



# Islamabad POST

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**Prime Minister Imran Khan rejects hike in fuel prices**

**Shibli Faraz rules out NRO for opposition**

**Nepalese envoy for exploring investment avenues**

## Briefs

### Three soldiers martyred

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Three soldiers were martyred during a search operation by security forces in South Waziristan. According to a statement released by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the three soldiers were martyred as terrorists fired at security forces during the operation. The martyred soldiers were identified as Subedar Nadeem, Sepoy Saleem and Lance Naik Musawar. Four other soldiers were also injured.

### Sindh brings the curtain down on local govts

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The Sindh Local Government Department notified on Monday an end to the four-year term of local government bodies in the province. "Consequent upon expiry of four (04) years term of Local Councils on 30th August 2020, pursuant to section 20 (1) of Sindh Local Government Act 2013, all offices of elected Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Chairmen, vice Chairmen, members, representative and such office bearers of Metropolitan Corporation, Municipal Corporations, District Councils, Municipal Committees, Town Committees, Union Committees, and Union Councils, in Sindh shall cease to exist w.e.f 31st August 2020," read the notification, a copy of which is available with a private channel. It directed all outgoing local government representatives to settle "individual liability, return asset(s), including Government vehicle(s), and state belonging, if any, to officer in-charge of respective Council, at once, as failure would constitute offence."

### Rs105 billion for uplift schemes

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government disbursed Rs105.42 billion for uplift schemes during the first two months of the current fiscal year, according to the Planning Commission. It said the government has set a target of doling out Rs116 billion development funds in the first quarter of fiscal year 2020-21. Of the total funds disbursed during July and August, a collective sum of Rs7.40 billion was dispensed to federal ministries, Rs13.55 billion to the Water Resources Division, and Rs13.48 to the Cabinet Division.

## PM rejects hike in fuel prices

The premier issues directives for finalizing the Karachi Transformation Plan in consultation with all stakeholders this week so that it can be approved

SAIFULLAH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday rejected the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) summary suggesting an increase in petroleum prices for the month of September. "The federal government will not increase fuel prices as people are already going through difficult times due to coronavirus and recent rainfalls and floods across the country," said PM Imran in a statement. He further said that the incumbent government will not put more burden on flood-hit masses by increasing petroleum prices. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) in its summary had proposed an increase of about Rs5 per litre in the prices of petrol and HSD for the month of September. Last month, the federal government hiked the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) up to Rs5 per litre ahead of Eidul Adha. The notification for the new prices read that the rate of petrol was increased up to Rs3.86 per litre and Rs5 per litre for high-speed diesel. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Imran Khan reiterated that the federal

government will play a vigorous role in resolving the problems faced by the people of Karachi and developing the metropolis. Chairing a high-level meeting to deliberated on Karachi Transformation Plan, he said: "We cannot shut our eyes to the hardships of public." PM Imran Khan maintained he is well aware of Karachi's perennial public issues that remain unresolved, emphasising that the development of the country is linked to the city's uplift. He issued directives for finalising the Karachi Transformation Plan in consultation with all stakeholders this week so that it can be approved and work towards its implementation could begin at the earliest. The meeting was attended by Planning and Development Minister Asad Umar, Sindh Governor Imran Ismail, Maritime Affairs Minister Ali Ziaidi, and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lt Gen Muhammad Afzal among others. The issues concerning the city's sewerage system, supply of clean drinking water, cleaning of stormwater drains, solid waste management, and public transport were discussed during the meeting at length.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in a meeting with Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani. - DNA

### Shibli Faraz rules out NRO

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Senator Shibli Faraz on Monday said that federal government and its departments are providing all possible support to Sindh government after heavy rains in the province. The federal minister further said that every possible assistance is being provided without any political bias. On the other hand, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on has issued a high alert as already inundated Karachi is set to receive seventh spell of monsoon rains from Monday. The Met office has informed that another monsoon rain-bearing system has entered the province which could aggravate existing urban flooding and water logging in Karachi. Rain/wind-thundershowers, with isolated heavy to very heavy falls, are expected in Karachi, Hyderabad, Thatta, Badin, Shaheed Benazirabad, Dadu, Tharparker, Nagarparkar, Mirpurkhas, Islam Kot, Umar Kot, and Sanghar.

## Pakistan, Qatar enjoy excellent ties: Sanjrani

Speaking to the Ambassador of Qatar, Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani said that there is good opportunity for Qatar to invest in infrastructure related projects in Gwadar

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani has said that Pakistan and Qatar enjoy cordial relations and both sides have stood together in testing times. Chairman Senate expressed these views during a meeting with the Ambassador of Qatar Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Faisal Al-Thani, here at Parliament House on Monday. Sadiq Sanjrani said that with improved security situation, investment opportunities have increased manifold in

Pakistan especially in Gwadar region and the projects included in the CPEC. He said that an increase in the parliamentary relations and exchange of delegations would be instrumental to explore the opportunities for economic cooperation and would pave the way for enhanced bilateral trade between Pakistan and other countries. "Pakistan and Qatar enjoy excellent cooperation at bilateral and multilateral forums including Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)" Senate

Chairman observed. Chairman Senate also informed the Ambassador of Qatar about the human rights violations being committed by Indian forces in illegally occupied Kashmir. He said that Indian occupying forces have brutally murdered innocent Kashmiris and have turned the occupied valley into an open jail blatantly violating all the human rights conventions. He called upon the global community to take notice of human rights violations being committed by Indian forces in the occupied valley.

## Pakistan, Afghanistan key bilateral talks

The Afghan stakeholders must seize this historic opportunity, work together constructively

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: On the invitation of Government of Afghanistan, Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood visited Kabul at the head of the Pakistan delegation comprising senior officers for the second review meeting of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS). The Afghan side was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Mirwais Nab. During the meeting, the entire spectrum of bilateral relations was reviewed. Highlighting the importance of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, the Foreign Secretary underlined that these historic and fraternal ties were reinforced by a shared desire for regional peace, stability and prosperity. The relationship

was further strengthened through regular exchanges at the highest level and through myriad bilateral mechanisms, particularly APAPPS. Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19, the Foreign Secretary said, Pakistan had opened the border crossings with Afghanistan to facilitate bilateral and transit trade as well as pedestrian movement. The Foreign Secretary reiterated Pakistan's abiding commitment to a peaceful, stable, united, sovereign and prosperous Afghanistan. He reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast support for the Afghan peace process and reiterated that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. An inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement was the only way forward.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Shahzad Waseem, leader of the house in Senate, calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

### SC orders to terminate two employees

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday restored the decision of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department for termination of its two employees on corruption charges and issued directives for recovery from them. The bench noted that Dr. Misal Khan had allegedly embezzled Rs 8 millions and storekeeper Nazar Hussain Rs 7.4 millions, respectively in line of purchase of medical equipment for Dera Ismail Khan Hospital. The chief justice remarked that the public money had been looted by the two employees. - APP

## Lowest daily virus cases

On August 30, it recorded only 213 new cases in a day, and six deaths across the country, while it sampled 18,017 tests

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday reported 213 new coronavirus cases, its lowest daily count in more than four months. The country reported its first case of the deadly virus on February 26 and went into a three-week lockdown in late March. In the subsequent months, the caseload kept climbing, peaking at 6,825 new cases in a single day on June 13. While it recorded 153 deaths, its highest to date, on June 19. However, in the last month, Pakistan's daily infections and fatalities have dropped significantly. On August 30, it recorded only 213 new cases in a day, and six deaths across the country, while it sampled 18,017 tests. The August 30 figure is the lowest tally since April 10, when 186 new infections were reported in a day. Recently, Dr Faisal Sultan, the senior most health official in Pakistan, who was recently appointed the prime minister's advisor on COVID-19, told the Telegraph that while the decline is a promising sign for Pakistan, he remains cautious. "At the end of the day I keep reminding people that this is like smouldering embers and the embers are there. You provide them with fuel and with a little bit of oxygen, they will flare up," he said.

### Nawaz's petitions fixed for hearing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has fixed for hearing the petitions of former Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif seeking exemption from appearance in Court. Appeals against Nawaz Sharif's sentence will be heard after the hearing of his appearance exemption petitions. IHC Judges Justice Amir Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani will hear the case. Meanwhile, a NAB prosecution team has been formed on the appeals of Avenfield, Al Azizia and Flagship References; NAB prosecutors Jahanzeb Bhawana and Sardar Muzaffar Abbasi will appear in Court. According to sources, NAB has decided to aggressively oppose Nawaz Sharif's request for exemption, taking a stand that the former PM is a fugitive and cannot be granted exemption from appearance. NAB officials are of the view that in case of his non-appearance, appeals against his sentences in both cases should be rejected.

### NAB rebuts Shahid Khaqan's allegations

KARACHI: The NAB Karachi has rebutted allegations of former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi of not pursuing the case. The PML-N stalwart is facing corruption reference of illegal appointments in the Pakistan State Oil (PSO). "NAB Karachi chapter strongly refutes allegations of Shahid Khaqan Abbasi", the spokesperson of the anti-graft body said in a statement. Reports questioning the performance of NAB Karachi were aired, however NAB prosecutor was already present at the Sindh High Court for hearing of corruption reference against the former prime minister. - DNA

## Nepalese envoy for exploring investment avenues

She appreciated the role of apex and allied bodies of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation ( SAARC), working together to defuse the political rifts among the member countries and keeping the prime motive of regional integration alive

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Sewa Adhikari High Commissioner of Nepal to Pakistan on Saturday stressed the urgent needs for exploring the investment avenues in various sectors among the SAARC member countries. Talking to a delegation led by Iftikhar Ali Malik President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry which called on at her residence, she said still there is a vast scope for economic integration which needs to be fully exploited. She hoped new leadership Of SAARC Chamber will endeavour to further strengthen the trade relations and economic ties among

all member countries on priority and live upto the aspirations of the private sectors of either sides besides promoting business to business links among the importers and exporters of the region. Sewa said exchange of business delegations must be encouraged for the development, progress, prosperity welfare and betterment of the poor strata of the region by overcoming abject poverty. She assured full cooperation to help achieving the objectives of the chamber as enshrined in its charter. She appreciated the role of apex and allied bodies of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation ( SAARC), working together to defuse the political rifts among the member countries and keep-



ing the prime motive of regional integration alive." She congratulated veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik and Senator Haji Ghulam Ali for assuming the offices of President and Vice President SAARC Chamber of Com-

merce and Industry respectively. Zubair Ahmad member executive committee and acting Secretary General SAARC Chamber Zulfikar Ali Butt were also present on the occasion. Iftikhar Ali Malik said that apex and allied bodies of SAARC are the true representation of the people of the region and speak their mind and hearts. He said that the role of chamber is instrumental in promoting regional economic integration in South Asia and SAARC Chamber is most vibrant and active body of SAARC. He said that SAARC Chamber is actively engaged in business to business relationships, to voice the interest of private sector of region and serve to promote exchange of commercial, technical,

industrial management and scientific information, education and know-how amongst its members in South Asia. Senator Haji Ghulam Ali urged the High Commissioner to play their constructive role in supporting the SAARC mechanism and its allied and apex institutions. He also shared some past memories with him. He said that the government of Pakistan and its people are committed to SAARC mechanism. He thanked the High Commissioner for her good wishes and assurance for economic integration in the region. He invited the High Commissioner to Peshawar for having direct interaction with private sector and see the culture of the frontier region of Pakistan.

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## Briefs

## PM Imran promises to solve Karachi's problems

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has vowed to solve Karachi's three major problems soon.

In a series of tweets on Saturday, the premier expressed solidarity with the people of Karachi.

The city was hit by heavy rain on Thursday that left most of the city flooded and without power. Electricity supply was restored in some areas after 48 hours and has yet to be restored in multiple other areas. Massive urban flooding across the city also led to water entering people's homes. The city for rainfall in August after it recorded 442mm this month.

"The whole nation feels the pain our people in Karachi are going through," wrote the premier. "However, out of this devastation and suffering there is now a positive development as my government, along with the Sindh government, is moving to immediately act and resolve three major problems of Karachi," he said. According to PM Khan, the problems are:

- Cleaning the city's stormwater drains once and for all and dealing with encroachments that impede water channels
- Devising a permanent solution to the city's solid waste disposal and sewerage problems
- Resolving the critical issue of water supply Karachi's are full of garbage and many have been encroached upon. Construction on top of the drains has led to the drains narrowing, leaving little space for rainwater to get through. When it rains, these overflow, causing widespread urban flooding.

## SOSV backs ecommerce platform PriceOye.pk

DNA

LAHORE: PriceOye.pk, Pakistan's leading e-commerce platform, announced that it has raised an undisclosed amount of funding in its ongoing Pre Series A round led by the US-based venture capital fund SOSV. Last year, the company announced its seed funding round led by Fatima Ventures. "Pakistani consumers are ready for world-class online shopping experience, and PriceOye.pk has proven itself to be the market leader thanks to the platform's unbeatable prices and seamless experience. We're grateful to back Adnan and Adeel as they go on to shape the future of the Pakistani economy," said William Bao Bean, General Partner at SOSV and Managing Director of MOX, the Mobile Only Accelerator.

