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Bosnian president supports Pakistan's stand on Kashmir

Zahida Parveen again appointed info secretary

Armenia must be held accountable for its crimes



Briefs

Pak to work together with US president

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri on Tuesday said Pakistan looks forward to working with whoever wins the United States election - Republican President Donald Trump or Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. While speaking to Arab News, the FO spokesperson conveyed the country's best wishes to Americans who voted in the record-setting election on Tuesday. He added that the election was an "internal matter" of the US.

'NAB not dealing tax affairs'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice (retd) Javed Iqbal on Wednesday said that the accountability watchdog was making all those people accountable for their illegal acts which they have committed while remaining in power. "No one dared to ask them about their sources of income before," the chairman NAB said as President of the Gwadar's Chamber of Commerce, Mir Naveed Baloch called on him on Wednesday. Javed Iqbal said that the NAB respects business community as they had a pivotal role in the progress and prosperity of the country.

Provision of relief top priority:

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz says providing relief to the masses is top priority of the government. In a tweet on Wednesday, he said the Prime Minister's announcement of affordable power supply to industries is another important step towards economic stability and creating employment opportunities. Shibli Faraz said the supply of electricity to small and medium enterprises at subsidized rates will not only run the factories, but also provide employment to poor workers.

Presidency of America up in the air

Both Donald Trump and Joe Biden claim victory; results show massive polarization among the voters; Trump announces to go to Supreme Court



WEB DESK / DNA

WASHINGTON: The US presidential election remained too close to call as America woke up on Wednesday focussed on a handful of key states. President Donald Trump falsely claimed victory and made unfounded allegations of electoral fraud. Joe Biden's camp described the statement as "outrageous." Both men still have paths to the White House through winning 270 Electoral College votes.

US President Donald Trump carried the prized battleground of Florida, then he and Democrat Joe Biden shifted their focus early Wednesday to three Northern industrial states - Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania - that could prove crucial in determining who wins the White House. By early Wednesday, neither candidate had the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win. Electoral College votes are assigned to each state, in part based on their population. Trump made premature claims of victories in several key states and said he would take the election to the Supreme Court to stop the counting. It was unclear exactly what legal action he might try to pursue. Several states allow mailed-in votes to be accepted after Election Day, as long as they were postmarked by Tuesday. That includes Pennsylvania, where ballots postmarked by Nov 3 can be accepted if they arrive up to three days after the election.

Pak decides advance purchases of vaccines

ISLAMABAD: The health ministry has recommended purchases of potential coronavirus vaccines under last-stage trials and allocation of \$100 million funds for its advance booking, sources. Pakistan made a decision to purchase the possible vaccines of COVID-19 in advance and permission was sought from the Prime Minister Imran Khan by the health ministry, sources privy to the development told a private channel. The Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination wrote a letter to PM Imran Khan to seek permission for advance booking of coronavirus vaccines. The ministry recommended allocation of \$100 million in funds for the purchases of

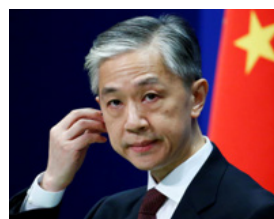
COVID-19 positivity rate nears 5%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday recorded 4.94% COVID-19 positivity rate - highest in three months. According to figures issued by the National Command and Operations Centre (NOC), 1,313 new cases were identified across the country, bringing the total tally to 337,573. A total of 26,565 tests were conducted. The country's death toll stands at 6,867 as 18 people succumbed to the virus in the past 24 hours. At least 316,060 have recovered from the virus so far. - DNA

China acknowledges major CPEC progress

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday that seven years after the launch of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), major progress had been achieved with many projects started or completed bringing more than US\$25 billion of direct investments to Pakistan. During his regular briefing held here, Wang Wenbin particularly mentioned the completion and inauguration of Orange Line Metro Line (OLMT) in Lahore, Pakistan which was first electricity-run public transport project.



Last month as an early harvest project, the Orange Line was made operational marking the beginning of the subway era for Pakistan, he said. The spokesperson said that the projects completed under the CPEC, a pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by China under the dynamic leadership of President Xi Jinping, had enhanced infrastructure and power supply in Pakistan and created employment opportunities for the locals and contributed towards the growth of GDP. These projects enhanced infrastructure and electricity supply in the country and created more than 70,000 direct positions and contributed 1 to 2 percentage points of the country's GDP growth, he added. Giving example of Afghanistan which was importing food and other essential items from the Gwadar port, he noted that the CPEC had not only promoted development in the two countries but also helped regional connectivity and prosperity.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan meeting with Šefik Džaferović, Chairman of Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. - DNA

Parliament sealed after 30 staffers get virus

NIHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday sealed the Parliament House after at least 30 of the two houses' employees tested positive for coronavirus last week, with sources informing that the building would remain closed until Nov 9. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has assumed the responsibility of disinfecting the building, while Senate Chairperson Sadiq Sanjrani, Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaisar, and several other officials self-isolated themselves due to possible exposure and were working from home. Owing to the coronavirus emergency, the Senate and National Assembly also cancelled scheduled meetings and announced a new date. Sources stated that even after reopening the Parliament House complex, all staffers would not be allowed to resume work. Instead, only a select few will turn up for duty.

Bilawal Bhutto says govt is snatching jobs

DNA

ASTORE: The incumbent government is snatching jobs from the youth instead of giving them opportunities, said PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. He was speaking at a rally in Gilgit-Baltistan's Astore on Wednesday as part of his election campaign. He has been visiting districts across GB in the run up to the November 14 election.

Pakistan, Bosnia agree to boost ties

Bosnian president supports Pakistan's stand on Kashmir; PM Imran Khan says Bosnia has always been special for Pakistan

A.M.BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Bosnia on Wednesday agreed to strengthen the ties and improve trade between the two countries. Addressing a joint press conference with Chairman of Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Šefik Džaferović, Prime Minister Imran Khan said Bosnia has always been special for Pakistan since the 1990s when they went through tragic events. "We have always stood with the people of Bosnia."

Earlier on Wednesday, Džaferović arrived in Islamabad on Wednesday for a two-day trip. The premier received the visiting dignitary at his residence where Džaferović was presented a guard of honour. In a meeting with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Džaferović called for a

peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute in light of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution. He stressed protecting human rights in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Džaferović said Pakistan and Bosnia enjoyed close ties which will be strengthened by his visit. Qureshi said that the two countries have always stood by each other in difficult times. He said Pakistan desired to expand relations with Bosnia in different fields including bilateral trade, education, culture and people to people contacts.

Zahida Parveen again appointed info secretary

Zahida is a senior bureaucrat and has already served as Federal Information Secretary

ISLAMABAD: Senior officer of the Information Group Zahida Parveen has been appointed Federal Secretary Information relieving Akbar Hussain Durrani. Zahida is a senior bureaucrat and has already served as Federal Information Secretary. She is known as an upright and honest officer who strongly believes in merit. Zahida Parveen was the first female who was appointed as the information secretary. Ms. Zahida Parveen has served on a number of important positions both in the Information Ministry and the Press Information Department. She is likely to serve as the Secretary Information till her retirement. - DNA



Army Chief visits Rwp Corps

DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on Wednesday visited Headquarters Rawalpindi Corps. COAS was given comprehensive briefing on prevalent situation along LOC and operational preparedness of the formations. COAS appreciated resilience of Kashmiri population who are being deliberately targeted by Indian Army on both sides of the LOC. He said that Pakistan Army shall continue to ensure protection and security of people along LOC. COAS was also briefed on the developmental work being undertaken in Rawalpindi Cantonment. COAS expressed his satisfaction over the progress and appreciated the civil administration in this regard.

Maryam to lead PML-N GB campaign

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz would head to Gilgit Baltistan for a seven-day visit from November 05 to lead the election campaign of the party in the GB polls. According to details issued by the PML-N regarding Maryam Nawaz's visit to the region, the vice president would reach Skardu on November 05 and address a public gathering at Ghuwari later in the day. She would address PML-N rallies in Skardu and Dambudas areas of the Gilgit Baltistan on 6 and 7 November followed by public gatherings in Gahkuch on November 08.

Ambassador Nong vows to strengthen historic ties

MENG FANRONG

ISLAMABAD: China's Ambassador Nong Rong in an impressive ceremony presented credentials to the President of Pakistan His Excellency Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday. The ceremony was held at Aiwan-e-Sadr (President House). The president said that Pakistan and China are staunch friends and share extensive common interests in common development and safeguarding regional and world peace and stability. Pakistan stands firmly with China on issues involving China's core interests. The current Pakistani government is actively committed to developing the economy and improving people's livelihood, and highly appreciates the important

opportunities that China's development has brought to the world and the region. Ambassador Nong conveyed President Xi Jinping's cordial greetings and best wishes to President Alvi, appreciating Alvi's great concern for China-Pakistan relations and supporting the friendship between the two countries with practical actions. Ambassador Nong said that China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic partners, the friendship between the two countries has always been unbreakable and rock solid, and the cooperation has always maintained exuberant vitality. Before presenting credentials, Ambassador Nong called on Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood on Monday. The Foreign Secretary welcomed Ambassadors' appointment to Pakistan and in

a tweet said that: "FS Sohail Mahmood received China's Ambassador designate Nong Rong today. FS reaffirmed strong commitment to Pakistan-China 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership', hoped CPEC projects would be fast-tracked. Lauded Ambassadors' experience and extended best wishes to him for successful term."



The tweet demonstrated Islamabad's resolve to further strengthen Pakistan-China ties under the leadership of a new Ambassador who had extensive experience of public service and had held key positions in the CPC. Chinese Embassy in Islamabad also issued a statement on Ambassadors' meeting with Foreign Secretary which

said that: "Ambassador Nong appreciated Sohail Mahmood and the Pakistani Foreign Ministry for actively promoting the China-Pakistan relations which were a model of state-to-state friendly relations and China has always given priority to Pakistan in its neighborhood diplomacy. During President Xi Jinping's historic state visit to Pakistan in 2015, the two sides upgraded the bilateral relationship to an all-weather strategic and cooperative partnership, taking China-Pakistan relations to a new level". Ambassador Nong emphasized that at the fifth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee held last week, China put forward the long-term goal of basically realizing socialist modernization by 2035 and the main goals of economic and social

development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period. The Envoy also stressed that China was ready to work with Pakistan to seize new opportunities for China's development and inject new impetus into bilateral cooperation. He underlined that China will earnestly implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries; strengthen exchanges and cooperation in all areas; work together to tackle the COVID-19 epidemic; deepen vaccine cooperation; and advance the building of the CPEC. Ambassador Nong arrived Islamabad on 22 October 2020. According to the diplomatic procedures, after the formal presentation of credentials, Ambassador Nong Rong is now able to fully discharge his duties as Beijing's Ambassador to Islamabad.

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Briefs

'India failed to suppress freedom'

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has said that despite using all its tricks and plans in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), the RSS-backed Indian government has failed to suppress the freedom sentiment of the Kashmiri people, Kashmir Media Service reported on Wednesday. The APHC spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar urged the Modi-led fascist regime to stop machinations to achieve its nefarious designs in the occupied territory and resolve the Kashmir dispute in its historical background in the larger interest of the region and the world at large. The spokesman said that the Kashmiris were determined to thwart India's wicked agenda to change the demography of the IOJK with unity and added that New Delhi has miserably failed in creating fissures among the Kashmiri resistance groups. "Indian machinations will not deter the Kashmiris from pursuing the cause of freedom as they are convinced that India is planning to deprive them of their identity, culture and Muslim majority character," he added. The APHC asked India to learn from history and stop extrajudicial killings and venomous propaganda against the Kashmir freedom movement and resolve the dispute within the framework of the UN resolutions. — APP

Steps being taken for development of youth: Amin

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque Wednesday said that steps were being taken for development of the youth. He said that youth were our asset and information technology had an important role in the development of youth. The minister expressed these views in a meeting with Usman Dar, Special Assistant to PM on Youth Affairs, who called on him, said a press release issued here. The minister welcomed the SAPM in his office and matters related to information technology and development of youth were discussed during the meeting. The DigiSkills program of the ministry was also discussed during the meeting. The minister said the ministry was taking steps for equipping the youth through DigiSkills. It was agreed during the meeting that joint efforts would be made for the empowerment of youth. He said the ministry would fully support all the initiatives for youth. The SAPM appreciated the DigiSkills Program and Ministry of IT's steps for development of the youth. — APP

PHMA welcomes PM's package

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PHMA) has welcomed the cut in power tariff for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and omitting peak-hour charges to encourage manufacturing. Announced by Prime Minister, the three-year relief package will boost the exports and enhance competitiveness of the local industry. PHMA zonal chairman Faisal Mehboob Sheikh and chief coordinator Adil Butt, observed that the Industrial Energy Package announced by the PM would boost productivity, lower costs and generate employment. It will be an added impetus to our industrial sector that is driving the economic revival and posting robust growth. "Elimination of peak hours from electricity tariff of all industries, 50 per cent discount on consumption of additional units for B1, B2 B3 connections till June 2021 and 25 per cent discount on additional consumptions for all industrial connections for 3 years is really a great relief for the industry and we are very happy with this decision," PHMA zonal chief said. He said that electricity rates are high in Pakistan and it is for the first time that power rates are being reduced. Pakistan's exports have become expensive as compared to the regional and other competitors. — APP

Business community stands in solidarity with the Armed forces

Addressing the gathering, S. M. Munir said that the Armed Forces of Pakistan have rendered invaluable services for the protection of the country's borders and eradication of terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Zafar Bakhtawari former Vice President FPCCI hosted a dinner in honor of Patron in Chief United Business Group (UBG), Mr. S. M. Munir, Chairman UBG Mr. Ifkhar Ali Malik and FPCCI's Presidential Candidate Sheikh Khalid Tawab at a local hotel in Islamabad. A large number of notable business leaders from all over Pakistan including Rawalpindi & Islamabad attended the dinner. Addressing the gathering, S. M. Munir said that the Armed Forces of Pakistan have rendered invaluable services for the protection of the country's borders and eradication of terrorism. He said that the business community across the country expresses full solidarity with the Armed Forces of Pakistan and looks forward to their positive role in making business friendly environment in Pakistan. He further said that UBG has nominated an educated and seasoned business leader Khalid Tawab to lead the FPCCI as President next year. Ifkhar Ali Malik Chairman UBG said that the business community is facing huge challenges today and the new leadership of FPCCI will solve all the problems of the business community in an effective manner as the development of Pakistan is dependent upon the



promotion of business activities. FPCCI's Presidential Candidate, Sheikh Khalid Tawab said that the business community has the most important role in the economy of Pakistan and owing to the experi-

ence of S. M. Munir, the business community has the full potential to solve its problems. Former Vice President FPCCI, Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari said that mutual unity of the business com-

munity is very important for their economic empowerment and during the current situation, the business community of Pakistan fully stands by its Armed Forces. He further said that the country's

economy could not move forward without taking the business community into confidence, therefore economic policies should be formulated with the consultation of the business community.

