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Malaysia keen to diversify ties with Pakistan
EU celebrates 2020 Erasmus Mundus scholarship recipients

China designates Nong Rong as new envoy to Pakistan


Briefs

TCP allowed to import wheat



ISLAMABAD: A high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday decided to allow the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) along with the private sector to import wheat in order to ensure sufficient availability of commodity in the country.

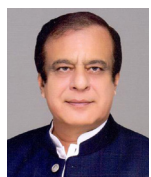
The meeting was attended by federal ministers Muhammad Hammad Azhar, Senator Shibli Faraz and Syed Fakhar Imam, Finance Adviser Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh, special assistants Mirza Shahzad Akbar and Shahbaz Gull, State Bank of Pakistan Governor, Punjab Food Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and secretaries of relevant departments. The chief secretaries joined the meeting through video-link.

The prime minister was given a detailed briefing on the situation of availability of wheat, daily release of commodity by Punjab, rates of wheat and Atta (flour), and import of sugar.

The situation about the quantity of wheat imported by private sector so far and the demand in next few years was also discussed. Minister for Industries Hammad Azhar updated the prime minister about the current price of sugar and its import. Expressing satisfaction over availability of wheat in the country and regular release by Punjab, the prime minister stressed timely arrangements to meet the future needs. — APP

Shibli assures facilities to investors

FIAZ CH



ISLAMABAD: The government was trying to provide a conducive environment and all possible facilities to investors, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said Thursday.

This he said during a meeting with a delegation of Careem Pakistan which called on him here. The delegation briefed the Information Minister on the working of Careem Service in Pakistan. Shibli Faraz said that international and national travel services could be an effective tool in promoting Pakistan's culture and tourism. He said the government was committed to promoting investment in the country and projecting a positive image of country in the world.

Pak, Uzbek relations cordial: PM

Deputy PM conveyed the warm greetings of the Uzbek President and noted that President Mirziyoyev looked forward to visiting Pakistan

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Uzbekistan's Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Sardor Umurzaqov, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, including the Covid-19 pandemic, bilateral cooperation, regional connectivity, and regional peace and security were discussed. Advisor for Commerce Mr. Abdul Razzak Dawood was also present during the meeting. The Prime Minister underlined that Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy cordial and brotherly relations. He warmly recalled his last meeting with President Mirziyoyev and mentioned that Pakistan keenly awaited his visit once the global pandemic situation settles down. The Prime Minister also highlighted the potential for enhanced trade with increased regional connectivity as a result of different planned railway projects. The Deputy Prime Minister conveyed the cordial greetings and best wishes of the Uzbek President and noted that President Mirziyoyev looked forward to visiting Pakistan. On behalf of President Mirziyoyev, he also extended an

COAS, Uzbek Dy PM discuss region

NAVID MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Prime Minister for Investment and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan, Sardor Umurzakov, called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. During the meeting matters of mutual interest with special emphasis on regional security situation and connectivity were discussed. The visiting dignitary acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's contributions for peace and stability in the region. Both pledged to support the vision for the better regional connectivity and improved security.

invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Uzbekistan. He also expressed Uzbekistan's desire to have improved economic relations with better connectivity and make investments in Pakistan. Underlining that there was no military solution to the conflict in

Continued on Page 04

Kashmir to remain on UNSC agenda: FO

The FO spokesperson said the international community must play its role in making India comply with its obligations under international law

SAIFULLAH



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday said that India must accept the fact that Jammu and Kashmir dispute will remain on the agenda of UN Security Council, till its resolution.

Addressing a weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said the only way India can get the Jammu and Kashmir dispute off the UN Security Council agenda is by letting the Kashmiris exercise their inalienable right to self-determination through

a free and impartial plebiscite under the UN auspices. He said the international community must play its role in making India comply with its obligations under international law, the UN Charter and the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. Regarding the latest incidents at the China-India border, the Spokesperson said Pakistan has been repeatedly emphasizing that

India's expansionist, and unilateral actions, particularly since 5 August last year, have been imperilling regional peace and security. He said the latest situation at the China-India border areas validates Pakistan's concerns and demonstrates that India's belligerence remains a major impediment in resolving the issues at its borders. He said we believe that it is imperative that China-India border issues are resolved in line with agreed understandings and bilateral agreements through established mechanisms and peace and tranquillity is maintained in the region.

China names Nong Rong as new ambassador to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: China has designated Nong Rong as a new ambassador to Pakistan who is currently a minister in a provincial government, media reported on Thursday. Chinese Ambassador for Pakistan Yao Jing has been transferred back to headquarters in Beijing for the next posting. He has been transferred two months before completing his three-year tenure. The newly nominated ambassador, Nong Rong, is a political appointee who has expertise in trade and commerce. Unlike the outgoing ambassador, he didn't serve in Pakistan before the appointment. Ambassador Yao Jing has served in Pakistan thrice in various capacities and in aggregate stayed in Islamabad for eleven years. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister For Investment and Foreign Economic Relations of Uzbekistan Sardor Umurzaqov called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

State terrorism must be condemned: FM Qureshi

World must strongly condemn and oppose any unilateral and illegal measures to change the status of disputed territories in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions

DNA

MOSCOW: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has urged the SCO members to work together to address resurgence of fascist ideologies and violent nationalism anywhere in the world especially in the region. Addressing the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting in Moscow on Thursday, he said those perpetrating state terrorism against people under illegal occupation in disputed territories must be condemned and held accountable. The Foreign Minister stressed that peaceful resolution of outstanding disputes is a pre requisite for achieving development, economic growth, poverty alleviation and social uplift

Qureshi meets Kyrgyz FM

MOSCOW: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi had a cordial meeting with his Kyrgyz counterpart Mr. Chingiz Azamatovich Aidarbekov on the sidelines of SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Moscow today. Foreign Minister Qureshi referred to the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries and thanked the Kyrgyz side for its active support for Pakistan's membership for the SCO. Both sides reviewed bilateral ties and examined the prospects of cooperation in diverse areas including political, economic, regional connectivity and people to people contacts. — DNA

of the masses. In this context, we strongly emphasize the importance of faithfully implementing UN Security Council Resolutions. He said the world must strongly condemn and oppose any unilateral and illegal measures to change the status of disputed territories in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions.

He said we must affirm that extremist as well as xenophobic ideologies, including Islamophobia, have no place in today's world. Highlighting the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan, the Foreign Minister said Pakistan has assiduously supported the efforts for a peace and reconciliation process that is Afghan-led

and Afghan-owned. He said the Afghan stakeholders must now seize this historic opportunity and work together to secure an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement. It is critical that the Intra-Afghan negotiations commence at the earliest. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said it is also imperative to be cognizant of the role of spoilers within and outside who do not want peace and stability to return to Afghanistan. He said the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland with dignity and honour should be an essential part of the peace negotiations. We look forward to consultations in the SCO-Afghan Contact Group to further facilitate the Afghan peace and reconciliation process.

PM tasks LEAs to arrest rape culprits

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has taken notice of recent sexual assault crimes reported in Lahore and Karachi, specifically the rape of a woman on Lahore Ring Road and murder of a 5 year old child after being raped in Karachi. According to details, Federal Minister for Water Resources and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmaker in the National Assembly, Faisal Vawda, has met Prime Minister Imran Khan where he raised the rape incidents of a minor girl, Marwah, in Karachi and a mother of two children in Lahore. Faisal Vawda said in a statement that PM Imran Khan has taken notice of the rape incidents took place in Karachi and Lahore. He said that such incidents are shameful for the civilised societies and tasked law enforcement agencies (LEAs) to immediately arrest the culprits.

Indian diplomat summoned to FO

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A senior Indian diplomat was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs today to register Pakistan's strong protest over ceasefire violations by the Indian occupation forces along the Line of Control (LoC) on the night of 8th September 2020, resulting in serious injuries to three innocent civilians. Due to indiscriminate and unprovoked firing by the Indian occupation forces in Bedori Sector of the LoC, 57 year old Muhammad Altaf s/o Muhammad Din, 27 year old Muhammad Aftab s/o Muhammad Altaf and 40 year old Tahir Iqbal s/o Muhammad Azam, residents of Village Banjori, sustained serious injuries. The Indian occupation forces along the LoC and the Working Boundary (WB) have been continuously targeting civilian population

3 civilians injured by Indian firing

RAWALPINDI: Indian Army troops had again initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation (CFV) in Bedori Sector along the Line of Control (LoC) targeting civil population. Around three innocent civilians got injured due to Indian troops firing, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release. Pakistan Army troops responded effectively to Indian firing, it added. — APP

heavy areas with artillery fire, heavy-caliber mortars and automatic weapons. This year, India has committed 2199 ceasefire violations to date, resulting in 17 shahidats and serious injuries to 171 innocent civilians.

Global COVID-19 death toll cross 900,000

DNA

NEW YORK: The worldwide death toll from the coronavirus pandemic jumped past 900,000 since the respiratory disease was first by China last year, a tally showed. There have been more than 27.7 million confirmed virus cases worldwide, according to a agency based on official statistics, with the worst-hit region Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Europe. The country with the most coronavirus deaths is the United States with over 190,000 fatalities, followed by Brazil. With billions of people around the world still suffering from the fallout of the crisis, a worldwide race for a vaccine is underway, with nine companies already in late-stage Phase 3 trials.

COVID-19 claims six lives

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan has reported six deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 299,855. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 6,365. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), 441 persons have been tested positive for COVID-19 in 24 hours. Sindh remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic in terms of cases followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Till now 131,115 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Sindh, 97,461 in Punjab, 36,755 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 13,227 in Balochistan, 15,804 in Islamabad, 3,137 in Gilgit-Baltistan and 2,356 in AJK.

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Malaysia keen to diversify ties with Pakistan

The Malaysian High Commissioner said, the work of craftsmen and artisans is being welcomed in every possible way with the spirit of close contact and goodwill

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Malaysian High Commissioner Ikram bin Muhammad Ibrahim has said that Pakistan and Malaysia have a long-standing relationship and the handicraft industry can be further developed by promoting mutual cooperation in the fields of industry and trade. After overcoming the virus, the government is taking all possible steps to increase trade and aid in Pakistan and the Handicraft Association of Pakistan stands by the government for this purpose, he said. He expressed these views while talking a delegation of Pakistan Handicrafts Association led by Fahad Barlas. The High Commissioner further said, the work of craftsmen and

artisans is being welcomed in every possible way with the spirit of close contact and goodwill. Fahad said, mutual trade in hand-

icrafts can further strengthen closer ties with Pakistan and other friendly countries and every effort is being made by the Pakistan

Handicrafts Association. Former President Handicraft Association of Pakistan Khurshid Barlas and senior members Amin-ur-Rehman

Mohsin Khalid Barir Hassan were present on the occasion during a meeting with Ambassador Ikram bin Muhammad Ibrahim



Briefs

Subgroup constituted to streamline NADRA, FBR

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh Thursday constituted a subgroup of FBR Policy Board members to point out and redress the difficulties that hinder the progress on data-sharing between National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

Chairing the second meeting of the Policy Board at the FBR Headquarters, he stressed the need for establishing a link between the two organizations for data-sharing and data analytics. This subgroup consists of members Hammad Azhar, Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Faiz Kamoka, Chairman FBR and Chairman NADRA, said a press statement issued by the Finance Ministry adding it would share its report with the chairman in a week.

The Adviser took a special notice of the difficulties, the traders were facing due to stoppage of containers at the Torkham Border, however he was assured by the FBR officials that necessary steps were being taken and the issue would be resolved within the upcoming weeks.

