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Somalia values its ties with Pakistan, says Amb Khadija

WB approves \$ 500 mln for RISE program

Tax-free budget a success, says Shibli Faraz



Briefs

PIA reduces domestic fares

KARACHI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced marked reduction in fares for its domestic flights with immediate effect. Spokesman of the national flag carrier sharing details said one way fares to and from Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and other destinations within the country would be Rs.12,000/- inclusive of all taxes. Mentioning that minimum fare for all domestic flights would be Rs.12,000/-, he said this has been decided in the interest of the passengers. - APP

Punjab govt extends lockdown

LAHORE: Punjab government has issued an extension notification regarding lockdown in Punjab due to the coronavirus. According to Primary and Secondary Health Punjab, the notification will be effective immediately and will remain in force till July 15. According to Secretary Primary and Secondary Health Care Captain (Retd) Muhammad Usman, educational institutions, wedding halls, restaurants, parks and cinema halls will remain closed. Social and religious gatherings, sports activities will not be allowed during lockdown. All business locations will remain open from Monday till Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Medical stores, puncture shops, flour mill, tandoor ovens, agricultural workshops will be allowed to remain open 24 hours a day. Call centers will be allowed to open with 50% staff while inter-district transport will be allowed to operate 24 hours a day. Grocery stores will be allowed to open all week, from 9am to 7pm. All churches will open for worship only on Sundays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SBP extends rozgar scheme

KARACHI: Soon after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) took a number of steps to provide economic support to businesses and households. According to a press statement Tuesday, the SBP reduced the financial cost to the private and public businesses and households by reducing the policy rate by a cumulative 625 basis points since 17th March 2020. To improve the cash flow of businesses and households, it allowed deferment of principal amount and restructuring of loans.

India involved in PSX attack, says PM Imran

We had to accumulate Rs5,000 billion initially but because of the virus our accumulation dropped down to Rs3,000 bln

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Tuesday that the Pakistan Stock Exchange attack in Karachi was perpetrated by India in order to 'destabilise' Pakistan. The prime minister was addressing the National Assembly, where he lauded the security forces for thwarting the attack, which could have otherwise caused considerable destruction. Speaking regarding the recently-passed budget, the premier said that the COVID-19 has affected economies around the world and the federal budget this year turned out to be quite an uphill task for the government. "We had to accumulate

Rs5,000 billion initially but because of the virus our accumulation dropped down to Rs3,000 billion," he told the NA. The prime minister added that the government could not incur the losses caused by the 'unprecedented' pandemic. The PM said that despite the criticism, the government reopened the construction sector and imposed 'smart' lockdown in areas with surge in virus cases. "We were not the ones suffering from confusion but those who are not familiar with the woes of poor," he said. The prime minister said that the devastation from the virus is not over as yet and the small and medium scale industries around the world have taken the biggest hit during the pandemic.

"We cannot exactly make a forecast about our tax collection in the coming years, although Hamad Azhar has come up with commendable policies and a financial plan," said the premier. Quoting Charles Dickens' historic opening lines from 'A Tale of Two Cities', the prime minister said: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". Building up on the notion, he said that the country has to make the best of these times by calculated and effective measures. The PM lamented that all the sectors such as power, agriculture, steel mills, import and export were inherited in dismal condition from the former governments.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan speaking in the National Assembly. - DNA

UN chooses Italy to restart tourism

DNA
ROME: Italy has been chosen by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) as the launching pad for the global 'Restart Tourism' drive after the coronavirus lockdowns around the world, reports Italian news agency ANSA. The UNWTO secretary general Zurab Pololikashvili will visit Italy on July 1 coinciding with the planned reopening of the European Union's external borders. Pololikashvili described Italy as "one of our strong allies and a world tourism leader," adding that Italy's tourism sector provides millions of jobs, as well as underlining the importance of the country's "unique cultural heritage, from art to food," the report said.

WB approves \$500 million for RISE

RISE is aligned with the government's COVID-19 crisis response, which aims to scale up spending on health and social protection

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has approved \$500m financing for the RISE program. RISE will help Pakistan strengthen fiscal management, promote transparency & private sector growth, and undertake foundational reforms to transition to low-carbon energy. The announcement was made by Illango Patchamuthu the Country Director of World Bank in Pakistan, in his Tweet. "Pakistan is suffering a significant fiscal shock from the economic fallout from the pandemic and the increased spending on crisis response, including emergency healthcare, social protection, and business support," said Illango Patchamuthu, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "The RISE program supports the government efforts to achieve macroeconomic stability, accelerate long-delayed policy reforms, and sets the course for a strong and competitive economy."

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved \$500 million in financing for the Resilient Institutions for Sustainable Economy program (RISE) to help Pakistan strengthen fiscal management, promote transparency & private sector growth, and undertake foundational reforms in the energy sector to transition to low-carbon energy. These reforms are critical to build fiscal resilience and stimulate recovery from impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. "Pakistan is suffering a significant fiscal shock from the economic fallout from the pandemic and the increased spending on crisis response, including emergency healthcare, social protection, and business support," said Illango Patchamuthu, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "The RISE program supports the government efforts to achieve macroeconomic stability, accelerate long-delayed policy reforms, and sets the course for a strong and competitive economy."

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- Continue on Page 6

Nigerian, Hungarian envoys leaving Pakistan

A.M.BHATTI
ISLAMABAD: Two more ambassadors are set to leave Pakistan after completing their diplomatic term. These ambassadors include High Commissioner of Nigeria Maj.Gen @ Ashimiyu Adebayo Otaniyi and Hungarian ambassador Istan Szabo. The Nigerian high commissioner, according to diplomatic sources, is leaving Pakistan at the end of July. While the Hungarian ambassador is also likely to leave in July. It may be mentioned here that the ambassador of Uzbekistan Furqat Sikikov and Ambassador of Switzerland have already left



Pakistan after completing their tenure. Ambassador Furqat has been elevated to the rank of Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan. He has already assumed charge of his office. His successor has not been announced yet therefore the Military Attaché of the Embassy Col. Saad will be the man in-charge till the time of appointment of new ambassador. Farewell receptions for these outgoing ambassadors and high commissioners will not take place because of a pandemic however some of their colleagues hosted a very selective farewell get-together in order to say goodbye to them.

- Continue on Page 6

38 Indian HC officials head home

SAIFULLAH
ISLAMABAD: Thirty-eight Indian High Commission officials in Islamabad headed homeward on Tuesday through the Wagah border crossing after Pakistan asked India to cut the size of its diplomatic staff here by half in a tit-for-tat response to the neighbouring country's similar move. According to sources, the Indian High Commission officials, including six diplomats, left by two buses and a truck for the Wagah border. The Indian officials also included a first secretary, two second secretaries, and three attachés. A total of 100 officials of the Pakistani High

Commission in New Delhi, including their family members, will come back home through the Wagah border today (Tuesday). Earlier, on June 23, Islamabad had categorically rejected the baseless allegations made by the Indian Ministry External Affairs as a pretext to seek a 50 per cent reduction in the staff strength of the High Commission for Pakistan in New Delhi. The Foreign Office summoned Indian Chargé d' Affaires to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to reject the baseless allegations levelled by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs regarding the violations of Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations by the high commission's officials in New Delhi.

Tax-free budget a success: Shibli Faraz

Measures proposed in the budget would turn the wheel of the economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said on Tuesday that in the face of global recession and national economic challenges, the tax-free budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 was a manifestation of Prime Minister Imran Khan's people-friendly policies. In a tweet, Shibli Faraz said that the measures proposed in the budget would turn the wheel of the economy and open new avenues of employment. The minister said that approval of the budget by a majority of 41 votes was a clear proof that the PTI and its allies were united under the leadership of Imran Khan.

'No differences among govt allies'

The issue of dual citizenship in Portugal and Pakistan has also come very close to the solution

DNA

LAHORE: Speaker Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has said that all the allies are on the same page, those who have spread rumors of differences will fail. A statement issued by Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi said that our alliance is for the solution of people's problems, which will be even stronger than before. Dreams will never come true of those who want change in Punjab and Center, he added. The Speaker Punjab Assembly congratulated the Chief Minister of the Punjab and all the allied parties on the approval of the provincial budget. He said the role of the members of the Assembly in participating in the budget approval process is commendable. He said that Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q) had taken full

part in the approval of the budget in the Center and Punjab and supported as an ally. Meanwhile, a delegation led by President of Pak-Portugal Association Mehboob Ahmed called on the Speaker Punjab Assembly and discussed issues related to overseas Pakistanis and bilateral relations between Pakistan and Portugal. On this occasion, speaker Punjab Assembly said that he has always raised his voice for overseas Pakistanis. "Our focus is to solve the problems of the people and provide relief for them". The leader of the delegation Mehboob Ahmed requested the Speaker to play a role in reviving the visa section of Portugal in Pakistan. The issue of dual citizenship in Portugal and Pakistan has also come very close to the solution. The Speaker assured Mehboob Ahmed that he would discuss the matter with the concerned authorities.

First ever woman Lt. Gen

Lt. Gen. Nigar Johar hails from Panjpir, District Swabi



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Major General Nigar Johar, HI (M) has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General. She is the 1st female officer to be promoted as Lieutenant General. On her promotion she has been appointed as Surgeon General of Pakistan Army. Lieutenant General Nigar Johar hails from Panjpir, District Swabi and is currently serving as Commandant Military Hospital Rawalpindi.

Inside...

ANF is fully committed to eradicate drugs: DG ANF - Page 02

CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani exhorts Sarangi competition winners - Page 03

ICCI lauds DC's role in controlling Covid-19 cases in Islamabad - Page 04

Exploring the beauty of wonderful Indonesia - Page 05

Azerbaijan President and First Lady view conservation of architectural reserve - Page 07

Have good cooperation with Pak parliament: Markus Ferber - Page 08

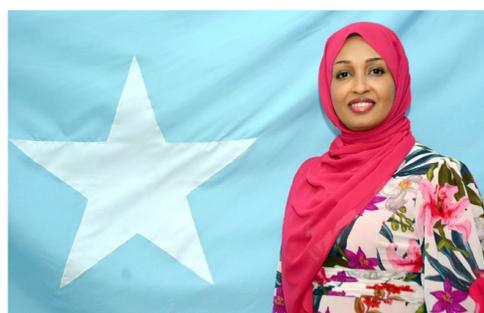
Somalia values its ties with Pakistan: Amb Khadija

Khadija Mohamed Al-Makhzoumi, Ambassador of Somalia said two countries have been developing a fruitful and close cooperation since 1st of July 1960. In 1969, Pakistan and Somalia were among the founding members of the OIC

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Khadija Mohamed Al-Makhzoumi, Ambassador of Somalia said her country greatly valued its relations with Pakistan adding these relations have seen marked improvement in the recent years. She expressed these views in an exclusive interview with daily ISLAMABAD POST. Her interview shall also be published in the coming issue of CENTRELINE magazine. Ambassador Khadija who is also acting dean of Arab countries further said, she had been highly impressed by the warm welcome she received from the Pakistani People. 'It gives me immense pleasure to say that the relations between Somalia and Pakistan are

good, because we uphold the principle of mutual respect and trust and we have a reciprocal consideration'. She said the two countries have been developing a fruitful and close cooperation since 1st of July 1960. In 1969, Pakistan and Somalia were among the founding members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Somalia's relations with Pakistan remained strong in the following years and through the ensuing civil war period, when the Pakistani military contributed to a UN peacekeeping operation in southern Somalia. In 2010, Pakistan tabled a proposal for United Nations Security Council seats for OIC and Arab League states, the latter of which Somalia is also a member. Ambassador said Pakistan and



Somalia are active commercial partners, trading a variety of commodities. In 2008-2009, Somalia exported \$34,822.059 million USD worth of goods to Pakistan, with Pakistan in return exporting \$17,781.883 million USD worth of goods to Somalia. Somalia's main export commodities to Pakistan centered on the country's livestock sector, and in 2009 included \$3.190 million in raw hides

and skins, \$1.044 million in raw sheep and lamb skins, \$0.137 million in sheep/lamb skin leather, \$0.225 million in raw hides and skins of bovine/equine animals, and \$0.033 million in leather of bovine/equine animals. Pakistan's exports to Somalia during the same year included \$53.254 million in rice, \$0.627 million in medicament mixtures, \$10.400 million in non-cocoa sugar confectionery, and \$0.20 million in shawls, scarves, mufflers, mantillas and similar garments. 'In a ceremony held in Islamabad, I, the Somali Ambassador to Pakistan, and the former Pakistani Interior Minister, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, signed the agreement in 2018 in the presence of His Excellency the former Prime Minister of Pakistan H.E. Mr. Shahid Khaqan

Abbasi and Mr. Usman Y Mobin, the Hon'ble Chairman of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA). This Agreement will assist Somalia in registering its citizens, immigration services, and other e-Government solutions'. Talking about Pakistan's look Africa policy she said, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan has done well by organizing a conference of the country's envoys in the African continent with a view to deliberating on issues relating to enhanced cooperation with them. The move is timely in the sense other countries of the world especially the United States and China are focusing more on Africa as its economies are considered as 'lions on the move'.