With a business model similar to China's JD.com, PriceOye.pk is catering to Pakistan's 210 million consumers by providing authentic, high-end products at low prices. "One of the biggest problems with online shopping in Pakistan is counterfeit products. PriceOye.pk is bringing transparency and trust to the online shopping experience, helping the 210 million Pakistani consumers seamlessly buy certified products at low prices. Our focus on customer happiness has made PriceOye.pk a leading e-commerce platform in Pakistan, and we look forward to going further with the support from SOSV," said Adnan Shafiq, Co-founder and CEO of PriceOye.pk

## Anti dengue arrangements reviewed

DNA

LAHORE: An anti-dengue drive initiated by the district administration is in full swing and surveillance is being carried out in various points of the provincial capital. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Sadar Hussain Virk on Monday visited Union Council (UC)-09 and inspected field staff. To prevent dengue, it was necessary for the public to cooperate with the administration and field staff, he said. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Raiwind Adnan Rasheed visited the PC-SIR Housing Society and reviewed measures and also visited various houses.

## Pakistan Navy's relief operation continues in rain-hit areas of Karachi

Additionally, thousands of bags containing necessary food items were also distributed in Surjani Town, Yaro Khan Goth, Yousaf Goth, Khamesso Goth covering diverse localities at Karachi and relief camps at District Badin



DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy's relief operation continued in rain-hit areas of Karachi and Sindh. Pakistan Navy teams, besides rescue operation, provided cooked food, neces-

sary ration items and established medical care centers for assistance of distressed population.

Pakistan Navy has augmented relief and rescue activities in Karachi and Badin, Sindh. Pakistan Navy assisted repairing of LBOD overflow/ leakage in coordination



with civil administration at District Badin. Different areas were also de-flooded. Relief and rescue efforts were launched at various parts of Karachi and citizens were shifted to safer places. Hundreds of cooked food packets were distributed amongst the traumatized

families in rain-hit area of Younis Abad & Kakka Pir, Nazimabad and Surjani Town. Additionally, thousands of bags containing necessary food items were also distributed in Surjani Town, Yaro Khan Goth, Yousaf Goth, Khamesso Goth covering diverse localities at Karachi



and relief camps at District Badin. Medical Camps established at Badin were reinforced with additional doctors and medics of Pakistan Navy. Mobile medical teams visited various localities and provided treatment and medicines to over 1000 patients. Medical assistance

was also extended to residents, forced to remain confined at their homes due to widespread flooding in Defence and Clifton areas.

Pakistan Navy's rescue & relief operation continues in Karachi and Sindh, to extend all out support in rain-hit areas.

## PAF distributes ration in rain affected areas

DNA

KARACHI: Keeping the tradition of serving the nation during natural calamities, Pakistan Air Force came to the succor of rain affected families of Karachi.

On the special instructions of Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, PAF Bases situated in Karachi are actively participating in relief operations in the rain affected areas. Pakistan Air Force besides actively participating in relief efforts in flood like situation in some parts of the city is also reaching out



to the needy families whose houses have been inundated in the natural calamity.

As a humanitarian gesture, ration packs carrying basic food items and commodities such as flour, rice, sugar, oil, pulses etc were distributed amongst over 1000 needy families of the worst hit areas in the recent torrential rains. In the first phase ration packs were delivered in various low lying areas in the vicinity of PAF Base Faisal and PAF Base Masroor, including Grex, Masroor Colony, Budhni Goth., Musharraf Colony, Bilal Colony and Al-Falah Society.

## No NRO for opposition: Sadaqat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sadaqat Ali Abbasi Monday said that the opposition parties want to seek National Accountability Bureau (NAB)'s law concessions for their personal interests but PM Imran Khan will not back down from his party's manifesto.

Talking to a private news channel, PTI leader said the opposition leaders were categorically claiming that they had never asked the PTI government for any NRO, but the amendments they have proposed are documentary evidence of seeking an NRO.

He said the reforms introduced by the PTI government would end politics of the opponents like in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the party brought far-reaching reforms and got re-elected with an overwhelming majority. Abbasi said the opposition should support any legislation aimed to protect the national interest, adding, the opposition will be exposed if it prefers its own benefits over national interest.

He urged the opposition parties to come up with positive and viable recommendations with regard to electoral reforms if they have.

He said under this vision the reforms are being introduced in all government ministries and institutions and the Prime Minister is personally supervising the reforms agenda of the government.

He said PTI government is serious about making the electoral process meaningful and parliament which would address issues like electoral fraud too.

## IRSA releases 343,000 cusecs water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 343,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 331,300 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, Tarbela Dam has already attained its maximum conservation level of 1550.00 feet, which was 154.00 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 184,000 cusecs and outflow as 183,400 cusecs.

The water level in the Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1241.15 which was 201.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 33,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 221,100, 310,700 and 205,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 42,800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 65,400 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

## Changing weather demand more ambulances: SRMS

KARACHI: Due to the changing weather patterns the city urgently needed more emergency vehicles like well equipped ambulances and other equipments prior to next monsoon season for addressal of issues including injuries and loss of lives due to lack of such vehicles.

This was stated by Sindh Rescue & Medical Services (SRMS), in a statement issued here Monday. It said that SRMS kept plying its service throughout the recent spells of heavy rain in Karachi to reach those who needed immediate critical medical help SRMS's Command & Control Center, provided uninterrupted service in three

shifts with the female staff members also performing their duties, as per norm. The crew walked through flooded streets where ambulances were unable to reach because of the flooding, carrying their equipment and providing services to those at the roadside or in houses.

The crew did not hesitate to carry unconscious patients on their shoulder to the ambulance where it was impossible for the vehicle to reach the caller, ensuring that every effort is made to provide emergency care to save a life and safely transfer the patient with all precautions and therapeutic treatment to destination site.

Aman Health Care Services and SRMS operational management ensured that the teams followed safety protocols and were provided the required administrative support to make this possible. SRMS was able to operate 85 per cent of its ambulances in these tough conditions and over the 48-hour period between August 27 and 28, catered to 300 plus emergencies including 132 home to hospital shifting, 133 hospital to hospital shifting, six road side to hospital and 45 other emergencies. SRMS always has and will continue to serve with the same zeal in times of crisis, living up to the needs and expectations of the people of Karachi. - APP

## KTH to star OPD today

DNA

PESHAWAR: The management of Khyber Teaching Hospital Monday has taken all the steps for resuming the services of OPD as per BOG directives. Board of Governors Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) had issued the directives to re-function the OPD services. KTH elective services restored after 24th March due to COVID-19 pandemic. All the specialties elective services would start from September. The OPDs was started with strict SoPs and no one without mask would be allowed to enter the hospital. One patient one attended policy was strictly implemented to minimize the risk of COVID-19 pandemic.

## Petroleum Division donates Rs186m in COVID Fund

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum Division and its attached departments have so far contributed around Rs186 million to the prime minister's relief fund to mitigate financial sufferings of the coronavirus (COVID-19) affected people and for taking precautionary measures to contain the deadly virus. The OGDCL, PMDC, SNGPL, SSGC, PPL and PSO significantly contributed to the relief fund, according to a recent data provided by the Petroleum Division. All employees of Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) have donated their two-day salary, which stood at around Rs5 million, in the fund to help needy. Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has allocated Rs38 million for relief activities across the country, out of which Rs19 million were meant for the prime minister's relief fund and Rs19 million for National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to procure medical supplies.

Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) contributed Rs30 million for the COVID-19 relief efforts. Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) deposited an amount of Rs53 million in the fund, and converted its I-9 hostel building into a quarantine center and handed over to Islamabad district administration. The company also announced provision of medicines, 50 personal protection equipment kits for medical staff, food items and a ventilator-equipped ambulance. Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has released a hand-out of Rs10 million for four districts of Sindh with the spirit of cash-support for procurement of necessary equipment in the province against COVID-19 pandemic. Pakistan State Oil (PSO) has extended support of Rs50 million in the prime minister's relief fund to support the needy. Both gas utilities, SNGPL and SSGC, has undertaken immediate measures to facilitate the people during the COVID-19 pandemic by holding E-kachehries and introducing online Billing Apps.

## LHC new registrar appointed

LAHORE: Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Muhammad Qasim Khan Monday appointed District and Sessions Judge (D&SJ) Malik Mushtaq Ahmad Oja as the LHC registrar. He will replace Bahadar Ali Khan, who will attain the age of superannuation on Sept 1. At present, Malik Mushtaq is serving as director general district judiciary, LHC. D&SJ Muhammad Saeed

ullah will take his place as DG district judiciary. The judicial officers had been asked to take charge of their new assignments on or before Sept 2. Meanwhile, the LHC also promoted 25 office coordinators to the rank of senior office coordinators. Additional Registrar HRhad issued the notification for the purpose after the approval of the LHC chief justice. - APP

## Pakistan has great potential to promote exports to Ethiopia'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ethiopia meets most of its needs through imports and Pakistan has great potential to export its many products to Ethiopia including pharmaceutical, surgical, steel rolls, textiles and others. This was observed by Shozab Abbas, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Ethiopia during an interaction with the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Shozab Abbas said that he would share the details of products with ICCI that have good demand in Ethiopia so that the business community could capitalize on the potential opportunities for promoting exports to Ethiopian market.

He said that Pakistani business community should focus on diversification of exports to get better penetration into African region. He said that he would try to arrange a display centre for Pakistani business community in Ethiopia so that they could showcase the potential of their products for exports to Ethiopian market. He said that Ethiopia was around 34 hours direct flight from Karachi and stressed that both countries should establish direct air links to improve trade relations. He assured that he would provide all possible support to the business community in getting better access to Ethiopian market and would also interact with ICCI members through webinars to apprise them of the emerging opportunities for exports in Ethiopia.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that Africa should be key focus of our business community as it offered great potential for exports. He said that Pakistan has formed a 'Look Africa' Policy, and it should make Ethiopia a hub of its exports to African region. He said that many Pakistani products including engineering goods, sugar, rice, agro-processed products and sports goods could find a good market in Ethiopia. He said that Pakistan could provide technical support to Ethiopia in the field of engineering, pharmaceutical, IT and many other sectors, so close cooperation between the two countries would be more beneficial for both sides.

He said that the Pakistan Embassy in Ethiopia should regularly share the information about products that were in high demand in Ethiopian market so that Pakistani exporters could enhance their export to Ethiopia.

Muhammad Aslam Khokhar, Shaikat Hayat Khan, Abbas Hashmi and Muhammad Shakeel Munir also spoke at the occasion and stressed that brotherly relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia should be transformed into meaningful economic and trade relations.

They said that the Pakistan Embassy in Ethiopia should play a role for frequent engagements at business-to-business level between the two countries that would help in further improving bilateral trade between the two countries.

## 'Govt formulating guidelines to reopen schools'

Specific tasks would be created for teachers in schools and responsibilities for ensuring health and hygiene would be defined before reopening of schools

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Education Shafiqat Mahmood Monday said that the government was aware of the academic loss of the students, but health of children was their top priority where authorities has been devising strict guidelines for reopening of schools and universities as soon as possible. Talking to a private news channel, the minister said federal authorities would review the situation of coronavirus pandemic and a session scheduled on September 7 would be attended by education ministers of all provinces to take a final decision regarding the resumption of academic sessions. "It is of the utmost importance that we safely integrate all our students back into the learning environment", he added. Further, he said that specific tasks would be created for teachers in schools and responsibilities for ensuring health and hygiene would be defined before reopening of schools. He said the government was

clear that no decision would be taken without proper consultations and students' safety would



clear that no decision would be taken without proper consultations and students' safety would

be the top priority while making any decision in this regard. Strict action will be taken against those schools for violating the government's order for a 20 per cent discount in tuition fees, he mentioned. The educators lost their jobs will be restored after the reopening of schools, he said, adding that the decision for promoting students had been taken in view of halting exams due to coronavirus.

Replying to a question, he said, "I already suggested division of classes into two sections as a

precautionary measure against COVID-19 in order to continue academic sessions and the classes should be continued into separate batches of students. However, we will also see the situation of COVID-19 cases after the conclusion of the Muharram ul Haram," he added. He also detailed different plans for educational institutions, saying that a suggestion was also under consideration for allowing the centers for resuming classes of Level 8 to Level 12 students in the first phase.

## Briefs

### Rawal Dam level surges to red mark

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The water level at Rawal Dam has surged to red mark and the reservoir management has decided to open spillways of the dam. Rawal Dam authorities in a statement announced opening of the spillways at 11:00 am on Monday.

"Around 6000 cusecs of water will be discharged from the lake," according to the administration. "Rawal Dam reservoir has maximum capacity of 1752 feet water conservation, while present water level at the dam has been 1751.9 feet," the dam management said.

"After opening of the spillways the water level at Soan River will rise and water could overflow from the banks of the stream," the dam administration said. Soan River is an important stream of the Pothohar region in North Punjab and drains much of the water of the area.

It is pertinent to mention here that monsoon season this year has rained more water over Pakistan filling three major reservoirs in the country to their maximum capacity. The Water reservoir of Mangla Dam reached to its maximum water conservation capacity of 1242 feet, on Saturday, according to Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) sources.

Earlier, the water reservoir at Tarbela Dam had also reached its maximum capacity of 1,550 feet. Currently, the cumulative quantum of water available at present in Mangla and Tarbela reservoirs stands at 13.336 million acre-feet (MAF) which is a record for water availability during the last 10 years.

### SAPM takes notice of dysfunctional civic facilities

DNA

ATTOCK: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam took notice of dysfunctional civic facilities and directed officials of Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) to address the issues without any further delay.

He directed to repair collapsed drainage line in his native village Shamsabad, Hazro and dysfunctional filtration plants in Hassanabad which were clogged after recent rains.

He was informed that the drainage line was executed by the PHED Attock and constructed by local contractors in Shamsabad from the funds provided by the SAPM. Similarly two filtration plants inaugurated by the DAPM remained dysfunctional for many days in Hassanabad.

