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Prime Minister Imran Khan urges Muslim leaders to show unity

FM Qureshi lauds Turkish support in FATF meeting

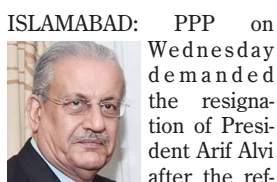
'Armenia using reactive missiles to attack civilians'



Briefs

PPP demands President's resignation

DNA



ISLAMABAD: PPP on Wednesday demanded the resignation of President Arif Alvi after the reference filed against Justice Qazi Faez Isa was dismissed as "illegal" by the Supreme Court in its detailed judgment on the matter. "There is a total break down of systems in the country. Inflation [in the country] continues to rise and there is no one ready to answer for this. This has also invariably led to a rise in terrorism-related incidents," Raza Rabbani lamented.

Ishq-e-Rasool (SAW) week announced

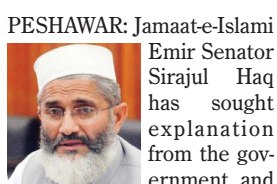
SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to observe Ishq-e-Rasool (SAAW) Week from 31st of this month to the sixth of the next month in connection with Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAAW).

This was announced by Minister for Religious Affairs Noor-ul-Haq Qadri while talking to the media in Islamabad on Wednesday. The Minister said during the week, Mahafil and ceremonies will be held across the country in which Ulema will highlight various aspects of Seerat-un-Nabi (SAWW). He said declamation contests on Seerat-un-Nabi (SAWW) will also be organized at educational institutions.

'Rise in terrorism alarming'

DNA



PESHAWAR: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Senator Sirajul Haq has sought explanation from the government and security agencies regarding the sudden rise in terror incidents across the country. "Terrorists attacked in the heart of the city on Tuesday morning. How they reached there and disappeared after completing their mission despite presence of numbers of check posts and personals of intelligence and security agencies in every nook and corner of Peshawar," questioned the JI chief while talking to journalists after the visit of Madressah Zubairia Peshawar on Wednesday.

NA pledges support to Azerbaijan

Pakistan's National Assembly resolution reaffirmed Pakistan's complete political, diplomatic and moral support to the brave people of Azerbaijan

A.M.BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly of Pakistan unanimously passed a resolution in which the house expressed deep concerns over deteriorating situation in Nagorno-Karabakh region of republic of Azerbaijan. The resolution moved by PML (N) Ayaz Sadiq condemned the illegal, immoral and unethical brutal acts of aggression by Armenian forces in Karabakh. The resolution reaffirmed Pakistan's complete political, diplomatic and moral support to the brave people of Azerbaijan. It urged UN and the International Community to play its role for restoration of peace and security in the region. Pakistan has reinstated its firm support to Azerbaijan at many levels. Earlier, Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly Asad Qaiser had sent a letter to his Azerbaijani counterpart Sahiba Garayeva to condemn Armenia's deliberate violation of the ceasefire and shelling of Azerbaijani civilians, the Azerbaijani parliament told Defence.az. In the letter, Qaiser expressed

serious concern over the shelling of Azerbaijani civilians by the Armenian armed forces. "Such actions continue a violation of the UN Charter and international humanitarian law," said the speaker, stressing that Pakistan does not recognize Armenia as a state.

Armenian rockets kill over 21 civilians

BAKU: The armed forces of Armenia hit the city of Barda of Azerbaijan with a "Smerch" multiple rocket launcher system causing serious civilian casualties. As a result of the treacherous missile attack on the city of Barda 21 civilians, including children were killed and more than 70 people seriously injured. Targeting yet another time the residential area in the city situated far away from the conflict zone, which has no signs of military targets exposes once again the terrorist nature of Armenia. - DNA

More News on Page 07

Qureshi lauds Turkish support in FATF meeting

In their telephonic discussion, the two foreign ministers talked about matters of mutual interest

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Wednesday appreciated Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's "concrete" stance on rising Islamophobia in a call with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu. In their wide-ranging telephonic discussion, the two foreign ministers talked about bilateral relations and matters of mutual interest, according to a statement from the Foreign Office. Qureshi offered felicitations to Cavusoglu on Turkey's 97th Republic Day. "The foreign minister appreciated

FM warns Afghan counterpart of spoilers

SAIFULLAH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Mahmood Shah Mahmood Qureshi had a telephone conversation with Afghan Foreign Minister Hanif Atmar. Views were exchanged on matters relating to Afghan peace process, bilateral relations, repatriation of Afghan refugees, and regional connectivity. The Foreign Minister reiterated that Pakistan supports a peaceful, united and stable Afghanistan. He underlined Pakistan's positive contribution to Afghan peace process and expressed the hope that the Afghan leadership would seize this historic opportunity through Intra-Afghan Negotiations to establish lasting peace in Afghanistan by achieving an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement. The Foreign Minister added that Pakistan will respect the decisions taken

Continued on Page 06

Prices of 94 medicines increased by DRAP

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has issued notification of increase in prices of 94 medicines including medicines used for fever, headache, heart disease, malaria, diabetes, sore throat and flu. As per details, the federal government had approved an increase in the prices of 94 medicines by anywhere from 9% to 262%. The federal government was forced to increase the prices of medicines due to various reasons including low availability in the market, appreciation of dollar and rising cost of raw materials. The medicines whose prices have been increased also include antibiotics, abdominal pain, medicines for eye, ear, tooth, mouth and blood infection, skin diseases and post-childbirth drugs. Of these, 68 medicines are local and 26 are imported. The price hike was reportedly unavoidable because of the aforementioned reasons. But, it is said that pharmaceutical companies will not be allowed to raise prices any further until June 2021.



PESHAWAR: Chief Of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa inquiring the health of Peshawar blast's injured person. - DNA

COAS directs troops to remain vigilant

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Wednesday directed the troops to remain vigilant in the wake of recent terrorist incidents by miscreants. The Army Chief visited Upper Dir Malakand Division where Corps Commander, Peshawar Corps, Lieutenant General Noman Mahmood welcomed the COAS, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release. The COAS was briefed on Stabilization Operations and Border Management. The Army Chief appreciated the performance of troops on border fencing in harsh, rocky and difficult terrain. Later on, the COAS also visited the children and others injured in the Madrassa blast at Lady Reading Hospital in Peshawar and inquired about their health.

On the occasion of Kashmir Black Day on October 27, he said that the enemy once again bathed the innocent children of the madrassa in blood to revive their dark history and nefarious intentions. - APP

APNS notifies Eid Milad holiday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sarmad Ali, Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society has announced that the member publications of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society will observe Friday, October 30, 2020 as closed holiday on account of EID MILAD-UN-NABI. Consequently, there will be no morning newspapers on Saturday, October 31, 2020 whereas the evenings not appearing on Friday, October 30, 2020 may bring out their issues on Saturday, October 31, 2020.

PM urges Muslim leaders to show unity

- shared on twitter the image of the two-page letter urging the leaders to act urgently

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday wrote a letter to leaders of the Muslim countries for a collective action to counter the growing trend of Islamophobia. The prime minister shared on twitter the image of the two-page letter, urging the leaders to act urgently against Islamophobia. "Today, we are confronting a growing concern and restlessness amongst our Ummah as they see the rising tide of Islamophobia and

PM declares PDM leaders 'pickpockets'

LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday while declaring the leadership of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) - an 11-party alliance - formed against the government 'pickpockets' said that the accountability will continue no matter what they do as this is the decisive time for Pakistan. Addressing Insaf Doctors Forum at Aiwan-e-Iqbal in Lahore on Wednesday, he said that all the 'pickpockets' come together on the same stage and make noise, adding that for the first time, they see accountability. "They are scared because for the first time there is a prime minister who will not be blackmailed," he said. The prime minister said that the system which does not have punishment and retribution always fails, adding that the mafia was creating hurdles in the way of change in the country. - DNA

Pak rejects illegal amendments in IIOJK's laws

The highly condemnable Indian action is yet another clear violation of the UNSC resolutions

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday categorically rejected the Indian government's illegal amendments in land ownership laws in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) promulgated under 'J-K Re-organisation (Adaptation of Central Laws) Third Order, 2020'. "The highly condemnable Indian action is yet another clear violation of the UN Security Council resolutions, bilateral agreements between Pakistan and India, and international law," the Foreign Office said in a statement. The Foreign Office said the IIOJK was an internationally recognized dispute under the relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions and international law.

"India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, and subsequent measures, particularly the domicile law and now the land ownership laws, are aimed at changing the demographic structure of IIOJK to convert the Kashmiris into a minority in their own land," it said. "Changing the demographic structure of the occupied territory is a violation of the 4th Geneva Convention and constitutes war crime," it added. The Foreign Office said that "all these measures and laws, lacking legal and moral legitimacy, are forced upon the oppressed people of IIOJK through the barrel of the gun with an unprecedented military siege in the most militarized zone in the world". - APP

Strict SoPs issued for COVID 19

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operations Centre has issued a fresh warning to business owners, warning them to shut down before or by 10 pm. The decision is aimed to curb the further spread of an already rising number of coronavirus infections and pertains to: - Restaurants, - Wedding halls, - Commercial markets, - Shopping malls, and Recreational spots have been asked to shut down by 6pm., Essential services such as medical stores, clinics and hospitals will remain open. The development comes on the back of an announcement made by the NCOCC earlier in the day, mandating the use of masks by all citizens across the country, in all public spaces, citing a rising number of coronavirus cases. To that end, it is now compulsory for everyone to wear masks in government and private offices as well as in markets and shopping malls.

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Irregularities unearthed in sugar mills transactions

The provisions of the law stipulate that subject to the issuance of notice to show cause u/s 22, the Initiating Officer has to attach the benami property within 90 days in case the Initiating Officer intends to file the reference in the case. The law additionally provides 60 days to the IO for the drafting of the case statement to further forward it to the Adjudicating Authority

EXCLUSIVE

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Benami Zone II, Lahore had taken up the investigation of 5 sugar mills for the verification of benami transactions. Purchasers with the largest quantities as declared by the mills in their sales tax returns were randomly summoned to ascertain their authenticity as buyers of sugar. The exercise unraveled the occurrence of benami transactions at a large scale during the preliminary investigation. Keeping in view the HR constraints, logistical limitations and narrow time-lines involved in the proceedings, detailed scrutiny was initiated in two sugar

mills initially i.e. Alliance Sugar Mills and Hunza Sugar Mills. As far as rest of the sugar mills are concerned, information will be gathered including information from the banks and proceedings will be started after concluding the already initiated cases. Show cause notices u/s 22 of Benami Transaction (Prohibition) Act 2017 have been served upon M/s Hunza Sugar Mills and M/s Alliance sugar mill whereby the mills with the actual buyers of sugar and sugar mills brokers have been alleged to have conducted benami transactions. Perusal of the sales tax returns of Alliance Sugar Mills and Hunza Sugar Mills showed that sugar worth PKR 19,125,774,948 and PKR 5,164,464,58

respectively, for TY 2017-2020, had been sold by mills to unregistered persons. To check the authenticity of these buyers, Benami Zone II, Lahore issued summons to multiple purchasers who in their written statements denied knowledge of any such transaction. During the course of investigation, it was extracted that the unregistered purchasers being shown in sales tax returns of the aforementioned sugar mills were ostensible owners including low paid workers or truck drivers, rather than the real owners, which to date remain unaware of their involvement in sugar purchase. The provisions of the law stipulate that subject to the issuance of notice to show cause u/s 22, the Initiating Officer has to attach the benami property within 90

days in case the Initiating Officer intends to file the reference in the case. The law additionally provides 60 days to the IO for the drafting of the case statement to further forward it to the Adjudicating Authority. In case the IO finds no aspect of benami transaction during the course of investigation within 90 days of issuance of show cause notice, he is bound by law to drop the proceedings. With the filing of reference, the Adjudicating Authority is under obligation to issue notice to the beneficial owner, benamidar and any interested party within 30 days of receipt of reference requiring them to file their reply. In case benamidar/beneficial owner is involved in the commission of benami transaction, the Adjudicating Authority

would pass order holding the property referred in reference as benami property and passing order to that effect. The law binds Adjudicating Authority to decide reference within one year from the date of filing of reference. The Adjudicating Authority, after holding the property benami, initiates proceedings for confiscation of benami property. Besides confiscation of benami property, the law provides prosecution of benamidar, beneficial owner and abettor etc. Subsequent to the trial, the law provides that the person involved in benami transactions would be sentenced to imprisonment extending from one year to seven years and additional payment of 25% of fair market value of the property involved.

Briefs

Govt to announce incentive for farmers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of National Food Security and Research has formulated an agriculture incentive package for Rabi season 2020-21 to boost per-acre output of seasonal crops particularly wheat to achieve self sufficiency in staple food production to maintain food safety and security in the country. In order to achieve the set targets of these major and minor crops during the Rabi season, the government was working and prepared a set of incentives for farmers to provide them agriculture inputs on subsidized rates during the season, said Dr Imtiaz Ahmad Gopang Food Security Commissioner of the ministry. Talking to APP here on Wednesday, he said that the Rabi package would be comprised on subsidy on fertilizers, herbicide, pesticides for enhancing per-acre output of wheat and other crops, besides provision of certified seeds and subsidy on agriculture credit as well as other inputs during the season. All the modalities of the package has been finalized and would be unveiled in next few days, he said adding that farming communities across the country would get benefit from the measures announced by government, he added. Under the Rabi crops incentive package, he said that government would provide Rs32 billion as fertilizer subsidy and others pesticides to enhance output of crops during season.

SMEDA to organize interactive workshop

DNA

HYDERABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) will organize an interactive workshop in "Human resource as a business partner" here at the secretariat of Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on November 5. According to announcement here on Wednesday, the workshop will be organized under National Business Development Programme (NBPD) with objective to enable the participants to increase their knowledge and effectiveness on the role of an HR business partner, progressive HR organization, development effective HR strategy, formulating effective talent management mechanism, performance management based practices, understanding HR competencies, developing employees talent and career development, understanding global human resource, developing culture of learning and significance of digital learning interventions. The entrepreneurs, SMEs owners, directors, managers, assistant managers, supervisors and all those who want to enhance their knowledge and skills in the areas can participate in this workshop.

