



Islamabad POST

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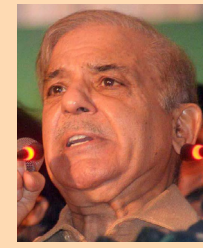
Price Rs. 20

Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations further solidified: Envoy

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Former CJP statement Govt, PML-N trade barbs

Prime Minister Imran Khan says PML N digging its own grave; Shehbaz Sharif says explosive news story peels off a thick layer of a grand scheme employed to target Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz

Fawad seeks money trail

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Monday asked Sharif family to give money trail of Avenfield apartments' purchase instead of fabricating stories. In a series of tweets, the federal minister responded to The News report, saying he had read a strange news item from senior journalist Ansar Abbasi. The minister said as per that news item, a Gilgit judge claimed that when he was having tea with former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar, the CJP instructed a High Court judge on the phone not to grant Nawaz Sharif bail before the elections. Fawad said strange jokes were being circulated in

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SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Khawaja Asif on Monday said that the allegations raised by former Chief Justice of Gilgit Appellate Court Rana M Shamim against Former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar have raised serious questions over the transparency of the 2018 general elections. Asif's statement came after a story was published in a local newspaper, which stated that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz were kept in jail till the elections on the orders of Justice Saqib Nisar. Nisar said Shamim had asked him for an extension but he didn't accept his request, adding that the ex-GB CJ had also complained to him about the same. Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry also took exception to this report and said it was an "absurd" story by the journalist. "All this controversy raises serious questions over the transparency of the elections of 2018... Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz were given punishment for crimes they did not even commit," said Asif while addressing a National Assembly session in Islamabad.

IHC takes notice

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has summoned former chief justice of Gilgit-Baltistan Justice (ret'd) Rana Shamim in relation to his allegations against ex-CJP Saqib Nisar. The IHC has summoned Shamim, editor-in-chief of The News, editor of the newspaper and journalist Ansar Abbasi today (Tuesday). A report had stated that then CJP Saqib Nisar had directed a high court judge to not release Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz on bail at any cost before the 2018 General Elections. "Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz Sharif must remain in jail until the general elections are over. On assurances from the other side, he (Saqib Nisar) became calm and happily demanded another cup of tea," this is what is said in the affidavit of the former top judge of GB talking about the then chief justice of Pakistan.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

Pak wants to strengthen ties with Qatar: PM

Ambassador Saoud Abdulrahman calls on PM Imran Khan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday expressed Pakistan's desire to strengthen bilateral ties with Qatar in diverse fields. The prime minister stated this as Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman called on him, the PM Office said. The ambassador conveyed greetings of the leadership of Qatar to the prime minister, which was reciprocated by him.

Joint session: Opp. finalises strategy

The opposition is determined to give tough time to govt during joint session

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) took stock of the country's issues on Monday in a virtual meeting and finalised its strategy for the days to come. PDM president Maulana Fazlur Rehman chaired the virtual meeting, with PML-N's top leadership, including Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif, Pashtunkhwa Milli

Shehbaz gears up contacts with opposition

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) President and Opposition leader in National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif has expedited his campaign of making contacts with the opposition leaders. Shehbaz Sharif on Monday rang Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Pakistan Democratic Movement Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman. He also called Quami Watan Party head Aftab Sherpao and Balochistan National Party Chairman Sardar Akhtar Mengal. He had telephonic conversations with ANP central leader

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Briefs

PTI lost public confidence

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Jamm-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq has said the PTI has completely lost public confidence but it now tries to create controversies by using the forum of parliament. The JI, he said while talking to party leaders at Mansoor on Monday, would oppose the government tactics to take control over institutions and create further political crisis. He said the PTI issued countless presidential references in three years, bypassing the national assembly and senate. The PTI's freshly proposed legislation, he added, had nothing to do with the public interest. The JI chief told the party leaders and workers that he met farmers, laborers, teachers, religious scholars during his stay in Multan.

Taliban launch operation against IS in Kandahar

The operation against IS-Khorasan started around midnight in at least four districts of Kandahar

AGENCIES

KABUL: The Taliban have launched a crackdown on hideouts of militant Islamic State group in southern Afghanistan, officials said on Monday, following an increase in bloody attacks by the group in recent weeks. The operation against Islamic State-Khorasan - the local chapter of the group - started around midnight in at least four districts of Kandahar province and continued through

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'Food crisis legacy of past govt'

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Afghanistan's food crisis is a "legacy" of the previous government, the Taliban deputy health minister said Monday, as he accused the international community of failing to keep its promises of aid. The UN has warned that around 22 million Afghans or half the country will face an "acute" food shortage in the winter months due to the combined effects of drought caused by global warming and an economic crisis aggravated by the Taliban takeover. "There is a very important problem that has been left over as

Continued on Page 06

Joint session of parliament on Nov 17

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Babar Awan on Monday said that joint session of parliament would be held on November 17, 2021 (Wednesday) at 12:00 pm. Speaking here in National Assembly, he said the government is ready to consider suggestions of the opposition and its member may sit with them before the joint session. If no suggestion is made by the opposition on legislative proposals, it should vote in favor of these bills, he added. - DNA

Covid-19 positivity lowest since second wave

Some 32,466 tests were conducted across the country with 240 more people tested positive

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The national tally of Covid-19 pandemic on Monday was recorded declining with one of the lowest positivity ratio during past 24 hours and reduced per day positive cases, disease trend and death rate since second wave. The National Command and Operation Centre (NCO) in a tweet on its official han-

dle shared the latest disease statistics. The nerve centre of the country in its fight against the pandemic wrote that some 32,466 tests were conducted across the country with 240 more people tested positive for the contagious disease. There were 1,111 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical condition in various Covid dedicated healthcare facilities of the country. The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 0.73%. The Covid positivity ratio is the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed to identify infected individuals. During the past 24 hours, some six infected patients died due to the deadly virus including those under treatment in the hospitals and in their respective quarantines or homes.

Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations further solidified: Envoy

Khazar Farhadov says next year we will celebrate 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries; calls upon the int'l community to hold Armenia accountable for grave war crimes

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov gave an exclusive interview to daily Islamabad POST and its sister publications, Centreline and DNA News Agency. Ambassador Khazar has just arrived in Pakistan. Having a rich experience in diplomacy, Ambassador Khazar Farhadov is keen to further expand and diversify bilateral relations. His particular focus is on how to ensure connectivity between the two brotherly countries. His interview shall be published in two parts. Full text appears in the November 2021 issue of Centreline magazine.

1- First of all, we welcome you in Pakistan. Share with our readers the importance of restoring the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 18, 1991? Thank you very much. On October 18, 1991, Azerbaijan obtained the opportunity to gain independence for the second time in

the 20th century and with the Constitutional Act "On State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan" declared to the world that it was the successor of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, which was the first republic in the history of all Muslim East. It should be noted that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was one of the first countries that recognized our independence, and did not recognize Armenia due to its aggression against Azerbaijan. The first years of independence were not easy for the young newly independent country and we faced great difficulties. On the one hand Armenia's military aggression continued, and on the other hand, as a result of the collapse of the existing system, the economy was paralyzed. There were serious threats and risks to the Azerbaijani statehood. It was during this difficult period that the great leader Heydar Aliyev came to power in 1993 at the insistent demand of the Azerbaijani people. The great leader eliminated chaos and anarchy in the economic and political life of the country. Independent Azerbaijan has outlined a new course of development that made independence eternal and irreversible. Today, under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan



is one of the fastest growing countries in the world. Azerbaijan has become a leader in the region and has achieved sustainable economic development. Azerbaijan has become a key player in actively promoting and implementing major projects aimed at ensuring stability, security and prosperity in the region and beyond. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and the Southern Gas Corridor have made and will make a significant contribution in this regard. Azerbaijan plays an active role in the creation and development of international transport corridors through its territory, such as East-West, North-South and South-West. Azerbaijan's prestige and great potential have a



positive impact on the expansion of our international relations. Azerbaijan is expanding and deepening its activities as an independent state at the regional and global levels, including productive cooperation in international organizations. Azerbaijan is recognized as a leader in the region and a reliable partner in the international arena. 2- How do you view the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan and what are your plans to further strengthen and deepen these relations? Next year we will celebrate 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. We are very delighted that the relations between our countries are developing and strengthening very successfully. Azerbaijan and Pakistan have always supported each other on bilateral and international levels. Economic relations do not correspond to the level of our political relations. We are working to increase trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. We have had some online meetings between our business communities. I would also like to note that the National Logistics Cell sent two trucks carrying Pakistani products to Azerbaijan via Iran for the first time within the framework of the TIR Conventions. This project will also contribute to the growth of our trade relations. Azerbaijan and Pakistan have signed bilateral agreements

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Air and road links between Pakistan, Tajikistan stressed - Page 04

Palestinians already live in a tech dystopia - Page 05

Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations further solidified: Ambassador - Page 06

Iraq to repatriate citizens stranded at Belarus border - Page 07

Allies' reservations over EVM dispelled, claim ministers - Page 08



QUETTA: President Dr. Arif Alvi meeting with Governor Balochistan Syed Zahoor Agha and Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo at Governor House. – APP

FCCI holds training session for staff on time management

Dr. Gaba in his comprehensive lecture explained in detail the importance of "Time Management" and said that institutions like FCCI would have to face multiple challenges on a daily basis

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Dynamism would be infused in FCCI staff through capacity building to catalyse and improve the quality of services offered by Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) to its members, said Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh President FCCI. He was addressing a training session for FCCI staff on "Time Management". He said that he is very conscious of improving the quality of services offered by FCCI and in this connection the staff would be trained on the modern scientific lines in consultation with world class trainers. "This job has been entrusted to renowned cardiologist Dr. Habib Aslam Gaba Chairman FCCI Standing

Committee on Training Development and Capacity Building", he added. Dr. Gaba in his comprehensive lecture explained in detail the importance of "Time Management" and said that institutions like FCCI would have to face multiple challenges on a daily basis. In this connection targets are being given to the staff and they must achieve the given targets within the stipulated time frame. He said that staff members would have to prioritize the given tasks according to their importance and prime focus should be given on the high priority assignment. He said that this is the only way-out to tackle the situation and come up to the expectation of office bearers in addition to ensuring improved services to the FCCI members. He also

encouraged the staff to take part in this interactive session and ask any question popping up in their minds for a clear vision and understanding of the job. He said that although the FCCI staff was doing well, there was still room for improvement. He said that training sessions would continue throughout the year and next session would be held on communication skills, work under stress environment, customer services on international standards and workplace hygiene etc. Prominent trainer Madam Kanwal Farid gave a presentation on "Tools and Tactics of Time Management". She said that she will continue to provide guidance to the staff to further improve their skills and in this connection, they could contact Dr. Gaba at any time.



Anti-riot force established

KARACHI: An Anti-Riot Force comprising 500 personnel has been established to avert any law and order situation in megalopolis. According to spokesperson for Security and Emergency Services Division on Monday, the force has been constituted on the directives of Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi Imran Yaqoob Minhas and Deputy IGP Security and Emergency Services Division Maqsood Ahmed. The force would assist local police and other law enforcement agencies in emergency situations. Deputy Inspector General of Police Security Maqsood Ahmed informed that the Anti-Riot Force comprising Special Security Unit commandos and police personnel of security division. – APP

Punjab leading in development process: CM

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that the Punjab province was leading the development process in the country. According to handout issued here on Monday, he was talking to parliamentarians and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) office-bearers in Muzaffargarh, who discussed with him the city problems. The chief minister said that the government would leave no stone unturned to serve masses and pointed out that unprecedented development work had been completed in a period of three years. No area would remain deprived of development, he promised. The development schemes would be completed speed-

ily while ensuring transparency, he said adding that the government was following a comprehensive plan to provide the best healthcare and educational facilities to people living in far off parts of the province. On the other hand, the opposition lacked any agenda for the public service and it was trying to interrupt the development process, he regretted. The opposition alliance, PDM's negative politics could not survive in the new Pakistan, the CM said adding that people had rejected the anti-development mafia and the development process was continuing despite negative politics of the opposition. – APP

Metropolitan soon to generate electricity from garbage

KARACHI: Administrator Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Monday said that the biggest problem of the city for many years would soon be resolved as the metropolitan was planning to generate electricity from garbage.

"The waste energy generating system for the landfill site is a gift from the PPP government for the citizens of Karachi", he remarked.

"Sindh is the only province of Pakistan whose waste management policy is being appreciated," the Administrator expressed these views while addressing a function held at China Ground, Kashmir Road, East District here. Managing Director Sindh Solid Waste Management Board Zubair Channa and other officers were also present on the occasion.

Barrister Murtaza said that garbage piles were cleared from 31 USCs of East District. "250 vehicles will collect garbage from house to house in all Union Councils of District East," he added.

Administrator said that sanitation situation in the city will be improved, adding that 200 garbage trucks are being provided to East District. – APP

11,048 bags of fertilizers seized

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: As many as more 9748 bags of fertilizers had been confiscated from godowns during anti hoardings action in the district and three FIRs registered and 0.17 million fine was imposed to the dealers for overcharging the DAP, Urea and other fertilizer. Assistant Commissioner tehsil Samundri Faisal Sultan seized 3800 bags of urea fertilizer and sealed the godown. Director Agriculture Ch. Abdul Hameed raided the godown at Khurrianwala and recovered 2 thousand bags of urea and sold all that bags at the price of 1768 per bag. He fined the dealers for overcharging the bag upto 2300 and also sealed the godown. He said that all the officers of agriculture department are in field and seized the godowns having hoardings of fertilizers. He said that no compromise should be made to those who plunder the pockets of farmers and strict action would be continue against hoarders of fertilizer.

