



Islamabad POST

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Pakistan, Iran vow to make joint efforts for peace

Govt will topple before year end, claims Maryam



France voicing biased appeals on Karabakh



Briefs

Pak heading in right direction

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi says Pakistan is heading in the right direction, showing positive indicators in various sectors, including economy, law and order and social development. Addressing ICMA Convocation in Islamabad on Wednesday, he said current account deficit has been successfully tackled and exports of the country are on the rise despite Covid-19. The President urged the business enterprises to honestly pay their taxes for national development. He said digitization of economy will lead to white economy.

Govt to topple before year end

DNA

GILGIT: PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz believes the PTI government will go home before the end of this year. The PML-N leader said this while addressing a rally in Gilgit-Baltistan on Wednesday. She criticised Prime Minister Imran Khan, saying he is obsessed with exacting revenge on Nawaz Sharif. "Imran Khan victimised the PML-N but Nawaz stood his ground and even saw his daughter go to jail," Maryam said. "The people of GB know that the one who doesn't respect mothers and sisters doesn't deserve your vote." She said the prime minister doesn't know what is happening in the country.

Maryam's speeches show frustration

FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Syed Shibli Faraz says frustration in PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz's speeches shows that they have conceded defeat in Gilgit-Baltistan elections. Reacting to Maryam Nawaz's assertions, he said it seems strange that on one hand, these people are busy in electioneering in GB, while on the other hand, they are talking against democracy.

NCOC suggests strict steps to curb virus

Forum decided that on 16 November the Federal Minister for Education would chair a special meeting at NCOC with provincial education ministers

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Wednesday called for banning large public gatherings and enhance restrictions in high risk areas due to COVID-19 resurge amid rising possible second wave of the pandemic. The NCOC meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar reviewed the epidemic curve data and disease prevalence in country including education sector. The Forum was told that the disease had increased three fold since the NCOC recommended to ban large public gatherings and outdoor activities on October 12 and November 3 to the National Coordination Committee (NCC) for its final decision. However consensus by all stakeholders is awaited. The Forum was briefed that there is an increasing positivity ratio in

1,708 new virus cases reported

ISLAMABAD: The total active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan on Wednesday were recorded 21,098 as 1,708 more people tested positive for the deadly virus during the last 24 hours. Twenty one corona patients, 20 of whom were under treatment in hospital and one out of hospital died on Tuesday, according to the latest update issued by the National command and Operation Center (NCOC). No COVID affected person was on ventilator in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and Balochistan, while 197 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in Pakistan, out of 1,855 allocated for COVID-19 patients. Some 31,989 tests were conducted across the country on Tuesday, including 9,273 in Sindh, 11,388 in Punjab, 3,877 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 5,453 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). - DNA

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Pakistan, Iran vow to make joint efforts for peace

The PM underscored the need to work closely for promoting peace and security in the region



A.M.BHATTI

Qureshi, Zarif discuss regional issues

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said Pakistan and Iran enjoy close and cordial relation and the two countries must further strengthen bilateral cooperation for mutual benefit. Talking to Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Javad Zarif in Islamabad on Wednesday, he also emphasized the need for enhanced bilateral cooperation with special emphasis on bilateral trade and economic relations. He underscored the need to work closely for promoting

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China to Pakistan, Nong Rong calls on Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan. - DNA

Iranian FM Zarif meets COAS

NAVEED MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran met with General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff of the Pakistan Army in GHQ, Rawalpindi. Friendly relations and neighbourliness of the two countries, border and defense affairs, as well as peace and security in the region were discussed during the meeting. A group of political and military officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in the form of a diplomatic delegation, accompanied Dr. Zarif.

Pak-China time-tested friends: PM

The Prime Minister congratulated the Ambassador on his appointment and extended best wishes for a fruitful term

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Nong Rong, the new Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan has called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad on Wednesday. Talking to new Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Nong Rong, he affirmed the time-tested Pakistan-China "All-Weather Strategic Co-operative Partnership". According to details the Prime

Minister congratulated the Ambassador on his appointment and extended best wishes for a fruitful term. The Prime Minister underlined the importance of SEZs, relocation of industry, and enhanced productivity in agriculture sector. During the meeting, mutual support on issues of core national interest for Pakistan and China was reaffirmed. Prime Minister emphasized that energy issues carry a national im-

portant and it is necessary that a consensus is developed among the provinces where a win-win result is achieved for the benefit of the people of Pakistan. Ambassador thanked the Prime Minister for receiving him and assured that China will fully support speedy completion of CPEC projects as well as industrialization in Pakistan and will deepen cooperation with Pakistan in agriculture sector.

Continued on Page 06

Blast leaves several injured in Jeddah

DNA

JEDDAH: Several people were wounded on Wednesday after an explosive device hit a ceremony commemorating the end of World War I at a cemetery in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Al Jazeera reported. According to the report, France's foreign ministry has issued a statement saying that diplomats from Europe, along with the representatives of several countries, were present at the commemoration. "The annual ceremony commemorating the end of World War I at the non-Muslim cemetery in Jeddah, attended by several consulates, including that of France, was the target of an IED [improvised explosive device] attack this morning, which injured several people," the French ministry said.

Pakistan extends condolences over Erekat's demise

The Spokesperson said Dr. Saeb Erekat was a champion of the Palestinian cause

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has extended deep condolences over the sad demise of the eminent Palestinian leader and negotiator, Dr. Saeb Erekat. In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said we offer our profound sympathies and heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. He said we fully share the sorrow and grief of our Palestinian brethren and stand by them in this difficult time. The Spokesperson said Dr. Saeb Erekat was a champion of the Palestinian cause who remained in the vanguard of the Palestinian people's legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination. He

said his untiring struggle for peace and human rights will always be remembered. Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said Pakistan reaffirms its steadfast support for the Palestinian cause and remains committed to further deepen its fraternal ties with Palestine. Erekat, a veteran peace negotiator and prominent international spokesman for the Palestinians for more than 30 years, died weeks after testing positive for COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus. The senior Palestinian official's infection was complicated by a history of health issues. He underwent a lung transplant in 2017 and suffered from a weak immune system and a bacterial infection in addition to COVID-19.

Bahrain PM dies aged 84



DNA

MANAMA: Prime minister of Bahrain Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman al Khalifa died on Wednesday, the royal palace announced. The long serving premier was 84-years-old at the time of his death. According to Bahrain News Agency, he passed away at Mayo Clinic Hospital in the United States. The island kingdom's King Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has announced official mourning for a week during which flags will be flown at half-mast. He played a key role in Bahrain's political and economic affairs.

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BRI countries to cooperate against Covid-19: CIE - Page 08

Pak greets Azerbaijan on liberation of territories

"We welcome the recent announcement of cessation of hostilities by the relevant parties," reads the Foreign Office press release

SAIFULLAH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday welcomed the deal signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia to end the military conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region after more than a month of bloodshed. A statement issued by the Foreign Office said Pakistan consistently supported resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh dispute in accordance with international law and the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. "We welcome the recent

announcement of cessation of hostilities by the relevant parties," reads the press release. "The trilateral agreement facilitated by the Russian Federation offers a renewed opportunity for establishing peace in the South Caucasus region." Congratulating the government and "brotherly people" of Azerbaijan on the "liberation of their territories", Islamabad hoped this will lead to an era of "stability and prosperity in the region and will pave way for the return of internally displaced persons to their ancestral lands." Earlier on Tuesday,

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia signed an agreement to end military conflict over the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called the deal "incredibly painful both for me and both for our people". It follows six weeks of fighting between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians. The region is internationally recognised as Azerbaijani but has been run by ethnic Armenians since 1994. A Russian-brokered truce was signed at the end of the war in the early 1990s but there was no peace deal.

NOVEMBER 2020

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

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Briefs

Sale of cars rises 25% in October

ISLAMABAD: The sale of cars in October 2020 rose to 11,997 units against the sale of 9,566 units in same month of the preceding year, showing an increase of 25 percent. During first the period July-October of the current fiscal year (2020-21), the auto sale also increased to 43,865 units against 40,583 units in same period of the previous year, showing an increase of 8 percent, a data released by Pakistan Automotive Manufacturing Association (PAMA) said on Wednesday. According to break up figures, the sale of Honda cars (Civic and City) sharply increased by 80 percent to 1,858 units in October from 1,032 units in the corresponding period of last year. The sale of Toyota Corolla, however, registered a decrease of 33 percent as it went down from 1,982 units in the corresponding month of last year to 1,314 units in same month of 2020. During the month, the sale of Suzuki Swift increased by 19 percent to 180 units against the sale of 151 units in same month of the preceding year. Likewise the sale of Suzuki Cultus also declined by 30 percent to 816 units in October this year as compared to 1,179 units in same period of last year. — APP

SHC angry over delay in stray dog vaccination

DNA

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has ordered the government to plan for the vaccination of stray dogs in the province. At a hearing on Wednesday, a bench headed by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, expressed anger over the delay in the programme. "You people only talk," Justice Mazhar said. "Implementation and doing work is not your thing." The advocate general replied that the government has formed a task force which has started work. "We want results. Tell us whether stray dogs have stopped biting," Justice Mazhar said. The court has instructed the Sindh government to present the plan at the next hearing, December 2. Last year, after the number of dog bite cases in the province increased, the government launched a campaign to vaccinate strays to fight against rabies and control the dog population. The dogs are tagged after vaccinations. Dr Seemim Jamali, the head of one of the biggest hospitals in Karachi, the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, said that the first thing to do after a dog bite is to wash the wound with soap and water. The next most important step is to visit a hospital and get an anti-rabies shot. "A dog bite does not mean that you have been bitten by a dog and you get yourself vaccinated once," Dr Jamali said on a private channel on Wednesday.

Chairman PHEC inaugurates Smart University

OKARA: The Chairman Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC), Prof Dr Fazal Ahmad Khalid, visited the University of Okara yesterday and inaugurated the Higher Education Commission's Smart University Project which was aimed at proving high speed internet to all the students across the 204-acre of the campus. Speaking at a press conference with the local journalists, Dr Fazal hailed the UO Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Zakria Zakar's efforts to perk up the civil and academic infrastructure with limited resources. Talking about the future of the university, he told that the UO was going to be the leading institution of the entire division and region. Dr Fazal also appreciated the UO administration for implementing the government's vision of Clean and Green Pakistan in true letter and spirit. Discussing the role of a modern university, he argued, "The universities of the 21st century should work with an egalitarian approach by not only providing degrees to students but also inculcating industry-oriented skills and building characters". — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security Division and Strategic Policy Planning, Dr. Moed W. Yusuf in a meeting with Australian High Commissioner, Dr. Geoffery Shaw. — DNA

MDCAT 2020 cancelled, SHC orders to form academic board

Following a hearing, the SHC underlined that since the National Medical & Dental Academic Board had not been formed under the Pakistan Medical Commission Act, 2020, the "MDCAT cannot be conducted"

DNA

KARACHI: The MDCAT 2020 examinations have been cancelled as the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday ordered the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) to form an academic board and examination authority and finalise the syllabus for the Medical and Dental College Admission Test before asking the candidates to appear for the test. Following a hearing, the SHC underlined that since the National Medical & Dental Academic Board had not been formed under the Pakistan Medical Commission Act, 2020, the "MDCAT cannot be conducted". According to the court ruling, the Board will have "the powers to formulate

the examination structure and standards for the MDCAT for approval of the Council". The SHC further criticised a notification issued October 23, 2020, by the PMC regarding the syllabus, in which it said candidates would have the option to mark any questions they believed were beyond the syllabus in an objection form to be provided at the examination center, saying it "created uncertainty and gross confusion and perplexity in the minds of all applicants" and terming it "unreasonable and nonstandard". "This is quite a unique idea that every applicant will be provided objection form at the time of entering into examination hall, so first he should be obliged to do audit exercise as to how many questions are out of his syllabus.

"Much time of the candidate would be lapsed and consumed to go through the entire question paper as an examiner and then filling the objection forms. "No further mechanism has been provided in the above announcement as to how and when the students appearing in the MDCAT will come to know whether objections raised by them were considered and the question considered by them to be outside the identified syllabus have been removed from scoring or not. "Such unreasonable and non-standard conditions amount to create hardship, distress and uncertainty amongst the candidates and their future is also on stake unless the proper syllabus is made out by the competent authority with due

deliberation and examination of FSC syllabus of the country to make out a common syllabus without any doubts so that the candidates should not be asked to fill objection forms in the examination hall," the order read. Human rights activist Jibrin Nasir also shared the news, congratulating the students. "Students already registered will be eligible to sit for MDCAT," Nasir said on Twitter. Earlier in the day, during the hearing, the PMC informed the bench that the entry tests were scheduled for November 15. "The students have been informed via text messages. Roll number and admit cards have also been issued," the body's legal counsel said. A lawyer representing the students confirmed and add-

ed that students were told to collect admit cards. The counsel for the National Testing Service (NTS) said his client incurred losses due to the high court's October 17 decision to postpone the test. "We need compensation." In October, the high court had restrained the government of Sindh from holding entry tests for medical and dental universities and colleges. The decision came on a set of petitions filed when a conflict emerged between federal and provincial authorities over the admission policy. The PMC moved the high court seeking permission to allow the MDCAT to be conducted on October 18 while pre-medical students approached the bench seeking a restraining order against it.

