) chief stressed the need for reducing cost of doing business, besides evolving a new price control mechanism, as huge transaction, rising oil prices and constant jump in electricity and gas tariffs have lifted the inflation to decades high level in Feb 2023. Mian Anjum Nisar warned the authorities that inflation above 6 percent can hurt economic growth and a careful policy is required to keep it in control. He said that the pace of inflation is skyrocketing at a time when the economic activity is slowing down. As the oil prices have been increased by another \$12/liter and power tariff has gone up further the BMP chairman stated that the government has dropped a fat bomb on the businessmen after it suffered an electric shock to meet the conditions of IMF for the revival of the stalled loan program a recipe to shake the trade and industry.—DNA

**Seminar on Mapping the violence against Journalism**

DNA  
LAHORE: Awareness Foundation arranged an informative and sensitizing seminar on Mapping the Violence against Journalism in Pakistan. The objective of this seminar, conducted in collaboration with the Press Club, was to issue a report regarding the violence against journalists. In this Seminar, Senior Analyst Ayaz Amir, President Press Club Lahore Azam Chaudhary, Analyst Isar Rana, Senior Journalist Gamar Handi, Secretary Press Club Lahore Abdul Majid Sajid, Director Awareness Foundation Razi Tahir, Nima Mabzar, Mohsin Bilal and Ancher Zain Ali expressed his opinion. Journalists strongly condemned the suppression of freedom of expression and violence on journalists. Speaking at the Seminar, Ayaz Amir said that violence has become a problem not only for journalists but for the entire society. In last 12 years, thousands were intimidated or silenced altogether, whether in the form of assault, enforced disappearances, murder or overt censorship. It seems that we have learned nothing from the past. "Violation of free speech, pressure and overt censorship of journalists is unacceptable," he added. President Press Club Lahore Azam Chaudhary & Secretary Abdul Majid Sajid underlined the importance of the freedom of press, free speech and expression. Every government seems to be an enemy of journalists, because they all need their preferred narrative.—DNA

**Peaceful development path worked well**

MUNICH: China's own experience shows that the peaceful development path has worked, and worked well, said China's senior diplomat Wang Yi on Saturday at the Munich Security Conference (MSC). Wang, director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, made the remarks when delivering a keynote speech to participants of the MSC. Making the world peace is China's abiding commitment, said Wang, adding that at the end of last year, the CPC convened its 20th National Congress. Xi Jinping, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee, declared at the congress that China's central task in the new era and on the new journey is to advance the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization. On how to accomplish this modernization of the largest scale in human history, China has given an unequivocal and steadfast answer: to unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development, Wang said. Peaceful development is not an expediency nor diplomatic rhetoric, but a strategic choice informed by profound reflections on the past, the present and the future, Wang said.—DNA



KARACHI: A street vendor is selling colorful balloons at Frere Hall in Provincial Capital.—Online

**W&S Department playing key role in Sindh's progress**

State-of-the-art & best quality buildings completed by W&S in entire sindh are a fitting answer to the negative propaganda. Construction of buildings despite limited resources, shortage of funds and 2012 schedule rates have been a testimony to the professionalism and hard work of engineers. It is necessary to give technical allowance to all the engineers of Sindh province immediately

**MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI**



W&S has significant importance in construction departments. It is not possible to start any sector until a building is constructed for it. Sindh is progressing rapidly in the provision of medical facilities in which W&S Department's has an equal share. Because the W&S department constructs buildings and handovers to the health department, after that it is possible to start treatment of diseases. All over the world, it was a surprise for everyone who came to Sindh, after teaching Sindh, every one knows that what they have heard about the development projects is completely wrong, and the facts are contrary to it. Sindh is moving forward very

fast in the health sector. Sindh is providing better medical facilities to patients than other provinces and Federal Capital City Islamabad. Sindh is progressing rapidly in the provision of medical facilities in which W&S Department's has an equal share. Because the W&S department constructs buildings and handovers to the health department, after that it is possible to start treatment of diseases. There are some reasons why the quality of development projects of W&S Sindh is not only improving day by day but the quality is much better than other provinces. For example, on the day I met Chief Engineer Buildings Shafiq ur Rehman Memon, he was shivering with high fever, but despite this he not only met with me but also met with his subordinate engineers and he were also giving instructions regarding work. It was an amazing example of professionalism. Another reason is that Sindh

is the only province whose Offices of Chief Engineers are established in Hyderabad and Sukkur region and Chief Engineers work in their respective regions. In case of necessary meetings, they go to Karachi. In Punjab, the Offices of Chief Engineers Central, South and North are located in Lahore. All Chief Engineers of Sindh Pakistan have offices in Derasa and Chief Engineers of Balochistan have offices in Quetta. If Chief Engineers perform their duties in their respective jurisdictions, then their Subordinate Engineers will also be present in their respective offices and if the chief engineers stay in the provincial capital city instead of staying in their regions, then their subordinates will never stay in their respective offices. Another reason is that if any one person wishes to visit the sites of development projects in Sindh, W&S engineers arrange physical visits to the sites for the media persons and also brief them technically. Engineers of

