



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, October 22, 2020

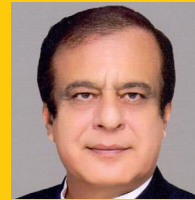
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Only a sovereign Afghan govt can avert civil war: Hekmatyar

Bringing down prices govt priority, says Shibli Faraz

Pakistan keen to expand bilateral relations with Iraq



## Briefs

### Country heading in right direction

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a tweet on Wednesday, he said the current account was in surplus of seventy three million dollars during September bringing surplus for the first quarter to 792 million dollars compared to deficit of 1,492 million dollars during the same time last year. The Prime Minister said exports grew twenty nine percent and remittances nine percent during previous month.

### Former Palestine envoy dies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Hazem Abu Shanab has died in Cairo. He was under treatment there. Ambassador Hazem served in Pakistan for almost three years. By profession Hazem was a journalist but later joined the Foreign Service. During his tenure in Pakistan, he tried his best to contribute to bilateral relations. At that time the Palestine embassy used to be located in F 10/3. Ambassador Hazem was a true friend of Pakistan. He gave interviews to CENTRELINE magazine on a couple of occasions. Besides he also gave interview to Channel Five TV hosted by Ansar M Bhatti.

### Incumbent govt is unlawful

DNA

NAWABSHAH: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman on Wednesday said that votes of people were stolen so the current government is unconstitutional. Talking to media persons, he said that struggle for supremacy of the constitution is going on today and said this is war for Pakistan's survival. He said that the concept of imposing rulers on the people should end and the purpose of PDM is new elections in the country.

## NCOC hints at another lockdown

Wearing of mask and social distancing must be ensured. Administrative actions be initiated against violators," the NCOC told the chief secretaries

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC), which oversees Pakistan's response to the coronavirus pandemic, on Wednesday warned that the country is fast approaching a point where there will be "no choice" left but to impose another sweeping lockdown. Warning that there is an urgent and immediate need to ensure the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for coronavirus prevention, the NCOC noted that there has been a clear resurgence in virus cases and deaths. "NCOC is closely monitoring the situation. If there is no improvement in SOPs compliance observed, NCOC will have no choice but to revert to strict measures leading to re-closures of services,". The statement said the NCOC, during a special session held to monitor the increasing, had noted a "clear resurgence in coronavirus" and

noted the rising death rate attributable to COVID-19. The chief secretaries, who attended the meeting, were directed to "strictly implement" SOPs. They were also directed to take "strict punitive actions" if a violation of the SOPs is observed. It also directed officials to put a "special focus" on the perceived high-risk sectors of transport, markets, marriage halls, restaurants and public gatherings. "Wearing of mask and social distancing must be ensured. Administrative actions be initiated against violators," the NCOC told the chief secretaries. Islamabad, the 21st October, 2020: Deputy Chairman Senate Saleem Mandviwalla has said that Pakistan and Iraq are intertwined in social, religious and cultural similarities and this bond keeps the people of the two sides connected with each other. This was stated by Deputy Chairman Senate Saleem Mandviwalla during a meeting with Hamed Abbas Lafta, Ambassador Iraq at the Parliament House on Wednesday.

## Pak keen to expand relations with Iraq

Ambassador of Iraq says that Pakistan is an important regional country



A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate underscored the need for enhanced trade and economic linkages by bringing the business communities of the two sides closer. He said that Pakistan and

Iraq have always exhibited warmth in bilateral relations and there is need to further strengthen these ties. Both sides also agreed to enhance frequency bilateral delegations at different levels to explore more avenues for cooperation. He said that Pakistan offers a conducive environment for

investment and Iraqi investors can benefit from the investment opportunities being offered under CPEC. Ambassador of Iraq Hamed Ababas Lafta agreed with the views of Deputy Chairman Senate and agreed to further consolidate cooperation in different sectors for mutual benefit of the people of two sides. He specifically mentioned that trade between Iraq and Pakistan is at its lowest level which needs to be enhanced through mutual collaboration. Ambassador of Iraq said that Pakistan is an important regional country. He agreed with the views of Deputy Chairman Senate to build stronger collaboration in multiple sectors.

## Bringing down prices govt priority, says Shibli

Says opposition is trying to mislead the people of Pakistan but it will not succeed

FIAZ CHAUDHRY / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz has said government is fully cognizant of the prevailing inflation in the country and all possible measures are being taken to bring down prices of essential commodities.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today (Wednesday), he said despite all hurdles, economic indicators are showing improvement due to prudent policies of the government. The Information Minister said exports are increasing, construction material is showing record sale, all the mills in Faisalabad are running with full capacity.

Continued on Page 06

## Pak, Oman sign MoU for military cooperation

MoU aims to frame the aspects of military cooperation between Oman and Pakistan



FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Sultanate of Oman signed an MoU in the field of

"Military Cooperation" between the two friendly countries at the premises of the Ministry of Defence Complex, Muscat. K. K. Ahsan Wagan the Ambassador, Islamic Republic

Pakistan and Muhammad bin Nasir bin Muhammad Alrasbi the Secretary General, Ministry of Defence, Oman signed the MoU. The aforesaid MoU aims to frame the aspects of military cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in a way that enhances the existing cooperation and serves the common interests of the two friendly countries. This MoU will surely contribute towards further strengthening Pak-Oman bilateral diplomatic relations in general and military cooperation in particular.



ISLAMABAD: EU ambassadors had a very interesting and constructive discussion with the Chairman of Islamic Ideology Dr. Qibla Ayaz at CII. Dialogue and further understanding is vital for achieving the mutual objective of Inter-faith dialogue and peace in the world. - DNA

## Explosion kills five in Karachi

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Five people were killed and 20 others received injuries in an explosion in a four-storey building at Karachi's Gulshan-e-Iqbal Block 7. As per details, nature of the blast has not been ascertained yet but in charge of CTD has said that explosion is likely a cylinder blast. The impact of the explosion was so severe that windowpanes of the nearby building were shattered. Balconies of two apartments have been completely destroyed, rescue officials said.

## STAMPEDE TRAGEDY IN KABUL

## Pakistan asks for proper management

The Pakistan Consulate had resumed the visa operation after a pause of seven months as security precaution due to coronavirus pandemic

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday expressed grief over the loss of lives in a stampede at a stadium in Afghanistan's Jalalabad city, where aspirants of Pakistani visas had gathered, and also

urged upon the Afghan authorities to ensure better management of the process. "We have received with sorrow and grief the news about the loss of precious Afghan lives and injuries in a stampede at a stadium in Jalalabad, several kilometres away

from the Consulate General of Pakistan, where applicants for Pakistani visas were being gathered under the arrangements of the provincial Afghan authorities," the Foreign Office said. The Pakistan Consulate had resumed the visa operation

Continued on Page 06

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No more secret clauses of Taliban-US agreement - Page 05

Macron urges Putin to boost anti-terror cooperation - Page 06

FPCCI pledges support to PM Imran Khan's vision - Page 07

China lauds President Arif Alvi's remarks about CPEC - Page 08



## Briefs

## KP govt increases wheat quota for mills

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has taken an important decision to ensure supplies of low-cost flour to its citizens by increasing the daily quota of wheat to the flour mills. Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Kamran Bangash, told ARY News that the provincial government has increased the daily wheat quota to flour mills up to 1,000 metric tons. He detailed that 4,000 metric tons of wheat is being dispatched to flour mills across the province from today and Rs13 billion subsidy is being provided for low-cost flour supplies. Bangash said that the provincial authorities were closely monitoring the flour supplies and put a strict check and balance on the flour mills and dealers. The special assistant added that the government commenced homework for finalising the locations for the establishment of Insaaf Sasta Bazaar. He announced that four bazaars will be established in Peshawar and 12 more in other districts of KP. Earlier in the day, the Punjab government also decided to establish 396 sahat (facilitation) bazaars across the province over the directives of Chief Minister Usman Buzdar. A review session was held under the chair of Punjab's chief secretary for government steps for price controls. During a briefing, it was told that 223 sahat bazaars have been made functional across the province.

## 'Nawaz will be brought back before January 15'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry on Wednesday said that the government will hopefully succeed in bringing back Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme leader Nawaz Sharif from London before 15th of January 2021. Talking to a media channel, Fawad Chaudhry said that the officials of the British government also believed that the court had convicted Nawaz Sharif and hoped that the UK government will soon decide about the PML-N leader. Earlier today, the federal government had sought Islamabad High Court's (IHC) nod to publish former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's summons in two London based newspapers. The IHC had heard the case related to summoning Nawaz Sharif in Al-Azizia and Avenfield Reference. Tariq Khokhar on behalf of the federal government had submitted a plea in the Registrar Office, seeking permission to publish the advertisement in the two London-based newspapers too. Earlier, the IHC had ordered to publish the advertisement for summoning Nawaz Sharif in Lahore addition of two newspapers in the country. The authorities had been directed to send a copy of the newspaper to Nawaz Sharif via the Pakistani High Commission in the UK.

## Advertisements summoning Nawaz Sharif pasted outside IHC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Advertisements summoning Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme and former Prime Minister (PM) Nawaz Sharif in Al-Azizia and Avenfield references have been pasted outside Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday. According to details, the copies of the ads that were published in two newspapers on October 20 were pasted on the court gate in a plastic coating. The PML-N leader has been given last chance to appear before the court till November 24 for legal proceedings. IHC had rejected petition of the federal government seeking permission to publish proclamation of Nawaz Sharif in



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President ICCI being congratulated by Ajmal Balouch President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajiran on passage of amended rent control act from NA. Abdul Rehman Khan VP ICCI, Ejaz Abbasi, Baser Daud, Khalid Chaudhry, Akhtar Abbasi and Zulqarnain Abbasi are also present. — DNA

## ICCI hails NA for passing Rent Control Act Amend.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry hailed the co-operation and support of the members of National Assembly for passing the Rent Restrictions (Amendment) Bill 2020 to address the very

longstanding burning issue of the traders of federal capital. He also expressed thanks to the PTI government for paying attention to this serious issue of local traders and getting the rent control act passed from the National Assembly. He said this while talking to Ajmal Baloch, President, All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran and Khalid

Chaudhry Secretary Traders Action Committee who met him in ICCI and congratulated him on passage of rent control act. Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, M. Ejaz Abbasi and Baser Daud former Presidents, Khalid Chaudhry, Akhtar Abbasi and Zulqarnain Abbasi were also present at the occasion. Sardar Yasir Ilyas

Khan also lauded the cooperation of Asad Umar Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Raja Khurram Shehzad Nawaz MNA, Ali Nawaz Awan SAPM on CDA Affairs and Dr. Babar Awan Advisor to PM on Parliamentary Affairs for the passage of rent control act from the National Assembly. He said this positive devel-

opment showed that the current government was focused on addressing the key issues of the business community and facilitating them in promoting business activities. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that the Rent Restrictions (Amendment) Bill 2020 passed by the NA envisaged formation of a Mediation Coun-

cil consisting of President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry or his nominee as Convener, and a representative of tenant and landlord each as members to play role for out of court settlement of rent disputes and hoped that the Mediation Council would be very helpful in settling rent disputes amicably.

## Sports facilities in merged areas top priority: Murad Ali

PESHAWAR: Project Director of the Prime Minister 1000 Ground Facilities Murad Ali Mohmand Wednesday said that development of new sports facilities and upgrading the existing sports infrastructure were the utmost priority of the present Government. He said as desired by the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan, work continues on achieving the target of the 1000 ground facilities masterminded by the Prime Minister Imran Khan all across the province including merged tribal areas. He said along with developing playing facilities under Prime Minister Imran Khan 1000 Ground Project in

merged areas works have been in full swing on the construction of playing grounds in Mardan, Malakand and Dir continued. He said Secretary Sports Abid Majeed, Director General Sports Asfandyar Khan Khattak have also visited various places across the province and witnessed works on the ongoing projects in merged tribal areas and other districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said under the ongoing 1000 projects the Directorate of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continued in construction of a state-of-art Sports Complex in Rustam sub-Tehsil of District Mardan in which work was underway on 151 kanals of land. — APP

## NIC announces appointment of advisory board

DNA

LAHORE: The National Incubation Centre (NIC) at LUMS is pleased to announce the appointment of its Advisory Board, chaired by Mr. Saleem Ahmad, Senior Advisor at Afiniti, world's largest applied artificial intelligence company. He, along with a strong team, will bring extensive leadership and expertise in entrepreneurship to both NIC Lahore and NIC Quetta. Mr. Ahmad is an alumnus of LUMS, LSE and Wharton and brings over 25 years of experience in invest-

ing and managing private equity, hedge and venture funds globally. Other members of the Board include Dr. Ayesha Khanna, Co-founder and CEO of ADDO AI; Ms. Zehra Hyder Ali, Founder and CEO Ghosla; Mr. Ali Mukhtar, Founder and CEO Fatima Ventures; and Mr. Ahmed Hussain, Director and Chief Strategy Officer at Service Sales Corporation. Dr. Alnoor Bhimani, Dean Suleman Dawood School of Business, LUMS, will continue to provide oversight as NIC's Interim Director. The NIC offers incubation and acceleration programmes for innovative businesses.

