



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Romania, Pakistan have uninterrupted ties for 56 years**

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## Briefs

**PM Imran for boosting Pak-Afghan trade**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed to take practical steps for the promotion of trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan, besides protecting borders. He was chairing a high-level meeting regarding improving existing border management system in Islamabad on Monday. The Prime Minister said his government believes in independent, but secured borders. He directed to establish a special division for border management system in the interior ministry under the supervision of additional secretary.

**OIC firmly supports our stance**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said the passage of unanimous resolution on Kashmir by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers is a triumph of Pakistan. In a statement on Monday, he said the fifty seven member countries of the OIC are unanimously accepting Pakistan's stance on blatant human rights violations in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said a false propaganda was done before the session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers that Kashmir is not on the agenda of the moot. If that was the case then how did the OIC pass a resolution on Kashmir?

**Shahera made Addl Info Secy**

FIAZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Shahera Shahid has been appointed Additional Secretary Information Division. According to a notification, Shahera Shahid has also been assigned additional charge of DG/PIO Press Information Department (PID). The Establishment Division has issued the notification of the posting. Presently, Shahera Shahid is serving as DG/PIO Press Information Department.

## COAS says ties with China are of great value

The Chinese Minister acknowledged Pakistan Army's sincere efforts for regional peace and provision of secure environment for CPEC projects

NAVEED MIRAJ / DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief Of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said that Pakistan Army greatly values our time-tested and brotherly relations with China. He stated this while meeting with General Wei Fenghe, Minister of National Defence, China on Monday at GHQ. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and enhanced bilateral defence collaboration were discussed. Visiting dignitary acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's sincere efforts for regional peace and provision of secure environment for CPEC projects. Army Chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa thanked the dignitary for China's unwavering support to Pakistan on all key issues at regional and international forums. We have been standing together all along, and our relations will be no different in wake of future challenges, COAS reiterated. Later on, an MoU was also signed for enhancement of defence cooperation between both the Armies.

### Chinese minister meets CJCS

STAFF REPORT / DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Wei Fenghe, China's Minister of National Defence, who is on official visit to Pakistan, called on General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi. Matters related to changing geostrategic environment and further strengthening of security and defense cooperation between the two countries were discussed during the meeting. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to 'Iron Brotherhood' and 'All-Weather' friendship with continued efforts to forge deeper strategic ties for a shared future and security vision.

Earlier on arrival at GHQ, Minister of National Defence, laid a floral wreath at Yagare-Shuhada. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army presented the Guard of Honour to visiting dignitary.



RAWALPINDI: General Wei Fenghe, Minister of National Defence, China and General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff paying their respects to Shuhada at GHQ. - DNA

## PDM calls for protests on Friday, Saturday

"I am sending a message to the workers of the whole country. We will meet again on December 13 in Lahore," said Fazl

DNA

MULTAN: The fifth power show of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) was held on Monday at Multan's Ghanta Ghar Chowk after days of conflict between the city administration and opposition workers over holding a public event at a time when the incidence of coronavirus is rising. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-(F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, PML-N Vice President

### Shibil slams Opp for creating unrest

RANA FARRUKH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Shibli Faraz on Tuesday slammed the opposition for creating mess in the country. Talking to media people the minister also came heavy on former prime minister Nawaz Sharif saying he always used undemocratic methods to grab power. Shibli further said opposition will not succeed in its nefarious designs. He also criticised Maulana Fazlur Rehman adding after losing in election now he was hatching conspiracies against the elected government.

Maryam Nawaz and PPP's Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari, along with other PDM leaders and their respective supporters attended the public meeting. Addressing the rally, Maulana Fazlur-Rehman said that there would be protests all over the country on Friday and Saturday against the violence in Multan. He also congratulated the people of Multan for participating in the successful and historic gathering.

Continued on Page 06

## Iran urges int'l community to condemn scientist's killing

A statement released by Iran embassy Islamabad stated that the traces of the terrorist Zionist regime are evident in this cowardly assassination

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Iran has called upon the international community to condemn brutal killing of a top nuclear scientist. Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, head of the Research and Innovation Organization of the Ministry of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was targeted and martyred in a terrorist attack in Tehran province on Friday evening, November 27th 2020. He was an official of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and his assassination is a clear violation of international law, contrary to the UN Charter and internationally recognized laws

Continued on Page 06

### Weapon used was Israeli, says Iranian TV

WEB DESK / DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's English-language Press TV said on Monday that the weapon used in the killing of a prominent Iranian nuclear scientist last week was made in Israel. "The weapon collected from the site of the terrorist act (where Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh was assassinated) bears the logo and specifications of the Israeli military industry," an unnamed source told Press TV. Speaking before the Press TV report, Israeli intelligence minister Eli Cohen told radio station 103 FM on Monday that he did not know who was responsible. Separately, Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the country's Supreme National Security Council, told state TV that Iran's enemies had launched "a number of failed operations" against Fakhri-zadeh in the past. "This time, the enemy applied a completely new, professional and sophisticated method," Shamkhani said, without elaborating.

### Corona death toll crosses 8000

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported 40 additional fatalities from coronavirus in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 8,025. The country-wide breakdown of deaths is as follows: Sindh 2,924, Punjab 2,991, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 1,368, Balochistan 166, Islamabad 314, Gilgit Baltistan 97, Azad Jammu and Kashmir 165. 2,839 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours.

## Pak participation in expo to strengthen ties: China

BEIJING: Pakistan's participation as special partner of cooperation in the 17th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) held in Nanning, Guangxi province of China showed its sincere wish to strengthen cooperation with China and ASEAN countries, a Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson said on Monday. "As you said, this year for the first time, Pakistan was invited as a special partner of cooperation to attend the expo. President Dr Arif Alvi delivered a



video address at the opening ceremony. It shows Pakistan's sincere wish to strengthen cooperation with China and ASEAN," Hua Chunying said during her regular briefing. The spokesperson said that for many years, Pakistan had

been supporting and participating in the China-ASEAN Expo and it had been using this platform to enhance cooperation with markets in China and ASEAN. "We are all weather all round strategic cooperative partners. We have geographical proximity and there is also links between Pakistan and ASEAN countries". She hoped to work with all sides to deepen cooperation within China-ASEAN-Pakistan and achieve win win development. - APP

## Romania, Pakistan have uninterrupted ties for 56 years

Romania has contributed to the development of Pakistani economy by building cement factories in Lasbella and Kohat, refineries in Karachi, tractor assembly factory near Islamabad: Nicolae Goia

EXCLUSIVE

ANSAR M. BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan Nicolae Goia talked to CENTRELINE, daily Islamabad Post and DNA news agency, on the occasion of national day of Romania. The ambassador touched upon various issues ranging from bilateral relations to COVID 19 latest situation in his country. Here is the text of his interview. **ON COVID SITUATION** In 2020 COVID-19 affected almost all countries and more than 50 million people around the world. It has governments operating in a context of radical uncertainty, and faced with difficult trade-offs given the health, economic and social challenges it raises. By spring 2020, more than half of the world's population had experienced a lockdown with strong containment measures. Beyond the health and human tragedy of the coronavirus, it is now widely recognized that the pandemic triggered the most serious economic crisis since World War II. Our countries are facing unprecedented challenges from COVID-19 the strain on our gov-



ernments is extreme, and the impact on people all over the world continues to grow. Under the terms of a government emergency ordinance, Romania's government is taking steps to address the shortfall in income that people and businesses may be experiencing. The measures pertain to the technical unemployment allowance, the granting of free paid days to parents for the purpose of child-care, and the payment of the return to work incentive, amongst others. The next measures taken by the Romanian authorities against the spread of

coronavirus (COVID-19) in Romania benefited from a high percentage of approval from the population and were considered to be qualitative. **BILATERAL RELATIONS:** Romania and Pakistan have established diplomatic relations in 1964, we have had uninterrupted diplomatic ties for 56 years, during which my country has contributed to the development of Pakistani economy by building cement factories in Lasbella and Kohat, refineries in Karachi, tractor assembly factory near Islamabad and many other projects in various fields. We have tradition, we have



many success stories, and we have all the necessary ingredients to reset our economic cooperation to a much higher level that it is right now. As the ambassador of Romania in Pakistan, I will put high on my agenda laying down the foundation for increasing the people to people contact, work system so that our expertise in the fields like construction, infrastructure, insurance, banking and finance, MSE etc. will be transferred to our Pakistani partners. We are going to encourage Romanian businessmen to invest in Pakistan, we will support the process of training

young Pakistani in Romania. Bilateral political relations between Romania and Pakistan are from cordial to excellent. An important number of high level visits on both sides have given impetus to these relations. We aim to expand our bilateral political dialogue and keep in mind that the consultations between Ministries of Foreign Affairs are becoming instrumental in promoting and supporting the mutually beneficial items on our common agenda, as well as in preparing high level contacts. The real potential of parliamentary relations between Ro-

mania and Pakistan demands more frequent contacts at the different level (Parliament or Senate), in order to identify and employ all the resources available for promoting and developing the cooperation in the political, economic, trade, education, defence, cultural fields, as well as, fighting against terrorism and extremism. The very existence of the Romanian and Pakistani parliamentary friendship groups is important to continue parliamentary contacts at all levels with Pakistan, especially to the political-diplomatic dialogue between both Parliaments. The economic and trade relations between both countries have been growing for the last decades and Romania is an important trading partner of Pakistan. Both countries have been enjoying historical friendship and traditional cooperation in many fields for the past many years but there is a need to enhance trade volume between both countries. Our main priority is to increase and diversify the commercial exchanges between Romania and Pakistan, in a balanced manner for exports and imports. - (Continued on Back Page. Another article on Page 7)

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Romania, Pak have excellent ties for 56 years: Envoy - Page 08

## Briefs

## Teenager arrested for raping 7-year-old

DNA

LAHORE: A 15-year-old boy was arrested for raping a seven-year-old girl in Lahore's Gulshan-e-Iqbal, the police said on Monday. The suspect lived in the same neighbourhood. According to the child's family, she had left her house to buy some edibles from a nearby shop. The perpetrator forcefully took her to the roof of a nearby shop and raped her, the survivor's father told the police. "I and my wife were not at home when the crime was committed. My daughter narrated the incident to me when we came back home."