Buzdar approved recruitment of 5700 policemen

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar Wednesday inaugurated the new building of police investigation complex central headquarters, driving license centre in DHA, a new building of Gulshan-e-Ravi police station and mobile application for women safety. The CM approved the recruitment of 5700 policemen while presiding over a meeting at police investigation complex and directed to expedite the transfer of land to 101 police stations. The participants approved the proposal of necessary legislation for issuing driving licenses to deaf and dumb. The government wants a good police sys-

tem and officers should open their doors to providing best services to the people. Every police officer enjoys the liberty of showing merit-based performance, he added. The CM assured to resolve traffic and highway police problems adding that partnership between prosecution and investigation wings should be improved. The investigation process will also be monitored through a central investigation centre, he disclosed. The CM said funds are provided according to the needs of the investigation wing because the quality investigation is very pivotal to take criminals to task. — APP

Will not allow anyone to harm Pakistan, says Dr. Firdous

DNA

LAHORE: Provincial Special Assistant for Information and Broadcasting Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that under the guise of rallies, those who harm Pakistan will be dealt with iron hands. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, she said that the opposition should hold rallies but if anyone tried to break the law or attacked the national institutions, will be dealt with iron hands. Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan said that Pakistan is currently at war. Pakistan's foreign enemies have attacked while our politicians are tools of the foreign masters. In such a situation, ignorant friends should think about the consequences. We will thwart the conspiracy to divide Pakistan. Criticizing the

PML-N vice-president, she said that Maryam Nawaz was the fish that was suffering without power. She enjoyed ten years in power. Maryam Nawaz was feeling the pain of being out of power, not of the people. They will continue to feel the pain of power until 2023, she said. She said that PTT's manifesto is to empower the common man. We will increase the pain of the opposition by giving relief to the people. Talking about the fact that essential commodities are out of reach of the common man, she said that no one knows the heat of inflation better than me. Inflation is a challenge, but the reasons behind it must be known. This is the suffering of those who are shedding crocodile tears. She announced that the talks with Kisan Ittehad have been successful.

Pakistan should enhance bilateral trade with Belgium

Pakistan exported textile Products worth \$500 Million to Belgium but the entire lot was not for this country alone. "It will go to the free zone area from where it could be exported to any EU country without any custom duty

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Pakistan should make concerted efforts to enhance bilateral trade with Belgium and in this connection it could also use Brussels as a warehouse to make exports to other EU countries, said Mr. Abid Hussain Trade Commissioner Embassy of Belgium in Islamabad. Addressing a function to mark the Belgium Business Contact Day in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said that Belgium is a very small country but it is included among most developed countries of the world. Responding to a question about investment in Paki-

stan by Belgium, he said Pakistan is a very small market for Belgium investors. However a family from Belgium established a company named TexPak in Lahore a few years ago. Currently it has three units with turnover of over 1 Billion Dollars. Responding to yet another question about the manufacturing of food grade steel in Pakistan, he requested to submit a written proposal so that contact between concerned stakeholders could be ensured. The Trade Commissioner said that corona has badly affected the world economy and after containing it we could exchange trade delegations. He said that the first Pakistani investment has also been made in Belgium. This

company is involved in the manufacturing of nutraceutical products. He further said that investment to or from both countries will help enhance bilateral trade and we will welcome it in any case. About textiles, he said that Pakistan exported textile Products worth \$500 Million to Belgium but the entire lot was not for this country alone. "It will go to the free zone area from where it could be exported to any EU country without any custom duty", he added. Earlier in his welcome address President Engineer Hafiz Ihtesham javed said that despite the corona, efforts made by Trade Commissioner Mr. Abid Hussain are really laudable. He said that bilateral trade declined

in 2019 as compared to 2018 while another dip is expected due to pandemic. Hence, we must make serious efforts to stabilize our bilateral trade. He said that Pakistan is a major buyer of textile machinery hence Belgium should set up its textile machinery manufacturing unit in Pakistan. "Due to cheaper labor it could cut down its cost of doing business substantially", he opined and said that Belgium had already arranged a catalogue show a few years ago but it could not yield required results due to the poor follow-up of this event. A question-answer session was also held in which Zulfikar Ahmad, Nawaz Alvi and Aslam Mirza participated.



LAHORE: Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan, Special Assistant to the Punjab CM on Business, Investment and Trade Affairs addressing the press conference, while Sec general new Pakistan housing scheme also present. — DNA

'Islamic bankers should replicate conventional banking models'

He called for educational institutes in Pakistan to continue with virtual classes and invite global experts to share their insights to benefit the students

DNA

KARACHI: Dr. Ishrat Husain, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity, was the chief guest at the 4th International Conference on Islamic Banking and Finance (ICIBF-2020). It was organized by the Institute of Business Management (IoBM), Karachi on Wednesday, November 4, 2020. During his speech, Dr. Husain shared two distinct advantages of Islamic Banking. First, all transactions are based on a real asset. Second, Islamic Banking is a risk-sharing arrangement and not a risk-shifting plan. He called for Islamic bankers to replicate pertinent conventional banking models. He was confident that investments in low-cost affordable housing schemes will bring positive results and that the government of Pakistan is promoting this initiative. Dr. Husain said that ICIBF-2020 will enable

global experts to speak virtually without incurring any costs. He called for educational institutes in

Pakistan to continue with virtual classes and invite global experts to share their insights to benefit the

students. ICIBF-2020, a two-day Conference will observe COVID-19 pandemic's impact on Micro, Small

& Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the way forward for Islamic Financial Institutions. Speakers at the inaugural session were Mr. Talib S. Karim, President IoBM; Mr. Bashir Jannohammad, Chancellor IoBM; Syed Amir Ali, President, and CEO, BankIslami Pakistan; and Mr. Ahmed Shuja Kidwai, President and CEO, Al Baraka Bank Pakistan. Mr. Talib Karim said that IoBM is pursuing a hybrid teaching model where a small percentage of students attend classes on campus and the rest attend it from home. ICIBF-2020 is pursuing the same model where national and international speakers are invited to speak online. Mr. Talib Karim duly appreciated the support IoBM has been receiving by BankIslami and Al Baraka Bank in organizing such conferences. Session chair, Mr. Bashir Jannohammad said that Islamic Banking is progressing in Pakistan where conventional banks are setting up Islamic Banking counters.



'Lahore is still a corona hotspot'

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid said on Wednesday the majority of the coronavirus cases in Punjab are being reported from Lahore. "Lahore has always been Punjab's coronavirus hotspot ever since the pandemic hit Pakistan and even now, most [people] testing positive are from Lahore," she said while speaking to a private channel. Over 200 neighbourhoods in Lahore are under smart lockdowns. Dr Rashid said that the virus hot spots are continuously changing in Lahore. She said that a total of 1.6 million tests have been conducted so far. Across Punjab, smart lockdowns have been imposed in 44 areas in Multan, 47 in Rawalpindi, 16 in Sahiwal, 24 in Sardogha, 37 in Bahawalpur and 17 in Dera Ghazi Khan. Another 34 localities in Faisalabad, 35 in Bhakkar 35 and 14 areas in Gujranwala are under a smart lockdown. The federal government said it is closely monitoring Lahore "as every second case is being reported there". People have been instructed to wear face masks every time they go out, avoid crowded places and practice social distancing. In the last 24 hrs, 1,313 new cases were reported and 18 people died across the country. Nearly 14,700 active cases have been recorded.

SHC orders issuing notice to PBS

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh High Court (SHC) here on Wednesday ordered to issue notice to Pakistan Bureau of Statistic (PBS) to file their comments regarding a constitutional petition filed by Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman Altaf Shakoork challenging delay in announcement of the final results of recent national population census. A two-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Irshad Hussain Khan heard the constitutional petition number 4452/2020. Lawyer of the petitioner Irfan Aziz Advocate submitted that the final results of the nation census are not being released by the government with an intention not to hold the local government elections in Pakistan. The bench ordered to issue notice to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics to file their comments. In his petition, Altaf Shakoork, making Federation of Pakistan, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) respondents, had submitted that the human capital is the most important asset of any society and conducting periodical national census is important to compile a numerical profile of this human capital and conduct national planning and related decision-making processes at all levels on the basis of this data.

Farmers end sit-in after successful talks

DNA

LAHORE: The Kisan Ittehad Pakistan on Wednesday called off their ongoing sit-in after assurance from the Punjab government. President Kissan Ittehad Akhtar Malik has announced to end the ongoing strike after successful talks with Punjab Law Minister Raja Basharat. The CCPO Lahore and AC Rawind were also present in the meeting. It may be noted the farmers under the Kisan Ittehad Pakistan resumed their sit-in on Wednesday morning after late-night police crackdown on the protesters. The police and the Anti-Riot Force personnel started late night crackdown against the farmers at Thokar Niaz Baig locality of Lahore. The police resorted to baton charge, tear gas shelling and arrested scores of protesters, who pelted stones at the policemen. The clash between the farmers and the law enforcement personnel resulted in traffic jam in the area. The protesters were demanding support price for their wheat and sugarcane crops and said they would continue the protest till government notifies approval of their demand. In an earlier report, the Kisan Ittehad Pakistan had yesterday announced to call off their strike after holding talks with Punjab Law Minister Raja Basharat.

Briefs

Dr Ijaz, Saud Sahir' left big journalistic void

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Expressing deep sorrow over the recent demise of eminent journalists Dr Ijaz Hassan Qureshi and Saud Sahir, former Senator and Chairman of Institute of Policy Studies Professor Khurshid Ahmad has extended his sympathies to their families while praying to Almighty Allah to grant their souls the highest ranks of Jannah. In heartfelt condolence messages issued on Wednesday, Professor Khurshid lauded the late scholars for their invaluable services and contributions to the field of journalism while maintaining that the void left by their departure will be difficult to fill. It is pertinent to mention that Dr Ijaz Qureshi, the chairman of monthly magazine Urdu Digest, founder of Karwan-e-Ilm Foundation, an activist of Pakistan Movement and the younger brother of renowned journalist Altaf Hassan Qureshi, passed away on Monday aged 92, whereas Saud Sahir, who served on various prominent positions during his illustrious journalistic career, breathed his last on Tuesday.