- Continue on Page 6

Briefs

Medicinal imports decrease by 12.17%

ISLAMABAD: The imports of medicinal products during the eleven months of ongoing fiscal year (2019-20) witnessed decrease of 12.17 percent as compared to the corresponding period of last fiscal year.

Pakistan imported medicinal products of worth US \$ 885.933 million during July-May (2019-20) as compared to the imports of US \$1008.668 million during July-May (2018-19), showing negative growth of 12.17 percent, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In terms of quantity, Pakistan imported 19,257 metric tons of medicinal products during the period under review as compared to the imports of 21,153 metric tons during corresponding period of last year, showing decrease of 8.96 percent in term of quantity. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the medicinal imports declined by 30.77 percent during May 2020 as compared to the imports of the same month of last year.

The medicinal imports during May 2020 were recorded at \$ 54.911 million against the imports of \$ 79.316 million in May 2019. On month-on-month basis, the medicinal imports also dipped by 26.12 percent during May 2020 when compared to the imports of \$74.326 million in April 2020, the PBS data revealed.

It is pertinent to mention here that the country's trade deficit witnessed significant reduction in eleven months of current financial year and declined by 27.75% as compared to the corresponding period of last year. — APP

'PTI Govt successfully wiping out conspiracies'

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan Tuesday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government under brave leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was successfully wiping out all internal and external conspiracies against the country.

Nobody is more sincere with the country than PM Imran Khan who wants to take the country out of all crises, he said while speaking to PTV news channel.

He said the corrupt leaders of Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Muslim League-N should present themselves for accountability instead of doing negative politics and misleading public.

Ali Muhammad said Prime Minister Imran Khan had no personal enmity against the opposition parties' leadership, and that he only wishes that the plundered national wealth should be recovered from them. He said that the present government is the most transparent government in the history of Pakistan and determined to root out corruption under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan. — APP

'90% grants linked to COVID-19'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Hamad Azhar on Tuesday said that 90 percent of total supplementary demands for grants for fiscal year 2020-21 were linked to COVID-19 related expenditures.

Responding to opposition members' comments on supplementary grants in the National Assembly here, the minister informed the House that the government reduced the supplementary grants from Rs600 billion in 2017-18 to Rs222 billion in first year of PTI government.

He said during 2017-18, when the PML-N government approved supplementary grants of Rs 600 billion, there was no disaster, COVID-19 or earthquake.

Responding to the opposition's query over supplementary grant for PM House, the minister clarified that since National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) was part of PM House therefore it came under the head of PM House. — APP

ANF is fully committed to eradicate drugs: DG ANF

Anti Narcotics Force & Pakistan Postal Services jointly launch commemorative postage stamp in a ceremony held at Headquarters ANF

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Opening ceremony of Postal Stamp held at Headquarters ANF on 30th June, in which Director General ANF, Major General Muhammad Arif Malik, HI(M), Special Secretary Communication, Mr. Tanveer Ahmed Qureshi, DG Pakistan Postal Services, Mr. Muhammad Ikhlaq Rana and other senior officers of ANF were also present. Anti Narcotics Force in collaboration with Pakistan Postal Services launched Commemorative Postage Stamp on the occasion of International Day against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking.

On this occasion, DG ANF Said that, "I would like to appreciate the efforts of Pakistan Postal Services. The commemorative postage stamp would be a great source of spreading ANF message at national and international levels. He further said ANF is fully committed to eradicate drugs from society".

Special Secretary Communication and DG Pakistan Postal Services appreciated the Zero Tolerance Policy of ANF against drug barons irrespective of their rank and position.

They also praised the countless efforts of ANF and its dedication towards eradication of narcotics and making Pakistan a "Drug Free Country". The Stamps have been issued after the approval of Prime Minister of Pakistan and are available at post offices throughout the country.



Blaze at Jamshoro Grid station causes power suspension

ISLAMABAD: The Spokesman Ministry of Power Division has said that various parts of Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) plunged into darkness due to sudden blaze at 500kV Jamshoro Grid Station of National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) in the wee hours of Tuesday.

Fire broke out in 132 kV switchyard of 500kV Jamshoro Grid Station of NTDC at 1.45 am resulting suspension of power supply to various areas of HESCO, the spokesman said in a statement issued here Tuesday.

He said teams of HESCO

and NTDC immediately rushed to the site and succeeded to restore NTDC 500 kV and 220 kV circuits within two hours beside controlling blaze.

It is pertinent to mention here that teams of NTDC, National Power Control Center and HESCO and CEO HESCO restored the power supply in short time. Owing to close coordination among the teams, power supply to 132 kV grid station was restored within two hours from the national grid, the spokesman said.

Similarly, he said power supply to Karachi was also restored soon after initial tripping. Maximum distri-

bution system of HESCO has been restored and power supply was being provided to the consumers, he added.

The spokesman said that the power division has also sought initial technical report into the fire incident. Meanwhile, Minister for Power Omar Ayub Khan has personally supervised the power restoration operation. The minister appreciated MD NTDC, CEO HESCO and all teams for their efforts to restore the power supply in shortest time.

The minister also lauded GM NPCC and his teams for keeping the whole distribution system stable. — APP

Imran doing politics of ideology

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Ports and Shipping Ali Zaidi on Tuesday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan was doing politics of ideology and leading his followers on the right path.

Speaking in National Assembly, he rejected the statement of PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto that he was involved in corruption.

"If single penny corruption is proved against me I will leave PTL." He said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Imran Khan had given hope to people who were sick of the former rulers. — APP

Muslim identity of IOK under threat

ISLAMABAD: In Indian occupied Kashmir, with the scrapping of Articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian constitution that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir as well protection of citizenship rights to its people, the RSS inspired fascist BJP government in India has started distributing domiciles of the disputed territory among outsiders, lavishly.

According to a report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, today, the distribution of domicile certificates of Jammu and Kashmir among Indian citizens is aimed at changing the Muslims majority status of Jammu and Kashmir into a minority.

The report suggests the centuries-old Muslim identity of the occupied Kashmir is under a constant threat as the followers of Hindutva, a Hindu supremacy ideology, want to convert Kashmir into a Hindu state.

The abrogation of Article 370 and the introduction of new domicile law is a direct attack on Kashmir's demography, it added.

The report cited the findings of international human rights organizations and said that New Delhi was planning a large-scale massacre in the occupied territory to eliminate its predominant Muslim character. The KMS report said that the Indian government had already changed Muslim-names of cities and places in the territory.

At the same time, the report argues, India wants to affect a future plebiscite in the UN-designated disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. — APP

38 Indian officials head homeward

ISLAMABAD: Thirty-eight Indian High Commission officials in Islamabad headed homewards on Tuesday through the Wagah border crossing after Pakistan asked India to cut the size of its diplomatic staff here by half in a tit-for-tat response to the neighbouring country's similar move.

According to sources, the Indian High Commission officials, including six diplomats, left by two buses and a truck for the Wagah border. The Indian officials also included a first secretary, two second secretaries, and three attachés.

A total of 100 officials of the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi, including their family members, will come back home through the Wagah border today (Tuesday).

Pakistan grateful for countries' solidarity

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson for the Foreign Office Aisha Farooqui Tuesday took to her twitter account to extend gratitude to a number of ambassadors, foreign embassies and foreign ministries of different countries who had expressed solidarity with the government and people of Pakistan over a terrorist attack on Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi yesterday.

In a series of tweets, she separately thanked ambassadors of Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, High Commissioners of the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, embassy of the United States, foreign affairs ministries of China and Turkey for their support and solidarity with the government and people of Pakistan. — APP



RAWALPINDI: A vendor displays traditional scarf to be used in hot weather to attract customers at Airport Road. — APP

G-14 illegal settlers given notice to pack up

The notice further said that the Foundation had surveyed 406 built up properties in Sector G 14-1,2 and 3 and paid to the occupants. "It has been observed that despite receiving amounts the occupants have failed to vacate land. After 15 days if these settlements are not removed, the administration shall launch operation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Govt Employees Housing Foundation (FGEHF) has given 15 days to all illegal settlers in Sector G 14 to pack up and vacate the place. The final notice was given through an advertisement published in all leading newspapers of Pakistan a few days ago asking all illegal occupants to vacate land as the Foundation has already paid to them for their built up properties.

The notice further says that if occupants will not remove their settlements or debris, after 15

days the district administration shall then do so through a full scale operation.

The notice further said that the Foundation had surveyed 406 built up properties in Sector G 14-1,2 and 3 and paid to the occupants.

"It has been observed that despite receiving amounts the occupants have failed to vacate land. After 15 days if these settlements are not removed, the administration shall launch operation. The administration shall not be responsible for any loss whatsoever as a result of this operation', the notice further reads. It may be mentioned here that

the Federal Govt Employees Housing Foundation (FGEHF) had announced that 15 year old issue of development of Sector G 14 shall be resolved by end of April 2020.

The FGEHF further said that measurement target in Sector G 14/1 had also been set and responsibilities assigned in this regard.

The housing foundation had made this announcement in response to a number of queries emanating from Prime Minister's Citizen Portal regarding development of Sector G 14 and its sub sectors. The G 14 sector was announced

in 2004 but due to illegal Built Up Properties (BUP) it could not be developed.

The foundation further said land for Sector G 14/1,2,3 was acquired by the DC office Islamabad vide an award under Section 11 of the Land Acquisition Act 1894 in January 2005.

The award for Built up Property in G 14/3 could only be announced in 2014 and supplementary award in 2017. Almost 70 per cent of the area of Sector G 14/3 has been got vacated and development work is being executed on the site.

It further stated, the measurements for BUP are being con-

ducted in Sector G 14/2 and award of BUPs in G 14/2 was done in February 2020.

Similarly measurements for BUP have already started in G 14/1 and award of BUPs is expected by 31 March 2020.

Earlier, FGEHF had decided to accommodate settlers of G 14/1 to G 15 and a summary in this connection was forwarded to the concerned authorities for approval.

Many people who were allotted plots in this particular sector have died while majority of the allottees has sold out plots because they had lost hopes of early development of this sector.

PDMA issues monsoon alerts

The Local Council Board is also directed to ensure timely repair and replacement of such billboard

PESHAWAR: Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has issued monsoon alerts for safety of general public.

PDMA has warned residents of low-lying areas to must keep important and valuable items at a secure and higher place at their homes.

The precautionary measures also include advice to people of ensuring cleaning of roofs and drainage of water along with coating or cement plaster on mud build walls.

Ensure timely relocation from damaged Katcha houses and building in case of rain, adds the warning.

People are also advised to adopt precautionary measures and ensure timely vaccination for protection from disease especially cholera and skin diseases.

An instruction has also been issued to Local Council Board to conduct survey of all the billboards to point out those which can fall due to wind storms.

The Local Council Board is also directed to ensure timely repair and replacement of such billboards having weak structure and can fall due to heavy rain and wind storm.

Meanwhile, PDMA KP has also advised masses to keep themselves abreast from all important announcements made by district government, PDMA and Relief Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in case of emergency due to heavy rain.

Briefs

Metropolitan Corporation employee suspended
 DNA
 RAWALPINDI: The Metropolitan Corporation on Tuesday suspended an employee, Muhammad Ayub, acting foreman distribution south, on account of misconduct and negligence. He will, however, draw his monthly salary during suspension.

Virtual Platform helpful to promote trade: RCCI
 ABID RAZA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), President SAboor Malik has said virtual platforms can be useful in promoting Pakistani products across the globe. "In the current difficult situation, COVID-19, there is an important opportunity for us to re-examine our market and products," he added. Through the virtual platform, the chambers can liaise with the government to identify different sectors and industrial zones, as well as share information with commercial consuls abroad, the president said. In a statement, he said that RCCI has also taken an initiative and organized all Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference and ASPIRE business conference via Zoom video link. He said that the country's exports can be increased by promoting regional trade. There are vast opportunities for bilateral trade with SAARC countries as well as Central Asian states and Afghanistan. "Pakistani products are in high demand in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Through virtual platform meetings can take place with ambassadors and commercial counselors, he suggested.

Housing societies development after NOC

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi, Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Mehmood has directed the private housing societies not to initiate any development work without No Objection Certificate (NOC) issued by the departments concerned particularly Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA). He said, the government was making all out efforts to promote economic activities and facilitate the investors. Solid steps were also being taken to facilitate the construction sector and private housing societies, he said and directed the private housing societies that without taking NOC from the departments concerned particularly RDA, no development work or construction should be started. - APP

Seven gamblers rounded up

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested seven gamblers and recovered Rs 17,230 cash stake money, four mobile phones, a motorcycle and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Waris Khan police team under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO), acting on a tip-off conducted a raid in its jurisdiction and arrested seven gamblers namely Muhammad Qasim, Asif Gul, Umair Hassan, Muhammad Adil, Muhammad Asghar, Muhammad Adnan and Shehryar as they were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. - APP

CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani exhorts Sarangi competition winners

This year's Serena Sarangi Talent Hunt competition had commenced in Ramadan and the theme was Hamd and Naat. The Sarangi jury had picked up three joint winners who were "equal in talent" namely Ayesha Rasheed from Lahore, Osaid Alam from Rawalpindi and Ayesha Tariq from Lahore



ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani met with the joint winners of Sarangi Season 4 and presented them winners certificates and cash prizes in presence of their families. This year's Serena Sarangi Talent Hunt competition had commenced in Ramadan and the theme was Hamd and Naat. The Sarangi jury had picked up three joint winners who were "equal in talent" namely Ayesha Rasheed from Lahore, Osaid Alam from Rawalpindi and Ayesha Tariq from Lahore. The presentation ceremony was held in limited setting due to Covid-19 crisis. Mr. Aziz Boolani congratulated the winners and commended the parents for nurturing the potential of the youngsters whose talent Serena will continue to showcase through Sarangi platform.