Naval Chief visits Creeks area, lauds role of Pakistan Navy

A comprehensive briefing was given to the Naval Chief on prevailing threat environment and combat readiness for the defence of Creeks Area that constitutes South Eastern maritime boundary with India



DNA

Karachi: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi visited Creeks Area to review operational preparedness of the deployed troops. Upon arrival at Brigade Headquarters Sujawal, the Naval Chief was received by Commander Coast, Vice Admiral Za-

hidlyas. A comprehensive briefing was given to the Naval Chief on prevailing threat environment and combat readiness for the defence of Creeks Area that constitutes South Eastern maritime boundary with India. The Admiral also visited the forward defended locations and met with the deployed troops. The Naval Chief expressed full satisfaction over operational readiness of

the troops. He appreciated professional prowess and dedication of officers and men in ensuring impregnable defence of motherland in the challenging environment of Creeks Area. The Naval Chief also directed to ensure optimal utilization of latest weaponry and equipment with motivation and alacrity in order to safeguard the maritime boundaries of Pakistan.

Banking sector assets expand 7.8 percent: SBP

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan Wednesday said that despite elevated economic stress driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, the assets of the banking sector witnessed a decent expansion of 7.8 percent during the first half of the calendar year 2020 (H1CY20). The central bank Wednesday issued the Mid-Year Performance Review (MPR) of the Banking Sector for the year 2020, which comprehensively covers the performance and soundness of the banking sector for the period January to June 2020 (H1CY20). The MPR attributed the growth to the robust increase in investments, funded by surge in deposits, adding that advances, on the contrary, observed mild downturn owing to the economic slackness caused by the disruption in the business activities after the outbreak. Sans SBP supportive measures, though, the contraction in advances could have been much higher, it said and highlighted that the policy measures rolled out by SBP facilitated the banking sector in conserving the capital, enhancing the lending capacity and increasing the loss absorption ability. As a result, despite some increase in credit risk, banking sector demonstrated improved profitability and

enhanced resilience. The Non-performing loans (NPLs) ratio increased from 8.6 percent as of end December 2019 to 9.7 percent as of end June 2020. However, net NPLs to loans ratio, which is a better measure of credit risk, increased only marginally from 1.7% to 1.9%. The earnings marked visible improvement as profitability jumped by 52% on year-on-year (YoY) basis, it said, adding this improvement resulted from higher interest income, deceleration in interest expenses and rise in non-interest income. With better profitability, the soundness of the banking sector further strengthened as Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) increased to 18.7 percent in June-20 from 17.0 percent in December 2019. The review also includes the results of the 6th wave of SBP's Systemic Risk Survey (SRS) conducted in July-August, 2020, which represents the views of the market participants. The survey results indicate that at present and for the next six months the respondents consider global risks and domestic macroeconomic risks to be important. Notably, the policy measures taken by SBP to mitigate the implications of COVID-19 have been very well received by the stakeholders — APP

'10 tourism zones on cards in GB'

ISLAMABAD: National Tourism Coordination Board (NTCB) Chairman Sayed Zulfikar Abbas Bukhari Wednesday said the federal government had chalked out a comprehensive plan for tourism sector's uplift in Gilgit Baltistan (GB) as it would usher a new era of development and prosperity in scenic valley. Addressing a public meeting in Skardu, he said ten recreational areas had been identified for setting up tourism zones in the GB. The feasibility report of four zones had already been finalized while the rest of them expected to be completed by the next month. He said the tourism zones spanning over 100 kilometers area would be established in various localities including Hunza, Diamer, Ghizer, Shigar and Skardu with quality restaurants, tourism police and proper road infrastructure. Zulfikar Bukhari, who also holds the Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development portfolio, said the initiative was meant to create a lot of employment opportunities for the people of the GB. He said the GB-based Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) hotels would be transformed into state-of-the-art facilities to boost domestic and foreign tourism in the country by offering dining and accommodation facilities to the tourists at par with international standards. — APP

Govt urged to expedite work on CASA- project

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa businessman Wednesday highlighted the significance of Central Asia, South-Asia (CASA-1000) power project and urged the government to expedite work on the project as it would help to fulfill the growing energy requirements as well as ensure availability of electricity to industries on subsidized rates. The demand was made by a delegation of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) led by its President Sherbaz Bilour, Senior Vice president Engr Manzoor Elahi and former president Faiz Muhammad Faizi during a meeting with Tajikistan Ambassador to Pakistan, Ismatullo Nasredin here. Both sides discussed hurdles in the way of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Tajikistan and agreed to make joint efforts to remove impediments to further strengthen mutual economic and trade ties between the two countries. Sherbaz Bilour underscored the importance of CASA-1000 project, which would not only help to address the increasing energy needs, but it would also ensure availability of electricity at the lowest rates.

ECP releases assets of PA members'

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday released assets details of members of the Punjab Assembly. According to the ECP, Provincial Law Minister Raja Basharat has assets worth Rs 29.3 million while lawmaker Ejaz Khan owns assets of only Rs 274,000 with no car and gold. MPA Sajida Yousuf is the poorest lawmaker of the Punjab Assembly with only Rs 217 in her bank account. Furthermore, she has never traveled abroad nor has a car or gold. Opposition leader in Punjab Assembly Hamza Shehbaz Sharif owns assets worth Rs 400 million. Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has once again drawn attention of members of the parliament and provincial assemblies towards mandatory requirement under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017 on submission of yearly statements of assets and liabilities. According to ECP, all parliamentarians have to submit to the ECP by December 31st, 2020, yearly statements of assets and liabilities including their spouse and dependent children as on the preceding 30th day of June on Form-B. — APP

WHO to provide all possible support to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: World Health Organization's (WHO) Pakistan Representative, Dr Palitha Mahipala Wednesday said that WHO would continue to provide all possible support to Pakistan amid the coronavirus crisis. WHO had taken several comprehensive measures to collaborate with the government and formed a coordinated response strategy to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr Mahipala said this at handing over ceremony of PCR machines for people affected by Corona disease and visit to Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH), Peshawar along with his team. He said that as COVID-19 continued to spread its tentacles dreading humans, the governments all over the globe were accelerating

their efforts to curb the pandemic. He added WHO was at the forefront of coordinating and planning concerted efforts to support the government of Pakistan in its fight against COVID-19. Dr Mahipala said "We are with Pakistan in this moment of global health crisis. We will continue to support Pakistan to help it control the pandemic as our priority is the health and well being of people." He said "In these unprecedented times, we must come together and support all of those who have suffered." Director KTH Dr Tahir Nadeem appreciated Dr Palitha's commitment in the face of adversity and WHO's arduous support to Pakistan during floods and dengue. — APP



ISLAMABAD: British High commissioner to Pakistan Cristian Turner inaugurating a automated lab in Pakistan, accelerating Covid testing. — DNA

Briefs

MCI urged to maintain prices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Citizens of federal capital on Wednesday urged the authorities concerned to ensure regular visits of markets to have check on increasing prices of warm clothes.

According to them, such steps with monitoring of warm clothes business by the district administration staff was necessary at domestic level to avoid any unnecessary increase in prices by shopkeepers.

They said that some shopkeepers have increased the prices of warm clothes without any justification, which they termed it totally unjustifiable and demanded action against any such unreasonable price hike.

"We have purchased warm items this year on double price as compared to previous year's rates due to the negligence of local administration officials, who were reluctant to hold surprise visits to check prices in open markets," Inaam Ullah, a citizen said.

They should understand the financial issues of poor segment of the society who were unable to purchase warm clothes on high rates, particularly when many of them were jobless due to corona pandemic, he added. A housewife Rubina Fazal said, "Last Sunday I went to market with my family for winter season shopping but unfortunately the rates of all major warm item like shawls, scarfs, sweaters or coats were high."

DCs directed to celebrate Shan-e-Rehmat week

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Capt. Muhammad Mehmood has directed the Deputy Commissioners of the four districts of the division to organize Seerat Conferences, Mehfil-e-Milaad-e-Mustafa and Calligraphy Art Exhibitions with religious zeal and fervor to celebrate Shan-e-Rehmat ul Alameen (Peace Be Upon Him) week from Nov 11 to 17.

He said, best arrangements should also be made to facilitate the participants and ensure maximum participation of the youngsters in the programs to illustrate the glorious character of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

He stressed that every Muslim has a tremendous emotional attachment with Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Muslims prioritizes it over everything.

He said, the main objective to celebrate the week is to show the world that the Muslims can sacrifice their lives but any disrespect to the great personality of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is intolerable in any manner. He said, all out efforts must also be made to ensure implementation of Covid-19 preventive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). - APP

NHMP recovers stolen car

RAWALPINDI: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) on Wednesday recovered a stolen vehicle and returned it to its owner. A person informed NHMP Patrolling Officers at Mis-yari (Murree Expressway) that his car has been stolen from the front of his house located at Shohala. NHMP officers immediately passed wireless message to all patrolling vehicles, at Bastal Morr, the officers of anti-crime squad tried to stop the car but the culprit succeeded to fled from there due to over speeding. City Police Officer Tayyab Nazir along with operations officer IP/SPO Gularan continued chasing the said car. After some distance, the culprit left the car on road and fled in deep forest.

The officials took the car in custody and after completing formalities, the car was handed over to its owner in presence of Local Police. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking keen interest in paintings exhibited in "silver lining" organized at Satrang gallery. - DNA

HEC awards 10 projects for research on Covid-19

The budget for each of RRG award is up to a maximum of Rs 15 million (USD 100,000) with a maximum project duration of 12 months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In response to COVID-19 crisis, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) launched a focused Rapid Research Grant (RRG) in April 2020 to engage academia in research around the clinical management of this epidemic. The grant is aimed to encourage academic research to strengthen clinical management or public health response against this virus. Under the specialised research initiative, potential project proposals were invited to contribute to the much-needed understanding of coronaviruses - the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and COVID-19. Considering the time-crunch, a specialised panel was constituted and tasked to complete the short-

listing in 3-4 weeks. More than 300 applications were received for this grant. After independent reviews, 58 proposals were short-listed based on already announced eligibility criteria and other necessary requirements. Later, these proposals were jointly reviewed by experts of Medical and Biological Sciences, Engineering and Technology and finally 10 quality projects made it to the last stage after rigorous scrutiny. The budget for each of RRG award is up to a maximum of Rs. 15 million (USD 100,000) with a maximum project duration of 12 months. These research projects offer a variety of pragmatic solution-oriented research, ranging from early detection diagnostic kits to immune response and understanding the virus behaviour. The proposals from 10 universi-

ties have been finalized. The University of the Punjab won two grants - one for an indigenous, low-cost production of ultra-pure Taq Polymerase and PCR mix for COVID-19 clinical diagnostic kits, and the other for development of a reliable, economical and high throughput serodiagnosis method for early detection of COVID-19. COMSATS University Islamabad has won the grant for development of RT-LAMP Assay for early detection of COVID-19, while National Textile University, Faisalabad research will focus on development of bioactive hospital textiles and protective suits against viruses and bacteria by immobilisation of nanomaterials. The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Lahore has won the research grant for epidemi-

ological disease modelling and molecular surveillance of SARS-CoV-2, while DOW University of Health Sciences, Karachi will be working on IVIG production from convalescent plasma of COVID-19 survivors, a low risk, high efficiency passive immunisation strategy against SARS-CoV-2. Interestingly, the test results of DOW university research are already very promising. Other project winners include the University of Health Sciences, Lahore (Immunological Virology and Genetic Basis of COVID-19 Patients), Lahore University of Management Sciences (Mapping Immune Response to SARS-CoV2 using a multidisciplinary approach), Aga Khan University, Karachi (Phylo- and immunodynamics of SARS-CoV2 infection in Pakistan: relating COVID 19 dis-

ease severity in with viral diversity) and Health Services Academy (HSA), Islamabad (Computational Modelling for COVID-19 Epidemic in Pakistan: Predictive Modelling of Disease Morbidity, Mortality and Assessment of Demands on the Intensive Care Units). To ensure high quality of research, faculty members from these universities were encouraged to collaborate with private sector and industry, both within and outside Pakistan, as needed. HEC funded thousands of research projects in the past, and this has led to more than 20,000 research articles published in recognised journals last year. With provision of RRGs, HEC hopes that academic researchers will come forward to contribute to better health systems coping with real-life challenges.