10-day Lok Mela to start from Nov 6

ISLAMABAD: Folk entertainers and rural musicians have been invited from all over the country to participate in the 10-day annual folk festival being held here from November 6. The event which was planned by National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) will culminate with a colourful award ceremony which is scheduled to take place on the last day. Cash awards will be distributed among the most talented and deserving artisans on the recommendations. An exotic craft bazaar with score of tastefully decorated pavilions offering a variety of knick-knacks souvenirs, antiques, craft items, gems and jewellery, and cultural materials will also be set up erected. Each province, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir will hold its cultural night during Lok Mela in which eminent folk artists and folk performers hailing from the respective province and region will perform live in a concert. — APP

Govt to improve illiteracy rate: Munaza

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) Munaza Hassan said government was committed to improve illiteracy rate among women. In a statement here on Wednesday she said an educated girl was the guarantee to informed decision-making, valuable economic partnerships and safe motherhood. Adding that female students must be encouraged and prioritized for various initiatives taken by the government. She said an educated, healthy and empowered woman on the decision-making table best personifies the state of peace and progress. — APP

Police arrest bootleggers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) Police teams arrested two bootleggers from the areas of Korla and Kohsar police stations and recovered 160 wine bottles, 60 liter alcohol, police said. Following directions and guidance of IGP Islamabad Muhammad Amir Zulfqar, police spokesperson said that renewed efforts are underway to curb bootlegging and drug peddling activities in the city. DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed has conducted special meetings with heads of police stations and directed them to accelerate efforts against anti-social elements.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sefik Dzaferovic posing for a picture along with his delegation at Faisal Mosque. —DNA

'AIOU role model for other educational institutions'

He informed the minister that presently 1.4 million students are enrolled in AIOU while the university has graduated 36 lac students so far

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Federal minister for Education and Professional Training, Mr. Shafiqat Mahmood, inaugurated the newly constructed Science Block of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Wednesday. During his media talk on this occasion and later on while addressing the senior faculty and administrative staff of the university, he highly admired and commended the role of AIOU in the field of mass education and termed it as a role model for other national educational institutions. He appreciated Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum for his dynamic leadership. He said that during Prof. Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum



tenure, AIOU has become more innovative and has made effective use of the latest information and communication technology in education. He said that Pakistani universities need to focus more on promotion of research culture in the country. Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum briefed the minister about the automation and digitalization process of the university. He informed the minister that presently 1.4 million students are enrolled in AIOU while the university has graduated 36 lac students so far. He further said that out of a total 1.9 million students enrolled in higher education in all universities of the country, AIOU is catering the higher educational needs of around six lac students.

IGP directs to maintain repute in conciliatory committees

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfqar khan has directed to engage well-reputed personalities in conciliatory committees who may help police in resolving the issues of citizens more effectively. The IGP in his directions to DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed has asked to engage the notables of the various areas in policing affairs who may help po-

lice in resolving the cases of petty nature. Following these directions, the DIG (Operations) overall reviewed the performance of the conciliatory committees established at the level of police stations and expressed satisfaction on it. The conciliatory committees have the mandate to settle four kinds of conflicts, i.e. domestic, property, brawls, transaction and trade. During the ongoing year, the conciliatory committees received 1204 applications of which 1089 were settled while remaining 115

are under process. Of these applications, 371 were related to family matters, 196 to brawls, 154 to property disputes, 252 to trade or business matters, 105 to tenants' issues and 116 of miscellaneous nature. The DIG (Operations) was told that these committees have a total 458 members including women who are performing vital role in resolving the matters of people with the help and cooperation of local police. He said that police is responsible for maintaining

law and order and people should also cooperate with it in efforts to combat crime as well as anti-social elements. He said these bodies are helpful in easing the burden of police and hoped that their performance would further improve in future. The DIG (Operations) said that police in the capital territory need unflinching support from residents and all other segments of society and such committees would be helpful to bridge the gap between police and public.

OGDCL injects two new gas and crude oil wells

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has injected two new wells, producing 65,233 Barrels crude oil and 368 Million Cubic Feet (MMCF) gas, in its production gathering system during first quarter of the current fiscal year. "Besides, the company carried out 27 work-over jobs at mature fields to arrest natural decline and sustain oil and gas production," according to the company's quarterly report available with APP. The company contributed around 47 percent, 29 percent and 36 percent towards the country's total oil, natural gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) production respectively during the period under review. However, the report said, oil and gas output of the company was impacted by natural decline at Dakhni, Kal, Pasakhi and Tando Alam fields coupled with non-revival and partial revival of wells. The OGDCL also spud four exploratory and development wells including Juna-1, Sheen Dund-1, Nangpir-1J and Qadirpur-62, and completed drilling and testing of seven wells pertaining to previous fiscal year. "Whereas total drilling recorded during three months was 17,620 meters." — APP

Committee formed to resolve circular debt

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet Wednesday formed a committee to prepare a proposal on modalities for clearing the circular debt of the Petroleum Division. The committee was constituted during the ECC meeting chaired by Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh here. The committee would comprise members from all the relevant stakeholders including Finance Division, Power and Petroleum Division, Planning Division, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Oil and Gas Regulator Authority (OGRA), Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan State Oil (PSO), Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), Government Holdings Private Limited (GHPL) and Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL). The committee would prepare a well-rounded proposal in a month and submit before the ECC. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas, President ICCI addressing the business community on PM's energy relief package for SMEs and industries. — DNA

Secretary lauds role of ANF in drug control

The secretary lauded ANF's achievements and its role as a specialized force in combating trafficking of illicit drugs at national, regional and global level

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Secretary, Ministry of Narcotics Control, Mr. Shoaib Dastgir, PSP paid his first formal visit to Headquarters Anti Narcotics Force, Rawalpindi after assuming the charge of Secretary MNC. He was welcomed by Director General ANF, Major

General Muhammad Arif Malik, HI (M). The secretary was briefed on counternarcotics endeavors by ANF, professional achievements, current drug situation and major challenges with regard to trafficking of narcotics, precursor chemicals and psychotropic substances. He was apprised that ANF is also vigorously undertak-



ing drug demand reduction campaigns through public awareness drives and community participation activities throughout Pakistan; apart from running rehabilitation centers providing free of cost treatment to drug addicts. He was also informed about the organizational requirements of ANF with respect to enhancement infrastructure,

acquisition of latest technology and establishment of more drug treatment centers in the country. The secretary lauded ANF's achievements and its role as a specialized force in combating trafficking of illicit drugs at national, regional and global level. He assured his support to ANF for addressing the inadequacies.

Gold price falls to Rs113,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs500 on Wednesday and was traded at Rs113,600 against its sale at Rs114,100 the previous day. Likewise, the price of 10 grams gold also decreased by Rs428 and was traded at Rs97,394 against Rs97,822 while gram 22 karat gold was sold at Rs89,276, Karachi Sarafa Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs1200 and Rs1028.80 respectively. The gold prices in the international market decreased by \$9 and was traded at \$1891 against \$1900, the association reported. — APP

4 held for not wearing face mask at G-15

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital administration Wednesday arrested four persons for not wearing face mask at different markets of sector G-15. As many as four shops were sealed for selling edible items at exorbitant rate, besides lodging a first information report (FIR) against a person at the same area over violation of anti-coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs). The operation was supervised by Assistant Commissioner, (ICT) Saddar-Zone, Gohar Wazir in collaboration with other concerned formations.

Deputy Commissioner, Islamabad, Hamza Shafiqat told APP that the teams of law enforcement agencies including police, Rangers and officials of district administration intensified crackdown on people who were not wearing masks on commercial markets and other public places. "Violators being served challan to control further transmission of the virus," DC remarked.

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad had imposed section 144 CrPC, last week in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) for a period of two months to control second wave of coronavirus. Meanwhile, ICT administration carried out an anti-encroachment drive in collaboration with Capital Development Authority (CDA) at various markets of G-15 and demolished several illegal structures. — APP

IESCO issues power schedule

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM Hameed, Haji Shah, Gondal, Manser Feeders, from 01:00 PM to 04:00 PM, Dhok Hasso, Ratta, Carriage Factory, Misryal Road, AMC, Benazir Bhutto, Major Masood, CS Shah, Dandoot Feeders, from 09:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Race Course, Askari XI, AFIRM, Muslimabad, Iqbal Road, Gulshanabad, Social Security Hospital Feeders from 09:00 AM to 01:00 PM, Basharat, Katas, Dalwal Feeders from 08:00 am to 12:00 pm Ghauri Garden, Suhdran Road, Scheme-1, Burma, Waheedabad, Khanna-2, Khanna East, Al-Noor Colony-2, Gharial, Nogzi, Fazaia, Shahpur, Anguri, Chakral, Mandi Bhalwal, Sarai Alamgir, Bahr Kalial, Bani, Katarian, Holy Family, F Block, CDA, FSH, I-8/4, Kurry Road, Khurram Colony, Service Road, Tariq Shaheed, Chontra, Chhaji Mar, Mathial, Feeders, from 08:30 am to 12:30 pm Bani, Bagh Sardar, Commercial Center, Faizabad, Shamsabad, Shakrial, Curry Road, Khurram Colony, Noor Muhammad, KRL, Faziya, Jinnah Camp, Al Noor, Falcon, Noor Muhammad, Service Road, Tariq Shaheed, Muslim Town, Dhok Hikmadad, City, Gulshanabad, Mohanpura, Jamia Masjid, Iqbal Road, Sir Syed Road, CBR-1, Pak View, Topi Pump, Azizabad, Amir Hamza Colony, and surrounding areas. — APP

Briefs

RCB issued 18 notices to food outlets

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Food Branch of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) issued 18 notices to food outlets for unhygienic and poor cleanliness conditions during last week. According to RCB Food Branch, total 30 food outlets were checked and the teams collected 12 food samples which were sent to lab for quality test while fines were also imposed on the rules violators. The cases of substandard food items were also sent to the court of the cantonment magistrate which imposed fines on the rules violators. Food Inspectors on the directive of the Cantonment Executive Officer conducted surprise visits of different markets including Saddar, Allahabad, Peshawar Road and other areas and inspected cleanliness condition with quality of food items at food outlets.

In order to ensure supply of quality food items to the residents, he said, the teams were conducting raids at food outlets in different areas on daily basis. The fines were also being imposed on the stall holders and vendors for unhygienic food and poor cleanliness condition. The raids would continue, he said adding that the teams were directed to also check the health of the workers serving at the food outlets.

IG for early completion of police welfare schemes

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Muhammad Amir Zulfiqar Khan Wednesday directed the DIG headquarters, Muhammad Saleem to ensure timely completion of welfare projects to facilitate the personals. During his visit at police lines headquarters along with Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) (Headquarters) Irfan Tariq and other officers, he asked the concerned officials to improve the quality of mess to improve the health of cops. He directed to ensure the availability of doctors and medicines at the dispensaries in order to provide timely medical assistance in case of emergency. "Provision of all possible facilities to the cops is supreme responsibility of federal capital police," the IG remarked. During the visit, the IG reviewed the progress work on residential barracks and other residential schemes launched for the welfare of police personnel. - APP

Police install HD CCTV

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The district police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO), Muhammad Ahsan Younas have installed high definition closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras in commercial areas particularly crime pockets to monitor activities of the criminals. According to a police spokesman, special Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) cameras would help control crime rate in commercial areas. He informed that Command and Control Center set up in the CPO office was working round the clock. The cameras would also be used to monitor traffic flow on various roads, he added.

The PTZ cameras which can easily monitor large areas with a continuous 360-degree rotation, night vision display and 200 meter zooming facility can record everything clear.

He said, Rawalpindi District Police under the command of CPO Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas was introducing latest technologies to ensure safety of the citizens and to net the criminals. He said, initially, the cameras had been installed in Dubai Plaza and Commercial Market areas. The cameras were being used to check activities of suspicious persons and vehicles, he added. Muhammad Ahsan Younas said that the police would continue to introduce latest technologies for better policing and enhance professionalism in the force. He said, the PTZ cameras would also be installed in other areas to control crime rate.

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Embassy of Spain celebrated the 20th anniversary of UNSCR1325 at the Spanish Embassy, together with civil society organizations, Foreign Office representatives from and Ambassadors from partner countries. Firm commitment to empower women and give them active roles in conflict resolution was stressed. Ambassador of Spain Manuel Duran spoke on the occasion. - DNA

ICCI hails government's energy relief package for SMEs

the Chamber urged the government to provided this relief on all units of electricity consumed by SMEs and industries to enable them in achieving accelerated growth which would help turn around the economy

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has welcomed the announcement of an energy relief package by the current government for SMEs and industries. They termed it a highly positive development as it would bring down the production cost, make our industry competitive and help in enhancing country's exports. However, the Chamber urged the government to provided this relief on all units of electricity consumed by SMEs and industries to enable them in achieving accelerated

growth which would help turn around the economy. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, ICCI said that power tariffs in Pakistan were considered the highest in the region due to which the cost of doing business had gone up significantly and our SMEs were facing great difficulties in producing goods at competitive prices thus exports were suffering. He hoped that providing 50 percent relief in commercial electricity price to SMEs on additional usage from November this year to June next year and 25 percent

relief to all industries on additional usage of electricity for three years would be instrumental in reducing production cost and boosting industrialization in the country leading to increase in exports. He said that abolishing peak hour regime was a laudable step of the government to support the industry. Yasir Ilyas Khan urged the government to reduce high taxes on power tariffs and also consider providing similar relief to industry in gas tariffs for the next three years that would make our industry very competitive and help boost exports. He

also urged the government for fixing power tariffs for the next five years at one level, which would give more confidence to the investors and help businesses make long-term planning for growth and expansion. He said that Pakistan was mostly depending on thermal fuel for energy generation due to which cost of electricity was very high and urged that the government to focus on renewable energy sources including water, wind and solar to produce cheap energy that would make Pakistan an attractive destination for local and

foreign investment. He further said that government should take measures to control power theft and transmission and distribution losses as to cover such losses, the government mostly tended to pass on their burden to the end consumers due to which commercial and domestic consumers were facing high electricity prices. He said that an inquiry report of NEPRA had disclosed that Discos had installed 30-35 percent faster meters and emphasized to investigate this issue to save consumers from such injustices and unethical practices. - APP