Sindh are not afraid of making surprise visits for the media. Engineers from Punjab, KP and Balochistan try to avoid media visits to development projects. When I was convinced that the development projects in Sindh are also on the ground and their quality is better than other provinces. Negative propaganda is being done against the development projects of Sindh. As journalists, it is our duty to write factual reports regarding the high quality development projects of Sindh. I visited the development projects in Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas, Umerkot, Nawabshah, Gumbat, Siddpur, Larkana, Quinor Shuhddikot, Bhayyar and saw that high quality work was being done. Top company's tiles were brought from Gujranwala, cement, glass, steel, aluminium, bars were items were being used which is approved by Sindh government. Ongoing Health Projects: 9 Teaching Hospitals, 69 DRQ, THQ, RHC and BRU. Admin/Training, two Preventive Programs, four Foreign Aided Projects, New Schemes Health Projects: 15 Teaching Hospitals, 71 DRQ, THQ, RHC and BRU, Seven Medical Education, One RHC Admin/Training and 2 Foreign Aided Projects. Ensuring the quality of work of development projects and eliminating wrong perception regarding the development projects of Sindh is not a matter of a single individual, it is our duty only with teamwork. Special attention of Minister Bilal Zardari, Chief Minister PPP and Syed Muzaf Ali Shah Chief Minister of Sindh, Sharif Ahmad Secretary Department of Sindh, Waqar ur Rehman Member Chief Engineer, Syed Shehbaz Ali Shah Executive Engineer Hyderabad, Dano Mal Executive Engineer Siddpur, All Assistant Engineers and Sub-Engineers are working hard day and night for quality improvement of development projects in spite of limited resources, shortage of funds and schedule rates of 2012. The en-

gineers who are working for the development of Sindh should be appreciated by the government of Sindh and ensure that all necessary facilities are provided to them. Technical allowance is being given to the engineers of other provinces including Azad Kashmir, while the engineers of Sindh have not been given technical allowance yet. It is necessary to give technical allowance to all the engineers of Sindh province immediately. Professional complaint should be discouraged by the government level and by the public. There should be no inquiry before the completion of any development project. It is important for the government and the engineers to allow any noteholding person to dominate the decisions of technical persons. By appreciating the government of Sindh, facilitating and supporting the basic provisions of engineers, the province of Sindh will lead all the provinces in terms of better quality of development projects.



**Briefs**  
**Sheikh urges president to announce polls date or resign**

**DNA**  
LAHORE: Awami Muslim League chief and former Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid on Sunday said constitutionally President Dr Arif Alvi has the authority to announce the date of the elections, asking the president to give the date of the election tomorrow (Monday) or resign from his office. "As per the constitution, the president can give an election date," Sheikh Rashid said while talking to media men in Lahore. The AML leader said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has not earned respect by pushing the country into crisis, adding the elections will be held together in the provinces and the center. Sheikh Rashid said Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz is yet undecided over contesting bypolls in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The former minister claimed that elections in the center and provinces will be held at the same time. "Only Supreme Court can save Pakistan after Allah," Sheikh Rashid said. He said Pakistan has 'default', the confirmation was also made by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif. Calling fresh elections in the country is the only solution to steer the country out of the present crisis, he maintained. He claimed that the fate of the country's politics would be decided by April 30, saying he won't be responsible for any major mishap before April 30.

**PIA bars expat woman to board flight**

**DNA**  
RAHIM YAR KHAN: The Pakistan International Airlines stopped a Saudi-Arabia-based Pakistani expat woman and her son to travel to Jeddah. The woman, who belonged to Rawi Town of Rahim Yar Khan, was traveling with her pet cat. The lady added she was stopped by two PIA officials who demanded the documents of the hen and white Persian-Himalayan male cat 'Oreo'. As per the woman, she showed the officers 'all essential documents for cat's travel', including the pet's passport, Ahlqabi Veterinary Clinic RNA, rabies vaccination certificate, test report issued by the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Lahore, Ministry of National Food, Security and Research Animal Quarantine Department (Animal Health Certificate) but she was not allowed to travel.