## Rear Adm. Naveed Ashraf new Cdr Pakistan Fleet



DNA

KARACHI: Rear Admiral Naveed Ashraf assumed the responsibilities as Commander Pakistan Fleet in a ceremony held at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, Karachi. Rear Admiral Naveed Ashraf was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1989. During his distinguished

career, he has served on various Command and Staff appointments. His important Command appointments include Commanding Officer of three Destroyers, Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy, Commander 18th and 25th Destroyer Squadrons. His Staff appointments include, Chief Staff Officer to Commander Combined Task Force-150 HQ NAV-

CENT Bahrain, Captain Training at HQ FOST, Naval Secretary, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Admin), Chief Instructor and Deputy President National Defence University, Islamabad. The Admiral is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, National Defence University Islamabad and Naval Staff College USA. In addition, he has also done Royal

College of Defence Studies Course from UK. In recognition of his meritorious services, Rear Admiral Naveed Ashraf has been awarded with Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-e-Basalat. During the Change of Command ceremony, the Admiral was presented with Guard of Honour. The ceremony was attended by Pakistan Navy officers, CPOs/Sailors and Navy Civilians.

## Services of Pak Navy beyond count: Ch Sarwar

LAHORE: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi called on Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar and discussed professional matters of Pakistan Navy during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Tuesday. During the meeting, issues of mutual interest and professional activities of the Pakistan Navy were discussed. Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar congratulated Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on assuming office and said that Pakistan Navy had the best professional skills and the world appreciated the performance of Navy in protecting maritime borders. He said the services of Pakistan Navy in the field of education and health were also commendable. The Governor said Pakistan Navy had provided selfless assistance to the people during natural calamities. He said Pakistan Navy was capable of repelling the enemy, adding that Pakistan Navy had rendered immense services for the defence of the country. He said the whole nation was proud of the bravery and courage of the Pakistan Navy. The Governor Punjab said the Pakistan Navy had a key role to play in the defence of country's maritime borders. He said Pakistan Navy was playing an important role in protecting the country's economic interests by providing security to Gwadar Port and CPEC. He hoped Pakistan Navy under the leadership of Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi would successfully overcome the maritime challenges being faced by the country. — APP

## SC gives one month for 120 new NAB courts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday gave the federal government a month's time to decide whether it will set up 120 more accountability courts to clear the backlog of cases. Headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed, a bench of the apex court expressed displeasure over the government when the court was informed that no permanent law secretary has been appointed yet. The bench directed the government to appoint a permanent law secretary at the earliest. At the start of the hearing, the SC inquired about progress thus far made on the establishment of 120 new NAB courts, to which additional attorney general Sohail Mahmood replied that a plan in this regard has been forwarded to Prime Minister Imran Khan for approval. Attorney General Khalid Javed Khan will be meeting the premier today to discuss the issue, he added. To a question about the proposed NAB rules, the prosecutor general informed that a draft of the rules had been sent to the Ministry of Law. He said the NAB chairman's comments on swift disposal of cases has also been submitted to the court. The court directed them to submit a progress report on next hearing to be fixed after a month.

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## Briefs

### Mobile phone imports increase 83.17% in Q1

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed an increase of 83.17 percent during the first quarter (Q1) of financial year (2020-21) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$492.894 million during July-September (2020-21) as compared to the imports of US \$269.087 million during July-September (2019-20), showing growth of 83.17 percent, according to the latest data issued by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Meanwhile, on year-on year basis, the import of mobile phones witnessed growth of 76.69 percent in September 2020, as compared to the imports of the same month of last year. The mobile imports during September 2020 were recorded at US \$186.531 million against the imports of US \$105.568 million in September 2019. On month-on-month basis, the imports of mobile phones also rose by 17.79 percent during September 2020, as compared to the imports of US \$158.364 million during August 2020, according to the data. It is pertinent to mention here that the overall merchandise trade deficit increased by 2.02 percent during the first quarter of current fiscal year (2020-21) as compared to the deficit of the corresponding period of last year. — APP

### 'Hunarmand Pak' classes to resume next week

ISLAMABAD: The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) will restart training classes from October 26 under 'Skill for All' (Hunarmand Pakistan) of the Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Programme. Executive Director (NAVTTTC) Dr. Nasir Khan announced while saying that anti-coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs), will strictly be followed. Talking to APP, he said all arrangements were finalized in this regard after which previously enrolled students were also intimated about resumption of classes by the affiliated institutions. Refuting the news item about closure of 'Hunarmand Pakistan', he said the training classes under the programme were stopped in the wake of coronavirus pandemic. The executive director said the government launched 'Skill for All' project in the start of 2020 under the Kamyab Jawan Programme with Rs 10 billion seed money and set a target to train 50,000 each in high tech and traditional trades by end of the Fiscal Year 2020-21. To a query, he said at least 37,000 young people were registered for traditional and high tech trades courses from across the country. Over 20,000 were enrolled from under-developed areas for imparting conventional skills such as welding, plumbing, dress-making and cooking, whereas around 17,000 youth for high tech trades like artificial intelligence, robotics and cloud computing from across the country, he told. — APP

### Tanzara Art Gallery to hold painting exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Tanzara Art Gallery will hold a Painting Exhibition from October 22nd to November 5th at Saidpur Village. The gallery would exhibit the works of renowned Pakistan artist Muhammad Atif Khan who has been successfully built a niche for himself in local and international art market. His master piece of Islamic miniature painting with geometric designs and juxtapositions of Mughal era figures within manadala like landscapes will be displayed, an official said on Wednesday. He said that Tanzara Art Gallery offers art lovers a splendid collection of art work by Pakistani artists both emerging and established. — APP

## With the right efforts, we won't see a "pandemic winter"

He further remarked that countries with similar socio-economic infrastructure have not fared well, in addition to countries where federal structures have been devolved: SAPM on Health

DNA

ISLAMABAD: There is already a slight but definitive rise in COVID-19 cases, but the second wave, the so-called "winter pandemic", can be avoided with the right efforts and precautions. The threat of COVID is ever-present, and with respiratory diseases traditionally gaining momentum in the winter, caution is ever more necessary. These remarks were made by Dr. Faisal Sultan, the Special Advisor to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health while speaking at the research launch of the report "Pakistan's Fight against COVID-19" by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) in Islamabad. He added that the initial polar public perception has now been transformed into unipolar perception in favor of smart lockdowns. He further remarked that countries with similar socio-economic infrastructure have not



fared well, in addition to countries where federal structures have been devolved.

Regarding the vaccine, he said that if and when available, Pakistan will prioritize subsets of the

population first, such as those at high risk and frontline workers. We have to carefully allocate resources for vaccination as Pakistan does not have the sufficient resources to invest in all the global

vaccination efforts. The advantage Pakistan has is that our polio vaccination teams can quickly and efficiently inoculate the population, though unlike polio, it will not be a simultaneous, mass effort.

The CRSS report states that Pakistan has, against all forecasts and odds, bent the COVID-19 curve in its favor. Broadly speaking, the creation of a central mechanism for all coordination, collation, decision-making and implementation in the form of the NCOC, piggybacking on the polio surveillance network, and dramatically ramping up healthcare infrastructure resulted in Pakistan's strong response to the pandemic. Despite the demonstrable success of the curbing mechanisms, this is no time to celebrate or drop our collective guard, said the SAPM. The threat of the COVID-19 pandemic is very real and ever-present. Continued caution and stringent adherence to COVID-19 SOPs are crucial to ensure the current situation stays under control. Without vigilance from every member of the general public, and continued pressure from the government, this disease could spread easily and wreak havoc.

## Role of PAL in educating the society commendable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), Dr. Yousuf Khushk called on Mohammad Sarwar, Governor of Punjab. During the meeting, Mohammad Sarwar said that the efforts of the PAL for the promotion and development of Pakistani languages and literature, their national and international recognition and the welfare of writers are commendable. The Governor of Punjab assured the Pakistan Academy of Letters of all possible help for the promotion of literature and the welfare of the writers. Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman, PAL, apprised the



Governor of Punjab of the aims and objectives and performance of the PAL, and in particular the current initiatives and future plans of the PAL for Literature and Writers of Panjab. The Chairman PAL presented the publications of PAL to the Governor of Punjab.

## Student's Artwork showcased at PUCAR

RAWALPINDI: A one-day display of students' work along-with Art and Craft Exhibition was arranged under auspices of Punjab Council of the Arts, Rawalpindi here on Wednesday. The students of training courses, continued in this Council, participated in the exhibition. Ex-Senator and Advisor to Chief Organizer and Focal Person for Insaaf Women Wing Nilofar Bakhtiar inaugurated the exhibition. Naheed Manzoor and Director PUCAR Rawalpindi Waqar Ahmed were also present. The works of art students enrolled in different courses of textile designing, interior and fashion designing, calligraphy, flower making, cutting & sewing, jewelry making, poetry decoration, candle making, painting and calligraphy were put on display in the exhibition. Appreciating the artwork of the students, Nilofar said that Pakistani culture has kept distinction all over the world as the country has very talented people. She said that she was impressed by the artwork of students of this Council. Nilofar said that Federal as well as Punjab Government has also taken valuable steps for the welfare of the artists, adding that the Artists Support Fund and more facilities were being provided for their well being. — APP

## Critical thinking pre-requisite to problem solving

ISLAMABAD: Critical thinking is a prerequisite to problem solving and decision making, said Prof. Dr. Masoom Yasinzai, Rector International Islamic University (IIU) on Wednesday. The IIU Rector was addressing the closing ceremony of a training program on "problem solving and decision making skills" organized by Pakistan Manpower Institute (PMI). Universities need to win the support of society to retain vitality in this different world now, it is a dire need of the hour that educational institutions should be relevant to societal demands, he said. He added the critical thinking and problem solving attitude are the aspects to be focused by universities. He said better decision making with a positive vision is a gateway to bring positive changes in the society. Hailing efforts of PMI, he emphasized on promoting constructive platforms and collaborations between PMI and universities to achieve mutual shared goals. Dr. Masoom also apprised the role of IIUI in service to society. He mentioned the vision and activities of the university's institutes and academies offering specialized training. He said IIUI was keen to expand its ties across the globe to exchange the experiences. Khurshid Ahmed Khan Marwat, Director General, PMI and other officials of the institute were also present on the occasion. At the end of the ceremony, the IIUI Rector distributed course completion certificates among the participants. — DNA

## Eight injured as van falls into ditch

RAWALPINDI: Eight people including students and teachers were injured when a Toyota Hiace fell into a ditch near Kahuta here on Wednesday. According to Rescue-1122, a Toyota Hiace was on way to Kahuta to Soar, when the driver lost control of vehicle due to break failure and while turning in sharp turn fell into ditch near Moori. On receiving information, Rescue teams rushed to the spot and shifted the three seriously injured namely Nagina w/o Muhammad Basit of 32, Tayyab s/o Zia Ur Rehman, 22, Khaqan s/o Arif (Hiace driver) shifted to Tehsil Head Quarter Hospital (THQ), Kahuta. — APP

## Chairman CDA for start of E-12 development work

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Aamer Ali Ahmed has issued directives for start of development work in stalled sector E-12. The CDA Chairman has also directed the officers concerned to meet affected and address

their grievances. The Chairman office in a statement on Wednesday said that the Chairman also visited site of sectors E-12/2 and E-12/3 and also met affected assuring them payment of their outstanding dues. He was also access accompanied by Members, Director or Generals, Directors and

other officials. The first PC-1 of sector E-12 worth Rs 847 million was approved in 1988 but development work could not start due to issues relating to affected people. Last time, a PC-1 OF Rs 6630 billion was approved by the CDA Development Working Party in its 45th meeting, last year.