Celebrities' board to play advisory role on Kashmir Cause

Notified advisory board aimed at promoting Pakistan's cultural richness both at home and abroad

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Committee Chairman, Shehryar Afridi Wednesday constituted a multi-faceted board comprising top celebrities of Pakistan to play an advisory role on Kashmir Cause. All the prominent media and sports personalities were invited to join cultural, heritage and sports advisory board for Parliamentary Committees on Kashmir. The due to be notified advisory board would be a creative alliance of some of Pakistan's top media personalities from the country's television, cinematic and sporting spheres, aimed at promoting Pakistan's cultural richness both at home and abroad in a bid to project a soft image of the country. Artists who have been invited to join were Humayun Saeed, Saba Qamar, Fahad Mustafa, Atif Aslam, Anwar Maqsood, Shaan Shahid, Ali Azmat, Yousaf Salahuddin, Saira Kazmi, Rahat Fateh Ali, Hadika Kiani, Shehzad Roy, Humaima Malick, Yousaf Salahuddin, Shaniara Akram, Adnan Siddiqui, Bilal

Ashraf, Samina Peerzada and Shafqat Amanat Ali. Film Producers Jerjees Seja, Momina Duraid and Ammara Hikmat have been chosen for the advisory role. Film directors Syed Noor, Nadeem Baig and Bilal Lashari were also on the list. From the field of sports Aisam ul Haq, Jahangir Khan, Jansher Khan, Maria Toorpakai, Wasim Akram, Sana Mir and Karishma Ali have been invited to join and would be notified soon. Ahsan Mashkoor has been notified as the focal person for the advisory board. In a letter addressed to one of the advisory board members, Shehryar Afridi mentioned, "To promote our cultural heritage and preserve our cultural legacy, we have decided to make you part of our advisory board on culture, heritage & sports." Further course of action, roles and responsibilities to be shared with the board before the first meeting which is due to be held mid November, the letter said. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ameer Jamaat e Islami, Senator Siraj ul Haq offering condolence and prayers for Izmir earthquake victims with Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Mustafa Yurdakul here at Turkish embassy. - DNA

IIUI President hails services of Shariah Academy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) Dr. Hathal Homoud Al-Otaibi on Wednesday commended the role of Shariah Academy of the university for providing services in legal field to the Muslims across the world. While chairing the 16th Meeting of Shariah Academy Council at Faisal Masjid Campus here, he said Shariah Academy was a unique hub of knowledge focused on promoting Is-

lamic legal philosophy and the Islamic concept of justice. IIUI President hailed role of Shariah Academy for its services in the legal field especially trainings of the legal fraternity across the Muslim world. He also hoped that the academy will further progress in the field of correspondence courses, trainings and publication of the books on Islamic law. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Ahmed, Director General of the academy and Vice Chairman of the council along-with other members including Barrister Dr. Adnan

Khan, Advocate Supreme court, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yousaf Farooqi Ex. Director General, Shari'ah Academy, Prof. Dr. Ali Asghar Chishti Head of Department Islamic Studies Hi-Tech University Texila, Prof. Dr. Miraj ul Islam zia Dean Faculty of Islamic Studies University of Peshawar, Dr. Haib ur Rehman Secretary, Chairman Department of Training, Shari'ah Academy. It is pertinent to mention here that the Council looks at the working of the Academy and lays down the broad framework for its activities.

Pakistan wants to strengthen relations with Nepal: President

Congratulating the Ambassador-designate over his appointment as Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal, the President said that Pakistan and Nepal had considerable potential to further improve economic, political and cultural relations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said that Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Nepal and wanted to further expand and strengthen bilateral relations in diverse areas for mutual benefit. He stated this while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Nepal, Syed Haider Shah, who called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Congratulating the Ambassador-designate over his appointment as Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal, the President said that Pakistan and Nepal had considerable potential to further improve



economic, political and cultural relations, a press release issued by the President's Media Office here said. He underscored the need for exploring new avenues of bilateral economic cooperation like agriculture, pharmaceuticals, IT, textiles and surgical instruments. The President expressed the hope that the new Ambassador would actively work for further strengthening economic and cultural relations between the two countries. He asked the Ambassador-designate to expose India over human rights abuses in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and other minorities' groups of India during his interaction with the diplomatic community.

Model Courts decided 422 Cases

RAWALPINDI: The Model Courts which have been set up across the country to provide speedy justice and clear the massive backlog of cases Wednesday decided 422 cases including 27 cases of murder and 59 of narcotics. According to details, the Director General Supreme Court Monitoring Cell So-hail Nasir said that in order to decide the pending cases on priority, statements of 526 witnesses have also been recorded in different cases on November 4. The Model courts in Punjab disposed of 24 cases while KPK Model Courts decided 11 cases. Similarly, Model Courts in Sindh disposed of 38 cases and Baluchistan Model Courts decided 6 cases. "Rigorous imprisonment was also awarded to 6 accused", he said. The Civil Model Courts dispose of 176 rent and family disputes while Model Magistrate courts decided 160 cases. A fine of Rs 33,66989 was also imposed on various accused in different cases, he added. The DG said model courts were established on the directives of Chief Justice Supreme Court of Pakistan, adding performance of Model Courts were being assessed on daily basis.

ITP directed to ensure smooth traffic flow

DNA

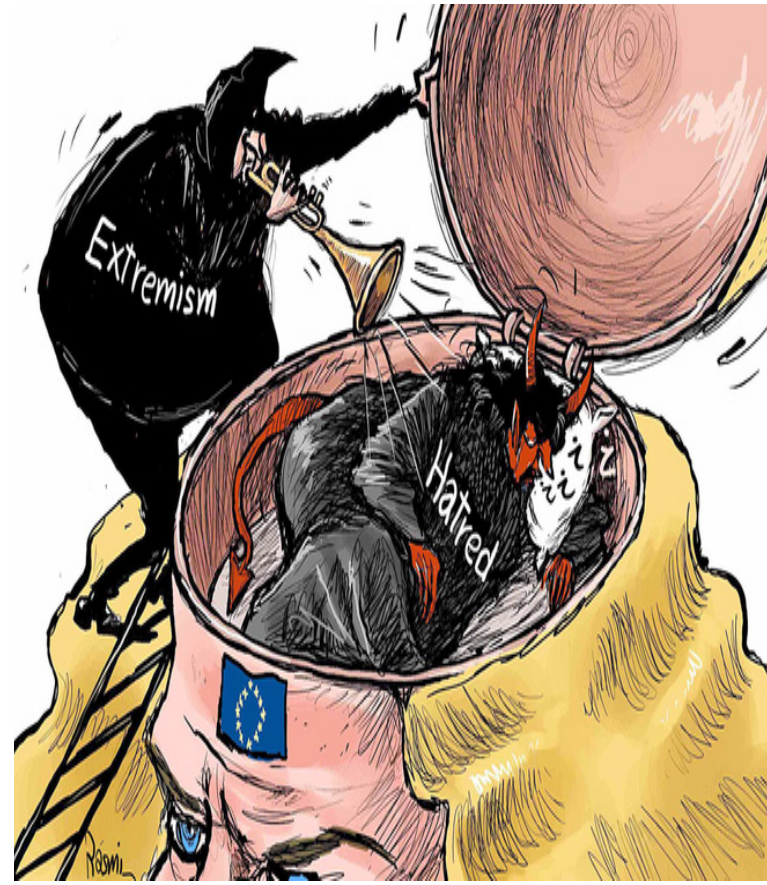
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has been directed to ensure smooth flow of traffic at IJP road, Srinagar (Kashmir) Highway and Islamabad expressway and take strict action against those creating inconvenience for the road users. While reviewing the overall performance report about traffic related issues here on Wednesday, Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed directed to depute special squads at Islamabad Expressway, IJP road, Srinagar (Kashmir) Highway and other important boulevards to ensure smooth traffic flow there. He said that complaints about any inconvenience to people can be lodged with ITP Helpline 1915 or 051-9261992-93 which would be addressed promptly. Following the directions of IGP Islamabad Muhammad Amir Zulfiqar, the SSP (Traffic) said that ITP is taking steps to ensure safe road environment in the city with maximum convenience to road users. He said that special squads have been constituted to ensure implementation on traffic rules and also smooth traffic flow in busy areas. He further directed to ensure traffic discipline in the city and take action against violators without any discrimination. Meanwhile, the spokesman said that 5, 74, 539 vehicles and bikes have been fined during the current year for hampering smooth flow of traffic and involvement in over-charging, over-loading and misbehaving with passengers. He said that 1, 37,647 trucks, 33,395 pickups, 67,365 wagons and 54,029 cabs were fined during the period over these violations. The police spokesman said that efforts are underway to ensure smooth traffic flow in the city and cooperation of road users in crucial to overcome traffic related problems.

PBM to construct 26 more Shelter Homes

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) was planning to construct 26 Panah Gahs in various areas of the country in the next few months to provide free night stay and food facilities to transit passengers, daily wagers and others, said official sources. Talking to APP, an official said at least 26 shelter homes being constructed in various areas of the country - eight each Panah Gahs will be constructed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, five each shelter homes will be constructed in Balochistan and Sindh. Panah Gahs (Shelter Home) would be established in six divisions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while two were being established in Peshawar in collaboration with provincial government. "60 percent of the construction cost of Panah Gahs will be borne by provincial government and 40 percent by PBM." The first Panah Gah in Balochistan would start functioning on January 31, 2021, he said. - APP

Violence rages in Afghanistan

As the USA goes to the polls to either pick a new Democrat President in Joe Biden or reelect Republican incumbent President Donald Trump, the Afghan peace deal between it and the Taliban has gone on the backburner, losing the momentum seen a few months back. This has been accompanied by a deadly increase in violence with at least two major terrorist attacks taking place in the country within a week. Two days back gunmen stormed a university in Kabul, resulting in an hours-long gun battle ending with 22 students dead and as many injured. Earlier, a suicide bombing at an education centre in the same city claimed 24 lives, mostly from Afghanistan's Shia community. That responsibility for both attacks was claimed by ISIS and targeted educational institutes specifically shows that a new brand of terrorism is emerging in the country. Although ISIS is but a shadow of its former self, it seems the group is still able to recruit militants to plan and execute attacks on soft targets. The Taliban on the other hand are testing the Afghan government and the USA's resolve by opening up a new offensive in the southern Afghan city of Lashkar Gah last month even though negotiations were ongoing. It is clear that there is not going to be any immediate let-up in terrorist activity in Afghanistan. Whatever the result of the US presidential election, the Afghan endgame will remain as complex and difficult a problem as it has remained for the past two decades since the war started. These distressingly high levels of violence should be worrying not only for the US, Afghan government and Taliban negotiators who want a peaceful solution, but also Pakistan whose own stability and security depends on that of Afghanistan. Spoilers such as Taliban fighters not onboard with the peace deal, countries like India operating in the region through agencies and groups like ISIS must be dealt with swiftly with all stakeholders working towards a common goal: a peaceful Afghanistan.



Second turns

THE feeling elsewhere in the government may not yet be one of rapid transformation but change is constant in the information ministry of Punjab. Four turns have already been played, and now we have Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan taking things into her able hands from Fayyazul Hasan Chohan. The outgoing minister was generous with directing his most piercing lines – many of them in the form of crude one-liners – against the PTI government's opponents. It is unclear as to what then prompted this, the second ouster of Mr Chohan, from his position as provincial information minister. It was Mr Chohan who had set the tone for the inaugural PTI government in Punjab with his forceful public rejection and dismissal from sight of anything which he considered even remotely coming in the way of his leader Imran Khan's vision. Back then, he had to be replaced after he made derogatory remarks about a minority community. However, both the successors of this original choice for the coveted post proved rather subdued. After Samsam Bukhari was unable to weave his magic and the gamble of trying out Mian Aslam Iqbal, otherwise thought to be chief ministerial material, failed to pay off, Mr Chohan was drafted in as information minister for the second time and looked safe and secure and prepared for a long stint. That perception proved to be wrong, and the heavens did not fall as Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan emerged on the horizon on a dusky November evening as if blessed on her way to prominence again by some unseen sage. Ms Awan had bowed out in April, as a special assistant to the prime minister, an exit that could hardly be termed as ceremonious. She herself holds the key to the mystery about her new assignment as a reinforcement for Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar's administration. The secret will start to unravel as she speaks. One has to pay attention to the words and tone she chooses.

Democratic Kazakhstan & parliamentary election 2021

Dr Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



The Election Law provides a technical basis for the conduct of elections and safeguards & guarantees integrity of the process, especially Election Day procedures, counting and tabulation

ELECTION is the "real essence" of modern democracy which determines a true and responsive political system, catering and establishing all democratic norms in a civilized society and the "Republic of Kazakhstan" is indeed a real "democratic" country. Parliament election will be held on January 2021 in Kazakhstan in which hopefully all major political parties will rigorously participate to win "hearts and souls" of the country-wide voters. The Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the "highest" representative body which represents "collective wisdom", "intellect" and "determination" to achieve a qualitative life. It minimizes gaps between the government and its people. It enhances connectivity among all the stakeholders in the prevailing political system in the country. The Republic of Kazakhstan is a unitary state with a presidential form of government.