Earlier, Chairman FBR, Muhammad Javed Ghani, briefed the Adviser on the efforts the institute had been making to improve the capabilities and expertise of its human resource and on the progress of the automation drive of FBR/Customs. — APP

Governor enquires health of ailing Iftikhar

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar Thursday enquired about the health of ailing Iftikhar Ali Malik President SAARC chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman United Business Group. Governor visited the residence of indisposed veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik (78) to enquire about his health and prayed for his early restoration of health. He also congratulated him for assuming the top slot of president of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) for two years term and hoped that he will continue to exploit his potentials for the promotion of trade and industry in South Asia. Governor further pinned hope that Malik would utilize his best abilities to bring closer the SAARC member states besides promoting regional trade and economic integration. He further said that his nomination was a proof of his untiring and selfless efforts for the business community of the region."

He said Pakistan is fully committed to improving trade relations among SAARC countries including India to make South Asia the most economically integrated region in the world. "South Asia is one of the most dynamic regions in the world, but it is also one of the least integrated, as its intra-regional trade accounts for just 5 percent of total trade, compared with 25 percent in the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN)," he added.

Muhammad Sarwar said the present government of PTI led by Prime Minister Imran Khan was fully committed to restoring peace and ensuring prosperity in the SAARC region and at the same time, Pakistan wants to maintain her foreign and trade relations with other countries on the basis of mutual respect.

PDF, PCFA plant Pak-China friendship tree at PHC

Chairman of PDF, Muhammad Bial Sethi said that initially the target of planting 300000 trees seemed an uphill task but the support of CM KPK and his dedicated team is making it easier for us to achieve this objective

DNA

PESHAWAR: Under the banner of joint project of Pakistan Development Foundation (PDF) and Pakistan China Friendship Association Khyber Chapter (PCFA) a Pak China friendship tree was planted at Peshawar High Court (PHC). The Registrar PHC, Khawaja Wajih-ud-Din planted this sapling in the premises of the august court in presence of the Chairman PDF, Muhammad Bilal Sethi, Secretary General PCFA, Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani, Chairman Tasleem Hussain Advocate, DFO Peshawar Gulzar Khan and other officials, senior lawyers and social activists.

On this occasion the registrar PHC, Khawaja Wajih-ud-Din remarked that plantation is inevitable for reducing environmental pollution and soil erosion. He added that the public has

a great role of play in this regard. The Registrar PHC, Khawaja Wajih-ud-Din also appreciated the two partner organizations for their volunteer collaborative struggle in making Pakistan clean and green.

Chairman of PDF, Muhammad Bial Sethi said that initially the target of planting 300000 trees seemed an uphill task but the support of CM KPK and his dedicated team is making it easier for us to achieve this objective. He said that apart from reducing environmental pollution, the project aims at further strengthening the long-tested Pak-China friendship. Similarly the Secretary General PCFA, Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani highlighted the objectives of this project and added that it aims at improving sino Pal relationships. Gilani thanked the Chinese Ambassador for his continued patronage in this project.



Naval Chief inaugurates Pakistan Navy Long Term Evolution network

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In an impressive Investiture Ceremony held at Bahria Auditorium, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbas conferred military awards upon Pakistan Navy personnel. The Naval Chief also inaugurated Pakistan Navy's Long Term Evolution (LTE) Network in Karachi. The Naval Chief, while inaugurating the LTE Network emphasized that LTE technology will greatly enhance Pakistan Navy's Network Centre Warfare capability and provide information superiority against the enemy in both conventional and asymmetric threat situations. He emphasized on the Commanders at all tiers to optimally utilize this capability taking due cognizance of information security aspects. Earlier during the Investiture ceremony, the recipients of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) were Cdr Nasar Mahmood, Cdr Syed Faisal Ali Shah, Cdr Raas Karim, Cdr Shifaat Ali Khan, Cdr Amir Mahmood, Cdr Rashid Mahmood, Cdr Zafar Iqbal,

Cdr Kamran Ahmed, Cdr Khan Mahmood Asif, Cdr Anwar Ali Sabir, Cdr Muhammad Nauman Rafique, Cdr Imtiaz Ali, Cdr Hammad Ahmad and Cdr Eljaz Ahmad. The recipients of Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Military) were Capt Imran Javed PN, Capt Muhammad Azhar PN, Capt Atif Naveed Hadis PN, Capt Muhammad

Hussain PN, Capt Shaikh Muhammad Hassan PN, Cdr Muhammad Tahir Fayyaz PN, Cdr Muhammad Ziaul Haq PN, Cdr Muhammad Adil Siddiqui PN, Cdr Khurram Shehzad PN, Cdr Hasan Shaheen PN, Cdr Farhan PN, Cdr Muhammad Kaleem Ahmed PN, Cdr Ahmed Raza Tahir PN, Cdr

Imran Khan PN, Cdr Akber Mirza PN, Lt Cdr Qaiser Waheed PN, Lt Cdr Areeb Ashraf Cheema PN, Lt Cdr Atif Muhammad Sarwar Baig PN and Lt Cdr Muhammad Shakil PN. The recipients of Tamgha-i-Basalat were Capt Amir Iqbal Khan PN, Lt Cdr Zulfiqar Ali PN, Lt Jamshid Hussain PN, Lt Bilal Nazir PN, Lt

Noman Majeed PN, Mahboob Hussain CSFA and Pervaz Ahmed CDTI.

47 Awards of TK(M)-I, 69 awards of TK(M)-II and 31 awards of TK(M)-III have also been conferred upon Master Chief Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers and Sailors. Letters of Commendation from Chief of the Naval Staff have been awarded to 63 Officers, Master Chief Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers, Sailors and Navy Civilians. The ceremony was attended by a large number of senior serving and retired officers of Pakistan Navy. On Defence Day 6 Sep 20, President of Pakistan conferred military awards upon Armed Forces personnel. From Pakistan Navy the recipients of Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) were Rear Admiral Imran Ahmad, Rear Admiral Muhammad Shuaib, Rear Admiral Zakaur Rehman, Rear Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Rear Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami and Rear Admiral Abdul Basit Butt. The recipients of Sitara-i-Basalat were Capt Syed Ailya Hasan and Lt Cdr Humair Iftikhar PN.



APNS welcomes Government decision over advertisements

This decision will go a long way in establishing transparency in the distribution of the provincial government's advertising



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The APNS welcomes the decision of the Punjab Government to release advertisements to the member publications of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society. This decision will go a long way in es-

tablishing transparency in the distribution of the provincial government's advertising.

Mr Sarmad Ali, Secretary General APNS in a statement said here today that this has been a long standing demand of the APNS that all Government advertising should be released to APNS member publications.

However, he requested the provincial government to make the policy more inclusive by observing the agreed 25% regional quota in the release of all ads including tender notices of provincial interest to regional newspapers along with national dailies.

This would not only ensure transparency in the issuance of tenders but also promote and safeguard the interests of regional press in the province which is already facing acute financial crunch due to decrease in the quantum of government advertising.

Ecolean Pakistan welcomes new MD

DNA

KARACHI: The global packaging producer, Ecolean welcomes Peter Hauggaard as the new Managing Director Ecolean Pakistan, Asia South & Middle East. Mr. Hauggaard has assumed his office in Lahore from September 1st 2020. Peter Hauggaard is a proven senior general manager with both commercial and operational experience. He has headed organizations in multiple countries, including, Turkey, Russia, Indonesia, Estonia, Serbia. "I am elated to take up this role in Pakistan, which is an economy with major possibilities and fast developments, making it a market of high business potential."

New LB system to empower people, says Buzdar

DNA

LAHORE: The new local bodies system will empower the people in the real sense and a new era of composite development will begin. The government will take the development process to the doorsteps of the people by transforming local bodies institutions. This was stated by Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar while presiding over a meeting about local bodies at his office. Secretary Local Government Department briefed the participants about the local bodies affairs. Addressing the meeting, the CM stated that local bodies had failed to resolve public problems in the past while the new local bodies system is in accordance with the public needs and authority will be devolved at grassroots in the real sense. The CM reiterated that local bodies' repre-

sentatives will be empowered and the new system will bring an end to the status quo. It will empower the citizens and public problems will be solved at the grassroots, he said. The CM directed that local bodies should show no negligence in fulfilling their fundamental duties and cleaning process should be ensured. The streets and commercial areas should be kept neat and clean, he said. He added most modern machinery is being provided to the local bodies for cleanliness

and made it clear that no negligence will be tolerated in the cleanliness of drains for draining out rainwater.

Provincial Ministers Raja Basharat, Mian Mahmood ur Rasheed, Dr Yasmin Rashid, Advisor Asif Mehmood, President PTI Central Punjab Ijaz Chaudhry, President PTI Northern Punjab Sadaqat Ali Abbasi, Secretary Good Governance Committee Ijaz Hussain Manhaish, Chief Secretary, Chairman P&D and others attended the meeting.



Protecting taxpayers' interest priority: Sukhera

ICCI has set up facilitation desk in its premises, which was aiming to address the issues related to federal taxes and make the tax compliance more easy and effective. He said criminal cases should be filed against those tax functionaries who were involved in malpractices and corruption.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman Mushtaq Ahmad Sukhera on Thursday said that protecting the interests of taxpayers was the key priority of his organization and FTO was providing relief to taxpayers by carrying out independent investigations about the maladministration by functionaries administering the federal taxes.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Facilitation Desk of Federal Tax Ombudsman, which was established by Islamabad Chamber of

Commerce and Industry (ICCI), the Ombudsman said that FTO would work with Federal Board of Revenue for setting timelines for tax cases to ensure their timely disposal. ICCI has set up facilitation desk in its premises, which was aiming to address the issues related to federal taxes and make the tax compliance more easy and effective.

He said criminal cases should be filed against those tax functionaries who were involved in malpractices and corruption. He said ensuring the self-respect of taxpayers was the



responsibility of the state and state should honor this responsibility. He said that SMEs were the backbone of economy and they needed

more focus of the government for ease of doing business. A fair, just, efficient and simplified tax system was needed to promote tax culture in the country, he added.

He appreciated the efforts of ICCI for providing better facilities to its members by setting up facilitation desks of various organizations that would help in resolving their key issues and promoting business activities.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President ICCI said ICCI was striving to provide maximum facilitation to its members in

business promotion and the establishment of FTO Facilitation Desk at Chamber was another right step in that direction. He said that ICCI would also setup the Facilitation Desks of CDA, NADRA, SM-EDA and Passport Office to provide more facilitation to its members. ICCI members at the occasion highlighted many tax issues including repeated selection of same taxpayers for audit, issue of Sec-8B, long delay in clearance of refunds and urged the FTO to work with FBR in resolving the highlighted issues.