## AC visits THQ hospital Murree

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Assistant Commissioner Murree on Wednesday visited Tehsil Headquarter hospital Murree and inspected facilities being provided to the patients at the hospital. On the occasion, the AC interacted with the patients admitted in the hospital and asked about the facilities being provided to them including the provision of medicines and the behavior of medical staff. He reviewed the stock of medicines and their registration in the record and expressed satisfaction over the cleanliness arrangements.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA in a meeting with a delegation headed by President ICCI Sardar Yasir Ilyas. — DNA

## Country heading towards prosperity: Amin Aslam

He said, 45 water filtration plants are being installed in different areas of Attock, Hazro and Hasanabdal to ensure provision of hygienically clean drinking water to the people at the cost of more than 60 million rupees which will certainly control water born diseases.

DNA

ATTOCK: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam here on Wednesday said that the country is heading towards development and prosperity by leaps and bounds in the dynamic leadership of Premier Imran Khan and the day is not far when all the problems of the people will be solved. He was addressing at two different gatherings at Dhok Miskeen

and Mohala Irshad Nagar. Amin Aslam said that the purpose of installing water filtration plants is to ensure provision of hygienically clean drinking water to the people and to control water born diseases. He said that these plants will supply clean drinking water to hundred of families of the area. He said, 45 water filtration plants are being installed in different areas of Attock, Hazro and Hasanabdal to ensure provision of hygienically clean drinking water to the

people at the cost of more than 60 million rupees which will certainly



control water born diseases. SAPM Malik Amin Aslam said that 04 water filtration plants in Attock, 04 in Hasanabdal, 04 in Hazro while rest of the plants are being installed in Waisa, Chechian, Khaqani, Boliyanwal, Golra, Haji Shah, Haroon, Malik Mala, Kalu Kalan, Formali, Jalalia, Hameed, Kamalpur Musa, Mararia and Ghorghushti. He said that beside this water supply scheme for Village Haji Shah and Qibla Bandi is also under completion. He said that this govt is ensur-

ing to provide basic facilities to the people by utilising maximum available resources. Malik Amin said, gas facility has been approved for 14 villages of the district which will be completed at the cost of Rs 330 million rupees while different roads are being metalled in the district and said that he was in close contact with local representatives for solving problems of the people. SAPM Malik Amin Aslam also visited Astana Salik Abad Sharif to participate in urs celebrations.

## Railways to spend Rs 1.8b

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Railways would restore old system of Karachi Circular Railways (KCR) with a cost of Rs 1.8 billion and around 16,000 passengers would travel on 32 passenger trains daily. The distance from the starting point to the last destination would be covered in only half an hour, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP on Wednesday.

He said that Pakistan Railways was going to restore historic project of KCR on the orders given by the Supreme Court in which role and cooperation of the Sindh government would be required. The official said 44 kilometers KCR track will include 30 km loop and 14 km mainline. The KCR has total 20 stations, out of which 15 are on the loop and five on the mainline, while there are 24 level crossings on the entire track. He said the KCR project would be restored in three phases. In the first phase 14 kilometers from Karachi City to Orangi Station would be revived, in the second phase seven kilometers from Orangi Station to Gilani Station will be restored while in the third and final phase nine kilometers from Gilani Station to Drug Colony track would be completely restored.

About the restoration of first phase, the official said the rehabilitation work of the track from Karachi City to Orangi Station was in full swing. So far, 12 kilometer track from Karachi City to Manghopir has been completely restored. — APP

## 17 outlaws including two drug pushers held

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police has arrested 17 outlaws including two drug smuggler and recovered huge cache of hashish, stolen bike, wine and weapons from them, a police spokesman said. According to details, a team of Sabzi Mandi police nabbed two drug pushers from sector I-11/4 and recovered 7.5 kilogram hashish from their possession. The accused were identified as Shahzad Khan and Sani. During the preliminary investigation, both confessed to their involvement in drug smuggling activities. Meanwhile, Lohibher police arrested a bike lifter Faisal Yaseen and recovered stolen motorbike from him. Koral police arrested accused Noman Nawaz and recovered 480 gram hashish from him. Khanna police arrested Yasir Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol from him. Bhara Kahu police arrested accused Oman Sohaib and recovered one 30 bore pistol from him. Kohsar police arrested two accused including a lady involved in immoral activities. Cases have been registered against the nabbed persons and further investigation is underway from them. — APP

## FCA meeting today to fix production targets

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA) will meet here today to review the output of Kharif crops and fix the production targets for the Rabi crops season 2020-21. The high-powered meeting would be held under the chairmanship of Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam and discuss the ways and means to ensure food safety and security in the country, said an official in Ministry of National Food Security and Research. Talking to APP, he said that meeting would discuss in detail about the issues and challenges being faced by the local agriculture sector and suggest immediate remedial measures to enhance per-acre crop output to meet with the growing needs of food as well as to exports. The meeting would be attended by officials from provincial ministers for food and agriculture, secretaries of agriculture, meteorological office and higher-ups of other concerned ministries and departments. — APP



## Briefs

## Police official suspended over misconduct

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar on Wednesday suspended a Sub-Inspector over his alleged misconduct with woman. According to details, Sub-Inspector Malik Mumtaz of Golra police station misbehaved with a lady Samar while his complaint was made with police high-ups. IGP Islamabad took notice of this incident and directed DIG (Operations) Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar to conduct investigation into the matter and submit report with his office. He said that every citizen is respectable for police and such attitude would not be tolerated at any cost. — APP

## Four held for selling petrol, refilling gas illegally

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police in a crackdown have arrested four persons for selling petrol and gas illegally and seized filling instruments from their possession. Police spokesman informed that a team under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO), Naseerabad police station conducted a raid and nabbed Abdullah and Muhammad Naeem on the charges of gas re-filling illegally and seized gas filling instruments, cylinders from their custody. In another operation, Taxila police station arrested Sahib Khan and recovered 120 liter of petrol while held Zohaib Khan and recovered gas filling instruments, measuring tools and cylinders. Police have registered separate cases and started investigation.

## DPO holds meeting, discusses law &amp; order

ABBOTTABAD: District Police Officer (DPO) Abbottabad Yasir Afridi held meeting with members of peace committee, discussed important issues related to maintaining law and order on the occasion of 12th Rabi-ul-Awal here on Wednesday. The cash prize for the best shop decoration on the occasion of 12th Rabi-ul-Awal will be announced by the committee. On behalf of Abbottabad Police, the District Police Chief awarded certificates of appreciation to the members of the peace committee for their outstanding services during the last Muharram. According to details, a meeting was held with members of the peace committee under the chairmanship of District Police Chief Abbottabad Yasir Afridi, Additional SP Abbottabad Owais Shafiq and SSP Traffic Tariq Mahmood were also present in the meeting. On the occasion of Rabi-ul-Awal, security arrangements, law and order situation and other issues were discussed. Addressing the members of the peace committee, the district police chief said that foolproof security and law and order would be ensured. — APP

## Three held for murdering shopkeeper

ATTOCK: Police on Wednesday arrested three suspects for their alleged involvement in the murder of a shopkeeper while snatching a mobile phone in the limits of Attock Police Station. Addressing a press conference, District Police Officer (DPO) Khalid Hamdani said the police using modern and conventional techniques have arrested three culprits belonged to tehsil Jand. He said the culprits contacted Mobile Shop Owner on his cell phone and asked him that they wanted to purchase a mobile. For which they asked the shopkeeper to come near Railway Park where they would take the mobile phone after payment. When Ayatullah along with his brothers reached the designated place, three culprits snatched mobile phone from him and shot Mobile Shop Owner dead on resistance. The DPO informed that after the sad incident, a team comprising ASP Amara Shirazi, DSP Fayyaz ul Haq, SHO Attock City Hamid Kazmi, SHO Attock Saddar Atif Sattar. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: US Charge d Affaires Ms. Angela Aggeler called on Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque. — DNA

## Kuwait opens employment door for Pak health professionals

A batch of 221 health professionals including doctors, nurses and technicians will depart for Kuwait from Pakistan today as the country will provide services of a total of 600 medical workers to the Gulf country

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has started fulfilling its promise for providing employment to nationals in foreign countries as the first batch of 221 health professionals will depart for Kuwait on Thursday after 10 years. A batch of 221 health professionals including doctors, nurses and technicians will depart for Kuwait from Pakistan on

Thursday as the country will provide services of a total of 600 medical workers to the Gulf country. The second batch will be comprised of 200 more health professionals following an agreement signed between Pakistan and Kuwait in July. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Zulfiqar Bukhari, has met Kuwait Ambassador to Pakistan Abdul Rahman. During a virtual address to the

health professionals, Zulfiqar Bukhari termed it a historical moment for Pakistan after the restoration of exporting labour-power to Kuwait. He asked health professionals that they will serve as the ambassador of Pakistan in the Gulf country. He said that the health professionals employed in Kuwait will act as assistance for more Pakistanis to get employment there. He said that Pakistan is determined for the development of Kuwait and it will continue to

send skilful nationals to the Gulf country in line with its vision 2035. Kuwait is willing to provide employment to more than 1,000 health professionals and no skilful person was sent to Gulf countries during the last 10 years, said Bukhari. It is the government's priority to provide services of skilful persons to member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Kuwait Ambassador Abdul Rahman thanked the Pakistani government for providing services

of its healthcare professionals in a difficult time. He vowed that the skilful persons from Pakistan will get complete facilities during their stay in Kuwait. In a statement, Zulfiqar Bukhari said Pakistan has also signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Japan for employment of Pakistanis. 500,000 jobs will be created in Japan during the next three to five years besides opportunities in the United Kingdom (UK), South Korea and Germany.

## IGP listens problems of policemen

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar on Wednesday held Ardal room to listen problems of policemen and issued directions to immediately resolve them. According to details, a total of 20 policemen appeared in Ardal Room and IGP listened to their professional and personnel issues. DIG (Headquarters) and AIG (Es-

tablishment) were also present on the occasion. The IGP assured to resolve the personnel matters of policemen while immediate directions were issued to resolve problems being faced by them during performance of professional duties. He also directed all senior police officials to hold Ardal room on weekly basis. He said that such interactions provide opportunity to policemen serving in Capital police force to raise their issues before high-ups.

## CDWP approves projects valuing Rs 8.175 bn

ISLAMABAD: Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Wednesday approved two mega projects worth of Rs 8.175 billion to support education system under COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting of the committee was chaired by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan and was attended by senior officials from Planning Commission and federal ministries/divisions. Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training presented two mega projects in CDWP meeting. The CDWP approved a project titled "Pandemic Response Effectiveness Project (PREP) for COVID-19" worth Rs. 4.87 billion. The project period of completion would be 24 months and the objective of this project is to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan to address significant disruptive impact

that keep children, teachers and administrators out of school for prolonged period. The project will focus on supporting schools and parents in distance learning activities, remote learning from T/radio broadcast, virtual network and support policy changes and their implementation to increase the capacity of the education system to deal with future emergencies that contribute to school closures. The meeting also approved another project namely "Response Recovery Resilience in Education Programming during COVID-19 by the Pakistan" worth Rs. 3.3 billion. The completion period of this project would be 20 months which would support short and medium term response and recovery needs under the COVID-19 pandemic, while establishing the technical and institutional capacity to build back a stronger. — APP

## Awareness session for Breast cancer held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) continued with its tradition to create Breast Cancer awareness in the organization across Pakistan. In collaboration with Shaikat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Center, a special webinar was conducted, not only for PTCL female employees, but also for female family members of company's male employees. The online session aimed to raise awareness on self-examination and denounce common myths that surround this disease. Guest speak-

er, Dr. Umm-e-Farwa Ali Zaidi from Jinnah Sindh Medical University explained the risks of Breast Cancer and how early detection can allow people to live a healthy life. Moreover, the speaker gave detailed information on the self-examination procedure and answered questions from the participants. Syed Mazhar Hussain, Group Chief Human Resource Officer, PTCL & Ufone, said, "PTCL, being a caring organization, strives to provide a healthy work environment and hosts sessions on creating awareness on various issues such as mental & physical well-being, stress management, work-life balance, amongst others. Breast cancer is increasing day by

day in Pakistan and there is dire need to educate people and to spread awareness on early detection to save lives. Our collaboration with Shaikat Khanum is a testament to our commitment towards this cause." In addition to the webinar, PTCL is running a comprehensive digital awareness campaign on Breast Cancer for its female staff under 'The Pink Club'. Furthermore, PTCL has turned its corporate logo pink on all social media platforms to show solidarity with the cause. PTCL, through such initiatives, endeavors to educate its employees and their friends and families to live a healthy and prosperous life.