Dacoit gang busted, 6 held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Criminal Investigation Agency (CIA) of Islamabad Police has arrested six members of a dacoit gang including his leader and recovered snatched cash, stolen motorbike and weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said.

Following directions of Inspector General of Police, Islamabad Muhammad Amir Zulfiqar Khan, Deputy Inspector General of Police (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed assigned special task to SP (Investigation) to ensure arrest of those involved in house burglaries.

A special team constituted by SP (Investigation) Malik Naeem Iqbal, under the supervision of DSP CIA Hakim Khan including ASI Sadheer Ahmed and others busted a gang involved in looting people at gunpoint in the areas of Sabzi Mandi and Shalimar police station. The accused were identified as Irfan, Qadeem Shah, Anar Gul, Zahid Khan, Muhammad Hameed and Muhammad Khan. Separate cases have been registered against the nabbed and further investigation is underway.

IESCO secures 6002 dangerous points so far

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Shahid Iqbal Chaudhary has said that out of total 7626 identified dangerous points, 6002 have been secured so far. He said that these points have been secured after shifting electricity wires to safe location and by removing tilted poles. Securing of these hazard points cost total Rs 955.974 million, he said. The CEO said a comprehensive campaign regarding shifting of electricity wires crossing over or close to the houses and removal of tilted poles was being carried out in all five operation circles of the company. The company was clearing all these points from its own resources, Shahid Iqbal said. The CEO said that we would take every step to protect the lives of customers and our line staff. - APP

Traffic wardens lauded for good show

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO), Muhammad Ahsan Younis has lauded the services of City Traffic Police (CTP) for ensuring smooth flow of traffic on city roads during Pakistan vs Zimbabwe cricket series in Rawalpindi cricket stadium. CPO said the best traffic arrangements were ensured to facilitate the motorists and implemented a comprehensive traffic plan to ensure traffic flow. Appreciating the performance of warden, he said such hard-working and dutiful officials earned a good name for the department.

Traffic wardens should continue to perform their duties with more diligence and dedication than before, he said. He further added that providing on-the-ground services to the public has always been the top priority of the traffic police which has earned a good name for the department. - APP

CPEC Business Conference from Nov 16

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) is going to hold a three-day business conference titled "China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Central Asia" in Gwadar from November 16 to 18. The conference would be attended by Chief Minister, Governor Balochistan, ministers, high government officials, foreign diplomats, and trade and industrial personalities. According to a RCCI official, the conference was aimed at deliberating progress on CPEC, promoting investment in Gwadar port city, boosting trade and exploring new trade opportunities with the Central Asian states under the umbrella of CPEC. He said that the CPEC was going to be prove as a game changer for Pakistan as well as the whole region and this would also determine ways and means to enhance co-operation with the Central Asian States. - APP



RAWALPINDI: The Malaysian High Commissioner Ikram Bin Muhammad Ibrahim planting a saplings the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). - DNA

322 new Corona cases reported in capital: NCOC

Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Coronavirus Wednesday said that 322 new COVID-19 cases were reported from the federal capital during last 24 hours. According to an official of NCOC, the figure is the second highest number of cases reported in a day during last four months while as many as 249 cases were reported a day earlier. He said that so far 22,432 cases were reported from the federal capital while 247 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) while 19,443 patients had been re-

covered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of Islamabad to reduce transmission of the infection in selected streets and other sectors of Islamabad. As per direction of District administration, five sectors have been sealed for emerging as Covid hot spots included G-6/2, G9/1, G-10/4, I-8/3 and I-8/4. Schools, Mosques, shopping centers and parks will remain closed and assistant commissioners of the areas will ensure arrangements. Residents have been asked to cooperate with the administration in its efforts

against corona. They also started taking actions on violation of SOPs related with the Corona while visiting marriage halls, markets and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration also sealed schools, shops, workshop and restaurants on violation of SOPs. The inspection teams also issued notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops. Assistant Commissioner (Saddar) in crackdown against marquee in E-11 on violation of timings and COVID SOPs particularly not wearing masks, also sealed three marquee while managers of three other arrested and lodged FIRs on gross violation of SOPs.

Commenting on the situation, an official of Ministry of National Health Services said that several local level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. He advised the citizens to continue following the social distancing, use of mask and other precautionary measures to stop increasing local transmission of COVID-19 in Islamabad. He said that the government had adopted effective strategy to combat COVID-19 that resulted reduction in corona cases in the country. He said that the main focus of the strategy was to control the disease on one hand and maintaining business activities of small and poor traders on the other hand. He said that all possible meas-

ures were adopted to control COVID-19 to avoid further load on already burdened health system of the country. He said that strategies were made to control corona keeping in view the global information, focusing on data with integration of local data in a scientific way. He said that the ministry had also asked the schools administrations of Islamabad Capital Territory to strictly monitor the SOPs to ensure protection of students from COVID-19. He said that all schools had been clearly directed to strictly follow the SOPs announced by the government like social distancing, hand sanitizing or washing, wearing of face mask etc.

IRSA releases 121,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 121,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 49,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1512.95 feet, which was 126.95 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 27,300 cusecs and outflow as 65,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1198.95 feet, which was 158.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 9,900 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. - APP

Briefs

CDA defends proposed scientific landfill

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) Wednesday defended its proposal for setting up a landfill site near Sangjani, meant for scientific disposal of tonnes of garbage being generated in the federal capital daily and dumped under a temporary arrangement in the I-12 sector.

The civic agency's response came in the backdrop of a protest staged by the residents of Taxila the other day against the initiative, voicing concern about the area's ecology due to the proposed landfill site. "The development of scientific landfill near Sangjani is an initiative of paramount importance for people of Islamabad as it may be surprising for many that the federal capital sans permanent dumping site, forcing the sanitation department to dispose of the trash in residential area," CDA Director Sanitation Department Sardar Khan Zimri said while talking to APP. He said in present times, there was a dire need for ensuring proper disposal of solid waste in the capital city to ensure clean and green environment under Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision. At least 600 tonnes of garbage was being generated in the capital city on daily basis, he added. He maintained that the site proposed by CDA near Sangjani was a deserted land not 'green one'.

Winter 2nd spell of snowfall to start from Fri

ISLAMABAD: Winter second spell of snowfall in northern areas would start from Friday including Astore, Naran Kaghan, Swat, Skardu and Babusart on said Spokesperson Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Dr Khalid Malik. Talking to APP, he said the spell would continue for four days (Fri-Mon) which would turn weather into intense cold. Adding that moderate snowfall spell with rain would attract a large number of people as during weekends these areas were crowded in routine. He said PMD also issued its advisory for the tourists to save them from any inconvenience. Citizens before visiting hilly areas first check the roads situation to avoid any hurdle during the journey. People should follow the instructions while driving and bring raincoats and warm clothes with themselves to safe from intense cold, he added. - APP

World Day for Tolerance to be marked on Nov 16

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Like other parts of the globe, World Day for Tolerance will be marked on November 16 (Monday) across the globe including Pakistan to educate people about the need for tolerance in society and to help them understand the negative effects of intolerance. The Tolerance Day is a time for people to learn about respecting and recognizing the rights and beliefs of others. It is also a time of reflection and debate on the negative effects of intolerance. Many educators use the theme of this day to help students in classrooms or in lecture theatres understand issues centered on tolerance, human rights and non-violence.

These issues are also found in text books, lesson material and other educational resources used for this event. Human rights activists also use this day as an opportunity to speak out on human rights laws, especially with regard to banning and punishing hate crimes and discrimination against minorities. In the workplace, special training programs, talks, or messages from workplace leaders about the importance of tolerance are utilized on this day. In 1996 the UN General Assembly invited member states to observe the International Day for Tolerance on November 16, with activities directed towards both educational establishments and the wider public (resolution 51/95 of 12 December).



ISLAMABAD: Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif planting a tree at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. - DNA

Dr. Sania approves multiple social protection initiatives

Dr. Nishtar said, "Districts with the highest stunting rates are being included. For now, 22 Nashonuma Centers have already opened in 9 districts. Overall, 52 Ehsaas Nashonuma centers will be established in 12 districts."

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 43rd board meeting of BISP was held at the BISP headquarters, Islamabad under the chair of SAPM Dr. Sania Nishtar. BISP is one of the 34 implementing agencies of Ehsaas. The board deliberated upon an extensive 19-item agenda including expansion of Ehsaas Nashonuma, opening of mobile wallets for Ehsaas One Woman One Account initiative, establishment of Cyber Crime Control Wing, agreement with NADRA to ensure easy payments to next of kins under Ehsaas Kafaalat, constitution of steering committees for Ehsaas Nashonuma and Ehsaas Talemi-Wazaef and

accident insurance coverage for monitoring teams of Ehsaas Talemi-Wazaef. A vibrant discussion took place, deep dive analysis was carried out and many important decisions were taken in the meeting.

To enhance the outreach of Ehsaas Nashonuma program, the board approved the expansion from currently 9 to 12 districts. Briefing the board about the flagship program, Dr. Nishtar said, "Districts with the highest stunting rates are being included. For now, 22 Nashonuma Centers have already opened in 9 districts. Overall, 52 Ehsaas Nashonuma centers will be established in 12 districts." The board also gave go ahead for "Ehsaas One Woman One Account initiative", to en-



able opening of mobile wallets for Ehsaas Kafaalat beneficiaries. "We will invest in financial literacy to promote uptake and believe this will significantly impact on individuals' abilities to escape poverty", shared Dr. Nishtar. Further, the board agreed to accelerate establishment of a "Cyber Crime Control Wing" to protect Ehsaas payments against cyber-attacks.

"Cyber Crime Transparency is personally a priority for me; a multipronged effort is underway to ensure fast-tracked action in this regard", said Dr. Nishtar while briefing the board. Enabling real time validation of eligibility of next of kin appeals in Ehsaas Kafaalat, the board approved an agreement with NADRA. This agreement was necessary to ensure that applications of next of kin of dead beneficiaries are processed quickly. Other important decisions included approval for the establishment of Steering Committees of Ehsaas Nashonuma and Ehsaas Talemi-Wazaef for oversight, policy enhancement accountability, and accident insurance coverage for monitoring teams of Ehsaas

Talemi-Wazaef. The board meeting was attended by Yusuf Khan Secretary BISP, Muhammad Ali Shahzada Secretary Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division, Ghufuran Memon Secretary Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination, Additional Secretary (Exp.) Finance Division, and representatives of NADRA and EAD. Amongst private sector members, Zafar A. Khan, Qazi Azmat Isa and Khawar Mumtaz attended the meeting. Members joined the meeting both physically and virtually. The board meeting concluded with the vote of thanks by SAPM Dr. Sania Nishtar. She thanked all the board members for their time, continued support, and trust.

Extremist ideologies, phobias a threat to democracies: experts

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Center for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a panel discussion on "Islamophobia and How to Deal with It?" The panel comprised of esteemed academics and scholars including: Dr. Todd Green, Associate Professor of Religion, Luther College, Iowa; Dr. Charles Powell, Director of the Elcano Royal Institute, Spain; Prof. Dr. Anis Ahmad, VC Riphah University, Islamabad; Prof. Dr. Samina Yasmin, Director, Center for Muslim States and Societies, The University of Western Australia; and Mr. Ahmad Naeem Salik, Research Fellow, CSP-ISSI. The interactive discussion began with introductory

remarks by Director CSP and Editor at ISSI, Mr. Najam Rafique. Defining "Islamophobia" as fear of Muslims and Islam to pathological degree, Mr. Rafique described it as bias of Western society that reflects in everything associated with Islam and its followers. French-led Islamophobia and Hindutva ideology, he opined, are two sides of the same coin. Elaborating upon the background of the panel discussion, he mentioned Prime Minister Imran Khan's strategy for countering Macron's remarks and the Muslim world to unite on this particular issue. Meanwhile, Director General ISSI, Amb. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry joined the discussion and posed some important questions to the worthy panelists.



