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Pakistan, Japan to strengthen think-tanks cooperation

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PM's Afghan visit vital for bilateral relations: Shibli

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Bilawal Bhutto slams Gilgit Baltistan CEC

Detailed News On Page-01



Pak, Afghanistan vow to end violence

PM Khan assured the Afghan government of Pakistan's unflinching support and cooperation to end violence in Afghanistan including a ceasefire; PM Imran's visit to a step to strengthen faith and cooperation: Ghani

NEWS DESK / DNA

KABUL: Pakistan and Afghanistan on Thursday agreed to pace up their joint efforts to reduce recent spate of terrorist incidents in Afghanistan through close coordination and intelligence sharing. Prime Minister Imran Khan and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in a joint press stake-out at ARG Presidential Palace reaffirmed their commitment towards taking urgent steps leading to restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Imran Khan, who arrived in the Afghan capital on his maiden visit to the neighbouring country, held talks with President Ghani, that focused on deepening of bilateral ties, Intra-Afghan peace process and regional economic development. Prime Minister Khan assured the Afghan government of Pakistan's unflinching support and cooperation to end violence in Afghanistan including a ceasefire.



"Let us know where we can help you. We assure you that we will be there to help reduce slur of violence in your country," the Prime Minister told the

Afghan president, as the two spoke before the local and international media. Imran Khan expressed concern over the increasing level of violence in Afghanistan and supported the idea of establishment of committees from the two governments to hold mutual discussions. Prime Minister Imran Khan thanked President Ghani for extending an invitation to visit Afghanistan, expressing confidence that it would lead to further strengthening of ties between the two countries. He said Pakistan and Afghanistan enjoyed historic links and brotherly relations and recalled that during the era of 70s, Kabul and Peshawar were the favourite destinations for the visitors from both sides. Imran Khan regretted that the people of Afghanistan unfortunately suffered violence for four decades and said Pakistan was most concerned about the situation due to the fallout of situation in its own tribal areas.

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Briefs

PM's Afghan visit vital

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Senator Shibli Faraz has said the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Afghanistan will prove to be pivotal for promoting bilateral relations and contacts between the two countries. In his tweet on Thursday, he said the peoples of both the countries have rendered immense sacrifices in the war on terrorism. He said peace, development and prosperity is the right of Afghan people.

Bilawal slams GB CEC

DNA

SKARDU: Bilawal Bhutto has strongly criticized the chief election commissioner Gilgit Baltistan.

"We have always said this is not an election commission, but PTT's election wing," said Bilawal. Asking the election commissioner to issue a clarification regarding the picture, Bilal questioned: "How can you sit with ministers of the government when you are the election commissioner?"

Pak, Japan to strengthen think-tanks cooperation

Japan has evinced keen interest to examine seriously the Pakistan's dossier about Indian state-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan, Kuninori Matsuda at a meeting with Special Assistant on National Security Division, Moeed Yusuf in Islamabad on Thursday proposed to strengthen co-operation of think tanks of the two countries. Talking about Afghan peace process, the Ambassador expressed deep interest in regional connectivity between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Japan has evinced keen interest to examine seriously



of the Pakistan's dossier about Indian state-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Moeed Yusuf said Pakistan is focusing on economic security of the country. He said Pakistan is emerging as an economic hub of the region and it can become economic corridor for Afghanistan as well. The Special Assistant said government will soon remove all obstacles regarding export of skilled Pakistanis to Japan.

US Charge d' affaires meets Gen. Bajwa

NAVEED MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Angela Aggeler, US Charge d' Affaires to Pakistan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), on Thursday. Matters of mutual interest including regional security situation particularly Afghan Peace Process were discussed during the meeting. Visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's contributions



for conflict prevention in the region and relentless support provided in Afghan Peace Process. The dignity also assured of US continued assistance for the common cause of peace in Afghanistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Norway Kjell-Gunnar Eriksen and representative of UNICEF exchange documents after signing financial assistance documents for girls education in Pakistan. - DNA

Afghan FM lauds Pak peace efforts

DNA

KABUL: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi held a meeting with his Afghan counterpart Mohammad Hanif Atmar in Kabul on Thursday and discussed bilateral relations, Afghan peace process and regional peace and security situation. In his remarks, Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Pakistan has always been supportive of the dialogue process for durable peace and stability in Afghanistan. He noted that peace in Afghanistan is important for peace and stability of the region. He said it is a matter of satisfaction that the world today is acknowledging Pakistan's stance and appreciating its facilitator role in the peace process. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the success of Afghan peace process is imperative for durable peace in Afghanistan.

Chinese envoy meets Asad Umar

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong vowed on Thursday to work together to make the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) a success. Nong Rong called on Asad Umar here and discussed matters related to bilateral relations projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor especially those related to Industrial Cooperation. They expressed satisfaction on the JWG's meetings held in the recent weeks, for various sectors. They agreed to work together to make the second phase of CPEC a success.

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Norway to support girls' education

Currently, Norway supports the GLSEP in the districts of Swat and Kohistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has extended its support to UNESCO Pakistan with the additional funding of 11 million Norwegian Krone (NOK) for improvement of the "Girls' Lower Secondary Education Programme (GLSEP)". Currently, Norway supports the GLSEP in the districts

of Swat and Kohistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. With the additional funding, district Mohamad in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, district Muzaffargarh in South Punjab and district Tharparkar in Sindh have been added for programme implementation. Considering the low transition of girls' from primary to secondary level due to multiple reasons, the Norwegian contribution has

significant importance to facilitate girls' post-primary education in Pakistan. Pakistan and Norway enjoy excellent relations. A good number of Pakistanis are now living in Norway, who are well integrated into the Norwegian system and society. Many of them are active members of various Norwegian political parties and some of them have already been elected to the Norwegian parliament.

Pakistan, Russia military drills end

The two week long Durzba-V was conducted at Tarbela and NCTC PABBI



ABID RAZA

KHARIAN: Closing ceremony of Exercise DRUZBA - V was held at National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) near Kharian. Russian Ambassador Danila Ganich, Inspector General Training and Evaluation (IGT&E) Lieutenant General Sher Afgan and senior Military officials from both sides witnessed the closing

ceremony. Special Forces' Pakistan-Russian Federation Contingent demonstrated real-time skilful drills & procedures of Counter Terrorism Operations. The two week long Durzba-V was conducted at Tarbela and NCTC PABBI. During the exercise, teams shared valuable experience in Counter Terrorism domain and displayed highest standards of training and professionalism.

Two Army soldiers martyred

DNA

RAWALPINDI (DNA): Two soldiers of the Pakistan Army have embraced martyrdom on early Thursday morning after terrorists opened fire on a security check post near Pash Ziarat in South Waziristan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement. As soon as the attacked was launched, security forces promptly responded in their defence. During the encounter, Havaldar Matloob Alam, 32, and Seopy Suleman Shaukat, 25, lost their lives. Per the ISPR statement, another unnamed soldier was wounded during the exchange of fire. A clearance operation in the area is currently underway. Last month, at least six soldiers were martyred in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack on a security forces convoy in North Waziristan.