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Briefs

NDMA starts flood damage survey

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has started flood damage assessments and survey in deluge hit areas of the country in collaboration with United Nations (UN) agencies, provincial disaster management authorities (PDMA's), provincial governments and others. A spokesman of the authority said in a press release that the NDMA has written a letter to UN agencies urging to carry out multi sector initial rapid estimation of the losses to properties and infrastructure in the affected areas. NDMA in coordination with provincial governments, PDMA's has also initiated a well-coordinated efforts to gather data as per already existing guidelines, the spokesman said. The NDMA has so far distributed 35 ton ration, high energy biscuits among 8,000 families of cloudburst hit areas in collaboration with World Food Programme (WFP). Likewise, 440 tons wheat has been distributed in flash flood hit areas of Sindh in partnership with WFP. NDMA has so far distributed 11,000 tarpaulin, 10,000 ration packs, 5,000 MREs, 2,000 mosquito nets and 11,000 tents among torrential rain hit area people. Some 100 ton clean drinking water has also been supplied in flash flood hit areas in partnership with Nestle Pakistan. Three life boats and medicines worth Rs 20 million have also been provided to flood affected in collaboration with World Health Organisation (WHO). — APP

3rd wheat shipment reaches Karachi Port

ISLAMABAD: The third vessel MV Coventry carrying about 69,000 metric tons of wheat from Ukraine had reached Karachi port, which was allowed to be discharged after mandatory quarantine inspection. A total of 195,000 metric tons wheat has been imported through three vessels since last week of August 2020 by encouraging private sector, said a press release issued by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MinNFS&R) here Thursday. Meanwhile, experts of Federal Department of Plant Protection (DPP) undertook the mandatory quarantine inspection of vessel to check bio-security risks and discharge was instantly granted to vessel after satisfactory phytosanitary examination. The Ministry of National Food Security is in close liaison with concerned provincial authorities to ensure unhindered movement of wheat cargoes from Karachi to other parts of the country. A significant impact of recent wheat import has been observed on wheat flour price in the country, whereas it was expected that this impact will be more apparent in next few days when the imported-wheat reaches to flour mills in various parts of the country. — APP

RCCI observes Belgian Business Contact Day

The RCCI president, Saboor Malik, said that Belgium was the 5th largest trading partner of Pakistan within the European Union, but the current trade volume was insufficient keeping in view the available potential of trade between the two countries

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Belgian Business Contact Day was observed at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). The day was observed with the theme of "Post Covid 19, moving forward together." Belgian ambassador Philippe Bronchain while addressing the business community said that there is a huge potential and opportunities to enhance trade between the two countries. He assured full cooperation to the Pakistani business community for strengthening trade between the two countries. The ambassador was accompanied by the Belgian embassy's trade commissioner Abid M. Husain and trade and commercial officer Shaikat Nawaz Niazi. He lauded RCCI efforts in promoting trade ties and organizing exhibitions and business opportunity conferences (BOC) at different parts of the world. Speaking on the occasion, the RCCI president, Saboor Malik, said that Belgium was the 5th largest trading partner of Pakistan within the European Union, but the current



trade volume was insufficient keeping in view the available potential of trade between the two

countries. He said both countries should extend support to private sectors for tak-

ing trade volume to more than \$2 billion in next couple of years. He said bilateral cooper-

ation can be enhanced in textile, cereals, cotton, leather and sports goods and gems and jewelry.

To benefit from the existing opportunities, exchange of delegation is important, he added.

ANF seized 1371 kgs drugs worth US \$ 9.46 mln in 18 operations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Acting upon zero-tolerance policy towards narcotics, Anti Narcotics Force Pakistan seized 1371.380 Kgs narcotics valuing US \$ 9.46 Million internationally, arrested 20 culprits including one afghan national, 2 ladies and impounded 6 vehicles while conducting 18 counter-narcotic strikes throughout the country. The seized drugs comprised of 155.100 Kg Hashish, 20 Kg Opium, 19.050 Kg Heroin, 1.230 Kg Cocaine, 1 Kg Methamphetamine and 1175 Kg Sulphuric Acid. ANF Rawalpindi, the staff of Police Station Attock established a naka near Iqbal

Shaheed Toll Plaza G.T road Attock intercepted a Suzuki Pickup and recovered 6 Kgs Hashish from the arrested accused Alam Zeb resident of Nowshera. In another operation, ANF Rawalpindi, conducted an operation opposite Attock Petrol Pump, T-Chowk G.T road Islamabad and recovered 2.400 Kgs Hashish, One Pistol 30 Bore, One Spare Magazine and Seven lives rounds from the arrested accused namely Bilal Zarin and Babar Shahzad resident of Rawalpindi. ANF Punjab, the staff of Police Station Faisalabad intercepted one Pakistani national lady accused Sunita Munawar resident of Lahore, at Faisalabad International Airport.

Shehryar pays tribute to Quaid

RAWALPINDI: District President of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), Shehryar Riaz Thursday paid tribute to Quaid e Azam on his 72nd death anniversary. Talking to APP exclusively he said that the dream of Muslims of sub-continent was materialized under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah who achieve an independent homeland. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of Naya Pakistan was in fact the Quaid's vision for Pakistan, as the people of all schools of thought and religions had an equal place in Quaid's Pakistan. He said in line with the Quaid's vision, it was the people's national responsibility to make Pakistan a peaceful.

Ghulam Sarwar for increasing Pak-Japan flight operations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan, Kuninori Matsuda called on Federal Minister for Aviation Division, Ghulam Sarwar Khan here on Thursday. Both discussed matters pertaining to mutual interests. The Japanese Ambassador expressed his deep grief on the Karachi air crash. In a meeting, Ghulam Sarwar said that the enhancement of flight numbers will boost opportunities for the business community of both countries. Federal Minister has informed the ambassador about the capabilities of ASF and asked to help to explore the possibilities of cooperation for



Airport Security Force. The minister told the ambassador that the up-gradation of Lai-Nullah Flood Forecasting under Government of Japan's grant-in-aid is under process and would be submitted to the Japan Embassy after completion of codal formalities.

The two held wide-ranging discussions on Pakistan-Japan relations and ways to further strengthen Tokyo and Islamabad's growing partnership in the Aviation Sector. The two sides agreed on the enhancement of the number of flights between both countries.

Mayor reviews anti-dengue arrangements

ISLAMABAD: A meeting on dengue virus prevention was held at the Mayor's Office under the chairmanship of Mayor Islamabad Sheikh Ansar Aziz. Maintenance Fatah Mohammad Mako, Deputy Director MPO Habib Qadir, Director Environment Akhtar Rasool and Media Coordinator Syed Mohsin Shirazi attended. Addressing the meeting, the Mayor of Islamabad Sheikh Ansar Aziz said that all arrangements should be made for the prevention of dengue virus as dengue virus is very dangerous. Our staff did a great job on the occasion of Eid ul Fitr. Now there should be no negligence in the arrangements for the prevention of dengue virus. He directed the directors of MCI to take steps for the prevention of dengue virus with full responsibility in the same manner as for the prevention of corona virus so that the citizens would be safe from this virus. It was informed that sprays are being carried out all over the city for the prevention of dengue. So far no dengue patient has come forward. Sanitation is being carried out in the city. Wherever there is any garbage, it is picked up immediately to prevent dengue virus. An awareness campaign was also launched. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Mayor Islamabad Sheikh Ansar Aziz presiding over a meeting on dengue situation. —DNA

10 criminals held, stolen bikes and weapons recovered

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police on Thursday arrested 10 criminals from various areas of the city and recovered four stolen motorbikes, hashish, wine as well as other weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said. According to details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan ordered crackdown against criminal elements. Following these orders, DIG (Operations) Waqar-Ud-Din Syed has directed all zonal officers to accelerate their efforts to curb the crime in the city. As per directions, SP (Saddar) Sarfraz Ahmed Virk constituted special team under supervision of DSP Khalid Mehmood Awan including SHO Tarnol police station, Sub-Inspector Alamgir Khan, ASI Muhammad Ishaq along with other officials who successfully

arrested wanted member of bike lifters gang. The gangster has been identified as Faizan Butt and police recovered four stolen motorbikes from him. Shalimar and Karachi company police teams arrested two accused Khan and Fahim for having 110 gram hashish and seven cans of beer respectively. Moreover, SP (City-Zone) Omer Khan constituted police team under supervision of ASP Aqeela Naqvi including SHO Kohsar police Station Sub-Inspector Shabbir Ahmed Tanoli, Sub-Inspectors Zahid Akhtar and



Rafi-Ullah along with others. This team succeeded to arrest two drug peddlers namely Zeshan Ishrat and Abdul Shakoor and recovered 595 gram hashish from their possession. Banigala police apprehended three accused Nazakat, Hafeez and Nasir and recovered 280 gram hashish and two liter alcohol from their possession. Cases have been registered against him and further investigation is underway from him. During special checking in the whole city, police nabbed two proclaimed offenders. DIG (Operations) Islamabad Waqar Uddin Syed has appreciated the performance and directed all police officials for high vigilance and monitoring against those involved in anti-social activities. He said that it is the collective responsibility of the every person of the society to remain alert against those involved in criminal activities in their surroundings and inform police for action against them.

Senate body for improving capital's hospitals

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination on Thursday directed the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination to improve quality of service delivery system at federal capital's public sector hospitals. The committee meeting which was chaired by Senator Khushbakht Shujaat asked the ministry concerned to ensure provision of basic health facilities at federal capital's hospitals and address concerns of patients. The body also expressed its displeasure over appointments of heads of hospitals and other federal health organizations on temporary basis. The committee asked the ministry of National Health Services to submit report on officials working under the ministry in its next meeting. The committee also expressed its dissatisfaction over performance of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC). The committee chairperson said that PMDC should address the issues of medical students on immediate basis and asked the council to complete registration process of 65 doctors of a private medical college and submit report to the committee. The committee took serious notice of the attitude of President PMDC and said that a Privilege Motion must be moved against him. They also stressed the need for PMDC not to play with the lives of the students who have recently graduated from Abbottabad International Medical College (AIMC). They were of the view that the committee will not allow PMDC to play with their lives. The committee recognized the fact that PMDC had directed AIMC to stop admissions, and that it was sheer negligence on the part of AIMC Administration that it did not pay heed. — APP

Rs 10 m allocated for street lights in Capital

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Thursday allocated Rs10 million for rehabilitation and renovation of street lights in sectoral areas of the city. Dysfunctional street lights had posed serious threats to the citizen's lives and property during night hours, but the timely intervention by the chairman CDA Aamer Ali Ahmed lead to the allocation of funds during the first two months of the current financial years to keep the city illuminated. Of the total allocation of Rs 60 million, for Street Light Division Rs 10 million were earmarked for renovation while Rs 50 million would be spent for installation of transformer and other electrical equipments in the city, said a statement issued on Thursday. More allocation of funds would also be made during coming days, it added. — APP

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Briefs

Albayrak starts anti-dengue campaign

RAWALPINDI: An awareness activity was conducted here Thursday to advocate the people about ethics of cleanliness, awareness about dengue fever and its precautionary measures. The purpose of the drive was to aware the residents, shopkeepers and grocery vendors of UC-78, Shah Khalid Colony about the precautionary measures against dengue fever and to nullify the breeding of dengue larvae, said a spokesman of Albaryak waste management. The residents and traders were asked to keep the pots, discarded tires, extra buckets or discarded bottles empty on their residence's roof top as they are filled up with rain water in the monsoon season.

They were also asked to dump their waste in company's waste containers allocated in their area or hand it over to sanitary workers which are assigned for proper waste collection. Citizens were also informed about the company's helpline number 1139, in any query regarding solid waste management they can file complaints at such number. — APP

DC directs to destroy dengue larva at mosques/shrines

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Captain (retd) Anwar-ul-Haq Thursday directed the officials of Awaq Department to make the arrangements for destroying the dengue larvae being found from mosques and shrines.

Chairing a meeting to review anti-dengue arrangements here at his office, he said that a large number of dengue larvae was being recovered from mosques and shrines during ongoing surveillance, so the concerned officials were directed to contact the management of mosques and shrines in the district and arrangements be made for destroying it immediately.