ISLAMABAD: Lis Rosenholm, ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan visits AEBD office and met Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan, CEO Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB). - DNA

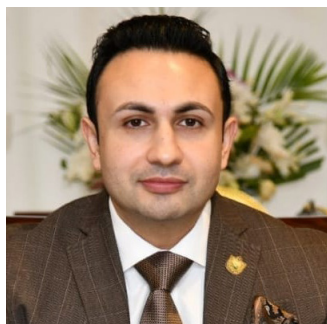
ICCI calls for revising SOPs for halls

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that during the lockdown, the owners of marriage halls and marquees paid millions of rupees in rent and salaries of the employees from their own pockets, which caused them great financial loss

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the marriage halls and marquees were allowed to reopen last month after remaining closed for about six months due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which provided them a decent opportunity to restore their business activities. However, the government has issued new SOPs for these businesses that would badly affect their business activities. Therefore, he urged that the government should revise the new SOPs by taking Marquee Association Islamabad on board to save them from bankruptcy. He said

this while talking to a delegation of Marquees Association Islamabad that visited ICCI led by Salman Ashraf President and Ashraf Shehbaz Vice President to highlight the issues being faced due to new SOPs. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that during the lockdown, the owners of marriage halls and marquees paid millions of rupees in rent and salaries of the employees from their own pockets, which caused them great financial loss. This was done to save the workers from unemployment and poverty. However, he said that the new SOPs have created a lot of concerns in the business community of this sector. He therefore appealed to the Prime Minister Imran Khan and the Federal Minister for Planning Asad Umar to take



the Marquees Association Islamabad into confidence for the strict enforcement of revised SOPs with the aim to save these businesses from permanent closure. Speaking at the occasion, Marquee Association Islamabad President Salman Ashraf and Vice President Ashraf Shehbaz said

that at least 5,000 people were employed in marriage halls and marquees in Islamabad while 7.5 million were employed in about 15,000 marriage halls and marquees across Pakistan. They said that the business of 30 industries was linked with marriage halls/marquees and if the business of marquees was affected, it would also put a negative impact on the business activities of relevant industries. They said that closing a marriage hall would put about 10,000 people out of work. They said that the closure of marriage halls for almost six months due to Covid-19 had already caused severe hardships to this sector and they could not afford more closure of businesses.

They said that political rallies and processions were being held all over the country in which thousands of people were participating. Therefore, imposing new restrictions only on marriage halls and marquees was not a fair approach. They said that these businesses should be allowed to keep one side open for holding indoor marriage functions that would save them from further damages. They said that the business community of this sector would fully cooperate in implementation of SOPs. Former President ICCI Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi, M. Omar, Khalid Chaudhry and others were also present on the occasion.

E&T hands over 4 stolen vehicles to Punjab police

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Excise and Taxation (E&T) Department Islamabad had handed over four stolen vehicles to Punjab police for its delivery to their genuine owners, said Director Bilal Azam. Talking to APP, he said the vehicles were stolen from various districts of Punjab. The department had handed over 42 vehicles to the Islamabad Capital Territory, Punjab and Sindh police up to date, he added.

SAPM Rauf Hassan met Danish envoy

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan Lis Rosenholm on Wednesday called on the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting Rauf Hassan. Economic cooperation between the two countries, especially in the current global context, the promotion of tourism, and the further improvement of cultural activities between the two countries were discussed during the meeting. The SAPM and the Ambassador of Denmark discussed in detail the Afghan peace process and the current situation in the region. Besides, cooperation in various fields, especially mutual cooperation in media, strengthening trade ties and the development of Pakistan's textile industry were discussed. SAPM Rauf Hassan appreciated Denmark's interest in investment in Pakistan in various sectors and stressed that the positive image of Pakistan should be projected globally. - APP

SC directs to improve prisons condition

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to implement the federal ombudsman's report to improve women's prisons condition in country and ensure standard environment for female inmates. A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed comprising Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Muneer Akhtar issued these directions during the suo moto notice case. At the outset of the hearing, the court directed to provide reports of the Federal Ombudsman to the Attorney General and all Advocates General. The court asked the law officers to seek guidance from the concerned governments on the reports of the Federal Ombudsman. Steps should be taken to improve the jails according to the suggestions of the Federal ombudsman's report. The counsel for federal ombudsman said that the federal ombudsman had submitted six reports to the court. A quarterly progress report was being submitted as per order of the Supreme Court, he added. He said that the reports from the federation and the provinces were satisfactory. Sindh and Punjab had passed legislation on prisons. - APP

Lok Virsa to hold "Sindh Musical Night"

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) will hold Sindh Musical Night at its Complex located near Garden Avenue, Shakarparian, to celebrate the rich culture of Sindh here on today in connection of its annual Lok Mela celebrations. Talking to APP an official of Lok Virsa said the Sindh Musical night would aim to promote traditional skills, folk and sufi music etc. The night will feature eminent folk singers to enthral the audience with their melodious performances. Master artisans, folk artists, rural musicians, instrumentalists and folk dance groups would be participating to exhibit their cultural heritage, he said. He said that eminent folk singers Shaukat Ali, Akbar Kameesu, Sada Bahar and Tufail Sanjani will perform along with many other rising stars. Lok Mela celebrations will conclude on Sunday, November 15 at 10 p.m. It is a unique opportunity for those who want to see rural Pakistan at one place should visit Lok Mela and enjoy the richness and diversity of our magnificent culture while ensuring strict observance of Covid-19 standard operating procedures, particularly face masks, he stated. - APP

An improved PCB

As reports of Rs3.8 billion in profits surface, prospects for PCB's improvement seem to be looking bright. Having been subjected to intense criticism in regards to its internal structure and the standard of cricketers it produces, such news comes as a saving grace for the body which has been working towards self-improvement. The only hope now is that cricket, at the grassroots level, is transformed to uphold the quality expected by the masses through certain restructuring schemes. As of right now, PCB reserves stand at Rs17.08 billion, in comparison the Rs13.28 billion of last year. This means that there is plenty of room now to implement policies that will improve the quality of the board as a whole. Amongst the few initiatives taken were the new appointments to the Board of Governors (BoG), a whistle-blowing policy and a few tweaks in its domestic structure. The four new members of the BoG could be beneficial in that they could bring about a new perspective and coincides with the ambitions of the central cricketing body and its commitment to change. Furthermore, the whistle-blowing policy comes as part of the zero-tolerance for corruption within the organisation and aims to protect the information provider in order to deflect any adverse reactions and to bring about accountability for those that might be contributing to the gradual erosion of the PCB. Lastly, there are still complaints that cricket, as a whole in Pakistan, may be lagging behind—despite government intervention—due to the PCB's insistence towards centralisation. According to Chairman Ehsas Mani, decentralisation would allow for cricket associations to function independently, giving the PCB more time to focus on enhancing the cricket structure of the country as a whole considering that complaints about how the system is unable to produce robust players are still relevant. With all that said, there are still new promises being made. For instance, the body insists that a new approach that prioritises coaching education and bridging the gap between domestic and international cricket will be implemented.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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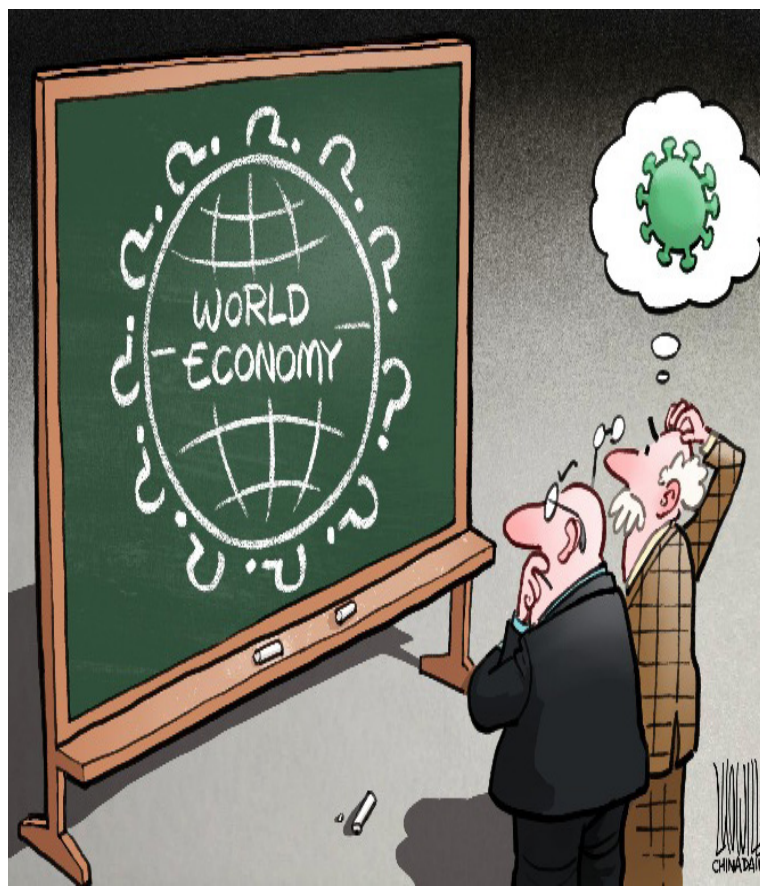
ABC CERTIFIED

Vol: 01 Issue: 196

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Pak-US ties under Biden's presidency

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

NOW that the US has elected Joe Biden as their President, the era of Donald Trump and the confusion he created is over. This heralds the US into a new era. However, the diplomatic affairs Washington has had with Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and other countries from South Asia, Asia, and Central Asia must be realigned under the Biden presidency. In the case of Pak-US ties, Pakistan needs to put a line in its relations with the US. Prime Minister Imran Khan and his regime would need to redefine the diplomatic objectives it needs to achieve as far as its ties with the US are concerned. The mistakes made in the past from both sides must not be repeated. Biden must ensure that the chaos created by Donald Trump is neutralized at the earliest. When focusing on Pak-US ties, China automatically becomes an active part of this equation. Where Pakistan and China are all-weathered friends, they both are also moving forward with CPEC. During Trump's era, US-China ties became sour to the extent that in 2019 Trump went on to call China's president an enemy. Biden, on the other hand, is expected to forge new ties with China where the two countries will be able to co-exist. Washington's relations with Islamabad will play a vital role in keeping smooth sailing between Washington-Kabul ties. The US, under Biden's presidency, will also focus on Afghanistan and Kashmir. The unwinnable war initiated by the US in Afghanistan in 2001 still haunts the US. Pakistan will play a key role in maintaining strong US-Afghanistan ties. The issue of Kashmir will also be on Biden's agenda. Biden and Kamala Harris have been sharing their opinion about Kashmir and they view that India should restore civil and political rights in Kashmir. This is where US-India ties will play a role. With the sensitive issue of Kashmir into the picture, Pakistan-India ties will surely be affected. It will be up to PM Imran Khan how he tackles the issue without creating any discontent.

Biden as President: America & world in safe hands

Iqbal Khan

Biden had been deeply involved in South Asian affairs from the time when he was Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and played an instrumental role in having the \$7.5 billion Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill passed by the US Senate. Biden administration is expected to return the US to the international organisations abandoned by Trump and re-join the Paris Climate agreement. He is likely to invest more in its relationship with like-minded countries. "A Biden White House would have a better understanding of what is important for the region," he said. Biden, who served as Obama's deputy for eight years, experts believe

Joe Biden's platter is full, depends on where he wants to begin from. If he takes a course to un-Trump America, he would have achieved a lot if he is closer to retrieve the US to the status at which Obama-Biden duo handed it over to President Donald Trump. Quick recommitment to Trump stamped international treaties like Climate Change, Iran Nuclear deal, Oslo Accords, reinforcing commitments to negotiate lapsed arms control and disarmament treaties, addressing the concerns of EU, Nato, and other allies, stopping further settlements in the West Bank, reversing shifting of US embassy to Jerusalem etc. could be good starting point. Pacifying its neighbouring countries would ease out the anti-America sentiment in American continents. More important issues are bridling China phobia, stabilising relations with Russia and rationalising India pampering. Due to erratic foreign policy trajectories, the US has embarked upon some lose-lose ventures. Impact of anti-China drive is consuming the US strategically and economically. Russia has assumed the role of a wild card in World politics and India is fast becoming a rogue don of South Asia. New York Times reported on November 10: "All along, China's leaders showed indifference toward the presidential race, having concluded that no matter who won, the United States would remain irreconcilably opposed to the country's rise". According to NYT Beijing bureau chief, "Tensions between the two countries are likely to fester". "They could even become more pronounced—over trade, tech, Taiwan and other issues". After four horrible Trump years, many Americans want to believe that the United States is on the verge of a new beginning. However, according to Daron Acemoglu: "Trump won't be the last American populist [President]". Trumpism is a way of life for a substantial number of Americans. "The roots of Trumpism didn't begin or end with Trump or even with American politics—they are closely connected to economic and political currents affecting much of the world. Americans must understand and address these if they are to prevent similar forces from once again seizing the nation". These Elections have brought to fore a highly polarised US society on partisan lines; extraordinary high turnout and razor edge results portray a high intensity of the divisive sentiment. Above all, over 70 million Americans have endorsed Trump's policies. For Biden, it's an opportunity to provide healing touch to America society and reshape "Ugly American" image of the US abroad. And he is appropriately suitable for this task due to his prudence, maturity and balance. In their victory speeches this weekend, Joe Biden and