PIA air crash report issued

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The PIA flight PK-661 did not crash because of the pilot's fault but did so due to technical reasons, said the final investigation report submitted by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Thursday. Forty-seven people were killed in a 2016 air crash when the ill-fated PIA domestic flight PK-661 enroute Islamabad could not complete its journey. The plane had taken off from Chitral around 3:50PM and PIA had said the plane crashed at 1642 local time (1142 GMT) in the Havelian area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, about 125 km north of Islamabad. The 207-page report on the air tragedy was submitted at the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Thursday.

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Pakistan, South Africa enjoy excellent relations

Ambassador Madikiza welcomed the establishment of CMEA as a Centre of Excellence within the ISSI and stated that he looked forward to closer cooperation and interactions on issues of mutual interest

NEWS DESK / DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Pakistan and South Africa enjoy excellent and cordial bilateral relations. This partnership has evolved over the years, expanding to include strong people-to-people links and new and exciting opportunities." This was stated by Ambassador Mthuthuzeli Madikiza, the High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa to Pakistan during his Web-Talk on 'South Africa's Perspective on Evolving Geo-Economic Trends and Pakistan South Africa Economic Ties.'

The event was organized by the Centre for Middle East and Africa (CMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) under its Ambassadors' Platform

Series. Ambassador Madikiza welcomed the establishment of CMEA as a Centre of Excellence within the ISSI and stated that he looked forward to closer cooperation and interactions on issues of mutual interest. He said stronger ties and increased collaboration between the African Continent and partner countries in the Asian region have been growing steadily over the years. This has also strengthened the notion of progressive internationalism, which entails opposition to the perpetuation of the legacy of global imperialism, colonialism, racism, the dominance of the global North over the South, as well as global structural inequality and poverty. Talking about South Africa and Pakistan's bilateral ties, he remarked

that both sides enjoy excellent bilateral relations. According to him, one of the top priorities is to expand economic ties as South Africa considers Pakistan an important market for business-to-business cooperation. Both countries also enjoy considerable cooperation in defence pro-



DNA

duction, with substantial opportunities for a strategic and mutually beneficial partnership. He was of the view that there were several areas for further expansion of economic ties, which includes higher education, science and technology, health, energy, agriculture as well as the minerals sector. Earlier, in his welcome remarks, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, expressed that, the present government of Pakistan attaches high priority to economic diplomacy particularly with Africa. CMEA was created out of this desire by Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, to have stronger economic and commercial ties with Africa. While praising South Africa as one of the leading economies within the

African Continent, Ambassador Chaudhry said that Pakistan envisages a closer cooperation with South Africa in future. Earlier Ms. Amina Khan, Director Centre for Middle East and Africa (CMEA) in her welcome Remarks stated that Pakistan and South Africa ties are highly valued since the establishment of their diplomatic ties in 1994. South Africa and Pakistan share several commonalities such their struggle against colonialism and the vision of the late Nelson Mandela. South Africa is one of the top trading partners of Pakistan from the African continent. Thus, extension and consolidation of trade and economic relations between two countries is pivotal.

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Sino-Pak collaboration moves towards social development area - Page 07

Rs 600b package for South Balochistan announced - Page 08

Briefs

NCRC
urges all
stakeholders
to get united

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson, National Commission on the Rights of Child, Afshan Tehseen reaffirms the commitment to protect rights of every child in Pakistan, the motto of the commission. "Today, thousands of vulnerable children continue to suffer from violence, abuse, illiteracy, poverty and disabilities in the country. It is important to let our children enjoy their lives with dignity having opportunities of development, protection and growth. On this day, let us resolve to get united for the cause of improving the state of children in Pakistan," the Chairperson NCRC Pakistan said here in a message issued on Thursday. The Universal Children's Day, is being marked around the world including Pakistan with activities focused on promotion and protection of children's rights on November 20. This year 2020, Pakistan is also celebrating 30th anniversary of the ratification of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), she informed. It is a pledge to ensure that children would have right to survive, participate and develop in an environment free from exploitation, abuse and neglect, she said.

Minister
inaugurates
'Skills Punjab
Job Portal'

DNA

LAHORE: Provincial Minister Industries Mian Aslam Iqbal said that Skills Punjab Job Portal was an important initiative of TEVTA towards realization of the policy of Prime Minister Imran Khan under the guidance of Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar for provision of job opportunities to the youth. He was addressing on the occasion of launching first ever official Job Portal of the Province for TVET sector, developed and designed by the Technical & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), here yesterday (Thursday) at TEVTA Secretariat, during a simple ceremony. Secretary Industries Dr. Wasif Khurshid, Director General Punjab Skill Development Agency Salah Saeed, Chairman Punjab Information Board Azfar Manzoor, Chairman PVTI Shah Nawaz Badar, Chief Operating Officer TEVTA Akhtar Abbas Bhawan and officers of different govt. departments and TEVTA were also present at this occasion. Mian Aslam Iqbal said that TEVTA was taking rapid strides towards progress and growth under the leadership of its Chairperson Ali Salman Siddique who deserves appreciation, along with his team, for making efforts for bridging up the gap between the prospective employers and skilled youth through development of the Job Portal, said the minister. Chairperson TEVTA Ali Salman said establishment of Job Portal was a significant step towards the New Skill Eco System of TEVTA which envisages introduction of demand driven quality training and provision of economic opportunities for students upon completion of training.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi calls on Senator Sirajul Haq Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami to offer condolences on the death of his mother. – DNA

Fuel efficient stoves would
reduce deforestation: Zartaj

Zartaj Gul distributed 100 energy-saving cooking stoves among poor and deserving households from Kalar Syedan and Kahuta forest areas of the Rawalpindi district under the UN Development Programme's Sustainable Forest Management Project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Promoting use of energy-saving cooking stoves among forest communities, which solely rely on fuelwood for cooking and heating needs, is vital to significantly reducing fuelwood and tackling deforestation in the country. "Empowering forest communities with alternative and efficient energy sources and energy-saving cooking stoves for meeting daily cooking and heating needs can significantly help cut soaring pressure on the country's forest resources," the state minister told participants of a ceremony held for distribution of 500 energy-efficient cooking stoves in Chawan forest area of the Karore valley, some 40 kms from here. Zartaj Gul distributed 100 energy-saving cooking stoves among poor and deserving households from Kalar Syedan and Kahuta forest areas of the Rawalpindi district under the UN Development



Programme's Sustainable Forest Management Project and Global Environmental Facility as a part of the government's efforts to cut forest loss. Zartaj Gul told participants that the energy-efficient stoves are proven known for burning around 50 percent less fuelwood and help

mitigate indoor air pollution and related health hazards that kill thousands annually in the country. However, she hoped, "the distribution of the energy-saving and efficient cooking stoves among the forest communities would not only reduce fuelwood collection burden

of households but also lead to improvement in their health and cut forest loss". With growing population and soaring demand for fuelwood, which steeply spike during the winter months (Nov-Feb), in most of the forest areas, the country's forest areas are under mounting pressure and

fast shrinking, she noted. Referring to various international studies on state of forests in Pakistan, the state minister Zartaj Gul said that current estimates suggest that the country's forests are being cleared at a rate of 40,000 hectares (ha) per annum, over 60 percent of which is used as fuelwood. Besides, over 60 percent of the rural communities and significant number of households in urban and peri-urban areas lack access to natural gas, who depend on fuelwood mined from the forest areas for their day-to-day domestic needs including cooking, heating and bathing, she added referring to the study findings. She pointed out that ruthless exploitation of forest resources and tree-cutting over last several years, most of it for meeting household energy needs, has badly degraded country's overall environment, aggravating air pollution, vulnerability to the devastating impacts of climate change, particularly floods, heat waves, land erosion and landslides.