PHED officials informed the advisor that drainage line was damaged by flash water due to recent rains. About the dysfunctionality of filtration plants, the officials said the plants remained unattended due to some technical issues as the management committee comprising of locals of the area refused to supervise the affairs after the inauguration which they earlier agreed.

### Youm e Ashura observed in Attock

DNA

ATTOCK: As many as 50 Youm-e-Ashur processions were taken out from different 'imambargah' of the district including the main procession which was taken out from Imambargah. All the processions after passing through designated routes culminated peacefully. The main procession culminated at Karbala amid tight security. DC Attock, DPO and SHOs supervised the processions. 'Sabeels' of water, milk and food stalls were set up by local people at different points for the mourners. A special mobile medical team from District Headquarters Hospital Attock and Rescue 1122 provided medical cover.



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing ambassador of Indonesia, Iwan S Amri handing over command to deputy head of mission. Ambassador Amri will leave Pakistan on Sept 3, 2020. – DNA

## Pakistan, UAE agree to boost cooperation in diverse fields

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al Zaabi met Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday. Ambassador said that Pakistan and UAE enjoying cordial bilateral relations based on shared values and traditions.

The existing economic cooperation needs to be enhanced in line with tremendous potential for trade and business between two countries. He said that exchange of Parliamentary delegations would steer the agen-



da to enhance bilateral ties and economic relationship.

He said that UAE can benefit from the improved security situation in Pakistan and invest in different sectors to boost the trade and economic ties.

He said that UAE investors can benefit for investment opportunities in CPEC projects and Gwadar Region.

He called for exchange of delegations of the business community to increase the trade volume between two countries. The Ambassador of UAE stressed for further boosting cooperation in different sectors through enhanced parliamentary interaction.

### Asia's biggest eye hospital to be functional by Jan: Gen Rehmat

*Babies should be able to see in terms of focusing ability, colour vision and depth perception by 6 months of age therefore they should have their first comprehensive eye exam at 6 months of age*

RAWALPINDI: Asia's biggest children eye hospital is scheduled to be functional by January 2021 with a capacity of treating one hundred and fifty thousand children annually, a leading eye trust announced Monday. The Rs one billion project is in final stage at the premises of Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Rawalpindi which will have a capacity to cater for the needs of 500 OPD patients per day, said President Al-Shifa Trust Maj. Gen. (Retd) Rehmat Khan. Talking to the media men here, he said that our data regarding school screening shows that 20 percent of children bears some sort of eye problems while 5 percent of them have severe eye disorders. He said that trust is constructing first children eye hospital in the country with a capacity of 500 OPDs and fifty complicated surgeries would be performed in a day. This will be the biggest hospital in Asia as far as the capacity is concerned for which we are thankful to the philanthropists and the donors, he added. Gen Rehmat Khan said that we have 13 eye specialist doctors while the required strength is 16 total. All the necessary equipment has been purchased and the children's hospital has been linked with the operation rooms of the main hospital. He said that eye screening for the children should be mandatory as lack of awareness create a lot of problems in the children as they grow. Babies should be able to see in terms of focusing ability, colour vision and depth perception by 6 months of age therefore they should have their first comprehensive eye exam at 6 months of age, then their eyes should be examined at age 3 and just before they enter the school as our future is linked to children, he said. Premature babies should be examined soon after birth so that timely action could be taken to prevent any problem. He informed that school-aged children should have an eye exam at least every two years if no vision correction is required. Children who need eyeglasses should be examined annually or as recommended by the eye doctor. – DNA

### Civil society's role appreciated

ABBOTABAD: DIG of Police Hazara Division Qazi Jamil-ur-Rehman has appreciated the civil society for playing effective role in maintaining peace during first ten days of Muharram. Talking to media during his visit to review security arrangements, the DIG said that civil society especially Ulama, traders' community, peace committee and journalist community who played role like opinion leaders in society deserved to be appreciated for extending their valuable contributions towards promoting brotherhood and religious harmony on the occasion of Muharram. He also appreciated the role of police force for maintaining law and order situation, adding that fool-proof security arrangements had been made for peaceful observance of Muharram in the three districts of Hazara Division. – APP

### Ufone and KhanaGhar to provide relief in Karachi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ufone's brand ambassador and founder of KhanaGhar, Parveen Saeed, pledged to provide cooked meals to the people of Surjani Town and Yousuf Goth who have been worst affected by the heavy rainfall in Karachi. To amplify the impact of this noble gesture, Pakistani telecom company, Ufone has decided to further give out cooked meals and provide clean drinking water to the residents of the area. Torrential rainfall in Karachi has wreaked havoc in Surjani town and Yousuf Goth, thousands of people have lost their homes and are deprived of basic amenities. People are facing extreme shortage of food supplies and clean drinking water. Leading humanitarian, Parveen Saeed, decided

to step up in this situation and help people during desperate times. Saeed, who is also a resident of the area, providessubsidized food to the low income group. To commend these inspirational efforts, Ufonelended support toParveenSaeed and decided to back her endeavour of feeding the needy. Ufone Head of PR and CSR Amir Pasha said, "Ufone realizes the pain of the people in Karachi. This is an unprecedented situation and millions suffer from heavy rainfall in the metropolis. The need of the hour is to support each other and stand with each other." Parveen Saeed extended her gratitude to Ufone and said, "The situation is extremely bad in Surjani Town and Yousuf Goth, people are unable to find food and feed their families. KhanaGhar is trying to ensure that no one has to sleep hungry."

### Attock sees upward trend in virus cases

DNA

ATTOCK: After a brief low graph of novel COVID-19 positive cases in district Attock, the number of positive patients again escalating as five more patients were tested positive raising the tally to 615. The official data of the respective health authorities confirmed on Monday.

According to the health authorities although new positive cases are being reporting, the number of recovered patients is also increasing with each passing day as 563 patients were recovered from this deadly disease across the district.

According to District Attock focal person for Covid-19, Dr Asif Arbab Niazi the new cases were reported from various parts of the district including city, Hazro and Pindi Gheb.

He said that number of active patients in the district are 28 in which 26 are home isolated while two other are under hospitalization.

Mr Niazi further said that the number of suspected cases in the district is 8384 while screening of as many as 11883 persons has also carried out so far.

He said that result of as many as 1418 suspected patients of the area is awaited. He said that as many as 6353 persons are tested negative so far.

### WASA urges not to throw trash in Nullah Leh

RAWALPINDI: Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Chairman Raja Tariq Mahmood Murtaza urged people not to throw shopping bags, garbage into Nullah Leh. As in the past, flood wrecked havoc in Rawalpindi and precious lives and property of the people were perished away in the flood. The desilting and dredging of Nullah Leh has been completed with an aim to protect the dwellers from flood devastation, and there is no danger of flood in Nullah Leh. Talking to APP, Chairman said while inspecting the machinery including D-wiring set, Screw Jetting Machine, Water Bowzers and Sewer Cleaning Roding Machines, the authority made it clear that all the machines in working condition.

He appealed the residents along Nullah Lai to avoid throwing and dumping solid waste into Nullah Lai because this creates hindrances to the flow of Nullah which results in flooding during monsoon season. Earlier, Punjab Emergency Service Rescue 1122 conducted Flood Preparedness Exercise at Rawal Dam to check preparedness level response strategy and further enhance the operational compatibility of Rescue 1122 teams. Civil Defense, District Education Department Rawalpindi, and other related departments participated in the mock exercise in a bid to avoid flood devastation. – APP

### IIUI president condoles Prof Ahmed's death

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Jumani, Acting President, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) visited residence of former IIUI faculty member (late) Prof. Ahmed Jan to offer condolences on his demise.

The Acting President was also accompanied by Adul Wahab Jan, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Usuluddin. Ahmed Jan was former Head of the Department of Dawah and Islamic Culture at Faculty of Usuluddin. He was a famous expert on the studies of comparative religion. Jumani conveyed grief and sorrow to Muhammad Tahir (son of late Prof. Ahmed Jan) and family on the behalf of IIUI President, Dr. Hathal bins Hamoud Al-Otaibi and offered fete-ha for the departed soul. During interaction with the family of late Professor, Dr. Jumani also conveyed that Dr. Hathal prayed for forgiveness of the departed soul and courage to the family to bear the loss with equanimity.

## COMSATS expands cooperation with China

COMSATS and China are facilitating the Government of Pakistan in establishing the country's first S&T Park on Biotechnology in Jhelum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad-based inter-governmental organization, the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) and its founding member country, China, are cooperating in various fields of science and technology for facilitating socio-economic uplift of the developing countries including Pakistan. COMSATS and its Centre of Excellence, the Tianjin Institute of

Industrial Biotechnology (TIB), are cooperating to establish a Joint Centre on Industrial Biotechnology for COMSATS Member States in China, which would provide opportunities of experts-exchange, joint research, and training of scientists/technicians to the developing countries. Having 21 of its Member Countries and 18 Centers of Excellence situated along China's Belt & Road Initiative, COMSATS is aiming to play an active role in this mega-project in the domains of higher education, S&T and innovation. COMSATS and China are facilitat-



ing the Government of Pakistan in establishing the country's first S&T Park on Biotechnology in Jhelum. The Torch Hi-tech Industry De-

velopment Centre of the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology and TIB are playing a key role in this initiative being led by the S&T Minister, Mr. Fawad Chaudhry. The planned Biotech Park would be based on public-private partnership, and would bridge industry with academia. Utilizing the broad capability in industrial biotechnology and existing talent pool in the country, the S&T park would realign the country's research efforts towards innovation and product development. It would house offices of local

and foreign universities, research organizations and industries in order to facilitate joint ventures aimed at job creation, facilitating start-ups, enhancing exports, substituting imports, and creation of knowledge economy. President Dr. Arif Alvi, chairing the meeting regarding the establishment of Jhelum Biotechnology Park which was attended by key stakeholders including officials from S&T and Housing Ministries, Forest Department, COMSATS, etc. reviewed the project and future course of action was determined.

## Briefs

## Qadri lauds maintaining peace on Ashura

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri on Monday lauded role of Interior Ministry, provincial governments and law enforcement agencies in making foolproof security arrangements for peaceful observance of Youm-e-Ashura as well as Muharram gatherings. In a statement, he appreciated role of Ulama and religious scholars for extending valuable services and cooperating in maintaining harmony, brotherhood and peace during early days of Muharram ul Haram. He warned strict action against elements still trying to fan hatred among various segments of society, adding that the Religious Ministry was maintaining a close liaison with Ulama and religious scholars to frustrate efforts of anti social elements.

## DHA conducts anti-dengue drive

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The District Health Authority (DHA) conducted an anti-dengue operation on the special directives of Additional Deputy Commissioner (Headquarters) in National Housing Scheme No. 1, Union Council Kalliam and destroyed a number of dengue larvae during indoor and outdoor surveillance. A large number of dengue larvae was found in the houses of the housing scheme as residents failed to remove the submerge water after rain. Meanwhile, ADC (Headquarters) Maham Asif has appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the dengue field staff so that the dengue epidemic can be controlled before the outbreak in the current rainy season. She said that dengue larvae was found in most of the houses in the area as the residents did not allow dengue teams to enter the houses and said that "our houses were clean and we could take care by themselves" but dengue mosquitoes and larvae were found in large number in these houses, she added. Maham said that dengue larvae have been destroyed and mosquito repellent has also been sprayed.

## Govt adds 2811 oxygen beds in hospitals

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar said on Monday that since mid June this year, the federal government had added 2,811 new oxygen beds in the hospitals across the country to facilitate the COVID-19 patients. "By mid June, the federal government had decided to add at least 2000 oxygen beds in various hospitals across the country," Asad Umar said in his tweet. The minister, who also chairs National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on coronavirus, informed that in Punjab, 804 new oxygen beds were added, while in Sindh and Balochistan 547 and 400 beds were added. Similarly 626,100, and 84 oxygen beds were added in Islamabad, Gilgit Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir respectively. - APP

## NEPRA to hold public hearing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority will hold public hearing on a petition filed by Central Power Purchase Agency Guarantee Limited (CPPA-G) here on Tuesday. According to the petition, the CPPA-G has sought 86 paise per unit increase in power tariff for the month of July under monthly fuel adjustment formula. In a petition filed with National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), the CPPA-G on behalf of ex-WAPDA distribution companies maintained that it had charged consumers a reference tariff of Rs 3.5420/kWh against the actual fuel cost of Rs 4.4035/kWh during the said period.