Kamala Harris declared that combating climate change will be one of their administration's top priorities, alongside containing COVID-19, rebuilding the US economy, rooting out systemic racism, and bridging America's political divides. With change in guard at the White House, there won't be any substantial change in the US policy towards Pakistan, beyond a symbolic euphoria of an ease-out in periphery matters. At strategic tier, America's policy towards Pakistan is a subset of its China phobia. Hence, Biden Administration will keep pumping in multi-dimensional strategic advantages to further empower India in the vain hope that one day it will fight and browbeat China on America's behalf. Even though India had disappointed the US twice during Trump's Presidency—Doklam and Ladakh crises. Foreign policy experts expect that the Biden administration will be tougher on India. PM Narendra Modi faces an American President whom he did not endorse, and whose opponent was extravagantly over projected in Texas, Houston, Texas and later in Gujarat, India. Twitter is a buzz with #HowdyModi & #NamasteTrump tweets. Biden was instrumental in imposing travel ban on Modi in the wake of Gujarat pogrom of Muslims in 2002. Like most of his predecessors, candidate Biden did a lot talk of solving Kashmir dispute; his Vice President Kamala Harris is also known for raising her voice for Human Rights violations in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. However, like many of their predecessors, both are likely to forget about it much earlier than their inaugural. Substantial portion of America's Pakistan policy is hostage to India's nod. Over the last decade or so, American articulations regarding Pakistan have been incrementally adopting Indian dictum and tenor. "Since Trump and Biden both have [been], generally speaking, similar views on Pakistan and the region, I don't think we should overstate the election's impact in South Asia," said Michael Kugelman of Wilson Centre. Though some Pakistan's foreign policy experts believe that with Joe Biden in White House, a return to "normalcy" is expected, though with caveats. The Trump-era contempt for diplomacy would certainly come to a close. But "Pakistan shouldn't raise the bar of expectation." Biden is likely to restore the dignity of all international organizations that will help Pakistan because there will be a certain level of predictability. Biden had been deeply involved in South Asian affairs from the time when he was Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and played an instrumental role in having the \$7.5 billion Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill passed by the US Senate. Biden administration is ex-

pected to return the US to the international organisations abandoned by Trump and re-join the Paris Climate agreement. He is likely to invest more in its relationship with like-minded countries. "A Biden White House would have a better understanding of what is important for the region," he said. Biden, who served as Obama's deputy for eight years, experts believe, will have a more conciliatory foreign policy towards China and even Iran. Over the decades, the US has invested very heavily in nurturing Hate-China sentiment amongst its own people. This roller coaster has attained its own critical mass, and it's no longer possible to reverse it through a presidential wish. Anti-China is a bipartisan malice in the US—its fast turning into an industry, and it's only a difference of shade whether it's a Democratic President in the White House or a Republican. Anti-China sells well and bring political and economic dividends to politicians and businesses. Biden, met Chinese President Xi Jinping several times when he was in government, has said that under his administration the US would lead by the "power of its example" rather than the "example of its power". Analysts say while Biden's tactics might change, the tougher US strategy towards China would remain if he took the White House given its broad bipartisan support. "Getting tough on China has become a source of rare bipartisan consensus in a polarised political climate," wrote Hui Feng, a senior research fellow at Australia's Griffith University's academic website, The Conversation: "a fundamental U-turn in US-China relations is still unlikely." Actually, America, as a nation, lost the 2020 presidential elections, it lost the race for decency, tolerance, and credibility of its government system. Lesson for contemporary democracy is: Country doesn't matter, present era politicians are birds of same flock. Elections are perceived as free and fair only by the winning side. With the slightest chance of losing in sight, the effected ones start shouting of factual or fictional foul play. Losers are more often sour than gracious. Once a norm, now free and fair elections, and their bipartisan acceptance as such, are more of a fairy tale. Election 2020 is over, but Trump-slitting [read mud-slitting] has just begun. President Trump's post electoral results statement shows that he does not wish to quit gracefully. America needs a healing touch. It is refreshing that President Elect Joe Biden wishes to start working on that aspect immediately. His Victory Speech radiated hope that Americans are in safe hands. — The writer is a freelance columnist; email: Iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com

Key takeaways from US election

Yossi Mekelberg



As Biden is likely to serve only one term, his three acute and urgent tasks are: To restore some modicum of sanity to the political process in Washington and across the country, to strategize the country's response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its impacts, and to heal the divisions and wounds in American society

THE US election did not disappoint after all. It threatened to be ugly, dirty and frantic with minimum civility, and with truth being at best an option, and it lived up to these promises. Donald Trump lost, leaving Joe Biden, who kept his calm throughout the campaign, to pick up the pieces of what the US has become. It is his task now to start the long process of bringing the nation together, and in his first speech after he was projected to win, unity and healing were his focus. It is probably the hardest task any peacetime leader has faced for a very long time. As Biden is likely to serve only one term, his three acute and urgent tasks are: To restore some modicum of sanity to the political process in Washington and across the country, to strategize the country's response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its impacts, and to heal the divisions and wounds in American society. President Biden and Vice President Harris will have to address the toxic legacy of the last four years with great sensitivity as well as a sense of urgency. It is also for the Democrats to draw the right lessons from the election results. If they consoled themselves four years ago that Trump's victory was a political accident, last week's results proved that he is a symptom of deeper, longer-term trends in American society that its liberal-progressives can't, and maybe don't even want to, understand or engage with. One can only speculate, albeit with a high degree of certainty, that had it not been for COVID-19 and its devastating impact on the nation's health and economy, Trump would have won a second term. Despite his administration's appalling performance in handling COVID-19, which has already claimed the lives of more than 235,000

Americans, and despite the number of daily infections reaching last week's record high of more than 121,000, an out-of-touch Trump continued to claim falsely the US was defeating the virus and he still gained the support of more than 70 million voters who wanted him to lead them for another four years. It begs the question: Lead them to what and to where? In the same vein, the Democrats' performance in the congressional elections was far from a resounding endorsement by the electorate. Trump might soon be history; nevertheless, the magnitude of his support is extremely troubling, and requires a national dialogue. For instance, racial tensions are older than the US itself but despite all the progress that has been made, especially since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, racism is embedded in many sections of American society, and fears, particularly among white working-class men, of African-Americans becoming truly equal in society are only increasing. In Trump they found someone who understood them and championed their cause. It does not take more than a brief glance at the electoral college map to realize the entrenched political divide between the coastal-urban blue of the Democrats, and the huge swathe of Republican red occupying rural America in the middle. Yes, in the end Biden won comfortably, but the Democrats should not forget who they were running against, and what unusual circumstances these elections were conducted under. That is what sparked the highest turnout since William McKinley won the election of 1900. The strategists need to ask themselves why, under these favorable conditions, a "blue wave" never materialized and a Democratic majority in the Senate remains elusive. The

Biden administration faces an uphill struggle to patch up much of the damage caused by the domestic and foreign policies of the current administration. It is a worry not only for the Democrats, but also for the Republicans that the latter could not produce a candidate that did not thrive on disrupting the system instead of fixing and improving it. The US, like so many other parts of the world, is entering a very taxing and uncertain period in its history and has huge challenges ahead. Whether it is containing and defeating COVID-19 and dealing with its devastating social and economic consequences, healing racial divisions, climate change, preventing nuclear proliferation in both Iran and North Korea, or improving relations with China, America can't address these challenges successfully without restoring bipartisanship when needed, and dealing with disagreements in a civil and constructive manner on Capitol Hill and across the country. For both Democrats and Republicans, the next few years must be a time of reflection, helped by a lowering of the rhetoric. It is the duty of both main political parties to reach out to tens of millions of people who have been left behind, disenfranchised and fearing for their livelihoods and well-being. This should be done without exploiting fears and indulging in cheap populism on the one hand, or with an arrogant and patronizing approach on the other. Biden, with his vast experience in politics, his interpersonal skills and his humanity, might be just the right person to bring the nation together and preside over the recovery process, while making the values of his party more palatable to those for whom a progressive party should be a support to lean on rather than a threat. — Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

NCOC suggests strict steps to curb virus

From Page 01

educational institutions and there is a need to check this trend. Forum decided that on 16 November the Federal Minister for Education would chair a special meeting at NCOC with provincial education ministers on board to assess and review the positivity prevailing in educational institutions.

After consultative discussions the recommendations would be shared with the provinces for consequent decision and enforcement. The Forum taking into account rising positivity ratio suggested an early and extended winter vacation to reduce impact of disease spread and ensure safety and health of students.

NCOC issuing guidelines on marriages to all stakeholders that Only outdoor marriages with upper limit of 500 people are allowed from Nov 20th NCOC also suggested for NCC meetings to increase restrictions on high risk sectors and particularly large public gatherings. NCOC recommended urgent and emergency measures to NCC for final approval after consensus by all stakeholders. NCOC appreciated SOP compliance in mosques so far since the last many months however noted decline in compliance at present and appealed to all stakeholders to further follow the same rather enhance amid possible 2nd wave.

Qureshi, Zarif discuss regional issues

From Page 01

and announced his country's readiness to agree on new models of trade. Referring to the importance of strengthening the security of the borders of the two countries, Dr. Zarif reminded the need for continuous consultations in this regard. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi also mentioned Iran as an important friend and neighbor of Pakistan and informed him about the practical steps taken by the Pakistani government to develop trade and economic cooperation with Iran and said that the Pakistani government has decided to exchange And help cross-border exports between the two countries. The Pakistani Foreign Minister stressed the importance of establishing peace and security on the Iranian-Pakistani border and stressed that the country would not allow hostile actions against Iran.

Regional developments, issues of the Islamic world, countering Islamophobia, regional cooperation, especially the strengthening of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), joint fight against terrorism and illegal immigration, and facilitating pilgrimages are among the other topics discussed by the two foreign ministers. The formation of a joint economic commission in the near future is among the other issues discussed and the agreement reached between the foreign ministers of Iran and Pakistan.

Pakistan, Iran vow to make joint efforts for peace

From Page 01

peace, security and development in the region. Highlighting Pakistan's efforts towards facilitating peace and stability in Afghanistan, the Prime Minister said there is no military solution to the Afghan conflict. He reaffirmed Pakistan's support for Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and hoped that this historic opportunity would be seized by all Afghan parties to secure a political settlement. Imran Khan further said that that peace in Afghanistan would be beneficial for the entire region as it would create new opportunities for trade and economic cooperation as well as regional connectivity. He also reaffirmed Iran's steadfast support for the Kashmir cause.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry in a meeting with Climate Change Minister Zartaj Gul in her office. The delegation was led by President Nasir Mirza and former President Zahid Latif Khan. — DNA

Uzbekistan's initiative to open a new page in SCO Afghan policy

The initiative of the President of Uzbekistan ShavkatMirziyoyev once again confirms the firm commitment of the Republic of Uzbekistan to achieving long-term and sustainable peace in the neighboring country, and is a logical continuation of a consistent friendly policy

DNA

TASHKENT: The proposal of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan ShavkatMirziyoyev to develop and adopt a Plan for the socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan as part of the practical implementation of the Roadmap for further actions of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact group will serve for further consolidation of the SCO countries' efforts in promoting the long-awaited peace in Afghanistan.

The initiative of the President of Uzbekistan ShavkatMirziyoyev

once again confirms the firm commitment of the Republic of Uzbekistan to achieving long-term and sustainable peace in the neighboring country, and is a logical continuation of a consistent friendly policy towards Afghanistan.

Being convinced that the security and economic prosperity in the entire vast SCO region are inextricably linked to peace and stability in this long-suffering country, Uzbekistan has always supported the Shanghai cooperation organization to play an important role in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan. In 2004 Uzbekistan as a chairman to SCO invited former Afghan President

Hamid Karzai to the Organization's summit in Tashkent. Since then, leaders of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan have been participating every SCO summit. And as a logical continuation, Afghanistan received the status of an observer state in SCO in 2012. It is symbolic that the initiative to establish the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group, formalized during Beijing summit in November 2005, was announced in Tashkent during the summit of the SCO states leaders in 2004.