Agreement worth
US\$ 14M reached
during Pak expo2020

DNA

LAHORE: Agreements worth the US \$14 million are expected to reach between Pakistani and Chinese industrialists as a result of 448 matchmaking meetings took place during the Pakistan Industrial Expo 2020 recently held in the provincial metropolis. This was the fourth edition of the expo arranged by the Everest International playing the role of a bridge between Pakistani and Chinese entrepreneurs and attracting certain investment and technology from foreign countries especially China. During the three-day event, more than 2000 professional Pakistani businessmen participated. 448 match meetings were arranged on the spot which let exhibitors from Chi-

na to join B2B meetings with Pakistani clients face to face. Multiple chambers and associations brought their delegation to participate including Constructors Association of Pakistan, Sahiwal Chamber, Sargodha Chamber, Swabi Chamber, Hardware Merchants of Pakistan, Chakwal Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Peshawar Chamber and Commerce & Industry. It is worth noting that the event was launched in an innovative model of "Online + Offline". All exhibits were physically showed and all B2B meetings held online via terminal equipment which was installed on every booth. The organizer followed the SOP regulations all the time, set sanitization gate, sprayer, temperature testers and arranged alcohol wet tissues and sanitizer for every booth.



SARGODHA: Vice Chancellor Dr. Ishtiaque Ahmad distributing certificates among the participants during calligraphy exhibition in connection with the Shane-e-Rehmatul-Lil-Alameen (SAWW) week celebrations at Sargodha University. – DNA

CCP conducts inspection
of APCMAs office bearers

DNA

KARACHI: Exercising its powers under Section 34 of the Competition Act 2010, the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), as part of an enquiry launched in May 2020 to investigate the possible anti-competitive activities by the cement manufacturers, carried out a search and inspection of the offices of Chairman and Vice Chairman of All Pakistan Cement Manufacturers Association (APCMA) located in Karachi today. Two different teams entered and searched the offices of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of APCMA located in Karachi and impounded the relevant record. The enquiry in cement sector was started based on the information gathered through various media reports, and concerns and complaints expressed regarding a concurrent increase in cement prices, particularly during the month of April 2020. The reports indicated that an in-

crease ranging between Rs. 45 - Rs55 per cement bag was apparently collectively decided in a meeting of the cement manufacturers held under the umbrella of APCMA. On 24th September 2020, the CCP had conducted search and inspection of the APCMA main office and the office of Senior Vice Chairman of the APCMA's Executive Committee; a senior employee of a major cement company in Lahore. Moreover, the impounded record, including Whatsapp messages and emails, warranting conducting search and inspection in the South Zone as well for obtaining evidence relating to anticompetitive practices. The evidence suggests possibility of a cartel/collusive arrangement between the cement manufacturers. It is pertinent to mention that various factors among others lower demand of cement in the first two quarters of 2020, and almost parallel increase in cement prices and data collected from Pakistan Bureau Statistics and the cement

companies, became the basis of CCP's enquiry and the earlier search. Sudden rise in price by the cement manufacturers at a time when there is low demand compared to the installed capacity of the manufacturers and considering that input fuel cost (coal and oil), transportation and interest rate have declined raises suspicion of a collective rise in price by cement companies. It is pertinent to mention here that the cement sector has a history of collusive activities and they have been penalized in the past to an amount of collectively more than Rs. 6.3 billion on account of forming a cartel and involvement in the prohibited agreements in violation of Section 04 of the Act. In 2012 the Commission again initiated enquiry against cement companies, however the same could not be proceeded and concluded due to stay order granted to cement companies by the Lahore High Court. The current enquiry was initiated in 2020.

Punjab govt
all set to deal
with public
gatherings

DNA

LAHORE: Keeping in view the second wave of the novel coronavirus, the Punjab law ministry, in its recommendations, asked the government not to allow the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to hold any public meeting in the province. Strict legal action should be taken against PDM if it puts people's lives in danger by holding a public gathering in the province, the ministry recommended. PDM's activist should be arrested under Section 16 of the MPO and its leadership should be kept under house arrest if it tries to hold a public meeting in the province. Earlier on November 17, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JULF) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had rejected a ban imposed by the federal government on public gatherings in the country amid rising COVID-19 cases. "We reject a ban on public gatherings in the guise of COVID-19 pandemic and they will be held as per schedule," the JULF chief had said adding that the incumbent rulers were used to rigging and their tactics are aimed at pressurizing the opposition leaders. He had said that it was not a government formed from the public mandate and therefore they would not hold any sort of negotiations with them. "We also reject the results of the Gilgit Baltistan elections," Maulana Fazlur Rehman had said.

CPSC hosts
first advisory
board meeting
at ISSI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted its first Advisory Board meeting on Thursday. Participants joined the meeting both physically and virtually. Those present on the occasion included: Director General ISSI, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG, ISSI; Professor Dr. Aliya H Khan; Professor Dr. Attaullah Shah, Karakoram International University; Dr. Farida Faisal, Arid Agriculture University; Dr. Guo Xuetang, Shanghai University of International Business and Economics; Hasan Daud Butt, KPK Board of Investment; Ambassador Masood Khalid, Former Ambassador to China; Mohammad Muddasir Tippu, DG China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Lt. General Naeem Khalid Lodhi (Retd.), Former Defence Minister; Ms. Pang Chunxue, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of China in Islamabad; Qazi Azmat Isa, Chief Executive, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund; Dr. Safdar Sohail, Executive Director, Pakistan Alliance for Social Protection; Ziad Alahdad, Former Director of Operations, World Bank and Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Centre. Director China-Pakistan Study Centre, Dr. Talat Shabbir, briefed the participants on the working of CPSC, its accomplishments for the past two years and shared future proposals.

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LARGEST CIRCULATED DIPLOMATIC MAGAZINE

Briefs

Development work of CDA underway

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The developmental work under Capital Development Authority (CDA) in sector I-15 and its sub sectors is underway. According to a press release of CDA, sector I-15 has been neglected for a long time. But, the CDA's administration has started work in this sector now. Biddings have been invited for the infrastructure of Sector I-15/1. The earth work and survey of streets and roads of the sector are continued. Besides this, the tender for sector I-15/4 has also been opened. According to detail, sector I-15 was opened for facilitating the low income citizens. Despite allotment of plots the sector lacked proper development. However, the current administration of CDA is committed for the developmental work in the neglected sectors. CDA is implementing the policy of the betterment of infrastructure in sector I-15 and its sub sectors so that the issues being faced by the allottees may be resolved. Tender for I-15 has been issued which will be opened on December 17, 2020. The developmental work will be started in January next year. The tender for sub sector I-15/4 has been opened and developmental work will be started with in two weeks.