Five Indian released

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Attorney General on Wednesday informed the Islamabad High Court (IHC) that five Indian prisoners had been released and repatriated to their country after completion of their imprisonment sentence in cases pertaining to espionage and terrorism. Chief Justice Athar Minallah conducted hearing on the petitions filed by Indian High Commission claiming that their citizens were not released yet although they had completed imprisonment sentence. The DAG Tayyab Shah informed the court that Indian prisoners were released on October 26, 2020 and sent back to their country. The lawyer of Indian high commission further claimed that three more Indians were still in jail despite completion of their sentences. The DAG pleaded that he would inform the court after taking information from the authorities, adding that the matter of some prisoners was pending with the review board. The court disposed off one petition and adjourned hearing on another till November 5. — APP

ISE REIT appraises share holders of constant growth

The shareholders of the Company approved the financial statements of the Company for the financial year 2020. The Company also announced final cash dividend of Re. 0.33 per share for Financial Year 2020 for its shareholders



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Thirty first Annual General Meeting of ISE Towers REIT Management Company Limited formerly Islamabad Stock Exchange was held on October 28, 2020. Chairman ISE REIT, Zahid Latif Khan, chaired the

AGM which was attended with the Board members. The shareholders of the Company approved the financial statements of the Company for the financial year 2020. The Company also announced final cash dividend of Re. 0.33 per share for Financial Year 2020 for its shareholders. The Company has been regularly paying the

cash dividend since the financial year 2017 increasing every year. The Board of Directors apprised the shareholders that Company has been recording a constant growth over the past few years. This year was another successful year in terms of profitability, revenue and return to the shareholders, despite the COVID-19

impact. The Company exercised control over its expenditure. The Chairman apprised the shareholders about future REIT / real estate projects of the Company. He also briefed that the Company for diversification of its business, has been acquiring a registered trustee company as its subsidiary. The shareholders applauded the

Company's growth and the Board of Directors for their contribution for growth of the Company. At the end, Zahid Latif Khan thanked the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan and Government of Pakistan for their continued support and placed his gratitude to the customers, shareholders, board members and staff.

Smart lockdown is an ideal strategy:ADB

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Asia Development Bank (ADB) Wednesday commended the Prime Minister Imran Khan's smart lockdown strategy as being ideal in striking a balance between lives and livelihoods. The ADB Vice President Shixin Chen, during a virtual meeting with the Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, also lauded the socioeconomic coverage extended to the marginalized section of the society. He shared Asian Development Bank's commitment to continue its support in the future, according to press statement issued by the Finance Ministry. The Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Division, Mr. Khuroo Bakhtiar, Country Director ADB, Ms. Xiaohang Yang, and the Executive Director, ADB, Shahid Mahmood also attended the meeting.

In his opening remarks, the Adviser Finance appreciated the strong support extended by the ADB for fight against Covid-19. The Adviser acknowledged ADB's long standing partnership and firm commitment towards Pakistan to bring about essential reforms in priority areas like energy, transport, water and urban services, and the social sector. The Adviser Finance shared a brief overview on the current economic situation and highlighted the measures taken by the Government to protect the vulnerable from the pandemic. The government had to shift from its pre-Covid fiscal tightening in order to provide relief to the masses and businesses during these testing times. He said, ADB's support to the Ehsaas Program was appreciated and areas of mutual interest, like effective resource mobilization and enhancing domestic productivity, were discussed for future collaboration.

Open court held for public issues

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: On the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, Provincial Minister for Public Prosecution Ch. Zaheer-ud-Din held an open court in the Assistant Commissioner's Office, Jaranwala to hear public grievances and issues related to various departments / institutions and directed to provide immediate relief to the people. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, Acting CPO Kashif Aslam, Assistant Commissioner Jaranwala Zainul Abidin, SP Nasir Mahmood Bajwa, Tehsil Administration and Police Officers were also present.

The Provincial Minister for Public Prosecution listened to the issues related to the revenue, Education, Municipal Committee, Police and other departments. He said that effective and expeditious steps would be taken for the solution of the problem. He said that close liaison was being established with the people and no effort would be spared in resolving their legitimate issues. He said that the process of holding open courts would continue on a regular basis and action would be taken against the officers who were lax in resolving the issues of the people. He asked the officers to remain available at their offices and solve public problems.

Metro Expands its business footprint in Multan

The simple but impressive inauguration ceremony was also graced by H.E. Bernhard Schlagheck, Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan



DNA

MULTAN: METRO, Pakistan's largest organized wholesaler and food specialist today launched METRO Wholesale Center at Multan, its 10th in the country. It was inaugurated by Makhdoom Shah MehmoodQureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan. The simple but impressive inauguration ceremony was also graced by H.E. Bernhard Schlagheck, Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan. On the occasion, Marek Minkiewicz, Managing Director METRO Pakistan said, "The Southern Punjab's capital Multan with a population of about a million people is a very attractive and important market for METRO. Multan is characterized by a variety of hotels, restaurants and caterers as well as many small

and mid-sized retailers. Altogether these branches form the key target group of METRO. We are therefore firmly convinced that Multan offers a great potential for our sophisticated self-service wholesale concept." He further added, "With the new Multan Store we not only aim at strengthening the documented economy as an exchequer collector but also offer local businesses a reliable supply source of up to 90% locally produced products and also implement a modern agriculture supply chain. The new store offers METRO's promise of - everything under one roof, competitive pricing and uncompromising quality." Expressing his views, Shah MehmoodQureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan said, "I am delighted to be here to inaugurate this unique project that has come about, in the shortest possible time. Indeed

METRO store will serve as a landmark for Multan, and will set a new mark for service and quality for the people of Multan. To me it is a vote of confidence on the economic revival of Pakistan." The German Ambassador, H.E. Bernhard Schlagheck also took the stage and said "METRO is a prime example of Germany's direct investment in Pakistan, of over 100 million Euros, as it remains to date one of the leading investors in modern wholesale cash & carry business from Germany in Pakistan. It is continuously expanding with addition of state of the art format store in Multan, new convenience stores and online business by the name of "Freshly" and "metro-online.pk" respectively." The store will be open seven days a week and will be offering its superior quality wide range of products in both food and non-food category.

PTI govt is business-friendly:CM

LAHORE: A delegation of Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) led by its President Mian Tariq Misbah-ur-Rehman called on Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office and discussed matters about the traders and industrialists. The Chief Minister assured to early resolve the problems and said PTI government was business-friendly as it was ensuring ease of doing business to promote trade and industry. The LCCI's one-window operation model would be extended to industrial estates and abolishing of the annual fee of Hajj and Umrah tour operators would be reviewed. The water tariff issue would also be solved and the committee under Commissioner Lahore would be reactivated to resolve the problems of the commercial markets. Traders would also be given representation in this committee, he added. Usman Buzdar announced to construct new parking plazas in Lahore and asked the traders community to identify land for this purpose. The Chief Minister said he was saddened over losses of traders due to Hafeez Centre fire and steps would be taken for compensation of losses in the light of recommendations of a committee constituted for this purpose. The consultation process would continue and problems of small traders would be resolved on a priority basis, concluded the CM. — APP

ATC extends physical remand of Shafqat Ali

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court on Wednesday extended physical remand of Shafqat Ali alias Bagga, co-accused in motorway gang rape case, for another ten days. Accountability Court Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta conducted the case proceedings, wherein police produced the accused on expiry of his physical remand. A prosecution argued before the court that the police recovered the club used to smash the car window, on pointation of the accused but further custody was required for recovering victim's cash and ATM card. He pleaded with the court for extending physical remand of the accused for another 15 days. At this, the court extended physical remand for ten days and ordered for producing the accused on November 7. On September 9, the accused- Abid Malhi and Shafqat Ali, allegedly raped a woman at gunpoint in Gujarpura area while she was waiting for help on the motorway after her car ran out of fuel. It is pertinent to mention here that Abid Malhi had also been arrested by police on October 12, after remaining fugitive for a month. He had been sent to jail for identification parade. An FIR of the incident was lodged with the Gujarpura police under various sections of the Pakistan Penal Code and the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA). — APP

Arrangements finalised to celebrate Jashn-e-Eid Melad

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: All administrative and security measures have been completed for the celebration of Eid Melad un Nabi (PBUH) in a dignified manner throughout the district. In this regard, the cooperation of the members of the Peace Committee was essential for maintaining the atmosphere of religious harmony, unity and brotherhood. This was stated by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali while addressing the members of District Peace Committee held in the Committee Room of his office. Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Afifa Shajia, District Manager Aqaf Shahbaz Hussain, Punjab Police and officers of other departments were also present. The meeting was attended by Sahibzada Zahid Mahmood Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Anwar, Sahibzada Faiz Rasool Rizvi, Mufti Zia Madani, Maulana Muhammad Riaz Kharal, Syed Jafar Naqvi, Ifukhar Naqvi, Mumtaz Hussain, Chacha Abdul Rashid, Islam Bhatti, Mian Tanveer Riaz and others. Welcoming the members of the Peace Committee, the Deputy Commissioner said that their excellent services in maintaining the atmosphere of social peace and religious tolerance were commendable.

Pakistan Navy conducts live weapons firing in N-Arabian Sea

On the occasion, the Chief of the Naval Staff reassured that Pakistan Navy is ready to thwart any aggression against Pakistan's maritime frontiers and to make defence of the country impregnable

DNA

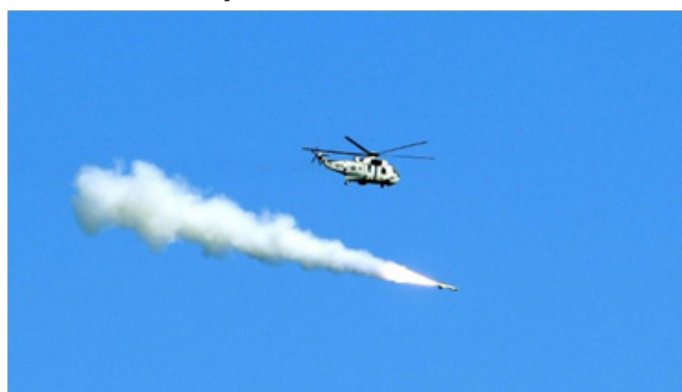
KARACHI: In an impressive fire power display, Pakistan Navy Fleet units demonstrated their optimum standard of combat readiness through live weapon firing of anti-ship missiles in North Arabian Sea. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi graced the occasion as Chief Guest and witnessed the event along-with other senior naval officers. The missiles launched from Pakistan Navy Surface and Aviation platforms (fix and rotary wing) successfully hit their intended targets. The successful

firings have re-affirmed PN's war fighting capability and combat potential. Chief of the Naval Staff expressed his entire satisfaction on the operational

readiness of Pakistan Navy and its preparedness to defend the national maritime interests. He also commended the officers and men for their commitment

and professionalism. On the occasion, the Chief of the Naval Staff reassured that Pakistan Navy is ready to thwart any aggression against Pakistan's

maritime frontiers and to make defence of the country impregnable. Pakistan Navy stands fully prepared to tackle threats across the entire spectrum of warfare.



Briefs

Face-mask mandatory at public places

ISLAMABAD: The district administration on Wednesday imposed section-144 in the federal capital for a period of two months, making wearing face-mask at public places mandatory to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

District Magistrate Shafqat Hamza, in a notification, said the section-144 had been imposed to ensure compliance of COVID-19 SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) among general public, following the advice of epidemiologists of DC COVID Nerve Center.

"Given the rising positivity of COVID-19 cases it becomes essential that the general public must use/wear face mask while visiting public places in Islamabad Capital Territory," he said. - APP

IT Minister launches Google's CS First Program

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication along with Tech Valley Pakistan, Telecom Foundation and Virtual University has launched a nationwide program with Google to help kids learn coding along with other IT skills.

A ceremony in this regard held here at the committee room of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication on Wednesday, said a press release. Federal Minister inaugurated the Google CS First Program. Secretary IT Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui was also present on the occasion. CS First is an early age coding program for kids aged between 9 to 14 and consists of a free computer science curriculum that makes coding easy to teach and fun to learn through video-based activities, with different themes like sports, art, and game design.

"CS First Program is the comprehension of Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of Digital Pakistan and is an important stepping stone in introducing digitalization in Pakistan", said Syed Amin Ul Haque, Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication. He said CS First Program will prove best platform for Pakistani students.

The platform which will be used in this regard is "Scratch" platform, a specialized tool researched and developed by MIT. As an official Google partner, Tech Valley Pakistan will assist the MoITT with the roll-out of the program, starting from the Telecom Foundation schools. - APP

80% positivity ratio in 11 major cities: NCOC

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Wednesday informed that around 80 percent disease spread and increase in positivity ratio was recorded in 11 major cities across the country. The NCOC meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar was told that at present 4,374 lockdowns were imposed with 30,610 people restricted under lockdown. The Forum emphasised that wearing of face mask was mandatory while moving out of homes in closed places with large crowds and public areas.

It added that wearing of face mask was must in all offices both government and private sector. NCOC directed provinces to ensure compliance on wearing of face mask SOPs particularly bazaars, shopping mall, public transport, restaurants and others. The 11 major cities with increased disease spread and positivity ratio included Quetta, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, Peshawar, Islamabad Capital Territory, Hyderabad, Mirpur, Karachi, Gilgit and Muzaffarabad. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Families of diplomats and members of civil society paying homage to victims of Armenia attacks on the innocent civilian population of Azerbaijan. - DNA

NTC committed to improve technology education quality

"The service structure needs to be based on a vertical growth, opportunities to compete for research, and technologically oriented positions in the country, including entrepreneurship in technologies relevant domains"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Technology Council (NTC) is committed to working for the betterment of engineering technologists and improving the overall standards of technology education and curriculum in the light of contemporary challenges.