Indonesia wants to further develop trade, economic relations: CG

The Indonesian CG also highlighted the importance of education cooperation as one of the instruments in promoting bilateral relations between Indonesia and Pakistan

DNA

KARACHI: Consul General of Indonesia Dr. Jun Kuncoro Hadiningrat has said that Indonesia wants to further develop trade and economic relations with Pakistan by boosting cooperation between the business communities and encourages linkages between the youth of both the brotherly countries. Exchanging views at a meeting during his visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI), the Indonesia CG said that Indonesia was also keen to promote cooperation in the IT sector hence, a webinar titled "Indonesia-Pakistan IT Updates - The Development and Challenges" was organized recently under the auspices of Indonesian Consulate which was a big breakthrough in which the IT experts from both sides stressed the need to promote digital economy between the two countries

President KCCI Muhammad Idrees, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Naqi, Vice President Qazi Zahid Hussain, Former President Majid Aziz and KCCI Managing Committee Members were also present at the meeting. Indonesian Consul General stated that Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Indonesia and Pakistan when materialized will certainly be a great initiative and advised the business community of KCCI to enlist the products that have the potential to increase the bilateral trade. The Indonesian CG also highlighted the importance of education cooperation as one of the instruments in promoting bilateral relations between Indonesia and Pakistan, especially in terms of people-to-people contact so that they could understand each other's culture. He was of the opinion that cooperation between Indonesian and Pakistani universities will pave the way for

more inclusive bilateral relations in the academia and education sectors of both countries.

"We need to promote interaction between the younger generation of both countries as they don't know much about each other", he said and appealed KCCI to look into the possibility of promoting such interactions as well.

To foster people-to-people relations between Indonesian and Pakistani youths that focuses on culture, education, tourism, exchange programs, the Indonesian Consulate has recently launched the first Indonesia-Pakistan Youth Forum (IPYF).

He said that Indonesia lays special emphasis on improving trade and investment ties with the business community of Karachi keeping in view the huge contribution to the national exchequer and the key role being played by this city in the economic development of Pakistan. Earlier President KCCI

Muhammad Idrees, while welcoming the Indonesian CG, pointed out that the bilateral trade was in favor of Indonesia as during 2020, Pakistan exported goods worth \$195 million while the imports increased to \$2.4 billion, indicating a trade balance of \$2.2 billion in favor of Indonesia.

"We have no problem with this as Indonesia is our brotherly country but I believe that effective strategies and practical steps have to be taken by both sides to make trade balanced", he said.

In order to improve Pakistan Indonesia Trade, he recommended that both countries should focus on exchanging commodities like maize, wheat, flour, rice, non-manufactured tobacco, fresh fruits, nuts, ready-made garments, finished and semi-finished leather, fish and fish products, cotton fabrics, surgical goods etc. "The Halal Food industry also holds great potential for enhancing bilateral trade."

SIDB to promote SMEs to increase economic growth

PESHAWAR: Small Industries Development Board (SIDB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided the promotion of small & medium enterprises (SMEs) and cottage industry (cluster) to increase economic growth and generate employment opportunities by collecting cluster data. The task of formulating recommendations for the purpose has been entrusted to the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB), said a press release issued here on Monday. In this regard,

Managing Director (MD) SIDB Syed Zafar Ali Shah met a representative delegation of Charsadda Chappal Association.

President, Charsadda Chappal Association, Malik Waheed led the meeting Deputy Managing Director, Noman Fayaz and Deputy Managing Director Sahibzada Zulfiqar Ali were also present on the occasion. Talking to the delegation, the Managing Director, Syed Zafar Ali Shah briefed them about the government's cluster development pro-

gramme and also decided to form a committee consisting of SIDB and other officials including representatives of Chappal Association.

The committee will formulate recommendations for the solution of the problems facing the people. Syed Zafar Ali Shah said that the government is making all out efforts to turn traditional footwear of Charsadda into a formal industry. He said that the provision of interest-free soft loans and product marketing is their top priority. – APP

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Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad checks cleanliness

He said that more steps should be taken to raise the standard of cleanliness

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad reached various areas to check the cleanliness situation in the city and inspected the cleaning operation on the roads in the morning. CEO Faisalabad Waste Management Company Kashif Raza Awan and other officers of the company were also present. The Deputy Commissioner visited Razaabad and other areas and while inspecting the presence of waste workers said that the cleaning process should be completed in the city before the

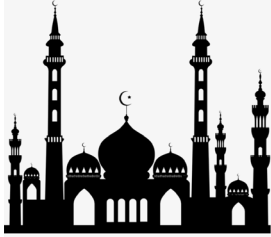


commencement of normal life. He said that more steps should be taken to raise the standard of cleanliness so that the city looks clean and beautiful in all respects as

per the expectations of the citizens. He directed to disposed off garbage in a save manner and said that the attendance of waste workers should be

monitored regularly. He asked the residents of areas about the presence of Waste workers and performance of them and on some complaints.

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	05:13 am
Zohr.....	11:52 am
Asr.....	03:27 pm
Maghrib.....	05:05 pm
Isha.....	06:31 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....	111 133 133
Marriott.....	051-2826121
Monal.....	0334-5421812



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

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Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
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Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
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G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8.....	9266316
Wapda Islamabad.....	9217579
Wapda Rawalpindi	111-309-309

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....	9209224
Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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Kyrgyzstan keen to promote economic co-op with Pakistan

Bishkek had hosted a very successful second Kyrgyz-Pakistan business forum entitled "Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan in the Age of Socio-Economic Integration"

MUHAMMAD JABRAAN

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. Ulanbek Totuaiev, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan said that the geostrategic location of his country offered great business opportunities to Pakistan while Pakistan was a gateway for Central Asian countries for better market access to outside world, therefore, Kyrgyzstan was keen to further promote economic cooperation with Pakistan to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. He said this while exchanging views with the business community during his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). The Envoy said that the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek had hosted a very successful second Kyrgyz-Pakistan business forum entitled "Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan in the Age of Socio-Economic Integration" in October this year and his embassy was interested to organize another Kyrgyz-Pakistan business forum in collaboration with ICCI in Islamabad or Bishkek to fur-



ther strengthen the business linkages between the private sectors of both countries. He said that Kyrgyzstan was a member of Eurasian Economic Union, which was a market of 180 million people and was also a beneficiary of the EU's GSP Plus. Thus close economic cooperation

of Pakistan with Kyrgyzstan would be more beneficial for both countries. He also discussed a wide-range of areas for promoting trade and economic ties with Pakistan. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Indus-

try said that Pakistan in this field. He said that Pakistan could export many products to Kyrgyzstan including marble & granite, pharmaceuticals, textiles, surgical instruments, food products, sports goods, leather products, IT, engineering goods and Kyr-

gystan should increase its imports from Pakistan to provide good quality products at competitive prices to its consumers. He said that both countries have good potential to cooperate in the tourism sector for mutual benefit. He said that ICCI would consider organizing a Pak-Kyrgyz business forum in collaboration with Kyrgyz Embassy, Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Senior Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan should encourage direct commercial flights between their major cities that would help in promoting business relations between the two countries. Muhammad Faheem Khan, Vice President ICCI stressed for frequent exchange of trade delegations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan to explore new avenues of trade promotion. Akhtar Hussain, Ch. Ashraf Farzand, Ashraf Hafeez and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas for promoting trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

AIOU opens MA/MSc admissions

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Islamabad has invited online applications for admission in 2-year MA/MSc programmes. Regional Director AIOU Prof Dr Bashir Ahmad Sameem said on Monday that earlier, the High Education Commission (HEC) had prohibited the universities from offering admission in 2-year MA/MSc programmes but now due to corona pandemic, the HEC allowed the universities to offer admission in MA/MSc programmes this year. Therefore, the AIOU invited online applications for admission in various MA/MSc programs including Urdu, History, Arabic, Islamic Studies, M.Com, Teaching of English Foreign Language, Library & Information Sciences, Distance & Non-formal Education, Teacher Education, Educational Planning, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Statistics, Botany, Microbiology, Environmental Science, Administrative Sciences, Economic, Sociology, General & Women Studies, Mass Communication, Pakistan Studies, Public Nutrition, Forestry Extension, Sustainable Environmental Design and 1-year M.Ed. Eligible students can submit their admission applications online up to December 06 while university fee can be paid through designated bank branches, jazz cash, easy load, U-mobile app, retailer agent or e-payment. AIOU prospectus is also available on the website www.aiou.edu.pk while more information can be obtained from university help-line or regional campus during office hours," he added.

Great opportunity of testing EVM Shibli Faraz

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Senator Syed Shibli Faraz Monday said that pilot testing of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in NA-133 bye-elections would have been made possible, if timely decision had been taken at the time of announcement of the Election Schedule. "Great opportunity lost. Had a timely decision been taken at the time of announcement of Election Schedule, pilot testing of EVMs in NA-133 bye elections would have been made possible!", the minister stated in a tweet. - APP

PML-N creates false narrative ahead of Maryam case

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services Murrad Saeed on Monday said Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) always created a false narrative to mislead the nation ahead of its vice-president Maryam Nawaz' hearing in Avenfield apartments reference. Speaking at the National Assembly, he said slogan-shouting has become the background sound for parliamentary proceedings as opposition continued its tactics to disrupt the House's business for their vested interests. They (opposition) employ new tactics to disrupt the proceedings as their leaders have been proven corrupt with known cases of mega corruption. "Such people could not lead the case of nation who in person were involved in malpractices," he remarked. Reacting to the debate of Parliamentary leader of PML-N in the NA Khawaja Asif, he said a conspiracy has been hatched against the judiciary, as the case of Maryam Nawaz is about to be heard. The minister said whenever there is a case against the judiciary, the PML-N comes to the fore. In the present case, they have brought former Chief Justice of Gilgit-Baltistan Rana Shamim to the fore. Shamim's affidavit, he said, was notarized by the person who notarized the medical report to Nawaz Sharif. - APP

EPA Chief urges citizens to reduce vehicular mobility

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Director General Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) Farzana Altaf Shah Monday urged the citizens to reduce mobility on vehicles for three months amid soaring air pollution in the federal capital. The EPA DG was of the view that increasing smog in Lahore has rung the alarm bells to ensure strict monitoring and measures to avert any smog risk in the federal capital, she told APP in her exclusive talk on increasing air pollution and its mitigation measures. Ms Shah said one of the major sources of air pollution in the federal capital was high vehicular emissions, burning of household trash, plastic waste, and brick kilns in the far vicinity. She added that industrial emissions particularly from the steel manufacturing units were contained through reverse bag dark carbon absorbing technology after rigorous efforts of the EPA. She pointed out that the brick kilns owners were also sensitized to convert their kilns over zigzag technology

which was fuel efficient and environment friendly. She said the months of November, December and January were critical as extreme drop in temperature would lead to increasing prevalence of suspended particles in the atmosphere leading to air pollution. "The twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad residents are requested to avoid maximum travelling over vehicles and opt for carpooling or mass transit sources," she added. Ms Shah informed that the EPA air quality monitors were regularly calculating the air pollutants' ratio and the most hazardous particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5) was beyond the permissible limits. The National Environment Quality Standards (NEQS) was 35 microgrammes per cubic meter for PM2.5 whereas currently it was beyond 60 microgrammes per cubic meter on average since the last one week. She said at present the only remedy was to reduce vehicular emissions, plastic or garbage burning and responsible behaviour of the masses to maintain the ambience clean and healthy.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by the Australian Trade Commissioner to Pakistan Mr. John Cavanagh called on the Federal Minister of National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam in Islamabad. - DNA

BOI to hold E-Kachehry for Business Fraternity



ISLAMABAD: The Board of Investment (BOI) to hold 'E-KACHEHRY for Business Fraternity' on November 17 aimed to establish a linkage between BOI officials and the business community. After successfully conducting the first E-Kachehry in August, the Board of Investment (BOI) will hold its second E-Kachehry on November 17th, 2021, said a press release issued by BOI here. The E-Kachehry will be conducted by Federal Secretary BOI, Ms. Fareena Mazhar. In the previous public outreach activity, many people from the business community contacted BOI with their queries and concerns. The nature of queries ranged from establishing branch and liaison offices to visa issues, Special Economic Zones etc.

Most queries were promptly addressed and the remaining was taken up with the concerned departments whilst ensuring follow-up mechanism. This outreach initiative aims to carry forward the precedent that was set last time by establishing a linkage between BOI officers and businesses that will affect timely resolution of issues raised at the forum. - DNA

NCOC lauds achieving 50% Covid vaccination

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Monday appreciated the cities that have achieved excellent vaccination targets with over 50 percent of the eligible population inoculated with Covid-19. The NCOC session held here chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar where the Forum was apprised about ongoing country wide obligatory vaccine regime. Chairman NCOC Asad Umar appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders for ensuring

vaccine administration to citizens in every city. The Forum appreciated cities including Narowal, Jehlum, Mandi Bahaudin, Peshawar, Bhimber, Bagh, Mirpur, Skardu, Gilgit, Ghizer and Islamabad for achieving excellent vaccination rate by vaccinating more than 50% of their respective population. Asad Umar emphasised on all stakeholders to maintain the vaccination rate achieved over 50 percent. The Forum also lauded the performance of Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Sialkot, Minawali, Kallar Kahar, Hafizabad, Rahim Yar Khan, for vaccinating more than 40 percent of eligible citizens.