AIOU's Executive Council approves annual budget, 2020-2021

ZIA-UL-QAYYUM informed the meeting that the university was extending its services to all areas of the country, and for that purpose constructing its own customized buildings in different parts of the country. He said that construction work of Moro Regional Office (Sindh), Sukkur Regional Office (Sindh) and Muzaffarad Regional office will start soon. He informed that budget allocations have been made in 2020-2021 budget for acquiring land and construction of buildings of regional offices/ centers in other parts of the country as well. The Vice Chancellor told the meeting that the Higher Education Commission (HEC) gives 40-50 per cent grant to other universities

for meeting their recurring budget, whereas the Commission gives us just 4-5 per cent annual grant. He informed that last year the HEC promised a 410 million grant to the AIOU but later on only an amount of 22 million rupees was given to the university, which is even less than one percent of our recurring budget. The Council noticed this anomaly with concern and authorized Prof. Zia-ul-Qayyum to take up the issue with Chairman HEC and even the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education. While appreciating his predecessors at the AIOU for setting up an endowment fund in the university Professor Zia-ul-Qayyum informed the session that AIOU meeting its development budget from this endowment fund. He said that recently the university further solidified its endowment fund by adding 1.5 billion rupees to it. The University's Treasurer informed that the strict austerity measures were taken during the outgoing year to save the University's financial resources. The Executive Council allowed the university for revising the University overtime payment to low-paid employees, particularly those working on second shift. It also approved the proposal of stopping deducting the transport allowance from the employees, during the lock-down period in wake of COVID-19.

ICCI congratulates Iftikhar Malik on assuming charge

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ahmed Waheed President, Tahir Abbasi Senior Vice President and Saif ur Rehman Khan Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Mian Akram Farid Chairman Founder Group have congratulated Iftikhar Ali Malik on taking over charge as President and Zubair Ahmed Malik as Executive Member, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The business leaders hoped that they would play role for further enhancing trade and economic relations among SAARC member states. They said that Iftikhar Ali Malik was a very experienced and seasoned businessman and his election as President SAARC CCI was an honor for Pakistan and a very positive development as he would utilize his abilities and experiences to bring all the SAARC countries further closer and help them increase trade among the SAARC member states. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that Iftikhar Ali Malik has rendered outstanding services for the business community of Pakistan in various capacities including as President Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, President FPCCI and Executive Member SAARC CCI. He said the elevation of Iftikhar Ali Malik as President SAARC Chamber would be beneficial for the economy of Pakistan as he would play a role for enhancing Pakistan's trade and exports with the SAARC region. ICCI President said that SAARC region has great potential for promoting intra-regional trade as it was a big market with a population of nearly 1.7 billion. However, SAARC Region was lacking in regional integration due to which it could not exploit its actual economic potential. He said that the SAARC region needed an investment-friendly environment to promote regional trade. He was of the view that if appropriate steps were taken to remove trade barriers and streamline custom procedures, intra-regional trade in SAARC countries could be increased from current USD 28 billion to over USD 100 billion in few years. He was hopeful that Iftikhar Ali Malik would utilize his position to work for addressing these issues in cooperation of SAARC governments to realize the actual trade potential of SAARC region. He assured that ICCI would extend all possible cooperation to him in his endeavours aimed at further enhancing Pakistan's trade and exports with SAARC member states. - DNA

Condolence Reference held for Prof. Nisar

ISLAMABAD: A special online condolence reference was held for late Prof. Nisar Ahmed Siddiqui, a renowned educationist and founder Vice Chancellor of Sukkur Institute of Business Administration (IBA) who passed away on June 22, 2020. He was a former senior civil servant with Master's from Boston USA. Dr. Fateh Marri, Executive Director HEC, conducted the session. Among many other scholars, it was also attended by Dr. Ishrat Husain, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity, Tariq Banuri, Chairman HEC, Ms. Naheed Durrani, Federal Secretary Climate Change, Mr. Fazalullah Qureshi, former Federal Secretary, Dr. A. Q. Mughal, former Chairman UGC, ED HEC and others. Prof. Nisar Siddiqui, who was also a Member of the HEC's governing body as representative of the Government of Sindh, became the Director of Sukkur Institute of Business Administration in 2004, after gaining wide experience in management, administration and academia at national and international levels. Later he became, founder VC of Sukkur IBA University which is now considered among leading institutions of higher learning in Pakistan.

126 Pak students win erasmus mundus scholarship

ISLAMABAD: The number of Pakistani students selected for the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD) scholarship to study in Europe has gone up almost three fold in the last three years, from 46 in 2017, to 126 for the academic year 2020-21, including 64 men and 62 women. With 126 scholarships out of a global total of 2,542, Pakistan now ranks third in world, having moved up one slot from its fourth position in 2019. A major reason is the awareness campaign launched jointly by the HEC and the EU mission in Pakistan. The total number of applications (2,919) from Pakistan are the highest in the world. The selected students will pursue their studies in 18 leading European countries. The Erasmus Mundus programme aims to promote academic and cultural understanding between the European countries and partner countries. It supports the development of human resources, facilitates international mobility and cooperation, and helps build capacity of higher education institutions across the world. EMJMD programmes encompasses a range of subjects of interest to Pakistan, including the circular economy, microwave electronics and optics, international humanitarian action, vaccinology, children's literature, media and culture, and groundwater and global change, to name a few. Notwithstanding the prevalent uncertainty due to COVID-19 pandemic, HEC is actively engaged in discussions with the EU Delegation to facilitate the start of academic activities by the scholarship awardees, including their travel arrangements. Collaboration is also continuing on other programs in higher education and research, in order to bring the quality and standards of education at par with the global standards.

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Telenor Pakistan donates PKR 25 mln to PRCS for food distribution

ISLAMABAD: In continuation of its COVID-19 relief efforts, Telenor Pakistan has extended its support for food distribution in partnership with Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) to the impacted families by handing over a cheque worth PKR 25 million at the PRC National Head quarter in Islamabad. Telenor Pakistan has made this donation to step up its support to the citizens of Pakistan and assist with building economic resilience for the most vulnerable in society. Through this donation, PRCS will distribute food ration bags to 4,500 families in 9 districts across the country. "Telenor Pakistan stands in unity with 'Har Pakistani' and this is a humble contribution towards ensuring that some of the most affected families get relief during this challenging time" said Irfan Wahab Khan, CEO Telenor Pakistan. "Pakistan Red Crescent Society is playing a

building economic resilience for the most vulnerable in society. Through this donation, PRCS will distribute food ration bags to 4,500 families in 9 districts across the country. "Telenor Pakistan stands in unity with 'Har Pakistani' and this is a humble contribution towards ensuring that some of the most affected families get relief during this challenging time" said Irfan Wahab Khan, CEO Telenor Pakistan. "Pakistan Red Crescent Society is playing a pivotal role in on-ground execution of relief efforts across the country and Telenor Pakistan is pleased to partner with them to ensure the food ration bags reach the deserving individuals and families."

Khalid Bin Majeed, Secretary General PRCS, acknowledged Telenor Pakistan's contribution for COVID-19 relief and particularly for PRCS' response. He further added that PRCS, being auxiliary to the government is on the forefront of fighting this pandemic and augmenting the government's response to the disease. PRCS staff and volunteers are present all across the country, and are involved in awareness campaigns, distributions of PPEs and hygiene kits, quarantine facilities, screening and provision of food packs to the people affected by the pandemic with low or no economic activity. This contribution is in continuation of Telenor Pakistan's pledge of PKR 1.6 billion towards COVID-19 relief efforts. The company and its employees have also donated PKR 50 Million towards Prime Minister's COVID-19 Relief Fund and has started initiatives that provide avenues for online learning/ training and nurturing the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

DC holds meeting over volunteers

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Muhammad Maghis Sanullah Tuesday presided over a meeting to discuss in detail help and assistant to the people through volunteers, under the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), in rural areas. Additional Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Shahab Muhammad Khan, District Health Officer Dr. Faisal Khanzada, Assistant Commissioner Abbottabad Dr. Mujtaba Bharwana, Assistant Director, Local Government, representative from Rural Support Program and Tehsildar Abbottabad, attended the meeting. - APP

Briefs

PIA reduces fares for its domestic flights

KARACHI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has announced marked reduction in fares for its domestic flights with immediate effect. Spokesman of the national flag carrier sharing details said one way fares to and from Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and other destinations within the country would be Rs.12,000/- inclusive of all taxes. Mentioning that minimum fare for all domestic flights would be Rs.12,000/-, he said this has been decided in the interest of the passengers. — APP

Post Offices re-branded with new outlook

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post has re-branded Post Offices in Bahria Town and other areas with new outlook and services including computerization. Pakistan Post has recently taken number of initiatives, besides performing its core business of delivery of mail and remittance of money, an official of Pakistan Post told APP on Tuesday. The new re-branded post offices include uplifting of counters and waiting area for customers. "Computer systems were also installed to make them online and start services like Electronic Money Order Service (EMO) etc. He said that an action plan for the implementation of the agenda had also been finalized and its implementation underway. He said that major reforms and new financial was introduced in the department. — APP

Commerce Ministry clarifies position on PPEs

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Commerce on Tuesday clarified the position on export of Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs) to remove the confusion of exporters to export the allowed items of PPEs. The ministry has been receiving many inquiries from exporters from all over the country regarding the export of Personal Protective Equipments, said a press release issued here. The ministry would like to clarify that export of all PPEs, including hand sanitizers, disposable gowns and gloves, face shields, biohazard bags, goggles and shoe covers, were allowed to be exported. These exportable items may be made from various classes of materials, including woven and non-woven chlorinated polyethylene (CPE), Polypropylene (PP), spunbond and meltblown. It might be recalled that on March 24, 2020, the ministry placed a ban on export of above items as well as a ban on N-95 masks, surgical masks and Tyvek Suits, the press release added. The ban on these items, except on N-95 Masks, Surgical Masks and Tyvek Suits, was subsequently lifted by the Federal Cabinet in the meeting on June 2, 2020. — APP

Anti-locust operation completed over 2.259 mln acres

ISLAMABAD: The anti-locust operations had carried out in 9,089 square kilometers approximately 2.259 million acres across 41 affected districts of the country to eradicate the pests attack and to save agriculture land from its harmful impacts. More than 972 joint teams took part in the anti-locusts operation in 41 districts of the country, according to details released by the National Locust Control Center (NLCC) on Monday. The joint teams of the Ministry of National Food Security, provincial departments of agriculture and Pakistan Army conducting a comprehensive survey and control operation against locusts in different districts of the country and so far 90.24 million acres have been surveyed. — APP

ICCI lauds DC's role in controlling Covid-19 cases in Islamabad

Muhammad Ahmad Waheed thanked the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad for setting up a Facilitation Desk at ICCI by the district administration and hoped that would greatly facilitate the business community in availing ICT related services

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry held a meeting with Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafqat at ICCI and discussed with him various issues of business community to find out their optimum solutions. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Ahmad Waheed thanked the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad for setting up a Facilitation Desk at ICCI by the district administration and hoped that would greatly facilitate the business community in availing ICT related services. He added that Hamza Shafqat has always cooperated with the Chamber in resolving the problems of the business community, which was laudable. Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that Deputy Commissioner ICT has played effective role in controlling the Covid-19 cases in Islamabad and his efforts in this regard



were commendable. He said that Deputy Commissioner along with ICT

Administration was always present at the occasion whenever citizens of Islamabad

abandoned any problems, therefore they will always remember his services with

good memories. He further said that DC ICT has taken all important de-

cision by taking business community on board including lockdown in Islamabad due to which he was quite popular in the business circles.

He said that in recognition of his laudable services for the business community and the citizens, ICCI would present him an award.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafqat said that ICCI has always extended a helping hand to the ICT Administration in resolving the key issues of business community and this approach has greatly helped in addressing issues on time.

He said that the district administration has set up a Facilitation Desk at the ICCI so that business community could avail all services related to DC Office related and the ICT Administration under one roof in the Chamber.

He said that the said Desk will be inaugurated soon that would prove quite beneficial for the business community.

Motorway Police foils smuggle attempt

The accused along with the truck handed over to Misri Banda police station for further investigation

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police on Monday night foiled an attempt to smuggle large quantity of opium, charas. According to the details, the Motorway Police received a tip-off that a Mazda truck TUC 886 was trying to smuggle drugs. Upon receiving the information, the Motorway Police started searching for the truck and found the truck near Colonel Sher Khan Interchange on Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway. However, the truck driver tried to flee the scene along with the truck, on which the motorway police chased the truck and stopped the truck near Wali Interchange and arrested one accused Nawab Jan, while the other accused took advantage of the darkness and escaped. On the search of the truck, 15 kg 120 grams of opium and 9 kg 320 grams of hashish found.