The creation of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group made it possible to establish a specific consultative dialogue with the Is-

lamic Republic of Afghanistan on the issues of the military-political situation in Afghanistan, its impact on regional security, assistance of the SCO member states to Afghanistan in ensuring peace, security and economic reconstruction, and enhancement of regional cooperation. Most significantly, due to this format of interaction, the SCO member states effectively coordinate efforts containing challenges and threats emanating from Afghanistan, preventing their spread in the space of the SCO member states. In addition, and most importantly, the regular dialogue within the Contact Group

contributed to the development of a regional consensus in the SCO space on the basic principles for resolving the situation in Afghanistan, which, in turn, today plays a decisive role in the formation of common approaches of the international community regarding peacebuilding in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The consensus in the SCO space was enshrined in the "Road Map of the SCO-Afghanistan" Contact Group adopted in June 2019 in Bishkek, where all SCO member states declared their commitment to the key principles of resolving the situation in Afghanistan.

Negotiations begin on US forces in Japan

WEB DESK

TOKYO: Japan and the US have started negotiations on cost sharing of 55,000 American troops based in Japan. The Japanese government announced on Wednesday that the two-day formal talks started in Washington on Tuesday, according to Japanese Kyodo News. "Costs shouldered by Japan have played an important role for ensuring the smooth and effective activities of the US forces in the country and affirmed the importance of further enhancing the strong solidarity of the alliance," the two sides said at the meeting.

"[We] look forward to a mutually beneficial outcome," they added. A day before, Japan's Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said: "We will appropriately engage in the negotiations by taking into account the increasingly stringent regional security environment and our fiscal situation." The five-year cost-sharing deal under bi-

lateral security alliance between the two sides will end next March – the end of Japan's fiscal year. Under the Trump administration, the US sought a hike in costs from the host countries. "Given they will transition to the [Joe] Biden administration, it is unlikely we will agree on five full years," a senior Japanese official said on Wednesday. Last year, under a new one-year deal, the US got a hike of 8.2% from South Korea for its 28,500 troops based in the country since the 1950-53 Korean War. South Korea agreed to pay 1.04 trillion South Korean won (\$920 million) in 2019 for the operation of the 28,500-strong US Forces Korea (USFK), up from 960 billion won (\$853 million) in the previous year. Earlier this year, Trump said he turned down a "certain amount" of money from South Korea related to his demand that Seoul shoulder a larger share of the cost of US military forces deployed in the country.

USAID ready to provide assistance to Uzbekistan

In 2019, USAID leveraged over \$10 million in private sector investment in the establishment of new orchards, installation of water saving technologies, increase in cold chain capacity countrywide

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: Since 1993, US Agency for International Development (USAID) has partnered with the people and government of Uzbekistan to diversify the country's economy, increase regional trade, address serious health threats, improve learning opportunities for students, and build the government's capacity to respond to the population's needs, Information Officer of US Embassy in Tashkent Susannah Wood told media in an interview.

"For example, based on a USAID-piloted electronic-court case management system, E-SUD, in 2018, the government of Uzbekistan expanded this system from the eight pilot civil courts to all 89 civil courts in the country, making court proceedings more transparent and significantly reducing

the time needed to file court cases and publish decisions," Wood noted. The information officer stressed that this system has been especially useful during the pandemic enabling court personnel to continue working from the safety of their homes. "In 2019, USAID leveraged over \$10 million in private sector investment in the establishment of new orchards, installation of water saving technologies, increase in cold chain capacity countrywide, and upgrades in product packaging, marketing, and branding to meet international standards," she said. According to Wood, last year, the Uzbekistan's Ministry of Public Education and the US Government, through USAID, signed the first ever Development Objective Agreement (DOAG) that will provide \$50 million to improve learning out-

comes for Uzbekistan's students, including expanding use of internet technologies in the classroom and improving the English capacity of the students. She added, that today, USAID and Uzbekistan are cooperating closely in the global fight against COVID-19. The US government has supported the Government of Uzbekistan's efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing life-saving equipment, laboratory and medical supplies, and technical assistance. According to Wood, as of July 10, 2020, the US government's funding assistance to Uzbekistan to combat COVID-19 is approximately \$6 million. "USAID has also provided \$2 million in regional COVID-19 supplementary funds to expand the Safe Migration activity for the Central Asia region. The disruptions caused by the

COVID-19 situation have increased the vulnerability of millions of migrant laborers in Central Asia. The loss of jobs and remittances has left families without adequate resources and legal protections," stated the information officer. "Through the Safe Migration in Central Asia activity, USAID will deliver much-needed assistance including informational resources; referrals to essential services; alternative livelihoods support; and skills training to help migrants navigate the difficult situation they are facing," she noted. The USAID mission in Uzbekistan will incorporate programs that will help address the impacts of COVID-19 on a range of development areas, including employment, Government revenues, return of migrants, food security, and human trafficking, Wood said.

China shows commitment to regional stability

Highlighting the principle of consultation and collaboration for shared benefits, Xi called for addressing global issues through consultation, building the governance system with joint efforts and enabling people from all countries to share the benefits of development

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping's important speech at the 20th meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) via video link illustrates China's commitment to practicing multilateralism and achieving mutually beneficial and win-win development, experts have said. Highlighting the principle of consultation and collaboration for shared benefits, Xi called for addressing global issues through consultation, building the governance system with joint efforts and enabling people from all countries to share the benefits of development. Xi's speech has conveyed

confidence and pointed out the direction for the development of the SCO in the post-epidemic era, Bauzhan Mukanov, an expert from Kazakhstan's Social Projects Foundation said. Noting that the SCO countries have helped each other and deepened practical cooperation amid the grim test of the COVID-19 pandemic, the expert said that the SCO operation has exemplified multilateral development. During his speech, Xi said that history has proven and will continue to prove that good neighborliness and friendship will prevail over a beggar-thy-neighbor approach, mutually beneficial cooperation is certain to replace zero-sum game, and multilateralism will win over unilateralism. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera, found-



ing director general of the Institute of National Security Studies of Sri Lanka, said that Xi's call for multilateralism at a time of uncertainty and deepening polarization around the world is important. In his speech, Xi also called for joint efforts to build communities

of health, security, development and cultural exchanges for "us all." Professor Tursunali Kuziev of the Uzbekistan State University of World Languages said that the proposals have very important and practical significance for promoting the development of regional countries and building a community with a shared future for mankind. Avtandil Otinashvili, chief editor of Georgian Newsday Information Agency, said that Xi's speech fully shows China's sincere desire to promote mutually beneficial and win-win international cooperation. Xi's call to step up anti-epidemic cooperation and build a community of health for all reflects the aspiration of people of all countries to unite to fight the pandemic and stick together

through thick and thin, which serves the common interests of the international community and will strongly promote countries worldwide to work together to defeat the pandemic, Otinashvili said. Professor Omar Farooq Zain, chairman of the Department of International Relations at Pakistan's Bahauddin Zakariya University, said that it is really "a sad fact" that the pandemic – a challenge that is like once in a century – was politicized for selfishness. The alignment of the SCO countries' development strategies and the Belt and Road Initiative can provide a long-lasting and sustainable way of development and economic recovery amid the pandemic and in the post-pandemic era, he added.

Asad, Amir, Malik dropped for NZ tour

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Asad Shafiq, Mohammad Amir, and Shoaib Malik were dropped as head coach-cum-chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq announced a 35-member squad for the New Zealand tour of three T20Is and two Tests. According to Misbah, Asad was dropped from the squad following his poor form with the bat as the right-handed batsman scored just 510 runs in his last 15 innings. Whereas, the exclusion of Amir and Malik will be a chance for youngsters to prove their mettle. "We wanted Asad to go back to domestic cricket to gain his form back just like Sarfaraz Ahmed. We believe he has still left with the potential to perform up to the mark at the international level," he said. "However, in place of Malik and Amir, we have given chances to youngsters considering upcoming 5 big ICC events," he added. Meanwhile, domestic performers including Hussain Talat, Imran Butt, Amad Butt, Danish Aziz, and Zeeshan Malik have got a place in the squad. It must be noted here that the 35-member squad was selected from the list of 45 players which was sent to New Zealand Cricket.

Pak-China time-tested friends: PM

From Page 01
Earlier, the ambassador met Speaker national assembly Asad Qaiser. Speaker Asad Qaiser has said that Pakistan is proud of its all-weather unique friendship and strategic partnership with China. He said that completion of CPEC would help Pakistan to achieve its economic and industrial goals. He said that present government is committed to take that exemplary relation to new heights. The Speaker said this while talking to Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong who called on him at Parliament House, today. While talking to the Ambassador, the Speaker said China and Pakistan have cherished vibrant, friendly relations spreading over decades. He said that those ties were based on regional development, mutual trust, trade and economic cooperation. He added that the cooperation between both countries was rapidly expanding. He said that Pakistan confidently counts on Chinese support at international and regional forums. He underlined the need for cementing parliamentary contacts for further cementing those ties. Referring to the inauguration of the recently completed Rashakai Special Economic Zone project, the Speaker said that it will prove a milestone in the industrial development of the country. The Speaker informed that Prime Minister of Pakistan will inaugurate the Special Economic Zone on 21st November, 2020. Ambassador Mr. Nong Rong said that relations between two countries were exceptional and gaining strength with the passage of time. He said that cooperation between China and Pakistan was clear depiction of the commitment of leadership of both the countries towards each other. The Ambassador said that completion of 1st phase of the CPEC would open new avenues of development for the people of the region. He informed that with the advent of 2nd Phase of the CPEC, socio-economic, industrialization, agriculture and scientific and technological sectors would be focused. He added that the completion of CPEC would change the destiny of the region and would unleash a new era of Pak-China relations.

Turkey to continue exploration in E.Med

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey has issued another navigational telex, or Navtex, for the area in the Eastern Mediterranean where it will conduct seismic research activities until Nov. 23. According to the announcement, the mission, which will be carried out by the Oruc Reis seismic research vessel, will continue for 12 days starting Wednesday. A Navtex is a maritime communications system that allows ships to inform other vessels about their presence in an area as well as other information. The Oruc Reis will carry out seismic studies in the Eastern Mediterranean together with two other vessels, the Ataman and Cengiz Han.

Briefs

Russia records highest daily deaths

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russia on Wednesday reported its highest daily death toll from COVID-19 with 432 more fatalities recorded in the last 24 hours. According to the country's emergency task force, the total number of cases in the country has passed 1.83 million, with 19,851 additions over the past day. The death toll in the country reached 31,593. Meanwhile, 18,616 more recoveries raised the total to over 1.36 million. Russia on Oct. 28 introduced new measures to stem the virus's spread, making mandatory the use of face masks in public areas, public transport, and elevators. Cafes, bars, and restaurants across the country, except in the capital Moscow, also close their doors from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

US states resume lockdowns

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Several US states on Tuesday imposed restrictions to curb the spread of the coronavirus as people admitted to hospitals soared, straining the facilities and medical resources across much of the country. The number of patients hospitalised with COVID-19 in California has risen by 32 percent over the past two weeks and intensive-care admissions have spiked by 30 percent, Dr Mark Ghaly, the state's health and human services secretary told reporters.

Several US states on Tuesday imposed restrictions to curb the spread of the coronavirus as people admitted to hospitals soared, straining the facilities and medical resources across much of the country. The number of patients hospitalised with COVID-19 in California has risen by 32 percent over the past two weeks and intensive-care admissions have spiked by 30 percent, Dr Mark Ghaly, the state's health and human services secretary told reporters. Beginning on Friday, restaurants and bars in Minnesota must close dine-in services between 10pm and 4am (04:00 GMT and 10:00 GMT) and keep the number of patrons below 50 percent of capacity. The governor's order also includes private social gatherings, which must be limited to 10 people from three households or less.