Following this, her father registered a complaint at the area's police station. The police arrested Iqbal. "He confessed to his crime during interrogation," SHO Muhammad Shoaib said. DNA samples of the suspect have been sent for tests and a medical examination of the survivor was conducted as well.

## Iran urges int'l community

From Page 01

and norms. Along with him, some other citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran have been martyred or wounded, which in turn, turns this attack into an act against human rights and a violation of the right to life.

A statement released by Iran embassy Islamabad stated that the traces of the terrorist and criminal Zionist regime (of Israel) are evident in this cowardly assassination, and any legal responsibility for this assassination will fall on this regime and its allies. This assassination is part of a series of assassinations carried out by the Zionist regime in Iran and in the region, and is therefore considered state terrorism.

It further called upon all countries, especially those claiming to defend human rights and fight against terrorism, are expected to respond appropriately to this terrorist act. The Islamic Republic calls on the international community - especially the officials of the European Union and the European capitals - to end their double standards and to condemn and deal with this state terrorist act in a transparent manner. This assassination shows that the enemies of diplomacy are living in anxious days and intend to endanger world peace and security by disturbing the region.

An important goal of the US-Israeli militants and their regional partners is to impose an extraordinary condition in the Middle East in order to achieve their sinister goals. The Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right to respond to this crime and to punish the perpetrators while being aware of the conspiracies of the enemies of peace, stability and security in the region and the world. If a government or an individual thinks that he can use the means of terror to prevent Iran's progress and advancement in the path of science, knowledge and technology, his ideas are completely wrong. Efforts to progress and succeed in all scientific fields will continue with vigor and speed. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while condemning this criminal assassination, calls on all governments and free and truth-seeking individuals to raise their voices in opposition to this barbaric act and do not let the enemies of Islam and Muslims block the way for the development and prosperity of the countries in the region with these assassinations. Everyone should be aware of the dangerous consequences of such moves in this area. The failure of the enemies in their sinister plan to create insecurity and instability in this region is possible only through the coordinated and sympathetic action of the countries of the region against the enemies.



ISLAMABAD: Officials of UAE embassy paying respects to Martyrs during a ceremony at the Embassy. - DNA

## E-commerce clearance facility to support exports: PRGMEA

Sohail A. Sheikh said that in post-pandemic age when e-commerce is transforming the entire trade globally government's this facilitation is the right step in the right direction

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRGMEA) on Monday appreciated the efforts of Pakistan Customs to develop an e-commerce automated clearance facility in collaboration with the State Bank, saying the move will prove to be very effective for SMEs, helping them promote their business, especially in era of post-corona economic slowdown. In an awareness program PRGMEA Central chairman Sohail A. Sheikh and Chief Coordinator Ijaz Khokhar, briefed the members about

e-commerce clearance facility developed recently by the Customs department of the Federal Board of Revenue. Sohail A. Sheikh said that in post-pandemic age when e-commerce is transforming the entire trade globally government's this facilitation is the right step in the right direction.

He asked the government to also launch a digital market policy in this regard after consultation with the real stakeholders so that B2B and B2C business can be catered. He said that estimated e-commerce sales value, which includes business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) sales, is equivalent to

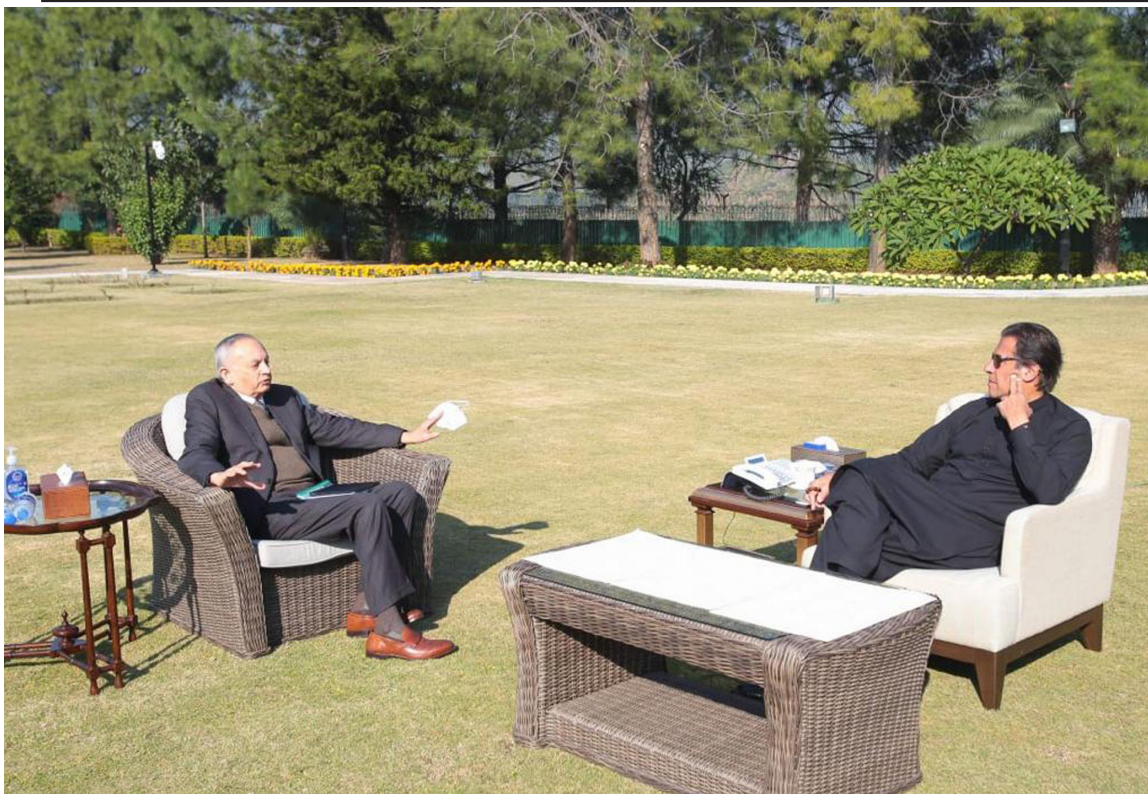
30% of global gross domestic product. He said that the coronavirus crisis has accelerated the uptake of digital solutions, tools and services. Quoting a World Bank report, he added that the Business-to-Consumer (B2C) transactions grew from \$1.5 trillion in 2014 to \$2.3 trillion in 2017 and now projected to grow to \$4.88 trillion in 2021.

PRGMEA Central Chairman observed that the value-added garment sector, which is also the major e-commerce operator, welcomes this initiative, expressing the hope that it will remove the difficulties faced by SME sector in exporting their goods, playing an effective

role in improving country's rating in the Ease of Doing Business Index. Sohail Sheikh said the role of export-oriented sector is vital in the country's economic growth and the government has accorded top priority to this sector taking necessary steps and measures to enhance its export efficiency, including 'e-commerce automated clearance system'. He said the new system will facilitate documentation besides allowing commercial banks to register e-commerce traders in Web Based One Customs. It is to be noted that under the SBP regulatory framework for B2C e-commerce exports, the exporters now

can send their e-commerce consignments without the requirement of E-Form up to \$5,000 per consignment. PRGMEA Chief Coordinator Ijaz Khokhar said that e-commerce is growing four times faster than the world economy. Cross-border e-commerce market in 2015 was estimated at \$300 billion and is expected to be worth \$ 900 billion by 2020. He said the cross border e-commerce is impacted by trade facilitation and logistics. So, poor trade facilitation and logistics will have no serious effects on economy. "We need to enhance the digital marketing activities because all the physical exhibitions have

been cancelled so the only marketing way has been left now is the digital mode. All our competitors in the region are aggressively capturing the market through digital mode," he added. Sohail A. Shikh added that the worldwide buying trend is changed, as they prefer online buying now. "For this we have to work a lot to launch the digital market policy after consultation with the business community." He said that already the major online companies have increased their business. Again we request the government to make a strong interaction with the stakeholders to form policies in this regard at the earliest.



ISLAMABAD: Abdul Raza Dawood, Advisor to PM called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

## Blockstack where you own your data comes to Pakistan

DNA

LAHORE: Blockstack PBC, a global blockchain technology company co-founded by a Pakistani Computer-Scientist-cum-entrepreneur, Dr. Muneeb Ali, has been successful in bootstrapping a thriving ecosystem around the Stacks blockchain. The mission of the project is to enable users to take back ownership of their digital lives, which are currently controlled by a handful of technology companies that have repeatedly broken the trust of their users. The growing Stacks community, along with a rising tide in the mainstream, believes the internet is fundamentally broken and has a promising solution in

the Stacks blockchain. As the ecosystem around the technology designed to address this 'broken internet' has grown, so too has the community, particularly here in Pakistan where the first-ever 'Stacks Chapter' is launching under the leadership of Nabeel Qadeer, Country Consultant for Blockstack. The goal of the chapter will be to raise awareness about the technology, form communities called Stacks Pakistan Circles, and advocate for bitcoin regulation with the help of the local industry. Currently, the Stacks ecosystem is focused on Stacks 2.0, the master design that will enable smart contracts and apps directly on Bitcoin, the most secure and robust blockchain in the world.

## PDM calls for protests on Friday, Saturday

From Page 01

He also criticized the government over arrest and torture on PDM rally workers. He said there would be huge protests all across the country. Pointing towards Prime Minister Imran Khan, the PDM Chief said that we will chase the jackal until it leaves the country completely. "Your ruling is called the ruling of coercion. Fighting against coercion is our only aim. I am sending a message to the workers of the whole country. We will meet again on December 13 in Lahore," said Fazlur Rehman.