CGSS, Uzbek embassy organize art competition

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad and Embassy of Uzbekistan, Islamabad Jointly organized a Motivational Art Competition for young students based on the theme, "Defeating COVID-19". The young students of age 8 to 13 years were invited to participate. The art competition commenced from 30th March 2020 and ended on 15th May, 2020. About 600 students from all over Pakistan and Uzbekistan participated and sent their creative art work to participate in

the art competition. There were three categories in which students received positions, Pakistan Students, Uzbekistan Students, The Millennium University College (TMUC) students. After careful evaluation the results of the competition were announced. Pakistan Student Category: First Position: Zahra Mustafa Contractor, Karachi, Second Position: Wajihah Shaheen, Karachi, Third Position: Ahmed Arain, Ghokti. Uzbekistan Student Category: First Position: Umurzokova Madina Zafar Kizi, Tashkent, Second Position: Allaberganova Bonukhon Rasulbek,

Khorezm region, Shovot district, Third Position: Musurmonqulova Iroda Anvar Qizi, Angor district of Surkhandarya. TMUC Student Category: First Position: Dua Ahmed, Roots Millennium School, One World Campus, Second Position: Hassaan Tahir, Roots School Millennium, Waterloo Campus PWD, Third Position: Syed Ibrahim Raza, Wahid Campus. Winners of the competition will be receiving medals and certificates from CGSS and Embassy of Uzbekistan and all participants of the competition will be receiving a certification of participation.

Ehsaas Program: Rs 2179.032 mln disbursed

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration successfully transferring cash under Ehsaas Emergency Cash Programme and so far disbursed Rs 2179.032 million among 181,586 persons.

According to a district administration spokesman, the administration made all out efforts to make the program successful like other parts of the country. The administration provided cash Rs 12,000 to deserving persons in seven tehsils of the district.

He said 26 centres were set up for Rawalpindi district including tehsil Gujar Khan, Taxila, Murree, Kahuta, Kallar Syedan and Kotli Sattian.

He said the beneficiaries were being provided cash at 26 points in Rawalpindi district which was being disbursed among the deserving families directly affected by the lockdown. The cash was being distributed among poor families under the supervision of Revenue Officers of the districts administration. — APP

60% corona patients recovered in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: Out of total 5,139 corona patients of Rawalpindi district, 2,760 recovered as they were provided all possible medical treatment and discharged from hospitals while total 243 deaths were reported here and no death was reported during last 24 hours. According to a district administration spokesman, 14,133 total COVID-19 suspected patients were tested in Rawalpindi while 5,139 were positive including 2,298 patients of Rawal Town, 1050 of Potohar Town, 1137 of Cant areas, 232 of Gujar Khan, 236 of Taxila, 63 of Kahuta, 33 of Kallar Syedan, 30 of Murree and 60 of Kotli Sattian. The results of 8827 were negative, he added. He advised the residents not to visit the hotspot areas of Rawalpindi district.

WPC promoting gender sensitive debate

ISLAMABAD: Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) has played an active role in promoting gender sensitive debate in the parliament. Senior official told APP on Tuesday that WPC had also passed the resolutions including "Pakistan towards Women Empowerment", attacks on women and girls in Abbottabad, Karachi, Faisalabad, Multan, Jhelum and Peshawar.

"WPC had regularly been part of all political or miscellaneous activities like 16 days of activism for elimination of violence against women and annual Rural Women's Day in which it had supported with many non-governmental organizations (NGOs)", he said. He said that WPC also contributed in the "National Di-

ologue of parliamentarians on Women in the informal Economy: Recognizing the Invisible Hands" and also been part of consultation on the "Compulsory Immunization and Protection of Health Workers bill". To celebrate Pakistan's National Women's Day he said, the WPC convened a national consultation of women parliamentarians and experts and international conference on the "Role of Women Parliamentarians in Strengthening Democracy and Social Justice". He further said that women parliamentarians have become increasingly proactive in their oversight role, the role was played both in the business of the House as well as beyond. — APP

Govt should announce a relief package for traders: Ajmal Baloch

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran and Traders Action Committee Islamabad Ajmal Baloch called on Punjab President Malik Shahid Ghafoor Paracha Secretary Khalid Mehmood Chaudhry, President Rawalpindi Small Traders Chamber Sajid Butt and President Pakistan Furniture Association Taj Abbasi at the National Press Club. Chairman Zahid Hussain Jinnah Supermarket General Secretary Abdul Rehman Siddiqui Karachi Company G-9 Markaz President Raja Javed Secretary Shahid Abbasi Sitara Market President Syed Altaf Hussain Shah G-9/1 President Mehboob Khan Hotel Motel Association Islamabad President Mehtab Abbasi and others Addressing a press conference, he demanded the government to immediately announce a relief package for traders affected by Corona, increase working hours for vendors in the markets and declare

a weekly holiday. If the demands are not met immediately, on July 18, business representatives from across Pakistan will blow horns in front of Parliament in cars to wake up the rulers in Islamabad. They demanded that furniture market restaurants and hotels be opened under existing SOPs. If hotels can be opened in Murree, then they can be opened in other cities as well. Travel agents should also be allowed to do business.

Malik Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, President, Anjuman-e-Tajiran Punjab, while expressing his views on the occasion, said that the government should waive the rent for six months to the traders. There are disputes between property owners and tenants. He further said that business conditions are bad and the balance of payments has deteriorated. He said that interest free loans of Rs. 500,000 to Rs. 500,000 should be provided to small traders on personal guarantee immediately.



ISLAMABAD: Riaz Fatyana, MNA, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

Chairman PARC inaugurates mechanical transplanting of rice

The Chairman also visited Galaxy Rice Mills and MESKAY & FEMTEE warehouse of Kubota mechanical transplanter

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman PARC Dr Muhammad Azeem Khan inaugurated mechanical transplanting of rice during a visit on Saturday the 27th June 2020 at Varpal Chatha District Gu-

jranwala. The Chairman, PARC observed the functioning of mechanical Rice transplanter and counted number of seedlings/fingers cut of the seedlings mat. On the occasion, Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan, Chairman, PARC discussed about the

medium used in plastic trays for raising of rice seedlings. He emphasized on the improvement of composition of seedlings medium for providing good start to the rice plant. He advised to use peat and organic material like farm compost in trays

for raising sturdy seedlings. The Chairman also visited Galaxy Rice Mills and MESKAY & FEMTEE warehouse of Kubota mechanical transplanter. He also observed the functioning of Kubota machines and gave valuable suggestions for improvement of the technology.

Old temples, gurdwaras to be renovated

The DOAM and Provincial archeological Departments are protecting 403 national heritage sites and monuments in the country to encourage historical, religious tourism

ISLAMABAD: The department of Archeology and Museum (DOAM) has planned to renovate old temples and gurdwaras which fell under Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) aimed to encourage historical and religious tourism. An official of the DOAM said DOAM would start restoration of historical sites as large number of local, foreigners, Sikhs

and devotees of Buddhism could visit these places. He said the sites which come under provincial jurisdiction, the respective provinces were taking major steps for protection of those. The department of Archeology and Museum (DOAM) and Provincial archeological Departments are protecting 403 national heritage sites and mon-

uments in the country to encourage historical, religious tourism. He said that DOAM was practically controlling five archeological sites in ICT including Ban Faqarian Buddhist Stupa, Shah Alla Ditta Caves, Rawat Fort, Pharwala Fort and Sarai Khurboza while other sites were administratively under provincial control. — APP



ISLAMABAD: The Chairman also visited Galaxy Rice Mills and MESKAY & FEMTEE warehouse of Kubota mechanical transplanter. — APP

Roads of diplomatic enclave in a shambles

MAJORITY of roads in the high-security zone i.e Diplomatic Enclave are in a shambles. Despite repeated pleas by the affected diplomatic missions, the authorities responsible for the maintenance remain unmoved. According to a survey, the main road where important embassies including France, Thailand, Italy, the Netherlands, USA, Russian, and China are located, is extremely in a bad shape. Most parts of the said road are destroyed either due to lack of maintenance of excessive rains. In addition, number of foreign missions on this road has increased with the passage of time however the length and breadth of the road remains the same as it was 20 years ago. The roads in the posh sectors such as F 6 and F 7 are also in bad condition and foreign missions located in these sectors are facing same challenges. A senior diplomat on the condition of not being named, said they have written dozens of letters to the CDA and MCI but all in vain. He further said that it should be a matter of prestige and dignity for the host country as the apathy of the authorities was earning bad name for the department and the country. "If you do not pay heed to the problems of the respective country, it means you do not respect that country", he added. Mayor of Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz has taken upon himself the onus of setting things in order in the Municipal administration therefore one should hope that he will take care of Diplomatic Enclave also. It is quite painful to note that pleas of the diplomatic missions go unheard. They have similar complaints against the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also, which according to them, always turns a deaf ear when they lodge such complaints. The situation is quite alarming and therefore needs immediate attention. Since lockdown is in place in most parts of the city so it is high time that the MCI took measures for the beatification and development of road infrastructure in the Diplomatic Enclave.

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PSX attack

PAKISTAN has largely succeeded in reducing the number of terrorist attacks in the country. But there is still some way to go for the country to live in safety. The unexpectedly brazen attack using guns and grenades on the Pakistan Stock Exchange compound in Karachi on Monday morning is an example. The attack took at least four lives and the four attackers were also killed, while seven people are said to have been injured. The PSX is located inside a high security zone and contains the offices of a variety of high-profile firms as well as staff numbering around 1,000. Thanks to a prompt response from security guards and law enforcement all four assailants were gunned down and the attack was thwarted as they could not enter the main compound of the PSX building. The gunmen had come to the Railway Ground parking area to storm the building and after detonating a hand grenade, opened fire outside the PSX ground. According to the police, items of food were found with the gunmen who also carried a range of weaponry and it is suspected they may have planned a prolonged siege at the PSX. As per a tweet by an hitherto unknown Twitter handle, the Balochistan Liberation Army has claimed responsibility for the attack. The DG Rangers told the press that the style of the attack resembled the one in the Chinese consulate in Karachi in 2018, in which four persons were killed. The BLA and other Baloch nationalist groups have also been accused of other acts of terrorism including one on the Pearl Continental hotel at Gwadar last year and others on security personnel or bus passengers based on their ethnicity. The DG Rangers also said that RAW was behind the attack, while also rejecting the question of whether this was an intelligence failure on the part of Pakistan's security. The police team involved in the operation have also been praised by senior Sindh government officials and promised a cash reward. Officials and politicians from all sides have all condemned the attack and said it is an assault on Pakistan's struggling economy. This may be true. But we need to get to the bottom of all acts of terrorism, including those claimed by or attributed to separatist tendencies, by understanding the nature of these organisations better, improving intelligence-gathering etc. This is the only way to defeat these forces, end violence and keep our country safe now and in the future.

Exploring the beauty of wonderful Indonesia

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti



Padar island is famous for its trekking track that goes up to the top of the hill. The tourists normally have to cover a steep distance of about 8,00 meters. The track is arduous and in zigzag therefore most of the tourists give up ascend even in the half way. Most of our group members nevertheless successfully scaled the peak. Flow of tourists to this island has increased manifold during past few years, told the Director of the tourism department Labuan Bajo Shana Fatina