## Keen to strengthen ties with Azerbaijan, says President

The President also stressed regular holding of high-level bilateral meetings between the two countries to explore potential in diverse areas to their mutual benefit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said Pakistan was keen to strengthen ties with Azerbaijan in the fields of tourism, trade, defence and energy. Talking to Bilal Hayee, the newly appointed ambassador for Azerbaijan, the President said Pakistan gave utmost importance to its relations with Azerbaijan. President Alvi said Pakistan and Azerbaijan enjoyed deep economic, political, military and cultural ties and urged upon the envoy



to play role in enhancing bilateral trade volume. He expressed gratitude to the government of Azerbaijan on supporting Pakistan during coronavirus pandemic, particularly repatriation of 522 stranded Pakistanis. The President also stressed regular holding of high-level bilateral meetings between the two countries to explore potential in diverse areas to their mutual benefit. He hoped that the Bilal Hayee as new ambassador, would contribute to further strengthening of relationship between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

## Islamabad police get success in its security plan

The IGP also directed all officials to meet with those cops who performed duties on Muharram and further encourage them. He also appreciated performance of their staff who remained vigilant to ensure protection to lives and property of citizens

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police achieved success in maintaining law and order during Muharram-ul-Haram due to effective coordination among all wings of the force. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar khan appreciated the performance of the Operational Wing spearheaded by DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed who ensured effective security on Muharram. He also thanked the personnel of other law enforcement agencies for their cooperation and lauded and officials and jawans of Islamabad police. Islamabad police including Rangers and personnel of other law enforcement agencies performed patrolling and security duties on the occasion of Muharram ul Haram and all processions were completely cordoned off through heavy deployment. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar khan, DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed, Additional SP Security (Operations), all SPs, SDPOs, SHOs and other police officials visited the routes of processions and ensured effective coordination among the security personnel performing duties. Police officials guided the cops and boosted their morale in accomplishing duties in a responsible manner. The IGP also directed all officials to meet with those cops who performed duties on Muharram and further encourage them. He also appreciated performance of their staff who remained vigilant to ensure protection to lives and property of citizens. Flag marches were also conducted in various areas of the city to show off preparedness of law enforcement agencies for security during Muharram ul Haram. Hundreds of religious gatherings (Majalis) and processions were held in the city and strict security arrangements on these occasions and special checking of participants was also observed. The personnel of Islamabad Traffic Police performed duties on the occasion to divert traffic on alternate routes and guided the road users. Metal detectors were used for checking of participants of Majalis, processions and high vigilance was maintained by the police officials which helped in peaceful holding of all events in connection with Muharram ul Haram. IGP Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar khan has further directed to ensure fool proof security arrangements for upcoming gatherings and devise an effective strategy to maintain law and order. - DNA

## 22 outlaws including seven POs held

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police arrested 22 outlaws and recovered stolen motorbikes, hashish, wine and weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said. According to details, Kohsar police team arrested two persons Ali Raza and Adil involved in cheating people after impersonating themselves as government servants while police team apprehended two bike lifters namely Hanook Masih and Aamir and recovered a stolen motorbike from them. Golra police arrested two accused Ahmed Ali and Athar Ali for facilitating proclaimed offenders while police team arrested accused Bilal Husain and recovered one 30 bore pistol along with ammunition from him. Sabzi Mandi police arrested accused Akash and recovered 30 liters wine from him. A team of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) apprehended a bootlegger namely Roohdad Masih and recovered 60 liters alcohol, empty bottles and stickers from him. Khanna police arrested accused Waris Khan and recovered 2.670 kilogram hashish from him. Secretariat police arrested accused Faizan and recovered 127 gram hashish from him. - APP

## Railways to float tenders for ML-I project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is likely to float tenders for dualization of Karachi-Peshawar track Main Line-I (ML-I) during the current week under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Tenders will be limited to seek interest of Chinese firms since the project would be funded and executed under the CPEC, official sources in the Ministry of Railways told APP. The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) had already approved the project which would bring revolution in Pakistan Railways and create a number of job opportunities, they said. Giving detail of the ML-I, they said project consisted of three packages. Under package-I, the existing tracks between Lala Musa and Lahore, Lahore and Multan and Nawab Shah and Rohri would be replaced and upgraded. They said the package-II consisted of upgrade of the railway track between Lala Musa and Rawalpindi, Nowshera-Peshawar

and Hyderabad-Karachi sections while the package-III included upgradation of remaining chunks of the main-line, including Multan-Khanewal to Sukkur. Under the project, rehabilitation and construction of bridges, provision of modern signaling and telecom systems, replacing level crossings with underpasses and flyovers, fencing of track, establishment of dry port near Havelian and upgradation of Walton Training Academy (Lahore) would be carried out. The project, the sources said, was aimed at increasing train speed from existing 80-90 km/hour to 160 km/hour, thereby reducing the train journey between major cities like Karachi-Rawalpindi from 22hrs to 10 hrs and Rawalpindi - Lahore from five hrs to three hours only, they added. About the initiatives taken by the incumbent government, they said Pakistan Railways introduced live tracking system, provided free Wi-Fi facility at major stations as well as initiated establishment of state of the art command and control centre at Lahore headquarters to bring safety, efficiency and improvement in its network.

## FIA arrests five NBP employees over fraud

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Abbottabad Monday arrested five employees of the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) Khaira Gali and Khanaspur Galyat who were involved in 472 million rupees fraud after the rejection of Bail Before Arrest (BBA). The arrested accused of NBP were Bank Manager Khanaspur Sardar Jahangir, Bank Manager Khaira Gali Najmul Hassan and three others earlier, FIA Abbottabad also arrested a Nigerian national Anyihunday who was the partner in crime with NBP employees on tip of information from another Nigerian national who was also booked earlier in a fraud case. The court also granted a 7 days remand to FIA Abbottabad for investigation of the fraud. FIA Abbottabad circle is trying to recover the looted amount but sources claimed that the Nigerian partners have also looted the amount from accused NBP employees in the name of investment. On 27th February 2020, after complaints an Inspection Team of NBP visited the Khaira Gali branch where they found that there was no connectivity system in place, keys were being mishandled, and the cashier was not aware of any financial irregularities in the bank. When the team checked the B-52 balance which coincided with the cash in the vault, it was revealed that the branch balance witnessed a sudden increase after December 31, 2019. - APP

## PNCA to start Film Production Course

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) has planned to start one year Film Production Course to become a Professional Film Maker. The course would offer a foundation for understanding cinema and its relation to culture, history, technology and aesthetics-Film Studies. According to an official, the classes were aimed to teach students to create and analyze moving images, to produce research, and to make art. He said that classes will be start from October 5 with having two semesters and last date to apply for course is September 5. The best local and international faculty will be teaching everything you need in your capacity to become a Professional Film Maker, he said. Sarmad Khoosat, a well known Pakistani Director and Andre F Nebe German director would teach the direction. Peter Bussian American Cinematographer would teach the Cinematography. Lisa Locus American script writer and Saim Saddique will teach the techniques of script writing, he informed.

## PMD forecasts widespread rainfall across the country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Monday predicted widespread rainfall in the country from Monday. The met office in a weather advisory said that monsoon currents continue to penetrate into Sindh and under its influence widespread rain and thundershowers with a few heavy to very heavy falls are likely in Mirpur Khas, Tharparkar, Umerkot, Sanghar, Larkana, Dadu and Badin districts. While scattered rain and thundersorms expected in Shaheed Benazirabad, Thatta, Hyderabad, Sukkur and Jacobabad districts till Tuesday morning. Whereas, generally light to moderate rain with isolated heavy showers in eastern and northern outskirts of Karachi at evening/night. The PMD also forecast rainfall at Rajanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Bahawalpur and Khaniwal districts in southern Punjab. The met office in its weather advisory has warned against likely urban flooding due to heavy rains from Monday to Wednesday in urban areas, flash foods in hill torrents and likely landslides in mountain regions. The PMD has also alerted all concerned departments, especially reservoir operators and water managers to remain alert during the forecast days.



RAWALPINDI: Motorcyclist passing through rain water accumulated on the road during rain at Railway Road. - APP

## NAB recovers Rs 466bn from corrupt elements

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Corruption is a curse and is the only solution to eradicate menace of corruption is surgery as the corrupt elements inflicted multiple losses to the country. Corruption is inflicting irreparable losses to country. National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was established in 1999. The main aim of establishing NAB was to recover the looted money from the corrupt and put them to justice as per law. NAB has fulfilled its duties perfectly and deposited a sum of Rs 466 billion in the national exchequer after recovering from the corrupt elements since its inception which is record achievement. Honorable Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB had devised an effective anti corruption strategy immediately after taking over the responsibilities of Chairman in 2017. Chairman NAB's strategy has been acknowledged by various reputed organizations. The visionary Chairman NAB has also introduced various reforms in the bureau for taking action against the corrupt without any

discrimination. NAB's Headquarter is Islamabad and it has eight regional offices located at Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Sukkur, Multan and Gilgit-Baltistan are working hard with best of their abilities to eradicate corruption and recover looted money from corrupt elements in order to deposit in the national exchequer. Chairman NAB firmly believes in taking action across the board by adopting "Accountability for All" policy without considering their status or position in government or opposition. Some 59 percent people of the country have expressed their satisfaction over the performance of NAB as manifested in surveys conducted by Transparency International, World Economic Forum, PILDAT and Mashal Pakistan. This has indeed rejuvenated NAB. NAB is the Chairman of SAARC anti corruption forum and is focal institution of the country as per anti corruption convention of United Nations (UNCAC), which is honor for the country due to NAB's efforts. NAB has distinction of inking MoU with China for combating corruption and sharing

each other's experiences regarding elimination of corruption. NAB's Regional offices are playing vital role in overall performance of NAB. NAB have established Complaint Cells in all its respective Regional offices excluding Complaint Cell in NAB Headquarters, Islamabad in order to address complaints of people related to corruption and corrupt practices on the directions of Justice Javed Iqbal. Chairman himself listen the complaints of the citizen on every last Thursday of every months by holding 'Khuli Ketchery' at his office. Chairman NAB has also set up a special cell to register grievance of the busi-



ness community at NAB Headquarters. Same Cells have also been established at regional offices of NAB to facilitate business community. A consultative committee has also been constituted to resolve the issues of business community. The business community has lauded the efforts of chairman in resolving their issues. Chairman has directed all DGs to honor the self esteem of all visiting accused persons as NAB is a human friendly organization which strongly believe in self respect of every person come in NAB. A grading system has also been initiated to assess the performance of NAB officers as well as offices. An effective monitoring and evaluation system was also in place to help assessing the standard of investigation of cases. It is producing positive results. NAB is committed for logical conclusion of mega corruption investigations, housing societies/cooperative housing societies and modarba scandals and recovered billions of hard earned money from illegal housing /cooperative housing societies which were looted through cheated peo-

ple at large. All affectees thanked Chairman NAB for recovery of their life earned money. NAB has asked the people to only invest in legal housing societies in order to avoid complications. NAB has also asked LDA, QDA, KDA, MDA, CDA, SBC, PDA and ICT, etc to play their role in checking the illegal housing societies and saving peoples hard earned money. NAB has also established a forensic laboratory in Islamabad for detecting criminal elements and eliminating corruption with the help of modern facilities. The lab has also helped in enhancing standard of investigations. The elimination of corruption is collective responsibility of the society and all and sundry such as media, civil society and others could play important role in this regard. Chairman NAB is committed in teamwork and strongly believe that all investigation officers and prosecutors should pursue NAB cases in accordance with law on the basis of solid evidence on merit. NAB under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB is strictly adhering to its goal of corruption free Pakistan.

## Karachi's floods

**A**NOTHER day has passed, and the floods in Karachi due to rainfall continue to wreak havoc on the city and its residents. The issue is beyond that of drainage and sewage now; the survival of residents trapped without electricity, food, water and even mobile signals is constantly under threat. 23 people have lost their lives so far, mostly due to building collapses and electrocution, and respite might still not be on the cards, as the meteorological department has indicated that the metropolis might see even more rainfall on Friday and the preceding days.

Both provincial and federal governments must first look to offer relief efforts where needed; this work is already in progress, according to government functionaries. Granted, this is the city's heaviest rainfall in the last 53 years, but this is also the biggest city of our country, and home to the largest number of inhabitants.

And the effects of 8-12 feet of water in some of Karachi's biggest thoroughfares are not only restricted to the provincial capital alone. It must be remembered that the port city is also the biggest contributor to the national economy, and right now, its financial centre on I A Chundrigar road is still inundated. It is still too early to calculate the loss Pakistan's economy has incurred because of just a few days of rain.

There is no doubt it; Pakistan is at threat from climate change, but Sindh is even at more threat, compared to other regions. Karachi's weather patterns in the last two decades are indicative of this. Rising sea levels, a shrinking winter and now unpredictable rainfall is only a taste of what is coming. This is the kind of reality check that we need; Pakistan must take climate action seriously and diplomatically engage other countries to do so as well. That is the only sure-fire way to protect Karachi from what is almost inevitable now.

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## Information in our hands

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

**T**HE amount of information available to us through the Internet is unprecedented. Such information was never readily available to any previous generation in history. There were days when people visited the library or borrowed books from their peers to gather information and conduct research. This was needed for students in particular or those who wanted to write on a particular subject. During the 2000s, encyclopedias were released on CDs or compact disks. It helped students and professionals alike. However, today, the Internet presents users with information on every subject. Whether it is text, pictures, audio or video, the amount of content available to gain knowledge is far more than what the humans had ever imagined. It is up to the users, to ascertain which information is important and must be grasped and which content should be ignored or left untouched.

The smartphones in our hands, therefore, must be viewed as a tool for learning. Students can learn concepts they study at school while professionals can enhance their learning related to their profession. Infographics and videos are an important content sharing tool and method in this regard. It disseminates valuable information related to all topics and can be accessed easily from all devices and gadgets. It is imperative for the youth of Pakistan, especially the students of primary classes, to absorb as much information as they can. Instead of wasting time in playing games, they must read and learn about new concepts and facts. While playing games also enhances the cognition, it must be played during specific times and under parental supervision. Learning, however, must be acquired through the content available over the Internet.

## Pakistan – An equaliser to Indo China maritime competition

Abid Latif Sindhu

Pakistani naval fleet is designed to achieve same as a lean and smart machine. If the coming rivalry opens up here, India will definitely have few surprises in the brown waters quickly turning blue. What's the Sino-Indian rivalry is all about as far as the maritime manifestation is concerned? This is very important to understand.