Aseefa, who attended the rally on her brother and PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's behalf, said that the public has given its verdict and the "selected will have to go now". "I have come among you today at a time when my brother, your brother, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari is suffering from coronavirus. I hope that just like you supported the mother of democracy and the daughter of the east, you will support Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on PDM's platform. And I promise that I will support Chairman Bilawal and you at every step." "If they think we will be scared of arrests, they are deluded. If they arrest our brothers, every female worker of PPP will step outside to save our brothers and the country," Aseefa told a charged crowd. PML-N Vice President Maryam, in her address, said she was "convinced of the bravery of Multan's people" as she had been told that the administration had refused to give permission for a rally, yet people had gathered to hold one. She accused the government of "throwing occupied Kashmir in [Indian PM] Modi's lap" and said that a campaign was being run for Pakistan to accept Israel as a state. "Public wants to know if the selectors and selected are on the same page on the matter of Israel," she said. "They knew that I didn't know about my grandmother's death. My family kept calling me but couldn't reach me because phone signals were suspended," she said in today's public meeting. Maryam also bashed the government for telling the opposition to postpone public meetings due to rising cases of Covid-19, saying, "Once Covid-18 goes home, Covid-19 will leave as well". "This Covid-19 is very intelligent. It doesn't spread in Jamaat-i-Islami's gatherings, it doesn't spread in government officials' public meetings. It doesn't enter gatherings of 300 people. It only spreads in opposition rallies." "Two selectors are constantly trying to push this bus (government) forward, but this bus is not running," she said.

## 'PPP's politics has buried Bhutto's ideology'

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM) on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan Monday said that the fate of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) cabal hinges on the number of devotees coming from Sindh for paying tribute to the Sufi saints of Multan.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, she said that the ideology of Bhutto was to empower the common man, but today's politics of 'Give and take' had buried his ideology. "What kind of message was being given by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to jiyalas [activists] by sharing stage with the assassins of Bhutto on its foundation day," she asked. The PPP jiyalas had rejected the narrative of PDM, she said and added that the unnatural alliance of opposition was against the ideology of Bhutto. Dr Firdous said that there were no curbs on the freedom of expression, but violation of the Punjab Infectious Diseases Control Act would not be tolerated, and strict action would be taken against the violators. She said that there was no restriction on the gathering of 300 people, but it was noteworthy that the stadium was not required for such limited gathering. She said that the PDM leadership itself was afraid of holding procession in the stadium; that's why they were making hue

## Business community hails PM decision

Iftikhar Ali Malik said that Covid-19 has crippled even the advanced economies of the world, countries including Pakistan are trying to maneuver through the coronavirus; monetary and fiscal policies are extensively being used to deal with negative economic impact due to the pandemic

DNA

LAHORE: United Business Group (UBG), the largest alliance of chambers and trade associations in the country, said on Monday that Prime Minister Imran Khan's prudent decision of allowing industrial operations during the second wave of coronavirus pandemic will definitely have a salutary impact on the national economy. Talking to a traders delegation here, the UBG Chairman Iftikhar Ali Malik, Presidential candidate in the upcoming election of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Khalid Tawab and candidate for the FPCCI Vice President Almas

Hyder said that timely and judicious decisions of the PTI government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan are giving impetus to industrial productivity and trade activities across the country, thus ensuring economic stability.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said that Covid-19 has crippled even the advanced economies of the world, countries including Pakistan are trying to maneuver through the coronavirus; monetary and fiscal policies are extensively being used to deal with negative economic impact due to the pandemic. Malik said the PTI government this time again during second wave of corona pandemic has made its best and the economy is now recovering gradually

because of appropriate policy recourse to address the macro-economic imbalances. The stabilization efforts paid off with a sustained adjustment in current account deficit and continued fiscal prudence, he added. He cited that historic incentive package by the Prime Minister during his visit to Faisalabad has resulted in record industrial production of the textile sector. "Since business community is the backbone of the economy and we understand, Prime Minister Imran Khan is working day and night to facilitate the businesses and industry to optimum level, and we support his vision of much-needed revitalization of the economy and industry," he assured. Khalid Tawab said that another

epoch making decision of Imran Khan about special relief in power tariff to all industrial units throughout the country has also enabled the local industry to be competitive and not only regain its due share but also expand its sales in the global markets. He said that COVID-19, in a way, further highlighted the fundamental weaknesses of Pakistan's economy such as low tax to GDP ratio, reduced savings rate and minimal export growth with negligible value addition etc. while the industrial sector regressed. However, the present government responded promptly to such issues by reforming policy measures; introducing smart lockdowns instead of bringing all the economic activ-

ities to a standstill. While, candidate for FPCCI VP Almas Hyder said that though the PTI government was committed to increase the exports and improve trade activities in the country, stakeholders of many sectors of economy are being ignored by the policy makers. Almas Hyder, who is also former President of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), urged the Prime Minister to direct the authorities concerned to ensure representation of all the stakeholders while framing future economic policies and trade related decisions so as to make them practically viable. It will definitely help strengthen the national economy on sound footings, he observed.



## Briefs

## 3 drug peddlers arrested, drug, liquor recovered

RAWALPINDI: Police in their ongoing drive against drug peddlers and bootleggers conducted raids in different areas and arrested three accused besides recovering 3460 grams charras and 100 bottles of liquor from their possession. According to a police spokesman, in a raid, Race Course police arrested a drug peddler namely Najam ul Hassan alias Naji Shah besides recovering 2080 grams charras from his possession. Saddar Baroni police held Gul Faraz and seized 1380 grams charras. Meanwhile, Saddar Wah police rounded up a bootlegger namely Fayyaz for having 100 bottles of liquor. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused under Narcotics Control Act while further investigations are underway. - APP

## New block in CDA hospital is underway

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Work on extra block in Capital Development Authority (CDA) Hospital is underway. The grey structure of under construction 5 stories block and the frame work of 3 stories has been completed. The Chairman CDA, Aamir Ali Ahmed has directed for fastening the work on the construction of extra blocks. According to detail, like a number of other projects of CDA the work on extra blocks in CDA hospital was also kept on delayed for a long time. The current administration of CDA released funds for this project while considering the importance of the project. The authority also removed all the hurdles on the way of project. The facility of 100 beds will be available in latest extra block. There would also be the facilities of air conditioning, electricity work, generators, and others in the block. The departments of ICU and CCU will be established in the hospital. The projected expense on the project is Rs 176.7 million. OPDs of all the departments and Diagnostic Centers will be established in the basement. 6 rooms will be allocated for consultants, 8 for medical officers, and 4 for Diagnostic Procedures. The medical ward of 33 beds will be established at ground floor. There will be 33 beds medical ward for females at first floor. The facility of 16 beds, CCU, and angiography, VIP cardiac room, nurses station, duty rooms, store room, will be at 2nd floor. Officers' medical ward of 18 beds will be established at third floor.

## Secretary IT lauds achievements of IT sector

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui has lauded the achievements of Pakistan's IT sector, noting that it is a matter of great pride that Pakistani IT companies are providing state of the art products and services to the world's largest companies. He was chairing a meeting to review steps being taken for enhancing growth of Pakistan's IT industry exports, said a press release issued here Monday. Briefing the meeting, PSEB Managing Director, Osman Nasir said that PSEB has been making efforts to provide state of the art office space to the rapidly growing IT sector of Pakistan. He said special priority is being given to setting up software technology parks in relatively underdeveloped areas to ensure holistic growth of IT sector across Pakistan. In this context, PSEB has recently established a Software Technology Park in Gilgit in collaboration with Special Communication Organization (SCO). Efforts are underway to identify suitable office buildings in Sargodha, Bannu, Swat and other cities for conversion into Software Technology Parks. Several webinars have been held to provide opportunities to Pakistani IT companies to interact with overseas entities to explore collaboration and cooperation possibilities, the MD PSEB said.



RAWALPINDI: General Wei Fenghe, Minister of National Defence, China along with his delegation called upon General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff at GHQ. - DNA

## International policy makers treasure Ehsaas programs

Together with Dr. Sania Nishtar, Dr. Jamila Mahmood, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia and Pia Andrews Advisor to Government of Canada shared the 'whole of government' experiences in their respective countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: UNDP hosted a high-level webinar on '#NextGenGov' Whole of the Government Integrated Social Protection Policy Response to COVID-19' today. The regional learning session brought together senior policymakers spearheading 'whole of government' approach in their social protection policies and systems to reflect on the lessons of COVID-19. Three countries were invited- Pakistan, Malaysia and Canada. Together with Dr. Sania Nishtar, Dr. Jamila Mahmood, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Malaysia and Pia Andrews

Advisor to Government of Canada shared the 'whole of government' experiences in their respective countries. The webinar aimed to enable learning and sharing the international experiences to help add value to the other governments keen to redesign their social protection policies and recalibrating their governance approaches post-COVID-19. The event mainly featured real time provocations around "Whole of Government" approach to social protection, inter-ministerial coordination and new institutional modalities and investment priorities that emerged in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis and whether governments will be able to



carry over this "collaboration premium" generated by the crisis into the future of social protection. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Sania outlined the experience of Ehsaas Emergency Cash and how

the programme pioneered a new policy approach. She explained, "The experience demonstrated how cash transfer programmes can be deployed to counter socioeconomic fallouts due

to external shocks such as COVID-19 which present a long-term predicament." Dr. Sania then described how a "whole of the government approach was adopted to deliver emergency cash assistance to 15 million daily wage earners countywide. She summarized how the crucial dependencies had been deep rooted in the methodology of the emergency cash programme including successful collaborations with NADRA, State Bank of Pakistan, provincial and district governments in union councils, public representatives and agencies responsible for law and order. Further, Dr. Sania explained the role of Cabinet approvals

when fiscal measures had to be taken to incentivize payment retailers. She also discussed how volunteers helped in the programme execution and how different agencies of the government were involved in beneficiary centered communications particularly the role of Radio Pakistan and PTV in providing a national hook up space for public announcements. Concluding the discussion, Dr. Sania highlighted that it was not just whole of the government approach but also public private with regard to the role of commercial banks and actors involved in providing connectivity which enabled real time authentications in the field.