This was stated by Chairman NTC Imtiaz Gilani while chairing the 6th NTC meeting held at the High-

er Education Commission (HEC). Chairman HEC Tariq Banuri also attended the meeting through video link. The meeting was also attended by newly appointed members, including Vice Chairman Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar and other ex-officio members. The Chairman NTC said that the significant issues of engineering technologists needing immediate attention include approval of their service structure.

"The service structure needs to be

based on a vertical growth, opportunities to compete for research, and technologically oriented positions in the country, including entrepreneurship in technologies relevant domains." The NTC meeting participants appreciated HEC's initiative for announcement of 200 scholarships for technologists. They took important decisions with regard to streamlining academic and governance activities at NTC. A committee was constituted to

make the technology education in line with the HEC's Undergraduate Education Policy 2020. It was also decided to recommend the inclusion of one representative of technologist associations as the Council Member. "If the associations fail to recommend one person and give more than one name, the Chairman NTC may appoint the most competent and well-versed nominee as Member." With a realisation that the engineering technologists are not get-

ting due recognition in Pakistan as compared to the developed world, where technologists have an edge of practical hands-on approach to problem-solving, the NTC Chairman and members expressed a resolve to take tangible measures for betterment of engineering technologists in the country. The meeting concluded with a resolve that NTC must go with its broader dimensions in emerging technologies benefitting humanity and boosting the national economy.

NUST holds online research seminar

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: An online research seminar titled, "The Security-Development Nexus in Post-Conflict North Waziristan" was jointly organised by the NUST Centre for International Peace & Stability (CIPS) and the Hanns Seidel Foundation Pakistan (HSF) here the other day. The principal aim of the seminar was to showcase findings of the research project titled, "Unravelling the Contextual Realities in Post-Conflict North Waziristan: Understanding Displacement, Resettlement and Post-Conflict Development." The guest speakers at the occasion were Lt Gen Muhammad Masood Aslam, (Retd) and Dr Ingrid Nyborg, Associate Professor at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Commenting on the State strategies in post-conflict contexts, the former remarked that "a holistic and people-centric strategy should be implemented and the war zones be converted into peace zones, which means that the writ of the state is not enforced through the military, but rather through the civilian law enforcement agencies." Echoing similar concerns, Dr Nyborg laid emphasis on the needs of the people in post-conflict environments and contended that "attention to human security was crucial to merge the security and development agendas." These broader insights were sculpted to elucidate the research findings on the case of North Waziristan, presented by the research lead, Dr Muhammad Makki, the Head of Department (Research) at CIPS, who stressed the need for understanding the specificities of contexts in post-conflict reconstruction, so that the policy and practice could be coalesced for sustainable development and durable peace. The interactive session of the seminar included PhD and Master's students of CIPS, and also brought together an audience including policymakers and academics. The seminar underscored the efforts of the Government of Pakistan for post-conflict development in North Waziristan.

World Tsunami Day to be marked on Nov 5

ISLAMABAD: Like other parts of the globe, World Tsunami Awareness Day will be marked on November 5 across the globe including Pakistan the day encourages the development of national and community-level, local disaster risk reduction strategies to save more lives against disasters. A tsunami is a series of enormous waves created by an underwater disturbance usually associated with earthquakes occurring below or near the ocean. By the year 2030, an estimated 50 per cent of the world's population will live in coastal areas exposed to flooding, storms and tsunamis. Having plans and policies in place to reduce tsunami impacts will help to build more resilience and protect populations at risk. World Tsunami Awareness Day was the brainchild of Japan, which due to its repeated, bitter experience has over the years built up major expertise in areas such as tsunami early warning, public action and building back better after a disaster to reduce future impacts. - APP

7500 cops to ensure security for Milad un Nabi (SAW)

RAWALPINDI: As many as 7500 cops will be deployed in Rawalpindi region to ensure security of the processions of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) to be celebrated on Oct 30 (Friday). Rawalpindi Regional Police Officer (RPO) Imran Ahmar has directed the police officers of Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum and Chakwal to finalize all the arrangements to provide foolproof security cover to 352 Milad processions and 91 Mahafils, to be organized in the region in connection with Milad un Nabi (SAW). Over 1000 volunteers would also be deployed along with Police personnel. Punjab police under their security strategy would make concerted efforts with the help of other departments concerned aimed at maintaining law and order and to avert any untoward incident. All arrangements are being finalized in the region to provide foolproof security cover to all the processions of the region. According to a police spokesman, under the

security plan formulated for 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal, foolproof security arrangements would be finalized while maximum police personnel would be on security duty in the region. Traffic Wardens, Punjab Constabulary, Elite Force, Special Branch, Mohafiz Squad, Ladies Police personnel and volunteers would provide security cover to the main Eid Milad un Nabi processions of the region while there would also be representatives of Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajran, District Peace, Milad and Seerat Committees of the four districts. He said elaborate security arrangements would also be made for Taxila, Gujjar Khan, Murree, Kahuta, Kotli Sattian tehsils and other areas of Rawalpindi district where all available resources would be utilized to ensure security foolproof. Police reserves would also be on high alert to meet any eventuality, he informed. Ulema, Mushaikh and religious scholars of different sects have also been tak-

en on board to promote religious harmony in the region. Strict checking of vehicles is being made at entry and exist points of the cities.

There would be strict monitoring of the main processions while Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras have also been installed to ensure the security of the main procession of Rawalpindi district. Parking of vehicles would not be allowed at the route of the procession, he said.

No one would be allowed to stand on roof tops of the commercial and residential buildings situated along the route of the main processions while armed police personnel would be deployed on the rooftops of the buildings.

Police patrolling had also been enhanced in many areas of the region. Special checking of the route of the main procession would be completed before start of the procession and bomb disposal squad would clear the route on 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal. - APP

Radio deficit stands at Rs 1 billion

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan on Wednesday informed the National Assembly that Radio Pakistan was running into deficit which stood at Rs one billion adding that contractual employees were laid off to overcome the deficit. Replying to a calling attention notice raised by Kishwer Zehra and others regarding termination of hundred of employees including contractual employees from Radio Pakistan, the minister said services of 749 contractual employees were terminated who had been recruited without following rules and regulations. It was very difficult to run an organization with a huge financial deficit and the ministry has to take such a tough decision to lay off the contractual employees, he said. He said all those employees were recruited during the tenure of past governments and no rules and regulations were followed to recruit them. Out of total terminated employees, 225 were closed relatives of those who were already working in Radio Pakistan and they were recruited without following any merit, he said. The Minister said Radio Pakistan received a grant of Rs 4373 million against its expenditure of Rs 5600 million. Radio has total revenue Rs 285 million while its shortfall was estimated as Rs 1200 million, he said. - APP

Deputy Speaker expels PPP lawmaker from NA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri on Wednesday directed to expel a PPP lawmaker from the House when he protested in front of his dais over not considering his question during the Question Hour. The starred question of PPP MNA from Karachi Syed Agha Rafiullah was at the top of the question list and its reply was not received. During the question hour, the Chair skipped this question and moved to the next question. PPP MNA Agha Rafiullah protested over it in front of the Chair's dais following which the Chair warned him for several times to follow rules for the decorum of the House. Over his continuous protest, the Chair initially directed to expel the protesting lawmaker from the House for the current sitting and later for the current session. He directed the Sergeants-at-arms to expel him from the House. The PPP female lawmakers gathered around Agha Rafiullah and did not give access to Sergeant-at-arms towards the MNA. The other opposition lawmakers, who were on the walkout from the House during this episode, returned to the House and the PPP MNA Raja Perwaiz Ashraf apologized from the Chair on the behalf of MNA Agha Rafiullah. The Chair reconsidered his decision and directed the PPP MNA to leave the House for a moment and then return.

IRSA releases 77,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 77,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 56,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1526.51 feet, which was 140.51 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 33,100 cusecs and outflow as 38,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1211.05 feet, which was 171.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 6,200 cusecs and 22,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 42,800, 39,000 and 13,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 5,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 3,800 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP

CGSS, Sialkot Varsity discuss personal development

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: An exclusive one-day training session on, "Mastering the Essentials of Personal Development" was organized by Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad at University of Sialkot.

The training session comprised of three segments and was organized to equip the students of University of Sialkot in basic academic skills for their personal and academic development.

Mr. Tariq Khattak, Entrepreneur and Member Board of Experts, CGSS delivered training on, "Personal and Professional Success, creating a balance through taking control of Circumstances". He gave a detailed presentation on the axioms of a successful life. He explained the attributes of a successful life and what are the circumstances that govern a successful life. He discussed that the definition of success is different



for every individual and every person has their own journey for achieving it. He stated that a balance between personal and

professional life is the key. One must govern the circumstances and take control of life challenges. He explained the Attributes of life:

Growth, Career, Recreation, and Contribution. Ms. Palwasha Nawaz, Project Executive, CGSS addressed the stu-

dents and explained the basics of interpersonal skills in everyday life situations. She highlighted the importance of Interpersonal Skills including Verbal Communication and Non-Verbal Communication. She explained how one can excel in academic and professional domain using effective interpersonal skills. She stated that Interpersonal skills are important for communicating and working with groups and individuals in your personal and professional life. People with strong interpersonal skills tend to build good relationships and can work well with others. Ms. Minahil Shawal Afridi, Research Executive, CGSS conducted training on the essentials of Academic writing. She explained the students regarding basics of academic writing to pursue a goal oriented life and academic career. She emphasized on the importance of reading and writing for promoting national development.

Briefs

Comm'r
to ensure
facilities at
Panagahs

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Captain (Retd) Muhammad Mahmood has directed the Deputy Commissioners of all the districts of the division to arrange special meals for the people residing in Panagahs on the occasion of Milad-ul-Nabi. In a letter written to all DCs, he instructed that provision of warm beds in shelters and protection from cold must be ensured in view of imminent winter season. The Commissioner directed the officials to inspect the shelters in their areas, review the daily menu, quality of food and the attitude of the deployed staff.

SAPM to
inaugurate
'Moto Tunnel'

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change (SAPM) Malik Amin Aslam will inaugurate reopening of the historical 'Moto Tunnel' near the pipeline track in Ayubia National Park today. According to the details, the tunnel has been renovated by the ministry of the climate change in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa forest and wildlife department under the UNDP and global environment facility funded sustainable forest management (SFM) project. — APP

QAU
conducts
disinfected
spray

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of the Vice Chancellor Qaid-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad Dr Muhammad Ali, the team of estate office under the supervision of Director estate and AR estate conducted the disinfectant spray on Wednesday at different department of the university. The campaign will continue in whole campus, particularly in teaching and research building, hostels, medical center, admin building, transport section and all residential colonies, a press release on said. This is in continuation of the steps taken by the university to ensure safe and healthy environment for the good health and well-being of students, staff and faculty's. The students, faculties and other staff were requested to strictly follow the SOPs by wearing masks, maintaining social distance. Together we can work for safe and healthy campus, it added. — APP

IESCO
issues power
suspension
programme

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension schedule in various areas of its region for Thursday due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Chaji Mar, Methal, Kohistan, Kashif Gul, Mix Industrial, Model Town, Ghazi Kohli, Sher Shah Suri, Jhanda, Rawalpindi-III, Askari-7, 502 Workshop, CNC, State Bank, Humayun Road, VIP, Chakri, Arsalan Poultry Farm, SPD, Priyal, Bani, Model Town, Pepsi, Sarwar Shaheed, Swan Industrial, RCCI, Highway, Tariq, Iqbal Town, Al Noor Colony, CDA, Faziya, Nogi, Faziya, Sukho, Mahouta, Kohar, Fatehpur, Gagan Feeders, from 08:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Marvi, Ghauri Garden, Abbasi Market, G-10/1, International School, Carriage Factory, Belta Road, New Shahullah Dulla, T&T, Company Bagh, Barin, Upper Topa, Bari Imam, Eid Gah, E Block, Shamsabad, kurry Road, Gangal, Service Road, Zafar ul Haq Road, Liaquat Bagh, Major Masood, Rata, Jamia Masjid, Gawalmandi, Mangtal, Gulzar Shaheed, Mall Road, Sir Syed Road, Jail Park, PWD-1, Mehboob Shaheed, Scheme-III, People Colony, Radio Pak, Nogi, Pind Hoon, Humayun, Gulshanabad.



ISLAMABAD: Envoys from European countries in a group photo with Federal Minister for maritime affairs, Ali Haider Zaidi on the occasion of a meeting concluded to showcase ministry's two year performance. — DNA

ICCI condemns French
President's remarks against Islam

Addressing the meeting, ICCI President Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan regretted that instead of contributing towards the peace and harmony in the world, French president has adopted an approach that has badly hurt the feelings of Muslims across the world

ISLAMABAD: The business community in a meeting at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) strongly condemned the anti-Islamic remarks made by French President Emmanuel Macron. They termed his comments highly provocative and irresponsible as the French president had deliberately chosen to provoke the sentiments of Muslim Ummah, which was highly condemnable. Addressing the meeting, ICCI President Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan regretted that instead of contributing towards

the peace and harmony in the world, French president has adopted an approach that has badly hurt the feelings of Muslims across the world. He said that French president had chosen to encourage Islamophobia by attacking Islam. He said that by attacking the Islam without having any understanding of it, the French president has hurt the sentiments of over one billion Muslims in Europe and across the world. The ICCI president said such irresponsible statements on the part of a leader of a developed



country was destined to create more negativity, Islamophobia and space for extremists.

He said that giving people liberty to disrespect the Holy Prophet (PBUH) under the garb of freedom of expression was not tolerable for the Muslim Ummah. The French president should immediately withdraw his remarks to save the world from further polarisation. He said the business community fully supported the stand of the Pakistan government on this burning issue and would follow whatever instructions were issued by the government towards the French products.

ICCI Senior Vice President Fatima Azim and Vice President Abdul Rehman Khan also condemned the stand of French President against Islam, saying the Muslim Ummah would not tolerate the publication of caricatures of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). They warned that any such attempt would damage the peace of the world and create more division in the world community, therefore, French president should immediately withdraw his remarks to save the peace of the world from destructive consequences. — APP

ECC principally
approves tax relief
for telecom sector

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet Wednesday approved in principle the proposal aimed at facilitating the telecom sector by the waiver of certain taxes. "In order to facilitate the Telecom sector by the waiver of certain taxes, ECC decided that the proposal may be granted approval in Principle," said a press statement issued by the Finance Ministry.