SBP reserves increase by \$191mln

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign exchange reserve held by the State Bank of Pakistan increased by US \$191 million to US \$12,931.2 million during the week ending on November 13, 2020, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported Thursday. The total liquid foreign reserves held by the country stood at US \$20,085.6 million. According to the break-up figures, the foreign reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan stood at US \$ 12,931.2 million whereas the net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 7,154.4 million. - APP

Police to take action against high beam lights

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has decided to take strict action against those involved in using high beam lights and Light-Emitting Diodes (LED) during drive. Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed said the decision has been made to ensure safe road environment in the city and avoid accidents. A total of 1,982 vehicles had to face action during the ongoing year having HID/LED lights while such lights were also impounded, he added. Special squads have been constituted to check use of LED/HID by motorists while police pickets would be erected at important boulevards of the city including Expressway, Kashmir Highway, Margalla Road, IJP road, Murree Road, 7th Avenue and 9th avenue to check this particular violation. - APP

IRSA releases 97,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 97,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 53,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1503.21 feet, which was 115.21 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 26,000 cusecs and outflow as 40,000 cusecs. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1190.20 feet, which was 150.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 7,800 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President ICCI along with a delegation is in a meeting with Federal minister for planning and development, Asad Umar. - DNA

Asad Umar to support ICCI over new industrial estate

Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry gave a detailed presentation to Asad Umar on the need of a new industrial estate in the federal capital

FIJAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: Asad Umar, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives has assured that he would fully support the ICCI in its endeavours for the establishment of a new industrial estate near Islamabad so that industrialization would flourish in the region. He stated this while addressing a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, which called on him led by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President. Khalid Javed, Shaban Khalid, Ch. Na-deem Gujjar and Taha Akbar Ansa-

ri were in the delegation. Asad Umar fully endorsed the proposal of ICCI for setting up a new industrial estate near Islamabad and said that he would move a summary of this proposal to the government for approval and materialization of this important project. He said that the government would try to acquire land under Sec-4 for industrial estate to meet the needs of investors and industrialists of the federal capital. He said that the current government was fully focused on reviving industrialisation to achieve rapid economic growth and maximum facilitation would be extended to the ICCI for a new

industrial zone in the region. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry gave a detailed presentation to Asad Umar on the need of a new industrial estate in the federal capital. He said that the existing industrial zones in Islamabad have saturated due to which setting up new industrial units in Islamabad was not possible and the potential investors of the region were shifting to other areas that was not good for the local economy. He said that the government should cooperate in establishing a new industrial zone near Is-

lamabad Airport as this strategic location provided easy access to the airport and motorway. He said that the government should also consider setting up an export processing zone near Islamabad Airport that would help in boosting exports from this region. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that ICCI would fully support the government in making PM's Kamyab Jawan Program successful. He said that ICCI would take the lead in connecting the youth with local industries and SMEs to help them in their job placement. He said that ICCI would play a role in connecting the young innovators with industrialists and invest-

ors to facilitate them in launching business start-ups. He said that ICCI would also provide guidance, career counselling and mentorship to youth to foster entrepreneurship in the young generation. Khalid Javed former President ICCI, Shaban Khalid and other members of the delegation also highlighted the importance of a new industrial estate in or around Islamabad that would bring multiple beneficial outcomes for the local economy as it would promote industrialization and investment in the region, create plenty of new jobs for people and generate more tax revenue for the government.

World Children's Day being marked

ISLAMABAD: Like other parts of the globe, United Nations' (UN) Universal Children's Day is being marked today across the globe including Pakistan to promote international togetherness and awareness among children worldwide. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, promotes and coordinates this special day, which also works towards improving children's welfare. World Children's Day is UNICEF's annual day of action for children, by children. According to UNICEF, this year, the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in a child rights crisis. The costs of the pandemic for children are immediate and, if unaddressed, may last a lifetime. It's time for generations to come together to reimagine the type of world we want to create. On 20 November, kids will reimagine a better world. Universal Children's Day promotes the welfare of and understanding between children. Many schools and other educational institutions make a special effort to inform children of their rights according to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Teachers stimulate their pupils to think about the differences between themselves and others and explain the idea of "rights". In countries where the rights of children are generally well-respected, teachers may draw attention to situations in countries where this is not the case. In some areas UNICEF holds events to draw particular attention to children's rights. These may be to stimulate interest in the media around the world or to start nationwide campaigns, for instance on the importance of immunizations or breastfeeding. Many countries, including Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, hold Universal Children's Day events on November 20 to mark the anniversaries of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. - DNA

NCRC urges to get united for children rights

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson, National Commission on the Rights of Child, Afshan Tehseen reaffirms the commitment to protect rights of every child in Pakistan, the motto of the commission. "Today, thousands of vulnerable children continue to suffer from violence, abuse, illiteracy, poverty and disabilities in the country. It is important to let our children enjoy their lives with dignity having opportunities of development, protection and growth. On this day, let us resolve to get united for the cause of improving the state of children in Pakistan," the Chairperson NCRC Pakistan said here in a message issued on Thursday. The Universal Children's Day, is being marked around the world including Pakistan with activities focused on promotion and protection of children's rights on November 20. This year 2020, Pakistan is also celebrating 30th anniversary of the ratification of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), she informed. It is a pledge to ensure that children would have right to survive, participate and develop in an environment free from exploitation, abuse and neglect, she said. - DNA

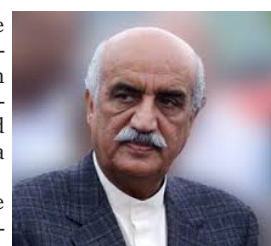
AIOU uploads confirm admission lists

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has expedited the process of verifying admission data of applicants for admission in various programs offered in autumn 2020 semester from matriculation to PhD level. Admission data of 90 percent candidates have been verified so far and remaining 10 percent would be verified within a week time. Verified admission data of the students have been uploaded on the university website to enable them to confirm their admission. Director Admissions, Mian Muhammad Riaz on Thursday informed that the candidates who have applied for admission in autumn 2020 semester may check status of their admission from the 'Admission Confirmation' link on the university website. To get information about objected admission forms or incomplete ones, the candidates can access 'Admission Objection' link on the university website. The Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum has directed the mailing department to complete the entire process of mailing of books within the stipulated time period by all means.

Khursheed Shah's bail plea adjourned

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday adjourned hearing of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah's post-arrest bail plea for two weeks. A three-member bench of the court headed by Justice Mushir Alam and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah heard the case filed by Syed Khursheed Shah and his son. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has also approached the Supreme Court against the decision to grant bail to Syed Khursheed Shah's son-in-law, wife and others. According to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), on receipt of multiple complaints against the petitioner (Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah, MNA that he was richest man in the Sindh beyond his known sources of income, the NAB conducted inquiry and investigation whereby collected the evidence against him and filed a reference in NAB Court Sukkur. He was nominated the accused No.1 in the Reference No.17/2019 along with seventeen others. The Petitioner/accused in connivance with other co-accused persons accumulated assets beyond their known sources to the tune of Rs.1,229,449,803-, which were disproportionate to their known sources of income. During the course of proceedings, Advocate Raza Rabbani counsel for Khursheed Shah said that his client was arrested from Islamabad on Separate 18, 2019. He said that the NAB produced his client before Accountability Court Sukkur on September 31, 2019 after getting transit remand from Accountability Court Islamabad. Khursheed Shah was sent to jail on judicial remand after 45 days, he added. He said that his client was in jail since last one year. Raza Rabbani said that the accountability court had granted bail to Khursheed Shah against a surety bond of Rs 0.5 million on December 17, 2019 but surprisingly, the judge went on a long leave instead of signing the bail bonds as per the court decision. The same cases were filed against Khursheed Shah in 2001 and his client was facing these cases since 2001, he added. - APP



1430 drug pushers held during ongoing year

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have arrested 1430 drug pushers during the ongoing year and recovered cache of narcotics from them, a police spokesman said. Following directions and guidance of IGP Islamabad Muhammad Amir Zulfiqar Khan, police spokesperson said that renewed efforts were made to curb bootlegging and drug peddling activities in the city. DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed conducted special meetings with heads of police stations to brief them about accelerating efforts against such anti-social elements. In perspective of these directions, he said Islamabad police launched special crackdown against drug pushers and bootleggers. Police arrested 1430 persons and recovered 482.868 kilogram hashish, 115.464 kilogram heroin, 10.515 kilogram opium, 1073 gram ice, 51 gram cocaine, 103 tranquilizing pills and 18411 wine bottles from them. DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed has appreciated this overall performance; he said it is the prime responsibility of police to provide relief to citizens and every possible effort would be made to ensure it. The DIG has urged all police officials to adopt decent attitude for success in policing affairs and said sluggish attitude towards resolving public affairs would not be tolerated. He said that utmost efforts should be made to curb the menace of drug, putting at risk the future of our generation.