## Pharmacy products exports increase record 22.60%

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pharmaceutical products exports during First three months of current fiscal year grew by 22.60 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-September, Pharmaceutical products worth US \$ 68,176 thousand were exported as compared to the exports of US \$ 55,609 thousand of same period of last year. According to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the exports of engineering goods increased by 19.31 per cent, engineering goods valuing US \$ 47,845 thousand exported as compared to worth US \$ 40,103 thousand of same period of last year.

## Daughter of policeman gets awarded by IGP



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar on Wednesday awarded cash prize and shield to Kainat Abbasi,

the daughter of Assistant Sub-Inspector of Capital police Muhammad Siddique, who got first position in BS Telecommunication Engineering. The IGP invited the position holder to his office and encouraged her by awarding cash prize

and shield. He prayed for success in her life and said that hard work is key to gain glory. DIG (Headquarters) Muhammad Saleem, AIG (Establishment) Kamran and AIG (Operations) Haroon Joya were also present on the occasion.

## PLI offers ten profitable options

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Postal Life Insurance (PLI) is offering ten profitable options to provide insurance cover to the citizens on competitive rates, even in remote areas and provide world class policyholders services and to fulfill clients expectations and demands. Senior official of Pakistan Post told APP on Wednesday that PLI has an unbeatable presence in the rural areas due to extensive network of post offices, adding that every Post Office serves as its outlet. "We are struggling to provide the service to our clients at their door step through our educated field force and canvassers" he said. He said that the "whole life policy" is the cheapest arrangement for providing for the family against premature death of the bread-winner. The premium rates are lower than those for other types. The insured has the option to pay premium till he reaches the age of 50, 55, 60 or 70 years as he may desire, according to the age up to which he expects to have an income to finance the policy. The value of a whole life policy is payable to the family of the insured only after his death.

## Faisal urges citizens to maintain COVID SOPs

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Dr Faisal Sultan on Wednesday said that there were threats of spread of the COVID-19 and asked the citizens to continue implementing protective measures as per directions to stem the increase in Coronavirus cases. In a media briefing, he said that keeping in view the increasing number of coronavirus cases in various cities of the country, citizens should follow social distancing and other precautionary measures to stop increasing local transmission of COVID-19 in the country. He advised the citizens to strictly follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) in markets, offices and houses to help mitigate the exposure to the COVID-19. He said that there were reports of violation of SOPs in markets by citizens and not wearing mask in public places. He asked the citizens to support the efforts of government in its fight against COVID-19 and effectively implementing its relaxation policy to continue business activities and normalizing the lives of citizens. "If citizens fail to implement precautionary measures against the disease there are chances of re-occurrence of virus which can lead to restriction on business activities. Any further closure of industry due to negligence will badly affect our social life." He said that as per daily reports corona cases were increasing in Karachi, Islamabad, Hyderabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, Multan and other cities while 19 deaths were reported during last 24 hours from Coronavirus. He said that it was good sign that SOPs were strictly followed in educational institutions. He said that people should follow SOPs like social distancing, hand sanitizing or washing, wearing of face mask etc. — APP

## Student's artwork showcased at PUCAR

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A one-day display of students' work along-with Art and Craft Exhibition was arranged under auspices of Punjab Council of the Arts, Rawalpindi here on Wednesday. The students of training courses, continued in this Council, participated in the exhibition. Ex-Senator and Advisor to Chief Organizer and Focal Person for Insaaf Women Wing Nilofar Bakhtiar inaugurated the exhibition. Naheed Manzoor and Director PUCAR Rawalpindi Waqar Ahmed were also present. The works of art students enrolled in different courses of textile designing, interior and fashion designing, calligraphy, flower making, cutting & sewing, jewelry making, poetry decoration, candle making, painting and calligraphy were put on display in the exhibition.

## Effective ventilation key factor to stop Covid-19 spread, study reveals

The study, published in the journal Environment International, found that SARS-CoV-2 is rather moderately infectious and a person would need to remain in a poorly ventilated room for a considerable amount of time to receive an infectious dose of SARS-CoV-2

ISLAMABAD: New research adds to the growing body of evidence that effective or proper indoor ventilation may be a key factor in preventing the spread of Covid-19 virus. The study, published in the journal Environment International, found that SARS-CoV-2 is rather moderately infectious and a person would need to remain in a poorly ventilated room for a considerable amount of time to receive an infectious dose of SARS-CoV-2. "Multiple studies provided quickly strong scientific evidence for successful indoor air-

borne transmission of Covid-19 in inadequately ventilated environments," said study author Jarek Kurnitski from Estonian Research Council in Estonia. "The virus is transmitted via saliva droplets with a size from 0.5 micrometres up to a few thousand micrometres produced by a person by talking, sneezing, coughing, or even just breathing," Kurnitski added. According to the researchers, the point is that small and large droplets act completely differently. Tiny droplets below 5 micrometres do not settle on surfaces, they remain airborne

and follow airflow streamlines for tens of metres, Medical Daily reported. Large droplets above 100 micrometres in diameter fall down like rocks - they do not travel farther than 1.5 metres even by coughing. The air exhaled by humans contains mainly droplets with a diameter in the range of 1-10 micrometres. Until this spring, it was held in the medical literature and guidelines that droplets larger than 5 micrometres fall down at the distance of up to two metres (which is why it was concluded that 2-metre

complete safety). By now, however, scientists have found out that this was a misconception or even a long-persisting erroneous medical dogma. Aerosol physics shows convincingly that in reality only droplets larger than 50 micrometres fall down at a distance of two metres, while smaller ones remain suspended in the air and travel farther. Thus, acknowledging this tenfold error fundamentally changed the understanding of the spread of virus particles and it was realised that the

largest number of exhaled droplets travel far and the virus can remain infectious in aerosol particles for up to three hours. By breaking this medical dogma, researchers also gave an important signal regarding the measures applied to prevent the spread of Covid-19 that led to the paralysis. "Measures can and must be applied taking into account the known transmission routes, which is why it is important to know that the disease is transmitted by aerosols, i.e. tiny droplets suspended in the air," the authors wrote. — APP



## NAB's role

OVER the past two and a half years there has been an aggressive and consistent deterioration in the reputation and running of the country's premier accountability watchdog, NAB. Established by former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf in 1999, the foundation of the institution from the outset was problematic, for it was set up solely to silence his political opponents who were unwilling to bend over backwards to accommodate his 'vision for the country'. Subsequent civilian governments of the PPP and the PML(N) did not attempt to right that wrong and instead used NAB against each other as well, making full use of its unbridled powers to punish opposition politicians while in government. Since becoming Prime Minister, Imran Khan has accelerated this practice under the assumption that it is exactly what his base voted him in power for: to put the likes of Nawaz Sharif and Zardari behind bars until they cough up all of that 'looted wealth' allegedly 'stashed abroad'. His voters quickly realized however that 'going after the corrupt' does not in fact put food on their table, rather stable jobs and a better economy do. As far as repatriation of wealth is concerned, not a dime has been credited to state coffers so far. NAB meanwhile has gone off the rails, making arrests willy-nilly without the necessary evidence to effectively prosecute and get convictions and as a result, politicians, bureaucrats, businessmen and media owners have been put behind bars for months on end only to be released after cases against them lead to no meaningful conclusion meriting sentencing. Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif is back in jail for a second time and on Tuesday was sent on judicial remand after NAB's request for extending his physical remand was denied by an accountability court. Usually, going by timelines of recent cases, the next step will be granting of bail, until a new case will be formulated or an older one revived and the cycle will repeat itself. Observations by the Supreme Court over the unchecked powers of arresting an individual, calling it a violation of basic human rights, have fallen on deaf ears as the government continues to up the ante. Until the NAB Ordinance 1999 is amended, there will be no letup in the misuse of this draconian law. However, for that, the government, opposition and the powers that be must meet somewhere in the middle. As things stand, reaching such a consensus is currently impossible.

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## Struggle for peace

SPECIAL Envoy to Afghanistan for the Trump administration Zalmay Khalilzad has warned that continued unrest and violence in Afghanistan could endanger the agreement reached some weeks ago, during talks between the Taliban and Afghanistan government. The latest problems arose after Taliban attacks in the Helmand province in the south of Afghanistan, which has been a Taliban stronghold for many years. Khalilzad has warned that any deviation from agreement reached could endanger peace, and throw the entire region into yet more chaos and yet further fighting. The Taliban have meanwhile said that any attack in Afghanistan will be the responsibility of the US and will not be accepted. Things then do not look very good. Pakistan as a bystander has already met a delegation from Afghanistan led by Dr Abdullah Abdullah and spoken to the Taliban during the peace process in Doha. However, the entire purpose of that peace process was to lead towards peace. It doesn't seem that it is too close. The fighting that Afghanistan is seeing will further weaken it and could make the government still less able to keep order in a country that has seen continuous chaos since the late 1970s. This would not be welcome. Despite the release of prisoners, as demanded by the Taliban, Zalmay Khalilzad has pointed out that the group is doing very little to stick to the ceasefire it had agreed to. Many had predicted that this could happen. The Taliban have not been good at keeping promises in the past, either in Afghanistan or in Pakistan. For this reason, Pakistan – seen as wielding some influence over the Taliban – had been brought into the process. But whether this will make a difference to the attitude of the group is yet to be seen. The point that all parties in Afghanistan need to understand is that peace is crucial to the people of the land. Of course, instability in Afghanistan, and growing militancy in that country, also directly affects Pakistan. Pakistan then will be keeping a very close watch on everything that is going on in Afghanistan, especially since India has close ties with the Ghani government. The situation is a complicated one. In fact, it has always been complicated in Afghanistan with many countries extremely interested in developments there. And each of them playing some role in events. We must hope that the Afghan people are eventually allowed to play a role in determining their own future and finding a way to bring peace to their troubled land.