He said that as the recent rains during the last week has increased the threat of dengue larva breeding, collective efforts were needed to completely wipe out this deadly disease. Anwar said that cleaning of air coolers, water coolers and roofs in mosques and shrines must be ensured. — APP

Work to roll out first phase of PSW system underway

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh chaired the 5th meeting of the Steering Committee on Pakistan Single Window (PSW) here at the FBR Headquarters. The Advisor was updated that the steering committee on PSW has met four times and the decisions taken during the 4th meeting are mostly implemented. The PSW Bill 2020 has been introduced in the Parliament. The modified PCI has been approved by the CDWP. The PSW Company has been incorporated and the hiring process for filling up the top positions has been initiated. It was also briefed to the Adviser that a development team is working on to roll out the first phase of the PSW system in the current financial year and in this regard negotiations are underway with NADRA, SECP and 1 link for information exchange.

Six accused arrested, contraband seized

ATTOK: Police during the drive against anti social elements claimed to have arrested six accused from different areas of the district and recovered 6.180 kg hashish, one Kalashnikov and three pistols from their possession. The accused arrested include Muhammad Shafiq r/o Malik Mala, Khalid Hussain and Muhammad Majid both r/o Haji Shah, Muhammad Tariq r/o Domel, Amir Mukhtiar r/o Jandial and Bali Khan r/o Kamra. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Participants of a three day drama workshop at PNCA pose for a group photo. — DNA

PNCA organizes three days drama workshop

Upon conclusion the Director General PNCA Dr Fouzia Saeed enlightened the importance of creativity on both individual and collective level, congratulated the participants for showing their interest and dedication

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts organized a three days drama workshop at Pakistan National Council of the Arts. Due to covid SOPs workshop was restricted to fifty participants. This workshop was aimed to motivate young generation towards power of communication, adopting theatre as a strong tool

of expression and creating innovative stuff in this regard as well as to promote the theatre culture by providing the participants a platform to exhibit their craft. In opening ceremony along with the Director General PNCA Dr Fouzia Saeed, SDPO Mr Usman Tipu from police services of Pakistan was the guest of honour. He appreciated the initiative taken by PNCA and throw light on the importance of seeking knowledge

and self-improvement techniques. Closing ceremony was conducted on 10-09-2020 at PNCA auditorium. Course conductor Mr Waqar Azeem in his introductory remarks briefly elaborated the contents of workshop and showed a glimpse of performance by the participants. Programme coordinator Mr Umer Zaka discussed the idea of that workshop and the encouraging response from all over the youth. He also ensured that PNCA under

the patronage of the Director General Dr Fouzia Saeed will continue these kinds of events on a broader scale and there is a lot more in pipe line. Upon conclusion the Director General PNCA Dr Fouzia Saeed cordially appreciated the participation of all the respected participants for making this workshop successful. She enlightened the importance of creativity on both individual and collective level, congratulated the participants

for showing their interest and dedication. She addressed the effectiveness of theatre as a universal medium and how it can be used to express the creative instincts. She motivated the participants towards promotion of open air theatre and about the few steps taken by PNCA in this regard. She distributed certificates among the participants and assure her round the clock availability for well of arts & culture.

Govt to ensure COVID-19 surveillance in schools

ISLAMABAD: The ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination has decided to ensure regular health screening and COVID-19 surveillance in schools after reopening from September 15. According to an official of the ministry, the main objective of this surveillance is to monitor the Corona situation and examine the health of teachers and children at schools after every two weeks. He said that further decisions will be made on reviewing the situation on the basis of test reports on scientific means. He added schools will be reopened stage-wise

with strict monitoring on implementation of SOPs related with the protection from COVID-19. He said that all schools have to strictly follow these SOPs announced by the government like social distancing, hand sanitizing or washing, wearing of face mask etc. He added besides school administration, the role of parents is also crucial to ensure implementation of SOPs. He said that schools administration, teachers and parents will have to adhere to the instructions after reopening of institutions. He added the number of students in a class will be reduced, which means that half of the students

will attend the session one day and half will come on the other day to avoid from any spread of the disease. The official said that there is no need to daily purchase expensive masks for children and asked the parents to make homemade fabric mask for school going children, which are washable and reusable. He said that students with low immunity level should be avoided to attend school in first phase. He said that due to immediate closure of schools a large number of population particularly students are now safe and remained protected from COVID-19. — APP

Police launch search operation in various areas

Police recovered four, 4MM rifles, one 44 bore rifle, a Kalashnikov, three 12 bore rifles, one 8MM rifle, 9MM pistol and huge quantity of ammunition from their possession

RAWALPINDI: Police on special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi on Thursday launched a search operation in Chakri, Sihla and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Chontra Police Station.

According to police spokesman the heavy police contingents, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and Ladies police under the supervision of SDPO, Saddar Circle, ASP, Muhammad Soaib Masood and SHO Chontra Police Station Zaheer Ahmed Butt conducted search operation in the area and arrested nine accused namely Gulam Muhammad, Mujtaba Hassan, Sajid Sabir, Adnan Ali, Muhammad Azam, Ghazanfar Abbas, Muhammad Aslam, Kamran Mumraiz and Muham-



mad Usman for illegally possessing weapons. Police recovered four, 4MM rifles, one 44 bore rifle, a Kalashnikov, three 12 bore rifles, one 8MM rifle, 9MM pistol and huge quantity of ammunition from their possession. The spokesman said the search operations to net criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly

being conducted in different areas of the district particularly to ensure law and order during Muharram ul Haram. City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas appreciated performance of Superintendent Police, Saddar Circle, Zia ud Din Ahmed, ASP Saddar Circle and Chontra police. — APP

AIOU extends date of admissions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has extended the date of admissions up to September 18 for continuing students of MSc, MBA and BS (face to face) programmes for the semester Autumn 2020. Professor Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor, AIOU has approved the extension in last date of fee deposit for continuing students of the said programs from September 8 while presiding over a meeting in this regard, said a press release on Thursday. All the regional centres of the university have been directed to facilitate the students in depositing their admission forms, while designated bank branches (MCB, NBP, ABL, FWBL) have also been informed to accept admission fee of the students with additional charges of rupees 500/-.

BISE's performance hailed, FDE's unsatisfactory

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) in evaluation of redressal of public complaints by Federal Education Ministry's has commended the performance of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, whereas declared as unsatisfactory the performance of Federal Directorate of Education. The Prime Minister's Office on Thursday said at Pakistan Citizen Portal, 542 complaints were monitored at the dashboards of 18 officials. On completion of performance review of Education Ministry, the report has been presented to the Prime Minister, the PM

Office said. An explanation has been sought from former Director General Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) over unsatisfactory performance. Also, Deputy Director FDE and Principal FG College Home Economics have also been asked to clarify their position regarding the performance. The PM Office said the officials, contrary to the directive of PMDU, showed negligence in resolving the public grievances. The Unit asked the officials to act responsibly while resolving public grievances. — APP

NAB seeks restoration of Nawaz's sentence

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Thursday moved Islamabad High Court (IHC) to restore the imprisonment sentence of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Avenfield Property reference. Th NAB had named former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs as respondents in the petition. The petition stated that some leaders of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) advised Nawaz Sharif for not returning to Pakistan and prayed the court to take legal action against them on violations of its orders. It stated that NAB had al-

ready filed appeals in Al-Azizia Steel Mills and Flagship Investment references to IHC. The petition stated that the accused had misused the bail granted on medical grounds and his party leaders had interfered into court's affairs. It stated that this court had granted bail to Nawaz Sharif in Avenfield Property reference and the court maintained this verdict. It further said that the accused was not entitled for this relief after he had been declared absconder in Toshakhana reference. It prayed the court to restore the imprisonment sentence of accused and also cancel his bail in Avenfield reference. — APP

Nawaz should face corruption cases, says Shahbaz Gill

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Dr. Shahbaz Gill has said in a statement that Nawaz Sharif is throwing dust in the eyes of the judicial system. Dr Shahbaz Gill said that Nawaz Sharif went abroad pretending to have less platelet. Instead of hiding behind illness, he should face corruption cases. Criticizing the former prime minister, Shahbaz Gill said that Nawaz Sharif was the first patient in the world whose condition depends on the corruption cases. He demanded that the nation wants to know what treatment is being given in London's hotels and parks. Nawaz Sharif has been declared an absconder after corruption certified by the High Court.

He said that those who claim to be the leaders in the speeches have left their workers alone to roam freely in London.

Gold price increases Rs1900

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1900 on Thursday and was traded at Rs115,000 against its price at Rs 113,100. Likewise, the price of 10 gram gold also increased by Rs1624 and was traded at Rs98,594 against its sale at Rs 96,965, Karachi Sarafa Association reported. The price of per tola silver increased by Rs20 and was traded at Rs1320 against its sale at Rs1300 while that of 10 gram silver also witnessed hike of Rs17.14 and was sold at Rs1131.68 against Rs 1114.54. The gold prices in the international market increased by \$30 and was traded at \$1956 against \$1926, the association reported. — APP

2 POs held during raid

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested two proclaimed offender in the jurisdiction of Bani Police Station, informed police spokesman here on Thursday. During course of action, Bani police held two proclaimed offender identified as Muhammad Danish and Muhammad Azeem by using scientific method who were involved in malpractices and looted millions of rupees from a jeweler and fled away from the scene. Meanwhile, City Police Officer CPO Muhammad Ahsan Younas appreciated the performance of police team adding that strict action must be taken against the anti social elements and must be punished severely. — APP

Tarbela 4th Extension yields Rs 75 bln revenue

ISLAMABAD: In yet another significant development towards contribution of low-cost hydro electricity to the National Grid, Tarbela 4th Extension Hydel Power Station crossed 10-billion units generation mark last night, as it has contributed 10.021 billion units to the system. This contribution of Tarbela 4th Extension Hydel Power Station yielded a revenue of about Rs.75 billion to WAPDA. Simultaneously, it also accrued saving worth Rs.100 billion to the national exchequer. — APP

Pak, Uzbek relations cordial: PM

From Page 01
Afghanistan, the Prime Minister highlighted Pakistan's positive contribution to the Afghan peace process. The Prime Minister stressed that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was of paramount importance for Pakistan and the region. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that Intra-Afghan Negotiations would commence at the earliest and culminate in a negotiated political settlement, thus contributing to peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to work with Uzbekistan to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation, bilaterally and in the region.

Speakers highlight significance of removing trade barriers

The panelists including experts on trade and economy, shared their views at virtual public private dialogue 'Expediting Trade Facilitation Reforms for Manufacturing Sector amid Covid19' organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Covid19 has provided us an opportunity to expedite e-commerce and other electronic business and trade solutions including e-payments and e-contracts. The corresponding measures to get aligned with these solutions would ensure safe and enabling business environment in the post pandemic scenario. The panelists including experts on trade and economy, said this while sharing their views at virtual public private dialogue 'Expediting Trade Facilitation Reforms for Manufacturing Sector amid Covid19' organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute

(SDPI), here on Thursday. Economic Advisor to The Commonwealth Secretariat, Dr Salam Ali, on the occasion elaborated the pertinence of using of digital technologies in Covid19 time and said that this shift has become increasingly important as it helps in cutting the cost and time faced by traders. The health and safety of customs and border officials should also be priority and the infrastructure related gaps that lead to delay of consignments, need to be redressed. Mr Riaz Ahmed Shaikh, Director General (Trade Facilitation), Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), on the occasion informed the participants that TDAP is helping private sector to

explore new market opportunities and new export destinations amid Covid19. The online accessibility of the relevant officials is part of this facilitation. He said that a deeper public private dialogue could play critical role in ascertaining the right regulatory measures during these difficult times. Dr Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, SDPI, while opening the discussion said that Covid19 provides us an opportunity to introduce interventions related to e-payments, e-signatures, and e-contracts in the overall trade processing chain. Likewise, greater reliance of traders during Covid19 on internet banking and insurance could cut trade costs, he added. "More paper-less trade can also be

made a norm through current and future free trade agreements," Ahmed said and added further that the safety requirements and distances of both people and goods is still not properly understood by the workforce in logistics. Therefore, protection of confidential information of exporters and importers remains a concern to be addressed, he emphasized. Secretary General, Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Ms Faiza Zubair, was of view that overall border management needs to be improved to promote bilateral and transit trade with Afghanistan. She suggested that the government should include more feedback from the private sector in future policy

measures and the customs authorities of Afghanistan and Pakistan needs to work closely to make the best use of new facilities and routes at Gwadar. Mr Manzoor Ahmed, Former Ambassador to WTO, opined that the tariffs in Pakistan are still higher as compare to other regions and even after Covid19, the government has been unable to address the trade barriers within the boundaries of the country. He suggested that we need to remove anti-export bias from the tariff structure, reduce various withholding taxes on production and trade and expedite free trade agreements with other partner countries beside building digitalization as part of these FTAs.