There are three main players, playing the roulette, China, India and USA. China offered India to join BRI being a natural partner to this regional and trans-regional arrangement, India not only refused rather started countering the initiative, even as late as 2019 China wanted India to join

**B**ITS of broken pottery are usually found ashore at many places all along the littoral states of Indian Ocean. This depicts the history, revealing itself for any carbon testing to reach a conclusion; IOR (Indian Ocean region) is a single contiguous region since centuries. Sea is the place where future is invented in ebb and flow of waves riding the concentric circles of time.

A nation, who knows the importance of this and has a maritime bent, is only likely to survive the coming vagaries of 21st century. It is just the beginning of this century and many countries are already out of competition. 21st century has also reinvented the Mahan; soon his mural will be made on every rock in the ocean. In Indian ocean this all started with china's Malacca dilemma and contestation of line dash-o-nine, India's fear of string of pearls, USA's pivot of Asia and Pakistan's coming out of sea blindness through the lens of Gawader.

India thinks itself as the net security provider in IOR with blue water navy and a huge seaboard. Pakistan navy is also no more brown water force, it is well acclaimed regional navy and is growing with every passing day (anti piracy operations of Pakistan navy deep in international waters had gained quite an accolades from all and sundry). In any future Sino-Indian rivalry in Indian Ocean, Pakistan will be the key factor and Pakistan navy the equaliser. In naval war the steps to engagements are surveillance, classification of threat, localisation of the target for the kill chain and targeting with suitable weapon delivery.

Pakistani naval fleet is designed to achieve same as a lean and smart machine. If the coming rivalry opens up here, India will definitely have few surprises in the brown waters quickly turning blue. What's the Sino-Indian rivalry is all about as far as the maritime manifestation is concerned? This is very important to understand. There are three main players, playing the roulette, China, India and USA. China offered India to join BRI being a natural partner to this regional and trans-regional arrangement, India not only refused rather started countering the initiative, even as late as 2019 China wanted India to join, then came the abrogation of article 370 and 35A which made both China and Pakistan apprehensive to Indian intentions beyond the red lines.

This triggered the Ladakh crisis and the start of rivalry in IOR as a consequence. General Bipin Rawat has said that other options are on the table if dialogue fails with China on Ladakh. These other options are to hit where India thinks that it is strong. This is IOR, specially the seaboard defended by Pakistan navy. If situation dete-

riorates, a naval war in Arabian Sea is not really out of question. China's declaring of maritime arc from Persian gulf through strait of Malacca to sea of Japan as the new maritime silk route has already unhinged the strategic thinkers of USA, who strongly believe that USA cannot allow any one power or coalition to dominate the Eurasian land mass (Mackinder laughing).

Mearsheimer the biggest realist scholar has already said that "China is single most threat to USA".

This brings USA here, west of Andaman-Nicobars and the nine degree channel. Indian navy with its 290 ships and 16 submarines will be a potent threat but Pakistan navy is ready with half the size to act as the David to take on the Goliath. The professionalism, training and the history of combat with India stands testimonial that big brother will be soon in for surprises. The 496 ships (all type) of Chinese navy with 2 aircraft carriers will not be a bystander if USA moves its naval assets in IOR. The term super power is going to be redefined as now the peer competition will be in the domains and spheres known as global commons. The high sea, atmosphere, Antarctica and space were the global commons as the world knows; China has redefined the two others, the internet with digital/cyber space and the inflow and out flow of rare earth metals. So we might be seeing the emergence of first global power of the world soon. No one except India wants to be at the wrong side of the history, not even United States. Any maritime power has to have a potent geography, maritime bent of its leaders, ship building capacity, size of seafaring population, significant ports, merchant vessels and a strong navy. Pakistan has all of it now less the enhancement of merchant vessels.

The recent maritime policy given by the government amply covers this aspect as well. Indian Ocean is known for three things, one its choke points, like Malacca, Sunda and Lombok straits on the eastern side, the six degree and nine degree channels between Andaman and Nicobar islands. Strait of Hormaz, Babul-mandeb, Suez Canal and the Mozambique channel on the western side. Second, its suitability for submarines due to temperature, pressure profile and salinity, this is known as an opaque sea, thirdly, the volume of trade, over 120000 ships cross IOR in a year. There are a number of French and British colonial islands in Indian Ocean which also makes them interesting players in any future competition. USA's naval bases are the Djibouti, Diego Garcia and Bahrain (CENTCOM). Indian naval bases are at Visakhapatnam, east coast Mumbai, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India is making another base at Lakshadweep Islands near Western Ghats. Since 1992 India is conducting the naval

exercises with USA with the name of "Malabar". The name itself depicts that which part of Indian Ocean, India is interested in, the Western Ghats and beyond, obviously towards Persian Gulf and Africa. Japan also later on joined the Malabar exercises along with Australia, thereby making this annual naval exercise a precursor to the formation of QUAD which is the geo-strategic alignment of states concerned with China's potential challenge to their interests.

These four states of QUAD have to understand that in a world of admitted rivalry and peer competition, balance of power is necessary but not sufficient, what is required is an architecture of growth and progress in all the domains, commons and global commons, the way China is doing. Balance of power in 21st century is half woven quilt, like an American mackintosh it will never cover you all. As China-India competition is expanding into Indian Ocean, therefore all three, Pakistan, China and India's more maritime focused than in the past.

The manifestation of this is the weakening of Indian alliance system by China through making the entire littorals, the strategic partner one way or the other. Therefore the illusion of India being net security provider has gone in thin air. China has become Mahan's state (both in real and allegorical way), trying to reach out to the oceans from all sides.

One, a land sea corridor under way from China-Myanmar-Indian Ocean, second, mainland China to South China-Sea, third, the jewel of crown, Gawader-Gilgit-Xinjiang. Pakistan navy's modernization plan is very vibrant, based on the principle of agility and outreach, the latest entry of frigate 054 is a force multiplier. It being the four dimensional force is giving whole hog protection to Gawader, while conducting day to day sea dominance operations in its territorial waters. Spotting an Indian submarine and then letting it go was a message that balance of power is not necessary as a mere number game, other vectors are much more important than the Indian arithmetic.

General Bipin Rawat can pick his monocle and see if there are more options on the table under the deck prism, if not, take a gig and come along.

Spotting an Indian submarine and then letting it go was a message that balance of power is not necessary as a mere number game, other vectors are much more important than the Indian arithmetic.

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## Learning for safe tourism and hospitality

Shaaref Munir



Tourism is a more supply-driven sector rather than being demand-driven – the more responsibility and care shown by the service-providers and vigilant monitoring by the government authorities, the safer and more touristic activities would take place in Pakistan. Only this would result in economic recovery in the tourist hotspots

**S**UNDAY last, the Mansehra district administration sealed all 48 hotels including 22 main businesses and their respective branches in tourist hotspots Shogran, Naran and Kaghan after the district health department reported 47 Covid-19 cases at hotels located in these spots. The infected patients had been quarantined in their hotels to avoid any panic while local health departments and officials were in the process of tracing and testing those who had come into contact with the patients. This is what everyone was scared of before the opening of the tourism sector in Pakistan because they believed that the SOPs would not be followed in letter and spirit. Violation of SOPs is a routine matter in Pakistan. Whenever Pakistan's institutions have tried to develop a certain policy or a set of SOPs, they have always failed to implement it. Sunday's event is the worst and latest example to support the aforementioned argument.

National Tourism Coordination Board (NTCB), the apex federal body to integrate tourism and hospitality country-wide, had timely published a very detailed SOP manual for the hotels, restaurants, and tour operators. Despite very comprehensive guidelines, the concerned businesses, provincial and local authorities failed to have them implemented. If the representatives of such reputable institutions and organizations fail to deliver due to their irresponsible behaviour, they ought to get inspired by examples from other countries who are working tirelessly to make their tourism sector work.

While studying in Istanbul, I have seen our university's Dean and other Professors always encouraging students to explore and learn different health and hygiene practices from the top hotels. Observing and studying of the practices has become crucial after the restaurants and tourists' spots were opened several months after the Covid-19 spread. This became an opportunity for me to personally be able to observe some of the best practices being conducted, starting from the Turkish Ministry of Tourism to the service-providing institutions, and all the way to common-man.

For example, hotels were ordered to operate at 60 percent while making sure all rooms were regularly disinfected, especially after every check-out. Body temperatures of all guests were to be checked upon each entry and exit. The rooms were also required to be ventilated for 12-hours after every check-out. Lastly, the spas and the pool areas were to be closed throughout the season. Restaurants were allowed to have dine-in's operational, but they also made

sure that their utensils were disinfected and packed air-tight in cases, along with the regular disinfection of the sitting and waiting areas. Similarly, the people were made to realize the severity of this pandemic and were requested to follow the SOPs responsibly. Moreover, the Turkish Tourism Ministry will send out undercover inspectors to check out the hygiene and safety standards of the hotels. The ones who fail to live up to the standard will be suspended or cancelled with imprisonment.

On 25th July, I was one of the panelists for Devcom-Pakistan's webinar on "Harnessing Sustainable Tourism Potential in the New Normal", where I presented this "Safe Tourism Model" to the World Bank Group, PTDC, Hashoo Foundation and several other organizations that were present there. This was to portray how Turkey, our brotherly nation, had adopted a role model strategy to support their primary income sector – and that we should learn from them as much as possible. Unfortunately, we don't listen to anyone. Neither do we take the rules and regulations seriously nor behave responsibly, resulting in a disastrous situation like we have learnt about in the Mansehra district. Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General UNWTO, has long back stated, "To ensure the survival of tourism companies and workers, we need the better support of governments. About 80 percent of the sector is made up of small and medium-sized enterprises, and that millions of livelihoods in the world are left vulnerable and are in dire need of support from their governments."

He has also stressed upon responsible tourism while UNWTO has already developed and disseminated guidelines in this regard that could be a way forward for Pakistani stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality sector besides what the NTCB has issued. Successful implementation of all guidelines and SOPs are the only viable option for the businesses in the sector.

Pakistan Civil Society's perspective is that the opening of the tourism sector is imperative to contribute to revive the economy from grassroots level to the national. SOPs should be laid down for a well-monitored limited opening of the sector as a test case. Awareness raising on the new normal shall be the top priority while the SOPs monitoring should be done by the teams comprising officials of the district governments, police and civil society reps. Violators shall be punished strictly. In the end, we all eye on the federal and provincial governments to develop monitoring mechanisms for SOPs implementation.

I believe that the implementation of SOPs would play a pivotal role in sustaining tourism in the coming days. Hence, all the stakeholders in hospitality and tourism operations should ensure complete compliance of the instructions without any ifs and buts. Thousands of lives would be at risk if the government and WHO SOPs are not followed and it would also hamper the economic activities engaged in the tourism business and local services.

Fayyaz Ahmad Sheikh, spokesperson TDCP, has stated in the 25th July webinar that all the government SOPs would be implemented in letter and spirit by the special teams formed to monitor the hotels and tour operations once the tourism sector is opened. We foresee an active role of the private sector in the tourism sector management that would ensure all the SOPs followed in the better monetary benefits of their own."

If that were the case and the SOPs were being implemented by the stakeholders, Sunday's event would never have happened in the first place. This is not the first time when an immense amount of irresponsibility was portrayed by the stakeholders. According to media reports, when touristic restrictions were given some ease on 1st June by Prime Minister Imran Khan, within 24 hours, the nation's total cases jumped from 71,068 to 74,320 infected patients along with 54 increased deaths. Even when NCOO ordered the provinces to develop their SOPs as per their terrain's characteristics, the provincial bodies procrastinated to a great extent to develop, let alone implement and monitor them.

Tourism is a more supply-driven sector rather than being demand-driven – the more responsibility and care shown by the service-providers and vigilant monitoring by the government authorities, the safer and more touristic activities would take place in Pakistan. Only this would result in economic recovery in the tourist hotspots.

It is the social awareness and the professional approaches that are leading the Turkish safe hospitality practices to a success by reducing the risk factor. And this is something we urgently need to understand for Pakistan too. Currently, there are around 11,000 active cases in Pakistan, as per the virtual source. However, the country could be facing another deadly wave of COVID-19 cases if the SOPs are not followed, especially by the businesses.