NUMS & DRAP to hold scientific symposium

RAWALPINDI: Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) and National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) have organized a one day Scientific Symposium on "Clinical Trials" at Army Medical College (AMC) Rawalpindi on Saturday, November 21, 2020. Surgeon General/DGMS (IS) Lt. Gen Nigar Johar, Vice Chancellor NUMS Lt. Gen Syed Muhammad Imran Majeed (Retd) and CEO DRAP Dr. Asim Rauf will address the symposium. The symposium is organized to impart experiential learning that integrates theoretical knowledge with hands-on practical application and skills. NUMS regularly organizes such events to keep its students as well faculty updated on the developments at home as well as in the international arena. - APP

QAU to play active role as member Consortium

ISLAMABAD: Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad being top ranked federal university and member Institution of the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) would play an effective role in bringing technology to Pakistan. It was assured by Vice-Chancellor Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad and Chairman Vice Chancellor Committee Prof. Dr Muhammad Ali Shah during a meeting with Sohail Mahmood Foreign Secretary of Pakistan and Prof. Dr Muhammad Iqbal Chaudhary Coordinator General COMSTECH at COMSTECH Headquarters Islamabad. He informed that QAU had already established a committee comprising of senior scientists for effective liaison with COMSTECH. He also highlighted importance of collaborative research, joint degree programmes and exchange of faculty as well as students among higher education institutions of Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC). Murtaza Noor Advisor COMSTECH on Media/Linkages and Secretary General QAU Alumni Association was also present on the occasion. Speaking on occasion, Coordinator General, COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. Iqbal Choudhary, said the purpose of CCoE is to put our efforts to achieve excellence in partnership. - APP

PARC joins hands with CUKOOs and Farm Friend

PARC and Cukoos will work together to promote, market, and sale of hygienic high-quality food products developed by PARC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PATCO is an agri-business company of PARC to promote its R&D products and services and in connection with its agri-business growth PATCO-PARC signed two agreements with two different business companies i.e. 'Cukoos' and 'Farm Friends' on 18 November 2020 at NARC. Chairman PARC Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan and other high officials of both parties attended the signing ceremony. CEO PATCO-PARC Dr. Muhammad Amjad, Director Farm Friends, Dr. Masroor ul Hassan Tipu and Managing Partner Cukoos, Mr. Anwar Yahya were the signatories on behalf of their

respective companies. PARC and Cukoos will work together to promote, market, and sale of hygienic high-quality food

products developed by PARC. Under this joint-venture agreement a new franchise of PARC Display Centre will be set up at Ittehad

Centre, Main Murree Road Bara Kahu. Meanwhile, importers and distributors of agri / livestock equipment

and dairy products, Farm Friends and PARC are entering into an agreement with a common objective to promote livestock, dairy feed and other products such as PARC milk booster in the country. PARC milk booster will be marketed along with application technology to the farmers through aggressive marketing with the help of distribution network. On witnessing the signing, Chairman PARC was determined to seek growth of research based and multi grain food products with the high nutritional value in the country. Our public-private partnership agreements would definitely bring new era in Pakistan agri-business by making hygienic and organic food within reach of common masses.



Briefs

AIOU Uploads Confirm Admission Lists

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Mehfil-e-Milad for ladies arranged at PUCAR

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Council of the Arts arranged Mehfil-e-Milad for ladies in connection with Hafta-e-Shan-e-Rahmatul Aalaameen. Member Punjab Assembly Farah Agha flanked by Naheed Manzoor was chief guest of the Mehfil-e-Milad. Salma Khan, urologist, Khadija Bibi, Larab Rafiq, Nasim Akhtar, Saba Akbar, Robina Naz, Maria Kanwal, Aqsa Fatima, Sabrina Bhukari, Nazma Shoukat, Tabusam Ikhtlaq, and Shahida Parween were among the Naat Khawaan. The Beautiful Wird of Durood Shareef gets much appreciation from the audience. While addressing the audience Farah Agha said that, to Love Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) is in the blood of muslim. Where a human body is incomplete without blood, a Muslim is incomplete without the Love for Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). Muslim should lived lived under the Guiding principles of Quran and Sunnah, so that they can succeed in this world and life after, she added. Naheed Manzoor said, as a Muslim we all should condemn the blasphemous sketches in France.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Turkey ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul and Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry Education Wajiha Akram inaugurating the up gradation of school with the help of TIKA. – DNA

Committee satisfied over Govt's COVID-19 measures

Mr. Asim Saeed, Member, Planning Commission reiterated that as a key planning agency of the Government, the Planning Commission believes in engaging with all stakeholders. In this case, we want to come up with doable initiatives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Leading representatives of industry and enterprises showed their confidence in Government of Pakistan's timely interventions to insulate the industry from getting hurt due to COVID-19. Appreciating State Bank of Pakistan's deferment of loan and temporary economic relief facilities, they suggested that government should do more to protect micro small and small enterprises from the direct and indirect effects of a possible second wave of COVID-19. They also highlighted the need for establishing an internationally recognized certification lab which may certify that exports going to Middle East and EU were according to their respective standards. In the absence of such lab in Pakistan, exporters have to send their samples to China to get the

required certification. In case of any restriction on air transportation during second wave of COVID-19, our exports to these destinations would be severely affected. This was the crux of the virtual meeting of high powered "Industry and Enterprise" sub-group of Planning Minister's Advisory Committee. The group's convener and member of Advisory Committee Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri highlighted that Government of Pakistan was trying to reach out to the private sector stakeholders to understand and address their needs during the pandemic. "In the short run the purpose of getting feedback from leaders of industry is to enable the Government to come up with a demand driven and evidence based policy response to protect businesses during these testing times; in the medium to long run, this group can help Planning Commission to tailor its initiatives that may

stimulate sustainable growth and economic recovery" said Dr Suleri, while orienting about the purpose of establishing the sub-group. Mr. Asim Saeed, Member, Planning Commission reiterated that as a key planning agency of the Government, the Planning Commission believes in engaging with all stakeholders. In this case, we want to come up with doable initiatives which have a complete buy in of industries. Mr Asfandyar Farrukh, Managing Director, Hub Leather Group said that reopening of business activities helped to honor the export orders. Terming cashflow and liquidity crunch as a major challenge for retail sector during COVID-19, he urged that State Bank should come up with a mechanism to lend money to retail sector based on their banking transactions and other taxes. Engr M.A Jabbar, Chief Executive, Qaim Automotive highlighted the