ON the westernmost tip of the Island of Flores, the town of Labuan Bajo, or also spelled Labuhan Bajo, sits peacefully with many wonders waiting for you to explore. Labuan Bajo was only a small fishing site that today has flourished to become the gateway to many exotic destinations in East Nusa Tenggara. Its population is around 2.5 million people. Around 60,000 people are living in Labuan Bajo. The main source of income of people of the island happens to be tourism; fishing while a small number of public sector jobs are also available. People here are industries and tough. People on the island are benign, hospitable and easy to get along with. Their kind nature makes stay of tourists even more pleasant. The FAMTRIP 2019 landed at the island on October 20 to explore potential of the island. For most of us it was for the first time in this part of the world. Because of its mesmerizing scenic beauty; blue sea and underwater treasures tourists fell immediately in love with this place. On a lighter note, one of our colleagues even wished to have his tomb built at top the mountain right in the middle of the sea in the Padar Island as he wanted to have a peaceful eternal life!! Labuan Bajo is known as the city of sunset. You can find plenty of vantage point to enjoy every end of the day with a spectacular sky. From Labuan Bajo you can enjoy a half-day, full-day or even an overnight trip to one of the pristine islands nearby. You may spend the night on one of these islands in a bungalow that is just footsteps away from the crystal clear water. The surrounding reef belongs to the world's greatest dive sites and also offers perfect snorkeling. Our first stop was Paddar island, which is around three hours away from Labuan Bajo if you take wooden boat. Since it is big boat therefore it takes longer than the speed boat. However it is cost effective as compared with the speed boat and secondly it is quite suitable for the big groups like ours. The boat was extremely comfortable. Usually we come across such boats only in Hollywood movies. Padar island is famous for its trekking track that goes up to the top of the hill. The tourists normally have to cover a steep distance of about 8,00 meters. The track is arduous and in zigzag therefore most of the tourists give up ascend even in the half way. Most of our group members nevertheless successfully scaled the peak. Flow of tourists to this island has increased manifold during past few years, told the Director of the tourism department Labuan Bajo Shana Fatina. She further told that the Tourism Ministry was doing its best to facilitate tourists in a befitting manner by providing them all possible facilities. Our next destination was Pink Beach, which is haven for surfers and snorkeling. But the Komodo island perhaps is the most sought-after tourist destination in the area. The

extraordinary interest of travelers to the existence of the Komodo dragons who are locally called ora is a valuable alluring factor that amplified by its superb national park. The Komodo National Park was listed as UNESCO's World Heritage Site in 1991. It is home to fascinating wildlife, both on land and underwater. For most of FAMTRIP participants it was quite fascinating experience to see the big lizards called Komodo dragon from an arm's length. The habitat at the Park is properly persevered and maintained. The trip of this island remains incomplete without a visit to the Komodo Island. From Pink Beach it took us almost two hours to reach the Komodo Island. Padar Island comprised beaches and trekking facilities therefore nobody is living on this Island. Same is the case with Pink Beach area. People working on these Island such as guides; staff of the local tourism department and security personnel in fact live at the Komodo Island. Every day early in the morning they travel to these islands to facilitate tourists and then come back in the evening. Flores Island is located in the Eastern part of Indonesia. Portuguese traders and missionaries came to Flores in the 16th century. Their influence is still discernible in Sikka's language, culture and religion. As history suggests, the first Portuguese visit took place in 1511. Dutch and Portuguese always remained at the logger heads in order to have sway over the island. During World War II a Japanese invasion force landed at Reo on 14 May 1942 and occupied Flores. After the war Flores became part of Indonesia. Access to this island is quite easy. From Bali it took us one hour and 15 minutes by plane to reach the island. Since Bali happens to be the preferred tourist attraction, all leading airlines of the world come to Bali therefore access is just no problem. Even from Pakistan, comfortable connections are available. From Islamabad to Bali it takes maximum 10 hours including the transit time. Tourists can continue their journey to the Flores Island and nearby touristic places after exploring diverse and enriched cultural heritage and safari parks of Bali. In Flores Island people speak Indonesian language however since it is fast turning into a tourist hub, communication in English is also possible. Well trained guides and hospitable locals are always there to help foreigners make their stay enjoyable and memorable. Tourists are deeply touched by the humbleness and hospitality of local people. People from Java region are well known for being well-mannered, hospitable and humble, however people of this Eastern part of Indonesia too stand out for their benign nature and hospitality. After visiting Padar Island, Komodo Island and Pink Beach our next destination was Mirror Cave. This cave is located

in the outskirts of Labuan Bajo. This cave was found by Dutch archaeologist in 1951, who concluded that Labuan Bajo was once located under water. Tedious path leading to the center of the cave often involves risk of being injured as edges of rocks are extremely thorny that is why visitors are advised to use helmets during the cave trip. The guide told us that the local name for the cave is Goa Batu Cermin. In some parts, you can see some stones with reflective character because of which it is called Mirror Cave. For the culinary feast, you can experience the delicious local food center for dinner time in Labuan Bajo. Labuan Bajo becomes more romantic with the growth of that ideal holiday spot. With choices of land and sea to conquer, it is no wonder that Labuan Bajo is seeing more and more visitors coming every year, said Shana Fatina, the President Director of local tourism department, while interacting with the FAMTRIP participants at dinner. On all of these small islands, you will find accommodation in the form of basic bungalows which are located almost directly on the beach. There are also a number of small restaurants. However, equipment for snorkeling cannot be rented on every island. Snorkeling equipment for the FAMTRIP participants hence was arranged by the hosts as it was not available on the Pink Beach. Labuan Bajo has a world class hotel named Ayana, which is equipped with state of the art amenities. The General Manager of the Hotel Nikolaus Alexander Preiesnitz originally from Germany but settled and married in Bali, greeted us upon arrival and told that this Hotel was opened on 15 September 2018 with 13 suites and 192 premium guest rooms situated on the shores of Labuan Bajo's white sand beach. He further told that each contemporary room features a flawless ocean view with large windows to capture the tropical sunsets. Summing up, Flores Island has a lot to offer to tourists and is likely to fetch even more tourists in the coming days as the Indonesian government spearheaded by President Joko Widodo is focusing much on development of tourism sector. People expect that the President during his second term in office, would do even better not only to improve tourism infrastructure but to extend maximum possible to facilities them also. Pakistan and Indonesia are working closely in various fields especially trade, economy, culture and education. Tourism appears to be yet another sphere that can further strengthen bonds between the two brotherly countries. **The writer is Chief Editor daily Islamabad Post, Centreline journal and DNA News Agency. The article is based on his visit to Indonesia last year as part of FAMTRIP 2019 organised by the Indonesian embassy in Islamabad.**

India's Falling Aspiration For Aircraft Carriers

Ali Basit

The aircraft carrier is a sea based aviation platform which plays multiple roles including power projection, land attack from sea, securing Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), security of island territories, foreign diplomacy and other non-combat operations. The carrier holds its prestige and assumed to be an important component by Navies as indispensable to their strategic assets vis-vis their strategic and global objectives. However, it is the most complex among all warships and importantly one of the most expensive sea asset, which stirs the traditional debate among policy makers over the desirability of investing in aircraft carriers

SINCE the advent of World War 2, aircraft carriers have been seen as an important sea battle arm and over a period of time, its utility has been enhanced by the world Navies due to its diverse mission sets. The evolution of aircraft carrier from wooden vessels to nuclear powered warships, carrying both fixed and rotary wing aircrafts, signifies it as an unpredictable wartime asset that no land based system can replicate. The aircraft carrier is a sea based aviation platform which plays multiple roles including power projection, land attack from sea, securing Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), security of island territories, foreign diplomacy and other non-combat operations. The carrier holds its prestige and assumed to be an important component by Navies as indispensable to their strategic assets vis-vis their strategic and global objectives. However, it is the most complex among all warships and importantly one of the most expensive sea asset, which stirs the traditional debate among policy makers over the desirability of investing in aircraft carriers. For many years, India's strategic and political tier strongly believed in formulating an expansive naval strategy, however, lack of consensus on the nature and direction of the Indian strategy prevented concrete progress. They maintained that Indian military in general and Indian Navy in particular must assert maximized role in the Indian Ocean Region as net security provider and beyond into the western Pacific as an Asia-Pacific power thus justifies for spending more in Indian Navy. This justification compels Indian Navy to pursue for major procurements along with three aircraft carriers. Chief of the Indian Navy, Admiral Karambir Singh, has previously stated that the country needs three aircraft carriers. Understanding the wide area to be covered on

both sides of the Indian Peninsula, it is essential for India to maintain an operational carrier battle group on both sides, and at all times. For that matter Indian Navy emphasizing on three aircraft carriers out of which two must remain operational and the third one to be retained for repairs and refits. Before going into the debate that whether Indian Navy has enough allocated budget to have three carrier battle groups, we first need to look at the existing Indian aircraft carriers. Indian Navy has one operational aircraft carrier, INS VIKRAMADITYA and another one, INS VIKRANT, which is under construction at the Cochin shipyard is expected to be commissioned in next three to four years, but unlikely to be done following the technical and financial constraints. Recently, India's Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat said in a statement that the Indian Navy's request for a third aircraft carrier may not be approved any time soon citing operational priorities. CDS has specifically targeted the carrier plans of Indian Navy, reiterating that the carriers can be knocked off by missiles. The CDS statements have called into question the acquisition plans of Indian Navy particularly "Maritime Capability Perspective Plan" goal of fielding a 200-warship Navy by 2027. Over the last two years, the Indian defence budget allocation has seen a depleting trend and has been lowest since 1960s. Out of the total defence budget, Indian navy's share stands at about 13.66 percent and it would want it to go back to 18 percent, as was the case in 2012-13. However, the recent impact of COVID-19 on Indian economy is likely to further diminish its defence budget. On 08 April, the Indian Ministry of Finance issued an official memorandum, asking for expenditure cuts on several ministries including the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The defence ministry has been asked to limit its first quarter (April-June 2020) spending to 15-20 percent (instead of 25%) of its full year allocated budget of INR 4713.58 billion. In an article published by Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, titled "COVID-19 and India's Defence Spending" stated that any re-orientation undertaken by the MoD in the short term is not going to be easy, considering that the MoD is already in the midst of a huge resource crunch. In 2020-21, the gap between its fund requirement and budget allocation was nearly INR 1,030 billion, it observed. It is important to mention here that the Indian defence expenditure is clearly unsustainable for defence modernization as it is being spent around 60 percent on salaries and pensions. Considering the financial constraints and revision of major defence procurements, Indian Navy is likely to windup proposals for aircraft carriers at least for the time being. Also taking into account of the vulnerabilities of aircraft carrier, which are becoming more exploitable as it is not possible for carriers to hide in this era of precision guided missiles and reconnaissance satellites, as emphasized by India CDS as well. Furthermore, one can relate the CDS statement as admission of the fact that in the event of naval war between Pakistan and India, the Carrier would always remained under threat if deployed towards western seaboard after progression in effective anti-ship missiles indigenously developed by Pakistan Navy. Failing to achieve objectives through Aircraft Carriers can cause a significant blow to the Indian Navy and strong psychological impact to Indian Nation. **Ali Basit is an independent researcher and alumnus of Quaid-i-Azam University. His areas of interest are international relations, Geo-politics, and Maritime security.**

Liverpool can stay on top without major signings: Klopp

"It is not a squad you have to change now and say 'OK, we need this position and this position'. The Liverpool boss said he had a "first 16 or 17" who could all play at the same level

LONDON: Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp does not believe he has to spend "millions" in the transfer market, saying it is a tricky task to improve his Premier League winners. Klopp's side were last week crowned English champions for the first time in 30 years with a record seven games to go.

The coronavirus outbreak, which put the Premier League on hold for three months, is likely to have a significant impact on the football transfer market. But Klopp said even if he had a significant war chest, spending it would not necessarily be easy or the right thing to do. The club decided not to compete with Chelsea for RB Leipzig striker Timo Werner even though he had



been heavily linked with a move to Anfield. Fringe players Xherdan Shaqiri and Adam Lallana look likely to be among those who will be leaving the club. "COVID has of course influenced both sides with ins and outs, that is completely normal, and it's just not likely that it will be the most busy summer in the world," Klopp told reporters.

"But maybe at a later point in the year, if the transfer window is still open, we will know more. But this squad... look at it. "It is not a squad you have to change now and say 'OK, we need this position and this position'." The Liverpool boss said he had a "first 16 or 17" who could all play at the same level. — APP

Leicester v Crystal Palace under consideration after local lockdown

DNA

LEICESTER: The Premier League has "contingency" plans for staging Leicester's home fixture with Crystal Palace given the enforced local lockdown in the city. Leicester are scheduled to host Palace on Saturday but a spike in coronavirus cases has seen stricter lockdown measures imposed in the city.

Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said the game could be moved or postponed to a later date if needed.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the game will go ahead.

But he did not state where and Masters said the Premier League must be "cautious and careful" in light of the UK's first local lockdown.

Masters said: "If what is happening in Leicester, we are waiting to hear, does affect the club's ability to host home games, either this Saturday against Crystal Palace or subsequent matches, then we have contingency to put those matches elsewhere or postpone them until a date when it is safe to do so."

"Of course contingency plans are discussed and part of our overall planning. "I am yet to understand what the impact of the partial lockdown in Leicester is going to have on the club but clearly it demonstrates the fragile project we have on here. We cannot take it for granted."

Leicester, third in the Premier League, travel to Everton on Wednesday before the visit of Palace. Speaking about the coronavirus spike in the city, Hancock said Leicester had "10% of all positive cases in the country over the past week".

Abdul Qadir was a magic man: Saqlain Mushtaq



ISLAMABAD: Former off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq believes late legendary spin-wizard Abdul Qadir's was a magic man saying his googly was unplayable.

"He was my inspiration. I watched him. The thing which made him a magic man was his style of bowling, his run-up and his expressions," Saqlain said in a video on his YouTube channel.

Saqlain said Qadir's googly was unplayable. "His googly was very dangerous and his way of bowling was unique," he said. Qadir had bagged 236 wickets in Tests while 132 in ODIs. He also captained Pakistan in five Test matches during 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Next in Saqlain's list of spinners was Australian Shane Warne. Saqlain said the thing he liked about him was his body language. "The way he used to stand and look at the batsman while waving the ball in the air looked like as if he was trapping the batsmen," he said and added Warne was very consistent and full of power.

Warne was the third highest five-wicket haul taker in the international arena after Muttiah Muralitharan and Richard Hadlee. He has taken 37 Test fifters and single ODI fifer, along with 10 Test ten-wicket hauls.

Saqlain said Sri Lankan Muttiah Muralitharan was a spinner who could spin the bowl on any kind of pitch. "His face expression and he used to enjoy bowling. He was very consistent and had a consistent turn in his bowling," he said.

Muralitharan has the most Test wickets (800) and ODI wickets (534 wickets). He also has the highest number of international wickets in Tests, ODIs and T20s combined (1347 wickets).

Saqlain put Indian Anil Kumble on No 4 saying he neither had too much turn nor he had an outstanding googly. "But had a very good control from wicket to wicket and was lethal on turning track," he said and added Kumble was very dangerous on slow and low track and had a very good bounce on a turning track.