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## Briefs

## Tens of thousands march in Belarus capital

MINSK: Tens of thousands of opposition supporters marched through Minsk Sunday, calling for an end to strongman Alexander Lukashenko's rule amid a heavy security presence and despite dozens of arrests. Belarus protests have entered a third week since the disputed presidential election on August 9 in which Lukashenko claimed victory. Opposition rival Svetlana Tikhanovskaya says she was the true winner, meanwhile. An AFP journalist and local media estimated that more than 100,000 people attended Sunday's protest, equalling the scale of rallies on previous weekends, the largest in the country since independence from the former USSR. A crowd gathered outside Lukashenko's official residence, the Palace of Independence, which was guarded by riot police and special forces personnel backed up by rooftop snipers. Sunday's rally came on Lukashenko's 66th birthday and protesters carried quirky handmade "gifts" including a cardboard toilet with a sign urging the strongman to flush himself away, a coffin marked "Political corpse" and a picture of a cockroach, the opposition's nickname for the president. Some laid flowers and symbolic gifts on the ground in front of a tall barrier manned by riot police equipped with helmets and shields. — APP

## Egypt army kills over 70 jihadists

CAIRO: Egypt's army announced Sunday that more than 70 alleged jihadists have been killed in recent military operations in North Sinai, the location of an insurrection affiliated to the Islamic State group. A statement by the Egyptian army said that the operations had targeted alleged "homes of terrorists" and "takfiri elements" leading to "the deaths of 73 takfiris in northern Sinai" between July 22 and August 30. Four other "takfiris" were killed, the statement added, without elaborating. The term "takfiri" is used by Egyptian security officials to refer to jihadists. During the clashes "three officers and four soldiers were killed or wounded," the statement said, without providing further details. In February 2018, security forces launched a nationwide operation against militants, focused on North Sinai. More than 930 suspected militants have been killed in the region along with dozens of security personnel, according to official figures. No independently verified death toll is available and the region is largely cut off to journalists. However, the Egyptian government has organised occasional media visits, closely supervised by the military. — APP

## Fire near Greek archaeological site dies down

ATHENS: A wildfire near the ruins of the Bronze Age site of Mycenae in Greece that prompted the evacuation of visitors to the archaeological site was contained Sunday, firefighters said. The fire that started at noon near the tomb of Agamemnon, the king of Mycenae who was killed during the Trojan War, "is partially under control", Greek Fire Brigade said. The flames licked the ruins but the fire department insisted there was no danger to the site's museum. The fire went through "a section of the archaeological site and burnt some dry grass without menacing the museum", the commander of the southern Peloponnese region's fire brigade, Thanassis Kolivras told Athens News Agency. The Ministry of Culture issued a statement saying that according to a first inspection, "the fire hasn't caused damage to the antiquities" adding that "a team of experts will assess the consequences" later. — APP



Manchester: England's Eoin Morgan hits a six as Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan keeps wicket during the international Twenty20 cricket match between England and Pakistan. — DNA

## Man United agree £40m fee for Ajax midfielder

DNA

MANCHESTER: Manchester United are closing in on the signing of Ajax midfielder Donny van de Beek after the two clubs agreed a fee in the region of £40m. United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer is a huge admirer of the Netherlands international, 23, and has had him watched on a number of occasions. It is understood United have now firmed up their interest with a medical and personal terms still to be concluded. The transfer is expected to be finalised within days. Van de Beek is set to sign a five-year deal, which should allow him to be available for United's opening game of the 2020-21 season, against Crystal Palace on 19 September. He will become Solskjaer's first close-season signing after a much-publicised move for Borussia Dortmund's England winger Jadon Sancho stalled over the size of the fee. Van de Beek was part of the outstanding Ajax side that got to the Champions League semi-finals in 2019. He was left out of Ajax's friendlies with German pair Eintracht Frankfurt and Union Berlin over the weekend.

## Students in Saudi Arabia begin new school year

DNA

JEDDAH: Around 6 million school students and half-a-million teachers in Saudi Arabia began the first week of the new academic year virtually on Sunday, but with shared frustration and a difficult start. Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education (MoE) announced a test launch of its new Madrasati (My school) platform for distance learning last week before the start of the academic year, but many students and teachers have been struggling with their registration since the initial announcement.

A hashtag on the new educational platform was trending in Saudi Arabia on Sunday, where many students, parents, and teachers asked for help or expressed their frustration and confusion. Secondary school student Mariam Harthi from Jeddah told Arab News that she preferred how things went last semester. "It was much easier before this platform, we used to arrange everything with the teacher via our Telegram group and attend classes with her on ZOOM or Microsoft Teams, and things were going well. I still cannot register on the new platform and I don't know why yet, although I followed the instructions. Something is wrong," she said. Secondary school student Saleh Omar from Makkah was able to complete creating his account on the platform, but said he doesn't know how to use it yet.

## Merkel condemns 'shameful' virus parliament protest

DNA

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Monday condemned as "shameful" an attempt by protesters angry at coronavirus restrictions to storm parliament, saying they had abused the right to demonstrate peacefully. Several hundred people tried to get into the Reichstag building during a rally against coronavirus rules in Berlin on Saturday. "This right to demonstrate peacefully is of course a very valuable asset even during a pandemic," Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said at a government press conference in Berlin. However, he said their actions were "a clear abuse". "The result was disgraceful images at the Reichstag which are unacceptable, anti-democrats trying to make themselves heard on the steps of our democratic parliament," he said.

## China rejects Indian army's accusation

China blames India for escalation in the Galwan Valley, and it has called on the Indian side to settle the dispute through military and diplomatic dialogue.

BEIJING: China on Monday rejected Indian army's accusations that Chinese troops violated the previous consensus and said its border troops always strictly abide by the Line of Control (LAC) and never cross the line in Ladakh. "Chinese border troops always strictly abide by the LAC. They never cross the line," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said during his regular briefing while responding to a question regarding Indian military's statement alleging the Chinese troops of carrying out provocative military movements to change status quo. "The border troops on the two sides had been in close communication regarding the issues on the ground," he added. Indian army said in a statement on Monday that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) "violated

the previous consensus reached in previous military and diplomatic engagements and carried out provocative military movements to change the status quo" in the disputed eastern Ladakh region on the night of August 29/30. It said Indian soldiers foiled the Chinese attempt. About any meeting going on to resolve the issue, he said, "What I said is that the two sides through diplomatic and military channels maintain close communication. As to specific meetings and talks, if there is anything we will release it in timely manner." The Galwan Valley, which is part of the disputed region, is located on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control in the western section of the Sino-Indian border. And Chinese soldiers have patrolled the area for many

years, according to China's Defense Ministry. China blames India for escalation in the Galwan Valley, and it has called on the Indian side to settle the dispute through military and diplomatic dialogue. It may be mentioned here that on May 6, Indian soldiers' first intrusion in the China-controlled Galwan Valley. On June 15, the Chinese and Indian soldiers engaged in a nightly medieval clash in Galwan Valley, where India was trying to build a strategic road connecting the region to an airstrip close to China. As many as 20 Indian soldiers were killed during the fight. Since then the two countries have held several rounds of commanders' level talks to ease the situation on the border in Galwan Valley. The disputed border covers nearly 3,500 kilometers (2,175 miles) of frontier that the two

## India accuses China of 'border violation'

DNA

NEW DELHI: India has accused China of violating the border consensus reached between them during recent peace talks. It said Chinese troops carried out "provocative military movements" to change the status quo in Ladakh. At least 20 Indian soldiers died in clashes with Chinese troops in the region in June. China has not said

if its soldiers also died. The two nuclear powers accused each other of crossing the poorly demarcated border and provoking the fight. China has denied that its troops violated the status quo. "Chinese border troops have always strictly observed the Line of Actual Control and have never crossed the line. The border troops of the two countries have been in communication over ter-

ritory issues," China's foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said. But Delhi said that Indian troops "pre-empted" Chinese activity on "the Southern Bank of Pangong Tso Lake" on the night of 29 August. "We undertook measures to strengthen our positions and thwart Chinese intentions to unilaterally change facts on ground," a statement from the Indian government said.

countries call the Line of Actual Control and that stretches from Ladakh in the north to the Indian state of Sikkim in the northeast. The two countries have been trying to settle their border dispute

since the early 1990s without success. Since then, soldiers from the two sides have frequently faced off along the contested frontier. India unilaterally declared Ladakh a federal territory while separating

it from disputed Kashmir in August 2019. China is among the countries to strongly condemn the move, raising it at international forums including the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). — APP

## France detains senior military officer

DNA

PARIS: A senior French military officer stationed at a NATO base has been indicted and jailed on suspicion of spying for Russia, local media and sources said on Sunday. The French army officer was stationed abroad, a judicial source said confirming details from Europe 1 radio. According to the report, the soldier was stationed on a NATO base in Italy and is suspected of espionage on behalf of Russia. The French government confirmed it was investigating a senior military officer over a "security breach". "What I can confirm is that a senior officer is facing legal proceedings for a security breach," Defence Minister Florence Parly told Europe 1 radio, CNews and Les Echos

newspaper. She gave no further details. The judicial source said the officer had been indicted and jailed on charges involving "intelligence with a foreign power that undermines the fundamental interests of the nation". He is being prosecuted for "delivering information to a foreign power", "collecting information harming the fundamental interests of the nation with a view to delivering them to a foreign power" and "compromising the secrecy of national defence", the source said. Europe 1 said the officer was a lieutenant-colonel stationed with NATO in Italy and had been placed under investigation on suspicion of spying for Russia. He speaks Russian and was seen in Italy with a man identified as an agent of the GRU, the Russian military intelligence service, the report said.

## South Chad 10 killed in clashes

N'DJAMENA: At least ten people have been killed in fresh fighting between nomadic herders and farmers in southern Chad, a local prosecutor said Sunday, with the most of the deaths happening during a funeral. The herders claimed to have lost a cow and tracked it down to a farm, said Ibrahim Ali Kolla, prosecutor in Moundou, Chad's second-largest city and capital of the southwest province. The herders sent a representative to reclaim the animal on Thursday but he was killed and the farmers attacked the herdsman at his funeral the same day, he added. Clashes between settled farmers and the nomadic Arab herders, many of them armed, are a worsening problem in the arid Sahel, where tensions over access to land are frequent. — APP

## Lebanon president for proclamation of secular state

DNA

BEIRUT: Lebanon's President Michel Aoun called Sunday for the proclamation of a "secular state" during a televised address to mark the upcoming centenary of the Lebanese state. "I call for the proclamation of Lebanon as a secular state," Aoun said during a speech after an enormous explosion at Beirut's port in early August and months of deepening economic crisis. He said such a state was the only way "of protecting and preserving pluralism" and creating real unity. "Lebanon's youth are calling for change... for them and for their future," said the 85-year-old president, who has

long been accused by protesters of being out of touch with the country's youth. "I say yes, the time has come," he added. "There is a need to develop, modify, change the system." Aoun spoke a day ahead of Lebanon marking a hundred years since French mandate authorities declared the state of Greater Lebanon. French President Emmanuel Macron is set to land in the country on Monday on his second visit in weeks to hammer home the need for reform in the wake of the deadly port blast that killed at least 188 people and wounded thousands. Aoun said he would call for dialogue including religious authorities and political leaders to reach "a formula that is accepted

by everyone and that would be embodied in the appropriate constitutional amendments". Macron on Friday spoke of the "constraints of a confessional system" in the country's politics that was hampering reforms. Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Hezbollah, an ally of Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement, earlier Sunday said his Shiite movement was "open" to the French proposal for a new political pact for Lebanon as long as there is national consensus. Aoun is to receive the representatives of parliamentary blocs and independent lawmakers on Monday to start consultations towards naming a new premier after the government resigned following the Beirut explosion.

## Sudan gov't and rebel groups agree peace deal

Fighting in Darfur alone left around 300,000 people dead after rebels took up arms there in 2003, according to the United Nations, with former government leaders accused of carrying out genocide and of crimes against humanity

JUBA: Sudanese leaders and rebel commanders Monday agreed on a historic peace deal, a crucial step towards ending 17 years of conflict in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed. Leaders of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an umbrella organisation of rebel groups from the western region of Darfur and the southern states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, raised their fists in celebration after inking the agreement. Fighting in Darfur alone left around 300,000 people dead after rebels took up arms there in 2003, according to the United Nations, with former government leaders accused of carrying out genocide and of crimes against humanity.

Conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile erupted in 2011, in the wake of South Sudan's independence, resuming two decades of war. "I congratulate all in Sudan on reaching a historic comprehensive peace that addressed the roots of the problem and ended the war, God willing," said Gibril Ibrahim, commander of one of rebel groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). He paid tribute to all those killed or affected by the long years of war. Sudanese paramilitary commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, best known by his nickname "Hemeti", and who commanded fighters in the war, signed the deal on behalf of Khartoum. Daglo and the leaders of the rebel

movements grouped together and shook hands - and briefly danced together. "We have started the real transformation of Sudan from dictatorship to democracy," Faisal Mohammed Salih, Sudan's information minister, told AFP, at the ceremony in Juba, the capital of neighbouring South Sudan. But while celebrating the deal, he said there was also still a long way to go. "We know that we are going to face some problems when we start to move this (deal) from paper to the ground... but we have that political will," Salih said. Rebels fought troops deployed by now-toppled autocrat Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) over charges of genocide and

crimes against humanity in the Darfur conflict. Bashir, who is in jail in Khartoum convicted of corruption, is now on trial for the 1989 coup in which he grabbed power. Sudan's transitional authorities in February agreed Bashir be handed over to the ICC. Human rights groups say Khartoum targeted suspected pro-rebel ethnic groups with a scorched earth policy, raping, killing, looting and burning villages. The deal was "initialled" and not signed, as a way to leave the door open for two key holdout rebel groups to join in a "final" agreement, officials said. Forging peace with rebels has been a cornerstone of Sudan's transitional government, which

came to power in the months after the overthrow of Bashir in April 2019. Both General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of a sovereign council, and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, were also at the ceremony in Juba. Sudan's rebels are largely drawn from non-Arab minority groups that long rallied against Arab domination of the government in Khartoum under Bashir. The agreement covers key issues around security, land ownership, transitional justice, power sharing, and the return of people who fled their homes because of fighting. It also provides for the dismantling of rebel forces and the integration of their fighters into the national army.

## Briefs

New  
Lebanese  
PM named

DNA

BEIRUT: Lebanon named its envoy to Germany, Mustapha Adib, as the new premier Monday to steer the country through a deep crisis after the Beirut explosion compounded a sharp economic downturn. The presidency made the announcement in a televised statement as Adib arrived at the palace in Baabda near Beirut to meet President Michel Aoun and parliament speaker Nabih Berri. Adib said hopes to implement major reforms after quickly forming a government. The 48-year-old was born in the northern city of Tripoli and is a Sunni Muslim, making him eligible to become prime minister under Lebanon's sectarian-based power-sharing system. His biography on the Berlin embassy website presents him as an academic who holds a PhD in political science. It says he has conducted "research and expert work in the areas of both human and state security, parliamentary oversight of the security sector, decentralization and local democracy, and electoral laws." From 2000 to 2004, he served as an adviser to Najib Mikati, a billionaire and former prime minister who backed his nomination on Monday. In 2011, then-prime minister Mikati appointed Adib as his chief of cabinet.