disparity that exists between ease in customs duties provided to exporters and manufacturers for local supplies. Government needs COVID-19, demanded Engr Jabbar. MsShanza Anwar from Steel Castings group termed shortage of steel scrap – a basic raw material, the biggest challenge for the steel industry. She pointed out that one of the biggest market for Pakistan phase 3, Saudi Arabia has additional certification requirement. These laws were changed during the times of COVID and most of the industry players were not aware of them. This caused in our consignments getting held at Saudi ports of entry. We have to send fans to China for testing and certification. Government should ensure that we have internationally accredited labs in Pakistan for uninterrupted exports. "Miracle Man", Mr Zafar Masud, President Bank

of Punjab termed deferment of loan repayments by private sector and Temporary Economic Relief Facility (TERF) by SBP as a major relief measures for industry. He also emphasized on creating awareness about employment initiatives, "KamyabJawan Program" and "Punjab Rozgar Scheme". He however, expressed fears about possible default of many industries in the FY22, and said that banking sector should work on minimizing the fall out effects of COVID-19 in FY22. Mr Waqar Ahmad of Nestle Pakistan and Afghanistan highlighting the impacts of COVID on food and beverage sector said that multiple times shutdowns of production plants to disinfect them is increasing the cost of production. "The beverages sector has struggled to recover as schools and large gatherings got curtailed during peak sales season, i.e., summer" he added.

92 more cases reported in last 24 hours

RAWALPINDI: In an alarming development, COVID-19 cases registered a sharp rise in the district as 92 more persons became its victims during the last 24 hours. According to a handout issued here, Deputy Commissioner Capt (R) Anwar Ul Haq said that 80 patients were reported from Rawalpindi district while 12 belonged to other districts. He said that number of coronavirus patients in the district hospital's were continuously increasing while the district government, health department and others had made arrangements to control the situation. The DC informed that 21 cases were reported from Potohar town, 16 Rawalpindi Cantt, 25 Rawal town, 3 Gujar Khan and 15 from Taxila. He further added that 33 patients were admitted in Holy family Hospital, 3 Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 6 Red Crescent, 8 Institute of Urology and one in the Hearts international hospital who were being provided the best health care facilities. Anwar said that to control the spread of COVID-19, the district administration imposed smart lockdown in various parts of the city and Cantonment areas to ensure public safety. He said that, the areas which had been sealed from November 19 midnight include DHA Phase 1 sector C, Gulshanabad, Hali road street 10, Allama Iqbal street Muslim Town and Behria Town phase 3. "There will be controlled entry and exit in the said areas identified as hot-spots of C virus disease", he added. – APP

15 sanitary workers tested positive

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) Managing Director Awais Manzoor Tarrar Thursday said the company was implementing all possible preventive measures to deal with the COVID-19 while 15 workers were tested positive for the virus. Talking to APP, he said the company was conducting joint disinfectant spray with coordination of Punjab Emergency Rescue Service 1122 and other departments concerned in different residential and commercial areas of the city where anti-corona virus spray and manual and mechanical sweeping with chlorinated water was being done to contain the coronavirus spread. The department has also deputed the staff to provide extraordinary cleanliness services inside and outside quarantine centres and was on the front line fighting against the coronavirus by providing exceptional cleanliness services, he said. He informed that different campaigns were also launched to create awareness among citizens about importance of cleanliness against coronavirus, smog and dengue virus so that they should keep their surroundings clean and adopt precautionary measures for elimination of such fatal virus. – APP

NIH to start awareness activities on antimicrobials

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Health (NIH) has decided to start series of activities across the country to promote awareness Antimicrobials Resistance (AMR) among all sectors. According to NIH, the institute in collaboration with national and international partners is celebrating Antimicrobials Resistance week from November 18-24. On occasion of World Health Organization's (WHO) World Antibiotic Awareness Week which is celebrated each year with aim to increase global awareness of antibiotic resistance and its devastating effects on living beings. Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death. As a result of drug resistance, antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines become ineffective and infections become increasingly difficult or impossible to treat. It said that the NIH had planned and implemented a series of activities across the country to sensitize the issue of AMR and to promote the correct usage of antibiotics across all fields in order to prevent further instances of antibiotic resistance. – APP

Reforms in British rule urged in seminar

RAWALPINDI: A seminar was held here on Thursday at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) on "Policy Dialogue in Public Perception and Criminal Justice in Pakistan". The seminar was organized by PMAS-AAUR Department of Criminology with the objective to aware the students and the faculty members about the hurdles faced by government departments to ensure criminal justice to the public and importance of the public perception. Prof. Dr. Qamar uz Zaman, Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR was chief guest while Basharat Shehzad Additional DG FIA Headquarters Islamabad, Saqib Sultan Director National Public Safety and Sultan Saleem Mirza DG Headquarters NAB Islamabad participated as guest speakers. Sultan Saleem Mirza in his address said that our legislators should look into the whole system and laws

which were affecting the justice system because many of them were inducted from the British rules which were outdated. "We only talk about justice, not about the laws or policies for the convicted, for his contribution to society," he said. Focusing on the public interaction, Basharat Shehzad said that action taken in the public feedback should also be given importance because when action would be taken the perception would automatically be improved. He said that there was no database in our country which caused the weak coordination between the police, investigation, prosecution and judiciary departments who were responsible for the justice. While addressing, Saqib Sultan said that justice was the most important act which protected the state and Pakistan was lacking behind in this, according to the World Justice Project 2020 Pakistan falls at the 98th position in world criminal justice. – APP



ISLAMABAD: High commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan Iqram Mohammad Ibrahim visited a local restaurant with his wife here in the capital. – DNA

"Accountability for all" NAB's policy: Chairman

NAB is committed for eradication of corruption by adopting "Accountability for All" policy. He directed all officers/officials of NAB to put in their best efforts in vigorously pursuance of under trail cases of NAB with complete preparation on the basis of solid evidence in accordance with law

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting to review performance of Prosecution Division of NAB at NAB Headquarters. During the meeting, it was informed that Prosecution Division of NAB is working closely with Operations Division of NAB HQ in order to have legal assistance to NAB's Operations Division and all Regional Bureaus of NAB in conduct of complaint verifications, inquires, investigations and are pleading cases of NAB vigorously on the basis of solid evidence in

the respected Courts as per law. During the meeting, it was informed that on the directions of the Chairman NAB, Prosecution Division has been revamped by inducting experienced legal consultants/special prosecutors. A mechanism of handling of witnesses has been introduced and the result of this intervention is very encouraging. Due to constant deliberations, monitoring and performance analysis of Prosecution Division, the overall conviction ratio is approximately 68.8 percent in the respected Accountability Courts which is record achievement. During the meeting, it was in-

formed that Sukkur has announced judgment in Reference No. 08/2019 whereby the accused persons namely Tufail Ahmed and Waqar Ahmed were sentenced for 10 x years R.I and 08 years respectively. It was further informed that the respected Accountability Court, Quetta has announced judgment in Reference No. 12/2015 whereby the accused persons namely Babar Tehseen, Khalid Akram and Javed Akram were sentenced for 10 x years R.I along with the fine of Rs 51.745 million each. It was informed that the respected Accountability Court Karachi has announced judgment in Reference No. 16/2017 whereby the accused persons namely Shahid

Wajid Ali was sentenced for 6 x years R.I along with the fine of Rs. 30 million after he was found guilty of the charge on the basis of solid proof against him. The respected Accountability Court Lahore has announced judgment in Reference No. 50/2014, 51/2014, 52/2014, 53/2014, 54/2014 whereby the principal accused Nazeer Ahmed Khan was sentenced for 5 x years R.I along with fines of total liabilities in each case. It was further informed that the respected Accountability Court Karachi has announced judgment in Reference No. 16/2017 whereby the accused persons namely Shahid

Raza Shah, Wahid Bux, Zaman Jokhio, Lal Muhammad, M. Afzal Hussain, M. Salik Nukhrich and Abdul Aziz were sentenced for 10 x years R.I along with fine of Rs. 5 million each. The Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB said that eradication of corruption is the top priority of NAB. NAB is committed for eradication of corruption by adopting "Accountability for All" policy. He directed all officers/officials of NAB to put in their best efforts in vigorously pursuance of under trail cases of NAB with complete preparation on the basis of solid evidence in accordance with law.