## Sheikh Rashid inaugurates Kohat, Lahore Rail Cars

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Monday restored Kohat and Lahore Rail Cars which were suspended due to Covid-19. Talking to media persons here at Rawalpindi Railway Station he said, the public meetings of the opposition parties cannot derail the government. The Prime Minister Imran Khan was ready to talk with the opposition parties on all issues except NAB and NRO. Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said that the incumbent government would complete its constitutional term of five years. To a question he said, the writ of the government cannot be called a baton as the government was striving to enforce law and protect the public from Covid-19. He advised the opposition parties to enter into dialogue with the government to steer the country out of the political impasse. It is in the interest of the opposition parties to hold dialogue with the government, he added. Politicians never close doors for dialogue, irrespective of what they utter publicly, he said. To another question he said, Bilawal Bhutto got

infected with coronavirus from the public meeting of Peshawar. He said, Shahbaz Sharif had talked about dialogue and the process should be initiated. He informed that the prices of daily use items including flour and sugar had started falling which would go down further as the government had taken solid steps. The government was well aware of the current security situation in the region, he said while rejecting any possibility of recognizing Israel. There was no threat to the country from the boarders however some vested interest elements were trying to create unrest in the country, he added. He informed that the Prime Minister Imran Khan had chaired a meeting about Lai Expressway and Main Line-1 (ML-1) Projects were signed nearly 16 years ago but could not be materialized. The incumbent government would complete both the projects, he said. The Kohat Rail car comprising nine coaches has a capacity of 850 passengers while the fare from Rawalpindi to Kohat would be Rs 230. - APP

## Islamabad gears up to beat lockdown boredom

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to provide a recreational activity to Islamabad residents during the times of the coronavirus pandemic, the Islamabad Capital Territory Administration in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority (CDA) is planning to open up a drive-in cinema in the federal capital. "We plan to have a car

cinema next month and the administration was working on it," Deputy Commissioner, Islamabad, Hamza Shafiqat hinted at the opening of a drive-in movie theatre in response to a tweet at his social media user. Recently, a Twitter user, Faizan Khan shared the idea while tagging DC of holding a car theater at F-9 park, every weekend until the second wave of COVID-19 ends. Residents of Islama-

bad regularly reach out to DC on social media and get a prompt response to their complaints and suggestions. Talking to APP on Sunday, Hamza Shafiqat said drive-in movie theatres have the advantages of in-person viewing while staying in the comfort, privacy, and safety of your own vehicle. "Social distancing is built-in, as cars are often parked six or more feet away from each other and proper COV-

ID-19 protocols make it easier to have fun yet stay safe," the DC remarked. Pertaining to a query, he replied that the city managers were considering the Shakarparian Parade Ground or F-9 Park as prospective locations for the cinema set-up. People will be allowed to watch films while sitting in their cars and the cars' radios will function as speakers for the movie's audio, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's ambassador-designate to Arab Republic of Egypt, Mr. Sajid Bilal, called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

## PCJCCI discusses Pak-China trade with FO official

SM Naveed lauded the foreign ministry efforts in further deepening and strengthening Pak-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. He said that the PCJCCI would continue working for economic integration of two brotherly nations through increased regional connectivity

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President SM Naveed Monday called on Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, Director General China Desk at the Foreign Office, and discussed with him Pak-China trade ties, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) matters related to agriculture, science and technology cooperation. According to a press release issued here, SM Naveed

lauded the foreign ministry efforts in further deepening and strengthening Pak-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. He said that the PCJCCI would continue working for economic integration of two brotherly nations through increased regional connectivity and win-win cooperation. He said that the PCJCCI was determined to serve as a model chamber and vibrant platform for promoting mutual

investment and friendship between Pakistan and China. The DG China Desk said that CPEC had entered the second phase with particular focus on industrialisation, science and technology cooperation and socio-economic development. He hoped that the second phase of CPEC would play a key role in promoting business-to-business ties between the two countries and also promote foreign direct

investment in Pakistan. He emphasised that CPEC, a flagship project of BRI (Belt and Road Initiative), would open up enormous opportunities for Pakistan and China, enabling both countries to promote growth and development in the region. Mudassir Tipu said that post-COVID-19, CPEC and BRI would become a hub of trade, connectivity and people-to-people exchanges. Highlighting the second phase

of China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement, the DG said that it was an opportune time to enhance Pakistan's exports to China. Two new joint working groups on agriculture and science and technology had been established earlier this year. He said that business-to-business engagement would complement government's policies on agriculture reforms, paving the way for second green revolution in Pakistan. - APP

## AIOU announces assignments submission schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has uploaded assignments submission schedule for the programs offered in autumn 2020 semester including matriculation, FA and I Com on its website (www.aiou.edu.pk). According to the schedule assignment submission deadline for the submission of 1st assignment of all full credit courses of matriculation, FA and I Com is 30 November while the deadline for the submission of 2nd assignment is December 20. However, the students who are unable to submit 1st assignment by the deadline are allowed to submit it along with the 2nd assignment on or before December 20. The deadline for the submission of 3rd and 4th assignment is January 20 and February 20, 2021 respectively. Moreover, submission deadline for 1st and 2nd assignment of half credit courses of these programs is December 20 and February 20, 2021 respectively. It is pertinent to mention here that the university has completed the process of admission confirmation of these programs and the candidates may verify their candidature from the website (www.aiou.edu.pk). Books have already been dispatched to the students of these programs while the study period is from November 2020 to February 2021. Students are advised to study regularly and complete all their academic activities within the stipulated time period. Moreover, they must follow the deadlines of assignments submission to avoid any future inconvenience. It is further communicated that the university has uploaded assignment marks of the students enrolled in FA program of spring 2020 semester.

## COVID-19 claims five lives in last 24 hours

RAWALPINDI: The deadly C-virus claimed five more lives of critical patients while 144 more people have become its victims during the last 24 hours. According to a handout issued by the district administration here on Monday, 137 patients were reported from Rawalpindi district while 7 belonged to other districts. The district administration informed that 40 positive cases were reported from Potohar town, 35 Rawalpindi Cantt, 53 Rawal town, 3 Gujar Khan, 2 Taxila, 2 Kahuta and 1 from Kalarysya and Kotli Sattian each. Recently 26 patients were admitted in Holy family Hospital, 37 Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 8 Red Crescent, 45 Institute of Urology, 2 Begum Akhtar Memorial Trust and 4 in the Hearts international hospital who were being provided the best health care facilities, e added. - APP

## Two dacoits held, snatched cash recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Sabzi Mandi Police has arrested two persons involved in dacoities and recovered snatched cash, nine mobile phones, motorbike and weapon from their possession a police spokesman said. He said that a police team headed by Station House Officer Sabzi Mandi Police Station Sub-Inspector Muhammad Iqbal busted two members' dacoit gang involved in snatching valuables at gun point. They have been identified as Abdullah and Yasir while police team recovered snatched cash, nine mobile phones, motorbike and illegal weapons from their possession. During the preliminary investigation, they confessed their involvement in incidents of looting people in various areas of Sabzi Mandi and Shams Colony police stations. Separate cases have been registered in Sabzi Mandi police stations against the nabbed persons and further investigation is underway from them. - APP

## Iran-US tensions

THE assassination of Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh, an Iranian nuclear scientist, near Tehran on Friday, will inevitably spell bad news for regional peace and Iran-American relations. Fakhri-zadeh, who headed research and innovation at Iran's Defense Ministry, had already been noted by American and Israeli investigation agencies as being an important contributor to the alleged covert atomic bomb programme by Iran. Despite Iran's denial that it is developing its nuclear programme, and an alleged fatwa by the Ayatullah against nuclear weapons, the West suspects Iran of seeking a coordinated nuclear weapons programme. Fakhri-zadeh had also especially been named by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2018 as a threat.

Though no country has taken responsibility for this, with the above facts, one cannot blame Iran for suspecting Israeli involvement behind the attacks. The lack of denial on Israel's and the silence from the US administration makes relations even more hostile. This is a pity; the victory of Joe Biden in the US 2020 presidential elections could have been a turning point in the US-Iran relations. The Trump administration had taken hostilities to the worst they had been in decades, to the point of rumours of war. Unfortunately, it seems that in its last few months, the Trump Administration is still determined to damage Iran-US relations to the point of no repair. Even with a Biden victory, and Biden's stated plans to renegotiate the Iran deal, these last-minute attacks will make that much more difficult - putting the Biden administration in a worse negotiating position. Despite the current administration's best efforts, it is hoped that these futile attacks are put to an end soon and the sanctions on Iran are slowly loosened with a Biden administration. Not just for regional peace but a sanction less Iran is important for Pakistan to map out a path for regional development, along with China.

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## OIC for Kashmir

THE outcome of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) recent meeting was a unanimous rejection and condemnation of all illegal actions taken by India in the region of Kashmir. This development comes as a major win for Pakistan considering it has secured the support of 57 countries for the Kashmiri cause. However, this is just the beginning. The focus should be on the next step which is to incite a similar response by the international community at large.

According to the resolution of the meeting, all members of the OIC denounced the revocation of Kashmir's special status, state-sponsored terrorism, vast human rights violations as well as the exploitation of Covid-19 to increase the subjugation of the people of Kashmir. Furthermore, they have demanded that the Indian government rescind the domicile certificates being issued to non-Kashmiris since they serve as a deliberate attempt to alter the demographic structure of the territory.

The OIC further emphasised that the issue of Kashmir is one that is internationally recognised as disputed, and so for any country to overtly lay claim over the region or act in isolation is unwarranted. If India continues to violate internationally applied laws in the region, then members of the OIC encourage the world to review their dealings with India for the sake of the innocent in Kashmir. This is the kind of response that is needed from the global community at large.

Even though this resolution serves as a small win for Pakistan, in comparison to the larger play for securing the right to self-determination in Kashmir, it reinforces the fact that the issue is being taken as seriously as it should. A trickle-down effect of such an attitude, in the international community, is bound to happen soon enough and for that, Pakistan must continue to work tirelessly.

# OIC Conference at Niamey & the Kashmir Issue

Justice Ali Nawaz Chowhan



The previous High Commissioner of Human Rights condemned Indian for not allowing inspection. The sub-committee of Human Rights Council through its report of 1997 authored by Mr. Palley called the Indian Army as a Rogue Army. For purposes of advocacy we should start addressing the National Institutions of the Human Rights in the 160 countries of the world. My services are always available as being the former Chairmen of the National Commission for the Human Rights

IT seems that the OIC has shown a cold shoulder to the Kashmir issue much against its previous proclamations. Let us recall the 22nd session of the OIC in December 1994 at Casablanca on Jammu and Kashmir with binding effect on the OIC. It has shown no interest in condemning Indian efforts to change the Muslims majority status by unlawfully bringing in non-Kashmiris to settle there for the first time in the 93 year history of state Subject Law. In order to change the demography and frustrate plebiscite. United Nation too has neglected Kashmir.