# No more secret clauses of Taliban-US agreement

Iqbal Khan

Washington Post's interesting October 12 article reported: "Afghans stunned, worried by Trump tweet to bring home US troops early" indicates the anxiety of the elements whose bread and butter has, for decades, been dependent on the spoils of Afghanistan's war economy. Many Afghan officials and analysts fear that if Trump follows through, abruptly dropping the US-Taliban agreement for a conditions-based and gradual pull-out, the country might plunge again into full-scale war and political mayhem. "If the withdrawal takes place according to the tweet, it will create chaos

ACCORDING to Associated Press, Taliban agreed on October 16 to suspend attacks in southern Afghanistan after the Americans promised to halt all strikes and night raids in keeping with the US-Taliban Agreement of February 29. Occupation forces had been conducting air strikes in support of Afghan forces trying to repel week-long Taliban assaults in southern Helmand province. This development came after a meeting with the US chief negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad and General Austin Miller, commander of US troops in Afghanistan. Americans gave the word that "they would end drone strikes on insurgent positions, as well as night raids and air assaults." So far the US had been in a denial mode about these clauses of agreement, insisting that they would continue to support Afghan Defence Forces, when attacked by Taliban. So now Americans have washed their hands off the intra Afghan fighting. Now it's free for all between Taliban and Ashraf Ghani's boys, and the American troops are poised to keep living happily in Afghanistan, in spectator role—far beyond Christmas! Billion dollar questions are: Did President Donald Trump ever mean what he said in his October 08 tweet about pulling back all troops from Afghanistan before Christmas? And why all of his such attempts to culminate "unnecessary wars" are hitting the same end over and over again? American 'Deep State' consisting of Pentagon-CIA combine, financially propelled by rouge American Defence Industrial Complex has so far overwhelmed Trump, making him eat the dust again and again. Before making complete pull-out statement about Afghanistan, his such announcements for Syria and Iraq had met the same fate. So far, Trump has not been able to end any war through a formal treaty. All such announcements have met same fate—spontaneous rise in violence and reversal of presidential decisions. And who is engineering it? In all probability it is America Deep State with the help of respective local elements who are by now hardened habitual of thriving on war economies of these conflict ridden states. No wonders "send button" of Trump's twitters and rise in violence are near simultaneous. Behind the scene intra-Afghan negotiations are running into problems. Devil lies in details, and the sides participating in intra-Afghan talks reportedly have substantial differences not only in core issues but also in periphery matters. Inside Afghanistan, tempo of fighting is picking up. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad claims another 'reset' with Taliban, on February 29 Agreement, to reduce violence. According to Rebecca Kheel, Trump sowed confusion about the US military plan for Afghanistan by tweeting that "we should have the small remaining number of our BRAVE Men and Women serving in Afghanistan home by Christmas." The

wording of the tweet made it unclear if Trump had actually ordered a withdrawal or was trying to appeal to voters in the final stretch of the presidential campaign. Further compounding the muddle, the presidential tweet came hours after national security adviser Robert O'Brien announced a draw-down to 2,500 troops in Afghanistan by early 2021. Daniel R. DePetris, in his October 13 piece for Defence One "The 20th Year of the Afghanistan War Should Be America's Last", opines that: "US national security interests do not depend on the outcome of the peace talks. It's time to come home". With post tweet confusion galore, General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has declined to endorse Trump's statement that remaining 4,000 US troops in Afghanistan should come home by Christmas. "I'm not going to engage in speculation," Milley said in an interview with National Public Radio (NPR). "I'm going to engage in the rigorous analysis of the situation based on the conditions". Washington Post's interesting October 12 article reported: "Afghans stunned, worried by Trump tweet to bring home US troops early" indicates the anxiety of the elements whose bread and butter has, for decades, been dependent on the spoils of Afghanistan's war economy. Many Afghan officials and analysts fear that if Trump follows through, abruptly dropping the US-Taliban agreement for a conditions-based and gradual pull-out, the country might plunge again into full-scale war and political mayhem. "If the withdrawal takes place according to the tweet, it will create chaos. The peace process will collapse, and we will go back to square one," said Ehsanullah Zia, a former senior Afghan official who heads the Kabul office of the US Institute of Peace. "This is the only thing the Taliban really wanted. People were becoming hopeful, but this sudden tweet has changed the scenario. Now all that investment, all that sacrifice, could go down the drain." Officials in the Ghani administration, however, are playing down the fears and say they can defend their country alone. Shah Mahmood Miakhel, a deputy defence minister, said, "99% of all military operations are planned and executed by Afghans"—a tall claim indeed. Taliban leaders reacted with open delight, welcoming Trump's statement and reportedly telling CBS News that they hoped he will win re-election in November. Later, the spokesman later said his comment to that effect had been "incorrectly" interpreted, after it set off a frenzy of controversy and was rejected by the White House. According to Abdul Khaliq, American forces conducted several airstrikes over the past few days in support of Afghan security force under attack by Taliban in the southern Helmand province, which is against the understanding of the

US-Taliban Agreement of February 29. The Helmand governor's media office said on October 13 that Afghan Special Forces, aided by air strikes from the country's air force, had managed to take back five checkpoints from Taliban control, killing 23 Taliban. Jets and helicopters continued to circle Lashkar Gah on the nights of October 12-13, attacking the Taliban's positions. Afghan security forces have launched a counter offensive in the south against Taliban fighters, government officials stated on October 13. Fighting raged for days in a major insurgent offensive that has overshadowed peace talks. The Taliban assault on Helmand province tests the resolve of the government at the start of talks to end the war, and could complicate Trump's recent pre-election pledge to bring home the remaining US troops by Christmas. However, Colonel Sonny Leggett confirmed on his twitter account that "the strikes over the past two days in Helmand did not violate the US-Taliban agreement." The Taliban need to immediately stop their offensive actions in Helmand Province and reduce their violence around the country. It is not consistent with the US-Taliban agreement and undermines the ongoing Afghan Peace Talks," Leggett's tweet said. The US strikes came after a gun battle around Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province on October 12. There has been sporadic shooting inside the city and residents have fled from the districts because of the fighting. According to spokesman for the provincial governor in Helmand, Taliban had started their coordinated attacks in different parts of the province a week earlier which later intensified. "The Taliban have destroyed several bridges over the main highway, so the highway is closed right now and no one can travel." Many Afghans were angered and disillusioned by the US-Taliban agreement signed on February 29 after a year of negotiations. They felt the Trump administration had made too many concessions in its haste to clinch the deal and to jump-start peace talks between Afghan and Taliban leaders. World has since long gotten used to mercurial twittering outbursts by Trump which he himself also does not take seriously. If he loses elections he will hand over all conflicts to Democrats almost in the same state as he inherited from them. And if he wins he will keep doing what Deep State" likes him to do. Over the past few years, resurgent Taliban have gained control of roughly 80% of the provinces, mainly the rural areas; while major urban district centres are still under government control. And that is the "Divide" that would persist for quite some time weather the occupation forces stay on or depart. — Writer is a freelance contributor, e-mail: Iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com

# Forgotten refugees of Bangladesh

Munaza Kazmi



These Beharis came to this delta region of Bay of Bengal or I should say they became Refugees due to lack of unity within states. Since, back in the year 1971, again a war broke down between the neighbor states of India & Pakistan, however with Indian conspiracy the land of East Pakistan had to be separated from West Pakistan therefore it laid the foundation of what today called Bangladesh

HISTORY offers fascinating pages to unfold. I'm of an opinion that, one cannot move forward without knowing his origins. Today am writing this article to remind us of our forgotten past, one of the darkest ever, unknown & silent topic of forgotten history, the vulnerable, the unjust, the forgotten indeed.... "The Forgotten Refugees of Bangladesh". I hope you people remember Bangladesh was a part of us, which had separated reasoning our irresponsiveness. Fall of Dacca is a never-ending debate & we should take responsibility of it, since it is something unjust from our side, if not today then maybe not in the future. It is known to every mankind, when there is war, there is death on both sides, abduction of rights & unjust, there is the loss of humanity, economy, infrastructure & everything. In-short, there comes victory for no one but the defeat & loss for both. These are the known facts of war, but what if fate prolonged the miseries & make one suffer for a lifetime & for nothing wrong or

evil however for being loyal. Loyal to one's homeland. Such is the condition of 250,000 Urdu-speaking Pakistanis who took refuge in the Geneva camps & other surrounding areas of Bangladesh, on charge of siding with their country back in 1971. They are leading forcefully a vulnerable & unimaginable life of half-naked, starving bellies, unsheltered, without identity, a miserable life, a life of Refugee. The antidote of Beharis is one of the miserable & bad fortune of all the times, today's world knows them as mere Refugees, who were once leading a prosperous & dignified life in their land, they were educated & cultured people, having all the knowledge, wealth & respect. These Beharis came to this delta region of Bay of Bengal or I should say they became Refugees due to lack of unity within states. Since, back in the year 1971, again a war broke down between the neighbor states of India & Pakistan, however with Indian conspiracy the land of East Pakistan had to be separated from West Pakistan therefore

it laid the foundation of what today called Bangladesh. At that time these unfortunate Beharis decided to side with Pakistani Government against the Bangladesh Forces backed by Indian politician & troops. Regrettably, Pakistan Army could not manage to safeguard the sovereignty of East Pakistan & surrendered to the Indian troops, in this way we lost an entire region of East Pakistan. Hence there these Urdu-speaking Pakistanis were labeled as traitors by the new government of Bangladesh & sent to the Bay of Bengal with completely erased identity to lead a life of refugees. Till date they are living unsheltered in small cells, with no food, no education & a proper livelihood, & are forced to live on scraps, women selling their bodies for less than half a dollar for the sake of buying a piece of bread, children dying before reaching the age of five due to malnutrition & filth, permanent starving & vulnerability had housed in these camps, a fall of humanity on which Pakistan is still blind eyed.





## Briefs

## China, Russia vow to up media cooperation

BEIJING: China and Russia will step up efforts in media cooperation in the post-COVID-19 era, according to a video conference for Chinese and Russian media launched Monday.

The conference, which is the 13th of its kind, was attended by more than 40 representatives from administrative departments, central and local media outlets, as well as new-media organizations of the two countries.

Both sides agreed that the mainstream media should report major international events in a comprehensive, impartial and objective way, and stay firm in opposing and resisting false information intended to stigmatize other countries, in a bid to safeguard international justice in the post-COVID-19 era. The two sides have committed to further carrying out press coordination, communication and exchange visits, as well as promoting the translation, broadcasting and publishing of brilliant works from the two nations.

The conference also called for concrete steps to advance cooperation in new-media and media-convergence projects.

## Pakistan asks for proper management

From Page 01

after a pause of seven months as security precaution due to coronavirus pandemic. "While the Embassy of Pakistan and the sub-missions in Afghanistan are committed to implement this new visa policy and to extend maximum facilitation to the visa applicants, we would request the understanding and cooperation of the Afghan people as well as the Afghan authorities to ensure better and secure management of the visa applicants," the Foreign Office said in a statement.

## Bringing down prices govt priority, says Shibli

From Page 01

while business activities are returning to normalcy. He said it is unfortunate that the opposition is trying to mislead the people of Pakistan but it will not succeed in its nefarious designs.

Shibli Faraz said opposition tried its level best to politicize the Karachi incident and today Indian TV channels are showing pictures of opposition leaders in this regard. He said opposition is busy in having confrontation among state institutions and they want to create uncertainty and chaos in the country to deflect attention from their corruption cases. The Minister said it is imperative to take corruption cases to their logical conclusion to save future of Pakistan's coming generations.

## India's COVID-19 tally reaches 7,651,107

NEW DELHI: India's COVID-19 tally reached 7,651,107 as 54,044 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours, according to the data released by the federal health ministry on Wednesday.

The total death toll rose to 115,914, as 717 deaths were logged across the country since Tuesday morning.

Still there are 740,090 active COVID-19 cases in the country, and 6,795,103 people have been successfully cured and discharged from hospitals. Wednesday is the fourth consecutive day when the number of active COVID-19 cases has fallen below the 800,000-mark.

By Tuesday, a total of 97,200,379 COVID-19 tests had been conducted, out of which 1,083,608 tests were conducted on Tuesday alone, according to the data from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

On Tuesday Prime Minister Narendra Modi cautioned citizens to strictly follow the COVID-19 guidelines.

In a televised address to the nation, Modi appealed to all countrymen to wear masks while venturing out of homes, regularly wash hands and maintain social distancing. — APP



BARCELONA: FC Barcelona players celebrate a goal in 5-1 win over Ferencvaros in first game of UCL group stages. — DNA

## Macron urges Putin to boost anti-terror cooperation

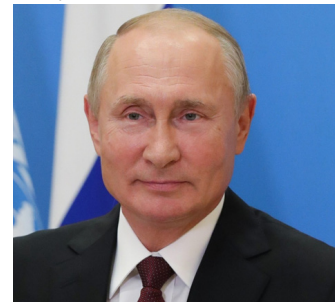
Macron spoke to Putin by phone and said he wanted to see both "a strengthening of Franco-Russian cooperation in the fight against terrorism and illegal immigration", the French presidency said, without giving details

DNA

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday urged Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to boost cooperation to fight terrorism and illegal immigration, following the killing of a teacher by a youth from the predominantly Muslim Russian region of Chechnya. For his part, Putin expressed his condolences over the grisly beheading of teacher Samuel Paty near the school where he worked in a northwest Paris suburb on Friday, calling it "a barbarous murder", the Russian presidency said.

"In this context, the two parties reaffirm their mutual interest in intensifying joint efforts to fight against terrorism and the propagation of extremist ideology," the Kremlin added. Macron spoke to

Putin by phone and said he wanted to see both "a strengthening of Franco-Russian cooperation in the fight against terrorism and illegal immigration", the French presidency said, without giving details.