NLE Medical results announced

ISLAMABAD: The National Medical Authority of Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) on Monday announced the results of the National Licensing Exam (NLE) Step 2 (Medical) examination held from October 29 to October 31. According to PMC, as many as 1,012 students sat for the NLE Step 2 (Medical) examination with results of 149 students who appeared at the Multan Center withheld. The pass percentage for the NLE Step 2 (Medical) was 6.95%. The 2021 NLE Step 2 (Medical) is applicable for foreign graduates only to assess their clinical skills to function as a safe and independent practitioner. A Full License to practice in Pakistan is to be issued only after passing the NLE Step 2 examination. A foreign graduate who is unable to qualify the NLE Step 2 is also allowed to attempt the NLE year period. The low pass percentage of the current skills training in some foreign colleges. PMC has the lack of clinical training of foreign graduates been confirmed by the outcome of the NLE highlighted during assessments carried out by hospitals and patient flow necessary for clinical and the language barrier which exists at local sites who are expected to impart clinical education. undertaking proper and mandatory clinical trainees these foreign colleges have been offering and marthan offering the locally recognized medical program in students from countries like Pakistan to provide them with a medical degree which they can take back to their home country for seeking a medical license. It is also for this reason that majority of the graduates from these colleges never obtain practice license in those countries or practice there as they would not fulfill the educational and training required for such licensing, it added. The PMC said that the clinical training is an integral part of a medical training program and is mandatory for patient diagnosis, treatment, and care. It must be noted that hospitals are the key to a medical training program and without clinical training, a student cannot progress to becoming a licensed doctor and would certainly not represent a safe doctor. - APP



NCM law final draft being sent to MOLAW

Kewlani said governors, chief ministers, chief secretaries and Inspector Generals of all provinces would be contacted for brisk implementation of NCM's recommendations

ISLAMABAD: The draft law of National Commission for Minorities has been finalized and was being sent to Ministry of Law and Justice for vetting, said Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Ejaz Khan Jaffar. Speaking in 12th meeting National Commission for Minorities (NCM) presided over by its chairman Chela Ram Kewlani, he said the ministry would write a letter to all relevant institu-

tions asking them help NCM. Secretary said the Evacuee Trust Property Board Chairman would brief the NCM about its minority welfare projects. The commission discussed various issues related to Pakistani non-Muslim population. The NCM asked the ministry of Human Rights to take the NCM into confidence over the proposed Christian Marriage and Divorce act. Speaking on the occasion NCM Chela Ram Kewlani chair-



man said forced, underage and marriage without permission of guardian was a social issue. He urged provinces to implement the marriage laws in their respective jurisdictions. Kewlani said governors, chief ministers, chief secretaries and Inspector Generals of all provinces would be contacted for brisk implementation of NCM's recommendations. The NCM sought nominations for induction of new minority

member on its seat vacated by a Christian member due to personal engagements. Secretary Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, representatives of Ministries of Interior, Law and Justice, National Curriculum wing and Ministry of Human Rights were also present in the meeting. At the end of the meeting the members of NCM wished Chela Ram a very happy Dewali and cut cake. - APP

Briefs

PSX closes
at 45,736
points

ISLAMABAD: The KSE 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained slightly bearish on Monday, losing 12.89 points, with a negative change of 0.03 per cent, closing at 45,736.26 points against 45,749.15 points on the last working day. A total of 172,851,026 shares were traded during the day compared to the trade of 192,466,529 shares the previous day whereas the price of shares stood at Rs5.135 billion against Rs7.664 billion the previous day. As many as 345 companies' transacted shares in the stock market, 125 of them recorded gain and 191 sustained losses whereas the share price of 29 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hascol Petrol with a volume of 18,579,124 shares and price per share of Rs6.53, Ghani Glo Hol with a volume of 17,843,000 and price per share of Rs34.15 and WorldCall Telecom with volume of 11,222,500 and price per share of Rs2.39.

Colgate Palm witnessed a maximum increase of Rs68.99 per share, closing at Rs2500 whereas the runner up was Bata (Pak) XD, the share prices of which climbed up by Rs59.83 to Rs1909.

The share of Unilever FoodsXD witnessed minimum decrease of 529.50 closing 18,949.50 followed by Ismail Ind, the share price of which declined by Rs35.03 to close at Rs432.12. — APP

Gold prices
decrease
by Rs 1900
per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed decrease of Rs1900 and was sold at Rs 126,200 in the local market on Monday against its sale at Rs Rs 128,100 the previous day. The price of 10 gram 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1629 to Rs108,196 against its sale at Rs Rs 109,825 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went down to Rs 99,180 from Rs 100,673, Karachi Sarafa and Jewellers Group reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs1480 and Rs1268.86 respectively. The price of gold in international market declined by \$3 and was traded at \$1863 against its sale at \$1866, the Jewellers Group reported. — APP

AIOU
dispatches
books to
students

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has initiated the process of printing, labelling and mailing of books to 400,000 students enrolled in matriculation and intermediate programs offered in autumn 2021 semester.

According to Director Admission, Syed Zia ul Husnain Naqvi, printing process is expedited to complete mailing within the timeline prescribed by university's academic calendar. He added that AIOU dispatches approximately 12,00,000 to 15,00,000 books every semester enrolled in matriculation and intermediate programs. PDF copies of these books were available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk), said a news release issued here. It is pertinent to mention here that university has completed its project of digital transformation of all key academic, administrative and financial operations to ensure transparency and efficiency. Providing quality educational facilities at the doorsteps of the students is the motto of AIOU. Provision of online books from matriculation to PhD level is further reflective of this vision which has eliminated complaints of delayed mailing of books. Therefore, students are instructed to download books from the website and start working on their assignments and preparing for their final. — APP

Air and road links between
Pakistan, Tajikistan stressed

Pakistan and Tajikistan are bound by ancient historical and cultural ties, will restore air connectivity: Ahsan Bakhtawari

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Tajikistan Ismatullah Nasiruddin has said that the flight time between Islamabad and Dushanbe is one hour while travelling from Pakistan to Dushanbe via Istanbul and Dubai is time consuming and expensive too. He expressed these views in a meeting with former Vice President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Ahsan Bakhtawari and Secretary General of PTI Traders Wing Waqar Bakhtawari at his embassy in Islamabad today. He further said that the effective diplomacy is needed for trade between Tajikistan and Pakistan by road. He added that several MoU had been signed during Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Tajikistan last



month to boost bilateral ties. A 65 trade delegation also visited Tajikistan during the visit, he said, adding that the Tajik government would extend all possible cooperation in establishing land and air links between the two countries. Former Vice President of ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan and Tajikistan are linked in ancient historical and cultural ties with common heritage but travel between the two countries has been made difficult it should be restored. PTI Traders Wing Secretary General Waqar Bakhtawari emphasized the importance of exchanging trade delegations between the two countries and said that they would launch personal efforts in this regard. He said that tourism is the first step and then trade promotion automatically follow by tourists.

Negotiations
avert flour crisis
in Rawalpindi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Flour Mills Association has postponed the strike in Rawalpindi Division for a week and restored the supply of flour after successful negotiations with food department officials and district administration.

A new round of talks between the central leaders of Flour Mills Association and the Food Department officials will begin in Lahore on November 16, after which the body of flour millers will announce the final course of action.

The Chief Patron of Pakistan Flour Mills Association Rawalpindi Region, Tariq Sadiq, Chairman Riazullah Khan and other leaders met the Director Food and other senior officials at the Deputy Commissioner's Office on Monday and conveyed their concerns.

During the meeting it was decided that flour mills would be supplied government wheat from the warehouses of the Food Department located in Rawalpindi, Taxila, Gujar Khan, and Sihala instead of South Punjab and they would not be compelled to buy government wheat from any remote area including South Punjab.

The flour mills association was opposing the decision of the government to buy wheat from far-flung areas as it would have greatly increased the cost of doing business. Food department officials also promised to restore wheat crushing costs, which had been reduced recently. After acknowledging the basic demands, the Flour Mills Association postponed its strike call for one week and restored the supply of flour in the market.

Talks between the central leadership of the Flour Mills Association and the food department will begin in Lahore on November 16, and if successful, the decision of the association will be implemented across Punjab. Leaders of flour millers Chief Minister Usman Bazar is taking personal interest in this issue for which they are grateful.

NA panel
meeting
postponed

ISLAMABAD: The meeting of National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting scheduled for Monday was postponed due to lack of quorum.

Besides its chairman Javed Latif, MNAs Kanwal Shozab, Aftab Jehangir and Ali Nawaz Chohan, all belonging to PTI turned up for the meeting.

Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib also came to attend the meeting.

Speaking informally on the occasion Javed Latif, MNA stressed the need for following rule of law. He said even after passage of over seven decades democracy was not as strong as it should have been.

New member of the committee Ali Nawaz Chohan said that this forum should remain above party line and all members should work for ensuring supremacy of the Constitution and strengthening of democracy. He said that all stakeholders were being consulted on Pakistan Media Development Authority law.

Besides Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shihra Shahid senior officers from the Ministry and its attached departments were also present. — APP

IDF report reveals
33mln diabetic patients
in Pakistan: PANAH

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: President Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) Major General (r) Masood-ur-Rehman Kayani on Monday said the number of diabetic cases in Pakistan was gradually increasing where the recent International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Report revealed that 33 million people in Pakistan were suffering from diabetes. He was addressing the participants of the special walk organized by PANAH and Heart International Hospital on the occasion of "World Diabetes Day". Speaking on the occasion, Major General (r) Kayani said Pakistan currently ranked third in the world in the number of diabetic patients. "It is noteworthy that more than 26.9% of the people living in Pakistan who are suffering from diabetes are not diagnosed," he added.

On the occasion, Major General (r) Ashraf Khan said that according to the statistics of the International Diabetes Federation, if the situation continued, the chances of 400,000 deaths

due to diabetes in Pakistan would increase this year. He said that the PANAH has been providing awareness to the people for the last 37 years about health related issues and their solutions.

Chairman Kidney Association General (r) Dr Zaheer said that one of the major causes of non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity was excessive consumption of Sugar Sweetened Beverages, which should be prevented.

PANAH General Secretary and Director Operations Sana Ullah Ghuman said that IDF figures show that an additional 11 million people in Pakistan suffer from poor glucose tolerance.

With their risk of developing type 2 diabetes, the rapidly rising level of diabetes in Pakistan, like the rest of the world, has become a major health challenge, he added. "There are currently 537 million people worldwide with diabetes. In Pakistan we have to impose emergency against diabetes. One of the major causes of diabetes is excessive consumption of Sugar Sweetened

Beverages, the government will have to take serious steps to prevent them," he underscored.

The participants of walk said that the government should formulate a comprehensive strategy to control diabetes.

One of the major causes of diabetes was the consumption of sugary drinks where taxation would be an effective way to reduce its consumption.

Led by President (PANAH) Major General (R) Masud Rehman Kayani and Major General (R) Ashraf Khan, besides Chairman Kidney Association General (R) Dr Zaheer, General Secretary and Director Operations Sana Ullah Ghuman, Dr. Wajid, along with a large number of doctors, paramedical staff and civil society were present on the occasion.

The walk was held on the highway from Peshawar road Saddar Rawalpindi to Heart International Hospital. Participants of the walk carried banners and placards bearing information on the risks and remedies for other deadly diseases including diabetes.

PMAS-AAUR
to celebrate its
silver jubilee

RAWALPINDI: Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) is going to celebrate its silver jubilee from November 22 to 27 at the completion of 25 years of its establishment. This was decided in a Deans/Directors meeting held under the chairmanship of PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Qamar uz Zaman, here on Monday. On the occasion, Prof. Dr. Qamaruz-Zaman said that the University started with less than 300 students enrolled in one Faculty and has now reached a total strength of over 12,000 students in its six faculties and seven Institutes. During 25 years, this Alma Mater not only produced graduates well acquainted

with cutting edge technologies to match the market demand but also made a great deal to uplift and develop scientific avenues, especially in the field of Agriculture, he added. He said, "We have to cherish Silver Jubilee Celebrations of PMAS-AAUR with full Zeal and Zest, extensively engaged in achieving its prime objective of uplifting poor masses of rainfed regions of the country."

"At this important juncture, I would urge the participation from the stakeholders in a week-long variety of scientific, social and cultural events chalked out in line with our resolve of transforming conventional agriculture to modern-day digital agriculture standards", he said. — APP

Shahbaz
can't wash
corruption
stains

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication Dr Shahbaz Gill on Monday

said that through cheap political stunts, Shahbaz Sharif Sahib would not be able to wash theft, money laundering and corruption stains.

In response to the statement of Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif, he said incompetent League always needed propaganda daily to stay in the news.

He said 'Chotay Mian' deserved Oscar Award for his 'dramabazi' and 'showmanship'. He said moral character of Shahbaz could be judged that he used to dictate judgments to Justice Abdul Qayyum on phone.

Gill said the nation has no hope of truth from such certified liars. Once again, Time has come again to say "Mujay Kuin Nikla", he said.

PKR recovers
43 paisas
against dollar

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee strengthened by 43 paisas against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Monday and closed at Rs175.29 as compared to the previous day's closing of Rs175.72.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 176 and Rs 177.5 respectively. Similarly, the price of the euro was appreciated by Rs 1.54 and closed at Rs 200.76 against the last day's trading of Rs 201.24, the State Bank of Pakistan reported.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.53, whereas an increase of 2 paisas was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 235.22 as compared to its last closing of Rs 235.20.