Boat carrying  
370 migrants  
reaches Italy

ROME: A fishing boat carrying nearly 370 migrants landed overnight on the Italian island of Lampedusa, the country's news agencies reported on Sunday, as a nearby humanitarian ship carrying another 350 people sought a port of disembarkation. Italy has been struggling in recent months to deal with daily arrivals of hundreds of migrants to its southern shores, a task complicated by security measures imposed by the ongoing coronavirus crisis. The boat carrying 367 people, which was in danger of sinking due to high winds, was escorted by the Italian coast guard and police to the island's port, ANSA news agency said. They were met at the port by a demonstration organised by the far-right, anti-migrant League party. The migrants, whose nationalities were not known, underwent temperature checks before they were taken to an emergency reception centre on the island which now houses some 1,160 people, 10 times its maximum capacity, Lampedusa's mayor, Toto Martello, told ANSA. About 30 other small boats, mostly from the Tunisian coast, had already reached the island since Friday carrying some 500 migrants, the Italian press reported. — APP

China to hold  
patent fair in  
November

BEIJING: The 12th China International Patent Technology and Products Fair will be held from Nov. 11 to 13 in Dalian, coastal city in northeastern province of Liaoning, sources with the National Intellectual Property Administration said. This year's conference will focus on the role of intellectual property rights in leading high-quality economic development. It will feature both online and offline events, including exhibitions, forums and investment matching.

Debuted in 2002, the Patent Fair has been held for 11 sessions in Dalian, attracting more than 10,000 enterprises and 90,000 patent projects from over 30 countries and regions. — APP

EU stocks  
ease back

PARIS: European stock markets eased lower in quiet trade Monday after the US Federal Reserve signalled it would keep interest rates at unprecedented lows for as long as it takes to get through the coronavirus crisis. London was closed for a public holiday, leaving Paris and Frankfurt to set the tone with very slight drops in afternoon exchanges. — APP

## “If not for repression, they could have done great deeds”

These people were real leaders, leading representatives of the intelligentsia, the best writers and cultural figures – in a word, the color of our nation

DNA

TASHKENT: On August 31, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited the Shahidlar Khotirasi (Memory of Victims) square. Surahs from the Quran were recited in memory of the victims of repression. A conversation took place with representatives of the older generation, the religious sphere and the creative intelligentsia. “Remembrance of patriots, reciting the Quran in memory of them is a good tradition. We know that our enlightened ancestors fought for the independence, freedom of our people. In recent years, through the efforts of our entire community, a lot of work has been carried out to restore their good name, replenish museums and organize creative schools. All this is done in order to bring historical justice and truth to people, so that our people know and never forget about the past, appreciate the present peaceful life,” said Shavkat Mirziyoyev. As is known, thousands of our innocent compatriots were subjected to repression during the totalitarian regime. In 1937-1953, 100

thousand people were repressed in Uzbekistan, 13 thousand were mercilessly shot. Many families were destroyed and children were left orphans. In 1937-1938 alone, when the repression acquired the widest scale, about 7 thousand of our fellow citizens were shot.

“These people were real leaders, leading representatives of the intelligentsia, the best writers and cultural figures – in a word, the color of our nation. Imagine what great deeds they would have done in the name of development of the Motherland, science, economy, culture and literature, what a breakthrough our people would have made if they had not been repressed! Today we remember this loss with sorrow”, the President said. The Head of the state instructed to conduct research on each of the 100 thousand repressed, find out their history by meeting with their relatives, publish books about their activities, perpetuate their memory, naming mahallas and schools after them.

In recent years, monuments and museums have been created in honor of such enlighteners as Iskhokhon Ibrat, Mahmudkhokja Behbud, Abdulla Avlo-



ni, Abdulhamid Chulpan, Abdulla Qadiri. Creativity schools are organized. Branches of the Museum of Memory of Repression Victims have been opened in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and all regions. New books are being written,

films are being shot, and research is being conducted on victims of repression. The coronavirus pandemic has not spared Uzbekistan either. Unfortunately, this disease claimed the lives of more than three hundred of our compatriots.

During the ceremony, surahs from the Quran were recited in memory of those who died from the disease. A prayer was read wishing a speedy recovery to the infected. “I express my deep condolences, I wish strength and patience to

all families who have lost their loved ones. I ask the Almighty for the healing of the sick. We have been fighting this scourge for six months now. We pray that this virus quickly disappeared from our country”, the Head of the state said.

Mali protest movement  
proposes two year  
transition to civilian rule

Chief envoy of the regional bloc ECOWAS, former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan, said last week that the coup leaders wanted a three-year transition period

BAMAKO: The protest coalition that campaigned against former Mali president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has proposed that the military junta that ousted him organise a transition to civilian rule within 24 months, one of its leaders said Sunday. Military rulers received representatives of the June 5 Movement at the Kati barracks near Bamako late Saturday, after announcing they would postpone a meeting with civic groups, political organisations and former rebels on the transfer of power due to “organisational reasons”. The protest movement has demanded that the military junta give it a role in the transition, in keeping with its role in spearheading Keita's ouster. It has proposed “a transition of 18 to 24 months” with civilians heading a

transitional presidency, government and assembly, one of the movement's leaders, Choguel Maiga, told AFP.

It also called for “a committee to monitor and supervise the transition which will be composed of a majority of members of the junta and the (June 5 Movement)”, he said. The junta did not comment on the meeting. The August 18 coup has prompted the West African country's neighbours and ally France to call for a swift transfer of power, amid heightened worries over instability in a country already struggling with an Islamist insurgency, ethnic violence and economic malaise. French Defence Minister Florence Parly told media Sunday that any delay in restoring civilian rule would benefit terrorists. Mali's influential imam

Mahmoud Dicko, a key player in the mass opposition protests that led to Keita's ouster, warned Friday that the military rulers did not have “carte blanche”.

Dicko's spokesman Issa Kaou Djim later expanded on this, saying the imam “said the people have started to doubt” the junta. Within hours of taking control, the junta pledged to enact a political transition and stage elections within a “reasonable time”. Chief envoy of the regional bloc ECOWAS, former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan, said last week that the coup leaders wanted a three-year transition period. This was rejected by the 15-nation Economic Community of West African States, which has demanded an immediate civilian transition and elections within 12 months. — APP

PIA transports  
211 Pakistanis  
from Shanghai

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA)'s special flight PIA8552 left from Shanghai Pudong International Airport on Sunday to transport 211 returning Pakistani nationals from China to Pakistan. In view of the disruption of commercial flight operations, it was PIA's eighth special flight from China to transport Pakistani nationals back home. All the arrangements were put on place for the smooth operation of the special flight from Shanghai to Islamabad, Qadir Bux Sangi, PIA Country Manager for China said on Sunday. PIA has earlier operated seven flights to take back Pakistani nationals mostly traders and students stranded in different cities of China following the Covid-19 pandemic, he told APP. “All the special flights are being arranged and operated by PIA with the help of the relevant Chinese and Pakistani authorities,” he added. The Embassy of Pakistan has thanked the Chinese government and relevant authorities for their constant support to make this flight operation successful.

TikTok owner says  
will abide by new  
Chinese export rules

BEIJING: The owner of popular video app TikTok said Sunday it will “strictly abide” by China's new export rules, which could potentially complicate a sale of the business as demanded by US President Donald Trump. TikTok has been at the center of a diplomatic storm between Washington and Beijing, and Trump signed an executive order on August 6 giving Americans 45 days to stop doing business with TikTok's Chinese parent company ByteDance – effectively setting a deadline for a sale of the app to a US company. But China's commerce ministry published new rules on Friday adding new items including “civilian use technology” to rules controlling the import and export of restricted technology. The new regulations could make it more difficult for ByteDance to sell the wildly popular video app, which features clips of everything from dance routines and hair-dye tutorials to jokes about daily life and politics. ByteDance said in a statement it would “strictly abide” by China's technology import and export law and its restricted export technology list “to handle business relating to the import and export of technology.” The move marked the first time China has adjusted its list of technologies subject to export bans or restrictions since 2008, adding 23 new items. An interview with a professor in official news agency Xinhua on Saturday suggested the change could mean ByteDance has to get approval from the Chinese government to sell its technology to an American company. Earlier this week, TikTok CEO Kevin Mayer quit the company, days after TikTok filed a lawsuit challenging the crackdown by the US government. TikTok – which has been downloaded 175 million times in the US and more than a billion times around the world – argued in the suit that Trump's order was a misuse of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act because the platform is not “an unusual and extraordinary threat.” — DNA

One dead in  
US shooting

SAN FRANCISCO: A person was shot dead Saturday in the US city of Portland following clashes between Black Lives Matter protesters and supporters of US President Donald Trump, police said. The Oregon city has been an epicenter of BLM protests since the police killing of unarmed black man George Floyd in Minnesota in late May, and according to local media a “caravan of hundreds of cars” of Trump supporters also converged there on Saturday. Portland police said officers answered reports of gunfire as violence erupted during a political rally involving hundreds of vehi-

cles “caravanning throughout downtown Portland.” “They responded and located a victim with a gunshot wound to the chest. Medical responded and determined that the victim was deceased,” the force said in a statement. OregonLive reported “clashes” and “tense moments” between demonstrators and counter-protesters, although police did not say whether the shooting was related to the rally. The shooting occurred at around 8:45 pm (0445 GMT Sunday) downtown, police said later in a statement, adding a homicide investigation was under way. — APP

France slams ‘arbitrary’  
crackdown on media in Belarus

“I call on the Belarusian authorities to reverse these measures without delay,” he added, saying that the crisis in Belarus requires “the establishment of an inclusive national dialogue”

PARIS: France on Sunday condemned an “arbitrary” crackdown against the media in Belarus after the accreditation of several journalists working for foreign media was withdrawn in the wake of disputed presidential elections. “The arbitrary measures taken by the Belarusian authorities against journalists violate press freedom,” Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said in a statement. “I call on the Belarusian authorities to reverse these measures without delay,” he added, saying that the crisis in Belarus requires “the establishment

of an inclusive national dialogue”.

“Repressive measures against journalists cannot help,” he said. Belarusian authorities on Saturday withdrew the accreditation of journalists working for several foreign media, including AFP, ahead of a major demonstration Sunday challenging the results of the presidential election. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1994, has faced unprecedented protests since the disputed August 9 election in which he claimed a landslide victory with 80 percent of the vote

in a poll that the opposition says was rigged. Belarus government spokesman Anatoly Glaz said the decision to revoke the media accreditations was taken on the recommendation of the country's counter-terrorism unit. He did not specify how many journalists were affected by the measure, but foreign media including the BBC, Reuters and Radio Liberty reported the withdrawal of accreditation of several of their journalists. Belarusian journalists working for Agence France-Press also had their accreditation revoked. — APP

## Syria's Assad names new government

Khamis headed the government for four years and the presidency did not give an official reason for his removal, but it followed a wave of criticism against the government for its handling of an economic crisis that had plunged war-weary Syrians deeper into poverty



next July when presidential elections are due, after which it will continue to function in a caretaker ca-

capacity until a presidential decree is issued naming a new cabinet, as per the constitution.

President Assad had on Tuesday named Arnous as prime minister after he was appointed interim premier in June ahead of last month's parliamentary polls. Arnous, an engineer who was previously the water resources minister, replaced Imad Khamis after he was sacked more than two months ago. Khamis headed the government for four years and the presidency did not give an official reason for his removal, but it followed a wave of criticism against the gov-

ernment for its handling of an economic crisis that had plunged war-weary Syrians deeper into poverty. A new wave of US sanctions against Syria that came into effect in June has sparked fears of deeper economic turmoil. Like Assad and Khamis, Arnous has been a target of US and European sanctions. He is now to head a government that must grapple with a coronavirus pandemic that is sparking alarm among medics and aid groups.

Qatar enacts  
key worker  
reforms amid  
criticism

DOHA: Qatar on Sunday introduced a \$275 monthly minimum wage and simplified the process for changing employers, the labour ministry said, following criticism of its treatment of foreign labourers. It comes a week after a stinging Human Rights Watch (HRW) report highlighted the shortcomings of past efforts to improve conditions for migrant labourers who make up almost 90 percent of the population. The new rules, which were announced on October 16, 2019 but only now signed into law, abolish the requirement that workers obtain a “no objection” certificate from their employer to change jobs. They require all workers, including domestic staff, be paid at least 1,000 riyals (\$275) for a month of full-time work – equivalent to around \$1.30 an hour. Employers are also required to either provide bed and board, or an additional 800 riyal a month allowance for food and accommodation. Employers will have six months to implement the new minimum wage. Previously, the temporary minimum wage was set at 750 riyals (\$206) a month. “To protect the interests of employers and employees alike, the labour ministry has today taken a major step forward in its labour reform programme by introducing a non-discriminatory minimum wage and removing the no-objection certificate requirement,” the ministry said in a statement. It said the changes would “boost investment in the local economy and drive economic growth”.