From ancient courts of prophecies to modern days of white-house dynamics, human civilization and evolution of rule of law has been maintaining a direct correlation with electoral democracy in which democratic elections are deemed to be "competitive", "attractive", "regular", "transparent", "fair" and "free". Common people/voters have "free" right to vote and elect their members/representatives in the political system. Moreover, competitive and popular majoritarian elections safeguard the vested interests of all the participating political parties in the elections and the Republic of Kazakhstan is no "exception". There have been no incident of pre/post-election engi-

neering, political manipulation or administrative interference/maneuvering because every party and its candidates completely enjoy freedoms of speech, assembly and movement throughout Kazakhstan. The constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan ensures the periodicity of elections, representative of various social groups in the government, openness and transparency of election authorities. Deity of democracy prevails in the largest economy of the Central Asia, Kazakhstan where political pluralism, transparency and doctrine of equal right, protection of basic human rights and change of government has been conditional to "peaceful" fair and free electoral mechanism wherein every vote "counts" and majority determines the fate of rule. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has signed a decree scheduling the parliamentary elections for the Majilis (Parliament) for 10 January 2021. It will further strengthen process of "politicization" and "democratization" in the country embarking towards a "viable", "valuable" and "liberal" democracy in the days to come. Kazakhstan needs robust socio-economic prosperity and sustainability of economic development which relies on positive, participatory and productive political system via successful parliamentary elections 2021.

Majilis is the lower chamber/National Assembly of the Kazakh Parliament consisting of 107 deputies who are elected for a five-year term. Nine deputies are elected from the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, an advisory body under the president of Kazakhstan whose members are drawn from organisations representing major ethnic communities living in the country. The Republic of Kazakhstan is a democratic country which implements all the international protocols pertaining to democratic traditions and norms in its country. Kazakhstan follows and respects all international laws/obligations to conduct free and competitive elections. Elections of the presidency, parliament as well as local representative bodies are held in terms of utmost openness and complete transparency in compliance with national legislation and universally recognized principles for democratic elections, stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Protocol No. 1, 1952), Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE (1990). The ruling Nur Otan party dominated political landscape of Kazakhstan and held 84 of the 98 directly-elected seats in the lower chamber of the parliament (Majilis) in parliament election of 2016. Six political parties participated in the elections 2016 and three of them, Nur Otan (82.2%), Ak Zhol Democratic Party of Kazakhstan (7.18%), the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan (7.14%), won the right to send their deputies to the chamber. Currently, the Nur Otan party has a majority of 84 deputies in the Majilis, while the Ak Zhol and the Communist People's party have 7 deputies each. Kazakhstan is a presidential republic, with the president exercising wide powers, including the right to dissolve the parliament, to initiate and veto legislation, and to appoint the ministers of foreign affairs, interior and defence, as well as the chairperson and two members of the CEC. The upper house is the Senate of Kazakhstan, with 47 members. Members of the Senate are elected on the basis of indirect suffrage by secret ballot, and half of the elected members are up for election every three years. Fifteen members of the Senate are appointed by the President of Kazakhstan with the view to ensure representation for all the diverse national, cultural components of society. In August, seventeen Senate deputies from

the nation's 14 regions and cities of Nur-Sultan, Almaty and Shymkent were elected to the Senate. The renewed composition of the Kazakh parliament, it will focus on "quality legislative support for social and economic reforms in the country. The government of Kazakhstan has now introduced valuable changes to provide more and more power to Senate and Majilis. Both have now granted greater authority to serve as a check & balance over the executive branch as a result of a number of amendments to the constitution. The Senate received greater decision making powers, including assuming the legislative powers of the Majilis if that house was dissolved by presidential decree prior to the end of its term. The parliament has now been vested with the ability to call a vote of no confidence on the government with a simple majority vote, as opposed to a 2/3 vote as required before. The right to elect and to be elected is regulated by the Constitutional Act "On Elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan", adopted in September 1995. According to the provisions of the Constitution and this Act the elections of the President, deputies of the Mazhilis of Parliament and of local representative bodies as well as members of local self-government bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan are held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. President of Kazakhstan introduced many meaningful political reforms in his country. The institute of parliamentary opposition has been initiated and in the political system due to which one chair and two secretaries of the Majilis standing committees will now be elected from the members of the parliamentary opposition. In addition, the parliamentary opposition will have the right to initiate parliamentary hearings at least once during one session and to set the agenda for the government hour at least twice during one session.

The Election Law provides a technical basis for the conduct of elections and safeguards & guarantees integrity of the process, especially Election Day procedures, counting and tabulation. The constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of assembly, expression, association, access to information, and the right to take part in political life, are guaranteed by the constitution. Paragraph 20 of the 1996 UN CCPR General Comment 25 to the ICCPR requires that "an independent electoral authority should be established to supervise the electoral process and to ensure that it is conducted fairly, impartially and in accordance with established laws which are compatible with the Covenant and undoubtedly the Central Election Commission of Kazakhstan is an independent organization to hold a transparent, fair and free parliament elections in the country.

The political parties of Kazakhstan have begun their political preparations for the upcoming parliament election 2021. Nur Otan is a pro-presidential political party. Its chairman is Nursultan Nazarbayev, who remains in the office even after his resignation. And the current president, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, was also nominated by this party. Since 2007, Nur Otan has been taking more than half of the votes in the elections to the Majilis (2007 - 88.41%, 2012 - 80.99%, 2016 - 82.20%). Kazakhstan's law on political parties prohibits parties based on ethnic origin, religion, or gender. A 2002 law raised from 3,000 to 50,000 the number of members that a party must have in its ranks in order to register with the Ministry of Justice, divided up proportionally by regions with no fewer than 700 members in each of the fourteen regions and two major cities. Primaries is an intra-party vote where one party candidate is elected. It is held between supporters of a political party. It is used in the USA and resembles a political show, which thereby activates

the growth of interest in a political party and its candidates. Kazakhstan's political party landscape is currently dominated by the ruling Nur-Otan party, which dominates parliament and the public debate. However, numerous other political parties exist. The present-day political parties in Kazakhstan can be divided into three categories i.e. Pro-presidential, "Soft" Opposition, and "Hard" Opposition. The current Pro-presidential political parties are Rukhaniyat and the Party of Patriots. The recently reconstituted party Adilet, Ak-Zhol, Auliy, the Communist Party, and the Communist People's Party are soft opposition orientation. The All-National Social Democratic Party, Azat (formerly Naghyz Ak-Zhol) and the unregistered political movement Alga have hard opposition labels. The Republic of Kazakhstan is sitting at the "apex" of true democracy in the central Asian region. Democracy stands for social protection and wellbeing of the general masses and Kazakhstan has been rated first in numerous published reports of the IMF, World Economic Forums, World Banks and Asian Development Bank in terms of poverty reduction, nourishing of human capital, provision of basic necessities of life etc. Democracy upholds economic facilitations and Kazakhstan has been rated among the top world countries for food supplies, employments and social networking. The modern democracy is the champion of human rights and Kazakhstan enjoys great repute of humanitarian assistance and service of humanity at large. Its national security doctrine has never been compromised on this particular issue. Humans are superiors and protected under the centuries old traditions of Kazakhstan already enshrined into its prevailing political system.

Modern democracy depends upon liberalization process and fortunately, Kazakhstan has been in the mainstream of economic liberalization, privatization, immense socio-economic development, gradual but permanent politicization and democratization process, initiation of effective judicial reforms, institutionalization of corruption free practices, good governance and last but not least start of e-government to establish a credible contact with general people to remove their worries and genuine concerns in the country. Elections, political system and democracy are the modern "trinity" of human survival, protection of basic human rights, freedom of expression, socio-economic prosperity, and qualitative life and last but not least, people's prosperity and the Republic of Kazakhstan is the real hub of socio-economic prosperity, human progression and productivity. It is the easiest and smoothest way for power-sharing and gross-root participation in any modern democracy. To conclude the pragmatic constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, its responsible but versatile political parties, modern & vibrant but accountable media, diversified and dynamic society and its various actors and transparent organs of the state including the central election commission are the real guarantors of the free, fair and transparent parliament elections 2021.

Competitive, alternative, interactive, regular and meaningful elections guarantee socio-economic stability and sustainability and political mellowness wherein people are the real king-makers in a political race to win support for gaining majority in the elections. Being prominent regional expert of Kazakhstan & CIS I owe that the Republic of Kazakhstan is the real cradle of democracy and upcoming parliament election 2021 would a giant leap towards greater community development and achieving long awaited dreams of sustained spells of socio-economic prosperity and political manifestation.

Bumpy ride to peace in Afghanistan

Iqbal Khan

Intra-Afghan talks began in Doha on September 12 as an "Action Point" of the US-Taliban Agreement of February 29. Substantive talks haven't yet begun, both sides are struggling to converge on to the norms and format of talks

PAKISTAN'S efforts for durable and permanent peace in Afghanistan have received wider recognition. Knowing well the inherent powerful fault lines of the peace process, Pakistani leadership has also been cautioning the world especially the US about the role of spoilers like India. Pakistan has appealed to all neighbours of Afghanistan to play their role to ongoing bring back stability and progress to Afghanistan and the entire region. Journey to Afghan peace is up for a bumpy ride. All realistic assessments point towards bleak prospects of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan—at least in immediate time-frame. While Americans could soon become indifferent, Pakistan may have to confront a long-term problem at hand handle. Former Prime Minister of Afghanistan Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's three days visit to Pakistan marked the revival of contact. As an erstwhile Mujahideen leader, he has the reputation of an Afghan leader having friendly disposition towards Pakistan. This was the second high-level visit from Afghanistan in recent

weeks. Earlier, Dr Abdullah Abdullah, the chief of Afghan High Peace Council, visited Pakistan in September. Hekmatyar belongs to the exclusive club of veteran Afghan resistance leadership who at the prime of their youth left their studies to struggle against Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. He symbolizes the agony and pain of his generation, many of his 'Comrades at Arms' have left for their heavenly abode without seeing the end of turmoil in their country.

Landmark event of the visit was his Public Talk at premier think-tank of Pakistan, Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, where he outlined his vision of Afghanistan's future, charted the challenges and pointed towards a viable way forward. Former Premier of Afghanistan said, "The only durable solution for peace in the Afghanistan lies in withdrawal of US forces and establishment of a non-aligned, independent and sovereign government by the Afghan representatives". He also urged India to "settle the Kashmir dispute according to wishes of Kashmiri people". During the visit, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar held talks with Pakistani national leadership, including President, Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. He discussed several issues, including the peace push, Afghan refugees, bilateral trade and student scholarships, with the Pakistani leadership. He praised Pakistan by saying that getting the Taliban to the negotiating table without Islamabad's backing was not possible. "I am happy that Pakistan has adopted a new policy, supporting the peace process, and reducing the tension between the two neighbours," he said.

As supreme leader of Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan, he announced starting separate negotiations with the Afghan Taliban to help bring peace to the war-torn country. "We have decided to start our own negotiations with the Taliban. First, it would be between the Taliban and Hizb-e-Islami, and then all other political parties will join us," Hekmatyar announced.

Hekmatyar said Afghan President Ashraf Ghani wants to remain in power, that constitutes "a big hurdle in [the progress of ongoing] intra-Afghan dialogue." He accused Ghani of not consulting with political leaders before starting talks with the insurgents. "We support the peace agreement signed between the US and the Taliban despite reservations," he said.

However, "Peace in Afghanistan cannot be achieved without bringing all stakeholders on board," he added. Hekmatyar criticized India and Iran, saying these were the only two states supporting the Ghani administration. "Iran supports the Kabul government as it has problems with the US, while India supports Ghani because of its issues with Pakistan," he said, while urging foreign powers to stop fighting proxy wars in Afghanistan.

Intra-Afghan talks began in Doha on September 12 as an "Action Point" of the US-Taliban Agreement of February 29. Substantive talks haven't yet begun, both sides are struggling to converge on to the norms and format of talks.

Lorne Cook reported for the, The Associated Press that "NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters on October 21 that the military alliance will not leave Afghanistan until security conditions allow, even as some US troops might be hoping to be back home in time for Christmas".

On October 19, the US special envoy to Afghanistan warned that "distressingly high" levels of violence, notably in the Taliban stronghold of Helmand province threaten to derail peace talks. The US stands committed to withdraw all foreign forces from Afghanistan by July 2021. In return, the Taliban pledged to prevent terrorist groups from using the Afghan soil for attacks, and promised to seek reconciliation with other Afghan groups. Reduction in violence is the latest American buzz word that implies Taliban should stop fighting while the Afghan National Security Forces and the US led occupation forces should keep brow beating Taliban, with impunity and in clear violation of February 29, 2020 US-Taliban Agreement.

Hekmatyar said it was the requirement of justice that those who have sacrificed for Afghanistan for so many years should have the right to govern the country now. "We have lost one million people in the war. We have six million refugees and over three million internally-displaced people. We cannot tolerate foreign forces anymore on our land to kill our innocent people," he said. He said the US has been defeated in Afghanistan without achieving any goals and considers the corrupt and incompetent Kabul government the main reason for its failure. It will be a mistake if the US now adopts another policy other

than leaving Afghanistan, he added.