S Africa's ANC officials in court

JOHANNESBURG: The secretary general of South Africa's ruling African National Congress (ANC), Ace Magashule, is to appear in court over alleged graft committed under former president Jacob Zuma, the police said on Wednesday. Magashule is facing accusations over housing contracts awarded in 2014 while he was premier of the Free State province, the elite Hawks anti-corruption unit said. An arrest warrant was issued on Tuesday over Magashule's alleged failures to conduct oversight and report corrupt dealings, they said. Magashule, 61, is due to appear on Friday at the magistrates court in Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State, police said. The scandal revolves around the equivalent of \$16.4 million (13.9 million euros) in contracts to audit houses with asbestos roofs, awarded during Zuma's corruption-tainted tenure of 2009-2018. Magashule joins a slew of other senior government officials and businessmen who have appeared in court over the contracts and are out on bail. "This is one of the most significant developments perhaps since the arrest of Zuma," political analyst Ralph Mathekgala told AFP. Zuma was forced out in 2018 over scandals centred around an Indian business family, the Guptas, who won lucrative contracts with state companies and were allegedly even able to choose cabinet ministers. His successor Cyril Ramaphosa has vowed to root out corruption in South Africa, which has been led by the ANC since Nelson Mandela came to power in 1994 after the end of apartheid. Ramaphosa recently penned a controversial letter to ANC telling them to face the "stark reality" that the party was "accused number one" for corruption. — APP

MOC cancels licenses of 15 trade bodies

However, the licence of these trade organizations were cancelled by the office of DGTO in 2018 on the grounds that they had failed to meet the terms and conditions of the licence as stipulated in rule 6 of Trade Organizations Rules (TOR), 2013

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary Commerce Sualeh Faruqi has upheld the decisions of Director General Trade Organizations (DGTO) in its November 6th order regarding the cancellation of licences of Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Quetta, other eight Trade Associations of Balochistan. Balochistan High Court in its or-

der of Oct 2, contempt application directed that Secretary Ministry of Commerce should decide the appeals of Pakistan Transport Association, Ghee Exporter Association of Pakistan, Pakistan Scrap Association, Scrap Importer Association, Gas Heater Importer Association of Pakistan, All Pakistan Copper Exporter Association, All Pakistan Land Route Custom Agent Association and All Pakistan Glass Manufacturer Importers and Exporters

Association by or before Nov 9, in accordance with law after hearing all concerned. In pursuance of the order of Balochistan High Court hearing of appeals of four of trade organizations was scheduled on Nov 4, and hearing of other four trade organisations was scheduled on Nov 5. However, hearing of all the appeals was held on Nov 4, on the request made by the counsel for all the petitioners. The background of the case is that all the

eight trade organizations were granted licence by the DGTO in 2017 under the Trade Organizations Act (TCA), 2013. However, the licence of these trade organizations were cancelled by the office of DGTO in 2018 on the grounds that they had failed to meet the terms and conditions of the licence as stipulated in rule 6 of Trade Organizations Rules (TOR), 2013. During the hearing, the counsel for the trade organizations point-

ed out that the licence of the trade organisations were cancelled by the office of DGTO despite provision of all the requisite documents mentioned in the show cause notices issued by the DGTO. The representatives of the DGTO denied that the trade organizations had submitted all the required documents and the licences were cancelled due to the failure of these trade organisations to meet the terms and conditions of a licences as per rule 6 of ToR 2013.

Turkish defense minister hails Karabakh victory



FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: The Turkish defense minister on Wednesday visited Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry in the capital Baku and hailed the liberation of territories from Armenian occupation. Welcomed by his Azerbaijani counterpart Gen. Zakir Hasanov, Hulusi Akar attended a ceremony held in connection with the Azerbaijani army's successes against Armenian occupying forces in Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Upper Karabakh, an internationally recog-

nized territory of Azerbaijan. Relations between the ex-Soviet republics have been tense since 1991 but fresh clashes erupted on Sept. 27. On Nov. 10 both the countries signed a Russia-brokered agreement for a long-term and comprehensive solution to the three-decade-long conflict. The deal declared a complete cease-fire and end to over six weeks of fighting. Baku freed nearly 300 settlements, including the strategic city of Shusha, during this period. "The present situation is very pleasing for us. This operation is an awakening... Azerbaijani army has shown its power to the whole world," Akar said. He said the relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan will last forever as "two states, one nation." Both Azerbaijan and Turkey are Turkic nations and share deep political, historical, and cultural relations.

BJP, allies win regional polls

WEB DESK

PATNA: India's governing party and its allies have won key state election seen as a barometer of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting economic downturn. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and his regional ally Janata Dal United (JDU) won 125 seats of Bihar state's 243-seat legislature, India's election commission website showed. A coalition of more than three political parties led by Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) opposed to the incumbent alliance managed to win 110 seats. The result, which was announced on early hours of Wednesday, mean that Nitish Kumar from the Janata Dal United (JDU) will likely return as chief minister. He has been in the post since 2005. Modi on Tuesday thanked people of Bihar for making a "decisive decision" to give development a chance. "I again assure every citizen of Bihar that for the balanced development of every person, every region, we will continue to work with full dedication," he tweeted. Bihar in eastern India is its second-most populous state and one of its poorest. Control of the key electoral battleground

is seen as a referendum on Modi's popularity. The RJD and his allies have accused the state government of tempering with results - a charge denied by the election officials. His opponents have criticised what they call his government's inept handling of the pandemic, which has led to more than 127,000 death so far nationwide. Modi's party and his alliance partner were pitted against the resurgent RJD party, led by a 31-year-old Tejashwi Yadav. The young leader campaigned in an alliance with the Indian National Congress, the country's main opposition party and communist parties, which put up an impressive performance winning 16 seats. The alliance made employment for youth its main election promise in the state where the unemployment rate is nearly double the national average. Modi's party and his allies have focused on nationalistic policies. To win votes, the coalition leaders often evoked the erosion of Muslim-majority Kashmir's semi-autonomy last summer, the recent placement of a ceremonial cornerstone for a temple in central India on the site of a mosque that was destroyed by Hindu rioters decades ago and the ongoing border clash with China in mountainous Ladakh.

Azerbaijani people feel pride: Ombudsman

DNA

BAKU: All Azerbaijani people feel joy and pride thanks to the decisive policy of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Ilham Aliyev, Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan, Sabina Aliyeva told media. "This is a special day for the Azerbaijani people - Day of Victory. We thank the victorious, saving Azerbaijani army, led by Supreme Commander Ilham Aliyev, who gifted

the day to us," Aliyeva said. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation made a joint statement. A complete ceasefire and a cessation of all hostilities in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict shall be introduced at 00:00 hours Moscow time on 10 November 2020. Armenian Armed Forces launched a large-scale military attack on positions of Azerbaijani army on the front line, using large-cal-

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

ber of military personnel members, who died fighting off the attacks of the Armenian Armed Forces. The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, Armenian Armed Forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts. The 1994 ceasefire agreement was followed by peace negotiations.



BEIJING: Premier of Pakistani film Parwaz Hai Junoon was held at Wanda cinema Beijing. Pakistan ambassador to China, MoINUl Haq was also present on the occasion. — DNA

Pakistani military action film debuts in Beijing

DNA

BEIJING: Ahead of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan in 2021, a Pakistani air force film debuted in a Beijing cinema on Wednesday. The Pakistani ambassador to China MoINUl Haque attended the premiere. The film, Parwaz Hai Junoon, is a 2018 Pakistani military action film directed by Haseeb Hassan, and is the first Pakistani movie to be released in Chinese mainland cinemas in 45 years. The movie tells the story of a group of young patriotic cadets who become the best fighter pilots in Pakistan after experiencing all kinds of challenges and hardships. In one of the film's highlights a JF-17, a fourth-generation fighter jointly developed by China and Pakistan, makes a surprise appearance. In the movie, a teacher at the air force academy asks students to compare JF-17 with Mirage 2000 in class. A

student answers that the JF-17 has three advantages including flexibility and safety and is complimented by the teacher. The movie also focuses on female pilots. One Pakistani woman in the film gives up her US nationality and a life of luxury, and overcomes many difficulties through the power of love and finally achieves her dream to become a JF-17 fighter pilot. Many people attending the screen had never seen a Pakistani film and wanted to learn about the country's movie industry. After the screening, the ambassador told the audience that there will be more Pakistani films and TV dramas being provided for Chinese audiences to help Chinese people better understand Pakistani culture and strengthen the two countries' friendship. The ambassador added that audiences can see the beauty of Pakistan as the movie shows many beautiful landscapes in the country. A military expert and a film critic who attended the premiere, said the film was surprising. Xiao Ning said the jointly researched JF-17, which only

took four years to develop, aroused his interest and is a proof of two countries' friendship. Falanxiaojiao, a film critic, praised the film as the patriotic movie that used younger actors and actresses to attract young audiences. The film will be formally launched in cinemas on November 13. China and Pakistan's friendship has also seen advances during the COVID-19 epidemic. At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in China, the Pakistani government allocated 300,000 medical masks, 800 hazmat suits and 6,800 pairs of gloves from public hospitals around the nation and transported them to China. After China's COVID-19 situation improved, the Chinese government and military, and the nation's enterprises and organizations, also lent support to Pakistan, buying and shipping medical supplies including test kits, real-time fluorescent kits, scanners, KN95 masks, gloves, goggles and protective clothing to Pakistan along with medical teams.

Gunmen kill prominent Libyan activist

FOREIGN DESK

TRIPOLI: Gunmen shot dead a prominent dissident in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi as political talks in neighbouring Tunisia focused on a road map towards elections in Libya. Hanan Al-Barassi, 46, an outspoken critic of abuses in the eastern areas controlled by renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA), was shot dead in public on Tuesday, rights groups and a security source said. Al-Barassi "was shot dead in Road 20, one of the main commercial streets in Benghazi", a security source, who asked to remain anonymous, told AFP news agency. "Moments earlier, she had been broadcasting a live video via Facebook." It was a reminder of the bloodshed still racking Libya as peace talks continued in Tunis and military negotiators hashed out ceasefire details in the front-line city of Sirte. "Barassi has been publicly vocal about cases of alleged assault and rape of women in Benghazi in which she implicated members of the armed groups in Benghazi, and she also alleged financial fraud," said Hanan Salah, senior Libya researcher for New York-based Human Rights Watch. She also ran a local association for the defence of women's rights.

Kashmir silk carpet becomes a hit at China Expo

BEIJING: Handmade silk carpets from Kashmir became one of the best-selling products at the 3rd China International Import Expo which concluded in Shanghai. "Unlike ordinary carpets, for me the Kashmir one is an artwork worth collecting. That's the reason why I bought it almost without any hesitation despite the high price, a Chinese man who bought an exquisite Kashmir carpet with RMB 60,000 from Zahid Ahmad of Woven Cashmere at CIIE told China Economic Net (CEN). This is Zahid Ahmad third journey to the expo. The Expo is an unparalleled high-end world event full of business opportunities for him. CIIE helped us a lot as our sales have got a 30% to 40% increase in China in the last three years. Our products are of superior quality, and via CIIE we have got potential customers well matched for our products, he said. The Chinese market now is their major focus because of the country giant business potential. China is a big market with a huge population. So even only 2% or 5% of the market is already a big number for us. Now they've opened two shops in the capital city Beijing. — APP

Endangering security: Legislators disqualified

WEB DESK

HONG KONG: Hong Kong has disqualified four opposition members of its legislature for "endangering national security", raising the prospect of a walk-out by pro-democracy legislators who oppose what they see as Beijing's ever tighter grip on the semi-autonomous city. The expulsions on Wednesday came shortly after China's parliament adopted a resolution allowing the city's government to expel legislators deemed to be supporting Hong Kong independence, colluding with foreign forces or threatening national security, without having to go through the courts. Hong Kong's government issued a statement identifying the disqualified politicians as Alvin Yeung, Dennis Kwok, Kwok Ka-ki and Kenneth Leung, adding that they "will lose their qualification as legislators immediately". Carrie Lam, the chief executive of Hong Kong, told reporters that the disqualifications were "constitutional, legal, reasonable and necessary". "We have doubts about their abilities to perform their duties. If they are unable to uphold the Basic Law, and to support Hong Kong, of course they are not qualified to be legislators," she said, referring to the city's mini-constitution.