The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 12 paisas each to close at Rs 47.72 and Rs 46.73 respectively.

Fire breaks
out near
Islamabad
airport

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A fire broke out in the bushes around the runway of Islamabad Airport on Monday. For about an hour, the fire engulfed both sides of the runway, sources said adding that the fire brigade of the Civil Aviation Authority has failed to extinguish flames so far.

More fire brigade vehicles have been summoned to put the blaze off immediately. The manager of Islamabad Airport said the fire was started in the bushes but the flight operation has been fully restored.

Indian troops
barge into
houses in
Srinagar

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD: Indian troops continued so-called cordon and search operations to harass people in Srinagar and other parts of the territory. In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The troops barged into the houses in Jamalata area of Srinagar on Sunday night and harassed the inmates. The operation was conducted after a policeman was injured in an attack in the area, Kashmir Media Service reported.

The troops also continued search operations in different places of Shopian, Pulwama, Baramulla, Rajouri and Poonch districts.

It is worth mentioning here that India has rushed thousands of extra troops to the occupied Jammu and Kashmir turning the territory into world's largest open-air prison.

RCCI "Pindi Food Fest" ends on a high note

Bangladesh High Commissioner Rohul Alam Siddiqui, DC Rawalpindi, Muhammad Ali, Station Commander Brigadier Salman Nazar also attended along with their families

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: A large number of citizens flocked to the three-day food festival at Ayub Park organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). Huge number of families, children and the elderly attended the food fair.

RCCI President Nadeem Rauf while sharing details informed that during the three-day festival, more than forty stalls of various regional and traditional foods were set up from all over Pakistan. Indonesian and Afghani food stalls also attracted a large number of visitors, he added.

The musical evening for families also featured live performances by local and folk artists, he said.

The highlight of the festival was the large number of women who set up stalls, he further added. He said that to empower women, RCCI provided them with a platform to advertise their products

through such festivals and exhibitions. Bangladesh High Commissioner Rohul Alam Siddiqui attended the food festival with his wife. Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Muhammad Ali, Station Commander Brigadier Sal-

man Nazar also attended along with their families. Chamber President Nadeem Rauf said that the purpose of holding the Food Festival is to expedite business activities after the lifting of Corona restrictions.

The Chamber has always strived to promote local industries, entrepreneurship and SMEs, he added. The visitors enjoyed various stalls of traditional dishes, edible and other items including dry fruits, Organic honey, Mango leather

(Dry Mango) and others. RCCI President Nadeem A Rauf and organizing team pose for a group photo at "Pindi Food Fest" organized Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry at Ayub Park Rawalpindi.



Air pollution

THE Pakistani citizenry, particularly the inhabitants of Lahore, seem to be in a state of worry as the average Air Quality Index Ratings (AQI) remain at an average of 350—a deathly hazardous level. After having suffered from the toll of the pandemic, as well the outbreak of dengue fever once again, this is an unnecessary health complication that can and should be avoided. Our authorities have gotten used to acting only when the situation becomes dire and this can be observed in the status quo as well; only now have anti-smog squads been created with the task of surveilling air pollution levels and correcting industrial malpractices that contribute to it.

Just two weeks ago, Lahore was classified as the most polluted city in the world—due to the disturbing AQI level of 681—according to data released by the US Air Quality Index. Meanwhile, the Punjab Minister for the Environment, Muhammad Rizwan, claimed that there had been no smog in the province for the last two years. Such preposterous statements not only defy facts and are therefore false, but they actively invalidate the public's concerns and health risks. This is absolutely unacceptable especially considering how urgent the crisis of air pollution has become. A representative of the government tasked with the protection of the environment domestically through proposing solutions that promote sustainability must act more sensibly and address the facts for what they are.

Years of crop burning agricultural traditions, increased burning of coal in factories and garbage in general and the use of oil has contributed to the worsening air quality in the country. Even small precautions that can be taken at an individual level like being proactive with waste removal, using cars equipped with green technology, emphasising the importance of minimising pollution are not practiced across the country.

With the creation of anti-smog squads, there is some hope that industrial pollution will be curbed and smoke-emitting factories will be held accountable for their contribution in the crisis. This step should have been taken earlier but, it is reassuring to see that some action is being taken at least.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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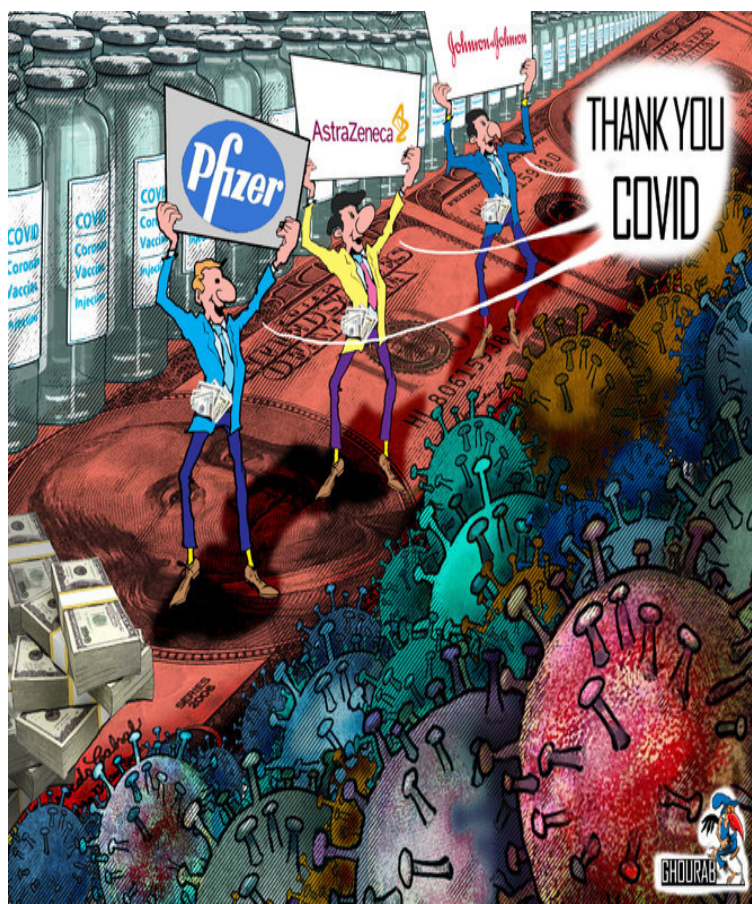
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A slow pace

IN a high-level meeting in Islamabad this weekend, which was attended by the most influential government officials including Energy Minister Muhammad Hammad Azhar, Industries Minister Makhdoom Khurosh Bakhtiar, Information Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Maritime Affairs Minister Syed Ali Haider Zaidi, Planning Minister Asad Umar, CM Balochistan and others, Prime Minister Imran Khan raised some important criticisms on the slow work being done in Balochistan. He stated that he was not pleased over the slow pace of development projects under the Southern Balochistan Development Package, and expressed chagrin at the low number of meetings held for such an important project.

The reservations expressed by the Prime Minister were needed and are relevant not just in the context of the Southern Balochistan Development Package, but pertains to almost all major projects being undertaken in the province. No doubt the province contains huge potential for the country; it is the basis for so many of the CPEC projects and provides us with a pipeline to the rest of the world. However, while the projects are announced with much pomp, they get lost in the slow pace and lethargy of politicians.

The Southern Balochistan Development Package brought up by the Prime Minister is a good example. This is an enormous project—worth Rs600 billion package for 200 development projects in South Balochistan. In this cash-strapped economy, this is not an easy spend—it is costing the federal government Rs540 million with the rest being spent by the provincial government. With such a huge project, which could potentially transform the province, one would expect the highest level of competency. Yet, almost one year into the project, it has been found that only one meeting of the Apex Committee has been held. The Prime Minister is now taking steps to review the progress of the project and ensure at least fortnightly meetings. It is unfortunate that this was needed. Those put in charge must show more responsibility—most of all the new Balochistan CM.

Palestinians already live in a tech dystopia

Malaka Shwaikh

The scale of Israeli mechanisms of control, intimidation, and surveillance that Palestinians have faced, and continue to face, is beyond the scope of any one article. That said, I will highlight two examples here: the population registry and prisons. In both the Gaza Strip and the WB, the Palestinian population...

FOR Israel, the basic human rights of colonised Palestinians, such as the right to privacy, are irrelevant. Earlier this year, a Palestinian friend told me that, while passing through an Israeli checkpoint in the West Bank, Israeli soldiers knew her location without even seeing her identity card. This was scary to hear, and it made me wonder if Israeli soldiers used facial recognition technology to identify my friend's face and destination. I knew there must be at least some surveillance mechanisms employed that we do not yet know about. This becomes clearer when we see Israeli soldiers taking pictures of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank — an act that is often live-streamed on social media platforms. It did not take long before we came across a Washington Post report of the Israeli military using smartphone facial recognition software called Blue Wolf to track Palestinians in the oc-

cupied West Bank. As an incentive to build the database, Israeli soldiers competed for prizes to see which unit could take the most pictures of Palestinians. This violated basic human rights, including the right to privacy. The database contains profiles of virtually every Palestinian in the West Bank and includes a "security rating" for each one. When soldiers use their phones to capture the image of a person, a colour flashes signifying whether the individual in question should be arrested, detained, or let free. Across the world, this type of software is often used by authoritarian regimes to help oppress populations. There have also been debates about the legality and safety of facial recognition. The method itself can be inaccurate and misidentify individuals, which can put their life in danger. The software has been banned by several US cities, and the European Parliament called for a ban of its usage by police in public. However, for colonial powers, basic human rights of the colonised are typically irrelevant. Hence, the new surveillance program does not come as a surprise. Palestinians, both within and outside Palestine, already live in a tech dystopia. Colonial surveillance has been constant and aims to strip them of what remains of their privacy. In the city of Hebron in the West Bank, the Israeli monitoring program is happening without any notification to the local population. It eliminates spaces for safe and free social gathering because the cameras are always filming. The scale of Israeli mechanisms of control, intimidation, and surveillance that Palestinians have faced, and continue to face, is beyond the scope of any one article. That said, I will highlight two examples here: the population registry and prisons. In both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the Palestinian population registry is fully controlled by the Israeli occupation authorities. All changes made to these records, including registration of births, marriages, divorces, deaths, and changes in address/name, require Israeli approval. Only after such approvals may the Palestinian Authority amend or issue an identity card. This in turn controls where Palestinians may live and whether they may travel to other areas in occupied Palestine. Methods of surveillance are also

present in Israeli jails. As soon as Palestinians are jailed, they are monitored as part of the Israeli technique of psychological warfare. And with advances in technology, human operators are becoming unnecessary. Since 2003, the number of Israeli jailers has been continuously reduced, having been replaced with cameras. The manually operated door locks in jails have been replaced with electronic systems, with one prison officer in a central monitoring room to control a section of more than 100 prisoners. Having fewer prison staff may result in further psychological violence. In solitary confinement, for example, prisoners have regularly been prohibited from leaving their prison cells to get some daylight or practise sport because there are not enough prison staff to "monitor them." This results in them staying in their prison cells for long hours — if not days — on end. Solitary confinement itself is a form of psychological torture. It's particularly true when prisoners are not allowed to leave their cells for long periods of time. Surveillance in these circumstances amounts to a form of subjugation and dehumanisation. It not only ensures Palestinians are constantly monitored but also prohibits them from exercising their basic rights, whether it's seeing the sun or walking outside. In colonial contexts across all temporalities and geographies, the coloniser will not only try to oppress and dehumanise the colonised but will also treat them as 'controlled subjects.' The coloniser will ensure their rights are curtailed and their most intimate details, pictures and whereabouts are known. Colonisation means no privacy. It means invading your most intimate spaces whenever and wherever the coloniser wishes. Israeli security and surveillance experts enforce politics of fear, and in so doing create a hostile and an aggressive program that enables the colonial order to justify its continued violence against the colonised. If the international community does not challenge such ideologies, they become complicit in continued violence and failing to hold those responsible to account. In doing so, they obstruct true justice and genuine confrontation of power.