Italy plunges  
into recession  
as virus bites

ROME: Italy posted a record economic contraction Monday as household spending and investment crashed during the country's coronavirus lockdown, driving the eurozone's third-largest economy deep into recession. The country's gross domestic product fell by 12.8 percent in the second quarter compared to the previous quarter and by 17.7 percent versus the same period last year, national statistics agency Istat said. “The full estimate of the quarterly economic figures confirm the exceptional extent of the drop in GDP in the second quarter, due to the economic effects of the health emergency and the containment measures adopted,” Istat said. The contraction was even worse than predicted in July, when Istat estimated a second-quarter drop of 12.4 percent. A recession is commonly defined as two consecutive periods of a quarter-on-quarter drop in GDP. Italy's economy shrank 5.4 percent in the first quarter. In the second quarter, household spending fell by 11.3 percent compared to the first quarter, while exports plummeted 26.4 percent, the agency said. Italy, the first European country to be hit full force by the coronavirus outbreak, went into total lockdown in early March as Covid-19 tightened its grip on the country. — APP

US, Israeli  
officials take  
first flight  
to UAE

TELAVIV: A US-Israeli delegation including White House advisor Jared Kushner took off Monday on a historic first direct commercial flight from Tel Aviv to Abu Dhabi to mark the normalisation of ties between the Jewish state and the UAE. The word “peace” was written in Arabic, English and Hebrew on the cockpit of the plane of Israel's national carrier El Al that took off around 11:20 am (0820 GMT) and was expected to land in the Emirates in the afternoon. “While this is a historic flight, we hope that it will start an even more historic journey in the Middle East and beyond,” Kushner, who is President Donald Trump's son-in-law and a key architect of his Middle East policy, said before boarding. “The future does not have to be predetermined by the past. This is a very hopeful time.” The flight number El Al 971 is a reference to the UAE's international dialling code, and the return flight, set to leave Abu Dhabi on Tuesday morning, is El Al 972, matching Israel's dialling code. — APP

**Briefs**

**PTA asks TikTok to block indecent content**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Monday asked TikTok to block the vulgar, indecent and immoral content for viewership in Pakistan. Keeping in view the growing concerns in the society with respect to content, the chairman PTA had an online meeting with senior management of TikTok, said a press release issued here. While acknowledging the recent efforts of the platform for taking down the indecent content, the chairman PTA asked the platform to put in place stronger content monitoring and moderation mechanism so that the unlawful material was not accessible within Pakistan. — APP

**Interior minister lauds provinces for Ashura security**

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Ijaz Ahmad Shah on Monday appreciated all provincial governments including the Islamabad administration for making foolproof security arrangements and ensuring peaceful observance of Ashura. In a statement, he said, "all arrangements were made through mutual consultation and cooperation between the provinces and the center to providing foolproof security to faithful during Muharram-ul-Haram." He also appreciated the Armed Forces, district administration and the police officials for their cogent efforts to maintain peace during the Ashura as well other mourning processions. The minister urged the citizens not to be careless about coronavirus and take precautionary measures to avoid spread of the pandemic. He asked the people to maintain distance at public places and during gatherings as advised by the health officials. "Cover your face with a mask and follow safety precautions as advised by the health ministry", Ijaz Shah said. The minister expressed the hope that soon the country would get rid of the deadly virus. — APP

**BRT Peshawar reopens for general public**

DNA  
PESHAWAR: Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) Peshawar service has been reopened for the public, said spokesperson Trans Peshawar on Monday. The service which was temporary halted on 9th and 10th Muharram now has been restored for the general public. Residents can travel via BRT service to their desired destinations from 6am to 10pm, said spokesperson. The spokesman said BRT Peshawar is providing best travel facilities to the citizens of Peshawar and those who came from other areas. Peshawar was declared among the highly sensitive districts from security perspective during Muharram. Since BRT is the largest project of Peshawar which affects tens of thousands of people, the administration had considered it suitable to close it for two days to avoid any possible security issues. The long awaited BRT Peshawar project was inaugurated by Prime Minister Imran Khan on August 13 after which a large number of people are travelling in these buses on daily basis. Apart from a couple of hitches, the service is running smoothly and majority of people using the service are praising it for being inexpensive and having facilities for people, particularly women passengers.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi meeting with Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malki. — DNA

**Saudi Foreign Minister expected to visit Pakistan**

FM Qureshi said that a large number of Pakistanis have been living in Saudi Arabia for many years and have been playing their part in the development of Saudi Arabia

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad al-Maliki visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad on Monday, and held a meeting with the Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. During the meeting, the two dignitaries held a discussion on Pakistan-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations, the promotion of bilateral cooperation in various fields, and other issues of mutual interest. Speaking during the

meeting, Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoy a deep-rooted and historic relationship. The foreign minister also inquired after the health of King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud. Qureshi further said that a large number of Pakistani expatriates had been staying in Saudi Arabia for years and playing role in the progress and development of the kingdom. "Sanctity of the Holy Mosques in the kingdom is dear to every Muslim and part of their religious beliefs," he said and vowed

that Pakistan would stand alongside Saudi Arabia for safeguarding its sovereignty. They also exchanged views on the expected visit of the Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud and the Minister of Energy Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud to Pakistan. Qureshi said that he is desirous to meet both the visiting Saudi dignitaries upon their arrival to Pakistan. The minister further said that a large number of Pakistanis have been living in Saudi Arabia for many years and have been playing their part in the devel-

opment of Saudi Arabia. The foreign minister said that we expect that following the improvement witnessed in the COVID-19 situation, the Saudi government would take special measures for the return of dismissed Pakistani workers and their re-employment. The foreign minister condemned the attacks of Houthi rebels in the kingdom. It is pertinent to mention here that besides meeting political leadership within the past few weeks, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malki called on

Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Jawed Bajwa at the General Headquarters (GHQ) on August 11. According to the military's media wing, matters of mutual interest, regional security, defence cooperation and other issues came under discussion in the meeting. Earlier this month, the Saudi ambassador also held separate meetings with the Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar and Speaker Punjab Assembly Pervaiz Elahi. Buzdar said that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have religious, historic and

deep-rooted ties and Riyadh played an important role in the development of Pakistan. Saudi Arabia has always supported Pakistan in a difficult time and Islamabad gave importance to its ties with Riyadh. The chief minister said that the efforts of the government bear fruit to curb the spread of coronavirus. He said that the government laid the foundation stone of Ravi River Front Urban Development Project which will be a game-changer. The authorities are planning to establish a new city in Lahore, he added.

**Pakistan condemns brutality on Muharram procession in IIOJK**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemned use of tear gas shells and firing of pellets on Muslims taking part in Muharram procession in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Due to the illegal and indiscriminate use of pellets, dozens of Kashmiris have reportedly been seriously injured, including with eye injuries causing permanent blindness. Indian occupation forces in IIOJK have been using pellet guns and lethal cartridges since 2010 resulting in large number of deaths and griev-

ous injuries to thousands of Kashmiris, including women and children. The Kashmiri youth has been systematically targeted in this deadly campaign. Indiscriminate targeting of civilians with pellet guns, causing excessive and permanent injuries and even deaths, is a clear violation of human rights and humanitarian law. The government of India is in clear violation of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. The BJP leadership must realize that it is directly responsible for these illegal actions of the Indian occupation forces.

**Azerbaijan's all occupied territories to be liberated: Jeyhun Bayramov**

DNA

BAKU: All occupied territories of Azerbaijan, including Gubadly, will be liberated and local Azerbaijanis will return to their homes, Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov has said. Bayramov made the remarks in a post shared on his Twitter page on August 31 that marks the anniversary of the occupation of Gubadly by Armenian forces. "27 years without Gubadly. The district occupied on 31 August 1993 by armed forces of Armenia, and Azerbaijani population were ethnically cleansed. All occupied territories of Azerbaijan, including Gubadly, will be liberated and local Azerbaijanis will return to their homes!", Bayramov's post reads. It should be



noted that as a result of the occupation, 238 Gubadli residents were killed, 316 were become to be disabled persons and more than 100

people were missing as a result of the occupation, adding that the administrative centre and 93 villages of the region were completely destroyed and looted, over 40,000 Gubadli residents became internally displaced persons. Azerbaijan and Armenia are locked in a conflict over Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh breakaway region, which along with seven adjacent regions was occupied by Armenian forces in a war in the early 1990s. More than 20,000 Azerbaijanis were killed and around one million were displaced as a result of the large-scale hostilities.

**Pakistan-China enjoy rich potential enhance cooperation in agriculture sector**

Meanwhile, Pakistan has a trade surplus with China in agricultural products. The volume of bilateral trade in this area has been growing strongly in recent years

DNA

BEIJING: Pak-Sino agricultural cooperation is still in the initial stage, with plenty of potential in technology, product processing, trade and infrastructure construction, says latest study done by Zhang Wenli and Zhai Xuelling from Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China. Meanwhile, Pakistan has a trade surplus with China in agricultural products. The volume of bilateral trade in this area has been growing strongly in recent years. From \$181 million in the year of 2010 to \$476 million in 2019, China's imports of agricultural products from Pakistan had increased by 163.1%, with an average annual growth rate of 11.3%. However, facing the challenges due to climate change, pest attacks, water shortage, etc., Pakistan's

agriculture calls for increased productivity. According to the study, the natural resource endowments between Pakistan and China are mutually complementary, which lays a solid basis for expanding cooperation as well as driving Pakistan's agricultural progress through adopting advanced technologies in the future. China has strengths in agricultural science and technology, mechanization, water conservancy engineering, etc. In 2019, the contribution rate of science and technology to China's agricultural growth recorded 59.2%, and the mechanization level of crop cultivation and harvest in China exceeded 70%. Simultaneously, the innovation of seed industry has been continuously promoted, and the coverage rate of improved seed varieties has



been greatly improved. Pakistan is rich in many agricultural production essentials like land and manpower. The per capita cultivated land area in Pakistan is twice that of China. Furthermore, Pakistan has a larger percentage of people in younger age groups than China. Moreover, Pakistan's increasingly improved investment environment, regulations and laws are

also appreciated. Currently, the yields of major crops in Pakistan such as wheat and rice are only about 50% of those in China. Therefore, the two countries can improve trade on each other's high-quality seed, and strengthen joint research on seed variety improvement of wheat, rice, oilseed, sugarcane, etc. Carrying out technical exchanges on planting, pest control, livestock breeding

management, drought and flood disaster response is also necessary for lifting Pakistani agriculture's overall level of technology and management. In addition, water-use efficiency in Pakistan is relatively low. The two sides should enhance bilateral cooperation on water conservancy system, and drip irrigation technology and equipment. It's mentioned in the study that Pakistan's prospect for developing labor-intensive agricultural products processing industry is bright. In this respect, future cooperation can mainly focus on the primary processing of agricultural products such as grain, livestock products and vegetables to make diversified supply of products. The study also points out several barriers hindering Pak-Sino agricultural cooperation. The researchers suggest infrastructure of electricity,

water and transportation be transformed or constructed. As China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) develops, infrastructure and logistics in Pakistan will be significantly improved, which will give a new impetus to the bilateral trade in agriculture sector. It added, the recent COVID-19 pandemic poses extraordinary challenges for almost all sectors of the economy of Pakistan. The need for maintaining food security and livelihoods has also gained more importance. Pakistan and China are all-weather strategic cooperative partners with time-honored friendship. By deepening agricultural cooperation with China, the productivity of major crops in Pakistan will be lifted to safeguard domestic food supply, and the whole sector will make steady progress fueled by high-techs.

**Pakistan, China to sign MoU**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China will sign formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote literary relations between two countries. The development took place during a meeting between Mr. Zhang Heping the cultural Counselor of Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters Dr. Yusuf Khushk in Islamabad on Sunday. The meeting discussed promotion of literature and cooperation between two friendly neighboring countries possess rich cultural heritage and powerful literary traditions. The Chinese cultural Counselor Zhang Heping appreciated role of Pakistan Academy of letters in extending cultural and literary ties with China. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters Prof. Dr. Yousuf Khushk said cultural and literary relations between two countries will be enhanced through writer to writer contact and intellectual exchanges through translations and other literary events.

**Maritime Affairs leading concept of Blue Economy**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Maritime Affairs is spearheading the concept of Blue Economy in the country. According to Ministry of Maritime Affairs, "Blue Economy is defined as sustainable commercial growth, improving livelihood and creating jobs using ocean resources while preserving and protecting health of oceanic ecosystem." The Blue Economy concept embraces many industries including ports, shipping companies, energy/renewable energy, fisheries, Maritime transportation, tourism, Climate Change, Waste Management to name a few. The Blue Economy sector presents many investment opportunities in the Maritime Sector including Marine Food Processing Chain, Exploitation of EEZ, LPG Terminal, LNG Terminal, Silk Route and BRI Coastal Development and Shipping industry.

**FPCCI stresses measures for Karachi rehabilitation**

FAIZ CH.

KARACHI: Mian Anjum Nisar, President, Sheikh Sultan Rehman and Khurram Ejaz, Vice Presidents of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) have expressed their serious concern, sorrow and grief over the loss of lives and damage to property caused by torrential rains in Karachi. They regretted that heavy rains have inundated the entire city and severely damaged the roads and exposed the already-weak infrastructure. Rain water has entered factories, warehouses, people's homes and caused heavy losses to the business community at large. Most parts of the city remain without electricity. Generators are not working either as people have run out of petrol because of shortage of petrol due to which the drainage of water from factories, warehouse and other work places could not be made possible. Life has come to a standstill and severely disrupted. The city which contributes more than 60% of the revenues and is the hub of Pakistan's economy is left at the mercy of nature and relief measures are highly inadequate, they added. They reminded the government that due to lockdown resulting from COVID-19, the economy of the metropolis had already suffered extensively and still not able to recover completely while the torrential rain further aggravated the situation. They further said, no precautionary measures were taken before the rain which was forecasted, well in advance.