France is voicing biased appeals on Karabakh

Despite the fact that France, in accordance with its mandate, must act as a neutral party, it openly pursues the pro-Armenian policy and voices completely unfounded accusations against Azerbaijan," Hajiyev said

FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijani presidential aide Hikmat Hajiyev has slammed France for pursuing an open pro-Armenian policy. "Despite the fact that France, in accordance with its mandate, must act as a neutral party, it openly pursues the pro-Armenian policy and voices completely unfounded accusations against Azerbaijan," Hajiyev said. The presidential aide added that contrary to the mandate of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair, French officials "are voicing unilateral, biased appeals". He ruled out France's any role in the adoption of a joint declaration signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia to end the Nagorno-Karabakh war, which entered force on November 10. "France did not play any role in the adoption of a joint declaration of the presidents of

Azerbaijan, Russia, and the prime minister of Armenia," Hajiyev said. "Apparently, France is showing jealousy over Russia's role in this issue. The signing of this document by the Armenian prime minister tells its own tale... France is trying to be more Armenian than the Armenians themselves," he added. "France does not have any authority to speak on behalf of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs," the presidential aide stressed. "On the contrary, France, as the co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, did not take any step to end Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan and implement the UN Security Council resolutions, it now unilaterally demonstrates zeal," Hajiyev said. "I wonder whether France has worried about the return of Azerbaijan internally displaced people to their native lands over the past 30 years?" However, France is concerned about the liberation of Azerbaijani lands from



occupation and ensuring the rule of international law," he said. "In conclusion, I would like to remind the official structures of France that the historic Azerbaijani city liberated from occupation, which holds a special place in the hearts of Azerbaijanis, is called Shusha, not Shushi," Hajiyev stressed. In the morning of November 10, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia signed an agreement to

end the military conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Under the deal, Russian peacekeepers are deployed in the region to patrol frontlines. Turkey also takes part in the peacekeeping process. Turkey and Russia signed a deal on creating a Turkish-Russian joint ceasefire monitoring centre. The clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan resumed after Armenia launched large-scale attacks on Azerbaijani forces and civilians on September 27. Five Azerbaijani civilians were killed on the first day of the Armenian attacks. Ninety-three Azerbaijani civilians were killed in Armenian's indiscriminate attacks on Azerbaijani civilians. Azerbaijan launched counter-offensive operations that ended in the liberation of over 300 settlements, villages. Azerbaijan also liberated five city centres and the historic Shusha city that was liberated on November 8. The 44 days of war ended with the Russian

brokered peace deal signed on November 9 by Azerbaijan, Russian and Armenian leaders. The peace agreement became effective on November 10 and envisages de-occupation of Azerbaijan's Kalbajar, Aghdam and Lachin regions by December 1 as well as the return of Azerbaijani IDPs to Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh and the seven adjacent regions under the control of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The peace agreement ended the 30-years-old conflict between Baku and Yerevan over Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region that along with the seven adjacent districts came under the occupation of Armenian armed forces in the war in the early 1990s. For about three decades, Armenia failed to implement the UN Security Council resolutions demanding the withdrawal of the Armenian troops, which was the main obstacle to the resolution of the conflict.

Briefs

US Embassy apologizes for political retweet

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The United States (US) Embassy in Islamabad on Wednesday came in for a lot of flak for retweeting a political post by PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal. Feeling the heat, the embassy said in a Twitter statement: "The U.S. Embassy Islamabad Twitter account was accessed last night without authorization. The U.S. Embassy does not endorse the posting or retweeting of political messages." It apologised for "any confusion that may have resulted from the unauthorized post."

Earlier on Wednesday, Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari hit out at the embassy over the retweet, saying: "US Embassy still working in Trumpian mode in support of convicted absconder & intervening brazenly in our internal politics! Monroe Doctrine also died centuries ago! US Embassy must observe norms of diplomacy - so if fake then clarify thru tweet; if not then apology tweet needed."

Punjab: highest cases in four months

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab has recorded the highest number of daily coronavirus cases in nearly four months, crossing a grim threshold as infection rates across the country begin to rise again. The province reported 502 new cases - the highest since July 14, when it had recorded 553 cases in a single day. Of the 502 new infections, 233 were recorded from Lahore alone. A total of 11,388 tests were carried out, according to the official tally. A total of nine people died due to the virus across the province.

As per daily reports from the World Health Organization, Multan had the highest positivity rate of 18.3% on November 9 - the highest in the country.

Other cities in the province with high positivity rates include Rawalpindi at 7.1% and Lahore at 4.8%. In view of the uptick in cases, the Punjab government has introduced "smart" lockdowns and restrictive measures in Gujranwala, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan.

FBR launches Maloomat app

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Wednesday launched the Maloomat TaxRay Application to facilitate the taxpayers' and general public in filing tax returns correctly. This application has been uploaded on the website of FBR, according to a press statement issued by the board here. Taxpayers' and general public can get the information about their assets and withholding deductions through the application. The information provided by this application would help the taxpayers in filing their annual tax returns correctly, it added.



RAWALPINDI: Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister of Iran calls on Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa. DG ISI Gen. Faez Hameed is also present. - DNA

BRI countries to cooperate against Covid-19: CIIE

On the occasion, participants discussed the building of a healthy Silk Road and the community with a shared future. China-Pakistan Health Corridor also was mentioned as a successful and fruitful case

DNA

SHANGHAI: BRI-countries reached a consensus to cooperate in fighting COVID-19, says a report published by China Economic Net (CEN). The cooperation arrangement was agreed at the Silk Road Health Forum and launching of Global Health Link as sub-activities of CIIE that were held in Shanghai last week.

On the occasion, participants discussed the building of a healthy Silk Road and the community with a shared future. China-Pakistan Health Corridor

also was mentioned as a successful and fruitful case. Initiated by the Silk Road Cities Alliance, the forum is jointly organized by the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center, China Reform Health Management and Services Group Co., Ltd., and Fudan Institute of BRI Global Governance. Academic institutions, government agencies, enterprises and NGOs from countries along BRI, including Pakistan, took part in the event.

The participants reached a consensus that BRI countries should cooperate to fight against COVID-19 and overcome the

global health crisis. Shen Guofang, Chairman of the Silk Road Ark Health Forum, mentioned Pakistan China Health Corridor and praised the solid cooperation between Pakistan and China. Raja Nushirwan Zainal Abidin, Ambassador of Malaysia to China, said at the event that we are all aware that the BRI aims at improving the quality of human physical interaction and movement. It is therefore not only about the construction of roads, highways and railway lines, often called "hard infrastructure" alone. It is equally about "soft infrastructure" including regulations, standards, practices as well the

culture of interaction. Soft infrastructure will profoundly change in light of covid-19, with greater emphasis on public health. I am heartened by the commitment by BRI countries to work closely together on the basis of science and the goodwill of humanity to build a "healthy community of human destiny."

Sri Lanka and other South Asian countries thanked China for its help to the BRI countries in the fight against the epidemic, and praised China's measures and achievements in the fight against the epidemic. Massimo D'Alema, Former Prime Minister of Italy said that it is

essential to strengthen the role of WHO, but also to promote exchange and direct cooperation between countries, in particular, within the framework of BRI. Zhang Wenkang, Former Minister of Health of China, said that the Chinese government actively advocates the joint building of a community of human health and has put forward a series of proposals on international assistance and the use of vaccines. China has taken concrete actions to participate in and support the global fight against covid-19, demonstrating China's sincere desire to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Shehbaz, Hamza indicted in money laundering case

LAHORE: An accountability court on Wednesday indicted Opposition Leader In National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif, his son Hamza Shehbaz and others in money laundering and assets beyond means case. Accountability Court Judge Syed Jawadul Hassan conducted the case proceedings, wherein jail authorities produced Shehbaz Sharif, Hamza Shehbaz and others on expiry of their judicial remand term. The court indicted Shehbaz Sharif, Hamza Shehbaz, and others during the proceed-

ings. However, all the suspects pleaded 'not guilty' and opted to contest trial. At this, the court directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to produce its three witnesses at the next hearing, November 26 and adjourned further hearing. Shehbaz Sharif stated before the court during the proceedings that all allegations leveled against him were baseless and he would produce solid evidence in his defence. Shehbaz Sharif also stated that he was taken to a

hospital yesterday but no physiotherapist had been provided to him yet. At this, the court remarked that the matter would be decided in accordance with the law and it would be heard on November 13. It is pertinent to mention here that the NAB had nominated 16 persons as accused in the case. However, only 10, out of 16, were indicted yet. Besides Shehbaz Sharif, Hamza Shehbaz, Javeria Ali, Fazl Dad Abbasi, Rashid Karamat, Muhammad Usman, Masroor Anwar, Nisar Ahmad, Shoab

Qamar, and Qasim Qayyum were indicted today. However, Salman Shehbaz, Nusrat Shehbaz, Rabia Imran, Syed Muhammad Tahir Naqvi, Haroon Yousaf Zai and another could not be indicted due to their absence. In a reference, comprising 55 volumes, the bureau had alleged that Shehbaz Sharif family committed massive money laundering of Rs 7 billion. Yasir Mushatq, Mushtaq Ahmad, Shahid Rafique and Aftab were made approvers in the reference. - APP

FIA unveils most wanted list of 1,210 persons

ISLAMABAD: FIA on Wednesday unveiled a list of 1,210 most wanted persons. The list released by the FIA includes 737 people from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 122 from Punjab, 161 from Balochistan, 100 from Sindh, 32 from Islamabad, and 30 persons from Gilgit-Baltistan. The FIA is in search of the accused in high profile cases. As per details, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz London chapter leader Nasir Mehmood Butt is wanted by the FIA in the judge blackmailing cases. MQM-founder, Muhammad Anwar are also placed on the list in provocative speech cases. Accused in attacks over the former president, Pervez Musharraf, former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, Punjab's former Home Minister Shuja Khanzda are also wanted by the FIA. Furthermore, accused named in the abduction of Ali Haider Gilani, son of former prime minister Yousuf Raza Gilani are also wanted by the FIA. Back in the month of October, the FIA had decided to seek the help of Interpol (International Police) to bring back former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's close aid Nasir Butt from the United Kingdom. - DNA

WHO official lauds polio workers

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Representative World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Palitha Mahipala has paid homage to the frontline polio campaign workers who are putting their lives at risk to protect the children from the crippling disease. During visit to Sargodha district to monitor polio campaign of Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIA) 2020 in the field on Wednesday, Dr Mahipala said that WHO had renewed polio eradication campaign all over Pakistan with full zeal and zest. He added it had introduced necessary adjustments in the operational plan of polio campaigns to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus by providing the teams with masks and hand sanitizers. - APP

Asad urges politicians to act responsibly

"Since mid October, when National Coordination Committee (NCC) first considered the NCOC recommendation to ban large public gatherings, the daily cases have nearly tripled"

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiative Asad Umar Wednesday urged the national political leadership to demonstrate responsibility in containing COVID-19 in the country. "The national political leadership across the political spectrum needs to demonstrate leadership to send a message to the entire nation for taking preventive steps and follow Standard Operative Procedures (SOPs)", he said in his tweet. The minister who also chairs the meeting of National Command and Control Center (NCOC) for Corona, said that the Center had once again recommended to ban all large public gatherings and rapid increase in positivity required urgent steps to save lives and livelihoods. "Since mid October, when National Coordination Committee (NCC) first considered the NCOC recommendation to ban large public gatherings, the daily cases have nearly tripled." He said consensus needed in NCC for taking this decision, which had been delayed due to lack of consensus. - DNA

330 candidates to contest elections in GB

GILGIT: Around 330 candidates including four women would contest upcoming general elections in 24 constituencies of Gilgit Baltistan scheduled to be held on November 15. According to details, a total of 745361 voters including 453663 male and 33998 female voters would cast their votes. For these elections Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) awarded 22 party tickets to its candidates from 24 constituencies. PPP awarded 24 party tickets to candidates from all constituencies and PML N awarded 18 Party tickets. - APP

Kashmir silk carpet becomes a hit at 3rd China's Int'l Import Expo

"Kashmir carpets are artworks. As the mechanization in Kashmir improves, handmade products definitely will be more rare"

DNA

BEIJING: Handmade silk carpets from Kashmir became one of the best-selling products at the 3rd China International Import Expo, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Wednesday. "Unlike ordinary carpets, for me the Kashmir one is an artwork worth collecting. That's the reason why I bought it almost without any hesitation despite the high price," said a Chinese man who bought an

exquisite Kashmir carpet with RMB 60,000 from Zahid Ahmad of Woven Cashmere at CIIE. This is Zahid Ahmad's third journey to CIIE. The Expo is an unparalleled high-end world event full of business opportunities for him. "CIIE helped us a lot as our sales have got a 30% to 40% increase in China in the last three years. Our products are of superior quality, and via CIIE we have got potential customers well matched for our products," he said. The Chinese market now is their major focus because of the country's

giant business potential. "China is a big market with a huge population. So even only 2% or 5% of the market is already a big number for us." Now they've opened two shops in the capital city Beijing. This year Zahid Ahmad brought Kashmir carpets, scarfs and furniture with embroidery to CIIE. The carpets exhibited are made from silk rather than wool. "Wool carpets are quite heavy. Silk carpets are smoother to the touch and their life span is longer than the woolen ones," he talked about silk carpets' unique strengths.

To further expand business in China, Zahid Ahmad is cooperating with the Chinese partner Xu Chunhua who was an enthusiast for Kashmir handmade carpets herself from the beginning. "Kashmir carpets are artworks. As the mechanization in Kashmir improves, handmade products definitely will be more rare. They have a chance to gain in value. Increasingly more Chinese people are becoming interested in it because of its cultural and artistic value," Xu Chunhua said with deep affection for Kashmir products.

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