The ECC meeting was chaired by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh while among others, it was

attended by Minister for Railways, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Petroleum, Adviser to PM on Commerce, Adviser to PM on Revenue and Adviser to PM on Institutional Reforms and Austerity. ECC further directed that a subcommittee may be constituted, consisting of Adviser to the PM on Revenue, Adviser to PM on Institutional Reforms & Austerity, Minister for Industries & production and Adviser Commerce, to prepare a modified proposal in view of the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) response for final approval.

CDA to work on
lane marking

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Upon the special directions of the Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Aamir Ali Ahmad, work on lane marking and Kerb stone painting at the roads of federal capital is continued. In the first phase the lane marking is being done on the roads of F-5, F-6, F-7, F-8, F-10, G-7, Expressway, Srinagar Highway, Lehtrar Road, 7th avenue, blue area and on some other roads. According to detail, all the departments of CDA are actively playing their roles for the beautification

of the city according to the special directions of the Chairman CDA. In few days the work on lane marking and kerb stone paint will be completed on all the important roads and sectors. In the second phase the lane marking and kerb stone painting work will held on the local roads of capital as well. Chairman CDA has issued funds to road maintenance department of the authority on emergency basis. Chairman CDA Aamir Ali Ahmad himself visiting and inspecting the ongoing work. However, the work is continued with full pace under the CDA's department of road maintenance.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Norway to Pakistan, Kjell-Gunnar Eriksen called on advisor to the Prime minister on commerce and investment, Razak Dawood. — DNA

RCCI inks MOU with Pakistan
Southern Africa Trade Federation

President Nasir Mirza said that the Chamber has always strived to enhance trade relations with African countries. Under the Africa Trade Forum and the government's Look Africa policy, our focus was to explore new markets

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Pakistan South Africa Trade Federation (PSATF) aiming to boost trade, increase exports and networking between Pakistan and South Africa. The document was signed by Chamber President Muhammad Nasir Mirza and Pakistan South Africa PSATF Chairman Muhammad Rafiq Memon. The signing ceremony was held on a virtual platform while Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shahriz A Malik, members of the executive committee, Chairman Regional Trade Khursheed Barlas and other chamber members were also pres-

ent on the occasion while TDAP Director Zulfiqar Langa, PSATF's Saleem Shakur and Zulfiqar Abasi participated through virtual

platform. President Nasir Mirza said that the Chamber has always strived to enhance trade relations with African countries. Under the

Africa Trade Forum and the government's Look Africa policy, our focus was to explore new markets. The MoU will strengthen the

Chamber's Charter, he added. Trade and Investment Attache Humaira Israr said that all kinds of assistance was being provided to exporters to promote trade. The diplomatic mission is working hard to remove obstacles related to banking channels and NOCs. She welcomed Chamber's suggestions and efforts to promote trade and improve networking. PSATF Chairman Muhammad Rafique Memon said that the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation would work together for the exchange of delegations and organizing exhibitions. Deputy Director TDAP Zulfiqar Langa welcomed the MoU and said that his organization has been working more actively than before. New marketing methods are being adopted so that Pakistani products can be better introduced in South Africa.

IHC extends
interim bail
of Rukhsana
Bangash

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday extended the interim bail of Rukhsana Bangash, the ex-principal secretary to former president Asif Ali Zardari, till November 23, in a case pertaining to assets beyond known sources.

A division bench comprising Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Lubna Saleem Pervaiz conducted hearing on pre-arrest bail petition of Mrs. Bangash. At the outset of hearing, Justice Aurangzeb remarked that this court wouldn't interfere into the inquiry process of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) against the petitioner. The court directed the petitioner to give answers of NAB queries.

However, the NAB investigation officer informed the court that his department had not issued arrest warrants against Rukhsana Bangash so far. Petitioner's lawyer Farouk H. Naek told the court that his client had received the summon notices on September 14, this year. He said there was a fear of her arrest if she appear before investigation team and prayed the court to extend her interim bail. He said that the NAB call up notice purpose was just to damage the repute of his client. After this, the court extended the interim bail till November 23 and adjourned the hearing.

Police net
nine POs

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested nine Proclaimed Offenders (POs) of B category, allegedly involved in different crimes. According to Rawalpindi police spokesman, special raids on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Muhammad Ahsan Younas were conducted by Rawalpindi police to net POs, Court Absconders and other outlaws.

He said, Taxila Cantt Police arrested seven B category POs namely Fahad, Asad, Shahid Mehmood, Saeed Akhtar, Malik Zahid, Faizan Ali and Ghiyam Ali who were POs and wanted in different cases.

Pirwadhai Police also held two POs namely Wahid Gul and Ghafoor Khan.

He said, the police crackdown against criminals would continue and the outlaws would be sent behind the bars.

He said, the CPO had directed the police to launch a crackdown against POs and strict action in accordance with the law should be taken against criminals particularly most wanted.

Motor Cars
imports
reduced by
24.66%

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Motor Cars imports during first three months of current fiscal year reduced by 24.66 per cent as compared the corresponding period of the last year. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the Motor Cars imports came down from US \$175,143 in FY 2019-20 of last financial year to US \$124,788 of the same period of current financial year.

During the period from July-Sep 20 this year, imports of Buses, Trucks and other heavy vehicles reduced by 29.25%, worth \$45,231 as compared the imports valuing \$67,525 of same period of last year, it added. Meanwhile, Motor Cycles imports decreased by 39.41%, worth \$10,758 as compared the imports of valuing \$18,754 of the corresponding period of last year. During the period under review, Parts and Accessories imports also came down by 28.64%, valuing \$61,650 imported as compared the imports worth \$91,288 of same period of last year.

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PMC's costly steps

NO stranger to controversy ever since it replaced the erstwhile Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, the Pakistan Medical Commission continues to court contentious issues. A month before some 150,000 aspiring medical students from across the country were to sit for their MDCAT, the PMC came up with its latest innovation: expanding their syllabus. Ever since the new syllabus was uploaded on the PMC website on Oct 19 with some surprise ie 'out of course' additional subjects and topics, several hundred protesting students have taken to the streets. They argue, with plenty of logic, that it would jeopardise the future of many who wouldn't be able to compete. And that is not the only unnecessary controversy the PMC has kicked off. Earlier, it decided that MDCAT would be 'centralised' at the national level but allowed the National University of Medical Sciences and Aga Khan University to conduct their own independent entry tests to the surprise of everyone. This step has already led other private college owners to demand the same exemption for their institutions. This is not all. The PMC's decision to abolish the quota for foreign students and make it mandatory for both foreign passport holders and non-resident Pakistanis to clear MDCAT in order to get admission in Pakistan is also controversial. Similarly, the permission given to private colleges to have their separate fee structures for foreigners, different from the one for Pakistani students, may encourage college owners to accommodate more foreigners in order to increase their earnings. The Pakistan Medical Association is concerned over the decision as it fears that it would potentially close the doors of medical education on many deserving local students. More information is required to discuss the pros and cons of the PMC decisions in detail. One thing, however, is clear. The PMC has failed to explain the rationale behind these actions to stakeholders, and should have taken more time to deliberate before announcing such crucial decisions. Some of the steps appear to be aimed at serving the interests of private college owners at the cost of deserving students and medical education. It is advisable for the PMC to take all the stakeholders into confidence rather than imposing its decisions on them. At the same time, it must try and act as a regulator of medical education in the country rather than take measures that only expose it to accusations of bias.



PTI and the IMF

PRIOR to the 2018 general election, Prime Minister Imran Khan had vowed to 'die before approaching the International Monetary Fund (IMF)' if he came to power. Less than a year after his win, the PTI secured Pakistan's 13th IMF bailout to the tune of \$6 billion over three-years, \$1 billion of which was released immediately to provide crucial support to fast depleting foreign exchange reserves. Desperate for dollars and lacking any meaningful leverage, the programme that was negotiated and signed was the toughest ever, with conditions that would force the government to make politically unpopular decisions. With the government unable to meet demands such as raising taxes and electricity tariffs that would drive up inflation further, the programme was suspended by the IMF in February. For the IMF to release a much needed \$450 million third tranche, the PTI government is being told to increase electricity prices by Rs 1.48 per unit and take the sales tax up to a standard 17 percent on all items except medicines and food. PM Khan has reportedly refused to accept these preconditions, which is understandable. Despite his insistence that the economy is on an upward trajectory, a statement he has based on cherry-picked macroeconomic indicators such as temporary remittance upticks and a current account surplus, ground realities are much different. Pakistan currently has the lowest growth rate among all South Asian Nations at 0.5 percent and one of the highest inflation rates at over 10 percent. Better GDP growth may be a long term prospect but the PTI's inability to reduce food prices, the primary reason for rising inflation, is a result of pure incompetence. Pakistan has to repay \$4.4 billion on account of foreign commercial loans during the current fiscal year; a reality that is bound to exert pressure on foreign exchange reserves that will start drying up unless there is some injection. With the IMF unwilling to budge and the federal government thinking about the political damage of another price and tax hike, there is little room to manoeuvre. None of the 'reforms' to 'turn around' the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) have been undertaken in over two years to meet tax collection targets. Despite tall claims of cracking down on the 'wheat and sugar mafias', prices of both commodities continue to rise as supply remains grossly mismanaged. Mr Khan has only himself and his economic team to blame for the precarious mess he finds himself in.

Turkey-Russia deal: what's next?

Lt. Col. (R) Khalid Taimur Akram



The latest moves in Idlib, however, cannot be separated from the wider dynamics in the Russian-Turkish relationship, which include the unfolding conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia is backing Armenia which has been occupying Azerbaijan's land for almost 30 years. The developments come after Turkish and Russian delegations held talks in September over the ongoing crises in Idlib and Libya

THE Syrian conflict is almost a decade old now with two important players; Russia and Turkey. Turkey and Russia have negotiated several times in the past to strike a deal to control the worsening security situation of the opposition held areas in Syria, but despite all these agreements, the situation in the area, particularly in the Idlib province has only worsened that seems to continue in the future as well with no possible solution in sight.

In May 2017 an agreement has been signed between Turkey, Russia, and Iran for de-escalation of Idlib and to make this area a demilitarized buffer zone. The agreement called for the cessation of hostilities between various conflicting parties including jihadists, Turk forces, Mainstream rebels obstructing supply channels, and Russian-backed Syrian forces. The parties were forced to pull their heavy weapons out of the zone. But the agreement was never fully implemented and the situation became worse in Syria, thus resulting in hundreds of civilians killed, and the tensions between Ankara and Moscow rose to extreme. The recent military reinforcements in Syria hint that the balance in the province is still fragile and could provoke a regional crisis.

Turkey in the Idlib

Turkey has set up 12 ceasefire observation stations in and around Idlib following the 2017 agreement that warded off a Russian-backed Syrian government offensive that threatened to collapse rebel rule in the province and force millions of refugees to the Turkish border. The establishment of these observation stations in the area came under the deal between Russia and Turkey, however, recently after Russia's efforts to hinder the Turkish supply chain and the increased protests against Turkish presence in Syria; Turkey has been compelled to withdraw its military forces from four observation stations mainly in the hard areas such as Morek, Sheik Aqil, Tal Touqan, and Shir Maghar and two military sites near Saraqeb that are surrounded by the Syrian forces who have recently launched an assault against the

rebel in the Idlib province of Syria.

For Turkey, which shares a border with Idlib, the area along with some other parts of Hama, Latakia and Aleppo is of utmost importance. Furthermore, Ankara wants to limit the autonomy granted to the Syrian Kurdish groups that govern much of north-east Syria but are a national security threat for Turkey. Turkey has long been facing the refugee crisis due to the ongoing conflict in Syria that has caused millions of Syrian nationals to seek refuge in the country. Turkey which has provided refuge to approximately 3.6 million Syrians is worried about another influx.

Idlib holds immense significance for the Turkish leadership because the current economic situation of the country is not favorable to afford another Syrian refugee crisis. Ankara has given an ultimatum to the Syrian army to withdraw behind the line of Turkish observation posts or else military action will be taken against them.

Ankara has begun pulling back forces and equipment from its observation posts initially established to monitor a fragile ceasefire in the Syrian conflict. Some of these stations such as the Morek base in the Idlib province were long encircled by Russian-backed forces. Evacuation from these observation stations does not necessarily mean that Turkey is going to reduce the number of its troops in the area, rather it has been observed that the number of Turkish military forces is on the rise, means Turkey is not withdrawing from the area it is taking a strategic turn. Currently, Turkey has deployed troops in the area, but providing logistic and military support to the troops especially in a situation where the supply chain is obstructed due to observation stations being encircled by the regime forces have become a matter of concern for Ankara.

Russia has either blocked or severely impeded Turkey's ability to resupply its position. On the other hand, the regime forces have also launched an offense against the Turkish forces thus provoking them to take military actions against them. Tensions between Turkey

and Russia have risen after a series of talks between the two countries on Syria and Libya failed in Ankara and both the countries are now embroiled in a conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia as well. Turkish officials claim that Russia does not want to stabilize the situation in the area for the long term and it can trigger a conflict in Idlib at any moment.

More recently, the situation at the observation posts became increasingly challenging for Turkey as the Assad regime organized demonstrations seeking to storm Turkish outposts. The attack on the Turkish check post that killed approximately 60 Turkish military personnel is a major issue in this regards that led to the withdrawal of Turkish military forces from these observation stations. The withdrawals are related to the Turkish expectation of a new military operation by the Assad regime supported by Russia. The geographic distance is a threat to Turkey and due to the obstructed supply chain, the Turkish soldiers could become a target for the regime forces.