Politics in Police

There is a difference between sacking a senior official if their performance is not up to standard, and constant reshuffling and turmoil in a department. The consistent changes in the Punjab Police department, especially of the position of the Inspector-General (IG), is that of the latter—several re-postings indicate a weakness, not in the performance of individuals, but in the government’s handling of the police force. For the fifth time in two years, the IG Punjab has been removed, and a notification has been given for a new contender for the position. There were reported political issues behind this resignation—the former IG Punjab Shoaib Dastgir had taken offence at the appointment of Umar Sheikh as the Lahore capital city police officer (CCPO) and refused to work with him. The matter is made even more complicated, considering that the CCPO has had a poor recommendation from the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and had reportedly not been promoted to BS-21 earlier, because of his less-than-stellar reputation with the Central Selection Board (CSB). All in all, it is a complicated mess—by removing Dastgir, the government has taken a clear side with Umar Sheikh—and in that process, risks contradicting its own approval of the CSB’s order for supersession. Whatever the merits, and whether Dastgir’s removal was warranted are not the most relevant questions, the real question is that the government has been unable to fulfil its promise of de-politicising the police. Two years on, we have seen absolutely no changes. This is an issue greater than petty differences between the IG and CCPO—it reflects structural weakness among the Police, and incapability of the government to strengthen the administration of it. Senior police officers can not be hired or fired at a whim, or because they take a principled stance over a specific issue. Consistent removal of the IGP worsens the problem—it sends the message that the Police’s priorities should cater to the Chief Minister most of all. The government needs to demonstrate a proper plan to weed out these political incentives that currently exist in the Police; these constant reshufflings will not do.

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Under PTI rule

Nawaz Sharif broke no jail, nor did he leave the country on the Q.T. He was bailed out because doctors close to the PM, whose integrity was unquestionable in his eyes, advised the government that Mr Sharif’s manifold and complicated ailments could not be treated in Pakistan and his precarious condition required immediate treatment abroad. Mian Shahbaz Sharif gave an undertaking in the court that he would himself bring elder brother back when doctors allowed him to return. The IHC told the government that if it opposed the request for bail, the plea for release on medical grounds would be dismissed. However the onus would be on NAB and the government in case something happened to the former PM. Thus, fear of legal consequences and negative political fallout, rather than humanitarian considerations, led the Cabinet to remove Mr Sharif’s name from the Exit Control List (ECL), allowing him to proceed to London. As long as the former PM kept silent, the government didn’t try to bring him back. The moment he started telephoning opposition leaders, alarm bells started ringing in the corridors of power. It was decided to make hectic efforts to get the former PM declared an absconder. Mr Nawaz Sharif left for London in the third week of November. By the time his medical check-up ended, the covid-19 pandemic had entered the UK. This led to the suspension of Mr Sharif’s ongoing medical procedures because the nature of his ailments made him highly susceptible to covid-19. The IHC has directed the former PM to appear in court today. According to medical reports Mr Sharif’s surgery is due this month. His last medical report was avowedly submitted to the Lahore High Court over a month ago. It explains that the patient will be scheduled for an invasive cardiac procedure once the hospital starts planning elective procedures amidst Covid-19 pandemic and given that he, being in the high-risk category, is stable enough to go through the intervention. Sharif’s travel back home is thus predicated on the permission of his medical team. He is liable to be held responsible only in case the doctors allowed him to leave but he avoided returning to Pakistan.

Obstacles in intra-Afghan peace talks

Michael Kugelman



Setting aside the problematic timing of a fresh political spat emerging just as peace talks were poised to begin, there is also a looming structural challenge in play. The Afghan negotiating team is overseen by a council more than twice its size – a classic case of too many cooks in the kitchen. Given Afghanistan’s notoriously fractious political environment

If there is one embodiment of the phrase “nothing comes easy,” it would have to be the fledgling Afghan peace and reconciliation process. In February, after much more than a year of grueling negotiations, the US government and the Taliban concluded an agreement that opened up a path for peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. The peace talks, known as the intra-Afghan dialogue, were meant to start within days of the inking of the US-Taliban deal. Instead, two obstacles – an Afghan election crisis and a dispute over the release of Taliban prisoners – precluded their launch. Now, however, the first obstacle has been overcome and the second is in the process of being resolved (albeit slowly), paving the way for the intra-Afghan dialogue to finally begin in the coming days and weeks. But recent days have brought another potential constraint: A flare-up in tensions between Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his main political rival, Abdullah Abdullah. Ghani has released the names of a 46-member team, known as the High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), which will oversee a separate 21-member negotiating team (appointed by Ghani in March). Abdullah, who heads the HCNR, claims that Ghani lacks the authority to appoint members to the council. Setting aside the problematic timing of a fresh political spat emerging just as peace talks were poised to begin, there is also a looming structural challenge in play. The Afghan negotiating team is overseen by a council more than twice its size – a classic case of too many cooks in the kitchen. Given Afghanistan’s notoriously fractious political environment, there is a strong risk of tensions among the HCNR’s nearly four

dozen members as they compete for influence over a much smaller group of negotiators. At a moment when presenting a common and confident front will be essential for Kabul, potential dysfunction within the Afghan negotiating team’s ranks is the last thing the country needs. It would risk making the Taliban look like the more organized and united negotiating partner. For an Afghan government already widely believed to be coming into talks from a relative position of weakness, this is not an impression it would want to convey. Fortunately, these new developments with the HCNR, while problematic, are unlikely to prevent the launch of talks. The key questions at this point are what the talks will look like when they begin and what factors might determine their trajectory. In all likelihood, the intra-Afghan negotiations will begin as the US-Taliban talks did – on the Taliban’s terms. In its negotiations with Washington, the Taliban got what it wanted: Direct talks with America that excluded Kabul, and no cease-fire. Similarly, the intra-Afghan dialogue is likely to begin without a Taliban commitment to a violence reduction agreement or cease-fire. Instead, expect the issue to be a top agenda point for Kabul soon after the talks begin – long before there are serious discussions about post-war power sharing and a post-conflict political system. Eventual Taliban buy-in for a violence reduction plan would deliver a major confidence boost that would bode well for the peace process. If the Taliban refuses, the talks would get off to a rocky start and set a shaky tone. While peace talks have repeatedly been projected by all parties as Afghan-led and Afghan-owned, in reality a series of non-Afghan factors will heavily influ-

ence their trajectory. One is Islamabad. Pakistan has a strong interest in successful talks, given that a political settlement would likely lead to its Taliban ally enjoying a strong degree of power. The question is whether Islamabad will use its considerable influence over the Taliban to pressure the insurgents to reduce violence in order to move the peace process forward – and, if so, if it will be successful. Another key factor is US policy. American officials may want to take a more hands-off role once talks begin, but the degree to which Washington remains diplomatically present, coaxing each side to push forward, will help determine the fate of the negotiations. Also of note is whether Washington wields its main tool of leverage over the Taliban – its troop posture – to influence insurgent decision-making in talks. Will America, for example, threaten to slow down its troop withdrawal if the Taliban rejects cease-fire demands or stonewalls more broadly? This is unlikely, given the domestic political imperative of a withdrawal. But, for Washington, playing hardball may compel more desirable Taliban responses in the negotiations than mere diplomacy. The US also carries the potentially potent stick of aid to Kabul. If Washington believes the Afghan negotiating team, through infighting or other problems, is seriously jeopardizing the peace process, it has the option of threatening to impose aid cuts. However, with American eyes fixed firmly on the exits, sustained US engagement in an intra-Afghan peace process, once one has begun, is far from assured.

COURTESY: ARAB NEWS

Myanmar begins to engage on Rohingya genocide

Azeem Ibrahim



It is likely that Myanmar now also recognizes internally that its position of stonewall denial is untenable and seriously undermines the credibility of the country and its government on the world stage. For what it is, this does count as progress

The Center for Global Policy last week ran a webinar panel session on the Rohingya genocide. Representatives of Myanmar had previously been invited to such events but had always declined the invitations. Much to our surprise, however, the deputy chief of mission of Myanmar to the US in Washington accepted this invitation.

This kind of move is unprecedented. Up to now, the position of Myanmar on such events has been to question the motives and legitimacy of anyone raising the issue of the Rohingya genocide, while denying all of the (overwhelming) evidence for it as fabricated and hostile to the state of Myanmar. In this sense, this appearance is a move forward, at least in the sense that the Myanmar authorities now recognize as serious the discussion that we are having in the international civil society about the genocide. This move comes in the light of January’s unanimous decision from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to order Myanmar to take all measures to protect the remaining Rohingya in Rakhine from genocide. It also comes as US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is under pressure to declare an official genocide in the case of the Rohingya, which would reverberate around the world. It is likely that Myanmar now also recognizes internally that its position of stonewall denial is untenable and seriously undermines the credibility of the country and its government on the world stage. For what it is, this does count as progress. Unfortunately, on the substantive evidence and the conclusions that any impartial observer might draw, the position of Myanmar remains unchanged from what we have heard before from

Aung San Suu Kyi, both in media appearances and in her representation before the ICJ late last year. This is to say that Myanmar continues to reject the findings of the UN Fact Finding Mission on the circumstances and events around the time of the genocide as false and hostile to Myanmar. Though quite why the UN would care to engage in this “conspiracy” against a country that most of the world does not care about is still not explained. Instead, it continues to refer to its own internal investigation, the results of which have yet to be published in full, but which, naturally, exonerates Myanmar and the Myanmar army. Even more perversely, it insists that it stands ready to welcome returning Rohingyas, but claims that Bangladesh is blocking their return. The fact of the matter is that the majority of the 300,000 to 400,000 Rohingyas remaining in Myanmar are effectively imprisoned in internally displaced people’s camps. Meanwhile, the entire legal and executive apparatus that was mobilized to force the Rohingya out in the first place remains in position, just as it was at the height of the “clearing operations,” and virtually all the Rohingya villages in their historic lands in northern Rakhine have been levelled and/or reallocated by the state to Buddhist loyalists, so any returning Rohingyas would be returning to what are, in

effect, prison camps. This last point perhaps best illustrates the continued absurdity of the position of the Myanmar authorities: Bangladesh would very happily have the Rohingyas return to Myanmar because, just like any other country, it is having to step up and deal with a problem that was in no way of its own making. The only thing that is remarkable about Bangladesh is that it has the humanity to not expel people when those people do not have anywhere safer to go. Nevertheless, actual engagement with these issues, the available evidence, and the allegations brought against Myanmar by the international community and international civil society is very welcome. And we strongly encourage the representatives of Myanmar to join our discussions in the future. We are not here to castigate Myanmar just for the sake of it. Our fundamental concerns are with the safety and basic human dignity of all people, not least the Rohingya. We will continue to be critical of Myanmar while it shows such contempt toward some of its own people – and the Rohingyas are indeed some of its own people – but we do very much look forward to a future where this changes, where Myanmar meets its moral obligations toward all of its people, and we can all then praise them for it.