It has not called any session of General Assembly or Security Council to consider Indian violation of its first undertaking of 8 January 1948, violation of UN resolution of 30 March 1951 and non-compliance of the recommendations made in the June 2018 and July 2019 reports of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. These reports reflect the crimes against Humanity being committed by India. It is unfortunate that a brotherly country was unhappy when the Foreign Minister of Pakistan reminded the OIC of its obligations. He may continue in his efforts undeterred using his diplomatic skills. Pakistan has an option of invoking the advisory jurisdiction of ICJ. Besides, pursuing the matter under International Law. Let us remind the OIC of its commitment on Kashmir at Casablanca by referring to the salient points of the resolutions Reaffirming the importance of the universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination enshrined in the Charters of the OIC and the United Nations. • Recalling all its previous resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. • Recalling the Report of the OIC Fact Finding Mission on the situation in Kashmir following • its visit to Azad Jammu and Kashmir in February 1993, and regretting that the human rights situation in Indian held Jammu and Kashmir remains grave. Regretting also that the Government of India has not responded favorably so far to

the offer of • the Good Offices Mission made by the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers and renewed by the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference.

Takes note of the Report of the Secretary General on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and • endorses the recommendations contained therein (Document No.ICFM/22-94/PIL/D.3). Calls for a peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue in accordance with the relevant • UN Resolutions and as agreed upon in the Shimla Agreement. Calls upon Member states to take all necessary steps to persuade India to cease forthwith the • massive human rights violations of the Kashmiri people and to enable them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination as mandated by the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Requests the Secretary General to take necessary steps for enabling the true representatives of • the Kashmiri people to have their views expressed in OIC and other international fora. Recommends that member states continue to coordinate their positions and to take joint action • at the UN General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights and other relevant international fora to promote respect for the fundamental human rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Requests the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir to continue its efforts for promoting • the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people in accordance with the UN Resolutions and for safeguarding their fundamental human rights. Something is gone wrong and we have to revisit the policy on Kashmir and assess the situation in the light Indian robust diplomacy.

Indolence can also be attributed to the government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir whose important duty was advocacy on Kashmir issue before the OIC and National Institution of Human rights. It has failed in doing this. There is need for coordinated and robust efforts on the part

of Government of Pakistan and Government of AJK in this context. Instead of following the UN resolutions starting from resolution 38 of 1948 onwards and Indian commitment to respect the wishes of people of Jammu and Kashmir it has illegally brought about a change in the status of Kashmir as reflected in Article 370 of the Indian constitution and has illegally and under coercion annexed Kashmir making it a province of India.

This act of the Indian government is destitute of the will of the people. The all party conference of 2000 has categorically denounced the purported document of accession to Indian. This is mere fabrication. Kashmir remains an international conflict zone and India is not allowing UN and other independent delegations to visit Kashmir and see for themselves the war crimes being committed with impunity by India.

The previous High Commissioner of Human Rights condemned Indian for not allowing inspection. The sub-committee of Human Rights Council through its report of 1997 authored by Mr. Palley called the Indian Army as a Rogue Army. For purposes of advocacy we should start addressing the National Institutions of the Human Rights in the 160 countries of the world.

My services are always available as being the former Chairmen of the National Commission for the Human Rights. I have contacts with the Global body of the National Institution of Human Rights in the Geneva. We cannot allow inertia to prevail. The Kashmir issue has to be kept alive. We have to raise voice against the war crimes in Kashmir before the world and the UN. This is our obligation.

- The Author is a former International Judge of the UN at The Hague, Chief Justice of the Gambia, First Chairman of National Commission for the Human Rights Pakistan, Judge of the superior judiciary, Co-Chair Person UNESCO, Professor of International Law etc.

# Independence of Kashmir in the guise of interests

Attiya Munawer



India is automatically unveiling itself in front of the world as India had started propaganda before the OIC meeting that Kashmir is not on the agenda, but the world has seen that the OIC meeting is not just a resolution on the Kashmir issue. It also strongly condemned the atrocities committed by the Indian government and demanded withdrawal of all illegal unilateral measures

THE OIC is the second largest organization of 57 Muslim countries after the United Nations, but it does not look like there should be unity and consensus among its member countries. Many countries of this organization are pointing guns at each other, but there is no difference on Palestine and Kashmir issues, all countries individually fully support Palestine and Kashmir cause. The OIC member states must first resolve their differences, and even if they do not, it is time to take a firm stand on the Kashmir issue.

In particularly, the rhetoric, criticism, concern and condemnation from the Islamic countries is not doing anything. The way India is violating the sanctity of thechaddar(veil) and the char divari (four walls of home) in the occupied valley, playing with the blood of innocent people, this blood is also on the heads of those who can stop the hand of the oppressor, but the world is a victim of worldly interests.

Unless OIC member states disguise their interests and unite in good faith against nihilist forces, OIC meetings will continue to lead to sit-ins and denunciations, and will not be able to convince the international community of their position. It is gratifying that the Kashmir issue has come to the forefront of the OIC member states' meeting, a major diplomatic victory for Pakistan over India over the Kashmir issue. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting passed a resolution on Occupied Kashmir.

The OIC rejected India's August 5 move in Occupied Kashmir and also passed a resolution against Indian atrocities in Kashmir. According to the text of the resolution, the Kashmir dispute has been on the agenda of the Security Council for more than seven decades, OIC has

rejected India's move on August 5, 2019 and demanded that India withdraw all its illegal actions by saying Indian actions are a direct violation of Security Council resolutions.

It was also said in the resolution that the Indian measures were aimed at snatching other rights of Kashmiris, including the referendum, all illegal unilateral measures taken in Jammu and Kashmir should be withdrawn and the Indian government should refrain from taking all possible steps to change the current population ratio in the disputed region. The resolution also condemned the Indian attitude, the Balakot tragedy, the aggression on the LOC and Working Boundary.

There is no doubt that India is fully mobilized to defeat Pakistan in the diplomatic arena, but for the first time, Prime Minister Imran Khan has raised the issue of Kashmir on all platforms, including the United Nations, and India is failing despite its diplomatic conspiracies. In this regard, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood-Qureshi is right to say that India has nothing to show in Kashmir, they can only show the story of atrocities in occupied Kashmir.

India is automatically unveiling itself in front of the world as India had started propaganda before the OIC meeting that Kashmir is not on the agenda, but the world has seen that the OIC meeting is not just a resolution on the Kashmir issue. It also strongly condemned the atrocities committed by the Indian government and demanded withdrawal of all illegal unilateral measures. Similarly, Opposition parties in the country were also accusing the government of not conducting effective diplomacy on Kashmir situation, but after the OIC meeting passed a resolution on occupied Kashmir, it became clear that the government's diplomat-

ic efforts are proving to be fruitful. However, merely condemning statements and approving resolutions is not going to solve the Kashmir issue.

There is no doubt that even if the OIC meeting passes resolutions on Kashmir, Palestine and Islamophobia, it will not have a significant impact on the people of the oppressed regions and the global wave of Islamophobia because The approval of these resolutions will not free Kashmir, nor will the oppressed people of Palestine be liberated from the domination of the illegitimate state of Israel, nor will the extremist elements of the Western world refrain from blasphemy and insulting the Holy Prophet (SAW). The resolutions passed in the past bear witness to the fact that these resolutions without enforcement have proved to be absolutely ineffective and useless. The status of such resolutions is nothing more than moral pressure, which countries like India and Israel are not ready to realize.

The only practical way, recently, Azerbaijan has shown the oppressed of the Islamic world that through a bold move the Armenian-occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region has been liberated by the sword. As a result of the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, Azad Kashmir was able to be liberated with the blessings of the courageous act of Jihad. Although Pakistan had just come into being at that time, it had neither army nor economy, but Quaid-e-Azam had succeeded in the world only with the spirit of jihad. Wherefore, Kashmir issue will not be resolved with condemnation statements and the approval of resolutions in OIC, for the independence of Occupied Kashmir, we will have to take off the cloak of expediency.

## Briefs

## 'No mandate to influence Indo-Pak bilateral ties'

DNA

AUKLAND: Newly-appointed Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), Greg Barclay has stated that the cricket's governing body doesn't have the mandate to influence bilateral ties between India and Pakistan. He thinks that some things are beyond cricket but is confident to do his best to get arch-rivals on the same page with regards to cricketing matters. "I would love nothing more than to see India and Pakistan continuing with their cricket relations like previously. I am also enough of a realist to understand that there are geopolitical issues at play here," Barclay told to media.

He further added that all cricket boards at ICC aim to continue helping that would allow both boards to come to a position where they can play regular cricket.

"Beyond that, I do not think I have a mandate or ability to influence the outcomes more than that. That is really done at a level way beyond where we could be operating," he added. "From the cricket point of view, we would love to get those countries back together again on a regular basis. The ICC will do whatever it can to help facilitate and support an outcome that might see that happen," he maintained. It must be noted that Pakistan and India have not played a bilateral series since 2012. Both teams have only faced in main ICC events or the Asia Cup since then.

## Pakistan players undergo 3rd round of testing

## SPORTS DESK

WELLINGTON: Virus-hit Pakistan cricket team on Monday underwent their third round of Covid-19 tests since arriving in New Zealand. The results of the tests are likely to determine if Pakistan squad are to be allowed to train during their managed isolation period.

An official of the team in Christchurch confirmed that the tests have already been conducted and results are likely in the next 24 hours. "Following the results of these tests, the Canterbury DHB medical officer of health will conduct an assessment of whether the team members who have not returned positive tests can have an exemption from managed isolation to train," a spokesperson for the New Zealand health ministry said. "For this to occur, the medical officer of health must be satisfied that training is unlikely to transmit Covid-19."

Pakistan team was supposed to have its exemption for training earlier during managed isolation period but that was put on hold after 6 players tested positive for the virus in round 1 of testing and amid reports of SOP breaches. Of the six squad members that had tested positive initially, a pair's infection has since been deemed as historic and no more infectious. Another member of the team tested positive in round 2 of testing. The remaining 46 members of the touring party had returned negative results.