**PM for more coordination over relief to Turkiye, Syria**

The prime minister was chairing a high-level meeting to review ongoing relief activities on part of Pakistan, in quake hit Turkiye and Syria

**DNA**  
LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that for the purpose of coordination, all relief assistance to the earthquake-affected people of Turkiye and Syria should be dispatched through National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). The prime minister lauded the humanitarian and charity organizations for their ongoing relief work in the quake-hit areas of Turkiye and said that Pakistani humanitarian organizations were in the forefront to support their affected brethren and sisters in these countries. The prime minister was chairing a high-level meeting to review the ongoing relief activities on part of Pakistan, in the quake hit Turkiye and Syria. The meeting was attended by representatives of Edhi, Saylani and Al-Khidmat Foundation, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, PM's Special Assistant Syed Tariq Fatemi, ambassadors of Pakistan to Turkiye and Syria and other high officials. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister, during the meeting, observed that relief assistance to these countries should be sent in accordance with the requirements of the earthquake-affected people and stressed upon ensuring of quality relief goods. The prime minister also constituted a sub-committee to be headed by the minister for planning. The committee would be tasked to share information among the government and humanitarian organizations over the dispatch of relief goods. The prime minister said through exchange of real-time information, the quake victims of Turkiye and Syria could be supported in a well-organized manner. The meeting was apprised of the details of the relief assistance sent to these two countries through NDMA. Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik informed the meeting that under prime minister's previous directive, the cost and preparation time for tents had been decided in consultation with the tent manufacturing industries. By the end of next month, the government of Pakistan would send 1,00,000 winterized tents to Turkiye. These tents were being prepared keeping in view the weather requirements and in consultation with the Turkish Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD). Faissal Edhi of Edhi Foundation, Maulana Bashir Farooqi of Saylani Trust and Abdul Shakoor of Al-Khidmat Foundation briefed the meeting about the details of relief consignments sent to the quake-affected countries which included tents, medicines, edible items, blankets and warm clothes. Besides, medical teams had also been sent to these countries. The prime minister appreciated the working of the charity organizations and directed NDMA to keep constant coordination with them. He also directed for further strengthening of supply chain of the relief items and asked for submission of a comprehensive mechanism for the next month in this regard.



Gen Faiz wanted to bring TTP back to Pakistan: Minister

**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Human Rights Minister Riaz Feroze has claimed that former director general of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed wanted to bring the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) back to the country. He made these remarks on Dawn News programme 'Doosra Rukh', which will air at 7pm (Sunday). The statement from the federal minister comes a day after PTI leader Shireen Mazari claimed that ex-army chief retired General Qamar Javed Bajwa wanted to "reset" TTP members in the country. Pakistan has of late seen an uptick in terrorist activities, with an attack on the Karachi police chiefs office on Friday night being the latest incident. The hours-long combat between terrorists and law-enforcement agencies, at the office located at Sharsa Faissal, left four people martyred and 18 injured while all three terrorists were reported to be killed. The PTI and the incumbent government have been trading blame for the security situation in the country. The coalition setup has said that the PTI's move to enter into dialogue with militants was "futile" and it was "never endorsed" by parliament. In the interview, Feroze claimed that an in-camera briefing was held in which army generals proposed to bring TTP back to Pakistan. -- Online

**KARACHI:** Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami, shouting slogans during protest against inflation at MA Jinnah road in Provincial Capital. -- Online

**Sindh River diverts toward Dasu hydro power project site**

**ISLAMABAD:** Dasu hydro power project construction has crossed important milestone as diversions made in Sindh river toward project site. Now the river will pass through diversion tunnel instead of its natural passage. This diversion tunnel is 1.33km long with 20 meter width and 23 meter length. Construction work began on temporary dam after successful diversion on Sindh river passage. Construction activities will start on main dam after the completion of temporary dam. Dasu hydro power project general manager, project director, Construction Company and representatives of consultants including engineers were present to witness these historical moments. Later on chairman WAPDA Engineer and Lt. General (r) Sajid Ghani congratulated project administration. This diversion of Dasu hydro power project comprised of two tunnels. One tunnel has been completed which is enough to pass this low level of water in recent winter season. Construction work is underway on second tunnel which will complete in mid of April. This tunnel will be available for water flow during summer when water level rises. -- Online

**Female suicide bomber arrested in Quetta 'supported' BLF**

The propaganda used by BLF to portray Mahal as a missing person has also been exposed on social media