On Saturday, the day after the murder, the Russian embassy in Paris stressed that the 18-year-old Chechen assailant Abdulkh Anzorov — who was killed by police following the murder — had had no links with Moscow since 2008. "This crime has no relation to Russia because this person had lived in France for the past 12 years," Russian embassy spokesman Sergei Parinov told state news agency TASS. Anzorov arrived in France at the age of six with his family as refugees, thus automatically forfeiting his Russian nationality. Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov on Saturday condemned

the attack and expressed his condolences to Paty's family but he also urged France not to "provoke" Muslims. "Find it in you to admit that Muslims have the right to a religion, and no one can take it away!" he said in a statement on his Telegram channel.

Kadyrov said Chechens had nothing to do with the attack, stressing that Anzorov had been raised in France and visited Chechnya only once — when he was two years old. French Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said Tuesday that Paty would be posthumously bestowed France's highest order of merit, the Legion of Honour.

## Egypt launches 1st restaurant at pyramids

DNA

CAIRO: Egypt launches its first tourist restaurant at the Giza Pyramids plateau late on Tuesday.

"Today, we announce the opening of the first tourist restaurant in the Panorama area of the Pyramids Plateau," Egyptian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Khaled al-Anany said at the opening ceremony.

Dubbed "9 Pyramids Lounge," the restaurant is the fruit of joint cooperation between the Supreme Council and Antiquities and Egypt's Orascom Pyramids Entrainment (OPT), which is a subsidiary of the Orascom Investment

Holding (OIH) group. The restaurant is built in a subtle wooden setting, with pillows scattered on the ground to emulate the Bedouin style. "The restaurant's unique location offers a view of all pyramids in Giza," al-Anany said, stressing that Egypt is keen to establish a tourist and archaeological infrastructure as it will have a positive impact on the tourism sector in the monument-rich country. For his part, Naguib Sawiris, Chairman and CEO of OIH, said his group's main objective is upgrading services provided to the visitors of the pyramids while preserving the area from all forms of pollution as well as creating a fascinating experience for its visitors.

## Olympic swimmer helping Belarus athletes

VILNIUS, Oct 21 (AFP/APP): A few weeks ago, Aliaksandra Herasimenia was a retired Belarusian Olympic swimmer with a stellar career. Now, from her self-imposed exile in neighbouring Lithuania, she heads up a new foundation to help a growing list of Belarusian athletes who have fallen foul of the country's authoritarian government.

"We provide some financial support and look for training facilities," Herasimenia told AFP in an interview in an office used by Belarusian pro-democracy activists in the Lithuanian capital Vilni-

us. On the walls around her are images of the street protests that have shaken the former Soviet republic since a disputed presidential election in August.

With less than a year to go before the Tokyo Olympics, athletes who have spoken out against President Alexander Lukashenko have been kicked out of the national team, some even arrested for joining protests.

Herasimenia estimates that 10 athletes have been arrested and more than 20 banned from training in Belarus and so need assistance from her fund. — APP

## Bulgaria president leaves Estonia after virus scare

DNA

TALLINN: Bulgarian President Rumen Radev cut short a visit to Estonia on Tuesday after finding out that he may have been exposed to the coronavirus, officials said.

Radev went to an investment forum on Monday, hosted by Estonia, before going to his

hotel to quarantine — later returning to Bulgaria. The president said on Tuesday he was "in excellent shape" and had no symptoms.

Images from the Three Seas Initiative conference, which was streamed on the internet, showed Radev on a panel with the Polish and Estonian heads of state, among others — none of

them wearing masks. "It was discovered yesterday afternoon that before arriving in Estonia, President Radev had been in contact with a Covid-positive person," Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid said on Facebook. "After the information reached Estonia, all the necessary measures were taken, and the Bulgarian delegation

self-isolated at the hotel." Bulgarian health minister Kostadin Angelov said earlier that Radev — whose role is largely ceremonial — had been in contact with an official who had also quarantined. Bulgaria has seen a significant uptick in coronavirus infections in recent weeks, leaving many provincial hospitals struggling.

## India returns Chinese soldier

DNA

BEIJING: The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldier, who went missing while helping local herders find the lost yak near the China-India border on Sunday, has been returned to the Chinese border troops by the Indian army early Wednesday morning, according to a statement of PLA.

The move came after China's foreign ministry on Tuesday urged India to honor its commitment to return the soldier.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian has said at a press briefing on Tuesday that China hopes India hands over the soldier as soon as possible and works with China to promote the implementation of the consensus reached at the 7th round of talks.

## China wants football to be 'bridge with the world'

In rare comments to international media, Liu talked of "using football to motivate the whole nation"

DNA

SUZHOU: China wants to unite its 1.4 billion people through football while also using the sport as "a bridge to work with the rest of the world", a top FA official says.

Chinese Football Association Secretary General Liu Yi explained to AFP what lies behind the country's aggressive push to become a major football power by 2050.

Under President Xi Jinping — described by state media as an "avid soccer fan" — the world's most populous country has grand plans to host and even one

day win a World Cup. In rare comments to international media, Liu talked of "using football to motivate the whole nation". "Football is a beautiful game to educate the new generation of young Chinese and also to (help) our nation to team up as one and be more cohesive," he said.

Like China's success in recent Summer Olympics, Liu called football "another tool to unite a nation and also demonstrate what we can deliver. "And football, as I said, is a bridge between China and the rest of

the world. Everyone plays football." Expanding on that theme, which comes as China is embroiled in a variety of disputes with countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia, Liu said: "China is still open. "And the development of Chinese football needs help from external stakeholders like the AFC (Asian Football Confederation), FIFA and also other federations as well, and other leagues as well.

"We are definitely going to carry on with that kind of partnership, working with all the international governing bodies, brands and stakeholders."

## UK museums fight for survival as virus resurges

The Victorian house in the heart of the British capital where the famous storyteller wrote "Oliver Twist", "The Pickwick Papers" and "Nicholas Nickleby" in the 19th century was eerily empty earlier this week

LONDON: Faced with reduced opening hours, far fewer visitors and plummeting income, London's picturesque Charles Dickens Museum is typical of how British cultural institutions are being financially strangled by the pandemic. The Victorian house in the heart of the British capital where the famous storyteller wrote "Oliver Twist", "The Pickwick Papers" and "Nicholas Nickleby" in the 19th century was eerily empty earlier this week, days after the government ramped up virus restrictions in the city.

That is perhaps not surprising. The residence, which houses many of Dickens' personal effects,

has only been open three days a week since late July following Britain's months-long nationwide lockdown. Elsewhere, other museums, theatres and concert halls — from the most intimate to flagship names — are struggling to survive and forced to lay off hundreds of employees. Cindy Sughrue, director of the Charles Dickens Museum, said the shutdown was "a real shock to us" as the overwhelming majority of its income, which comes from admission fees, souvenirs and special events, disappeared overnight.

"We're an entirely independently funded museum... so without much warning we had to suddenly

figure out how we were going to survive," she told AFP. Today only around a fifth of the typical 60,000 annual visitors are still coming through the doors, in large part because half the normal footfall is from overseas — and they are staying away. With Britain imposing two-week quarantine requirements on many foreign visitors, there is little prospect of an imminent resurgence. The country has suffered Europe's worst death toll from the virus, with nearly 44,000 deaths. As different households are again banned from mixing indoors, domestic visitors are unlikely to make up the shortfall.

"One of the most frustrating as-

pects for everyone is that we have no idea of when it's going to end," said Sughrue. "Each time there's a new government announcement, or a new restriction comes in... we see a drop in our numbers and it gradually increases again. It's a bit of a roller-coaster."

The Charles Dickens Museum had hoped for a very different 2020, marking the 150th anniversary of the author's death. But it is not alone in having best laid plans wrecked by the coronavirus. Some cultural institutions have not reopened since the nationwide lockdown was eased over the summer, daunted by needing to comply with new sanitary rules and restrictions

on visitor numbers. Under pressure, the government released an aid package of £1.57 billion (\$2.03 billion, 1.72 billion euros) but many in the cultural sector have branded it insufficient. The Charles Dickens Museum, which usually has an annual turnover of £850,000, has received around £500,000 from a range of sources which will keep it going until the spring. "I'm absolutely confident that when the pandemic is over and international tourism returns to London we will absolutely bounce back," said Sughrue. "But no one knows exactly when that point is going to be reached, and that's my concern now." — APP

## Thai army dismisses rumors of coup attempt

DNA

BANGKOK: The Thai army on Wednesday dismissed rumors of a coup attempt as some infantry carrier vehicles were spotted on the eastern outskirts of the capital Bangkok. Deputy army spokeswoman Col. Sirichan Ngathong categorically denied that a batch of 14 Stryker infantry carrier vehicles, which were seen transported on a motorway from the Laem Chabang port in the Chonburi province, was part of a coup attempt as rumored on social media. Her remarks came against the backdrop that massive protests were staged on Bangkok's streets.

Sirichan said the U.S.-made infantry carrier vehicles were merely destined for an ordnance battalion in the Saraburi province, passing the eastern outskirts of the Thai capital.

## UEFA abandons attempt to hold under-19 finals

DNA

PARIS: UEFA has given up on holding its under-19 championships in Northern Ireland and cancelled the tournament, which had already been postponed several times.

The governing body of European football issued a statement, dated Tuesday evening, which said that the decision was "due to the current unresolved epidemiological situation in Europe and resulting travelling difficulties." The under-19 Euros were originally scheduled for Northern Ireland at the end of July 2020, with a final on August 1, but were postponed first to November and then to March next year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The tournament was also a qualifier for the under-20 World Cup, scheduled for Indonesia starting on May 20, 2021. UEFA announced that it had selected its five top-ranked under-19 teams, France, England, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal, as its entrants. Spain, who won the last under-19 Euros in 2019, miss out. UEFA also said it had decided to postpone a plan to restructure the competition into three tiers, like the Nations League, and will run the 2021/22 under-19 competition in the traditional format.

## Fears grow in S. Korea over suspected flu shot deaths

DNA

SEOUL: Concerns over the safety of seasonal flu shots are mounting here after more potential flu shot fatalities were reported Wednesday, putting health authorities in hot water amid its push to curb the "twindemic." So far, five people have died after receiving flu vaccines under the state-led free flu shot scheme this year, although no evidence has been found to show those deaths are linked to flu shots. As of Tuesday, 8.3 million people had received free flu shots under the state-run program.

According to health authorities, a 68-year-old man on the country's southern resort island of Jeju and a 78-year-old man in Daegu have died after getting the shots, raising the number of fatalities to five. Health officials said they are investigating whether there is any causality between their deaths and flu vaccines, noting that both men had underlying diseases. Fears over flu vaccines emerged last Friday after a 17-year-old boy in the western port city of Incheon died two days after receiving a flu shot. Similar fatalities were reported from a 78-year-old man in Gochang, North Jeolla Province, and from an 82-year-old man in Daejeon on Tuesday. Both received flu shots Monday. "We feel regret over people's concerns over free flu shots and are looking into the situation in a grave manner," said Vice Health Minister Kim Gunglip at a press briefing. "But first, we must find out the exact cause of the recent deaths." According to health authorities, the deceased people got flu vaccines manufactured or distributed by Korea Vaccine, Boryung Biopharma, LG Chem or Shinsung Pharm.



## Briefs

## Obama steps up support for Biden

DNA

WASHINGTON: Former president Barack Obama holds his first rally Wednesday in support of US election front runner Joe Biden, while Donald Trump campaigned frantically and accused his opponent, who stayed home in Delaware, of going "into hiding." Two weeks before the polls, the contrast in campaign strategies between Trump, 74, and Biden, 77, has never been more pronounced: the Republican president led another rally in the battleground state of Pennsylvania Tuesday, while Democrat Biden stayed mostly out of sight ahead of a pivotal televised debate later in the week. Polls show Biden ahead and, with the clock running down, he appears confident. In any case, few could ever out-campaign Trump, who has rediscovered his old energy with daily, sometimes twice-daily, rallies around the country since recovering from Covid-19 just over a week ago.

His latest rally was in Erie, a former Democratic stronghold that he won in 2016, symbolizing his successful capture of the white working-class vote that had long been loyal to the left and which Biden has been trying to claw back. Trump's message with a fortnight left to go has boiled down to a mix of optimism, telling Americans that the coronavirus pandemic is practically over, and ever more extreme attempts to tar Biden as corrupt - even saying Tuesday that he wants the attorney general to open an investigation ahead of the election. But, underlining how hard it is for him to escape the subject of the Covid-19 crisis, Trump's wife Melania canceled plans to accompany him to Pennsylvania at the last minute, complaining of a "lingering cough" following her own bout with the virus.