Kumble had bagged 619 wickets in 132 Tests and 337 in 271 ODIs. He also has the record of most Test wickets (619) by Indian and third in the world.

Saqlain said former Pakistani spinner Mushtaq Ahmed was once ranked No 1 in the Test ranking at a time when there was Warne, Kumble, Muralitharan and me. "He took many wickets in county enjoyed bowling," he said.

In an international career that spanned from 1990 until 2003, Mushtaq claimed 185 wickets in Test cricket and 161 in ODIs.

The last Saqlain named in the list was Pakistani Saeed Aajmal. "I have worked with him as a coach. He was great and quick learner and was very strong minded. He was a team man and always used to think out of the box," he said.

He has a great heart and was mentally very tough. "He also ruled in the cricket rankings and won matches for Pakistan single handedly. He was a game changer and match winner," he said.

Aajmal took 178 wickets in 35 Tests while attained 184 wickets in 113 ODIs. — APP

Buffon signs contract extension with Juve

DNA

TURIN: Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon has signed a year-long contract extension with the Serie A leaders.

The former Italy international, who will be 43 when his new deal expires, returned to Juventus in 2019 after a season at Paris St-Germain.

Buffon has made more than 500 league appearances for Juventus since joining the club in 2001, having made his professional debut with Parma in 1995.

"Super Gigi is proof that age is only a number," a club statement read.

Juve captain Giorgio Chiellini has also signed a year-long extension.

Juventus are four points clear at the top of Serie A with 10 games remaining, as they chase a ninth consecutive title.

LAHORE: Muhammad Hafeez, Mohammd Rizwan, Shadab Khan, Wahab Riaz, Fakhar Zaman and Mohammd Hasnain will fly off and join the Pakistan cricket team in England over the weekend after they tested positive for coronavirus a second time. The players were retested

on Monday, June 29, following a first negative test on June 26, the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement, adding that they will now start making travel arrangements for the players. Ten players had been left out of the squad traveling to England over the weekend after they tested positive for coronavirus at least once.

Shadab, Haris Rauf, Haidar Ali, Fakhar, Rizwan, Riaz, Imran Khan, Hafeez, Hasnain and Kashif Bhatti first tested positive last week. Apart from the seven players, one support personnel — the masseur — also contracted the illness after the cricket body had 35 tests carried out for COVID-19 in Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar.

Hafeez, Wahab, Shadab test negative for COVID-19

DNA

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WB approves \$500 mln for RISE

Continue from Page 1

The program supports reforms to broaden the tax base and reduce distortions in tax policy, strengthen debt management and transparency, and implement urgently needed reforms to achieve financial viability of the power sector. In tandem, reforms to lower barriers to the formalization of firms, increase the use of digital payments, and better regulate real estate developments will help create an enabling environment to attract private investment. "RISE supports reforms such as harmonizing sales tax and making the trade tariff structure more com-

petitive. This could help the country attract new investments and spur economic recovery," said Shahib Mohib, Lead Country Economist for the World Bank. "Taken as a whole, we hope that RISE can build a foundation for sustainable growth driven by the private sector."

The program supports the foundations for a move toward a low-carbon and more financially viable power sector. The program includes reforms to improve the integrity of the banking sector, promote digital finance, and create a more competitive national tariff policy to promote trade and reduce costs to consumers.

Nigerian, Hungarian envoys leaving Pakistan

Continue from Page 1

The Hungarian ambassador spent almost seven years in Pakistan, which is unique in the sense that normally the European ambassadors leave after completing their stipulated term of three or four years.

The previous Romanian ambassador Emilian Ion was an exception too. He spent seven and half years in Pakistan. The senior most ambassador in Pakistan is now Ambassador of Bahrain and thus he should have been the Dean of Diplomatic Corps, however he refused to become the Dean. Ambassador of Ukraine was next in the line of seniority but he also refused to become the Dean.

Sri Lanka probes allegations 2011 final was fixed

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka has ordered a criminal probe into allegations the 2011 cricket World Cup final was "sold" to India, officials said Monday. "A criminal investigation has begun," K.D.S. Ruwanachandra, the secretary to the sports ministry, told AFP.

"It is handled by the (police) independent Special Investigation Unit on sports-related offences."

Former sports minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage

claimed earlier this month that Sri Lanka sold the match to ensure an Indian victory. "I feel I can talk about it now. I am not connecting players, but some sections were involved," Aluthgamage said.

The island nation's 1996 World Cup-winning skipper Arjuna Ranatunga has also cast doubt on the result and previously called for an investigation.

Local media reports said former skipper and chief

selector for the 2011 finals, Aravinda de Silva, had been summoned for an interview with investigators on Tuesday. Local media reports said former skipper and chief selector for the 2011 finals, Aravinda de Silva, had been summoned for an interview with investigators on Tuesday. After starting strongly, Sri Lanka lost the final at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium by six wickets. Sri Lanka batted first and

scored 274-6 off 50 overs. They appeared in a commanding position when Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar was out for 18. But India turned the game dramatically, thanks in part to poor fielding and bowling by Sri Lanka, who were led by Kumar Sangakkara. Sangakkara had said Aluthgamage should share his allegations with the global governing body the International Cricket Council. International cricket in Sri

Lanka has previously been linked to corruption allegations, including claims of match-fixing ahead of a 2018 Test against England. Earlier this month, the Sri Lankan cricket board said the ICC was investigating three unnamed ex-players over corruption claims. Match-fixing was made a criminal offence in November. Offenders face fines of up to 100 million rupees (\$555,000) and up to 10 years' jail. — APP

County cricket: 1 August start date

DNA

LONDON: The 2020 county season will begin on 1 August, the England and Wales Cricket Board has confirmed.

Final approval for the formats to be played by men's teams will be approved early in July at a meeting of the 18 first-class clubs. Two competitions of four-day and Twenty20 cricket have been under discussion, based on regional groups.

"Planning for the return of the women's domestic game remains ongoing," said ECB chief executive Tom Harrison.

There has been no cricket on the UK mainland so far this year because of the coronavirus pandemic, but England will begin a behind-closed-doors Test series against West Indies next month.

The County Championship should have begun on 12 April but instead all clubs, except Surrey and Lancashire, furloughed players and other staff under the government's job retention scheme.

Juventus' Pjanic and Barcelona's Arthur in swap deal



DNA

BARCELONA: Juventus midfielder Miralem Pjanic will join Barcelona at the end of the season in a swap deal with Brazil international Arthur.

Bosnian Pjanic, 30, has agreed a deal worth an initial 60m euros (£54.9m), with a further 5m (£4.6m) in add-ons.

He made 214 appearances for Serie A champions Juve after joining in 2016.

Meanwhile, Arthur, 23, who joined Barca from Gremio on a six-year deal in 2018, will move for an initial 72m euros (£66m), with 10m (£9.1m) in add-ons.

IIUI BOT approves appointment of Dr. Hathal Bin Hamoud

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Trustees (BoT) of International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) in its 14th meeting approved the appointment of Dr. Hathal bin Hamoud Al-Otaibi as new IIUI President.

The meeting was held on Tuesday at Aiwan e Sadr that was chaired by President of Pakistan, and IIUI Chancellor, Dr. Arif Alvi. Professor Dr. Hathal has done PhD in work psychology and psychology of individual differences from University of Madrid, Spain. He has completed his Post-doctorate from the USA. He is also a member of Saudi Arabian Association for Educational and

Psychological Sciences. Dr. Hathal is also a member of Spanish Psychologists Association and also owns membership of International Conference for Training and Human Resource. His practical experience includes Deanship of Institute Affairs Abroad at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud University, Riyadh, while he has also served as Head of Psychology Department in the same university. He had been Chairman of the Graduate Studies Committee in the Department of Psychology at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud University, Riyadh. He has also served as a full time Advisor in the Ministry of Higher Education, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques program for Ex-

ternal Scholarships. Dr. Hathal worked as Head of the quality Committee of the Department of Psychology. Dr. Hathal remained a training consultant in the human resource and member of the curricula and Curriculum Committee. On the occasion, IIUI Rector, Professor Dr. Masoom Yasinzai presented the "Rector's Report". The participants showed satisfaction and appreciated university achievements. The board members who joined the meeting included numerous important officials of Pakistan and Muslim world including President of Pakistan, (recently appointed) Pro-Chancellor of IIUI, Professor Ahmad Salem Muhammad Al-Ameri, Chief Justice

Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan, IIUI Rector Dr. Masoom Yasinzai, Secretary Finance, Secretary to President of Pakistan, Chairman HEC, Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology, Chairman CDA, Acting IIUI President Dr. Aqdas Naveed Malik, Vice President IIUI, Dr. Nabi Bux Jumani, Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Director General ISESCO, Secretary General Rabita Alam Al Islami, President, Islamic Development Bank, Shaikh of Al-Azhar, Cairo, Secretary General, Rabita al alam al-Islami, Rector Umul Qura University, Makkah, Rector Al-Azhar University, President, Islamic University, Madinah and President Islamic University, Gaza.

Somalia values its ties with Pakistan: Amb Khadija

Continue from Page 1

She added, African continent is a rising market of 1.26 billion people; it is rich in mineral resources and is an exporter of energy resources. Pakistan has a lot of goodwill in the region as the country always championed the cause of the African countries at UN and remained in the forefront of peacekeeping missions in Africa. In this backdrop, it is unfortunate that Pak-Africa trade is negligible and the country has diplomatic presence in a few countries alone — thirteen missions to cover 54 countries (the rest are managed through concurrent accreditation). Apart from Africa being a huge potential market for Pakistani goods, the country's geo-strategic location and connectivity offers opportunity for African goods to reach Central Asia and South Asia. Increase in bilateral trade will open new opportunities for both regions which will help them in diversifying their trade basket and also in reducing the price that will ultimately benefit the consumer 'As Somali Ambassador to Pakistan, I consider my role is to facilitate the contacts between the players in the economic field, to get them to know each other better and also to interconnect in a better way'.

A large number of Somali students are studying in Pakistan in various educational fields. We are thankful to the people and government of Pakistan for their continuing assistance to the Somali students and for your delight some students after graduating from Pakistan have established an urdu speaking colony in Mogadishu, Somalia. We are also now thinking to cooperate in Higher Education and research field.

"I, Ambassador of Somalia to Pakistan, thanked Pakistan for hosting Somali students adding the role of HEC was also laudable in this respect.

Dr. Tariq Banuri, Chairman, Higher Education Commission (HEC) was the chief guest while former National Security Adviser Lieutenant



General Nasir Khan Janjua (r) and ambassadors of other countries were also present on the occasion.

Almost Hundreds of students graduated every year in Pakistan and majority of Somali students after doing graduation from Pakistan are now contributing greatly to the Somali society. Some of them are even reached highest positions like members of Parliament and Ministers in Somalia'.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education, Somalia to promote bi-

lateral academic collaboration and develop cooperation in higher education and other fields of common interest.

The MoU was signed by HEC Chairman Dr Mukhtar Ahmed and Abdi Dahir Osman, the Somali Minister for Education, Culture and Higher Education in 2017.

Under the MoU, the two sides agreed to describe the guidelines for future agreements on specific activities by the institutions involved. I also appreciated the HEC and Pakistani universities for facilitating Somali students. Almost 1500 Somali students are currently studying in various Pakistani universities.

The ambassador said, a number of foreign dignitaries, representatives of a number of Pakistan based and international organizations and Pakistani Ministries of S&T and Foreign Affairs gathered in Islamabad to celebrate induction of Somalia as the 26th Member State of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) in 2017. The Federal Republic of Somalia formally became COMSATS' member during a signing ceremony at COMSATS secretariat when the Minister of Culture and higher Education Somalia, H.E. Mr. Abdi Dahir Osman and Executive Director COMSATS, Dr. S.M. Junaid Zaidi, signed Somalia's accession agreement.

On launching of daily Islamabad Post she said, "I would really like to appreciate the news Agency as this youngest news Agency which started its operation in 2012 has been ranked number one by Alexa.com the website that issues ranking of various news Agencies. In my opinion this DNA website stands out for its exclusive news especially news about Diplomatic Corps."

I also congratulate the Chief Editor for launching first and only diplomatic daily newspaper of Pakistan i.e daily Islamabad Post and hope like CENTRELINE and DNA News Agency this newspaper shall also play its role in promotion of diplomatic activities'.

Briefs

Foreign investment in govt securities rises

DNA

KARACHI: Nearly \$66 million were invested via foreign funds in government securities during June without any outflows recorded during the month, data from the State Bank of Pakistan showed.

Foreign funds amounting to \$37.5 million were invested in treasury bills and \$28.1 million in Pakistan investment bonds, according to the data from the central bank.

The robust inflows are an indication of foreign investors' interest in high-yielding debt market despite back-to-back rate cuts by the central bank over the past three months.

Tahir Abbas, the head of Research at Arif Habib Limited said foreigner investors sense that there is a less likelihood of further rupee depreciation.

"Indeed, they are betting on potential [rupee] appreciation... together with good returns that means a win-win situation."

The SBP brought interest rate cumulatively down by 625 basis points to 7% since March 17 to boost the economy amid the coronavirus crisis.