Courtesy: TRT World

The EU's migrant crisis is not going to disappear

Ranvir S. Nayar



The EU claims that Belarus has deliberately allowed migrants, mainly from the Middle East and Africa, to enter its territory in order to counter pressure from Brussels in the wake of the 2020 elections won by President Aleksandr Lukashenko. Critics and EU observers have condemned the election as fraudulent and also criticized the strong-arm leader's violent repression of protests following the poll

TENSIONS between the EU and Belarus have risen sharply in recent weeks, with Brussels accusing the Eastern European nation of encouraging migrants from third countries to mass at the border with Poland, sparking violent clashes with Polish border guards. Belarus has pleaded helplessness in the matter, saying that it is acting on humanitarian grounds, and denies pushing migrants westwards into the EU. Instead, it accuses Poland of using military muscle against unarmed civilians, injuring many and forcing thousands to stay for weeks in bitter cold in the open forests on the border between the two nations. Poland admits that at least eight migrants have died on the frontier in the past few weeks, but since it has barred journalists and human rights organizations from the area, there is no independent verification of the situation on the ground or even the number of migrants trapped around the main Polish border crossing of Kuznica. The EU claims that Belarus has deliberately allowed migrants, mainly from the Middle East and Africa, to enter its territory in order to counter pressure from Brussels in the wake of the 2020 elections won by President Aleksandr Lukashenko. Critics and EU observers have condemned the election as fraudulent and also criticized the strong-arm leader's violent repression of protests following the poll. While there is some truth to the EU accusation that Belarus is allowing migrants to enter its territory, the entire crisis puts the focus back on the EU's handling of migrants and its poor human rights record in this respect. It is also unfair to accuse Belarus of creating the crisis since it is not Belarusians who are crossing

into the EU but migrants from far-off countries whose destination was always Europe. In many ways, blaming Belarus for creating the crisis would be similar to the US accusing Mexico if migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala or Honduras trooped across the border. For the EU, the crisis revives the spectre of 2015 when over a million migrants, mostly fleeing wars in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Iraq, arrived in Europe, mainly via Turkey. Initially, Turkey, too, refused to hold them back, partly due to rising tensions with France. But, subsequently, the EU reached a deal and compensated Ankara for holding the migrants and repatriating them to their country of origin. After the migrant influx led to an outcry in the EU and a sharp rise in anti-migrant rhetoric among the extreme right in several EU nations, Brussels tried to halt the flow at its source, for instance by helping Libya step up coast guard patrols in order to prevent migrants from leaving in boats. There have been dozens of incidents in which boats have capsized in the Mediterranean, leading to thousands of deaths. Most EU nations have been accused by human rights groups of failing to respect migrants' human rights and causing death due to callous policies. Indeed, the EU and the other big magnet of migration, the US, need to review their migration policies and address the problem, not in a stop-gap and crisis mode, but with a long-term view, say over at least a couple of decades. The issue of migration, which is as old as humanity, is not going to disappear just because the EU does not like it or refuses to accept it. Migration is a result of several factors. Yes, most migrants are economic migrants, but responsibility for this lies partly with developed nations that have failed to assist developing countries reach a level of economic activity that ensures their own citizens can be gainfully employed. And, certainly, the EU and the US have been guilty of setting off conflicts and other crises that have forced more economic misery on these countries, creating the flow of migrants. The EU also ought to recognize that migrants, on the whole, bring a lot of value to the societies where they finally settle. Thousands of examples can be cited in the US and the EU where migrants have been at the core of economic development of the host country. Moreover, almost half of EU nations are facing a severe aging crisis that needs urgent attention if their economies are not to come to a grinding halt in a few decades. The only solution for these countries is migration. Thus, it may be time for the EU and others to review their own long-term population and economic situation and take at least a couple of steps — to create a viable migrant policy that takes care of their own needs and which also creates conditions that encourages many of the would-be migrants to stay home. Both of these need strategic and long-term thinking, as well as genuine political will, in order to be able to stand up to critics and counter the rhetoric of the far right. Unfortunately, at least in the EU, there is hardly any leader in sight who appears to have the courage to do the right thing, by their country and by humanity.

— Courtesy: Arab News

US and Turkey: It is not over yet

Dimitar Bechev

US and Turkey are operating in a grey zone. The alliance is hanging by a thread, but it is too early to pronounce its demise. Transactionalism is the order of the day and it is likely the two sides will work on an issue-by-issue basis

ON October 31, US President Joe Biden and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met on the margins of the G20 gathering in Rome, ending weeks of speculation about whether such a summit would take place. Earlier that month, a short-lived diplomatic crisis had demonstrated just how strained ties between the two countries are. The US ambassador to Ankara David Satterfield and nine other Western envoys had been threatened with expulsion after they called for the release of jailed Turkish philanthropist Osman Kavala — an act the Turkish government perceived as meddling in its internal affairs. Biden and Erdogan's meeting — their second this year — indicated that lines of communication are still open. But it cannot be denied that Turkish-American relations are at an all-time low. From the Turkish side, the perception that the US is an unreliable ally and is in fact seeking to undermine Ankara has been growing and feeding anti-Americanism over the past five to six years. Washington's

decision in 2015 to arm Kurdish forces in Syria affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which Ankara — and its Western allies — consider a "terrorist" organisation, and allegations of US involvement in the attempted coup against Erdogan's government in 2016 have all fuelled this sentiment. From the US perspective, Turkey's decision to foster closer ties with Russia has caused concern. The Turkish purchase of Russian-made S-400 defence systems in 2017 sent shockwaves through Washington, which has been wary of Russia's resurgence. The delivery of the advanced weapons to Ankara in 2019 triggered sanctions against Turkish officials under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) a year later. More importantly, it resulted in Turkey's expulsion from the international consortium behind the development of a new generation of fighter jets, the F-35. Erdogan's recent statements that the Turkish government is looking to buy another batch of S-400 surface-to-air missile systems further incensed Washington. So with all this tension between them, are Turkey and the US on the cusp of a breakup? Probably not. Neither Biden nor Erdogan is pushing for a complete decoupling. Indeed, the Turkish government is hoping to clinch a deal with the Biden administration for the purchase of 40 F-16 fighter jets and 80 modernisation kits to upgrade older military aircraft. Turkey is keen to bring up-to-date its air force which is largely composed of F-16s. It is also keen to recoup the \$1.4bn advance payment it made for the F-35 project. At a moment when all its neighbours, from Greece to Russia to Iran, are upgrading their military capabilities, Turkey cannot afford to lag behind. For all the desire to assert its strategic autonomy, Ankara is still reliant on Western military technology. It is likewise committed to NATO which, in an era of uncertainty and with Russia building up its military strength on the opposite shore of the Black Sea, remains central to national security. No wonder, the majority of Turkish citizens continue to support membership in the Alliance.

Its weakened domestic economy and the rapidly depreciating lira, which has lost 80 percent of its value over the past decade, also highlight Turkish dependence on international financial markets. A divorce scenario with the US will not augur well for economic stability. Had the ambassadors been expelled and had a full-blown crisis with the West ensued, foreign investors would have disposed of lira-denominated assets en masse, sending the currency in free fall. The US also still needs, in the words of State Secretary Anthony Blinken, its "so-called strategic ally". The Turkish military remains key for NATO's eastern flank where Russia poses a formidable challenge. Turkey's sale of Bayraktar TB2 drones to Ukraine, now deployed against the pro-Russian separatists on the battlefield in the Donbas, demonstrates its strategic value. Ankara has also supported all NATO initiatives aimed at reassuring allies in the Black Sea, including regular exercises and rotation of naval ships from the US and other member states of the pact. Last but not least, Turkey's role in the Middle East and North Africa, notably in Libya where it competes with Russia and in Syria, is another reason for Washington not to stonewall Ankara. The same is true of Afghanistan where Ankara has not let go of plans to play a role in securing Kabul airport. US and Turkey are operating in a grey zone. The alliance is hanging by a thread, but it is too early to pronounce its demise. Transactionalism is the order of the day and it is likely the two sides will work on an issue-by-issue basis. Biden and Erdogan will, therefore, be able to cooperate in limited ways in NATO. A deal on the F-16s is not unlikely either, despite opposition in Congress. The US will not be rattled by a new Turkish operation in Syria either if the deconfliction rules established between the two militaries on the ground hold. Yet it would continue to watch warily Turkey's engagement with Russia and, increasingly, China. Biden will be more outspoken on Turkish domestic politics too, unlike Trump. There is bound to be more friction in the future.

Briefs

Govt, PML-N trade barbs

FROM PAGE 01

Quoting the report, he said that orders were given via phone not to release Nawaz and Maryam before the elections, saying that his leader and his daughters were unjustly imprisoned. PML-N leader questioned that if the apex court of the country was involved in such practices then where could one expect to find justice. Earlier, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president and opposition leader in National Assembly (NA) Shehbaz Sharif on Monday has said that explosive news story peels off a thick layer of a grand scheme employed to target party supremo Nawaz Sharif and vice president Maryam Nawaz.

In a post on social-networking website Twitter, the PML-N leader said, "Allah has His own way of revealing the truth. It's yet another vindication of Nawaz Sharif and Maryam in the court of public opinion."

Ex-chief justice of Gilgit-Baltistan apex court Rana Shamim had recorded his statement about former chief justice of Pakistan, Justice (ret'd) Saqib Nisar, before an oath commissioner in London, PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said. Abbasi said Nawaz was sundered from politics after he was disqualified as the prime minister back in 2017. "Three people, including Rana Shamim and Saqib Nisar, are aware of the facts, but the people of Pakistan should also know the truth. If someone meddles with elections, so don't we hold the right to question them?" he said. Abbasi said when the country's chief justice could be involved in such practices, then how could justice be delivered in the country. "I pray that Nisar is not involved in this act. Getting involved in the country's affairs is unconstitutional [...] Nisar had visited hospitals and tried to build dams, thus we have to believe Rana Shamim's statement," he said.

Fawad seeks money trail

FROM PAGE 01

the country to prove Nawaz Sharif a victim. The federal minister further said it was ludicrous claim that a judge having tea, sitting in front of the phone and issuing such instructions in front of a visitor whether to take the bail of an accused or not and the accused was not a common man either, but the chief executive of the country. "Instead of fabricating silly stories and conspiracy theories, the Sharifs should provide money trail for the Avenfield Apartments, which were later given to Maryam Nawaz" Fawad said, adding Maryam had claimed that she did not own any property even in Pakistan. "Now she has to respond to billions of properties surfaced on her name."

Taliban launch operation...

FROM PAGE 01

Monday morning, Taliban provincial police chief Abdul Ghafar Mohammadi told AFP. "So far, four Daesh (IS) fighters have been killed and ten arrested... one of them blew himself up inside a house," he said. A member of the Taliban intelligence agency who declined to be named told AFP at least three civilians were killed in the operation. Local media quoted a Taliban official as saying there had also been a blast in a western suburb of Kabul Monday morning with no casualties.

In the three months since the Taliban came to power, IS-K has been active in Jalalabad, Kunduz, Kandahar and Kabul. Last month the group claimed responsibility for a suicide bomb attack on a Shia mosque in Kandahar that killed at least 60 people and injured scores more. That attack came a week after another deadly mosque blast claimed by IS-K in northern Kunduz province killed more than 60 people. The group on Sunday claimed responsibility for a bomb that destroyed a minibus in Kabul at the weekend killing a well-known local journalist and up to two others.

Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations further solidified: Ambassador

FROM PAGE 1

3. What would you tell us about the 44-day Patriotic War of Azerbaijan?

Armenia for almost 30 years kept under occupation almost 20 percent of my country's territory. The occupation was accompanied with notorious war crimes and crimes against humanity. Armenia committed the Khojaly genocide in February 1992, killing hundreds of civilians, including 106 women and 63 children. 1275 Azerbaijanis were taken hostage, 150 of them are still missing. Armenia's ethnic cleansing has resulted in more than a million Azerbaijanis becoming refugees and internally displaced persons. In 1993, the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions demanding the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of armed forces of Armenia from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. However, these and all other similar resolutions adopted by relevant international organizations, including the UN General Assembly have been ignored by Armenia.

The OSCE Minsk Group was established in 1992 to resolve the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. If the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs had taken decisive steps to force Armenia to end its military aggression against Azerbaijan, their task could have been fulfilled. During the occupation Armenia tried to maintain the status quo. Unfortunately, no international sanctions have been imposed on Armenia to ensure the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions. And the overthrow of the war criminal regime in Armenia in 2018 was not accompanied by real changes, as well.

The Armenian government has made a number of provocative statements and actions, such as "Karabakh is Armenia and period". The then Defense Minister of Armenia openly threatened Azerbaijan with a new war for the new territories. In addition, Armenia pursued a policy of illegal settlement of Armenians mainly from the Middle East, in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, in gross violation of international law. In July 2020, Armenia committed a military provocation on the state border with Azerbaijan. As a result of an artillery strike in the Tovuz region of Azerbaijan, 13 servicemen and



civilians were killed. In August last year, an Armenian sabotage group tried to penetrate through the former line of contact in order to commit terrorist acts against Azerbaijani military servicemen and civilians, but was successfully neutralized. At the General Debates of the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly on September 24 last year, President IlhamAliyev warned that hostile, Azerbaijanophobic statements and provocations of Armenian leadership demonstrate that Armenia was preparing for a new aggression against Azerbaijan. Three days later, on September 27 last year, Armenia launched a large-scale attack on Azerbaijani military positions and civilians. In response, Azerbaijan launched a counterattack on its own territories against Armenia, using the right to self-defense enshrined in Article 51 of the

UN Charter. For 44 days, the Armenian armed forces intensively fired on the regions and cities along and also far from the frontline. Armenia used ballistic missiles such as the Scud and Iskander-M, as well as banned white phosphorus and cluster munitions. As a result of these Armenian war crimes, more than 100 civilians, including 11 children, were killed and more than 450 were injured. More than 12,000 civilian infrastructure, including individual houses, has been destroyed or severely damaged in Azerbaijan. Armenia has attracted mercenaries and foreign fighters from abroad and placed them against Azerbaijan. In total more than 300 cities and villages were liberated on the battlefield. Armenia had to sign an act of capitulation on 10 November 2020. Accordingly, Armenia was obliged to withdraw its troops from the remaining part of Azerbai-

jan's territories, namely Aghdam, Lachin and Kalbajar regions. Azerbaijan has implemented itself the above-mentioned UN Security Council resolutions. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was left in the past. There is no administrative territorial unit called Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. Karabakh and East Zangazur economic zones were established by a presidential decree signed on July 7 this year.