COURTESY: ARAB NEWS

Briefs

Build-up of greenhouse gases hits new record

NEW YORK: Greenhouse gas concentrations in the Earth's atmosphere still reached record high this year despite an emissions dip caused by coronavirus lockdowns, according to a new United Nations report released.

"Greenhouse gas concentrations—which are already at their highest levels in 3 million years—have continue to rise," Petteri Taalas, Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization, said in the "United in Science 2020" report.

"And now 2016-2020 is set to be the warmest five year period on record. This report shows that whilst many aspects of our lives have been disrupted in 2020, climate change has continued unabated," he said.

The report said that worldwide coronavirus lockdowns had an immediate effect on greenhouse gas emissions, with daily levels in April 2020 declining by 17 percent compared to 2019. But the reduction was short-lived. As the world's economies began to reopen, greenhouse gas emissions increased by early June and were within 5 percent of 2019 levels. — APP

Chinese military to participate in Kavkaz-2020 drills

BEIJING: The Chinese military will send personnel to take part in the Kavkaz-2020 counter-terrorist military drills in Russia between September 21-26, according to a statement released by China's Ministry of National Defense here on Thursday. Pakistan, Armenia, Belarus, Iran, Myanmar and other countries will also participate in the drills, the statement added.

The ministry noted that the drills are not to target any country and has nothing to do with the regional situation. "At this moment when the world is joining hands to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, China's participation in drills aims to move forward the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, deepen practical cooperation in military training between the two militaries, and enhance the capacity of multinational forces to jointly respond to security threats and safeguard regional peace and stability," according to the statement.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said earlier that the main actions will unfold at the Kapustin Yar and Ashuluk training grounds in south Russia's Astrakhan Region, as well as in the waters of the Black and Caspian seas. — APP

New York to mark 9/11 anniversary today

NEW YORK: With crime on the rise, shops and apartments increasingly vacant and homeless people on the sidewalks, New York today mark the 19th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic and a bitter fight with the White House.

The city will hold its annual ceremony in memory of the nearly 3,000 people who died in the bloodiest terrorist attack in US history, punctuated by a minute's silence at the exact moments that Al-Qaeda militants crashed two hijacked airplanes into the World Trade Center towers.

Instead of reading out the roll call of the dead, this year the families of victims have recorded themselves. But they will still be present at the "Ground Zero" memorial. The site museum will also open for the first time since the novel coronavirus brought the city to a standstill in March. At most two decades after the attacks, September 11 remains synonymous with New York's heroism and resilience. City leaders have emphasized the latter in the past months as the Covid-19 infection rate – which killed 23,000 people here, the early epicenter of the disease in the United States – has been lowered to under one percent.

New York state Governor Andrew Cuomo on Tuesday reminded New Yorkers that their resilience is likely to be tested once again by the social and economic "after-effects" of the pandemic. — APP



PESHAWAR: Players in action during closing ceremony of tennis coaching training camp at Qayum Sports Complex. — APP

Myanmar military figures profiting from secretive conglomerate: Amnesty

It specified that military units – including those that have committed atrocities against Muslim Rohingya and other minority ethnic groups in Rakhine State – owned about a third of the company

WEB DESK

LONDON: Amnesty International says Myanmar's military figures – including those believed to have committed serious human rights abuses – have financial dealings with a secretive conglomerate with links to international businesses.

In a report released on Thursday, the human rights group revealed that Myanmar's military figures had received bonuses of as much as \$18 billion from Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL).

The report, which was based

on leaked official documents, further said that the entire board of the Yangon-based company was comprised of senior military officials.

It specified that military units – including those that have committed atrocities against Muslim Rohingya and other minority ethnic groups in Rakhine State – owned about a third of the company.

These documents provide new evidence of how the Myanmar military benefits from MEHL's vast business empire and make clear that the military and MEHL are inextricably linked," he said.

Myanmar's military chief Min Aung Hlaing is among

those who directly benefit from the company, Amnesty said. It added that between 2010 and 2011, the general had owned 5,000 shares and received an estimated \$250,000 in payments.

The United Nations (UN)'s Independent International Fact-Finding Mission has previously said the country's army, led by Min, had carried out the "gravest crimes" against the Rohingya Muslims – including mass killings and rape – with "genocidal intent."

The UN has called for the investigation and prosecution of Min for genocide and war crimes.

Neither Min nor MEHL immediately commented on Amnesty's report.

Myanmar's military has time and again denied that its forces committed atrocities against Rohingya Muslims, contradicting thousands of eyewitness and victim accounts.

Amnesty said that the leaked documents were provided by Justice for Myanmar, an activist group that campaigns for justice and accountability for the people of Myanmar.

The documents provide information on the "considerable annual dividend payments" that share-

holders have received since MEHL was established in 1990.

Another document presented in the report shows the company is owned by 381,636 individual shareholders, who are all serving or retired military personnel, and 1,803 "institutional" shareholders, consisting of "regional commands, divisions, battalions, troops, war veteran associations."

MEHL has sprawling interests across mining, manufacturing, and banking, and works with a number of international companies from China, Japan, South Korea,

and Singapore. In response to Amnesty's report, a South Korean company that had dealings with MEHL, Pan-Pacific, said it was ending its business partnership with the conglomerate.

Japanese company Kirin and Myanmarese company KBZ also told Amnesty that they were reviewing their relationship with MEHL.

Myanmar and its de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, are under international pressure to improve their treatment of the Rohingya after a bloody military crackdown in 2017 that killed thousands of Rohingya and prompted genocide charges at the UN's top court.

Egypt: Plasma treatment for Covid-19 begins

DNA

CAIRO: A recovered patient has been donating blood plasma after him and his family were infected by Covid-19 even though the scientific community is divided on using plasma to treat the virus.

Mohamed Fathi, an Egyptian man who has recovered from Covid-19, winced as he watched tubes running down his arm to donate blood plasma, but insisted: "if I can help just one person, that's a very good thing".

The 25-year-old land surveyor from Cairo caught the disease in May, on the eve of the Muslim Eid al Fitr festival, becoming one of the almost 100,000 reported cases in Egypt, where more than 5,000 people have died of the novel coronavirus.

"Losing the sense of taste was a terrible experience," he told AFP at Egypt's National Blood Transfusion headquarters in Cairo, describing just one of his symptoms. "You feel like you're eating for the sake of it." Things got worse for the family when his elderly father was also infected, making Egypt's blistering hot summer months a hellish period of fretting over his recovery from a loud, dry cough and constant fevers.

"I came to donate today because I didn't want someone else to go through what I and my family went through," said the softly spoken young man, one of about 200 volunteers who had so far taken part in the budding project.

Judge apologises for controversial hijab ruling

DNA

TORONTO: A Canadian court judge, who asked a Muslim woman from Montreal to remove her hijab in a hearing, says she's willing to apologise now after five years of the incident.

A Muslim woman whose hijab was compared to wearing a hat and sunglasses in court, finally received an apology from a Quebec judge. But the apology was five years in the making after Judge Eliana Marengo refused in 2015 to hear the case of Rania El-Alloul, who was seeking to have her impounded car returned, unless she removed her hijab.

The apology was ordered by the Quebec Council of the Magistrature, the body responsible for disciplining judges. The judge admitted she was wrong to ask El-Alloul to remove her hijab and comparing it to other items.

"My reference to hats and sunglasses was simply meant to exemplify how the rules of decorum are generally applied in the courtroom and was most certainly not meant to disrespect either you or your beliefs," the judge said in a statement read at a hearing. And she admitted she was wrong not to hear the case. Dozens of complaints were filed after Marengo refused to hear the case unless El-Alloul removed her hijab.

The case was suspended and El-Alloul eventually had her vehicle returned. While the judge apologised and admitted she was wrong, Marengo challenged the Magistrature's authority to act on the complaints.

She tried to appeal to the Quebec Supreme Court, but it refused in 2018 to hear the case and that led to the apology in exchange for no further disciplinary action against Marengo. "I accept her apology," El-Alloul said. "This is what my faith teaches me."

France hosts Med leaders for summit over Greece-Turkey tension

The aim of the talks is to "make progress in the consensus on the relationship of the EU with Turkey above all ahead of the 24-25 September EU summit," a French presidential official said

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday hosts leaders from Mediterranean states for a summit set to be dominated by growing tensions between Turkey and EU states in the east of the sea.

The EuroMed 7 is an informal group of seven EU Mediterranean states, sometimes dubbed "Club Med", that held its first summit in 2016 and notably does not include

Turkey. But the meeting on the French island of Corsica will bring together leaders of France, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain with eastern Mediterranean EU members Greece and Cyprus.

France has strongly backed Greece and Cyprus in a growing standoff with Turkey over hydrocarbon resources and naval influence in the eastern Mediterranean that has

sparked fears of conflict.

The summit will get under way at around 1500 GMT at a coastal resort just outside Corsica's capital Ajaccio. The aim of the talks is to "make progress in the consensus on the relationship of the EU with Turkey above all ahead of the 24-25 September EU summit," a French presidential official said.

Reaffirming Macron's policy to-

wards Turkey, the official said that France wants a "clarification" in relations with Ankara which should be an "important" partner.

Turkey has sought to join the EU for over half a century and while its membership bid has stalled badly in the last few years, and is no longer seen as realistic in some quarters, it remains a candidate to join the bloc. — APP

Would treat Taliban leader with love, says Stone

DNA

LONDON: The British singer Joss Stone was on her podcast "A Cuppa Happy" chatting with musician Nitin Sawhney about a trip she took to Libya and how the local militia "looked after" her.

"When you say that word, militia, what do we feel," Stone asked. "We feel, 'They're clearly murderous bastards', that's how we've been taught to feel when we hear that word. These people were so lovely and they were just



trying to survive and they were trying to protect also." After she visited a refugee camp, Stone said she began to see the world "differently."

She also described a conversation she had with a man in Afghanistan, who asked her how she would hypothetically treat the leader of the Taliban if they were to meet

face to face.

"I'd say, 'Nice to meet you, my name's Joss, what's yours,'" Stone said. "That's how you should approach the world because you don't know what's happened, how they got to that position... Maybe that's a bit of a crazy thought but it's worked for me."

She described: "You want people to change, obviously, but they're not going to do that all the while they're hated, they're only going to do that when they become loved, I think... You can't just go, 'No', and wag your finger at them, it's not going to work."

Turkey rejects Arab League decisions

DNA

ANKARA: The Turkish Foreign Ministry in a statement on Thursday said Turkey "completely rejected" decisions taken by the Arab League targeting the country.

Turkey in the statement "completely rejected" all decisions taken at a Ministerial Council meeting on Sept. 9 in the Egyptian capital Cairo.

During the meeting, foreign ministers of Egypt and the UAE accused Turkey of conducting activities in the region that "pose threats to the security of Arab countries".

Social networks should archive hate speech: HRW

Social media content, particularly photographs and videos, posted by perpetrators, victims, and witnesses to abuses, as well as others has become increasingly central to some prosecutions of war crimes and other international crimes

DNA

PARIS: Social media networks should start archiving hate speech and other illegal posts after taking them down so they can be used as evidence in prosecutions, Human Rights Watch said on Thursday.