Troop withdrawal

AS the months pass by without any positive developments in Afghanistan, the situation continues to get murkier. The outgoing Trump administration's decision to withdraw an additional 2000 troops—leaving the US tally of troops stationed in Afghanistan to 2500—might just lead yet another increase in violence. The stated deadline of the pullout—January 15, 2021—means that it comes only five days before the transition between the Trump and Biden administrations. How convoluted that situation will get remains to be seen, but either way, there is so far some confusion as to what direction the US policy in Afghanistan will take after a new President takes office. It is doubtful that President-elect Biden will send its armed forces back, so Afghanistan will have to live with the 2500 soldiers that will remain once this new order has been implemented.

Amidst the US' unilateral decisions, the future of Afghanistan hangs in the balance, with no prospects of resolution in the short run. Violence has continued to increase in the last few months, with some particularly grisly attacks on civilians. The Taliban and the Afghan government are sitting at the negotiating table, but not much has come of it. Long-standing issues such as power-sharing and the structure of the state going forward remain key stumbling blocks. But with the US focused inward, all of this could quickly lead to a complete breakdown in talks if there is a refusal by both sides to find compromise. The Biden Administration—once it comes into power—would have to set clear policy goals for the negotiations quickly, in order to break the deadlock. Perhaps that is what at least one of the sides is waiting for anyway; to see whether a change in leadership can open up more room to manoeuvre. The start of the next year will be a critical point for the negotiations—for better or worse.

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Caution needed

WITH the heightened risk factor that accompanies the accumulation of people in large groups, Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) call for rallies, protests and sit-ins is highly irresponsible. What needs to be understood is that the wellbeing of the people needs to come first. Our future cannot be ridden with economic depravity, a poor quality of life and uncontrollable chaos—all qualities that we can expect if we refuse to take precaution in the status quo.

PM Imran Khan's warning on public protests and gathering stem from the concerns of a mutated and much more lethal virus that plagues the country, claiming multiple lives and livelihoods. According to new research, the strain of COVID-19 is, now, not showing up on tests. Furthermore, symptoms seem to be severer and much more fatal. We have returned back to the beginning of May where medical equipment, sanitation supplies and commodities in general were either scarce, in a limited supply or subject to extreme inflation. The only difference right now is the attitude towards the disease; the authorities and masses, in a similar fashion, seem to be apathetic towards the precautionary behaviours that must be adopted to limit the rate of transmission. A prime example of this is the insistence of continuing with public protests, putting the lives of thousands at risk to a disease that seems to be hungry for more. In recognition of all this, all jalsas, whether in Lahore or Peshawar, need to be cancelled for now. It is the responsibility of these large parties, dominated by highly informed politicians, to endorse self-preservation so that we can, once again, tackle the pandemic with efficiency and urgency.

The biggest weapon that plays in the virus' interest is the neglect that such political bodies continue to show in Pakistan. If the fact that we, as a country, are facing this problem together—with each individual subjected to equal amounts of risk—is understood then the need for collective action, regardless of whatever side you are on, will become clear.

Afghan peace process at crossroads!

Iqbal Khan

Taliban are likely to be the most influential group in any new political setup in Afghanistan, no matter who sponsors such a set; or whatever route it takes. This is a reality with which neither Ashraf Ghani's Afghan government nor Iran are happy to reconcile with; though both are trying to improve their relations with future rulers of Afghanistan. However, violence is increasing as all sides continue to violate anti-violence clauses of the February Peace Deal—with impunity. United States airstrikes has emerged as a new normal impacting on speed of Doha talks. At least 876 civilians were killed and 1,685 injured as attacks surged by nearly 50 percent in the three months to the end of September

PRIME Minister Imran Khan is set to undertake his maiden trip to Afghanistan on the invitation of President Ashraf Ghani as Afghan peace process faces uncertain future with the change at the White House after Joe Biden won the US election. Premier Imran will meet President Ghani, Dr Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Afghan High peace council, and reiterate Pakistan's support for the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. The visit comes at a crucial juncture as intra-Afghan talks are making little progress. Continued violence in Afghanistan is making the process further complicated.

Pakistan has played a key part in brokering the ongoing peace process, something that has been acknowledged both by Kabul and Washington. The several rounds between the Taliban and Afghan government negotiators have yet to make any major headway. Interestingly, President Donald Trump continues to behave like the winner of 2020 presidential elections. According to Lolita Baldor and Meghann Myers, he is all set to order substantial troop cut in Afghanistan and small troop reduction in Iraq by January 15. This would run counter to military commanders' advice. Expected plans would leave 2,500 troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Presently, there are 4,500 to 5,000 troops in Afghanistan and more than 3,000 in Iraq. Republican leaders in Capitol Hill issued stark warnings about making any hasty exit from Afghanistan that could jeopardize the peace process and undermine counterterrorism efforts. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has warned against a potentially "humiliating" pull-out from Afghanistan that he said would be worse than the US departure from Saigon in 1975. Representative Michael McCaul, Republican leader on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said of the plans for Afghanistan, "We need to ensure a residual force is maintained for the foreseeable future to protect US national and homeland security interests and to help secure peace for Afghanistan." Many Afghans believe Trump rushed with the peace process. They say that President Trump did not prioritise a responsible pullout of American troops, something that can result in pushing the country back into a civil war. Trump has also been accused of giving the Taliban more concessions during talks and side-lined the Afghan government. And, one has also to see how Biden handles Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is quietly but aggressively following his strategy to be at least a disrupter in Afghan peace process. Modi wants to retain

the capability of using Afghan soil as launching pad for India's state sponsored terrorist proxies.

In the run-up to the US elections, Biden had said he would withdraw US troops but was not averse to keeping some counterterrorism forces in Afghanistan. In an interview with CBS in July, Biden had said the US bears "zero responsibility" if the Taliban came back to power after the withdrawal of US troops. "Zero responsibility. The responsibility I have is to protect America's national interest and not put our women and men in harm's way ... that's what I'd do as president," Biden said.

Deep State strongly feels the necessity of around 9-10,000 troops to remain stationed in Afghanistan for eternity, to meet strategic objectives beyond Afghanistan. Trump shall hand over the Afghan war to Biden at about same troop level at which he inherited. Troop basing in Afghanistan checkmats many rivals—China, Russia, Iran etc; alongside overarching intelligence gathering about Eurasian landmass.