During the occupation, which lasted for almost 30 years, Armenia deliberately destroyed cities and villages, looted and plundered all cultural and religious monuments of Azerbaijan. Armenia has tried to erase the traces of Azerbaijanis living in these areas. The city of Aghdam was destroyed to such an extent that it was called "Hiroshima of the Caucasus". 65 of the 67 mosques in the Armenian-occupied territories were demolished, and the remaining mosques were desecrated while being used as pig and cow barns. Even cemeteries have been destroyed and desecrated. The facts of complete destruction of cities and villages, as well as cultural and religious heritage of the Azerbaijani people have been widely covered by the Pakistani and international media.

Armenia has committed a serious ecocide in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. 60,000 hectares of our forests have been destroyed, lands and rivers have been polluted. Armenia has seriously polluted the transboundary river Oxuchay, causing the degradation of the ecosystem of the riverine territory of Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, some foreign companies are also involved in this environmental crime. They must be held accountable for the illegal exploitation of our natural resources in our previously occupied lands. We have about 4,000 citizens registered as missing during the First Karabakh War. Armenia must inform us about their fate. We have solid evidence that almost all of them were tortured to death by Armenian servicemen in violation of international humanitarian law and buried in mass graves.

The "Azerbaijanophobia" promoted by the government is growing in Armenia. The racist ideology nurtured in Armenian society on the basis of ethnic hatred and demonization is the main cause of ethnic cleansing and unprecedented vandalism in the territories previously occupied by Armenia in Azerbaijan.

Muguruza beats Kontaveit to reach semifinals at WTA Finals

GUADALAJARA: Garbine Muguruza ended Anett Kontaveit's 12-match winning streak with a 6-4, 6-4 victory Sunday that propelled her into the semifinals at the WTA Finals.

Muguruza, who will be playing in her first semifinals of this tournament since 2015, needed the win to advance to the semifinals at the expense of Wimbledon finalist Karolina Pliskova. Kontaveit was already assured of a spot in the semis before her last group-stage match.

Muguruza avenged a recent loss to Kontaveit, who beat her in just 48 minutes in the Kremlin Cup quarterfinals in Moscow last month. "I have been improving and found myself, today I knew that it was a must win match and went out to get it", Muguruza said. "I had to end Anett's streak, she was like invincible in the tour and fortunately I did it".

Muguruza had an early break and then saved two break points to take the first set against Kontaveit, who never appeared settled in the night match.

"She was not a top of her game tonight, I could see it, maybe been already qualified to the semifinals had something to do with it", added Muguruza. The WTA Finals are played in a round-robin format with the top two players from each group advancing.

The semifinals will be played on Tuesday and the final is set for Wednesday at the Centro Panamericano de Tenis in Zapopan.

Pliskova rallied from a set and a break down to beat Barbora Krejickikova 0-6, 6-4, 6-4 in the earlier match to maintain a chance of reaching the semis, but was eliminated with the Muguruza win. "Obviously horrible start, horrible first set. I think was combination of both me not playing really well and (her) playing just amazing," Pliskova said. "I'm just proud that I was able to reset and start from zero and find a bit my game, although it was not great."

French Open champion Krejickikova finished the singles tournament 0-3, but remains alive in the doubles along with Katerina Siniakova.

"I think I had amazing season. I was doing really well throughout the season and right now it's very disappointing," Krejickikova said. "I really want to do well in doubles with my partner. I'll just keep going, stay focused."

The WTA Finals are being played in Guadalajara for this year only, with the event scheduled to return in 2022 to Shenzhen, China. - APP



WTA calls on China to investigate Peng allegations

LONDON: The Women's Tennis Association on Sunday called on China to investigate allegations of sexual assault made by Peng Shuai against a former Chinese vice premier, while also demanding an end to censorship of the former top-ranked doubles player. Peng, one of China's biggest sporting stars, alleged on her Weibo social media account on Nov 2 that Zhang Gaoli, who used to be a member of the Politburo Standing Committee - China's top decision-making body - coerced her into sex and they later had an on-off consensual relationship. Peng, 35, said in the post, which was deleted about half an hour after it was published, that she could provide no evidence to back her allegations. China's internet is heavily censored and the private lives of top leaders are an especially sensitive subject. Zhang, now 75, was a vice premier between 2013 and 2018 and served on the Politburo Standing Committee between 2012 and 2017. Concerns among the global tennis community have grown as Peng, the first Chinese player to top the world rankings when she was doubles number one in 2014, has not been seen since the post. The US-based WTA, which runs the women's tour, said in a statement that it would seek a "full, fair and transparent investigation into sexual assault allegations" against the former Chinese leader. "The WTA player, PengShuai, are man and CEO Steve Simon. "PengShuai, and all women, deserve to be heard, not censored. Her accusation about the conduct of a former Chinese leader involving a sexual assault must be treated with the utmost seriousness." The China's State Council Information office and the Chinese Tennis Association did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the WTA's statement. Simon told the New York Times on Sunday that he had talked directly to Peng but that he surances that he had received assurances from the Chinese Tennis Association that she was safe "and not under threat". The International Tennis Federation (ITF) men's tour did not immediately respond to requests for comment. China has been the focus of the WTA's most aggressive expansion over a decade and hosted nine tournaments in the 2019 season with a total \$30.4 million prize money on offer. - Agencies



'Food crisis legacy of past govt'

FROM PAGE 01

a legacy from the former regime, and that is malnutrition," Deputy Health Minister Abdul Bari Omar said at a press conference in Kabul. He cited World Food Programme figures showing 3.2 million Afghan children under the age of five will be acutely malnourished by the end of the year, and said the previous US-backed government did not do enough to avert disaster.

"For twenty years, the health sector has remained dependent on foreign aid. No basic work has been done ... so the healthcare infrastructure and its resources could survive," he said.

Opp. finalises strategy ahead of joint session

FROM PAGE 01

Awami Party chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai, and others were in attendance. Earlier, JUIF leader Hafiz Hamdullah had said that PDM President Maulana Fazlur Rehman had convened the virtual session to discuss important issues such as the electronic voting machines, electoral reforms, the NAB ordinance, and granting the right to vote to overseas Pakistanis. Hamdullah said leaders of the Opposition alliance will consult each other on anti-government protests and finalise the PDM's strategy regarding it.

Shehbaz gears up contacts with opposition

FROM PAGE 01

Amir Haider Hoti, Shafiq Tareen and Balochistan Party's leader Dr Abdul Malik Baloch and Mohsin Dawar. He also held talks with JI Amir Sirajul Haq on phone. In his telephonic conversations with different leaders, Shehbaz appreciated the united efforts of the opposition and thanked the opposition parties. He was of the view that the opposition parties had shown an unprecedented unity in the national interest. Shehbaz held that the principled stance of the opposition and the government's allied parties had made the government to retreat. He was optimistic that the united front of the opposition would defeat the black laws and mal intention of the government in the upcoming joint session of parliament.

Late Mitrovic header earns Serbia World Cup berth

LISBON:Serbia clinched an automatic berth in the 2022 World Cup finals after a 90th-minute header by halftime substitute Aleksandar Mitrovic gave them a comeback 2-1 win over Portugal in their Group A qualifier on Sunday. The result lifted Serbia into the top spot on 20 points, three more than second-placed Portugal who only needed a draw to finish top on goal difference and qualify but will now head into the March playoffs. Mitrovic beat home goalkeeper Rui Patrício with a downward header at the far post to spark wild celebrations on Serbia's bench after visiting captainDusanTadic had canceled out an early Renato Sanches opener for Portugal. Jubilant fans thronged central Belgrade, bringing traffic at the main Republic Square to a halt as they waved Serbian flags and hooted their car horns. With Portugal's talismanic captain Cristiano Ronaldo stifled, they produced little upfront and midfielder Joao Palhinha conceded the home side were



below par. "We have to take responsibility because we had a poor game," he told Portugal's RTP television.

"We just defended in the second half. Credit to Serbia, they played very well but we had the capacity to be on top. Everyone in the dressing room is disappointed but we have to look ahead to the playoffs now because we are more than good enough to be in the World Cup. "You can't win all the time. Difficulties are part of life and this feeling should give us more strength."

The home side made a dream start in the second minute after Bernardo Silva robbed NemanjaGudelj of the ball in the danger zone and fed Sanches, who drove it past goalkeeper PredragRajkovic from 15 metres. Unfazed by falling behind, the visitors came close when DusanVlahovic, who preferred Mitrovic as the lone striker, hit the post before Patrício gifted Serbia the equaliser. - APP

Novak Djokovic makes winning start in Turin

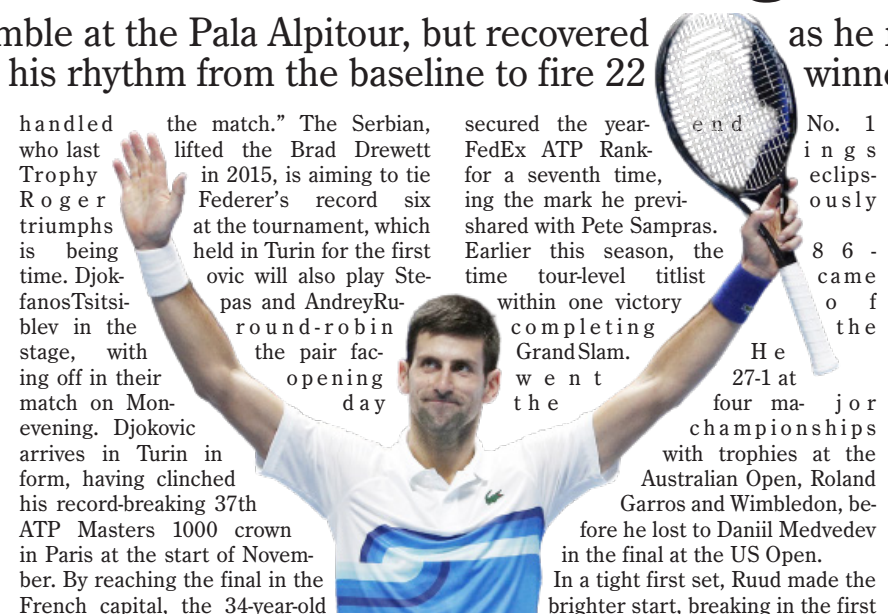
Top seed took an early tumble at the Pala Alpitour, but recovered in the first set, finding his rhythm from the baseline to fire 22 winners to secure victory

TURIN: Novak Djokovic began his bid for a sixth Nitto ATP Finals title with victory on Monday, downing Casper Ruud 7-6(4), 6-2 in Turin to move to 1-0 in Green Group action. The top seed took an early tumble at the Pala Alpitour, but recovered as he rallied from a break down in the first set, finding his rhythm from the baseline to fire 22 winners to secure victory after one hour and 33 minutes. "I recovered from that fall on that break point in that first game," Djokovic said in his on-court interview. "It was very strange. I played a good forehand and came into the net and had a pretty comfortable overhand and I slipped, tripped, dropped my racquet and lost my serve. The conditions here are quite tough. If you lose your serve, it is difficult to get it back. But I managed to stay in. I am very pleased with the way I

handled the match." The Serbian, who last lifted the Brad Drewett Trophy in 2015, is aiming to tie Roger Federer's record six triumphs at the tournament, which is being held in Turin for the first time. Djokovic will also play Stefanos Tsitsipas and Andrey Rublev in the round-robin stage, with the pair facing each other on Monday evening. Djokovic arrives in Turin in form, having clinched his record-breaking 37th ATP Masters 1000 crown in Paris at the start of November. By reaching the final in the French capital, the 34-year-old

secured the year-end No. 1 ATP Rank for a seventh time, the mark he previously shared with Pete Sampras. Earlier this season, the time tour-level titlist won within one victory of completing the Grand Slam. He went on to win four major championships with trophies at the Australian Open, Roland Garros and Wimbledon, before he lost to Daniil Medvedev in the final at the US Open. In a tight first set, Ruud made the brighter start, breaking in the first

game when Djokovic found the net with a backhand after he stumbled and dropped his racquet during the point. However, the top seed quickly regrouped, breaking back as he hit his groundstrokes with great depth and accuracy to force a tie-break. The Serbian then clinched the 61-minute opening set with a forehand winner down the line. Fueled by momentum, Djokovic raced ahead at the start of the second set, as Ruud struggled to hit through the World No. 1. Djokovic won 83 per cent (15/18) of his first-serve points in the set to seal victory. Ruud is making his debut at the Nitto ATP Finals, having won an equal-tour-best five titles on the season. The 22-year-old, who is the first Norwegian to compete in the tournament's 51-year history, was aiming to clinch his first career Top 10 hard-court win. - Agencies



Briefs

PNS ALAMGIR
visits Port
Aksaz Turkey

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship ALAMGIR Monday visited AKSAZ Naval Base, Turkey and participated in Multinational Exercise DOGU AKDENIZ-21 conducted in Mediterranean Sea.

Vice Admiral Zahid Ilyas represented Pakistan Navy in Multinational Exercise, said a Pakistan Navy media release received here.

Upon arrival at port, the ship was received by Naval Attaché of Pakistan at Ankara, Commander of 2nd Turkish Destroyer Squadron and officials from Turkish Navy. During the port stay, Mission Commander Commodore Azhar Mahmood along with Commanding Officer PNS ALAMGIR called on Turkish Navy high ranking officials including Commander Turkish Maritime Forces.

During the interactions, matters of mutual interest were discussed and contribution of Pakistan Navy to regional peace and maritime security were acknowledged by the host naval dignitaries.

The Mission Commander conveyed well wishes from Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for the people of Turkey in general and Turkish Navy in particular.