## MEPs back EU's Big Tech clampdown

BRUSSELS: European Parliament has given the EU executive strong backing to draw up new rules against big tech that could become the most draconian ever against the likes of Google, Amazon or Facebook. MEPs meeting in Brussels on Tuesday weighed in on the "Digital Services Act", an upcoming EU legislation that aims to put sweeping limits on the tech giants and even see the firms forced to split up.

In a series of something called initiative reports, a huge majority of MEPs called on the EU to "future-proof" rules on tech firms that would go further and faster than competition law.

If adopted, the rules would again place Europe at the forefront of a global clampdown on big tech just as antitrust authorities in the US launched proceedings against Google, largely following the EU's playbook. "The eternally long competition proceedings against Google and other platform operators show that they can hardly be dealt with using the normal instruments of competition law", said German MEP Markus Ferber. - APP

## Air pollution killed 500k newborns in 2019

DNA

WASHINGTON: Air pollution killed 476,000 newborns in 2019 according to a new global study which said that nearly two-thirds of the deaths came from noxious fumes from cooking fuels. More than 116,000 Indian infants died from air pollution in the first month of life and the corresponding figure was 236,000 in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the State of Global Air 2020.

The estimates were produced by the US-based Health Effects Institute and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's Global Burden of Disease project. The authors wrote they relied on a growing body of evidence linking mothers' exposures during pregnancy to air pollution with the increased risk of their infants being born too small (low birth weight) or too early (preterm birth). These conditions are associated with serious complications and already account for the vast majority of neonatal deaths in both regions.



ISLAMABAD: Mian Anjum Nisar, President FPCCI presenting Crest to Dr. Moeed Yusuf, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on national Security during his visit to Federation House Karachi. Also present are Sheikh Sultan Rehman, Khurram Ijaz, Zubair Baweja, Vice Presidents FPCCI, Khurram Sayeed, Zakaria Usman, Mian Shaikat Ahmed, Asim Ghani and others are also seen in the picture. - DNA

## FPCCI pledges support to PM Imran Khan's vision

During the meeting with Dr. Moeed Yusuf, SAPM on National Security, President FPCCI discussed various avenues of economic prosperity and also highlighted some issues confronted by trade and industry of Pakistan

DNA

KARACHI: Mian Anjum Nisar, President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan's narrative should be supported by all segments to build image of Pakistan as moderate and investment friendly destination. During the meeting with Dr. Moeed Yusuf Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security and focal person for Economic Outreach program President FPCCI discussed various avenues of economic prosperity and also highlighted some issues confronted by trade and industry of Pakistan. For Economic Outreach Program

he offered full cooperation of FPCCI and informed that being the national apex institute of the private sector in Pakistan, FPCCI has its vast outreach at national and international levels and was strongly connected with all leading economic and trade blocs. FPCCI advisory and thematic committees could be instrumental to achieving vision of the Prime Minister for Economic Outreach. Mian Anjum Nisar while presenting suggestion for Economic Outreach Program also highlighted some issues that are affecting industrial growth and economic development of the country. He said that our competitors, due to better level playing field have attracted huge investment and have pen-

etrated in the world leading export markets. While we are still advocating to remove basic hurdles such as expensive and interrupted energy supply. Tariffs and duties on basic raw materials for exports-oriented industry. Insufficient production of agricultural products which are input material of industry such as cotton etc. inadequate infrastructure to support cross borders trade particularly availability at ports. Responding to the participants of the meeting Dr. Moeed Yusuf Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security and focal person for Economic Outreach program said that the Prime Minister has given vast representation of stakeholder while National Security

better coordinate with each and every ministry to harmonize our stance. The National Security Division has created an economic outreach roadmap for economic diplomacy, which will now be processed through the ministries and the assessment of economic potential of ministries. He further said that a mapping exercise of ministries and government organisations has been initiated by this division. This mapping exercise will identify Pakistan's comparative advantage in priority countries. He presented the model that will develop Pakistan's narrative. He told that the Economic Outreach program will engage vast representation of stakeholder while National Security

will serve as focal point. He further informed that to expand Pakistan trade in goods and trade in services his team has identified various areas of improvement. While concluding Mian Anjum Nisar President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry said that we have seen different industrial policies by different regimes but now industrial policy should be formulated that assures protection of the existing industries and does not produce negative growth. He demands thermal efficiency of electricity plants that should not consume more fuel for producing electricity. He also demanded charter of economy and national image building policies.

## China's plastic machinery getting popular in Pakistan

DNA

BEIJING: Commercial Counsellor of Pakistani Embassy Badar ur Zaman here said that the plastic machinery exported from China is getting popular in Pakistan, and collaboration in the plastic industry between the two countries is increasing. China is one of the major suppliers of plastic materials like PVC, PE, and other materials. It's also one of the largest exporters of man-made fiber. "Chinese investors have a strong interest in investing in the textile industry of Pakistan, and we are looking forward to organizing more and more events in the machinery industry." According to Gwadar Pro on

Wednesday, he expressed these views at the opening ceremony of the 18th International online Exhibition for Plastic & Packing Industry, 17th International Exhibition for Food & Beverage Processing Packaging Technologies. The event was co-organized by China National Machinery Industry International Co. Ltd, CMEC International Exhibition Co., Ltd, and Pegasus Consultancy Pvt. Ltd. Guo Chunshui, Commercial Counselor of the Economic and Commercial Office, Chinese Consulate General in Karachi, said at the occasion that there is a great potential for cooperation between China and Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh in a meeting with Managing Director IMF, Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan (MENAP), Ms. Kristalina Georgieva through video link. - DNA

## Kyrgyzstan sets new polls as new PM reassures Russia

DNA

BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN: Kyrgyzstan's electoral authorities said Wednesday parliamentary polls annulled over unrest would be repeated in December as acting leader Sadyr Japarov moved to assure Russia of the two countries' strategic partnership. The Central Asian country's elections commission said the fresh elections would be held on December 20, after a previous vote was annulled over political chaos that unseated a president and rattled Russia. Members of the Central Electoral Commission agreed to the new date unanimously, the body said in a statement. Allega-

tions of vote-buying in the October 4 elections raised by international monitors and losing parties sparked a protest that escalated into clashes between police and demonstrators. Central government all but disappeared in the week that followed as rival groups contested executive positions. Sooronbay Jeebekov resigned as president last Thursday, allowing populist Japarov - who had been approved as prime minister the day before - to also take over as acting head of state.

Jeebekov was the third Kyrgyz president to resign on the back of political unrest since independence in 1991. This turbulence has concerned Russia, which maintains a military base in the



country and is a destination for hundreds of thousands of Kyrgyz migrants. Japarov received Moscow's ambassador Nikolai Udovichenko on Wednesday, a government press release said, in his first publicly acknowledged talks with a Russian official since

becoming prime minister. Japarov thanked Udovichenko for Moscow's "important role" in stabilising the country, after Dmitry Kozak, deputy head of Vladimir Putin's presidential administration, held talks with Japarov and Jeebekov last week. Japarov said Russia "was and remains a trusted strategic partner of our country" and gave assurances that the Russian language would keep its constitutional status. Udovichenko congratulated Japarov on becoming prime minister and said that Moscow was ready to assist Kyrgyzstan in the modernisation of the tax system and customs procedures, according to the release. Foreign Minister Ruslan Kazakbayev is scheduled to meet with

his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow on Thursday, a Russian foreign ministry statement said last week. After agreeing a date for new parliamentary elections, lawmakers must now schedule a presidential election. According to the constitution, 51-year-old Japarov will not be able to run for office unless he leaves his posts before the electoral period begins. The new leader has suggested he will seek to change the constitution and restructure parliament but the legislature has yet to discuss any concrete plans. Kyrgyzstan is the most democratic - but also the most politically volatile - of the five former Soviet Central Asian states.

## Bank Alfalah shows operating profit growth

DNA

KARACHI: The Board of Directors of Bank Alfalah Limited in its meeting held on October 21, 2020, approved the Bank's unaudited condensed interim financial statements for the period ended September 30, 2020. The Bank's operating profit at Rs.20.614 billion showed a growth of 11.4% compared to the corresponding period of 2019 despite lockdown in the country and drop in the policy rate by 625 bps during the year. Subjective provisioning, general provision buildup against advances and upfront impairment against equities contained profit after tax to Rs. 8.331 billion, which translates into earning per share of Rs. 4.69 (Sep 2019: Rs. 5.20). On the revenue front, net markup income and non-markup income showed combined growth of 10.1% with strong contribution from capital gains on government securities of Rs. 2.185 billion and FX earning of Rs. 2.762 billion. Fee and commission income remained muted due to lower transactions volume and regulatory waivers of branch and digital banking fees. Operating expenses were contained at 9.5% compared to same period last year. This increase was largely driven by staff costs, IT support and maintenance fee, full year impact of new branches opened last year along with an overall impact of inflation and rupee devaluation.

## Abacus and SNP announce partnership

DNA

LAHORE: Abacus Consulting, a leading business transformation firm announced a strategic partnership with SNP Schneider-Neureither & Partner SE (SNP Group), a global leader in data transformation, to simplify the complex digital transformation of data and processes. SNP offers an automated transformation path using its proprietary BLUE-FIELD™ approach powered by the CrystalBridge® software platform, allowing greater speed, accuracy and ease in dealing with SAP migrations. Whilst Greenfield and Brownfield approaches are familiar to many SAP practitioners and customers, the innovative BLUE-FIELD™ methodology flexibly combines the advantages of both approaches to deliver greater success for clients when it comes to speed and agility. As a leading system integrator in Pakistan and the EMEA region, Abacus is a multi-award winning SAP partner with deployments in over 30 countries. With this partnership, Abacus aims to enable its clients in modernizing application workloads smoothly and help them leverage the advantages of digital platforms of the future.

## UBG to announce its panel for FPCCI election on Oct 24

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The United Business Group (UBG), the largest alliance of chambers and trade associations in the country, will announce its panel on Oct 24 for the annual election of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry being held on Dec 30 next. President SAARC chamber of Commerce and Industry Ifkhar Ali Malik who is also Chairman UBG while talking to media here on Wednesday said that high level 20 members core committee meeting has been convened to make public the names of its panel candidates on all seats which will hold marathon session on Oct 24 with UBG patron in chief SM Muneer in chair. He said that the UBG provincial level scrutiny committees will submit their recommendations to core committee for the award tickets to the best candidates contesting elections for the slots of President, SVP and VPs. He said that the best highly educated young traders enjoying the highest degree of integrity with a spirit of serving the business community will be awarded tickets on merit with consensus. He said under rotation policy, federation President will belong to Sindh province.



**Briefs**

**Russia reports 15,700 COVID-19 cases**

RUSSIA: Russia registered 15,700 COVID-19 cases over the past 24 hours, slightly down from the all-time high of 16,319 reported a day earlier, the country's COVID-19 response center said Wednesday. Russia's cumulative number of coronavirus cases has grown to 1,447,335, including 24,952 deaths and 1,096,560 recoveries, the center said in a statement. Moscow has seen a spike in COVID-19 infections, tallying 4,389 new cases over the past day, bringing the city's total to 377,017. Along with many other European countries, Russia has been witnessing a steep growth in COVID-19 cases over the past weeks, after many restrictions were lifted and social gatherings were seen during the summer. — APP

**Over 8000 healthcare workers contract virus**

ISLAMABAD: Over 8,000 healthcare professionals in Pakistan have now tested positive for the coronavirus, according to the ministry of national health services, regulation and coordination. As of October 19, 87 healthcare workers have died, while there are a total of 8,272 infections in the profession. Separately, 7,902 medics have recovered since the outbreak in Pakistan in late February. The official data also notes that of the sickened healthcare workers, majority, therefore 61% are doctors. Additionally, 927 nurses have tested positive. Majority of the infected healthcare professionals have been reported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2,494, followed by Sindh, 2,255, Punjab, 1,815, Islamabad, 647, Balochistan, 536, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 323 and lastly Gilgit-Baltistan, 202. While a large chunk of the death toll has been recorded in Sindh, where 34 healthcare workers have died to date, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 21.