## Chang'e-5 probe prepares to land on moon

BEIJING: China's Chang'e-5 probe is preparing for a soft landing on the moon to undertake the country's first collection of samples from an extraterrestrial body. The lander-ascender combination of the spacecraft separated from its orbiter-returner combination at 4:40 a.m. Monday (Beijing Time), according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA). Launched on Nov. 24, Chang'e-5 is one of the most complicated and challenging missions in China's aerospace history, as well as the world's first moon-sample mission for more than 40 years. The spacecraft is performing well and communication with ground control is normal, CNSA said. The lander-ascender combination will execute a soft landing on the moon and carry out automatic sampling. The orbiter-returner will continue orbiting about 200 km above the lunar surface and wait for rendezvous and docking with the ascender. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Sualeh Ahmed Faruqi, secretary commerce in a meeting with Paul Koyi, president Tanzania chamber of commerce, industry & agriculture (TCCIA). — DNA

# Armenian president calls on government to resign

He pointed out that the situation in Armenia was very different from two years ago when elections were held and proposed the establishment of a provisional national unity government and early elections

## FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Armenia's president said Sunday that the government should resign, new elections should be held within a year at the latest and an interim government of national accord should be formed, preferably a technocratic one. Armen Sarkissian also criticized the Armenian government during his meeting with representatives of the Armenian community in Russia. He described Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's signing of a

cease-fire agreement with Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and the withdrawal of Armenians from Karabakh as a "great tragedy." "There is a solution in any country where such a great tragedy has occurred. The government that led to this has to go," he said. He pointed out that the situation in Armenia was very different from two years ago when elections were held and proposed the establishment of a provisional national unity government and early elections. Suggesting that a technocratic government be established

on which all parties will agree, Sarkissian said this government could work for six months or a one-year period and lead the country to early elections. Sargsyan also said that a constitutional referendum needed to be organized before the new elections to amend the constitution. Claiming that the president or the prime minister should not make important decisions for the country alone in Armenia, Sarkissian said "the Constitution is not balanced at all in our country. There should be a balance between the Parliament, the government, and the

Presidency." He also emphasized that the country's president should be elected by popular vote, not by the parliament as it is now. In 2018, Pashinyan rose to prominence as the leader of widespread demonstrations across the country against the political establishment, demanding a more democratic Armenia and an end to corruption. He was elected prime minister by the parliament after the bloc he led received 70.4% of the vote in elections held in December 2018. Relations between the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan

and Armenia have been tense since 1991 when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Upper Karabakh, a territory recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions. New clashes erupted on Sept. 27 and ended with a Russian-brokered truce six weeks later. The Armenian army launched attacks on civilian and Azerbaijani forces and violated three humanitarian cease-fire agreements during the 44-day conflict. After nearly 30 years, Azerbaijan managed to liberate its territories from illegal Ar-

menian occupation, while Armenia was defeated and had to sign a cease-fire agreement with Azerbaijan that put an end to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh on Nov.10. Pashinyan said he had signed an "unspeakably painful" deal which allowed Azerbaijan to claim control over regions it took back in the fighting. While Azerbaijan liberated several cities and nearly 300 settlements and villages amid the heavy fighting, Armenians are also handing over other territories under the deal, which is being monitored by both Russia and Turkey.

## First Islamic Encyclopedia published

TASHKENT: At the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, large-scale work is being carried out in Uzbekistan to preserve universal human values, revive the scientific and cultural heritage of the Uzbek people and convey to the general public the essence of the true religion of Islam. The decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated April 16, 2018 "On measures to radically improve the activities of the religious and educational sphere" is the fundamental basis of this activity.

In accordance with it, the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan was established and one of the major projects carried out at the academy is a multi-volume Islamic encyclopedia. The Islamic Encyclopedia will consist of approximately

20 volumes, in which it is planned to publish more than 60,000 articles. The original version of the encyclopedia is being created in Uzbek and will be translated into other languages in the future. Foreign scientists have been involved in the creation of the encyclopedia, including those from Asia, the Arab East, European countries and Turkey. Scientific advisory councils have been created in such scientific areas as the Koran and Hadith, Islamic law, the history of Islam, literature and art. When defining the content of the encyclopedia, an attempt was made to creatively use the traditions of compiling an encyclopedia in the world, as well as the experience accumulated in this area in Uzbekistan, the available theoretical developments. — DNA



MILAN: AC Milan's Sandro Tonali vies with Fiorentina's Gaetano Castrovilli during a Serie A football match between AC Milan and Fiorentina. — DNA

# Iran nuclear scientist Fakhrizadeh laid to rest

A message was read out to the ceremony from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who has ordered officials to identify and punish the perpetrators of the crime and continue his scientific path with diligence

## FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh has been laid to rest three days after his assassination outside Tehran, with the country's defense minister pledging to continue his work "with more speed and more power." He was buried at Imamzadeh Saleh mosque in Tajrish in northern Tehran's Shemiran district on Monday after a detailed funeral ceremony was held in the morning. The cortege began at the Ministry of Defense in east Tehran, with top state and military officials on hand to pay their respect to a man who played a leading role in bolstering Iran's defense power

and advancing its nuclear energy program. An honor guard carried the casket containing his remains which reportedly received three shots during an ambush on a boulevard in Absard where assailants blew up an explosives-laden Nissan truck before targeting him and his security detail in a hail of bullets. The remains of the weapon used in the assassination show that it was made in Israel, Iranian media claimed. The weapon collected from the site of the terrorist act bears the logo and specifications of the Israeli military industry. Iran's Ministry of Intelligence also said it had obtained "new leads" on the identity of the perpetrators and that the information "will be

publicized very soon." At an outdoor portion of the Defense Ministry, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) chief Gen. Hossein Salami, the IRGC's Quds Force head Gen. Esmail Qa'ani, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Ali Akbar Sahebi and Intelligence Minister Mamoud Alavi sat apart from each other and wore masks due to the coronavirus pandemic as a reciter read several verses from the holy Qur'an. A message was read out to the ceremony from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, who has ordered officials to identify and punish the perpetrators of the crime and continue his scientific path with diligence. Defense Minister Gen.

Amir Hatami put his forehead against the casket and kissed it before addressing the ceremony, pledging that the assassination would make Iranians "more united, more determined." "For the continuation of your path, we will continue with more speed and more power," Hatami said. Hatami also called the nuclear arsenal of the US and the stockpile of atomic bombs Israel which is widely believed to possess at least 200 warheads "the most dangerous threat against humanity." Hatami also called the nuclear arsenal of the US and the stockpile of atomic bombs Israel which is widely believed to possess at least 200 warheads "the most dangerous threat against humanity."

The defense chief vowed that "no crime, assassination or act of folly will remain unanswered on the part of the Iranian nation." "We will certainly pursue the criminals to the bitter end. They should know that they will meet their comeuppance and the Commander-in-Chief's imperative will be implemented," he added, referring to the Leader's order for punishment of the perpetrators. Hatami said despite carrying out the assassination to further their gains, the enemies ended up suffering defeat in three areas by perpetrating the atrocity. First, Fakhrizadeh's assassination introduced the scientist to the world as a "great model for those setting their foot on the path of struggle."

## 'Malaria gains at risk from COVID-19'

## FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Funding shortfalls and disruptions to treatment in sub-Saharan Africa as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic risk tens of thousands more lives being lost to malaria, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned in its annual report on the mosquito-borne disease on Monday. The UN's health agency said it was concerned that even moderate disruptions in access to treatment could lead to a "considerable loss of life". A 10-percent disruption in access to effective anti-malarial treatment in sub-Saharan Africa could lead to 19,000 additional deaths, the report found. That number rose to 46,000 with a 25-percent disruption in access and 100,000 at 50-percent disruption. "Progress has stalled," said Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa. "COVID-19 threatens to further derail our efforts to overcome malaria, particularly treating people with the disease. Despite the devastating impact COVID-19 has had on African economies, international partners and countries need to do more to ensure that the resources are there to expand malaria programmes which are making such a difference in people's lives." The WHO's latest world report on malaria, which is preventable and treatable and mainly affects countries in Africa, shows progress against the disease had already slowed when the COVID-19 pandemic emerged earlier this year.

## OPEC to discuss extension of output cuts

LONDON: OPEC oil producers' club will meet virtually Monday to mull over an extension to production cuts as the coronavirus pandemic continues to weigh on global demand. Ministers from the cartel will start meeting via video conference at 1 pm GMT Monday and will be hoping that they can turn a page on a disastrous year. The 13 members to the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) want to avoid a repeat of the collapse in prices seen in April at the beginning of the pandemic. On Tuesday they will be joined by their allies, including Russia, who form the OPEC+ grouping. The common goal of the alliance is to keep afloat a crude market devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic and which is slowly recovering from the depths into which prices plunged at the end of April. According to the current deal, a cut of 7.7 million barrels per day (bpd) is meant to be eased to 5.8 million bpd in January 2021, but most observers expect this to be extended by between three and six months. The current deal was reached in April but since then producers have had the second wave of the pandemic to take into account.

## Australia demands China apology

## FOREIGN DESK

SYDNEY: Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison has condemned a fake image of an Australian soldier posted on the Twitter account of a Chinese government spokesman as "truly repugnant" and demanded the post be removed. The image, depicting a grinning Australian soldier holding a blood-stained knife to the throat of an Afghan child, was posted on Monday on the verified account of China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian. Morrison said the Australian government was demanding an apology from China and had asked Twitter to remove the tweet, which was pinned at the top of Zhao's feed. "It is utterly outrageous and cannot be justified on any basis," Morrison said. "The Chinese government should be utterly ashamed of this post. It diminishes them in the world's eyes." Relations between Australia and China have deteriorated sharply in recent months. China has introduced a string of economic sanctions on Australian goods and state-controlled news outlets have repeatedly attacked Australia over a range of issues.

# NATIONAL DAY OF ROMANIA

## PELES CASTLE, THE HOME OF ROMANIAN ROYALTY

**B**UILT in the 19th century according to the specifications of Carol I, Romania's first King, the Peles Castle is an image of the monarch's aesthetic mindset, combining the German and Italian neo-Renaissance.

Peles is located near the town of Sinaia, in the Prahova County, and it is one of the most famous castles in Romania, maybe even more than Corvin Castle, Bran Castle, or the Rasnov Fortress. The blood ties between the members of the Romanian and the British royal families, the Russian dynasty and the royal families of Germany and Greece, as well as the Romanian Queen's tireless patronage of arts, have attracted to the castle the most resonant names of the 19th and early 20th century.