Conclusion

The latest moves in Idlib, however, cannot be separated from the wider dynamics in the Russian-Turkish relationship, which include the unfolding conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Russia is backing Armenia which has been occupying Azerbaijan's land for almost 30 years. The developments come after Turkish and Russian delegations held talks in September over the ongoing crises in Idlib and Libya, where both the countries are supporting opposing sides in both conflicts. This is a sign of further weakening of the modus vivendi between Turkey and Russia in Syria. A new war for in North-Western Syria between Russia and Turkey would be a very hard blow for both economies, which are now increasingly interconnected. By clashing with Turkey, the Russian Federation could lose an easy access to the Dardanelles and its own Syrian bases, as well as to the Bosphorus.

— The writer is Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad

Pakistan to reap its demographic dividend

Abdul Rashid Shakir



In Education & Training, the Govt of Pakistan has launched Hunarmand Pakistan Programme under 'Skills for All Strategy'. (NAVTTTC) of the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training is executing this Initiative in collaboration with provincial TEVTAs under the guidance of PM KJP

PAKISTAN is a country with a rich demographic dividend, as 65% of its more than 220 Million population is below the age of 35 while 29% of it is in the age group of 15-25, which is the United Nations definition of youth. These stats make Pakistan one of those few countries in the world that have predominantly young population, second to Afghanistan in the South Asian region.

It goes without saying that it is the youth, rather a well-educated and trained youth which determines the future of a country. Therefore, sheer numbers are of no much significance if not exploited to the maximum by providing quality education, professional training and effective engagement opportunities.

Cognizant of the fact, the Government of Pakistan has started Kamyab Jawan Program (Successful Youth Program), a dedicated wing in the Prime Minister's Office. Moreover, Pakistan has developed National Youth Development Framework (NYDF) in order to regulate and coordinate various initiatives aimed at the socio-economic development of youth in the country. The said National Youth Development Framework (NYDF) is perfectly in line with the United Nations System Wide Program of Action for Youth (Youth-SWAP) and Pakistan's Vision 2025. It is modelled on a principle of 3 Es: Education & Training, Entrepreneurship and Engagement.

In Education & Training, the Government of Pakistan has launched Hunarmand Pakistan Programme (Skilled Youth Programme) under 'Skills for All Strategy'. National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) of the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training is executing this Initiative in collaboration with provincial Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities

(TEVTAs) under the guidance of Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Programme (KJP). Under this Initiative, Pakistan is imparting professional and technical training to 170,000 youth both in conventional and high-tech trades to equip them with cutting edge technologies for playing a productive role in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. Out of 170,000 youth targeted to be trained under this Programme, 50,000 urban youth would be trained in high-tech trades, 50,000 youth of less developed areas would be trained in conventional trades, 20,000 youth would be imparted apprenticeship training, whereas 50,000 youth would earn professional certificates under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Besides capacity building of youth through technical and Vocational training, the Government of Pakistan is also focused on improving its Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system to ensure quality training of its abundant human resource. The Government has planned to establish a National Accreditation Council for the accreditation of 2,000 TVET institutes. It is also working on developing 200 Standard National Qualifications, besides establishing 75 Smart Class Rooms for distance learning. It is also setting up training facilities in 70 Madrassas (Religious seminaries) in order to mainstream them in the national development stream. Moreover, Pakistan plans to develop 10 Country of Destination Specific Facilitation Centers to enable its skilled youth to grab rewarding employment opportunities in those countries. In Entrepreneurship, Pakistan has initiated Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) In collaboration with National Bank of Pakistan and 20 other commercial banks to provide subsi-

dized business loans for young entrepreneurs who want to start a new business or expand an already-existing one. Within almost a year since the launch of Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) In October 2019, 2,919 loans worth PKR 1.3 Billion have been disbursed among potential young entrepreneurs. Out of 2,919, 36% loans have been disbursed among existing businesses who want to expand their operations, whereas 64% borrowers are those who intend to start a new economic venture. 84% of the 2,919 borrowers are male while 16% of them are female. Major sectors in which loans have been approved include auto, fashion/cosmetics/jewellery, shop keeper, retailer/super store, dairy, education services, technical services workshop, pharmaceutical and medical services.

In Engagement category, Pakistan has notified first of its history, National Youth Council (NYC), comprising of prominent young leaders in different walks of life including business, IT, Show biz, sports and politics. National Youth Condo (NYC) is headed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Imran Khan himself, and is mandated to provide input for effective policy formulation for the socio-economic development of youth in the country. Another flagship initiative of the Government of Pakistan to engage youth in social work, and coordinate with the local administration to ensure better service delivery to the public is Prime Minister's Youth Tiger Force. Under the initiative, more than one million youth across length and breadth of Pakistan has registered themselves through online portal to assist local government authorities to ensure effective monitoring and seamless delivery of civic services to the public.

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Briefs

PM urges Muslim leaders to show unity

From Page 01 attacks, through ridicule and mockery on our beloved Prophet PBUH (Peace Be Upon Him) in the Western world, especially Europe," he wrote. Imran Khan urged upon the Muslim leaders to raise collective voice and explain to the leadership of the non-Muslim, especially Western states, the deep-seated reverence and love all Muslims feel for their divine book, the Holy Quran, and for Prophet PBUH. "It is time to reach out to 'the other' and end cycles of violence bred of ignorance and hate. We must explain to the Western world that value systems differ for different social and religious and ethnic groups in the world. He said for Europeans and the Jews, the Holocaust, which was the culmination of the Nazi pogrom, had led to many Western, especially European states, to criminalizing any act of criticism or questioning of the Holocaust. "The prime minister said, "Blasphemy against any Prophet of Islam, Christianity or Judaism was unacceptable in our faith." "The time has come for the leaders of the Muslim world to take this message with clarity and unity to the rest of the world, especially the Western world so an end is put to Islamophobia and attacks on Islam and our Prophet PBUH," he said. He said, "Our faith is guided by peace and tolerance as practiced in Riyasat-Madina and in Aqsa-Madina with Misqat-Madina (the Treaty concluded by our Prophet PBUH between Muslims and Jews). "It is the responsibility of Muslims to inform the world of this spirit and core of the faith Islam," the prime minister concluded.

Qureshi lauds Turkish support in FATF meeting

From Page 01 the Turkish president's concrete stance regarding increasing trend of Islamophobia. The Turkish foreign minister said Prime Minister Imran Khan's statement on Islamophobia is praiseworthy," it added. Qureshi also thanked Cavusoglu for Turkey's support to Pakistan during the recent session of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in which the watchdog found Pakistan had successfully complied with 21 out of 27 points of action and decided to keep the country on its 'grey list' until February 2021. Meanwhile, the Turkish foreign minister appreciated Pakistan's success in implementing FATF's action plan, the statement said. Cavusoglu also expressed sadness over the blast at a madrasah in Peshawar a day earlier in which eight people lost their lives and more than 110 others were injured. Both foreign ministers agreed to continue discussions on regional stability and matters of mutual interest, the statement concluded.

Egypt's al-Sisi condemns French magazine

DNA
CAIRO: Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi said on Wednesday freedom of expression should stop if it offends more than 1.5 billion people, following the display of images in France of the Prophet Mohammad that Muslims see as blasphemous. Sisi also said he firmly rejects any form of violence or terrorism from anyone in the name of defending religion, religious symbols or icons. "We also have rights. We have the right for our feelings not to be hurt and for our values not to be hurt," he said during an address to commemorate the Prophet Mohammad's birthday. "And if some have the freedom to express what is in their thoughts I imagine that this stops when it comes to offending the feelings of more than 1.5 billion people," he added in televised remarks.

Melania Trump attacks Joe Biden, media in latest speech

Melania turned her guns towards the Democrats, defending her husband Donald Trump for the way his administration handled the coronavirus crisis while at the same time, telling supporters the Democrats tried to "put their own agendas ahead of the American people's well-being"

DNA

NEW YORK: Melania Trump attacked Joe Biden and the American media on her first solo trip of the US election 2020 campaign in Philadelphia, calling out the Democrat presidential nominee for his "socialist agenda". Melania turned her guns towards the Democrats, defending her husband Donald Trump for the way his administration handled the coronavirus crisis while at the same time, telling supporters the Democrats tried to "put their own agendas ahead of the American people's well-being".

Like her husband, Melania took jibes at the media, accusing them of covering "idle gossip and palace intrigue" while referring to Joe Biden's policies as a "socialist agenda". "We must keep Donald in the White House so he can finish what he's started and our country can continue to flourish," she said. The first lady showed sympathy for coronavirus victims, saying that "there are many people who have lost loved ones or know people who have been forever impacted by this silent enemy". However, she said that Donald Trump had handled the coronavirus well and that res-



taurants, hotels and other public places had learnt to operate safely during the pandemic. "We don't close down and hide in fear. We get to work to find real and lasting solutions," she said. Melania was speaking to a few hundred supporters who were

crowded into a converted barn which is usually used for weddings. Most of the attendees wore masks but there was no social distancing as people stood together closely. Earlier this month, US President Donald Trump had announced that he and wife Melania had tested positive for coronavirus. Hope Hicks, a top adviser to the president who has travelled with him on Air Force One several times, had earlier contracted the virus, according to US media reports. After recovering from the virus and testing negative for it, Melania had revealed that her son Barron Trump had also con-

tracted the infection. In an article published on The White House's official website, Melania stated that first, her son Barron tested negative for the virus but later, another test revealed he had contracted the infection. Referring to him as a "strong teenager", Melania had said Barron did not show any symptoms at all and has since recovered. "Luckily he is a strong teenager and exhibited no symptoms. In one way I was glad the three of us went through this at the same time so we could take care of one another and spend time together. He has since tested negative," she had written.

Erdogan rebukes insults against Prophet (PBUH)



FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkey's president on Wednesday once again assailed recent insulting remarks against Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). "It is a matter of honor for us to stand sincerely against attacks on our prophet," Erdogan told his ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party's parliamentary group. "Unfortunately, we are in a period when hostility to Islam, Muslims and disrespect for the prophet, is spreading like cancer, especially among leaders in Europe," he added. Erdogan noted that France, and Europe in general, deserved better than the vicious, provocative and hateful policies of French President Emmanuel Macron. "We call on prudent Europeans to take action against this dangerous trend on behalf of themselves and their children for a bright future," he said. Earlier this month, President Emmanuel Macron accused French Muslims of "separatism" and described Islam as "a religion in crisis all over the world." Tensions further escalated

after Samuel Paty, a teacher at Bois-d'Aulne College in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, was beheaded on Oct. 16 by Abdullah Anzorov, an 18-year-old of Chechen origin, in retaliation for showing controversial cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad to his students during one of his classes on freedom of expression. Macron paid tribute to Paty and said France would "not give up our cartoons." Insulting cartoons by Charlie Hebdo were also projected on buildings in a few cities. Earlier this year, the magazine republished cartoons insulting Islam and Prophet Muhammad. They were first published in 2006 by the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, sparking a wave of protests. Several Arab countries as well as Turkey, Iran and Pakistan have censured Macron's attitude toward Muslims and Islam, with President Erdogan saying the French leader needs "mental treatment". While calls to boycott French products are circulating online in many countries, Erdogan has urged Turks "to never help French brands or buy them."

Detained political consultant leaves Belarus: lawyer

MINSK: Prominent American political strategist Vitali Shklyarov, who was detained in Belarus late July and accused of mobilising protesters, has arrived in the United States, his lawyer told media on Wednesday. Shklyarov was among the several prominent figures detained in Belarus amid a crackdown on opponents of strongman president Alexander Lukashenko, whose victory in the August 9 presidential election sparked historic protests. A Harvard University fellow who has advised political campaigns in the US, Russia and Ukraine, Shklyarov

was detained in Minsk on July 29 and charged with organising actions violating public order. He was released under house arrest earlier this month after meeting with Lukashenko inside the KGB security service prison where he was being held. In an October 24 phone call with Lukashenko, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo demanded the release of the "wrongfully detained US citizen". "I confirm that Vitali has arrived in the United States and is in Washington," his lawyer Anton Gashinsky told AFP. - APP

Uzbekistan's GDP makes up 408.29 trillion soums

WEB DESK

TASHKENT: According to preliminary estimates, in January-September 2020, the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Republic of Uzbekistan at current prices made up 408.29 trillion soums and, compared to the same period of 2019, increased by 0.4% in real terms. The GDP deflator index, in relation to the prices of January-September 2019, amounted to 111.8%, the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan said. According to the results of January-September 2020, in the structure of GDP produced, the gross added value of the production of goods reached 240.32 trillion soums, the service sector - 136.4 trillion soums, and net taxes on products - 31.56 trillion soums. As the chart above illustrates, in January-September 2020, GDP growth slowed to 0.4% versus 5.9% in Janu-

ary-September 2019 and 5.7% in January-September 2018. At the same time, a slowdown in the GDP deflator index to 111.8% was noted after 118.5% in January-September 2019 and 130.5% in January-September 2018. When calculated in US dollars at the average exchange rate for the period under review, nominal GDP totaled US\$41.07 billion (in January-September 2019 - US\$42.22 billion). GDP per capita of the country made up 11.95 million soums (or equivalent - US\$1,203). As the above chart demonstrates, in January-September 2020, GDP per capita in real terms decreased by 1.5% versus growth by 3.9% in January-September 2019. The gross value added created by all sectors of the economy made up 92.3% of the total GDP and increased by 0.5% (contribution to GDP growth - 0.4 percentage points). Net taxes

on products in the structure of GDP amounted to 7.7% and decreased by 0.6% (negative contribution to GDP growth - 0.04 percentage points). The sectors of agriculture, forestry and fisheries made a positive contribution to GDP growth - 0.8 p.p. (in January-September 2019 - 0.6 p.p.) and construction - 0.5 p.p. (in January-September 2019 - 1.4 p.p.). Industry and the service sector made a negative contribution to GDP growth, which in January-September 2020 reached 0.7 p.p. and - 0.2 p.p., respectively. In January-September 2019, the contribution of industry to GDP growth was 1.2 p.p., the service sector - 2.0 p.p. Due to the decrease in net taxes on products, GDP fell by 0.04 percentage points. In the same period of 2019, net taxes on products made a positive contribution to GDP growth, which amounted to 0.7 p.p.