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

Hekmatyar said unfortunately some countries think a gap will be created once the US forces leave Afghanistan which they will be able to fill. He hoped the Americans would not repeat the deadly mistake of the Soviets who established their puppet government in Kabul before leaving Afghanistan.

While talking about the current situation in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, Hekmatyar said that India should learn from the defeat of Soviet Union and NATO in Afghanistan, which proves force alone cannot resolve any issue. "I condemn atrocities and barbarism against innocent people in Kashmir and other parts of the world," he said. "The Kashmir issue cannot be resolved by force. India should resolve it as per the will of Kashmiri people."

During his meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan on October 20, Hekmatyar appreciated Pakistan's positive role in facilitating the Afghan peace process. He also thanked Pakistan for its long-standing contribution to the socio-economic development of Afghanistan and for hosting millions of Afghan refugees for more than four decades. Prime Minister, while welcoming the guest, underscored historic bonds of friendship and brotherhood between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Imran Khan also warned against the damaging role of 'spoilers', within and outside Afghanistan, as this could also undermine the peace dividends to be accrued in terms of progress and prosperity of the Afghan people.

Signals from the US side are pretty confusing, it won't be an overstatement to say that it is still keeping its options about staying or leaving open.

— The writer is a freelance columnist; e-mail: Iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com

Briefs

Shaheen reaches career best spot

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Emerging pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi has achieved a career-best spot in the ICC ODI Bowler Rankings, which were released on Wednesday. The 20-year-old has jumped eight places to 16th spot with 621 ranking points to become only the second Pakistan bowler after Mohammad Amir (eighth) to feature inside the top-20. Wahab Riaz after taking five wickets in the Zimbabwe series has now moved to 60th place while Mohammad Hasnain has taken a massive jump from the 202nd position to the 120th spot. Shadab Khan dropped down to 30th, Imad Wasim to 49th, Usman Shinwari to 44th while Hasan Ali to 49th. New Zealand's Trent Boult is at the top spot, while India's Jasprit Bumrah and Afghanistan's Mujeeb-ur-Rehman ranked second and third, respectively. Meanwhile, in batsmen rankings, Pakistan's white-ball skipper Babar Azam has edged closer to the second spot in the ICC ODI Batsman Rankings. He has retained third-ranking but has gained 8 points to rise to 837 points after scoring 221 runs. The 26-year-old now trails behind India's Rohit Sharma by 18 points, while Virat Kohli is ranked number-one on 871 points. Imam-ul-Haq has been dropped to 12th from 11th, Fakhar Zaman to 18th from 21st while Haris Sohail has retained his 33rd spot.

Pak decides advance purchases of vaccines

From Page 01

vaccines on an emergency basis for around 10 million nationals. In its first phase, the vaccines will be made available for elderly citizens and health workers. PM Imran Khan was sought for allowing the inter-ministerial committee for holding negotiations with vaccine makers besides ordering the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) for considering the matter on an emergency basis.

It read that the trials of COVID-19 vaccines have entered into its third phase on the global level and all countries started advance booking for the vaccines expected to be introduced in the first and second quarters of 2021.

The ministry stated in its letter that Pakistan contacted Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, for getting free-of-cost vaccines or its availability on discounted prices. It is expected to get vaccines from Gavi by the end of 2021. It is pertinent to mention here that the matter related to the advance purchases of COVID-19 vaccines was also discussed by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC).

US approves \$600m sale of armed drones to Taiwan

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States plans to sell four armed MQ-9 Reaper drones to Taiwan, the US Department of State announced on Tuesday, in a sale that is likely to further anger China, which claims the self-ruled island as its own. The \$600m deal would be the first such sale since the administration of US President Donald Trump loosened US policy on the export of sophisticated and closely guarded drone technology. The sale supports Taiwan's "continuing efforts to modernize its armed forces and to maintain a credible defensive capability", the State Department said in a statement. It will also help maintain political stability and the military balance in the region, it added. The State Department's formal notification gives the US Congress 30 days to object, but that is unlikely given the broad bipartisan support in Washington for the defence of Taiwan. The drones deal, first reported in mid-October, is the latest in a series of sales of military equipment and weapons sales to Taiwan worth about \$4.2bn, which have included Harpoon anti-ship missiles, air-launched SLAMER cruise missiles, and mobile light rocket launchers.



ISLAMABAD: Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, CGSS & Major Gohar Zia (Retd), Member Board of Experts, CGSS met with Akan Rakhmetullin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan. – DNA

‘Azerbaijan to ensure security of Armenians in Karabakh’

I many times said that all those who live in Nagorno-Karabakh will continue to live there in peace and dignity. Armenians are our citizens. There are thousands of Armenians who live in different parts of Azerbaijan

DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has said that Azerbaijan will ensure safety of Armenians who live in Nagorno-Karabakh in the same speech where he said that the ongoing military operations will stop once Armenian troops are withdrawn from occupied Azerbaijani territories. Aliyev made the remarks in an interview with the Italian newspaper.

"I many times said that all those who live in Nagorno-Karabakh will continue to live there in peace and dignity. Armenians are our citizens. There are thousands of Armenians who live in different parts of Azerbaijan, primarily in Baku, and those Armenians who live in Nagorno-Karabakh can be sure that their security will be provided, their financial situation will be much better," Aliyev said.

He added that these citizens will live much better than the life they live today under the suppression of the junta regime in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Asked if Azerbaijan started to taste the flavour of the victory, Aliyev said: "Our task was to restore the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and we are coming closer to this task." The president added that Azerbaijan was strictly committed to the peaceful settlement talks in the past 30 years, waiting for the restoration of its territorial integrity. Meanwhile, he stressed Armenia's provoking statements and actions in the past couple of years. "So the last one took place on September 27. We had to respond and our response was very sensitive to Armenia. So, when we talk about the victory we did not put in front of us such a target. We wanted to resolve it at the negotiation table. But we were always



ready to do it on the battlefield what we are doing," Aliyev said. Speaking about Russia's position not to intervene in the situation, Aliyev said that being one of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group which created the legal basis for a peaceful solution to the conflict, "mediators must be neutral, no matter how they feel about the situation". "Therefore, the neutrality now which we more

or less see on the ground, I think is the only way how things can happen. Therefore, it was not a kind of a green light for us. We responded to the Armenian attack on September 27 without any 100% understanding who will do what. We just did what we thought was right to defend our country, to defend our people, and to restore justice," Aliyev said. Speaking about Turkey's political and moral support to Azerbaijan, Aliyev described it as very important.

"I many times referred to the fact that this is only political and moral support, but it was sufficient. Because such a strong country as Turkey when openly declares its position on this issue, it also sends the signal to the whole world, that Azerbaijan is doing the right thing. Azerbaijan is restoring its territorial integrity, Azerbaijan is fighting on its territory. We are not aggressors, we are not

attacking other countries. Therefore, this political support which started in the early hours of the clashes and continues up to now is very important for the conflict resolution," said the president. Aliyev denied the presence of any jihadists in the country fighting on the side of Azerbaijan. He added that so far Azerbaijan had presented no evidence proving this. "We can mobilize several times more if we announce the total mobilization. We have modern weapons. We have sophisticated technology. And we have a very high moral spirit. Therefore, there is no need for that," he added. Aliyev said that Azerbaijan had enough evidence about foreigners fighting on the Armenian side. "We know that PKK is there, we know that some terrorists from the Middle East joined the so-called 'army of Nagorno-Karabakh'. Therefore, unfortunately, this issue is absolutely out of the picture."

Italy agrees night-time curfew

DNA

ROME: Italian officials agreed on Wednesday to impose a night-time curfew, joining a slew of European nations in ramping up restrictions in the face of a dramatic surge in coronavirus cases. But the measure, which restricts Italians to their homes between 10:00 pm and 5:00 am, fell short of the kind of rules in force in countries including France, Belgium and Germany. Governments in Europe are struggling to get a hold of a pandemic that has now infected more than 11 million on the continent.

Wednesday saw Russia announce a daily record for cases and deaths, upping pressure on the government only days after President Vladimir Putin said there were no plans for a lockdown. The United States remains the worst-affected country with more than nine million cases and 230,000 deaths. President Donald Trump, who has suffered from the virus, faced off with Joe Biden in a long-awaited election on Tuesday, with tens of millions of mask-wearing Americans streaming to the polls. The virus has transformed the election, with many millions avoiding the queues and the risk of infection by returning postal votes before election day. Trump's handling of the virus has also been under the microscope. With results from crucial battleground states not yet returned, the election was on a knife-edge on Wednesday with neither candidate taking a decisive lead.

Hockey legend Rashid Jr. passes away

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Legend hockey player, former captain Olympian Abdul Rashid Jr. has died at the age of 79. According to sources, he was suffering from kidney disease and was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Islamabad. His funeral prayers will be offered in Bannu. On the demise of Olympian, Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Brigadier Khalid Sajjad Khokhar and Secretary General Olympian Asif Bajwa express grief to his family and prayed for the departed soul. They said that his services will always be remembered. He was considered as the best center forward of his time and was the only legendary athlete to win gold (1968), silver (1972), and bronze (1976) medals in the Olympic games. By the time he retired, he had scored the most 96 international goals for Pakistan. Rashid Jr. was also the manager of the national team that won the 1994 Hockey World Cup. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) also offered condolences for the legend.

CAS sets date for Akmal's ban appeal

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) has reportedly fixed a date for the hearing of banned Pakistani cricketer Umar Akmal's appeal. According to sources, the virtual hearing will be held on December 1. CAS has appointed an adjudicator from the Queen's Council to hear the case and will decide the appeal case, however, no date has been announced. It must be noted that CAS had accepted Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) request to conduct the hearing of Umar Akmal's case virtually. PCB filed an appeal against the reduction in Akmal's ban whereas Akmal appealed for further reduction in his suspension.

Remember, ex-Supreme Court judge Mr. Justice (retd) Faqir Muhammad Khokhar, in his capacity as an independent adjudicator had reduced Akmal's ban to 1.5 years from 3 years. The cricketer was charged under Article 7.5.4 of the PCB Anti-Corruption Code.

Aisam to protest against Macron in Paris Masters

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan's Tennis star, Aisam-ul-Haq has decided to protest peacefully against French President Emmanuel Macron during this week's Paris Masters Tennis tournament. The 40-year-old posted a video message and said that he will be wearing a white armband against the blasphemous publications. He emphasized that he as an athlete has learned to respect all cultures, religions, cultures, faith, and beliefs. He added that freedom of speech doesn't disrespect others' religion. "This peaceful protest is against Macron who, sadly and disappointingly, is endorsing and encouraging this kind of behavior where people are allowed to disre-

spect the religion of Islam and make fun of our Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)," he said. "Islam only preaches the message of peace and love and respect for all the Prophets," he added. "I urge not just Muslim athletes but athletes all over the world who respect other religions - to show solidarity, unity by wearing a white armband and to create awareness that we, as human beings and athletes, we don't disrespect people and countries who disrespect other religions," he concluded. Aisam will play on Wednesday in the first round of the Paris Master's mixed doubles event. He will partner with Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece. The duo will lock horns against Jamie Murray and Neal Skupski of Great Britain.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Faisal Sultan Prime Minister Special Minister Advisor for Health, Secretary Health Amir Ashrif Khawaja and VC Prof. Tanvir Khaliq inaugurating school of Dentistry project of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University. – DNA

Armenia preparing grounds for further attacks against civilians: Presidential aide

Armenian armed forces are shelling with heavy artillery villages of occupied Aghdam region of Azerbaijan. It was obvious in the statement of MFA Armenia that they were paving the ground for new war crimes against Azerbaijani civilians," he wrote on Twitter

DNA

BAKU: Presidential aide Hikmat Hajiyev has said that Armenia is preparing grounds for further indiscriminate attacks against the Azerbaijani civilians. Hajiyev made the remarks to the Armenian Foreign Ministry's earlier statement that "in case of existential threat created for the Artsakh people and the Artsakh government, the defence army has an integral right to defend its population and to counter-attack the enemy". "By such bellicose statement and based on fabricated narrative MFA Armenia prepares the ground for indiscriminate attacks against Azerbaijani civilians. Armenia as a state sponsoring terrorism demonstrated its true

face by firing Smerch and SCUD ballistic missiles to Ganja, Barda etc," Hajiyev wrote on his official Twitter account on. On November 4, Hajiyev reported heavy artillery shelling by Armenian troops in villages of Azerbaijan's occupied Aghdam region. "Armenian armed forces are shelling with heavy artillery villages of occupied Aghdam region of Azerbaijan. It was obvious in the statement of MFA Armenia that they were paving the ground for new war crimes against Azerbaijani civilians," he wrote on Twitter. On November 3, Hajiyev posted on Twitter the video of unexploded white phosphorus ordnance being neutralized by ANAMA experts. "Armenia continues to use white phosphorus projectiles against civilians in Tartar region



of Azerbaijan. Unexploded phosphorus ordnance was neutralized by ANAMA," he said. "Weapons containing white phosphorus are extremely toxic when inhaled, ingested or absorbed through burned areas and can have severe negative impacts on human health. Such weapons

cause severe, partial to full-thickness thermal and chemical burns. Armenia used phosphorus UXOs [unexploded ordnance]," he warned. The presidential aide also tweeted: "Attacks on civilians or civilian objects as well as on forests or other kinds of plant cover White Phosphorus shells prohibited under the Protocol III on Prohibitions or Restrictions on Use of Incendiary Weapons of UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons of 1980." He added that reconciliation with Armenia is not going to be easy. "Reconciliation is not going to be easy, and it will require a lot of effort. But we are ready to bring investments/our soft power to Karabakh. Azerbaijan is a multi-cultural society - Armenians living elsewhere in our country with no

problems," Hajiyev tweeted. Under the tweet, Hajiyev posted his interview with The Telegraph headlined "Azerbaijan claims to have retaken enough land in Nagorno-Karabakh war to resettle 500,000 Azeris". Armenian armed forces launched a large-scale operation in the front-line zone on September 27 at 6 am, shelling the positions of the Azerbaijani army from large-calibre weapons, mortars, and artillery installations of various calibres. Armenia has been targeting Azerbaijan's densely populated areas and infrastructure projects. Armenia launched missile attacks on Azerbaijani cities and regions - Ganja, Barda, Mingachevir, Khizi, Absheron, Tartar, Gabala, Kurdamir, Siyazan, Goranboy, Aghdam among others.