**Total 330 candidates to contest GB elections: EC**

DNA  
GILGIT: Election Commission Gilgit Baltistan issued final list of candidates for upcoming general election scheduled on November 15. According to Election Commission GB, from 584 candidates who initially submitted their nomination papers, 218 candidates have withdrawn their candidatures and finally total 330 will contest election from 23 constituencies of GB. From Gilgit Baltistan Assembly constituency No 1 Gilgit 25, from GBA 2 Gilgit 26, from GBA 4 Nagar 18, from GBA 5 Nagar 26, from GBA 6 Hunza 15, from GBA 7 Skardu 6, from GBA 8 Skardu 9, from GBA 9 Skardu 4, from GBA 10 Skardu 11 candidates will contest election. Similarly, from GBA 11 Kharmung 10, from GBA 13 Astor 12, from GBA 14 Astor 22, from GBA 15 Diamer 17, from Former 16 diamer 13, from GBA 17 Diamer 14, from GBA 18 Diamer 09, from GBA 19 Ghezer 23, from GBA 20 Ghezer 26, from GBA 21 Ghezer 20, from GBA 22 Ghanchy 10, from GBA 23 Ghanchy 15 and from GBA 24 Ghanchy 5 candidates will contest election in GB. From Gilgit Baltistan Assembly (GBA) constituency No 3, election schedule had been changed due to sudden demise of PTI's GB President Syed Jafer Shah. Now polling for this constituency will be held on November 22.

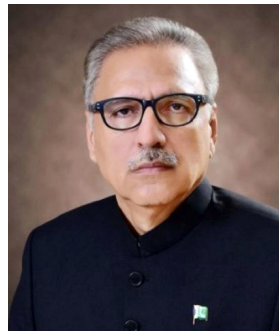
**China lauds President Arif Alvi's remarks about CPEC**

We have noted these reports and we commend President Alvi's comments on the CPEC," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson, Zhao Lijian said

**AGENCIES**

BEIJING: China on Wednesday lauded President Dr. Arif Alvi's remarks about the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and terming it as a visionary pilot project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which not only served to promote socio economic development of Pakistan and China but also aimed to enhance regional connectivity and shared prosperity. "We have noted these reports and we commend President Alvi's comments on the CPEC," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson, Zhao Lijian said

during his regular briefing held here. "As President Dr Arif Alvi said the visionary CPEC as important pilot project of the BRI not only serves to promote China and Pakistan's socio economic development but also aims to enhance regional connectivity and share prosperity," he added. He said, since its launch tangible outcomes in areas like energy, transportation infrastructure and ports had been achieved making concrete contributions to Pakistan's national development. Zhao Lijian remarked that both Pakistan and China supported exploring possi-



bility of opening the corridor to third parties based on consensus through consultation. "If we look at Gwadar port as an example nearly 20,000 tonnes of commodities such as wheat, sugar and fertilizers have been transferred through the port to Afghani-



stan creating almost a 1000 temporary jobs," he added. He said that China firmly supported the development of CPEC and stood ready to work with Pakistan to fully implement the consensus reached between the two leaders, focus on cooperation, social development,

livelihood, industry and agriculture while advancing current projects to turn CPEC into a demonstration programme for high quality development of the BRI and bring more benefits to the two peoples. In an interview, President Alvi had said that he was optimistic about the future of Pakistan. As a result of CPEC projects, Pakistan was going to emerge as international geo strategic Economic hub. He said, the CPEC also created favourable conditions for realizing connectivity between China, Pakistan and central Asian countries and Pakistan would further elevate cooperation with

China various areas and accelerate high quality development CPEC. In a response to a question, he contradicted remarks of the US Secretary of State about influence of China's infrastructure deals from Laos to Montenegro to Pakistan. He said that for some US politicians, attacking China was a checklist they need to do every day. "This is so true for Pompeo," Zhao Lijian said that China's relationship with Laos, Pakistan and Montenegro was a traditional friendship and the US Secretary of State Pompeo did not need to waste his breath on sowing discord between us.

**COAS visits LOC forward areas**

DNA  
RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Qamar Javed Bajwa visited forward areas at Chamb Sector along LOC. COAS was briefed on latest operational situation including Indian CFVs deliberately targeting local residents living near LOC. Interacting with officers and men, COAS appreciated them for continued vigil and remarkable operational preparedness. COAS emphasised upon troops to extend all out support to local population affected by unprovoked Indian ceasefire violations. Remain steadfast, utmost your duties with most sincerity and devotion, COAS remarked. Commander Rawalpindi Corps, Lieutenant General Azhar Abbas received COAS at the LOC.



ISLAMABAD: Maulana Tahir Ashrafi, Special Representative of Prime Minister on Religious Harmony calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

**2 CAA officers stopped from travelling to Pak from US**

The action is followed by the imposition of Rs100,000 fine by the CAA against Qatar Airways over non-compliance of SOPs against novel coronavirus

**ATHAR SUFI**

KARACHI: Two officers of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) have been stopped from travelling back to Pakistan from a flight of a foreign airline from the United States (US). The CAA officers including inspectors of flight standard Masood Elahi and Shahzad Anwar have reportedly reached the Texas airport without undergoing coronavirus screening tests which led the foreign airline administration's refusal to issue boarding cards to them. Both passengers were will-

ing to travel to Dallas to Karachi and Lahore en route Doha through the flight. The spokesperson of the aviation authority told media that both officers have undergone coronavirus tests, however, boarding cards were not issued by Qatar Airways' administration due to conduction of their tests other than the required laboratory. Later, the CAA officers underwent COVID-19 screening tests from the prescribed laboratory. The action is followed by the imposition of Rs100,000 fine by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) against Qatar Airways over

non-compliance of standard operating procedures (SOPs) against novel coronavirus. The aviation authority had taken punitive measure against Qatar Airways last week for violating the COVID-19 SOPs after a passenger from Mozambique to Karachi flight, QR-604, was transported despite being tested positive for coronavirus. Besides imposing fine, the aviation authority had stated in its letter that the foreign airline will also bear complete expenses for the testing and quarantine of the passengers. It said that any recurrent violation of COVID-19 re-

lated SOPs shall be dealt with in a more stringent manner including but not limited to revocation of operating authorization granted to Qatar Airways for flight operations to and from Pakistan. In the global synergetic drive to curb the spread of COVID-19, CAA had issued SOPs for international passengers travelling from chartered and private aircraft to Pakistan which made it mandatory to possess negative RT-PCR testing certificate from point of original departure for category B listed countries prior to commencement of journey.

**Iran kicks off aerial military exercise**

TEHRAN: Iran's Air Defense began a large-scale military exercise on Wednesday in different parts of the country, Tasnim news agency reported. In the air defense drill, codenamed Guardians of Velayat Sky-99, units from the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) have participated. According to the report, Iranian fighter jets, bombers, homegrown drones, missile systems, radars, electronic warfare equipment, and communication systems have been employed in the war game. The exercise is aimed at combat preparedness and to consolidate the air defense capabilities of the Iranian armed forces in simulated real-war conditions. The participating units will practice tactics against aerial threats in low, medium and high altitudes. — APP

**Hascol Marketing License of KPK suspended**

SAIFULLAH / DNA  
ISLAMABAD: Hascol Petroleum Limited (HPL) was found operating illegal/unauthorized storage and selling of petroleum products (petrol & diesel) at Amangarh Depot. Based on the investigation and the documents, provided by HPL, it was proved that HPL remained involved in severe violations of Law/Rules and failed to provide reasonable justification for the operation of this depot despite of OGRA's clear directives for the stoppage of operation of Amangarh depot till the fulfillment of all legal requirements & OGRA's permission in January 2020. The company was served with Show Cause Notice on October 13, 2020 on the illegal operation of Amangarh Depot & to explain the facts by appearance. After hearing and due consideration, the Authority suspended Hascol Petroleum Limited's marketing activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and directed them to immediately stop all marketing activities/ sales at outlets in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa till further orders. Further, in order to avoid any inconvenience to general public, all Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are directed to augment supplies to their retail outlets in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In addition to the above, the Authority also imposed a penalty of Rs. 10 Million on breach of rules by HPL.

**Only a sovereign Afghan govt can avert civil war: Hekmatyar**

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The only durable solution for peace in Afghanistan is that the US should withdraw its troops and a non-aligned, independent and sovereign government should be formed by Afghans in light of their beliefs and traditions without any interference; otherwise the country would slither into another civil war, warned veteran Afghan politician and Hizb-e-Islami's supreme leader Eng. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. He was addressing a large number of foreign policy analysts, practitioners and journalists at his exclusive talk organized by Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, at the conclusion of his three-day official visit to Pakistan on the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here on Wednesday. The forum was chaired by Executive President IPS Khalid Rahman and moderated by Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain. Pakistan's special envoy for Af-

ghanistan Ambassador (r) Muhammad Sadiq was also present on the occasion. Hekmatyar said Afghans invested about \$20 billion in other countries including Turkey and the Gulf states during the war. He suggested that Pakistan should facilitate Afghan investors and businessmen thus enabling them to bring their investment to Pakistan. The facilities he termed essential in this regard include permission to open bank accounts, buy property on the basis of Afghan passports and long-term visas like those provided by certain European countries. The Afghan leader, who met the top-level leadership during his three-day visit to Pakistan, said he had held talks with Pakistani officials in this regard and was hopeful that it would be implemented soon. Hekmatyar, who has twice served as Afghan prime minister in the 1990s, said it was the requirement of justice that those who have sacrificed for Afghanistan for so many years should have the right

to govern the country now. Afghan groups should have the opportunity to enter into negotiations with each other at a neutral venue. The discussion agenda would be withdrawal of the US from Afghanistan and an independent sovereign government. The other national issues such as constitution and type of government should be left for later after peace is restored. These are national issues and no external forces have the right to decide about these matters, he said. He said the US has been de-

feated in Afghanistan without achieving any goals and considering the corrupt and incompetent Kabul government the main reason for its failure. It will be a mistake if the US now adopts another policy other than leaving Afghanistan, he added. Hekmatyar said unfortunately some countries think a gap will be created once the US leaves Afghanistan which they will be able to fill. He hoped the Americans will not repeat the deadly mistake of the Soviets who established their

puppet government in Kabul before leaving Afghanistan. He warned rival countries against transferring their hostilities to Afghan soil. Afghanistan should not be used by the US against Russia, by India against Pakistan, and by Iran against Saudi Arabia, etc, he added. He said India and Iran are also supporting Ashraf Ghani's government, which is surprising as it is weak. The continuation of war in Afghanistan is not in anyone's favor, including India. The reason behind India's

support of the current Afghan government could be Kashmir, he said, adding that India must not transfer their Kashmir war to Afghanistan. Hekmatyar said his group supports the US-Taliban agreement although they have their own observations and reservations about the process and also want to be part of the negotiations. However, it contains the vital point that the US will leave Afghanistan, though its timeframe could have been reduced. He said the majority of political parties are not supporting the Afghan government's stand on the peace process. The current government in Kabul is not ready to enter into negotiations with all political parties. Hekmatyar said negotiations will start between Hizb-e-Islami and Taliban with the aim to make the peace durable and lasting. Peace is not achievable without bringing every stakeholder on board. He said Pakistan helped the US in Afghanistan but the Americans still pre-

ferred India over Pakistan. This is because superpowers have their own designs and they do things as per their own interests. Hekmatyar said his visit to Pakistan comes at a time when the Afghan peace negotiation process is at a critical stage. His impression was that Pakistan is keen for an Afghan-owned peace process in Afghanistan. He said the Pakistani officials have assured that all mutual problems will be solved gradually through mutual understanding. He was realistic that the peace process would not have been possible without the support of Pakistan. Earlier Khalid Rahman, in his introductory speech, said that Gulbuddin was one of the first leaders to offer resistance to the Soviets in the 1980s. He played a very important role in Afghanistan ranging from the battlefield to politics. He stressed that those who wish to see peace in Afghanistan must come together, terming it a healthy sign that Pakistan and Afghan leaders are beginning to engage in productive talks.



ISLAMABAD: Hizb-e-Islami's supreme leader Eng. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar addressing a session organized by Institute of Policy Studies. — DNA