PHF names technical officials for National C'ship

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Wednesday announced the names of technical officials for smooth conduct of the 66th Edition of National Senior Hockey Championship, being played from Nov 3 to 15 at Mari Petroleum Hockey Stadium, Ayub Park, Rawalpindi. "We have chosen our top of line technical officials to ensure smooth conduct of the country's premier hockey activity," said a spokesman for the PHF here. - DNA

Turkish FM, Qureshi discuss rising Islamophobia

The Turkish foreign minister appreciated the stance taken by the Prime Minister on the subject

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu Wednesday called Foreign Minister Mahmood Qureshi where in they exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. Foreign Minister Qureshi extended felicitations to Foreign Minister Cavusoglu on 97th Republic Day of Turkey to be ob-

served on Thursday (29 October). The two foreign ministers agreed to remain in touch on issues of concern to the Muslim Ummah, including the rising Islamophobia. The Turkish foreign minister appreciated the stance taken by the Prime Minister on the subject. The two foreign ministers expressed satisfaction at mutual collaboration between Pakistan and Tur-

key at multilateral fora. Foreign Minister Qureshi reiterated appreciation for the principled stance taken by Turkey on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and Turkey's steadfast support in this regard. He also conveyed sympathies and condolences at the loss of precious lives in the Peshawar terrorist attack and reaffirmed Turkey's solidarity with Pakistan. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan has visited Embassy of Azerbaijan in Islamabad & extended his sympathies over the losses of precious innocent lives as a result of the missile & artillery attacks of Armenia against civilians of Azerbaijan & expressed his solidarity to the Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada. - DNA

'White House to blame for relief bill failure'

Pelosi's letter comes as U.S. Covid-19 case numbers reached a record high this past weekend amid climbing hospitalizations. Over 225,000 people have died in the country, and there is currently a 7.9 unemployment rate

MONITORING DESK

NEW YORK: Hopes of a Covid-19 relief bill before Election Day have been ended by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who blamed the White House for 'failing miserably'. In a letter to house Democrats on Tuesday, Pelosi said that efforts made by Congressional Democrats to pass a bill have been resisted by the White House and Senate Speaker Mitch McConnell. She also cited White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows' comments on Sunday, in which he said 'We're not going to control the pandemic.' For a long time now, Congressional Democrats have laid out a strategic plan to crush the virus, she wrote. "The White House and Mitch McConnell have resisted, and on Sunday, Mark Meadows told us why saying 'We're not going to control the pandemic,'" referring to the chief

of staff's interview on 'State of the Union' last Sunday. "From 'hoax' to hundreds of thousands dead, the White House has failed miserably - not by accident, but by decision," she wrote. "Now we know why they resisted science at the expense of lives, livelihoods and the life of our democracy. Again, it was a decision to do so." Pelosi's letter comes as U.S. Covid-19 case numbers reached a record high this past weekend amid climbing hospitalizations. Over 225,000 people have died in the country, and there is currently a 7.9 unemployment rate. On Monday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell moved to adjourn the Senate until November 9, killing off any hopes of further coronavirus relief before the election. McConnell and his Republican colleagues head into the election recess on the back of celebrations at the White House on Monday evening

following Amy Comey Barrett's confirmation to the Supreme Court. A spokesman for McConnell said that he needed to make no further comment on the 'continued Democrat filibuster on COVID relief in the Senate.' Democrat Senators said their Republican counterparts would 'rather jam through another extreme right-wing nominee' than consider 'the real and dire needs' of Americans amid the pandemic. Lawmakers have tried fruitlessly for



months to reach an agreement on a follow-up to Pelosi's CARES Act as Republicans brought their \$1 trillion number up to \$1.8 trillion and Democrat's lowered their initial number from upwards of \$3 trillion down to \$2.2 trillion. President Trump has also previously indicated that no stimulus bill would be agreed before next week's election. 'Nancy Pelosi is only interested in bailing out badly-run, crime-ridden Democrat cities and states. That's all she is interested in,' Trump told reporters Tuesday. 'She is not interested in helping the people.' 'After the election, we will get the best stimulus package you have ever seen,' the president added. 'I think we are going to take back the House because of her.' Trump has been unclear about the next round of relief, saying earlier in the month that the next stimulus package would only come 'after I win' the election. But he then did

a U-turn and urged Congress to approve piecemeal coronavirus relief measures - that he would sign - that would have included another round of \$1,200 for Americans. Earlier this month, the House passed a \$2.2 trillion Covid-19 relief bill, winning the vote 214-207. The bill received no Republican support and 18 Democrats voted against it. The White House and Republicans introduced their own \$1.8 trillion framework during negotiations with Pelosi. Trump, however, contradicted his own officials saying that he was willing to go higher than that number. Despite the president's verbal commitment, Republicans expressed their opposition to another stimulus package in general - let alone one that goes above \$1 trillion. Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin spent weeks in talks over a potential new coronavirus aid package.

US: Protests erupt in capital over death of Black man

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: Protests turned violent in the US capital Washington, DC late Tuesday after the death of a Black man. During the protests outside the 4th district police station, four officers were injured, and at least one person was arrested, the NBC4 television station reported. The Metropolitan Police Department said the police officers tried to stop Karon Hylton-Brown, 20, on Friday at a traffic stop, when he was riding an electric moped without a helmet. According to the police, he collided with a car during the chase. Protestors, including the victim's family, were shouting "show us the video" referring to the police claim. The department said that officers gave him first aid, but he succumbed to injuries in the hospital. Hylton-Brown's family holds the police responsible for the crash.

Vietnam mobilizes 250K troops to combat storm

HANOI: Vietnam has mobilized at least 250,000 troops and 2,300 vehicles to combat the "worst storm" facing the country in at least two decades, local media reported Wednesday. The Southeast Asian country is facing Storm Molave, the ninth in the East Sea this year and fourth in the current month, which has killed two people with many believed missing, the Vietnam News Agency reported. Thousands have been displaced by the storm. The country's National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting said the storm is the strongest in 20 years and will move deeper inland during the day before weakening. Intermittent rains are also lashing many parts of the country. According to daily Vietnam News, around 1,242 fishing vessels with 7,430 workers were asked to return home. More than 44,200 people were evacuated to safety in the Phu Yen province, which is witnessing strong gusts and heavy rainfall. Vietnam's central region has been reeling from historic flooding and back-to-back storms since early this month. The rains, landslides and floods have killed at least 130 people while 18 are still missing. The rains affected 7 million people in the country. The government of Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc has announced it will provide 6,500 tons of rice from the national reserves to four central provinces to assist people affected by the recent flooding.

UN appeals for \$211M to help Syria

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The UN humanitarian chief on Tuesday appealed for an additional \$211 million to help Syria deal with the COVID-19 crisis. Mark Lowcock told the UN Security Council that the money is needed to maintain the supply of healthcare items, to improve water and sanitation in camps, and to make schools safe for the return of teachers and students. He said the confirmed coronavirus cases were overwhelmingly the result of community transmission, adding that 92% of officially confirmed infections cannot be traced to a known case. Lowcock emphasized that the scale of the outbreak would likely be far greater in Syria than the current level of confirmed cases, which is about 13,500.

FM warns Afghan counterpart of spoilers

From Page 01 by the Afghan nation about their future through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process. The Foreign Minister commiserated over the loss of lives in the unfortunate incident at a stadium in Jalalabad where Afghan local authorities were managing visa applicants. The Foreign Minister highlighted the steps taken by Pakistan side to facilitate Afghans wishing to visit Pakistan. In this regard, the Foreign Minister highlighted that the new visa policy was aimed at further easing people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

Briefs

Armenian attacks kill 14 in Azerbaijan's Barda

DNA

BAKU: At least 14 civilians were killed and over 40 others injured in missile attacks by Armenian forces on the city center of Azerbaijan's Barda region, local authorities said Wednesday. This follows Tuesday's attacks that killed at least four civilians and injured 10 as Armenia continues to flout numerous cease-fires. "Following missile attacks to Tartar, armed forces of Armenia firing rockets to Barda. No lessons learned from yesterday's killing of civilians with cluster weapons. Armenia must end its military occupation and #WarCrimes," Hikmet Hajiyev, assistant to the Azerbaijani president, said on Twitter. He also said that Armenia once again used the Russian Smerch missiles causing civilian casualties. "Such deliberate War Crimes of Armenia are deplorable," Hajiyev said. Azerbaijani Defense Ministry in a statement confirmed that "there are killed and injured people" and "civilian infrastructure was damaged." "Armenian armed forces, grossly violating the humanitarian ceasefire regime, have fired at the Barda city from the 'Smerch' MLRS [Multiple Launch Rocket System]," the ministry said. Since the clashes erupted on Sept. 27, Armenia has repeatedly attacked Azerbaijani civilians and forces, even violating three humanitarian cease-fires since Oct. 10.

Iran's parliament speaker contracts virus

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's parliament speaker has announced he tested positive for the novel coronavirus, weeks after he faced criticism from government officials for his visit to a hospital in the capital Tehran. "One of my office colleagues had contracted coronavirus, and at midnight my test result also came positive," Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on Twitter early Wednesday, adding that he has quarantined himself. A few weeks ago, pictures of Qalibaf flanked by patients and medics inside the COVID-19 ward at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Hospital had sparked a controversy. While supporters of Qalibaf praised him for his "bravery" in "boosting the morale" of healthcare workers, the president's office came down heavily on him for "not complying" with health protocol. Following the incident, President Hasan Rouhani had canceled the meeting of the heads of three branches of the government, which did not go well with Qalibaf's supporters. While speculation is rife that Qalibaf's visit to hospital and trips to remote Iranian provinces in recent weeks could have resulted in his infection, his tweet suggests otherwise.

Facebook's India policy chief quits

MONITORING DESK

NEW YORK: Facebook's top India public policy executive, who was at the centre of a controversy over her alleged failure to address hate speech on the platform, has quit, the social media giant said on Tuesday. The network sparked a political storm in India after the Wall Street Journal newspaper (WSJ) reported in August that policy chief Ankhi Das refused to take down anti-Muslim posts by a Hindu nationalist legislator as it could damage the firm's business interests. The legislator from the southern Telangana state, T Raja Singh, belongs to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In his Facebook posts, Singh demanded that Rohingya refugees be shot, called India's Muslims traitors and threatened to demolish mosques. Facebook blocked him following the publication of the WSJ report, which had also detailed other BJP politicians and Hindu nationalist groups posting anti-Muslim hate speech.

'Armenia using reactive missiles to attack civilians'

Hajiyev noted that "today MOD of Armenia made a statement that they will hit harshly. By that they mean civilians, kids and women"

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani presidential aide Hikmat Hajiyev has said that in violation of humanitarian ceasefire Armenia resorts to war crimes to kill civilians. "In violation of the humanitarian ceasefire and in order to compensate their sustained military losses Armenia resorts to war crimes of killing civilians. Barda region was attacked with reactive missiles. So far 3 killed, 10 people including kids and women seriously wounded," Hajiyev wrote on his official Twitter account. He later reported about the increasing death toll. "The number of killed in Barda raised to four as a result of Armenia's missile attack. An indiscriminate and targeted attack against civilians continue," he tweeted.

Missile attack on Barda crime against humanity

DNA

BAKU: The Armenian Armed Forces, grossly violating the humanitarian ceasefire regime, again have fired at Azerbaijan's Barda city from the "Smerch" MLRS, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry wrote on the Twitter page, media reports on Oct. 28. "As of now at least 13 civilians killed and many injured! This is a crime against humanity!" the ministry tweeted. Armenian Armed Forces launched a large-scale military attack on positions of the Azerbaijani army on

the front line, using large-caliber weapons, mortars, and artillery on Sept. 27. Azerbaijan responded with a counter-offensive along the entire front. Currently, Azerbaijan continues the liberation of its territories from Armenian troops. Back in July 2020, the Armenian Armed Forces violated the ceasefire in the direction of Azerbaijan's Tovuz district. As a result of Azerbaijan's retaliation, the opposing forces were silenced. The fighting continued the following days as well. Azerbaijan lost a number of military personnel members, who died fighting off the attacks of the

Armenian Armed Forces. The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, the Armenian Armed Forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts. The 1994 ceasefire agreement was followed by peace negotiations. Armenia has not yet implemented four UN Security Council resolutions on the withdrawal of its armed forces from Nagorno Karabakh and the surrounding districts.

Hajiyev stressed the presence of a toddler among the killed. "One little toddler is among the killed as a result of Armenia's missile attack to Barda region of Azerbaijan. Baby killing policy and war crimes of Armenia's political-military leadership continue. Erupted fire is being extinguished by emergency services," he said. In a different tweet posted on 27 October, Hajiyev noted that "today MOD of Armenia made a statement that they will hit harshly. By that they mean civilians, kids and women". "According to ANAMA Armenia used cluster Smerch missile against civilians in Barda. Use of cluster weapons against civilians is forbidden. Four civilians including, 2 years old baby girl killed. 13 civilians wounded. Because of cluster bomblets number of casualties quite big".