Briefs

US
withdraws
from Paris
agreement

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: After a three-year delay, the US has become the first nation in the world to formally withdraw from the Paris climate agreement. President Trump announced the move in June 2017, but UN regulations meant that his decision only takes effect today, the day after the US election. The US could re-join it in future, should a president choose to do so. The Paris deal was drafted in 2015 to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change. It aims to keep the global temperature rise this century well below 2C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5C. The delay is down to the complex rules that were built into the Paris agreement to cope with the possibility that a future US president might decide to withdraw the country from the deal. Previous attempts to put together a global pact on climate change had foundered because of internal US politics. The Clinton administration was unable to secure Senate backing for the Kyoto Protocol, agreed in 1997. So in the run up to the Paris climate talks, President Obama's negotiators wanted to ensure that it would take time for the US to get out if there was a change in leadership.

Ethiopia
declares
emergency
in Tigray

FOREIGN DESK

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia's government has declared a state of emergency in the northern Tigray region after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed accused the opposition-led local government of attacking federal troops and trying to "loot" military assets. A statement issued by Abiy's office on Wednesday said the Federal Council of Ministers made the declaration "recognising that illegal and violent activities within the National Regional State of Tigray are endangering the constitution and constitutional order". "Our defence forces ... have been ordered to carry out their mission to save the country. The final point of the red line has been crossed. Force is being used as the last measure to save the people and the country," Abiy said in a social media post. Military operations in the region have commenced, Abiy's spokeswoman Billene Seyoum told the Reuters news agency on Wednesday, without giving further details. In September, Tigray held regional elections in defiance of the federal government, which called the vote "illegal". The row has escalated in recent days with both sides accusing each other of plotting a military conflict.

Nigeria fire
displaces
thousands

WEB DESK

ABUJA: A fire at an internally displaced persons camp in northern Nigeria left at least 7,200 people without shelter, authorities said early on Wednesday. A total of 1,200 tents were burned in the fire at the camp in Gajiram village in Borno state, according to Yabawa Kolo, an official from Nigeria's Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). Officials said the incident, which occurred last week, was the latest in a "series of the annual fire outbreaks" at the camp, reported on the online news website called the Premium Times. The camp includes those who escaped the violence of the Boko Haram armed group. Kolo said the government sent humanitarian aid to the camp's residents. Five children were killed and 7,457 people lost their tents in a fire last year at a refugee camp in Borno state, reported Anadolu Agency. Armed groups have forced more than two million people to flee their homes since 2009 when Boko Haram began an armed campaign. Some 30,000 people have been killed in the conflict and millions forced from their homes.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sefik Dzaferovic planting saplings at E-7 Bosnia and Herzegovina Park after its inauguration. - DNA

PM's relief package to boost exports, says Iftikhar Malik

Hailing the package, Iftikhar Ali Malik said here Wednesday that it was long awaited demand of the entire business community which the prime minister had fulfilled. He said 50 per cent record reduction in power tariff would instantly address

LAHORE: The epoch making package offered by Prime Minister Imran Khan is bound to boost export, poised to promote small and medium enterprises, promise to strength national economy and bring sigh of relief and solace to business community badly hit by globally deadly virus pandemic Covid 19. Hailing the package, President SAARC Chamber and Chairman United Business Group Iftikhar Ali Malik said here Wednesday that it was long awaited demand of the entire business community which the prime minister

had fulfilled. He said 50 per cent record reduction in power tariff would instantly address the most burning issue of high cost of doing business compared to neighbouring countries. He said now traders and entrepreneurs could effectively compete global markets and boost export worldwide. Iftikhar Ali Malik said the package would promote industries in the country that had suffered losses in the past due to high power tariff. He said for next three years, all industries on additional usage of electricity would be provided

25 per cent relief on the basis of their previous bills. He said an end to peak-hour system for commercial users, with provision of uniform electricity rates round the clock would eliminate the prevailing disparity in doing of business. He said a strong infrastructure of energy was vital to help industries grow and compete with global market. He said that now Pakistan would not lag behind India and Bangladesh in terms of exports. He said that industrialisation would create ample job opportunities for jobless people. He

regretted that the contracts signed with power generation companies during previous tenures resulted in production of high-cost power which had bad effects on industrial sector. The SAARC CCI president further said major chunk of the economies of Japan, China, France and several other developed countries was based on promotion of SME sector and the PM must toe the same policy to attain sustainable economic stability on sound footings which he added was also pre requisite for political sta-

bility. During the pandemic of COVID-19, economy was fractured, however, the PM successful strategy steered the country out of crisis with bare minimum casualties, he added. He said taxation be totally streamlined with broadening of tax base instead of levying double taxation on existing tax payers. He said that United Business Group would fully support the government for brining non tax payers into tax net which, he added, was need of the hour without which the country could not make progress. - APP

Libyan factions agree on implementation of ceasefire deal

WEB DESK

TRIPOLI: Libya's rival military factions have agreed on a plan for implementing a ceasefire deal reached last month, the United Nations' acting envoy to Libya Stephanie Williams has said. The announcement on Tuesday came one day after a meeting of a joint military commission to discuss the implementation of the deal opened on home soil for the first time. The meeting followed a "permanent" ceasefire agreement signed by the warring factions in Switzerland last month, intended to pave the way towards a political solution to the conflict. A major oil producer, Libya has been wracked by violence since a NATO-backed uprising in 2011 overthrew and killed longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi. It has since been dominated by armed groups and divided between two bitterly opposed administrations: the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) based in the capital Tripoli, and a rival

administration in the east, backed by renegade military commander, Khalifa Haftar. Haftar, backed by Egypt, Russia and the United Arab Emirates, launched an offensive on Tripoli in April 2019 but was beaten back in June by the GNA with military support from Turkey. The warring factions returned to the negotiating table in September in UN-supported talks held in Morocco, Egypt and Switzerland. The latest talks are taking place in the remote desert oasis of Ghadames, some 465km (290 miles) southwest of Tripoli and near Libya's borders with Algeria and Tunisia - far from the power bases of either side. In the meeting, the two sides agreed to "establish a military subcommittee to oversee the withdrawal of military forces to their respective bases and the departure of foreign forces from the front lines," Williams said. The commission also decided to "meet in Sirte as soon as possible" and make the central coastal city its headquarters, Williams added.

'Armenia must be held accountable for its crimes'

Armenia, grossly violating the requirements of international humanitarian law, makes armed strikes against civilians, children, women, and the elderly, said Azerbaijani ombudsman

DNA

BAKU: Aggressor Armenia, which has held the Azerbaijani historical and ancient lands under occupation for almost 30 years, has committed numerous war crimes, massacres, and genocide during this period, Azerbaijani Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) Sabina Aliyeva said in an interview with Trend news agency on Nov. 3. "This country demonstrates its fascist and terrorist essence even today," Aliyeva said. "First of all, Armenia, grossly violating the requirements of international humanitarian law, makes armed strikes against civilians, children, women, and the elderly." "To be more precise, the Armenian Armed Forces, continue their war crimes, violating the humanitarian ceasefire three times, using prohibited ammunition, missile systems and heavy artillery, fired on settlements and civilian infrastructure located far beyond the conflict zone," ombudsman added. "As a result, there are numerous casualties among civilians, as well as massive destruction," Aliyeva said. "Armenia is also targeting religious and cultural monuments, shrines, and



universal values, which are part of the Azerbaijani historical and cultural heritage." "In this regard, the attacks on ancient Ganja city with ballistic missiles caused great damage to cultural sites related to the world cultural heritage," the ombudsman said. Thus, Aliyeva emphasized that the international humanitarian law, including the 1954 UNESCO Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the IV Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, the 1992 European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage and other international documents were grossly violated. "In general, these criminal acts, terror-

ist acts, a gross violation of international humanitarian law witnessed by the international community, in particular the violation of the provisions of the IV Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, testifies to the neglectful and disrespectful attitude of the Armenian political leadership to the norms of international law," Aliyeva said. "From the very first days, we conducted missions to investigate the facts of terror in Naftalan, Tartar, Ganja, Barda and also visited the relatives of the dead and wounded and met with the wounded," ombudsman said. "We prepared five reports based on the factual materials collected during the field investigations and presented them to the international community," Aliyeva said. "Currently, we are preparing the sixth report in connection with the numerous human casualties and destruction caused by the Armenian Armed Forces' another shelling of densely populated areas of Barda district by using prohibited cluster shells," the ombudsman said. "This report will also be presented to the international community."

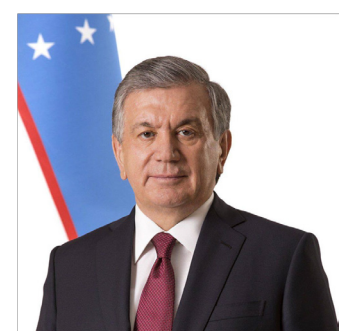
Hydrometeorology is important for ensuring our security: Mirziyoyev

The material and technical base of the Center for Hydrometeorological Service is outdated, and the economic profitability is low. In particular, over the past 9 months, the center was able to cover only 6 percent of expenses from its own income

MONITORING DESK

TASHKENT: President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a meeting on the priority tasks of improving the activities of the domestic hydrometeorological service. The hydrometeorological service is important for many areas, such as agriculture, energy, transport, ecology. But due to the lack of proper attention over the years, this area in Uzbekistan has lagged behind the times. Upper-air observations have not been conducted since 1995, which reduces the reliability of weather data. According to international standards, there should be 4,000 stations on the territory of our country, but in reality there are only 335. The material and technical base of the Center for

Hydrometeorological Service is outdated, and the economic profitability is low. In particular, over the past 9 months, the center was able to cover only 6 percent of expenses from its own income. Hydrometeorology is one of the areas important for ensuring our security. Today the main task is to change the quality of services in the system," said Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The meeting presented a presentation on the phased commercialization of the center's services. Today meteorological data is provided free of charge to 35 departments, including about 20 commercial organizations. The cost of services is lower than the cost and has not been revised for 15 years. The head of state stressed the importance of revising prices and expanding the coverage of paid



services. The presence of many unused features is indicated. For example, next year, on the basis of a public-private partnership, one solar power plant will be built in Karmaninsky and Nurabad districts, and in 2022 - three solar and one wind power plants. These stations will use the services of the meteorological service to plan

their power generation. In addition, it is possible to provide paid services to Internet services for weather forecasting, clusters and foreign scientific institutions. The Hydrometeorological Center stores observational data for the last 100 years. That's 18 million sheets. The meeting set the task of fully digitizing this data. The deficiencies in the material and technical support of the meteorological service are considered in detail. It was noted that only 14 out of 70 weather stations are automated. The weather forecast is made using 10-year-old software, which negatively affects the promptness of preparing data on weather and natural disasters. It was emphasized that the existing three weather radars - in Tashkent, Samarkand and Nukus - are not enough. In this regard, it was

instructed to install locators in Bukhara, Navoi, Surkhandarya and Namangan regions in the coming years, automate all meteorological stations, build new stations and posts. The implementation of these measures will improve the quality and efficiency of the meteorological service. Ushydromet is the regional center of the World Meteorological Organization. Stressing the importance of preserving this status, the head of state instructed to organize a regional hub in Samarkand in 2022 to collect, process and store backup data. Meteorological data is one of the important factors in ensuring the efficiency of agriculture. Overseas enterprises of the agro-industrial complex are provided with more than 20 types of services such as determination of plant moisture, precipitation, soil temperature.