Platforms were becoming more reactive in removing undesirable content, the New York-based rights group said in a report. But it was time that such content was pre-

served to facilitate any subsequent prosecution of individuals, including war criminals, HRW said.

"Social media content, particularly photographs and videos, posted by perpetrators, victims, and witnesses to abuses, as well as others has become increasingly central to some prosecutions of war crimes and other international crimes," it said. Online posts could also help document atrocities and abuses "such as chemical weapons attacks in Syria, a security force crackdown

in Sudan, and police abuse in the United States", it said.

While it was "understandable" that social media platforms remove content that incites or promotes violence, "they are not currently archiving this material in a manner that is accessible for investigators and researchers to help hold perpetrators to account", it said.

Increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence systems were often taking down content before police "have a chance to see it or even know that it exists", it not-

ed. HRW said social media platforms should work with other parties concerned to develop mechanisms "to preserve potential evidence of serious crimes" and make it available to investigators, civil society organisations, journalists and academics. The experience of the US, where online evidence of child sexual exploitation is preserved for 90 days, may yield important lessons for such a discussion, it said.

In the first quarter of this year, Facebook took down 6.3 million posts

because they were considered to be "terrorist propaganda", 25.5 million because of violence and 9.6 million because of hate speech.

Last year, millions of Twitter accounts were flagged because of hate content or threats of violence. In 2016, Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube created a "Hash Sharing Consortium" to pool databases of inappropriate content.

Pinterest, Dropbox, Amazon, LinkedIn, Mega.nz, Instagram, WhatsApp and others have since joined.

Briefs

'Qatar blockade could be over in weeks'

DNA

WASHINGTON: Top US diplomat for Middle East expresses cautious optimism that three-year siege of Qatar by Arab states may soon end. Progress may be made within weeks to end a three-year blockade of Qatar by Arab states, a senior US State Department official said on Wednesday, citing signs of "flexibility" in negotiations. David Schenker, the department's top diplomat for the Middle East, was quick to urge caution, however, because there has not been any fundamental shift in talks that would quickly lead to a resolution. The dispute dates from 2017 when the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Egypt imposed a boycott on Qatar, severing diplomatic and transport ties and accusing it of supporting "terrorism". Qatar vehemently denies all allegations. "I don't want to get into the whole diplomacy in it but there is some movement. I would like to say that it's going to be a matter of weeks," Schenker told a virtual event hosted by the Washington, DC-based Brookings Institute. Kuwait and the United States have tried to mediate a rift that has undermined Washington's efforts to form a united front against Iran, which is struggling for regional supremacy with Saudi Arabia.

US towns destroyed as firefighters battle wildfires

SHAVER LAKE: Hundreds of homes including entire communities were razed by wildfires in the western United States Wednesday as officials warned of potential mass deaths under apocalyptic orange skies. At least five towns were "substantially destroyed" in Oregon as widespread evacuations took place across the northwestern state, governor Kate Brown said. "I want to be upfront in saying that we expect to see a great deal of loss, both in structures and in human lives," she told a press conference. "This could be the greatest loss of human lives and property due to wildfire in our state's history." Along with neighboring California and Washington, Oregon has been scrambling to contain rapidly spreading wildfires since the weekend due to unprecedented heatwaves followed by intense, dry winds. Two deaths were confirmed in the Santiam Canyon region 60 miles south of Portland. "They are not going to be the only folks that we find deceased up there," said Marion County sheriff Joe Kast. Jody Evans, a resident of Detroit - one of the five towns devastated in Oregon - fled her home as the fire approached.

Private Chinese rocket maker completed series C+

HANGZHOU: Private Chinese rocket maker LandSpace has completed its series C+ funding worth 1.2 billion yuan (about 175 million U.S. dollars), the company announced on Wednesday. The company has raised a total of 1.8 billion yuan over the past year. The latest round of funding will support the development of the ZQ 2 liquid-propellant carrier rocket, as well as the research and production of medium and large liquid oxygen-methane carrier rockets. The company will seize market opportunities for the global deployment of satellites, increase investment in research and development, and foster talent to increase its commercial launch capabilities. Zhang Changwu, founder and CEO of LandSpace, said the company will focus on the demand for commercial satellite launches and enhance the transport capacity of the ZQ series liquid-propellant rockets. By the end of August, the company had completed hot firing tests for 80-tonne and 10-tonne TQ rocket engines. — APP



Moscow: Group photo of the Foreign Ministers attending SCO-Foreign Ministers meeting. — DNA

Wildlife in catastrophic decline due to human destruction: WWF

"We are wrecking our world - the one place we call home - risking our health, security and survival here on Earth. Now nature is sending us a desperate SOS and time is running out."

WEB DESK

GLAND: Wildlife populations have fallen by more than two-thirds in less than 50 years, according to a major report by the conservation group WWF. The report says this "catastrophic decline" shows no sign of slowing. And it warns that nature is being destroyed by humans at a rate never seen before. Wildlife is "in freefall" as we burn forests, over-fish our seas and destroy wild areas, says Tanya Steele, chief executive at WWF. "We are wrecking our world - the one place we call home - risking our health, security and survival here on Earth. Now nature is sending us a desperate SOS and time is running out." The report looked at thou-

sands of different wildlife species monitored by conservation scientists in habitats across the world. They recorded an average 68% fall in more than 20,000 populations of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish since 1970. The decline was clear evidence of the damage human activity is doing to the natural world, said Dr Andrew Terry, director of conservation at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), which provides the data. "If nothing changes, populations will undoubtedly continue to fall, driving wildlife to extinction and threatening the integrity of the ecosystems on which we depend," he added. The report says the Covid-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of how nature and humans are intertwined.

Three key problems caused by habitat change

Factors believed to lead to the emergence of pandemics - including habitat loss and the use and trade of wildlife - are also some of the drivers behind the decline in wildlife. New modelling evidence suggests we can halt and

even reverse habitat loss and deforestation if we take urgent conservation action and change the way we produce and consume food. The British TV presenter and naturalist Sir David Attenborough said the Anthropocene, the geological age during which human activity has come to the fore, could be the moment we achieve a balance with the natural world and become stewards of our planet. "Doing so will require systemic shifts in how we produce food, create energy, manage our oceans and use materials," he said. "But above all it will require a change in perspective. A change from viewing nature as something that's optional or 'nice to have' to the single greatest ally we have in restoring balance to our world."

Arab League agree not to condemn UAE-Israel deal

WEB DESK

DUBAI: Palestinian leaders won renewed Saudi support for Palestinian statehood on Wednesday but failed to persuade the Arab League to condemn last month's normalisation deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). At a video conference of foreign ministers, the Palestinian leadership softened its censure of the UAE over the US-brokered August 13 accord - to be formalised at a signing ceremony at the White House next week - in the hope of getting more Arab support, but to no avail. "Discussions regarding this point were serious. It was comprehensive and took some time. But it did not lead in the end to agreement about the draft resolution that was proposed by the Palestinian side," Arab League Assistant Secretary-General Hossam Zaki told reporters. According to a Palestinian diplomatic source, the Arab League dropped the draft resolution condemning the controversial Israeli-UAE agreement.

Nelson Mandela's lawyer and friend George Bizos dies at aged 92

DNA

JOHANNESBURG: George Bizos, an anti-apartheid icon and renowned human rights lawyer who defended Nelson Mandela on treason charges for which he escaped the death penalty, died on Wednesday aged 92. President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the rights lawyer's passing during an online media briefing. "This is very sad for our country," he said. Bizos died of natural causes at his Johannesburg, his family said in a statement. The celebrated lawyer represented Mandela during the Rivonia Trial which saw Mandela and seven others sentenced to life imprisonment in 1964 on charges of seeking to overthrow the racist apartheid government.



Many had expected the death penalty. Ramaphosa described Bizos as one of the lawyers who "contributed immensely to the

attainment of our democracy". "He had an incisive legal mind and was one of the architects of our constitution," the president said. Bizos arrived in South Africa as a 13-year-old war refugee from Greece and became one of its most respected lawyers. In a long career dedicated to defending democratic values and human rights, the soft-spoken Bizos represented a series of activists against the white minority regime and later helped to finalise the constitution of post-apartheid South Africa. A beloved national figure, he continued working into his late 80s. One of his last major trials secured government payouts in 2014 for families of 34 miners shot dead by police at Marikana northwest of Johannesburg two years earlier.

Pompeo accuses Russia of Navalny's poisoning

He was flown for treatment to Germany, where doctors said he was poisoned

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Wednesday there was a strong chance Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny's poisoning was ordered by senior officials in Moscow. "I think people all around the world see this kind of activity for what it is," Pompeo said in a radio interview. "And when they see the effort to poison a diplomat, and

they recognize that there is a substantial chance that this actually came from senior Russian officials, I think this is not good for the Russian people," he told conservative host Ben Shapiro. Navalny, the most visible critic of President Vladimir Putin within Russia, fell violently ill last month as he took a flight in Siberia. He was flown for treatment

to Germany, where doctors said he was poisoned. Pompeo reiterated that the United States and its European allies all wanted Russia to "hold those responsible for this accountable" and said Washington would also try to identify the perpetrators. "It's something that we'll take a look at, we'll evaluate, and we'll make sure we do our part to do whatever we can to

reduce the risk that things like this happen again." Pompeo's remarks come despite President Donald Trump's comment last week that he had seen no proof that Navalny was poisoned. Trump has sought warmer relations with Putin, although his administration has still pushed sanctions over Ukraine and other concerns. — APP

'Brazil could launch COVAXX this year'

SAO PAULO: Clinical trials in Brazil of a Chinese-made vaccine against Covid-19 have shown "extremely positive" results, and a widespread vaccination campaign could begin as early as December, the governor of Sao Paulo state said Wednesday. Sao Paulo, the epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic in hard-hit Brazil, is one of six states helping to test the so-called CoronaVac vaccine developed by Chinese pharmaceutical firm Sinovac Biotech. — APP

Trump admitted playing down coronavirus danger

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump admits he tried to minimize the seriousness of the threat from Covid-19 at the outset of the pandemic in audio recordings released Wednesday from interviews with veteran US journalist Bob Woodward. "I wanted to always play it down," Trump said in an interview with Woodward on March 19, according to a CNN preview of the book "Rage," due to be published September 15. "I still like playing it down, because I don't want to create a panic," he said in the conversation with Woodward, which was recorded. In another recorded interview, on February 7, he told Woodward the virus "goes through the air" - despite repeatedly mocking people who wear masks in the weeks and months after. It took until July before he was seen publicly wearing a mask. Coming eight weeks before the November 3 presidential election, the revelations add new pressure on Trump. Opinion polls show around two thirds of Americans disapprove of his handling of the virus and he has often been accused of minimizing the crisis in order to try and boost his reelection chances.

Congo Nobel doctor back under UN protection

KINSHASA: Nobel peace laureate Denis Mukwege was again under the guard of United Nations security forces in DR Congo after death threats against him prompted protests and international calls for his protection. Mukwege, a gynaecologist who shared the 2018 Nobel Prize for his work against sexual violence in war, said in July he had been threatened after he condemned a massacre in the country's strife-torn eastern region. The doctor has been living at the Panzi hospital near Bukavu, which cares for women raped in the surrounding province, since he survived an attack at his home in 2012 in which a security guard was killed. UN police officers had left the site in May but were re-deployed to the hospital, Mukwege's communications manager said, adding there had been "zero protection" until Wednesday morning. "We welcome the redeployment of elements from #MONUSCO to #Panzi this morning to ensure the safety of our patients and staff. Thank you to the #UN for ensuring our protection," Mukwege tweeted. A spokesman for MONUSCO, the UN mission deployed in DR Congo, confirmed to AFP that the security detail had previously been stood down. "The police officers who were directly assigned to securing the Panzi clinic had to be withdrawn due to Covid cases," the spokesman said.