**QUETTA:** The female suicide bomber arrested in Quetta by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) was forced to support the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), it emerged on Sunday. According to details, Mahal Baloch was used by and forced to support BLF's militant wing. She had been separated from her children and turned into a suicide bomber in yet another case of Baloch mothers and sisters being used by terror outfits for nefarious purposes. The propaganda used by the BLF to portray Mahal as a missing person has also been exposed on social media. Tweets shared by The Balochistan Post were used to create a false narrative against Pakistan security forces. Mahal's husband, Bebehar Baloch alias Naifem, belonged to the armed wing of BLF while her father, Mahmood Hussain, belongs to the central committee of the Baloch National Movement (BNM). Bebehar and his brother Noqah were among the closest associates of BLF commanders. These commanders include Wahid Baksh Qambar, BLF leader Dr Allan Nazar, Dilip Shikhari and BNM Chairman Ghulam Nabi Rebatan. In 2016, Bebehar and Noqah died in a dispute over money and weapons. On Friday, the CTD along with other sensitive agencies arrested Mahal, following the attack. They recovered from her handbag a suicide jacket with four to five kilos of explosive material attached to it. The Balochistan CTD spokesperson said that the alleged suicide bomber was planning to attack important installations or security forces in Quetta. FIR No 09/2023 US-45 Exp. IIF(1) (20)6-11-11/07 ATA was lodged against the suspect at the CTD Police Station in Quetta. The accused was accordingly produced before a court of law for physical custody. An investigation was launched to arrest the remaining members of the network and more raids were planned in other areas of Balochistan. -- Online

**NEPRA likely to jack up power tariff**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) is likely to increase electricity tariff by Rs1.17 per unit on account of monthly fuel adjustment (MFA) for January 2023. According to details, the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) has filed a petition with NEPRA seeking a hike in electricity tariff by Rs1.17 per unit under fuel monthly adjustment. The CPPA had requested an increase of Rs1.17 for the month of January 2023 under monthly fuel adjustment. The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) will hear the CPPA plea on February 28 and make the decision accordingly. The increase will not be applicable on the KE consumers. Earlier it emerged that the federal government has decided to hike tariff by Rs7.91 per unit on account of quarterly adjustments to meet conditions set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to continue loan program under Extended Fund Facility (EFF). According to the circular debt management plan, which was presented to the IMF, the government will jack up electricity price by Rs7.91 per unit in four quarterly adjustments - Feb-March 2023, March-May 2023 June-Aug and September-November.

**US stages joint air exercises with Asian allies**

**SEOUL:** The United States held joint exercises bilaterally with South Korea and Japan involving strategic bombers on Sunday, a day after North Korea fired a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in a "sudden launching drill". South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the exercise, in which South Korea's F-35A, F-15K and U.S. F-16 fighters escorted American B-1B bombers, demonstrated the allies' "overwhelming" defence capabilities and readiness posture. "The exercise strengthened the combined operation capability and affirmed the United States' unwavering commitment to the defence of the Korean Peninsula and the implementation of extended deterrence," the South's military said in a statement. Japan flew F-15s over the Sea of Japan with the U.S. Armed Forces' B-1 bombers and F-35s in tactical exercises. Japan's Defense Ministry said in a statement, calling the security environment "increasingly severe" after the latest North Korea missile landed within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). "This bilateral exercise reaffirms the strong will between Japan and the United States to respond to any situation, the readiness of (Japan's Self-Defense Forces) and U.S. Armed Forces, and further strengthens the deterrence and response capabilities of the Japan-U.S. Alliance," the ministry said.

**China may give Russia weapons for Ukraine war, US warns**

WASHINGTON: China is considering giving Russia weapons and ammunition for the Ukraine war, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said. Mr Blinken told CBS News that Chinese companies were already providing "non-lethal support" to Russia - and new information suggested Beijing could provide "lethal support". This escalation would mean "serious consequences" for China, he warned. China has denied reports that Moscow has requested military equipment. Chinese President Xi Jinping is an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin and is yet to condemn Russia's invasion - but he has sought to remain neutral in the conflict and has called for peace. Mr Blinken was speaking to CBS after he met China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, on Saturday at the Munich Security Conference. He said that during the meeting he expressed "deep concerns" about the "possibility that China will provide lethal material support to Russia". "To date, we have seen Chinese companies... provide non-lethal support to Russia for use in Ukraine. The concern that we have now is based on information we have that they're considering providing lethal support," he said. He did not elaborate on what information the US had received about China's potential plans. When pressed on what the US believed China might give Russia, he said it would be primarily weapons as well as ammunition. The US has sanctioned a Chinese company for allegedly providing satellite imagery of Ukraine to the mercenary Wagner Group, which supplies Russia with thousands of fighters. Mr Blinken told CBS that "of course, in China, there's really no distinction between private companies and the state". He said China provided Russia with weapons, that would cause a "serious problem for us and in our relationship", he added. Relations between Washington and Beijing were already poor after the US shot down an alleged Chinese spy balloon in early February. Both sides exchanged angry words, but equally both sides appeared embarrassed by the incident and seemed ready to move on. But if China were to deliver weapons to help Russian forces in Ukraine, then US-China relations would deteriorate much more severely. -- DNA

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