However, the rate is still one of the highest across the region.

Pressure on rupee is expected to ease due to foreign loan commitments by multilateral financial institutions. The rupee lost an estimated 19% of its value against the US dollar since April last year.

Malaria kills 279 in Zimbabwe

HARARE: At least 279 people have died and more than 300,000 people have been infected with malaria in Zimbabwe since the peak season of the disease in January.

The outbreak comes at a time when Zimbabwe is grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic which has since infected 574 people leading to seven fatalities.

Zimbabwe's National Malaria Coordinator Joseph Mberi said Tuesday that COVID-19 social distancing restrictions had deterred many people especially in rural areas to seek medical attention in time, further complicating the situation.

Mberi said the COVID-19 outbreak had also forced health workers to be skeptical in dealing with people presenting malaria symptoms which are similar to the pandemic.

He said the coronavirus pandemic was a hindrance to early testing and treatment because health workers did not have adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). — APP

Germany to resume 60% of flight operations

BERLIN: While German airlines only served about 30 percent of their original route network due to the COVID-19 crisis in June, the number is set to rise to 60 percent by July, according to an analysis published by the German Aviation Association (BDL) on Tuesday.

In July, passengers would be able to fly to 239 destinations in 69 countries from German airports, according to the BDL.

However, many originally scheduled connections would still be served with reduced frequency, therefore the total number of flights would be significantly lower, according to the analysis.

The total number of flights from German airports in July would only reach 27 percent compared with the same month last year, according to the BDL.

The focus of the restarted air traffic was on destinations within Europe, especially the "classic holiday regions," the BDL noted.

The top destination would be Palma de Mallorca with 326 departures from Germany in the second week of July, it said. — APP

Azerbaijan President and First Lady view conservation of architectural reserve



BAKU: President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva viewed the restoration and conservation works carried out in a part of Icherisheher State Historical and Architectural Reserve. The restoration and conservation works were carried out on the initiative of first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and with support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. — DNA

Itfikhkar assumes office of SAARC president

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Veteran Pakistani business leader Itfikhkar Ali Malik on Tuesday assumed the office of the President of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) for two years term. Outgoing President Ruwan Edisinghe handed over the charge at the two days Joint session of executive committee and general assembly commenced today through video link and Khairuddin Mayel Ahmadi, VP Afghanistan, Mahbulul Alam VP Bangladesh, SVP Designate and former President, Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Vinod Juneja VP India, Chandni Raj Dhakal, VP Nepal, and Dr. M. Rohitha Silva, VP Sri Lanka present on the occasion congratulated Itfikhkar Ali Malik and reposed full confidence in his sagacious and dynamic leadership.

Briefly speaking on the occasion Itfikhkar Ali Malik thanked the SVP and VPs from all member countries for their full fledged and overwhelming support to him for promotion of intra trade and further establishing strong business linkages amongst the entrepreneurs of the South Asia.



He said all out efforts will be made to strengthen regional economic cooperation besides achieving Chamber South Asia vision 2030 which he added will usher an era of progress, prosperity and development in the region. He said that entire emphasis will be laid on achieving the objectives of chamber in true letter and spirit with consensus and VPs of all countries will be taken into confidence. He paid rich tributes to Ruwan for contributing towards encouragement of trade, Industry, small and medium enterprise and agriculture sectors in addition to safe-

guarding the economic and business interest of the region.

Itfikhkar said that he will formulate viable strategies to take regional cooperation to new levels by exercising his sphere of influence which he added will result into betterment of the people of the region as well besides strengthening of economies in all member states. He said that in the larger interest of the region especially small countries, the avenues of economic cooperation with China will also be further explored which will ultimately benefit the business community of the region. Welcoming Itfikhkar Malik outgoing president Ruwan hoped that new leadership especially Itfikhkar Malik during his tenure will take all stakeholders on board and make strenuous efforts to implement the objectives and manifesto of the chamber mainly aimed at promotion of intra trade among member countries.

New VP from Pakistan Senator Haji Ghulam Ali along with newly nominated members in executive committee and general assembly in SAARC Chamber were also present and acting Secretary General Zulfikar Ali Butt were also present on the occasion.

Venezuela asks EU ambassador to leave

DNA

CARACAS: Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro on Monday asked the head of the European Union (EU) mission in Caracas, Isabel Brilhante Pedrosa, to leave the country within 72 hours, after the bloc released sanctions against 11 Venezuelan officials.

"We will sort it out in 72 hours... she will be given a plane to leave, but we will arrange our things with the European Union," said Maduro. However, Venezuela's airspace is currently closed to commercial airplanes because of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the officials sanctioned is the opposition legislator Luis Parra, who is contesting the leadership of the National Assembly controlled by the opposition and Maduro's main challenger Juan Guaido.

Former French PM sentenced to five years

DNA

PARIS: Former French Prime Minister François Fillon, his wife Penelope, and his former assistant Marc Joulaud, have been found guilty of misappropriation of public funds, complicity and concealment by the Paris tribunal. The judgement concluded Fillon paid his wife and children, as well as Joulaud, hundreds of thousands of euros from the public payroll for little or no work. Fillon was sentenced to five years in prison, three of them suspended, as well as a fine of 375,000 euros (\$423,000) and a ten-year ban on running for elections.

UK economy hit worse than first thought

DNA

LONDON: The UK economy shrank more than first thought between January and March, contracting 2.2% in the joint largest fall since 1979, official figures show.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) revised down its previous estimate of a 2% contraction, with all the main economic sectors dropping.

There was a significant economic impact in March, as the coronavirus pandemic began to have an effect.

The data comes as the prime minister is set for a major speech on the economy.

Jonathan Athow, deputy national statistician at the ONS, said: "Our more detailed picture of the economy in the first quarter showed GDP shrank a little more than first estimated. "Information from govern-

ment showed health activities declined more than we previously showed. "All main sectors of the economy shrank significantly in March as the effects of the pandemic hit."

The first-quarter contraction is now the joint biggest drop since the July-to-September period in 1979.

Mr Athow said: "The sharp fall in consumer spending at the end of March led to a notable increase in households' savings." The new data showed 6.9% GDP contraction in March.

The first-quarter figures show that the services sector - which accounts for about three-quarters of UK GDP - shrank by a record 2.3%.

The ONS said production output fell by a revised 1.5% in the three months, driven by declines in manufacturing as factories temporarily shut down, while there was a fall in construction output of 1.7%.

Aviasales.uz launches tourism project in Uzbekistan

TASHKENT: Aviasales.uz implements the "Discover Uzbekistan" project to support small and medium-sized businesses in the tourism sector. This is a platform for potential tourists, where in a couple of clicks they can find all the necessary information for planning a trip to Uzbekistan. The project is supported by Ravnaq bank.

Guides, tour operators and owners of guest houses from cities of Uzbekistan can post information about themselves and their offer on the website of the Open Uzbekistan project for free.

The project is focused both on the development of domestic tourism and on attracting travelers from the CIS countries. The organizers undertake to attract users and promote the site on their platform in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Belarus.

"There are many historical places in Uzbekistan that are really worth visiting, and most tourists from neighboring countries have not seen them. Now, our users may be interested in routes to Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva," Aviasales.uz marketer, Ruslan Baiganurov, said.

Site users will be able to choose the duration of the tour and find suitable offers, accommodation, flights, as well as all the necessary information about cities and attractions.

"The tourism industry is changing, many people can no longer afford a trip to foreign countries this year. Our task is to show that Uzbekistan is incredibly interesting, colorful, and traveling here is inexpensive. As soon as the borders with neighboring countries open, we will begin the promotion of the Discover Uzbekistan project for foreign travelers," Ruslan Baiganurov said. — DNA

Russia is quietly occupying Ukraine's information space

Vladimir Putin's six-year military intervention in Ukraine has failed to reverse the country's turn away from Russia, but the Kremlin leader is far from admitting defeat. On the contrary, his hybrid war against Ukraine remains at the heart of Russian foreign policy. Over the past year, Putin has rejected international calls for a compromise with Ukraine's new president Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Instead, he has continued to publicly undermine Ukrainian statehood while signalling his readiness for a long-term geopolitical confrontation by fast-tracking the distribution of Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine. There are also indications of a mounting Russian offensive in the Ukrainian information sphere, with the Kremlin acquiring indirect control over key media outlets in a bid to turn the tide of Ukrainian public opinion back in Moscow's favor.

In June 2020, journalists from the respected investigative Ukrainian TV show "Schemes" (a joint project by Radio Liberty and UA:First TV channel) reported that Vladimir Putin's closest ally in Ukraine, the pro-Kremlin politician Viktor Medvedchuk, has a 24.66% stake in Ukraine's most popular TV channel 1+1. This claim, based on company records and Medvedchuk's own asset statements, suggests that Medvedchuk is even more

influential in the Ukrainian media industry than previously thought. Over the past few years, he has reportedly built up a formidable Ukrainian media empire via purchases fronted by partners and proxies. Acquisitions have included the TV news channels NewsOne, 112, and ZIK.

This creeping occupation of Ukraine's information space has not gone unnoticed. Speaking in May 2020, former Ukrainian prime minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk complained that the country was in grave danger of losing control over the domestic information arena due to increasingly direct Russian influence.

Moscow's efforts to build a Ukrainian media empire should come as no surprise. Putin has always placed great importance on control over the media. In the early days of his presidency, he moved quickly to muzzle Russia's fledgling free press. Years later, during Russia's 2014 offensives in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, Putin's forces prioritized the seizure of broadcasting infrastructure and made sure Ukrainian TV channels were forced off the air.

Dominating the media environment in the rest of Ukraine has proven somewhat trickier. Since 2014, the Ukrainian authorities have banned the broadcast of Russian TV channels and placed restrictions on Russian-produced TV content. Meanwhile, the oligarch owners of Ukraine's major media holdings have

largely fallen in line with public patriotism and backed the country's efforts to defend itself against Russian aggression. This has left the Kremlin with little choice but to acquire Ukrainian media assets of its own.

In his highly praised book "All the Kremlin's Men. Inside the Court of Vladimir Putin", author Mikhail Zygar goes even further, saying that Medvedchuk has long been "the main source of information about what was happening in Ukraine" and the only person Putin trusts in Ukraine.

Medvedchuk first rose to national prominence in Ukraine during the 1990s as the leader of the United Social Democratic Party of Ukraine. Prior to his current role as Putin's unofficial representative in Ukraine, the pinnacle of Medvedchuk's political career had been his stint as chief of staff to Ukraine's second president Leonid Kuchma.

Medvedchuk's relationship with Putin dates back to his time in the Kuchma administration. The two initially met within the framework of bilateral dialogue and grew sufficiently close for Putin to become godfather to Medvedchuk's daughter in 2004.

Following Ukraine's pro-democracy 2004 Orange Revolution, Medvedchuk's political fortunes declined. With his United Social Democratic Party of Ukraine increasingly eclipsed by the rising might

of the Donetsk-based Party of Regions, Medvedchuk sought to reinvent himself as the leader of the "Ne Tak" party, which campaigned against Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration. The expensive project failed to make an impression, attracting just 1% of votes in Ukraine's 2006 parliamentary election.

Medvedchuk then spent a number of years out of the limelight before returning to the Ukrainian political fray in 2012 with the launch of the "Ukrainian Choice" movement. This new political initiative was designed to play a prominent role in the campaign against Ukraine's plans to sign an association agreement with the EU. As part of this strategy, Putin and Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill were both invited to a summer 2013 conference in Kyiv that aimed to promote Ukraine's embrace of "Orthodox values" and signal the country's membership of the "Russian World".

During the early years of the undeclared Russo-Ukrainian War that erupted in the wake of the Euromaidan Revolution, Medvedchuk continued his political comeback by serving as the Kremlin's preferred contact for negotiations on prisoner exchanges. In 2018, he confirmed his status as Ukraine's most influential pro-Russian politician, taking on a leadership role as Chairperson of the Opposition Platform-For Life Party, which went on to secure a distant but

credible second place in Ukraine's July 2019 parliamentary election.

Medvedchuk's latest political vehicle shares the Kremlin-friendly agenda of his earlier initiatives. The party benefits considerably from the favorable coverage provided by his expanding media empire, and has succeeded in eclipsing its Russophile rivals among the traditionally Moscow-leaning electorate in southern and eastern Ukraine. However, with a voter base heavily concentrated in the pensioner age group, it is unclear whether the Opposition Platform-For Life project has the potential for significant further growth.