### History of Peles Castle

When King Carol I of Romania visited the location on which the beautiful castle now stands, he was amazed by the stunning scenery of the Carpathian Mountains that surround it. The construction of Peles Castle was commissioned by King Carol, and on August 22, 1873, the foundations were laid in the form of a hunting house and a summer retreat for the Romanian royal family. The castle was designed by the German architect Johannes Schultz in a Neorenaissance style that combined numerous features of classic European styles.

Besides the castle, other constructions were erected, such as a power plant, the Economat Building, the royal stables, the guards' chambers, and the Foisor hunting lodge. Later additions were also built between 1893 and 1914 by the Czech architect Karel Liman. Peles became the first castle in Europe fully powered by locally produced energy, with the electric system being completed in 1884 and the central heating system in 1897. The castle was completed in 1914, and it remained a royal residence until 1947. After the forced abdication of King Michael I, Peles was seized by the Communist regime in 1947, together with all the properties of the royal family. In 1948 the whole estate was closed, and numerous pieces of art were moved to the Art Museum in Bucharest. Peles Castle was then opened as a museum in 1953 by the communist regime, and it remained



so until 1975 when it was closed again due to its advanced state of deterioration. Between 1975 and 1989, the castle was constantly renovated

Joseph to the Crown Prince of Japan. Peles Castle also hosted numerous artists such as George Enescu or Jacques Thibaud, that were

the stained glass windows make it a true symbol of elegance and royalty. Another outstanding part of the castle, the Royal Library, is



Great Armory Room

and was also used by the communist regime as a retreat for the heads of state that visited Romania. After the Romanian Revolution of 1989, the castle was once again opened to the

the guests of Queen Elizabeth of Romania, the wife of King Carol I.

The impressive castle spreads over an area of 3,200 square meters, housing 160 rooms that impress

home to unique manuscripts decorated in gold. Many of the rooms of the castle are decorated so that they resemble the styles of various cultures from throughout the world. Due



Pelisor Castle

public, and in 2007 it became the property of King Michael. Inside and around Peles Castle

The inner courtyard, with its medieval air, carries the tourists back in time. The Sovereign's Gate opens the journey into the castle, and a monumental marble staircase leads up to the Hall of Honor, the official reception space that witnessed the presence of royal guests, from Emperor Franz

through their beauty and sophistication. The best known is the Great Armory Room, hosting some of the finest collections of arms and armor, with over 4,000 pieces of weaponry that were collected or received as a gift, mainly from Western and Eastern Europe, but also from other regions of the world.

The interior of the castle, especially the main hall, is beautifully decorated with sculpted wood and

to its remarkable architecture and to the artistic value of the exhibits it houses, the castle is one of the elite monuments in Europe and in the world.

Throughout the year, the Peles Museum hosts several permanent and temporary exhibitions. Ceramics exhibition Peles Castle is hosting the ceramics exhibition, with over 5,000 pieces of faience, floor tiles, and porcelain gathered from the greatest European authors and ceramic centers of the 19th century. It was established by Queen Marie between 1914 and 1927,

with later pieces being purchased by the Peles Museum throughout 1970, from both private owners as well as antique stores.

Among the pieces of art, the exhibition includes Chinese vases from the 18th and 19th centuries, Japanese pottery from the great workshops of Atari and Satsuma, Persian ceramics from the 17th and 18th centuries, and European art from throughout Paris, London, or Vienna. Horology exhibition Throughout his life, King Carol was widely appreciated for his punctuality. The horology exhibition in Peles display over 50 clocks of various styles and typology, from the private royal collection. It includes grandfather clocks, pendulum table clocks, fire-place clocks, alarm clocks, pocket watches, and more.

Most of them belonged to King Carol I, but the collection also includes pieces that belonged to Queen Marie, Carol II, and King Michael. Most of the clocks date back to the 19th century, but the collection also includes clocks from the 18th and 20th centuries. Hidden underground passages and stairs that melt into the steep slopes of the mountain complete the majestic ensemble. Just as in fairy tales, lockers open up not into wardrobes, but into splendid suites. Exploring Peles Castle becomes as much an adventure as an aesthetic experience.

A Saxon influence can be observed in the interior courtyard facades that have rich and ornate the face work similar to northern Europe alpine architecture and allegorical hand-painted murals. King Carol insisted that Peles Castle should be welcoming to anyone who wanted to admire it closely and enjoy its royal atmosphere and lovely views of the mountains. Therefore, the castle's park and terraces surround it, with flowerbeds and fountains, turrets, pavilions, galleries and balconies concealed by ivy.

Thus, it is no wonder that many of those who visited Peles claim that it is one of the most beautiful castles in Europe. **Peles Castle in popular culture** The fairy-tale features of Peles Castle and its historical authenticity also designate it as a one of a kind setting for professional photo sessions and film productions. In fact, Peles Castle was chosen to represent the home of the eccentric



billionaire Penelope played by Rachel Weisz in the film "The Brothers Bloom", released in 2009, also starring Adrien Brody and Mark Ruffalo.

Christmas Prince: The Royal Wedding", was released in 2018 and another one in 2019, "A Christmas Prince: The Royal Baby".

1902. It was meant to be the residence of the Romanian royals, King Ferdinand and Queen Marie. It was designed by a Czech architect in the Art Nouveau



A courtyard in the castle

The 2017 American Christmas-romantic comedy film "A Christmas Prince" released on Netflix used Peles Castle as place for filming. A sequel, titled "A

**Pelisor Castle** The younger brother of Peles Castle and part of the same complex is Pelisor Castle. The construction was commissioned by King Carol I, and it was built between 1899 and

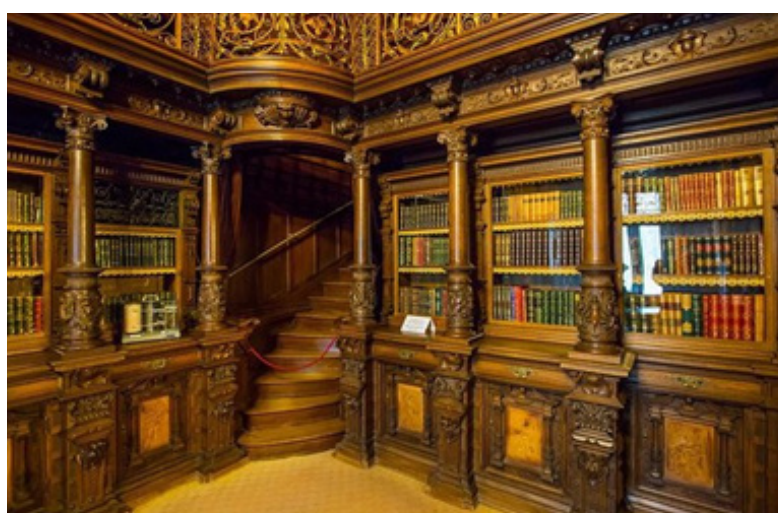
style, and it has several chambers, a chapel, and a golden room. Many of the artistic decisions regarding the design were made by Queen Marie, and she even helped decorate and paint it.



Ceramics at the Peles Museum



Sculpted wood inside Peles Castle



Royal Library



The Moorish room decorated in red and golden



The music Room

**Briefs**

**PTI's Khalid Khursheed elected as GB CM**

DNA

**GILGIT:** The Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly on Monday elected PTI candidate Barrister Khalid Khursheed as the region's new chief minister. Barrister Khursheed secured 22 votes, while joint opposition's candidate advocate Amjad Hussain got nine votes. Polling to elect the new leader of the House was held in the afternoon. PTI has already pocketed the key slot of GB Assembly speaker after Amjad Ali was elected earlier this week. The party has already pocketed the key slot of GB Assembly speaker after Amjad Ali was elected earlier this week. Media reported that Khursheed's name was finalised after consultations with the PTI central leadership and its chapter in Gilgit-Baltistan.

**Afghan forces kill 8 Taliban militants**

DNA

**KABUL:** Afghanistan says its forces have killed the Taliban mastermind of an earlier car bomb attack on an army base, and seven other militants, in an overnight airstrike in the eastern province of Ghazni. "The mastermind behind yesterday's terrorist attack on the base was killed along with seven other terrorists," the Defense Ministry said in a statement on Monday. The militant, identified as Hamza Waziristani, is said to be a Taliban from the Pakistan border region of Waziristan, according to a military spokesman Fawad Aman. The attack on the army base occurred on Sunday morning, when a bomber detonated "a Humvee vehicle which was full of explosives" close to a public protection unit in Ghazni. The attack killed at least 30 people and injured 24 others, director of Ghazni hospital Baz Mohammad Hemat said, adding all of them were security personnel. The attack was the worst targeting the country's security forces in recent months. Violence continues to take a heavy toll in Afghanistan even as government negotiators and the Taliban have been engaged in peace talks in Qatar, in an effort to end nearly two decades of war.

**NCOC finalizes vaccine proposals**

**KHAYAM ABBASI**

**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for Planning and Development and the head of National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) Asad Umar said on Monday that the forum has finalised its recommendations for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccine on Monday. Asad Umar, after chairing a session of NCOC, said in his Twitter message that the task force of experts headed by Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan had developed the recommendations which were discussed and finalised on Monday. The recommendations will be presented to the federal cabinet on Tuesday for its approval, he said. On November 23, it emerged that the federal government had decided to approach international donors for financial assistance to purchase COVID-19 vaccine. The government is likely to contact the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNICEF for funding for the bulk-buying of doses of the vaccine. The health ministry will approach the multilateral donors through the Economic Affairs Division. It will negotiate with them for financial assistance or a loan with no strings attached, the sources said, adding the health ministry has begun working on a coherent plan for the purpose.