Tashkent makes the largest contribution in Uzbekistan's GDP

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: In accordance with the Program of State Statistical Works, the State Committee on Statistics carried out a preliminary assessment of the gross regional product (GRP) of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regions and Tashkent city for January-September 2020. Outstripping GRP growth rates in January-September 2020 were noted in Navoi (+6.8%), Namangan (+4.5%), and Andijan (+3.4%) regions. A decrease in the growth rate of GRP in comparable prices, compared to the corresponding period of 2019, was observed in the city of Tashkent (-1.6%) and Samarkand (-0.3%) region. In January-September 2020, the city of Tashkent made the largest contribution to the

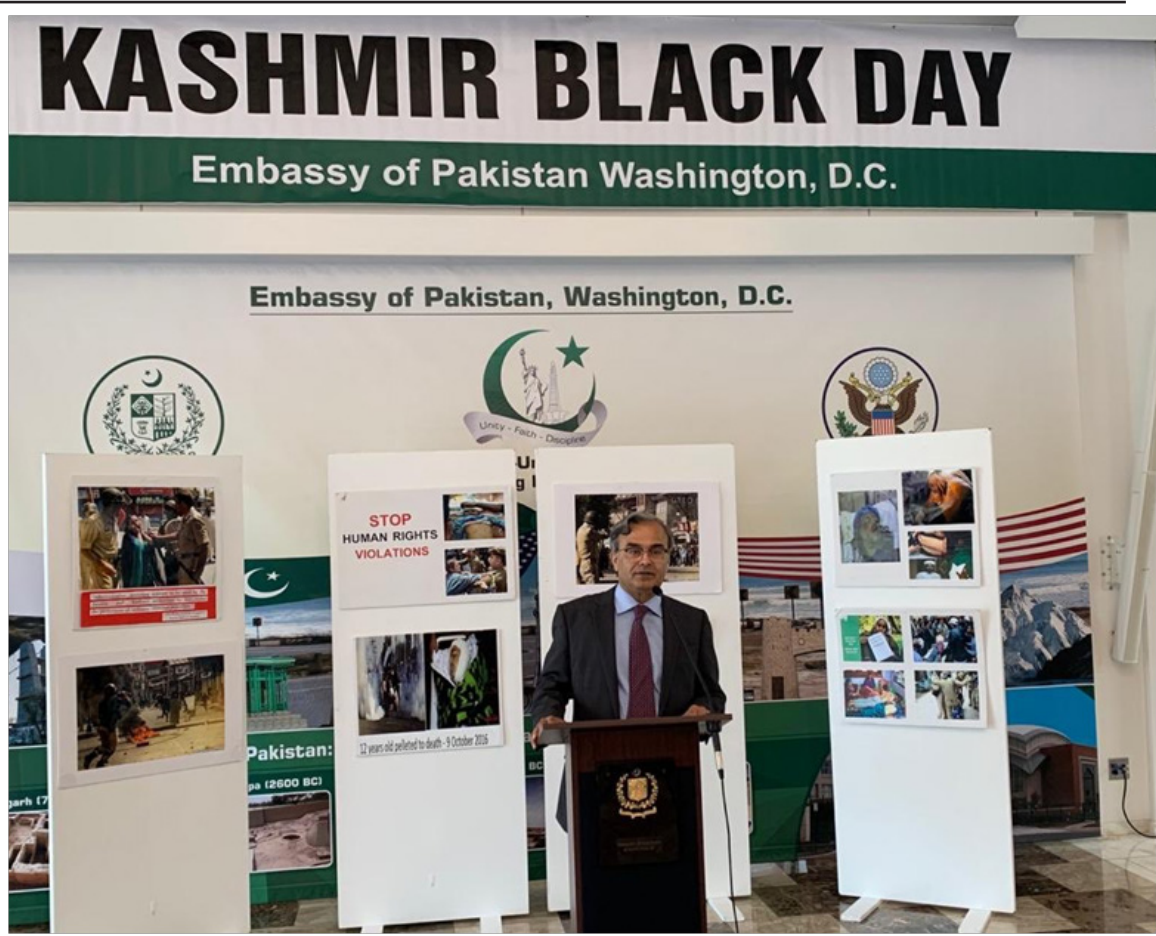
formation of the republic's GDP with a specific weight of 15.6%. Tashkent and Navoi regions occupy the next places with indicators of 10.5% and 9.0%, respectively. Syrdarya region (2.0%), Jizzakh region (3.0%), the Republic of Karakalpakstan (3.5%) and Khorezm region (3.6%) have the smallest share in the formation of the republic's GDP. According to the results of January-September 2020, the largest shares of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the sectoral structure of GRP belong to Jizzakh (55.1%) and Surkhandarya (50.4%) regions, Industry - Navoi (73.0%) and Tashkent (47.3%) regions, Construction - Tashkent city (10.1%) and the Republic of Karakalpakstan (9.8%), Services - Tashkent city (53.0%) and the Republic of Karakalpakstan (35.2%).

Kashmir Black Day observed at HC Ottawa

DNA

OTTAWA: A webinar was organized today by the High Commission for Pakistan, Ottawa and the Consulate General of Pakistan, Toronto to observe Kashmir Black Day. The event was held to observe 27 October as the darkest day of Kashmir's history as Indian forces landed in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir on that day in 1947. The webinar was addressed by senior officials and experts including Sardar Masood Khan, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, High Commissioner for Pakistan, Ottawa, Dr. Fozia Alvi, President Humanity Auxilium, Dr. Zafar Bangash, Director, ICIT Toronto, Mr. Farhan Mujahid Chak, Associate Professor of Political Science, Ms. Karen Rodman, Executive Director Just Peace Advocates and Mr. Robert Fantina, Political Analyst. Mr. Abdul Hameed, Consul General Toronto, moderated the event. During his address on the occasion, Sardar Masood Khan, Pres-

ident AJK, said the United Nations was not showing leadership in the filed of diplomacy and currently no dialogue was taking place between Pakistan and India. He suggested that Kashmir movement may be turned into an international mass civil rights and BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) Movement. He drew attention towards the multilateral diplomacy as a possible mechanism for resolving the dispute. He also highlighted the need for effective communication to support the legitimate rights of Kashmiris to self determination. He underlined that India had been distorting facts about Kashmir and an effective communication strategy can help us counter it. High Commissioner Raza Bashir Tarar referred to the lack of political will on behalf of the international community. He said that the international civil society seemed to be ready for the advocacy of Kashmiris. The concepts like "responsibility to protect" should not be used selectively as the international community is not ready to protect Kashmiris.



WASHINGTON: Ambassador of Pakistan to US Asad M. Khan addressing the Kashmir Black Day event at embassy of Pakistan in Washington DC. - DNA

Uzbek President receives Turkey's Defense Minister

Hulusi Akar sincerely thanked the President of Uzbekistan for the warm welcome and conveyed the best wishes of the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan

DNA

Tashkent: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev received Hulusi Akar, Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Turkey. Warmly greeting the guest,

the Uzbek President noted with satisfaction the dynamic comprehensive development of Uzbekistan - Turkey strategic partnership built on centuries-old bonds of friendship and brotherhood, which has been raised to a qualitatively new level over the past three years by joint efforts. Hulusi Akar sincerely thanked the President of Uzbekistan for the warm welcome and conveyed the best wishes of the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The meeting served to consider the current state

and prospects of military and military-technical cooperation between the two countries, as well as the results of joint activities carried out in recent years in the sphere. Important areas of practical interaction established between the defense ministries of Uzbekistan and Turkey are the implementation of programs in training military personnel, developing contacts among specialized higher education institutions, exchanging experience in training military units. Current issues in the joint counteraction to contemporary challenges and threats to security in the region were discussed. The Minister of National Defense of Turkey confirmed readiness for further full-scale cooperation with Uzbekistan in the military and military-technical spheres.



European stocks slump as tougher virus control measures loom

Global markets look incredibly nervous, the mix of rising COVID-19 cases and deaths and the potential full lockdown in France, add this to the uncertainty ahead of the US elections and you have a very poor backdrop

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Losses accelerated across European stock markets on Wednesday, with the benchmark STOXX 600 tumbling to its lowest level since late May on fears of a new national lockdown in France and tighter curbs elsewhere to combat a surge in coronavirus cases. The pan-European STOXX 600 index fell 2.4 percent, while Germany's DAX and France's CAC 40 plunged 3.3 percent and UK's FTSE 100 dropped 2.2 percent. The French government has been exploring a new, na-

tional lockdown from midnight on Thursday, BFM TV reported, albeit a slightly more flexible one than the two-month shutdown that began in mid-March. President Emmanuel Macron will give a televised address later on Wednesday, his office said. Meanwhile, German Chancellor Angela Merkel wants to close all restaurants and bars from November 4, according to a draft resolution seen by the Reuters news agency, while The Telegraph newspaper reported that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is under pressure to implement a new lockdown. "Global markets look incredi-

bly nervous, the mix of rising COVID-19 cases and deaths and the potential full lockdown in France, add this to the uncertainty ahead of the US elections and you have a very poor backdrop," said John Woolfitt, director of trading at Atlantic Capital Markets. "I don't expect this to be long-term, but nervousness will continue until elections are done and some form of steady-ing in the COVID-19 numbers." Economically sensitive sectors such as carmakers, banks and insurers led declines, falling between 3.9 percent and 4.4 percent. United States stock futures also slid more than 1

percent as investors stayed on the sidelines with no stimulus package in sight and just a week to go before the US presidential election. Meanwhile, assets considered safe havens in times of crisis, such as US Treasuries, the US dollar and Japanese yen rose. Concerns over weakening demand for energy and rising US crude stockpiles drove oil prices sharply lower, with US West Texas Intermediate falling 3.9 percent and Brent crude losing 3.1 percent to below the \$40-per-barrel mark. The downbeat mood overshadowed a batch of upbeat quarterly results from Euro-

pean companies. Deutsche Bank AG reported a surprise swing into quarterly net profit and upgraded the revenue outlook for its investment bank, but its shares fell 4.2 percent. French retail giant Carrefour delivered its strongest quarterly underlying sales growth for at least 20 years. Shares of the group, however, dropped 2.5 percent. German online takeaway food company Delivery Hero was among the few gainers, rising 4.1 percent, after it raised its guidance for 2020 sales for the second time this year.

Nearly 6,000 civilian casualties in Afghanistan

MONITORING DESK

KABUL: Nearly 6,000 Afghan civilians were killed or wounded in the first nine months of the year as heavy fighting between government forces and Taliban fighters rages on despite efforts to find peace, the United Nations has said. From January to September, there were 5,939 civilian casualties in the fighting - 2,117 people killed and 3,822 wounded, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a quarterly report on Tuesday. "High levels of violence continue with a devastating impact on civilians, with Afghanistan remaining among the deadliest places in the world to be a civilian," the report said. Civilian casualties were 30 percent lower than in the same period last year but UNAMA said violence has failed to slow since the beginning of talks between government negotiators and the Taliban that began in Qatar's capital, Doha, last month. The Taliban was responsible for 45 percent of civilian casualties while government troops caused 23 percent, it said. United States-led international forces were responsible for two percent. Most of the remainder occurred in crossfire, or were caused by ISIL (ISIS) or "undetermined" anti-government or pro-government elements, according to the report.

Over 29 mln Tanzanians head to polls

DAR ES SALAAM: More than 29 million Tanzanians are taking to some 80,000 polling stations across the country to cast ballots for the elections of president, members of parliament and councilors on Wednesday. The elections have attracted 15 presidential candidates from 15 political parties, but the race is tight between incumbent President John Magufuli of the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi and Tundu Lisu from leading opposition Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo. Magufuli is seeking re-election to serve his second and final five-year term to complete what he describes as his agenda aimed at making Tanzania an economic powerhouse. Most of the polling stations opened at 7 a.m. local time (4:00 GMT) and are expected to close at 4 p.m. with each station accommodating less than 500 voters. Magufuli arrived at Chamwino polling station and cast his ballot at around 10 a.m. in the capital Dodoma. "Today is an important day for Tanzanians to practice and strengthen democracy," Magufuli said in a statement televised by state-run Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation. He encouraged registered voters to elect their leaders of choice, and appealed to Tanzanians to continue cherishing the country's peace and tranquility during the elections.

Philadelphia calls National Guard after unrest

DNA

NEW YORK: Philadelphia will deploy more police officers and has called for help from the National Guard as it braces for further unrest after the police killing of a Black man armed with a knife, authorities said on Tuesday. Hundreds of protesters took to Philadelphia's streets on Monday after a bystander's video was shared on social media showing two officers shooting 27-year-old Walter Wallace after he did not heed orders to back off and to drop the knife. Wallace was bipolar and his mental issues were relayed to the officers before the shooting, Shaka Johnson, a lawyer for Wallace's family, told the Philadelphia affiliate of media. While the demonstrations began peacefully on Monday at Malcolm X Park on the west side of the city, they later turned violent, inflicting significant damage on businesses and leading to 91 arrests, commissioner Danielle Outlaw told a briefing. "For today and this evening we anticipate the chance of additional incidents of civil unrest and as such, we will be taking additional steps to ensure order," Outlaw said, adding that she had asked surrounding counties for assistance.

Briefs

PML-N responsible for economic bankruptcy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Political Communication Shahbaz Gill has said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), which crashed the country's economy is responsible for the bankruptcy of Pakistan. SAPM Shahbaz Gill, in a statement, said that masses know that people involved in looting of country for past three decades are to be blamed for the deteriorating economic situation of Pakistan. On the other hand, other countries moved ahead because there were no corrupt leaders, he added. The PM's aide said that when PTI came into power, there was a current account deficit of \$20 billion and government was also facing challenge of pending \$11 billion loan installment. PML-N took current account deficit to the highest level in the country's history in 2018 at over \$19 billion but PTI government recorded a surplus of \$73 million last month, Dr. Shahbaz said. He said exports increased by 29 percent last month while remittances also recorded increase of nine percent.

Pakistan: highest inflation in South Asia

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: According to the Sustainable Development Organization's comparative inflation statistics, Pakistan has the highest inflation among South Asian countries. According to the organization's statistics, the inflation rate in Pakistan is 9% while it is 7.34% in India, 5.97% in Bangladesh and 4.1% in Sri Lanka. The price of flour in Pakistan is 68 PKR per kg, 28 INR in India, 41 takka in Bangladesh and 93 Sri Lankan rupees in Sri Lanka. The rate of onions in Pakistan is PKR 80, INR 50 in India, 40 takka in Bangladesh and 150 Sri Lankan rupees in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the price of sugar in Pakistan is PKR 105 while in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, it is priced at INR 55, 70 takka and 85 Sri Lankan rupees respectively.