US revokes visas for 1,000 Chinese

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US says it has revoked the visas of more than 1,000 Chinese students and researchers who have been deemed to be a security risk. The move follows a proclamation by President Donald Trump in May aimed at Chinese nationals suspected of having ties to the military. He said some had stolen data and intellectual property. China has accused the US of racial discrimination. Nearly 370,000 students from China enrolled at US universities in 2018-19. A state department spokeswoman described those whose visas were revoked as "high-risk graduate students and research scholars". She said they were a "small subset" of the total number of Chinese students. "We continue to welcome legitimate students and scholars from China who do not further the Chinese Communist Party's goals of military dominance," the spokeswoman said.

Greece: Thousands of refugees sleep rough

Desperate families, many with young children, spent Wednesday night in the open, some without tents or basic bedding. Some of the homeless trekked to the nearest villages for water and other supplies

DNA

ATHENS: Thousands of refugees slept rough on the Greek island of Lesbos for a second night after a fire razed the country's largest camp to the ground, sending crowds fleeing but with nowhere to go. Families slept on roadsides, in supermarket parking lots and in fields across the island, which was at the forefront of the European migrant crisis in 2015-2016.

There had been about 13,000 people in the camp. Tuesday night's inferno at Moria sent thousands rushing to save their lives, reducing the camp - notorious for its poor living conditions - to a mass of smouldering steel and melted tent tarpaulin. A second fire broke out on Wednesday night, destroying what little was left. Desperate families, many with young children, spent Wednesday night in the open, some without tents

or basic bedding. Some of the homeless trekked to the nearest villages for water and other supplies. Police reinforcements were brought in to prevent refugees and migrants from reaching the island's main town of Mytilene, confining them to fields and roadsides. Eight-year-old Congolese girl Valencia, who was barefoot, gestured to a Reuters reporter that she was hungry and asked for a biscuit. "Our home burned, my shoes

burned, we don't have food, no water." Both she and her mother Natzy Malala, 30, who has a newborn, slept on the side of the road. "There is no food, no milk for the baby," Natzy Malala said. Officials have declared a four-month emergency on Lesbos and flown in additional riot police. The migration ministry said it would take "all necessary steps" to ensure that vulnerable groups and families had shelter, but these were ex-

pected to be met with stiff resistance from locals. Authorities were already at loggerheads with locals over plans to replace Moria with a closed reception centre, which Lesbos residents fear would mean thousands of asylum seekers remaining permanently. Municipalities were at odds over the handling of the situation, said Costas Moutzouris, governor of the Northern Aegean. "There is no decision. It's up in the air," he told media.

Briefs

Hafeez for strong FBR and NADRA linkage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh chaired the second meeting of the FBR Policy Board here at the FBR Headquarters. Chairman FBR briefed the Adviser on the efforts the institute has been making to improve the abilities and expertise of its human resource and on the progress of the automation drive of FBR/Customs. Chairman FBR briefed the Adviser on measures taken and future course planned to improve skills and competence of its staff by providing different in-house and foreign trainings to improve managerial competence and adopt a culture of performance based incentives including promotions. He also briefed the Adviser on the work being done on the IRIS (software) side to consolidate various application platforms into one to improve efficiency and performance. The Chairman further informed that a technologically advanced sales tax registration verification mechanism is introduced whereby officers with tablets will be sent to capture real time information and pictures including GPS coordinates of businesses requiring verification. Details of data sharing arrangements agreed to by 12 other organizations with FBR were also discussed in the meeting. The Adviser stressed on the need to establish a link between NADRA and FBR for data sharing and data analytics. He created a subgroup of members to point out and sort the difficulties that are hindering the progress on the data sharing issue between the two organizations. This subgroup consists of Mr. Hamid Azhar, Dr. Ishrat Hussain, Mr. Faiz Kamoka, Chairman FBR and Chairman NADRA; the subgroup will share its report with the chairman in a week. The Adviser took a special notice of the difficulties the traders are facing due to stoppage of containers at the Torkham Border. Member customs informed that necessary steps have been taken and the issue will be resolved within the coming weeks.

Rs33 crore recovered from Excise officer's house

DNA

LAHORE: The anti-graft body raided the house of a former Excise officer on Thursday and recovered cash and prize bonds worth Rs330 million, according to a statement. According to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), accused Khwaja Wasim, a grade-16 officer, acquired assets beyond his know sources of income during his service as an income tax officer at the Excise Department. "NAB has recovered cash and prize bonds worth Rs330 million during the raid at his house today," read the statement.

ML-1 project to create 150,000 jobs: Rashid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmad has said that tender of ML-1 project envisaging upgradation of the railways infrastructure will be opened by the 20th of this month. Talking to the media persons in Rawalpindi today (Thursday), he said this project will provide one hundred and fifty thousand job opportunities. The Minister said the PTI government will complete its mandated tenure and serve the masses. Sheikh Rashid said the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan will take forward the country and address all the problems of Rawalpindi city including water.

CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani hosts lunch for envoys



ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani hosted lunch for ambassadors and high commissioners of various countries. Pakistan's ambassador-designated to Austria Aftab Khokhar also attended the lunch as a special guest. Ambassadors of Brunei, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Iran, and Turkmenistan attended the reception. General Manager Islamabad Serena Hotel Michel A Galopin was also part of the gathering. Full coverage of the event in the coming issue of CENTRELINE magazine. – DNA

EU celebrates Pakistan's 2020 Erasmus Mundus scholarship recipients

Today we congratulate the young men and women who will embark on an educational and cultural journey through the Erasmus+ programme over the coming months

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The European Union Delegation to Pakistan hosted a pre-departure event for the 130 Pakistani students (68 men and 62 women) who received Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree scholarships for 2020 to study in Europe, at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) today. The event, organized in collaboration with the HEC for the first time, recognized Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree scholarship holders, and provided an opportunity for networking among peers and Erasmus Alumni. During her welcome remarks, the Ambassador of the European Union in Pakistan Androulla Kaminara said, "Today we congratulate the

young men and women who will embark on an educational and cultural journey through the Erasmus+ programme over the coming months. I am sure that they will return strong knowledge and rich experiences, and will help contribute to the development of Pakistan." The Ambassador further added, "This year the experience of students worldwide will be very different due to COVID-19. European universities are making a special effort to provide the best possible experience to all students, including those from abroad, while making sure they are safe." She added that she is particularly happy that more students from Pakistan access the Erasmus+ program. This year 2,542 students from 142 countries were se-



lected for the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree scholarships. Pakistan was 3rd in the world for number of scholarships awarded and remained the top country in

terms of scholarship applications. Erasmus+ Alumni shared their experiences, followed by a question and answer session

Higher Education Commission Chairman Dr. Tariq Banuri, Ambassadors and representatives from EU member states and members of the Erasmus+ Alumni Asso-

ciation also attended the event. Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport across the world. The first Erasmus+ Programme was launched in 1987, initially for exchanges with Europe only. It was extended beyond Europe's borders in 2004. It funds programmes, projects, scholarships and fosters cooperation both within the European Union and globally. The overall Erasmus+ budget for the last seven years was EUR 14.7 billion including 1.7 billion for international students. Approximately 21 per cent of this amount was allocated to Asia. There are no country specific quotas or allocations under the Erasmus+ programme.

Shehbaz Sharif, daughter appear before NAB court

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif and his daughter Javeria have appeared before an accountability court in Lahore in Ramzan Sugar Mills case. An accountability court's administrative judge Jawadul Hassan conducted the hearing of Ramzan Sugar Mills case on Thursday. However, Shehbaz Sharif's son Hamza Shehbaz did not appear in the hearing due to illness. The accountability court approved Hamza's exemption plea and extended his judicial remand till October 1. Shehbaz Sharif appeared at the court's rostrum and said that he had saved billions of funds belonging to the people of Punjab during his 10-year tenure without taking any benefit for him and his family businesses. He continued that Sindh government had reduced the rates of sugarcane but the decision was not followed by the Punjab authorities. Sindh High Court (SHC) had set the rates of sugarcane up to Rs172 per 40 kilograms besides ordering to provide Rs11 subsidy.

Hackers demand \$38 million from KE

KARACHI: Hackers have demanded \$38 million from Karachi-Electric's (KE) administration to restore its hacked system. The hacking event on the KE portal was reported on Sept 7, according to which its IT department had halted internal communication and links with banks, causing problems for the city's sole electric supplier. According to KE, customers may experience some disruption in accessing duplicate bills from the KE website, however, all the call centres are operational for any correspondence. The hackers have given a deadline of September 15 to K-Electric to pay the amount else the amount for the restoration of the portal would be double. – DNA

Violence on border meant to derail peace process: ISPR

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Babar Iftikhar on Thursday expressed regret over escalation of violence on the Pak-Afghan border. In his latest tweet, the DG ISPR said, "unfortunate rise in violent incidents on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border is meant to derail Afghanistan Peace Process." He further said that Pakistan earnestly believes that both countries deserve peace and progress. "Together we will defeat all spoilers," Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar added.

Digital trade a potential area for Pak-China cooperation: DCM

DNA

BEIJING: There is immense potential for digital trade between Pakistan and China as the former is actually moving towards digitalization, and the China International Fair for Trade in Service (CIFTIS) provides an opportunity for the BRI countries to really look into the prospect," said Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) of Pakistan to China Ahmed Farooq in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN). The CIFTIS held from September 5 to 9 is the largest comprehensive exhibition in the field of global trade in services in China. The event organized under the background of global economic recovery is meant to provide opportunities for international

businesses together online and offline and facilitate cooperation. Addressing a session of Belt and Road Digital Trade under the fair, Ahmed said the CIFTIS is conducive to restoring economic vitality, improving trade connectivity, and facilitating the development of digital trade in the region. While talking about digital development in Pakistan, Ahmed noted it holds a bright future especially in the post-pandemic era when offline business is undermined and online becomes the trend. The size of the population is very critical to digitalization as well. Pakistan is a country with 220 million people and around two-thirds of the population is below 30 years old, an energetic group always interested in new things and more adaptable to transformation.

The society as a whole is also taking incremental steps to accept those changes brought about by digitalization, including e-commerce, digital payment, online education, etc. Besides, the government is also keen on promoting the Digital Pakistan policy, in view of millions of new jobs expected to be created from economic growth due to digitalization. "Pakistan also

has immense potential for developing tourism. With the potential of China's outbound tourism and the special bond between Pakistan and China, there will be plenty of cooperation opportunities between the two countries after the epidemic," Ahmed said. Blessed with diversified geography from snow-clad mountains to deserts to the uncharted sea, Pakistan is

home to 108 peaks above 7,000 meters, as well as more than a 1000 km long serene coastline with sandy and sunny beaches. Pakistan is honored with historical sites of Indus valley civilization that can trace back to 4000 years ago and preserves hundreds of Buddhist heritage sites. "Be it digitalization of Pakistan or tourism, CPEC will continue to play a part in driving their development as it did in the infrastructure sector," Ahmed noted. CPEC is moving towards the second phase with a human-centric approach, and the areas of food security, vocational training, job creation, and health sector and others are expected to improve the well-being of the people, he added.