The visit of PNS ALAMGIR comprised harbour and sea phases. During harbour phase table top discussions on professional matters and bilateral interactions were held. Whereas, sea phase included participation in Multinational Maritime Exercise DOGU AKDENIZ-21 that included wide range of naval drills and operations. — APP

EU, Uzbek
Afghan envoy
holds talks

WEB DESK

TASHKENT: Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan Ismatulla Irgashev held talks with the EU Special Representative for Afghanistan Thomas Niklasson in Brussels.

During the conversation, the sides discussed the efforts of Uzbekistan and the European Union to peacefully resolve the Afghan crisis, as well as to provide the country with humanitarian and other assistance as soon as possible.

Thomas Niklasson highly appreciated the assistance of Uzbekistan in evacuating citizens of the EU member states from Afghanistan and expressed interest in further actively cooperating with our country in establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan, as well as in creating a humanitarian hub in Termez. The parties also exchanged views on the current situation in Afghanistan, the development of a consolidated position of the international community, both in relation to the new authorities of the country, and the prevention of a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

Argentina's
opp scores win
in midterm
elections

WEB DESK

BUENOS AIRES: President Alberto Fernández suffered a severe setback in Argentina's midterm elections held Sunday amid widespread anger over high inflation and rising poverty, with his governing coalition losing control of the Senate and threatened with falling from its position as the biggest bloc in the Chamber of Deputies.

The triumph by the center-right coalition Together for Change will mean a tough final two years in office for the president, who must deal with the acute social crisis and also seek a debt refinancing agreement with the International Monetary Fund to stabilize the economy. It could also intensify divisions within the governing coalition.

Fernández's Front for Everyone coalition, which is made up of a collection of Peronist and leftist parties, has been able to pass laws by controlling the Senate while relying on support from independents in the lower house, where the coalition held a strong minority.

Iraq to repatriate citizens
stranded at Belarus border

Regular air links between Baghdad and Minsk were suspended in August, prompting people to travel through Turkey, Qatar, the UAE and Egypt, according to the Iraqi foreign ministry

FOREIGN DESK

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi government will begin repatriating its citizens stuck on the Poland-Belarus border, as people there face freezing conditions and lack vital supplies. Iraqi government officials confirmed repatriation flight would begin on Thursday for those who wish to return, on a "voluntary" basis. "Iraq will carry out a first flight for those who wish to return voluntarily," Iraqi foreign ministry spokesman Ahmed al-Sahaf said on Sunday.

He did not say how many people would be able to board the first Minsk-Baghdad flight, but said Iraq had recorded 571 of its citizens stuck on the border who have expressed willingness to be repatriated. Thousands of migrants from the Middle East, including some from the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, are camped out on both sides of the Poland-Belarus border.

Western countries have accused Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's government of engineering the crisis by encouraging migrants to come to Belarus and attempt to breach the border.

Lukashenko, who has been in power for nearly 30 years and led a crackdown against his opponents, denies the charges and blames the West.

President Putin must
follow up his words

BERLIN: Germany on Monday called on Russia to put its rhetoric into practice and exercise its influence over Belarus to end the migrant crisis. Speaking to reporters in Brussels, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas spoke cautiously about Russian President Vladimir Putin's offer for help to resolve the crisis at the EU borders.

"Putin is certainly the one who can simply use his influence on Lukashenko to end this really inhuman attempt," he said, accusing Belarus of using migrants as a political tool to exert pressure on the EU.

"If Putin can provide help, he should do so. He should not only talk about it, he should follow up his words with deeds," he added. Tensions between EU member states and

Belarus escalated last week after hundreds of migrants, mostly from the Middle East countries, headed to the country's western border with Poland, tried to breach the barriers. Poland accused Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko of engaging in a form of "hybrid warfare" and using migrants as a weapon to destabilize European countries.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has dismissed claims that Kremlin is engineering the recent migrant crisis, saying Moscow is ready to facilitate efforts to resolve the problem. "We are ready to do our utmost [to help resolve the situation] if there is anything we can do," he told state channel Rossiya-1 on Nov. 13. — Agencies

Russian President Vladimir Putin has rejected accusations of being involved and has urged the European Union to speak directly to Belarus.

Regular air links between Baghdad and Minsk were suspended in August, prompting people to travel through Turkey, Qatar, the UAE and Egypt, according to the Iraqi

foreign ministry. The United Arab Emirates barred Afghan, Syrian, Yemeni and Iraqi citizens from flights to Minsk on Monday.

On Friday, Turkey banned the same group of citizens from flying from its airports to Belarus, while private Syrian carrier Cham Wings Airlines on Saturday halted flights to

Minsk. European Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas is expected to travel to Baghdad on Monday to discuss the issue. EU foreign ministers are due to meet on Monday in Brussels to widen sanctions on Belarus.

Josep Borrell, EU foreign policy chief, said ministers would approve sanctions on anyone taking part in migrant trafficking, including airlines, travel agencies and officials. "Lukashenko got it wrong. He thought that by acting in this way he would twist our arm and force us to cancel the sanctions," he told the Journal du Dimanche, a French weekly. Belarusian officials said some 2,000 people, including pregnant women and children, are living in the biggest camp near the village of Bruzgi.

Poland has refused to allow the refugees and migrants in and has accused Belarus of preventing them from leaving. Despite the difficulties, some still make it across the border but are often detained. Poland is reportedly carrying out pushbacks, sending those who breach the frontier back to Belarus.

Aid agencies say at least 10 refugees and migrants have died on the border so far — but warn this number is likely underestimated. They say a humanitarian crisis is unfolding as temperatures drop below freezing, urging a de-escalation.

4 held over
Liverpool
'terrorist'
blast

LIVERPOOL: Police in northwest England on Monday said they were treating a deadly blast outside a hospital in Liverpool as a "terrorist incident" involving a homemade bomb that was reportedly foiled by a quick-thinking taxi driver.

Russ Jackson, in charge of counter-terrorism policing in the region, said the motivation for Sunday's blast in a taxi was unclear.

But he said the improvised explosive device, which ignited in the cab, turning it into a fireball, was "built by the passenger" who died.

The explosion outside the Liverpool Women's Hospital came just minutes before a Remembrance Sunday service at nearby Liverpool Cathedral. That has prompted speculation the event was the intended target.

Jackson told a news conference: "We cannot at this time draw any connection with this but it is a line of inquiry, which we are pursuing."

"Although the motivation for this incident is yet to be understood, given all the circumstances, it has been declared a terrorist incident." Three men aged 21, 26 and 29 were arrested under the Terrorism Act soon after the explosion in the nearby Kensington area of the city and were taken for questioning. — APP

Myanmar
frees jailed
American
journalist

YANGON: American journalist Danny Fenster has been freed from prison in Myanmar, according to a Myanmar military official and former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson, who had been on a private humanitarian visit to the country.

Fenster's release comes just days after the former managing editor of Frontier Myanmar — an independent news outlet that covered current affairs, business and politics — was sentenced to 11 years in prison by a military court in Myanmar.

Myanmar's military spokesperson Zaw Min Tun told CNN Business that the journalist "has been released and deported. We will release details why he was released later."

According to a statement released by Richardson on Monday, Fenster will be making his way back to the United States "through Qatar, over the next day and a half." — Agencies

Women's
educational
campaign
kicks off in
Uzbekistan

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: Association of Business Women of Uzbekistan "Tadbirkor Ayol" has launched a large educational campaign, timed to coincide with 21 November - World Women's Entrepreneurship Day. Women's Entrepreneurship Week, held in our country from 16 to 21 November will undoubtedly provide new opportunities for women who want to realize their entrepreneurial ideas.

Gulnara Makhmudova, Chairperson of the Association of Business Women of Uzbekistan "Tadbirkor Ayol", noted in her speech that today there are 68 regional branches of the Association in the country, more than 200 specialists make a significant contribution to the development of women's entrepreneurship. For a number of years, the Association of Business Women of Uzbekistan "Tadbirkor Ayol" has widely celebrated this date. And this year a double holiday will be celebrated on this day - the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Tadbirkor Ayol Association. This year, the traditional week will cover exciting online and traditional events in various regions of the country, in which not only experienced women business representatives will take part, but also young girls who are just starting out in business. It will not be a mistake to say that the date of 21 November - as a means of acquaintance, exchange of experience and discussion, in a sense, ensures the unity of women all over the world. Festive events dedicated to the significant date will be held throughout the whole week.



JAKARTA: Dr. Muhammad Najib, ambassador-designate of Indonesia to Spain, called on ambassador Muhammad Hassan and discussed matters of mutual interest. — DNA

Delhi prepares
for new lockdown
amid pollution

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court has told authorities to shut offices in the capital and nearby cities, allowing millions to work from home as officials seek ways to reduce hazardous air pollution that led to the closure of schools. Its order on Monday came after city authorities in New Delhi, which has been battling a toxic haze since early November, took emergency measures on Saturday, ordering the closure of schools and halting building work for four days.

"We direct the centre and states of the national capital region to impose work from home for the meantime," said Chief Justice NV Ramana, head of a panel of three judges considering a petition by a city resident. The Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 343 on a scale of

500 in Delhi on Monday, a sign of "very poor" conditions that can cause respiratory illness on prolonged exposure. The capital experienced severe conditions late last week as temperatures dropped and the index reached 499.

The AQI surged to 451 on a scale of 500 in the wake of Hindu festival of Diwali in the first week of this month, during which firecrackers were burned across India.

The AQI measures the concentration of poisonous particulate matter PM2.5 in a cubic metre of air. Anything above 100 is considered unhealthy. Avikal Somvanshi, Programme Manager of Clean Air Campaign at New Delhi's Center for Science and Environment, told media that a lockdown might help as vehicles contribute to 15 percent of Delhi's air pollution.

NATO warns Russia over
Ukraine military build-up

AGENCIES

BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned Russia on Monday that the western military alliance was standing by Ukraine amid a large and unusual concentration of Russian troops on Ukraine's borders. Stressing that the important thing now was to prevent situations from spiralling out of control, Stoltenberg urged Russia to be transparent about military activities, to reduce tensions and prevent an escalation.

"We have to be clear-eyed, we need to be realistic about the challenges we face. And what we see is a significant, large Russian military build-up," Stoltenberg told a news conference with Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba in Brussels. He said he did not want to speculate about Russia's intentions but added: "We

see an unusual concentration of troops, and we know that Russia has been willing to use these types of military capabilities before to conduct aggressive actions against Ukraine."

The Russian troop movements have over the past days spurred fears of a possible attack. Moscow has dismissed such suggestions as inflammatory and complained about increasing activity in the region by the NATO transatlantic alliance.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and says the waters around it belong to Moscow now, despite most countries continuing to recognise the peninsula as Ukrainian. Russian-backed separatists took control of Ukraine's eastern Donbas region that same year and soldiers on both sides continue to be regularly killed in the conflict there. The troop border build-up



- which Ukraine last week estimated at 100,000 - was dangerous, said Stoltenberg, because it reduced the amount of warning time, should Russia decide to "conduct a military aggressive action against Ukraine."

supported and helped by Russia," he said.

A NATO source, asked to describe how Russia is going about deploying its military equipment towards Ukraine, said: "large equipment such as tanks, self-propelled artillery and infantry fighting vehicles is moved at night to avoid tell-tale pictures showing up on social media as they did during the Russian military build-up in spring."

"It can go either way," Lithuania's foreign minister Gabrielius Landsbergis told reporters, also on Monday, on the margins of a meeting with his European Union counterparts. The West cannot exclude a Russian attack on Ukraine while international attention is focused on the Belarus migration crisis, or that Russia establishes a permanent military presence in Belarus, he said. "I would not exclude that as a possibility," he said.

Turkey, Iran to strengthen co-op in security

"We want to improve our deep-rooted relations with Iran, and our cooperation in other global issues as well as in our region"

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: In terms of human trafficking, terrorism and security we believe that there is much we can do, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu stated Monday during a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Tehran, as he underlined that Turkey and Iran aim to develop both regional and global cooperation.

"We want to improve our deep-rooted relations with Iran, and our cooperation in other global issues as well as in our region," he said. Underlining there are important developments in the region, Çavuşoğlu said: "For this reason, it is more important than ever that we continue our dialogue and cooperation on regional issues. Afghanistan is one of them. We must continue to work for a political solution in Syria. Iraq is our neighbor. There are developments in the Gulf, the problem in Yemen continues, we desire to work closely with Iran on these issues, especially the 3+3 format, for the stability of the South Caucasus." He also expressed the two countries' satisfaction with the peaceful elections held in their joint neighbor Iraq.

"I think we can make a significant contribution



to the stability of Iraq as two countries. We will continue our cooperation in the Astana format in Syria. We would like to hold meetings both at the level of leaders and at the level of foreign ministries in the coming period," he added. Regarding Afghanistan, Çavuşoğlu also said the two countries both aim for permanent peace and stability in Afghanistan.

"When we look at regional issues, our views

overlap with Iran on many issues and we are concerned about the current situation in Afghanistan. The humanitarian crisis, on the one hand, economic distress, on the other hand, there are difficulties. It is our desire (for Afghanistan) to establish an inclusive government," he said.

Noting that bilateral relations were discussed in detail, Minister Çavuşoğlu said: "Today, to

gether with my brother Hossein and our delegations, we also reviewed the preparations for the seventh meeting of the High Level Cooperation Council, and upon Iran's proposal, our delegations will work to determine our roadmap for long-term comprehensive cooperation." Most recently, the interior ministers of Turkey and Iran last month signed a memorandum of understanding designed to prevent the terrorist and illegal activities the countries face, particularly along their borders.