SC adjourns Justice Isa's review petition

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of Justice Qazi Faez Isa review case till the third week of November. The petitioners requested the bench to grant further time for case preparation which was allowed by the bench. A seven-member larger bench of the top court, presided by Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Manzoor Ahmed Malik, Justice Faisal Arab, Justice Mazhar Alam Miankhal, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed, took up the case for hearing. At the outset of hearing, Justice Bandial remarked that the petitioners should be given time to view the detailed judgment which was issued later in Justice Isa case. The bench wanted to start hearing on the petitions as one member of the bench was going to retire in upcoming days. Advocate on record Qasim Mir Jut stated that the petitioner's lawyer couldn't appear on this day and prayed the court to adjourn the hearing for two weeks. Justice Bandial remarked that top court's benches had been set up for Karachi Registry in next week and the court would hear the matter after this. Earlier, on June 19, a ten-judge full-court quashed a presidential reference against Justice Isa. - APP

Pakistan, China discuss post-COVID healthcare

The Forum was organised by South and Southeast Asia Medical Education and Service Alliance (SSAMESA)

DNA

BEIJING: Universities and medical institutions from 11 countries, including China, Pakistan attended an international online forum and discussed post-COVID healthcare opportunities and challenges. The Forum was organised by South and Southeast Asia Medical Education and Service Alliance (SSAMESA), China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. The participants exchanged in-depth views on the opportunities and challenges facing the higher medical education and healthcare industry in the post-COVID-19 era. Titled "New Challenges, New Opportunities, New Cooperation - The

Reform and Development of Higher Medical Education and Health Care in the Post-pandemic Era", the seminar was set to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in higher medical education, medical and health services, public health systems and smart medical construction in the post-epidemic era among medical institutions from South and Southeast Asia. It is one of the sub-forums of the 2020 Online Forum on Education Cooperation in South & Southeast Asia organized and sponsored by China's Yunnan Provincial Department of Education. According to the event organizer and also the SSAMESA secretary Kunming Medical University (KMU), China, 16 medical experts

including Prof. Li Song, President of KMU, China, Prof. Javed Akram, Vice Chancellor of University of Health Sciences (UHS), Lahore gave speeches on medical personnel training, medical services and COVID-19 prevention and control. Yuan Bin, Party Secretary of KMU, said, "The COVID-19 epidemic is a common challenge facing all mankind. Only through solidarity and cooperation can countries overcome the epidemic and promote new progress in medical education and health care." Prof. Javed Akram from Pakistan delivered a well-received speech with the theme "Challenges & Opportunities in Medical Education for Health Universities".

He and other experts had a full exchange on the reform and development of medical education and health care in the post-epidemic era, and put forward opinions and suggestions on promoting regional cooperation in medical education and health care. SSAMESA, initiated by KMU and Shanghai Jiaotong University (SJTU) in 2019, is a non-government and non-profit international medical institutions consortium joined by 39 medical institutions from 12 countries in the South and Southeast Asia. It was established to promote exchange and cooperation between medical institutions in China and South and Southeast Asian countries in the fields of medical education, sci-

entific research, medical training and healthcare services. The Alliance also aims to promote the improvement of regional higher medical education and medical and health services, and make positive contributions to the development of global medical and health care. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Alliance has donated masks, forehead thermometers and other PPEs to some of its members. And an online sharing session on COVID-19 clinical diagnosis and treatment was held with more than 100 medical experts from 13 universities and medical institutions in 7 countries to share their successful experience and practices in epidemic prevention and control and patient treatment.

Indian troops martyr two youth

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Indian troops in their fresh act of state terrorism martyred two Kashmiri youth in Badgam district on Wednesday. According to Kashmir Media Service, the youth were martyred during a violent cordon and search operation which was launched by the troops in Machowa area of the district, last evening. The operation continued till last reports came in. - APP

ECC approves Rs190m TSG for coastal areas survey

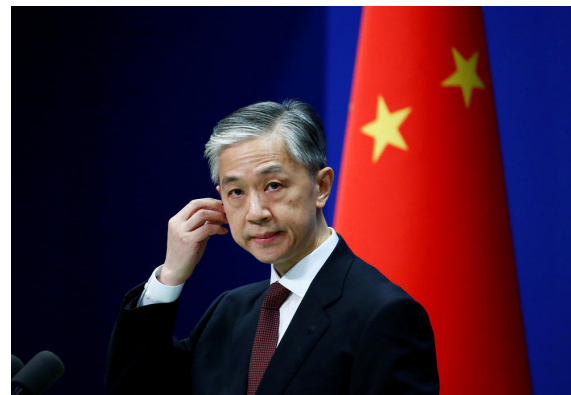
NIHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee has approved the Technical Supplementary Grant of 109.47 million rupees to the Ministry of Defence for the survey of the coastal areas. The Committee meeting was chaired by Advisor on Finance Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh in Islamabad on Wednesday. The amount was surrendered by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs as the Pakistan Army has offered to assist in the survey. In order to facilitate the telecom sector by the waiver of certain taxes, the ECC decided that the proposal may be granted approval in principle. The Committee also approved the summary moved by the Ministry of Energy for the allocation of another 38 MMCFD gas from 3 new wells Rehman 6,7 and 8 to M/S SSGCL, subject to all regulatory approvals. The price of gas will be as per the applicable petroleum policy. The ECC granted approval for the renewal of the contract with Tavanir Iran for the purchase of 104MW of electricity subject to vetting by the Ministry of Law and Justice. The contract, if approved by the Ministry of Law and Justice will be valid till 31st December 2021.

Indo-Pacific strategy outdated Cold War mentality: China

DNA

BEIJING: Commenting on India and the United States (US) working together to strengthen ties, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin Wednesday said the development of bilateral relations among countries should be conducive to regional peace, stability and development and must not infringe upon the legitimate rights and interests of a third party. "We always hold that bilateral relations between countries should be conducive to regional peace, stability and development and should not undermine the legitimate rights and interests of any third party," Wang's remarks were made during a regular briefing in response to a question on the US Secretary of State Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper high level ministerial



meeting with their Indian counterparts in New Delhi. He said, all visions on regional cooperation should be in line with the trend of the times, which was peace, development and win-win cooperation. He criticized the "Indo-Pacific strategy" proposed by the US and said it trumpets the outdated Cold-War mindset, confrontation between blocs and geopolitical rivalry. "We urge certain US politi-

cians to reject the Cold-War and zero-sum game mentality, and stop making moves like hyping up the so-called "China threat", sowing discord between regional countries, and undercutting regional peace and stability." Wang said besides, the China-India boundary issue was between China and India. The border situation was generally stable at the moment. Both sides had unimpeded channels for communication, and were properly handling matters through consultation and negotiation. On the US Secretary of State visit to Sri Lanka, he said it was so typical for some US officials to force small and medium sized countries to pick sides, adding, "I noticed an article written by a Sri Lankan diplomat, saying the country will handle foreign relations according to its constitution, laws and people's will and doesn't need any external lecturing on state governance." He said China and Sri Lanka were traditionally friendly neighbors and added, "We have been developing bilateral relations based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and conducting friendly cooperation based on equal-footed consultation and mutual benefit, which has substantively improved the well-being of people in Sri Lanka. These are facts that cannot be shaken."

Pakistani pine nuts fly to China to satisfy Chinese foodies

BEIJING: A flight carrying 25 tons of Pakistani pine nuts arrived at Kunming Changshui Airport in southwest China's Yunnan Province, says a report published by China Economic Net. "Baxi pine nuts", a snack popular in China in recent years, has always been mistaken by Chinese consumers as being produced in Brazil. In fact, they are from Chilgoza pine forest in Pakistan's western region Parachinar. According to the report, historically Pakistan has been a traditional exporter of pine nuts, most of which are sold to China through the Khunjerab Port in Kashgar, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Nowadays some vendors are purchasing such pine nuts in Xinjiang because of its advantage of road traffic. Pakistan pine nut is of the best quality in the world with its large kernel, thin skin, high nutritional value and medicinal value. According to a pine nut supplier in China, some pine nuts take up to three years to mature. They are also difficult to harvest, which justifies their high price. The harvest season begins in early September. The local people collect pine corns by self-picking from trees and bury for about two weeks till the corn open. Fresh pine nuts are easy to deteriorate and become moldy. Therefore, in order to ensure the quality of pine nuts, they need to be shipped by air in time, the Chinese supplier said. Gao Shang, head of cargo product of Air Freight Department of YTO Express, told China Economic Net (CEN) that October and November is the peak season for the import of Pakistani pine nuts. In order to solve the transportation problems caused by the COVID-19 epidemic and ensure the smooth flow of cargo between China and Pakistan, YTO arranged B757F cargo aircraft to carry 25 tons of pine nuts in 3 shifts per week. At present, YTO has shipped over 200 tons of pine nuts from Pakistan to China. These pine nuts will be sold in Hangzhou and Shaoxing city in east China. According to previous news from CEN, in addition to pine nuts, YTO also delivered mangoes, the king fruit of Pakistan, from Lahore to Kunming and Shanghai. Thanks to the "air + land" combined transport mode and cold chain end distribution of YTO, the mangoes remain fresh when delivered to Chinese consumers. As economic and trade ties between China and Pakistan continue to deepen, more and more high-quality Pakistani agricultural products will come to China and become popular among Chinese foodies, Gao said. - DNA

Pak entrepreneurs participate in SCO startup forum session

ISLAMABAD: Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Startup Forum, envisioned to lay the foundation for multilateral cooperation and engagement for startups among the SCO Member States, held its first ever session on 27 October 2020 using a virtual platform. Over 130 Startups and entrepreneurs from SCO Member States participated in this digital event, showcasing their startup ideas and pitching to a panel of renowned investors and corporates and witnessed parallel brainstorming sessions in which all Member Countries highlighted their initiatives to promote startups, exchanged success stories and discussed issues faced by the startups. This dynamic forum received overwhelming participation not only from Government bodies of the member states but also from all stakeholders of the startup ecosystem such as entrepreneurs, incubators, mentors, investors, students and academia. 23 innovative startups from National Incubation Center Program of Ignite under the auspices of Ministry of IT & Telecom and 8 renowned speakers from various domains of startup ecosystem represented Pakistan in this event. Amin Ul Haque, Federal Minister for IT & Telecom in his message while appreciating the SCO initiative said that such activities will help to resolve socio-economic problems facing SCO Member States by carving out innovative solutions and exchange of ideas on how institutional interventions can be introduced to support the startup ecosystem. - DNA

Saudia to abolish sponsorship system

Quoting Maaal, the Arabic newspaper, the report said that the kafala system had been in place for seven decades in the kingdom

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia plans to cancel a foreign worker sponsorship system, known as kafala, and replace it with a new form of contract between employers and employees, a report said on Tuesday. Quoting Maaal, the Arabic language online economic newspaper, the report said that the kafala system - that generally binds an expatriate worker to one employer - had been in place for seven decades in the kingdom. Rights groups criticise the system and say it leaves workers vulnerable to exploitation. However, Saudi media had said the abrogation of the sponsorship law would lead to limiting the relationship between the employer and the expatriate worker to the employment contract that defines the rights and duties of both the parties. A report says the end to the kafala system is also aimed at promoting economic growth and expanding commercial activities. In February, a Saudi Gazette report had said that the decision to end the sponsorship system was part of economic reforms that Riyadh is witnessing after the launch of Vision 2030 by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also known as MBS. - Agencies



LAHORE: Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan Androulla Kaminara met Maulana Kabir Azad of Badshahi Mosque Lahore. Efforts to build bridges btw different faiths and cultures were discussed. - DNA

Peaceful Afghanistan vital for regional peace: Suri

Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri said that Pakistan has always desire to have peaceful Afghanistan as peace in Afghanistan would ensure regional Progress and development

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri has said that Pakistan and Afghanistan are interlinked with shared social, cultural and economic ties which date back to the centuries. He also remarked that bilateral ties between both nations can be enhanced by boosting trade and investment opportunities in both countries. He expressed these views while talking with Mr.

Nissar Ahmed Ghoryani Minister for Trade and Investment of Afghanistan and Mr. Naseer Chairman Standing Committee of Wolsi Jirga on Health, Sports, and Youth Affairs who called on him in the Parliament House today. Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri said that Pakistan has always desire to have peaceful Afghanistan as peace in Afghanistan would ensure regional Progress and development. He also remarked that the incumbent Government of Pakistan is

striving hard to enhance bilateral ties on the basis of economy and trade. He said that special Executive Committee of Pak-Afghanistan Friendship Group (PFG) is working under the leadership of Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser to facilitate traders on both side of the border. He remarked that liberalizing visa policy for Afghan has been the achievement of this committee. He mentioned that two days Seminar on Pakistan Afghanistan Trade & Investment Forum 2020 was also to enhance bilateral ties on the basis of trade and investment. He was also an efforts resolved that terrorist activities to sabotage this process of coordination and collaboration would not succeed. Afghanistan Minister for Trade and Investment Nis-

sar Ahmed Ghoryani said that Afghanistan values high its brotherly relations with Pakistan and wanted to further strengthening the existing relations. He appreciated the initiatives of Pakistan's Parliament to bring both countries more closer. He said that both countries have vast opportunities for trade and business enhancement and close collaboration and coordination between Pakistan and Afghanistan would bring prosperity and progress for both countries.



Torkham border not closed: Authorities

PESHAWAR: The authorities at Torkham Border Wednesday said the border was opened for crossings and all kinds of trade activities as no such notification regarding closure of the border was received so far. The authorities said activities on both sides of the border were underway and trade vehicles were allowed to cross the border from both sides. The vehicle clearance process was also underway at the border, the authorities said adding there was no reality in reports that the border has been closed. However, the authorities said as soon as any notification for closure of the border was received, it will be closed till further orders. - APP

825 new cases; 14 deaths in past 24 hours

ISLAMABAD: The total active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan on Wednesday were recorded 11,627 as 825 more people tested positive for the deadly virus during the last 24 hours. Fourteen corona patients, 13 of whom were under treatment in hospital and one out of hospital died on Tuesday, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO). No COVID affected person was on ventilator in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Balochistan, while 98 ventilators elsewhere in Pakistan, out of 1,884 allocated for COVID-19 patients, were occupied. Some 29,477 tests were conducted across the country on Tuesday, including 8,860 in Sindh, 11,056 in Punjab, 3,955 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 4,023 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 838 in Balochistan, 181 in Gilgit Baltistan (GB), and 564 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Around 311,814 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. - APP