Palestinian
official banned
from Al-Aqsa

DNA

JERUSALEM: Israel has banned the deputy director of the Jerusalem Waqf Department from entering Al-Aqsa Mosque compound for six months. "I have received an Israeli order banning me from Al-Aqsa Mosque for six months," Sheikh Najeh Bakirat told Anadolu Agency on Wednesday. He said the Israeli authorities have given no reason for the ban. Bakirat noted that Israeli police and intelligence had raided his office last week, citing a threat to Israel's security. Israel had banned Bakirat from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque for 23 times since 2001 and detained him 13 times. "I reject this Israeli ban order," he said. "This is an Israeli attempt to empty Al-Aqsa Mosque and disrupt the work of the Waqf department in Jerusalem," he added. Al-Aqsa Mosque is the world's third-holiest site for Muslims. Jews call the area the Temple Mount, claiming it was the site of two Jewish temples in ancient times. Israel occupied East Jerusalem, where Al-Aqsa is located, during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. It annexed the entire city in 1980 in a move never recognized by the international community.

Assad regime
attacks kill 7
civilians

WEB DESK

IDLIB: Seven civilians were killed and 13 others injured in regime artillery shelling of civilian areas on Wednesday in Syria's northwestern Idlib province, according to the White Helmets civil defense agency. The White Helmets said regime attacks left four civilians dead in Ariha city, two in Kafarya village and one in Idlib city. Another 13 civilians were wounded by the shelling and were transferred to nearby hospitals. In May 2017, Turkey, Russia and Iran announced that they had reached an agreement to establish a de-escalation zone in Idlib, as part of the Astana talks on Syria. Despite subsequent understandings that were concluded for the ceasefire in Idlib, the most recent of which was last January, the regime forces and their allies continued their attacks on the region. Since January 2019, the attacks have killed more than 1,800 civilians and displaced more than 1.94 million people who fled to relatively calm areas or close to the Turkish border. On March 5, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russia's Vladimir Putin announced that they had reached a ceasefire agreement in Idlib, which took effect the next day.

Beijing
deny Nepali
opposition's
accusations

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China and Nepal denied the accusations of Nepali opposition legislators who said Beijing had seized territory along the Himalayan border between the two nations. Jeevan Bahadur Shahi, a provincial legislator of the opposition Nepali Congress party, said Chinese troops had crossed the border and built nine concrete structures about one kilometre (0.6 miles) inside Nepal, at Limi in the district of Humla bordering Tibet. Shahi, who represents the area, told Reuters that China did not object when Nepali villagers built a road in the sparsely populated area 10 years ago. "They are now saying the small valley belongs to them," Shahi said. The claims were first reported on Tuesday by London's Daily Telegraph newspaper, which quoted Shahi and another Nepali politician as saying China had annexed dozens of hectares from the Himalayan nation bordering Tibet, beginning in May. China seized control of Tibet in 1950 in what it describes as a "peaceful liberation". "It is not true that China has encroached our land and had constructed buildings there," said Sewa Lamsal, a spokeswoman for Nepal's foreign ministry, but she did not elaborate. In Beijing, a foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin, dismissed the report of China seizing territory from Nepal as a "completely unfounded rumour". - APP

Briefs

Lahore still a corona hotspot: Dr Yasmin

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid said on Wednesday the majority of the coronavirus cases in Punjab are being reported from Lahore. "Lahore has always been Punjab's coronavirus hotspot ever since the pandemic hit Pakistan and even now, most [people] testing positive are from Lahore," she said while speaking to a private channel. Over 200 neighbourhoods in Lahore are under smart lockdowns. Dr Rashid said that the virus hot spots are continuously changing in Lahore. She said that a total of 1.6 million tests have been conducted so far. Across Punjab, smart lockdowns have been imposed in 44 areas in Multan, 47 in Rawalpindi, 16 in Sahiwal, 24 in Sargodha, 37 in Bahawalpur and 17 in Dera Ghazi Khan. Another 34 localities in Faisalabad, 35 in Bhakur 35 and 14 areas in Gujranwala are under a smart lockdown. The federal government said it is closely monitoring Lahore "as every second case is being reported there". People have been instructed to wear face masks every time they go out, avoid crowded places and practice social distancing. In the last 24 hrs, 1,313 new cases were reported and 18 people died across the country. Nearly 14,700 active cases have been recorded.

Nandipur corruption case referred to FIA

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday referred the Nandipur power project corruption case to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Taking to social networking website, Twitter, Federal Minister for Energy Omar Ayub Khan announced that he directed to refer the case pertaining to Rs 80 billion diversion of funds by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government in Nandipur power plant earmarked for PSO fuel payment to construction and covering losses in fuel to the FIA. He asked the FIA to bring all those involved in the mega corruption case to justice at the earliest. Earlier on March 18, the accountability court had rejected the acquittal plea of former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf in the Nandipur power project reference. The verdict had been pronounced by AC Judge Azam Khan. The court after rejecting the acquittal plea of the PPP stalwart, ordered to continue the trial in the reference. Accused could not be given relief under the amended laws of the NAB, the court had said in its verdict. The former prime minister had filed an acquittal plea under the new amended national accountability laws. = DNA

NCOC proposes micro, smart lockdowns

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), while expressing reservations over continuous increase in coronavirus deaths and cases in the country, has on Wednesday proposed to impose micro and smart lockdowns. Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar chaired the NCOC meeting which held detailed review of all hotspot areas and measures to control spread of the pandemic. The members told that violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) in markets, marriage halls and unnecessary public gatherings is increasing COVID-19. It was told that the epidemic should be controlled by micro and smart lockdowns in hotspot areas.

Indonesian envoy meets ASEAN committee chairman



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Mulawarman Tugio, S.H., L.L.M. paid a courtesy call on the Chairman ASEAN Committee in Islamabad (ACI), Dato Mahmud Saidin, High Commissioner of Brunei, at Embassy of Brunei Darussalam, Islamabad. Both the dignitaries spent some time together and discussed matters of mutual interest. DNA

'BRI very concerned about Pakistan's environment'

By the end of 2019, China had participated in more than 160 climate projects in countries along BRI, involving wind power, solar power, hydropower, biomass power, geothermal and other types of projects

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Institute of Green Finance (IIGF) of China Central University of Finance and Economics (CUFE) released BRI climate finance report which emphatically analyzes several cases of CPEC projects, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. According to the report, to help the countries along BRI enhance their capacity of mitigating and

adapting to climate change, China has carried out climate projects. By the end of 2019, China had participated in more than 160 climate projects in countries along BRI, involving wind power, solar power, hydropower, biomass power, geothermal and other types of projects. Among them, several projects in Pakistan are mentioned, such as 900 MW Photovoltaic Power Plant (on Ground) in Punjab Province, Dawood Wind Power Project, 30MW PV Plant, N-J Hy-

dropower Station, Karot Hydropower Station. Of the 50 projects listed in the report, 9 are CPEC projects. Liu Huixin, the Research fellow, added that BRI is very concerned about Pakistan's climate and environment. China has invested in renewable energy projects to ease local energy shortage while also protecting sustainable development. The report also mentioned the challenges which Chinese investors are facing.

The main problems encountered by climate change projects in this region include the coordination between the investing enterprises and the BRI countries, the market competition for the projects, as well as the risk assessment system and financing methods for project investment. Professor Wang Yao, the dean of IIGF, said that including Pakistan, China's climate investment and financing in the countries along BRI has achieved many fruits. Meanwhile, there are many cas-

es that have been successfully implemented, which contribute to the local economy, society, environment, and climate change response. "In the future, China will establish standards for climate investment and financing to guide more projects under BRI, increase investment in renewable energy projects, gradually abandon investment in fossil energy, and promote low-carbon transformation of local industries," Wang said.

Matiari-Lahore HVDC line being completed

DNA

BEIJING: Recently, one of the key projects of CPEC, Matiari to Lahore +660 kV High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Transmission Line Project, has almost been completed as its Lahore converter station DC bipolar finished open line test, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The 886 kilometers of transmission line runs from the southwest to the northeast of Pakistan, passing through the provinces of Sindh and Punjab. It is the first +660 kV DC project overseas of the State Grid Company of China (SGCC) with completely independent intellectual property rights, and all its economic and technical indicators are at the international leading level. Due to the old circuits and inadequate power transmission channels, it is difficult to transport the abundant power resources in southern Pakistan to the north, where people suffer from a severe shortage of electricity. The change came in 2015. In the summer of 2015, a severe heat wave struck southern Pakistan and caused the deaths of about 2,000 people from dehydration and heat stroke. The power outage was one of the main reasons for this tragedy. The same year, China and Pakistan agreed to form a '1+4' cooperation structure with the CPEC at the center and Gwadar Port, energy, transport infrastructure and industrial cooperation being the four key areas to achieve common development.

Khusro lauds EU's assistance

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Economic Affairs, Makhdoom Khusro Bakhtyar on Wednesday reviewed the on-going and pipeline European Union-Funded projects worth Euro 493 million and 108 million respectively in Pakistan. He chaired a high-level portfolio review meeting of European Union-Funded projects in Pakistan, said a press release issued here. The minister appreciated the humanitarian assistance provided by EU during floods and support for temporarily displaced persons, and most recently for COVID-19 pandemic. He also appreciated the MoU of Multi Indicative Program (MIP) 2014-2020 for Pakistan amounting 618 million including development cooperation in rural areas development, good governance, human rights, and rule of law in the country. He laid stress to streamline SDGs objectives and European Consensus on Development 2017. The minister underlined the importance for opening up the new bilateral priority areas in the sector of agriculture, industrialization, digitalization, and climate change for next MIP 2021-2027. He said that Pakistan needed an inclusive economic growth and strengthening SMEs in post-COVID scenario.

Motorway rape suspect on judicial remand

DNA

LAHORE: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday sent Shafqat, one of the two key suspects in the Lahore-motorway gang rape case to jail on 14-day judicial remand. The Lahore-motorway gang rape suspect was produced before Lahore's anti-terrorism court by police to record a statement before the magistrate. The suspect recorded his statement before the magistrate after an application seeking permission to record the statement of the suspect under Section 164 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) was filed with the ATC. The court sent Shafqat to jail on 14-day judicial remand and directed to produce him before the court on November 18. On October 28, the Anti-Terrorism Court had extended physical remand of Shafqat.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Maldives Farzana Zahir presenting her credentials to the President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi. - DNA

Saudi Arab eases curbs on foreign workers

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia will remove several key restrictions on foreign workers in an overhaul of the kingdom's controversial labor policies, part of a plan to attract overseas talent and increase job market mobility. Non-Saudis will no longer need their employer's permission to change jobs, travel abroad or leave the country permanently, according to Sattam Alharbi, a deputy minister at the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development. "Runaway" reports that employers can file against foreign workers who stop showing up to their jobs - effectively rendering them fugitives - will be abolished and replaced with a procedure for ending their contract, Alharbi said in an interview with Bloomberg on Wednesday. The new rules will come into effect on March 14 and apply to all foreign workers in the private sector, regardless of salary level, he said. The changes could have a dramatic effect on Saudi Arabia's labor market and the lives of the 10.5 million foreign workers who make up about a third of the kingdom's population. The current "kafala" or "sponsorship" system, used for expatriates in Gulf Arab countries for decades, has been criticized by human rights groups as a form of indentured servitude. Some economists argue that the system also entrenches a practice of private employers hiring cheaper and more easily-controlled foreign workers who enjoy scant protections, even as Saudi unemployment rises. "These changes are not small changes - it's huge," Alharbi said, explaining that the government had worked on the overhaul for two years. "We aim to achieve more inclusion for Saudis, attract talent, improve the working conditions, make Saudi Arabia's labor market more dynamic and productive." - DNA

RCCI assures full support to PIA in revival

CEO Arshad Malik said that the financial restructuring of the national airline, new fleet of aircrafts, training of staff and new destinations for flights are being given priority

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Chief Executive Air Marshal retired Arshad Malik paid a visit to the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Wednesday. The CEO was accompanied by Chief Commercial Officer Ali Tahir, Regional Coordinator Sher Ali, and Passenger Sales Manager Waqas Malik. On this occasion President RCCI Nasir Mirza, Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shahraiz A Malik, former presidents, members of the executive committee and chamber members were also present. CEO Arshad Malik said that the fi-

ancial restructuring of the national airline, new fleet of aircrafts, training of staff and new destinations for flights are being given priority. In 2019, PIA went into gross profit for the first time in eight years. The most important challenge at the moment is the old debt of

four hundred and fifty billion, for which a financial plan is being worked out. The PIA is facing serious challenges due to the Corona epidemic and licensing issue. It is the combined responsibility of all entities, including the business community, to come

forward and play their due role in rescuing the national airline from crisis. The Rawalpindi Chamber's efforts to promote trade activities and improve Pakistan's image abroad are commendable. PIA will also provide discounts for the convenience of Rawalpindi

Chamber members. The Chamber will also be provided other incentives, including special discounts and Corporate Package for Gwadar Business Conference and exhibitions in Afghanistan. On the occasion, Chamber President Nasir Mirza said that PIA is our national airline and also our national identity all over the world. The business community will play its part in overcoming this challenge and assured full support in this regard. He said that the chamber organizes exhibitions and business conferences abroad and inside Pakistan. We always prefer to travel by national airline only. He also gave a briefing to CEO Arshad Malik on the ongoing activities of the Chamber.