Faced with a new potential migrant wave due to the instability in Afghanistan, Turkey has maximized measures on its eastern border with Iran. Turkey is continuing efforts to bolster the security of its border with Iran to prevent any migrant influx in the face of the recent developments in Afghanistan. The beefed-up border measures in Turkey, which already hosts nearly 4 million Syrian refugees and is a staging post for many migrants trying to reach Europe, began as the Taliban started advancing in Afghanistan and took over Kabul following the United States' withdrawal.

Turkey is not the only country putting up barriers. Its neighbor Greece has just completed a 40-kilometer fence and surveillance system to keep out migrants who manage to enter Turkey and try to reach the European Union.

Briefs

All set to table electoral reforms bill

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Monday said all the coalition

government partners were unanimous to pass the electoral reforms bill that would be tabled in a joint sitting of the Parliament, scheduled to be held on Wednesday. "All the coalition partners including Pakistan Muslim League-Q, Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan have agreed on the bills [related EVMs and I-voting] to be tabled in the joint session of the Parliament," he said while talking to media persons after a meeting here at the Prime Minister House.

The minister said it was the dream of Prime Minister Imran Khan of introducing Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in the elections as it would ensure transparency and resolve the issue of mistrust in the electoral system. Sheikh Rashid said Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Minister for Science and Technology Shibli Faraz, and Advisor to Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Babar Awan always briefed Prime Minister Imran Khan in every cabinet meeting on EVMs.

He said the PM Imran Khan had answered all questions of the coalition partners in today's meeting. — APP

EG Pakistan's 3-day ITIF Trade & Industrial Fair today

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Spokesman of Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan (EGP) has organized 3-day 17th ITIF Asia, the International Trade & Industrial Fair from 16-18 November, 2021 here today. On the occasion, Governor Sindh Imran Ismail has been invited as Chief Guest of the program. While the Guest of honors H.E. Mr. Andrei Metelitsa, Ambassador Republic of Belarus and H.E. Mr Hassan Nourain, Consul General of Iran would also attend the international Trade and Industrial Fair which will be remain continued for three days event. It is pertinent to be mentioned here that since COVID-19 pandemic the ITIF Asia was postponed since long.

The International Countries among Belarus, Iran and others have participated in this event.

No increase in petrol prices till November 30

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority has maintained the petrol prices after its summary to petroleum division for an upward revision about Rs5- to 8 was shunned by the Premier.

The notification for the prices for Nov 16 onwards to remain the same, said the notification after Prime Minister Imran Khan disapproved of the hike recommendations. The premier told OGRA to send the sales tax adjustment matter to the cabinet instead.

OGRA had recommended the price increase of Rs5 for both petrol and diesel which the premier office turned down. The prime minister took a decision in order to provide relief to the masses, the federal government has said. The prices of petroleum products are fixed by the government for 15 days. Earlier on November 5, the government had jacked up the prices of petrol and diesel by more than Rs8 per litre, days after the prime minister had announced a relief package for the masses.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkey ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul, Director General Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey Asif Hussain Memon, Turkish Defence Attache and Representative of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Mrs. Dilshad Senol, cutting cake to celebrate National Day of TRNC. — DNA

TRNC celebrates Independence Day

FOREIGN DESK

LEFKOŞA: The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on Monday celebrated the 38th anniversary of its foundation with special events, achieved after many years of suffering under the oppression of the Greek side. TRNC President Ersin Tatar and Turkey's Vice President Fuat Oktay attended the ceremonies held in the capital Lefkoşa (Nicosia).

Speaking there, Oktay said that the Greek Cypriot side announced that they will start unilateral hydrocarbon studies in the Mediterranean again, adding: "Don't worry, we will not leave them alone, we will continue our drilling works from where we left off. We do not hesitate from anyone. Those who seek adventure in the Eastern Mediterranean get the answer."

Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu in a Twitter message marked the special day and said, "We will continue to walk shoulder to shoulder with our Turkish Cypriot brothers in the TRNC's fight for the future and independence!" Deputy Foreign Minister Yavuz Selim also said, "Turkey, on the basis of international law, will always continue to be the unconditional and unshakable supporter of the TRNC and its people, as a guarantor of the Turkish people of Northern Cyprus, both at the table and on the field."

Saudi Arabia donates two Mosques

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia has donated King Abdul Aziz Mosque in Mansehra and King Fahd Mosque in Muzaffarabad to the Pakistani government and the brotherly Pakistani people. The handing over ceremony of the gift was held in Islamabad Monday. Among others, Minister for Religious Affairs Noor-ul Haq Qadri and Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Bin Said Al-Maliki were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, the Minister for Religious Affairs said the two mosques had been damaged in the 2005 earthquake, and the local people wanted their reconstruction. He said both the mosques have been reconstructed by Saudi Arabia as a gift to the people of Pakistan.

The Minister said Saudi Arabia was among the leading countries that helped Pakistan during the 2005 earthquake. He said Saudi Arabia has the honor to construct mosques all over the world. Noor-ul Haq Qadri, on behalf of the government and the people of Pakistan, thanked the Saudi Government and the people of Saudi Arabia for this valuable gift.

Speaking on the occasion, the Saudi Ambassador said Saudi Arabia has always supported Pakistan in the hour of need. Later talking to the media, the Ambassador said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have deep political and economic ties, which will further grow in days to come.

Pak all set to welcome Sikh pilgrims

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan, on Monday is all set to welcome Sikh pilgrims to the country.

According to details, the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan has granted permission to Sikh pilgrims of various countries including India, Afghanistan, USA, Britain, Canada to visit Pakistan and celebrate the 552 birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak. Ten Afghan Sikh pilgrims which include four men and six women, will enter the premises of Pakistan through Turkham border. Government of Pakistan (GOP) mentioned that it has always respected the religious sentiments of Sikh community. Meanwhile, Indian Sikh pilgrims will reach Pakistan on November 17 through Wagah border Lahore and will also visit Darbar Kartarpur Sahib during the birth anniversary celebrations.

Allies' reservations over EVM dispelled, claim ministers

Fawad Chaudhary said the entire leadership of the allied parties, including GDA, MQM-Pakistan, PML-Q and Balochistan Awami Party was present in the meeting, and are standing with the government

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry has said Monday the joint parliament session has been convened at about 2 pm on Wednesday for which the reservations of government allies have been allayed who will support the bills tabled for electoral reforms. "All our allies, Muttahida Qaumi Movement - Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pakistan Muslim League - Q (PML-Q), have agreed to support our Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) bill," said Chaudhry while briefing media in Islamabad Monday after a meeting of the members of the government's allied parties with Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Minister said the entire leadership of the allied parties, including GDA, MQM-Pakistan, PML-Q and Balochistan Awami Party was present in the meeting, and are standing with the government. He said the reservations of the allies were listened and addressed. Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said it was unanimously decided that a joint sitting of the Parliament would be summoned for

PTI allies, Opp agree to oppose govt bills

ISLAMABAD: Backdoor contacts between the parties, part of the coalition government at the Centre, and the opposition have been restored as both of them are reportedly on the same page when it comes to blocking the passage of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government bills at the joint session of parliament to be held the day after tomorrow (Wednesday, November 17).

Sources told a private television channel that members of both the opposition and coalition parties were determined to oppose the government bills relating to electronic voting machines (EVMs), the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and electoral reforms. The steering committee of the joint opposition in the parliament had written a retort letter to the National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser yesterday (Sunday) in which it demanded legislation with consensus and consultation. According to the TV channel report, the committee members met yesterday and discussed the contents of the letter written by the NA speaker to Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif in detail. A reply to the speaker's letter was written at the meeting in which he was informed about the correct method of legislation in the joint sitting of Parliament. The opposition said in the letter that the government had not followed the procedure laid down for legislation on 21 drafts of the proposed bills. The letter proposed to the Speaker that the parliamentary committee already formed by him of both the Houses of Parliament to consider the entire package of electoral reforms should prepare a package of electoral reforms including Elections (Amendment) Bills 2021 by consensus. — DNA

Wednesday. He said bills pertaining to electoral reforms will be tabled in the session.

He said his while talking to media about the claims by Chief Justice Gilgit Baltistan court Rana Shamim who said former chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice retired Saqib Nisar intervened in cases against ex-premier Nawaz Sharif and his family, and leveraged his authority to delay their bail until after 2018 elections.

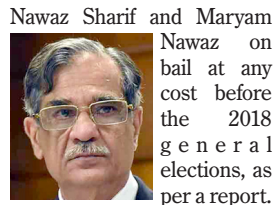
Standing next to him was interior minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad who said Prime Minister Imran Khan himself addressed the objections raised on electoral reforms by the allies. He confirmed the rescheduled joint parliament session to now hold on Wednesday and added that some 8- to 10 legislation will be proposed in the next session with the support of the treasury bench associates.

All our allies stand with his with whom we discussed at length the electoral reforms we want to bring in the parliament, Chaudhry said. Earlier today, Islamabad High Court (IHC) served contempt of court notice to the former CJ GB Rana Shamim over his allegations against the ex-CJP Saqib Nisar.

Saqib Nisar rubbishes allegations

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Former chief justice of Pakistan, Justice (ret'd) Saqib Nisar has rubbished allegations levelled against him by ex-chief justice of Gilgit-Baltistan apex court Rana Shamim of giving instructions to keep Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz in jail till the general elections. Shamim had stated in a notarised affidavit that he had been witness to then CJP Saqib Nisar's direction to a high court judge not to release



Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz on bail at any cost before the 2018 general elections, as per a report. Speaking to a media house, the former chief justice vehemently denied the allegations levelled against him and called the report a "self-motivated story". "I have never spoken to anybody or any high court judge in connection to any matter related to Mian Sahab," he said.

Chinese investors urged to explore CPEC opportunities

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar Monday encouraged the Chinese investors to explore more investment opportunities in industrial, agricultural and information technology areas under the umbrella of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said that due to special relationship between Pakistan and China, the government and people of Pakistan would wish to see much greater investment from China. He solicited the support of

Chinese companies working in Pakistan to attract more foreign direct investment from China in the country. Chairing a meeting of Chinese investors working in Pakistan hosted by the CPEC Authority here, the minister asked the Chinese investors to seek help from the Authority in case of any issue. He said a facilitation center had also been set up in the Authority to provide help to the Chinese investors. Further, he said, a CPEC Cabinet Committee had also been set up to resolve the highest

level policy issues besides establishing a Pak-China relationship Steering Committee to resolve the day to day CPEC related issues.

The minister informed that the Prime Minister Imran Khan was taking keen interest in the CPEC projects and was convening regular meetings in this regard.

SAPM on CPEC Affairs Khalid Mansoor, Chairman Board of Investment (BOI) Azfar Ahsan, and Ambassador of China to Pakistan Nong Rong attended the meeting which was participated by

CEOs and representatives of over 70 Chinese companies. A number of companies joined through video link as well. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on CPEC Affairs briefed the participants on the latest developments with regard to CPEC and stated that Phase-II of the CPEC is aimed to enhance the bilateral cooperation in Industrial, Technological and Agricultural sectors.

He said that business to business collaboration would be the hallmark of this phase of CPEC. — APP

Pakistan 'strong' development partner: EU VP Hautala

The EU, she said, wanted to help Pakistan and other GSP Plus countries to implement the international human rights conventions

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Vice-President of European Parliament Heidi Hautala Monday said European Union (EU) considered Pakistan a 'strong' development partner and wanted to further deepen this bond in diverse fields. Heidi Hautala, also a member of the Committee on International Trade of the European Parliament as well as in charge of the Review of the GSP Regulations, expressed these views in an interview with News and Current Affairs Channel of

Radio Pakistan, a news release said. She said the current visit of her delegation was from South Asia mission that worked closely with countries like Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Vice-President of European Parliament said all the countries that were in GSP Plus status including Pakistan would have to reapply for it at the latest by 2025. "The applicant countries must fulfill the requirements in order to get into regime again," she said, adding the EU was 'very carefully' monitoring the



implementation of the GSP Plus regime in Pakistan and the next monitoring mission would visit in 2022. Answering a question regarding 27 conventions that were to be adhered to under the GSP Plus regime, she admitted that Pakistan was making progress on the

issues of women rights and gender equality but there were still concerns regarding rights of each and every person in the country. The EU, she said, wanted to help Pakistan and other GSP Plus countries to implement the international human rights conventions. She said some new conventions would be added to the present system to encompass other areas that have evolved over the years. In this connection, she referred to Paris Agreement on climate change and accords on good governance, and rights of persons with disabilities among others.

Saudi crown prince announces world's first non-profit city

RIYADH: Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has announced the establishment of the first non-profit city in the world on Sunday.

The city will be a model for the development of the nonprofit sector globally and an incubator for youth and volunteer groups, as well as local and international nonprofit institutions. "This will be the first nonprofit city of its kind, which will contribute to achieving the goals of Misk Foundation in supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and qualifying future leaders by defining nonprofit work in its internal operational concept and in terms of opportunities and youth training programs it will provide. In addition, the project will provide services that contribute to creating an attractive environment for all beneficiaries of the city's offerings," the crown prince said. "Prince Mohammed bin Salman Nonprofit City, which implements the digital twin model, will host academies, colleges, 'Misk Schools,' a conference center, a science museum and a creative center offering a space to support the ambitions of innovators in sciences and new generation technology such as AI, IoT and robotics. It will also feature an arts academy, art gallery, a performing arts theater, a play area, a cooking academy and an integrated residential complex. — APP