This is part of a broader trend that does not bode well for the Kremlin. Support for pro-Russian parties has plummeted since the start of Russian aggression in 2014, with Medvedchuk and other Russophile political forces collectively winning less than 20% of the vote in Ukraine's 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections. There are already signs that the process is underway. In the current climate, it would make little sense for Ukrainian media outlets controlled by Moscow to flood the country's information space with pro-Putin messaging. However, TV channels associated with Medvedchuk have played a prominent role in recent campaigns to discredit Ukraine's reform agenda and promote a spate of anti-American narratives. — DNA

Briefs

UAE to reopen mosques on July 1

DNA

DUBAI: The UAE announced it will reopen mosques and other places of worship across the Gulf country on July 1 at 30 per cent capacity, state news agency WAM reported. The new decision excludes prayer areas on highways, industrial zones, labor camps, commercial centers, and parks. It comes as the country works to return to normal life following the lockdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The country also announced the return of federal government staff to their offices while adhering to health guidelines to avoid a new wave of infections. Meanwhile, the UAE said it was committed to cooperate with the international community to overcome COVID-19. Since March, the Gulf nation has assisted more than a million medical workers through aid including the supply of personal protective equipment. "Today's milestone of assisting 1 million healthcare workers affirms the UAE's commitment to extending a hand of cooperation to the world, regardless of the religion, race, or ideology of recipients," Reem bint Ibrahim Al-Hashemy, Minister of State for International Cooperation, said. The number of people infected with the coronavirus in the UAE is 48,246, although more than 37,000 have recovered. But 314 people have died of the virus in the country.

Ali Geelani parts ways with Hurriyat

DNA

SRINAGAR: In a surprising development, Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani resigned from his post as chief of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, media reported. According to a report, Geelani has named Abdullah Geelani as his successor. The ailing 90-year-old leader, who has been under house arrest for the better part of the past decade, said in a purported audio clip: "I completely distance myself from the leadership of Hurriyat Conference in view of its present situation. All constituents of the forum have been informed about my decision through a detailed letter." The primary reason behind his decision, as cited in the letter, appears to be a few decisions taken by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir-based chapter of the Hurriyat Conference. The letter said the chapter only represented Hurriyat in Pakistan and was not authorized to take decisions on its own. It said there were complaints of financial irregularities, self-promotion and infighting against some members but before an inquiry into these complaints could be completed, some members dissolved the chapter itself and elected an ad hoc body.

UK's National Gallery to reopen

LONDON: Britain's National Gallery on Tuesday said it would reopen next week after being closed for more than three months due to the coronavirus outbreak. The central London venue will reopen on Wednesday, July 8, becoming the first major art museum in the country to do so, as restrictions imposed in late March are finally eased. Swaths of the hospitality, tourism and cultural sectors are due to reopen in England from this weekend, including pubs and restaurants, due to a decline in virus cases and deaths. "We want to be a part of the nation's recovery story," gallery director Gabriele Finaldi said. The government, under pressure over its response to the outbreak that has officially claimed more than 43,000 lives, is hoping the move will help kick-start the economy. - APP

Have good cooperation with Pak parliament: Markus Ferber

Parliaments have a vital role to play in protecting their populations and generating greater connectivity between nations to collectively address this pandemic

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The German Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) Pakistan and its partners commemorated the International Day of Parliamentarism and praised the cooperation with Pakistan's parliament as being exemplary. They particularly highlighted the increased role of legislatures in upholding the public will and passing effective laws during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The HSF Chairman and Member of the European Parliament, Markus Ferber, has been a parliamentarian for more than 25 years. In his video message, he cited Pakistan as an excellent example of good cooperation between the Foundation and the national parliament:

"Parliamentarism means freedom for the people, rule of law and that everyone has access to those who take decisions. That's why we as Hanns Seidel Foundation are very engaged in cooperation between parliamentarians. [...] We celebrate our good contacts with parliaments all over the world - I will only mention one: the Parliament of Pakistan with whom we have a really good cooperation." The Honorable Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, in his special message stressed the significance of parliaments during the COVID-19 crisis: "Parliaments all over the world are grappling with the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on their constitutional obligations, such as oversight, lawmaking and public involvement. These are testing



times which require extra ordinary steps and collaborations to address the extra ordinary circumstances; certainly parliaments have a vital role to play in protecting their populations and generating greater connectivity between nations to collectively address this pandemic." Dr. Wolfgang Stefinger, who is a

Member of the German Federal Parliament Bundestag, reflected on the history of parliamentarism in Germany and on the state of parliamentary democracy around the world: "In Germany, we have never taken a stable parliamentary democracy for granted. To have a confident [and] independent parliament is a historical achievement for us. [...] Even in places where functioning parliamentary democracy prevails, it needs to be defended constantly. Civil society plays a key role in this matter." The Member of the Parliament of the Free State of Bavaria (Bayerischer Landtag), Alexander König, highlighted Bavaria's support during the COVID-19 pandemic: "Parliaments need to pass emergency laws, allocate urgent funds, and analyze governmental re-

sponses to the crisis. [...] Bavaria proudly helps its partners worldwide to strengthen good governance and sustainable development through international cooperation. Together, we will overcome the global coronavirus pandemic." The eminent political scholar and convener of Pakistan's Parliamentary Research Group, Zafarullah Khan, called the parliament an important pillar of the modern democratic state: "In Pakistan, the parliament was entrusted with a core and critical role as delineated in the Constitution of 1973 and through 1,195 mandate bearers every inch of Pakistan has a representation and voice at the federal and provincial levels. During a pandemic, the parliamentary institutions must come up with prudent laws and appropriate budgetary allocations."

Beijing reports 7 new local COVID-19 cases

BEIJING: Seven new locally transmitted COVID-19 cases were recorded in the Chinese capital, raising total infections to 324 since June 11, when the first case from Beijing's Xinfadi market cluster was detected, Beijing Health Commission said on Tuesday. Out of all seven cases, six were reported in Fengtai and one in Daxing districts of Beijing, the health authority added. The Chinese capital also registered one asymptomatic case on Monday, the health authority said. As of Saturday, a total of 104,807 deliverymen in Beijing have received nucleic acid tests and all of them tested negative for COVID-19, the State Post Bureau (SPB) said Tuesday. The SPB said it will strengthen disinfection at workplaces, enhance health management of deliverymen and upgrade delivery services to curb the spread of COVID-19. - APP

Hot, humid weather likely: PMD

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Tuesday forecast hot and humid weather in most parts of the country during next 24 hours. However Rain wind-thunderstorm expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, upper/central Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and Islamabad during day time. Rain-thunderstorm with gusty winds expected in coastal areas of Sindh including Karachi during the period. Maximum temperature (°C) recorded in Mohenjodaro 47, Dadu 46, Nokundi, Dalbindin, Sibbi, and Sh.Benzirabad 45°C. - APP

New virus has pandemic risk: scientists

DNA

BEIJING: A new flu virus found in pigs in China has become more infectious to humans and needs to be watched closely in case it becomes a potential "pandemic virus", a new study has found. A team of Chinese researchers looked at influenza viruses found in pigs from 2011 to 2018 and found a "G4" strain of H1N1 with "all the essential hallmarks of a candidate pandemic virus", according to the paper, which was published in the US journal, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS). Workers on pig farms showed elevated levels of the virus in their blood, the authors said, adding that "close monitoring in human populations, especially the workers in the swine industry, should be urgently implemented." "Pigs are intermediate hosts for the generation of pandemic influenza virus. Thus, systematic surveillance of influenza viruses in pigs is a key measure for prewarning the emergence of the next pandemic influenza," the study said.

Indian troops martyr two more Kashmiris in IOK

ISLAMABAD: Troops in their fresh act of state terrorism in Indian held Kashmir, martyred two more Kashmiris in south district Islamabad, on Tuesday. According to Kashmir Media Service, the youth were killed by troops during All-out cordon and search operation in Waghama area of the district. A joint team of Army's 3 Rashtriya Rifles, Central Reserve Police Force and Special Operation Group launched a cordon and search operation in the area and in the exchange of fire two militants were killed, a police official told media men. However, he added, the identity of the youth was yet to be ascertained. - APP



LAHORE: General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, offering foteha at Yadgare-Shuhada at PN War College, Lahore. - DNA

EU to allow in visitors from 14 'safe' countries

DNA

BRUSSELS: The EU has named 14 countries whose citizens are deemed "safe" to be let in from 1 July, despite the pandemic - but the US, Brazil and China are excluded. Those named include Australia, Canada, Japan, Morocco and South Korea. The EU is ready to add China if the Chinese government offers a reciprocal deal for EU travellers, dip-

lomats say. EU border controls have been lifted for EU citizens travelling inside the bloc. Rules for UK travellers are covered separately in the Brexit negotiations. UK nationals are still to be treated in the same way as EU citizens until the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December. Therefore, during that time UK nationals and their family members are exempt from the temporary travel restriction.

On the current "safe" list, still likely to be amended, are Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Serbia, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay. The UK is currently negotiating "air bridges" with several EU member states, so that coronavirus does not totally block summer holidays - the busiest season in Europe for tourism, which employs millions of people.

Pakistanis stand with Kashmiris: Fawad Ch

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhary Tuesday said the Pakistani nation would continue to support to the people of Indian occupied Kashmir until the realization of their right to self-determination. Pakistanis are standing with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters and will always stand with them in every situation, he said this while speaking at a private news channel programme. He said Pakistan would continue its moral, ethical, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiris. "India must be aware of the fact that Pakistan is not a weak country and we are capable enough to give befitting response to every aggression", he warned. India's irresponsible attitude towards regional matters is posing serious threat to regional peace and stability, he feared. Pakistan is exercising effective diplomacy to promote peace in the region and resolve all outstanding disputes with India through dialogues, he mentioned. - APP

Taliban reaffirm commitment to US deal

KABUL: The Taliban reaffirmed their commitment to a February deal to draw down the war in Afghanistan during a call with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the group's spokesman has said. The discussion came as US President Donald Trump faces mounting pressure to explain why he did nothing after being reportedly told that Russian spies had offered and paid cash to Taliban-linked militants for killing American soldiers. The Taliban have denied that their fighters received any Russian bounties, and the group's Qatar-based chief negotiator Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar reiterated their pledge not to strike against the US. Baradar told Pompeo that "according to the agreement, we do not allow anyone to use Afghan soil against the US and other countries", Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said Monday in a statement on Twitter. Under the landmark agreement, which excluded the Afghan government, Washington and the militants said they would refrain from attacking each other. The Taliban spokesman said Baradar and Pompeo discussed concerns about the deal, including intra-Afghan talks and the release of 5,000 imprisoned insurgents. "We are committed to starting intra-Afghan talks," Baradar told Pompeo, blaming the hold-up on the delayed release of prisoners, according to Shaheen. The Afghan government in Kabul has said it has freed nearly 4,000 Taliban prisoners so far in a bid to kickstart the negotiations. Pompeo acknowledged the Taliban had refrained from attacking urban centres and military bases under the deal, but called on them to do more to reduce overall violence. - DNA

UK reimposes lockdown

LONDON: The British government ordered schools and non-essential shops in the central English city of Leicester to close after a localised outbreak of coronavirus. Health Secretary Matt Hancock said nationwide moves to ease a three-month lockdown would be reversed in Leicester, where the infection rate is three times as high as the next worst-affected city. "Unfortunately while cases in most parts of the country have fallen since the peak, in Leicester they've continued to rise," he

told parliament after a meeting with local leaders. Schools, which only re-opened for some children on June 1, would close from Thursday and shops that only opened two weeks ago would be shuttered on Tuesday, he said. Plans to reopen pubs, restaurants and cultural sites on July 4 would be scrapped in Leicester - although they will go ahead elsewhere in England - and locals are now being advised against all but essential travel. - APP

State Bank receives \$1.3b loan from Chinese banks

The World Bank has also approved a \$500 million loan in financing for the Resilient Institutions for Sustainable Economy programme

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KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan confirmed on Tuesday receiving loans worth \$1.3 billion from Chinese banks this week. In a tweet, the bank said that it has received the amount as "GOP [Government of Pakistan] loan disbursements from Chinese banks". This brings the total amount of official inflows received since June 23, 2020, to around \$3 billion. The World Bank has, on the

other hand, also approved a \$500 million loan in financing for the Resilient Institutions for Sustainable Economy programme (RISE). This loan aims to help Pakistan to strengthen its revenue and expenditure (fiscal) management, promote transparency and private sector growth, and begin foundational reforms in the energy sector to switch to low-carbon energy. These reforms are important in order to increase recovery from the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic

and help in building fiscal flexibility. Last week, the State Bank received around \$1.7 billion to facilitate the country during its fight against the coronavirus pandemic. This included \$725 million from the World Bank, \$500 million from the Asian Development Bank, and \$500 million from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. These funds aim to support the government of Pakistan's efforts to strengthen its health system. However, the SBP said on

June 25 that Pakistan's dollar reserves fell to their lowest level in seven months last week after the central bank retired foreign debt of \$244.5 million. According to the SBP's latest data, foreign exchange reserves on June 19 were \$9.9 billion. This was the first time since November 2019 that the dollar reserve in the central bank fell below \$10 billion. The SBP publishes weekly foreign exchange reserve data with a gap of a few days and the next weekly

data may see its reserves increase again because of the fresh inflows. Pakistan's depleting dollar reserves were one of the main challenges for the present government when it came into power in August 2018. To tackle this challenge, PM Khan's government signed a \$6 billion bailout with the International Monetary Fund. The IMF programme opened more doors for Pakistan as the World Bank, ADB and AIIB also pledged support. The dollar reserves were

doubled from its lowest point in 2018 to \$12 billion this year. The dollar account turned to a surplus in October last year. However, this came at an expense of choking economic growth such as reducing imports and increasing interest rates which made the borrowing expensive. In the first nine months of the current fiscal year, the loss to our dollar account was reduced by 73% and we were in surplus in May, the latest month for which the data is available.