**Romania, Pak have excellent ties for 56 years: Envoy**

*From Page 01*

**MUTUAL COOPERATION:**

Nowadays, there is a strong need to strengthen the international economic cooperation and, simultaneously, to reconstruct the traditional relationship with the old friends, Pakistan among them. Besides the bilateral cooperation through mutual investments, we are also interested to find options of working together on the third markets where, Romania and Pakistan might conjugate their resources and energies in the most constructive way. This is, unfortunately, a domain which had been somehow neglected lately because of focusing on the internal reconstruction of economy. Romania and Pakistan do have common areas of interest both geographically (Near East, Northern Africa etc.) and thematically (the common interest of developing sectors as IT and communications, civil constructions and infrastructure, agriculture etc.). Our priorities, bilaterally, but also at EU level, are to support the democratic evolution of Pakistan, to intensify commercial trade and investments, and to consolidate regional stability, with special focus on the situation in Afghanistan. I am fully aware that the huge potential of our bilateral relations demands more frequent contacts at the government level, in order to identify and employ all the resources available for promoting and developing our cooperation in the political, economic, trade, energy, culture, education, defence fields.

Romanian companies could be involved in development project in Pakistan by supplying equipment and other components. Our companies have the capacity and technical expertise to cooperate in areas such as oil and gas exploration and extraction, petrochemical refining facilities, tractors and farm equipment, training aircraft for military pilots, helicopter maintenances, security and surveillances systems, construction of high power lines, equipment for power plants, assembly of trucks and motor vehicles. I would like to point out in this context the excellent cooperation between Pakistan and Romania in the military field. Romania Damen Shipyards - Galati constructed two modern 2,300-ton corvettes for Pakistan Navy.



The last corvette was launched on September of 2020. The ships will be used by Pakistan Navy for a range of tasks, including maritime security operations, surveillance and intelligence gathering, combat search-and-rescue (CSAR), and anti-surface and anti-air operations. **PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONTACTS:** Bilateral cultural relations are playing an important role in the development of friendship and partnership between the peoples of Romania and Pakistan. I believe that cultural ties thanks to historical relations and the warm feelings that the two peoples share for each other create a huge potential for greater collaboration. We are also convinced that future holds even better prospects as regards cultural relations between Romania and Pakistan. Culture is an area where we can cooperate with each other in order to increase people to people cooperation between the two countries. I genuinely believe Pakistan has a rich cultural background and so does Romania, therefore, multiplying the number of contacts in



this particular area shall be high on my agenda during my stay. I am fully aware that the huge potential of our bilateral relations demands more frequent contacts at the government level, in order to identify and employ all the resources available for promoting and developing our cooperation in the political, economic, trade, energy, culture, education, defence fields. I believe that the bilateral political dialogue is ripe enough to accommodate periodical exchanges of views and assessments on regional stability and security issues, related mainly to the strategies embraced by our governments that aim at managing and solving the frozen conflict and at ensuring a balanced regional development with a special emphasis on Afghanistan. I am interested in continuing to update and modernize the bilateral framework, taking into account that Romania is a member of the EU. Romanian companies could be involved in development project in Pakistan by supplying equipment

and other components. Our companies have the capacity and technical expertise to cooperate in areas such as oil and gas exploration and extraction, petrochemical refining facilities, tractors and farm equipment, training aircraft for military pilots, helicopter maintenances, security and surveillances systems, construction of high power lines, equipment for power plants, assembly of trucks and motor vehicles. There is a big interest in developing cooperation in the education and culture sector shown by Romanian and Pakistani institutes. I hope that the number and the diversity of the cultural exchanges between our two countries will increase in the future, for a better reciprocal understanding, strengthening our traditional friendship and enhancing the people contacts. **YOUR IMPRESSIONS ABOUT PAKISTAN** Pakistan is strategically located between the twin forces of competition and collaboration in the mega-region

that embraces Central Asia, South Asia, Middle East, and Caucasus. In this context it is important to note that Pakistan has a versatile geopolitical potential which can multiply opportunities for cooperation with important regional players. Increased regional stability could have a stabilizing effect for ongoing domestic efforts, hence Pakistan had committed itself to supporting the reconciliation effort in Afghanistan and is working toward normalization of relations with India. In my opinion Pakistan has been very active diplomatically since its inception and the new government it working with success on global perception management in order to achieve foreign policy objectives. I, as the Romanian Ambassador in Pakistan, have developed a true affection for your country, my second home for a while, and wish with all my heart that Pakistan will enjoy stability, peace and prosperity the Pakistani people so much deserve. *(Full text of the interview shall be published in the December 2020 issue of CENTRELINE magazine)*

**Moderna vaccine shows 100% efficiency**

**WEB DESK**

**MASSACHUSETTS:** American biotechnology company Moderna on Monday announced that its under-trial drug for the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has shown 94.1% efficacy against the disease and a 100% efficacy in the severe cases. In a press release, the Massachusetts-based company said its coronavirus drug candidate, named mRNA-1273, was "generally well tolerated" and that "no serious safety concerns [were] identified to date". Moderna further announced that it would submit later today a request to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to approve the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of its coronavirus vaccine. It also noted that it intended "to apply for a conditional marketing authorization with the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and to progress with the rolling reviews, which have already been initiated with international regulatory agencies", as per the press release.

Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel lauded the participants, scientists, and the agencies that helped and ensured the coronavirus vaccine trial was a success, terming the drug "a new and powerful tool that may change the course of this pandemic and help prevent severe disease, hospitalizations, and death". The biotechnology company further announced that it would submit later today a request to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to approve the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of its coronavirus vaccine. It also noted that it intended "to apply for a conditional marketing authorization with the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and to progress with the rolling reviews, which have already been initiated with international regulatory agencies", as per the press release.

**Pakistani scholar taps Pak-China coop in cotton research**

**"Pakistan is still on the list of developing countries, and there're lots of differences in cotton research between Beijing and Pakistan, like the lack of proper infrastructure in agriculture"**

**DNA**

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan, China needed to collaborate with each other to exchange cotton germplasm, so as to share knowledge and scientific approaches for having quality yield. This collaboration is imperative as Pakistan doesn't have cotton that is suitable for machine picking, and China's cotton is not that resistant to heat and drought, said Muhammad Tehseen Azhar, a Faculty member of Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), and Lecturer-Chair of Germplasm and Genetic Stocks, ICGI. Gwadar Pro quoted him as having said, that lack of technology in Pakistan could be problematic for some time. "Pakistan is still on the list of

developing countries, and there're lots of differences in cotton research between Beijing and Pakistan, like the lack of proper infrastructure in agriculture." "Farm work is mechanized in most parts of China, you know, from sowing to picking or harvesting, but Pakistan is still in the end of that line," he further mentioned. In order to tap the potential of Pak-China cooperation in cotton research, he has signed MoUs of joint research program with different Chinese institutions, including Department of Science and Technology of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Agricultural University (XAU), School of Agriculture Sciences, Zhengzhou University, and Institute of Cotton Research (ICR) of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), Anyang. According to Muhammad

Tehseen Azhar, the Gwadar Pro added, germplasm is the baseline of breeding, so a breeder cannot conduct any experiment without germplasm. Therefore, a gene pool that has all the desirable genes needed for the development of variety is longed by scientists and it calls for efforts from scholars of different nations. He has already signed a MOU operation agreement on research of cotton germplasm resources with Professor Du Xiongming, director of Cotton Germplasm Resources Division, ICR, CAAS, to assess the adaptability of the Chinese germplasm of cotton in Pakistan. Dr. Azhar also mentioned the idea of consolidation and standardisation in the cotton seed industry in Pakistan. He noted that cotton outputs in Pakistan have plunged to 21-year lows these days,

threatening the livelihoods of growers and textile sector's viability. According to the latest official statistics, Pakistan is going to harvest 8.5 million bales of cotton in 2020/21. As per Dr. Azhar, poor cotton production is mainly the result of a shift to other remunerable crops like corn, rice, and sugarcane. And cotton area is expected to decline mainly due to the potential threat of pest attack, uncertain weather conditions, followed by insufficient availability of certified seed. Besides, social economic problems like the lack of labour force are worsening the situation. "Our work is to set up standards, like the purity standard; that's what we do as humble researchers," Dr. Azhar said adding, "It might be lonely, but it could make a difference for mankind."

**'Pakistan is safest for minorities'**

**NANKANA:** Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Noorul-Haq Qadri has said that Pakistan is the safest country for minorities to live their lives in tranquility. Addressing a ceremony held in connection with the 551st birth anniversary of founder of Sikh religion Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji in Nankana Sahib on Monday, he said that followers of all religions are equal citizens of Pakistan. Noorul Haq Qadri said that opening of Kartarpur Corridor is a gift from the government of Pakistan to Sikh community. He said all religions of the world have spread the message of love, peace, harmony, brotherhood and tolerance among the masses. - APP

**PIA suspends biometric attendance**

**ATHAR SUFI**

**KARACHI:** The management of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has decided to suspend biometric attendance in all offices during the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic. The national carrier's human resources department issued a circular which stated the suspension of marking the attendance of employees on TMS machines on all stations from December 1. It said that employees will mark their attendance manually on registers to be maintained in the Line Manager's offices. Sectional and divisional heads have been directed to maintain attendance registers in their offices which will be sent to the human resources manager in Islamabad by 10th of every month. Earlier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) had decided to implement strict COVID-19 precautionary measures amid rising cases of the virus in the country. According to details, the new changes relating to in-flight meal services for domestic and international flights had been approved by PIA CEO Air Marshal Arshad Malik. The new SOPs relating to food service for domestic flights had included a ban on the provision of drinks through a trolley besides also restricting the provision of food and drinks during the flight.

**'UK-Pakistan relationship built on people'**

**Slug The High Commissioner said he was making efforts to further strengthen bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and to propel the volume of bilateral trade**

**DNA**

**ISLAMABAD:** The British High Commissioner to Pakistan Dr Christian Turner, CMG in his frank and interactive discus-

sion highlighted the importance of UK-Pakistan relations at the CASS Conversations with Ambassadors on "Pakistan - United Kingdom Relations - Challenges and Opportunities" organised by the Centre for

Aerospace & Security Studies, here in the capital on Monday. The High Commissioner said he was making efforts to further strengthen bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and to propel the

volume of bilateral trade to boost inclusive and export-led economic growth through collaborative joint ventures in the areas of healthcare, clean energy, combating climate change, education and tourism sectors

in Pakistan. Moderated by Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani, Director Foreign Policy at CASS, the discussion was followed by a candid Question/Answer session between the High Commissioner and the participants.