However according to Aljazeera, "analysts say Biden will largely stay on the course set by the outgoing president but will hold the Taliban accountable for violence. They say the real difference will be in implementation, with some Afghans expressing hope Biden will give fewer concessions to the Taliban". Afghanistan's second vice president, Sarwar Danish, has called upon the incoming Biden administration to review the peace process and apply more pressure on the Taliban to reduce violence.

Taliban are feeling the heat, and looking for umbrella. According to Arab News, on November 10, Taliban called on the incoming administration of US President-elect Joe Biden to stick to the February agreement. "The Islamic Emirate would like to stress to the new American president-elect and future administration that implementation of the agreement is the most reasonable and effective tool for ending the conflict between both our countries." According to Andrew Watkins, senior analyst on Afghanistan at the International Crisis Group: "A Biden government is much more likely to listen to concerns of allies, including those in Kabul, and its own national security establishment, and adjust its policy of drawdown and disengagement to ensure continued stability as much as possible.

Taliban are likely to be the most influential group in any new political setup in Afghanistan, no matter who sponsors such a set; or whatever route it takes. This is a reality with which neither Ashraf

Ghani's Afghan government nor Iran are happy to reconcile with; though both are trying to improve their relations with future rulers of Afghanistan. However, violence is increasing as all sides continue to violate anti-violence clauses of the February Peace Deal—with impunity. United States airstrikes has emerged as a new normal impacting on speed of Doha talks. At least 876 civilians were killed and 1,685 injured as attacks surged by nearly 50 percent in the three months to the end of September. United Nations has also raised questions over Al Qaeda with a senior UN official telling the BBC last month that the group were still "heavily embedded" with the Taliban. The US States has, so far, kept up with the schedule of thinning out of troops to reach a zero level by May 2021. A report released in May by the UN said al-Qaeda has between 400 to 600 operatives active in 12 Afghan provinces: Badakhshan, Ghazni, Helmand, Khost, Kunar, Kunduz, Logar, Nangarhar, Nimruz, Nuristan, Paktiya and Zabul.

Talking to the visiting Iranian foreign minister on November 11, Prime Minister Imran Khan 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. Highlighting Pakistan's efforts towards facilitating peace and stability in Afghanistan, the prime minister said there is no military solution to the Afghan conflict. Imran 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. According to Seema Sengupta's November 11 piece for Asia Times, Intra Afghan "peace process is at risk of collapse as influential groups seek a wider negotiation than US-backed bilateral track". New President could mean a renegotiation or a watered down implementation of February 29 deal; keeping occupation troops in Afghanistan beyond agreed timeframe of May 2021, on any pretext, could unhinge Taliban from the deal. Both Trump and Biden seek troop reduction in Afghanistan. Unlike Trump, Biden is focused on more orderly withdrawal and may set his own terms with the Afghan Taliban. Taliban on the other hand hope that the new US administration would stick to the agreement reached between them and Washington on February 29.

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

The impact of 2020 on human values

Dimah Al-Sheikh



Is there a case for saying that economic prosperity at the expense of all else, including more human-centric value outcomes, is not what we should pursue when we get a chance to reboot the way we produce, manufacture and export goods? Or should we be focusing more on the human capital at the center of the world's economic growth

2020 is a year that will feature heavily in future history books, and for many reasons. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us, in one way or another. It has acted as an accelerator on issues that were already bubbling beneath the surface of our lives. As it emerged, an urgent question loomed large: As our world is changing, are our values changing too?

A seismic economic recession, worldwide protests for racial equality and justice, more extreme climate temperatures, a new virtual reality of working from home — we have had to adapt to all these in less than nine months. And so we have had to rethink fundamentally the way we live, the way we do things and our priorities. Through all of this, our values have also shifted.

If 2020 were a mirror, the forces acting on it have chipped, scratched and cracked its surface. Now, as we look into the mirror of 2020, we see a changed reflection staring back. When something as fundamental as who we are and what we are able to do has altered, it is natural that the value outcomes we strive for should also reflect our times. But let's make this explicit: COVID-19 did not do this to us. It simply made manifest what was previously latent. It is not unique in the history of pandemics. What is unique is how it has marked the dawn of a new world where technology and humanity are now more closely aligned and integrated than ever before. The real kicker for COVID-19 was its refusal to go away. Though it will, in time, come under con-

trol when a scientifically approved vaccine is widely available, by not "going away" it has exposed a largely unsustainable set of lifestyles that we were too accustomed to. Our shortfalls were exposed — as an international community and as individuals who had become dependent on so many inter-related pieces of a global jigsaw puzzle.

We have been forced to re-examine ourselves, our lives and our systems at a deeper level. When we give more attention to things at a more analytical level, we are able to look past the things we think that we want. We are able to look beneath the surface and understand, on a more basic level, the beliefs, assumptions and behaviors that color our lives. At the bottom of this introspective dive, we can see more clearly our underlying values — collectively and individually.

During V20's search for the "value of our values" it has been striking that 2020 has exposed a deep and unarticulated conflict between two values outcomes which we would all agree are universally desirable.

Take for instance the conflict that has been dubbed by economists as "the trade-off" — the conflict between lives and livelihoods. No one would argue that economic prosperity and public health are undesirable value outcomes, on any metric. Yet 2020 has set these two on a collision course. It's not clear that either will come out of it well as we cannot have one without damaging the other. Yet we cannot accept this as a resolution. Herein lies a core motivation for the formation of the Values 20 Group. We believe in

the potential of humanity. We believe that humans can do better if we find a way of harnessing our innovation, ingenuity and creativity to come up with solutions to our problems that don't prefer one value outcome at the expense of another.

How do we do this? We must articulate a better understanding of why these values, among many others, have come into conflict now, why they existed in the first place, whether we need such an emphasis on them in the future, and how we can resolve conflicts in the systems that our growth and productivity has become reliant upon.

Is there a case for saying that economic prosperity at the expense of all else, including more human-centric value outcomes, is not what we should pursue when we get a chance to reboot the way we produce, manufacture and export goods? Or should we be focusing more on the human capital at the center of the world's economic growth? What value outcomes are integral to making that a reality?

These are among the questions that the Values 20 non-official engagement group is tackling, debating, researching and molding into policy recommendations that we hope will be presented to the G20 leaders.

It aims at enshrining a new kind of thinking at the heart of policy-making in the years ahead — one that will endeavour to exalt and elevate a common humanity that, in times of crisis, we stick together. It has never been more important that we do so.

— Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Coronavirus cases in Russia exceed 2M

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russia on Thursday reported 23,610 new virus cases, the highest single-day spike in the country, bringing the total number of cases to more than 2 million. According to the country's health authorities, the death toll rose to 34,850, with a record high of 463 fatalities reported over the past 24 hours. Some 25,573 virus patients recovered, also a highest single-day rise in the country, pushing the total number of recoveries to over 1.5 million. Meanwhile, the number of active cases went down for the third day in a row, standing at 454,102 on Thursday. Russia's overall case tally is the fifth highest in the world, behind the US, India, Brazil, and France. Despite a surge in numbers, Kremlin has resisted plans to reintroduce national lockdown restrictions, which were implemented in spring. Separate measures in different regions, however, are in place.

Pak, Afghanistan vow to end violence

From Page 01

"My visit at this particular time has a message that Pakistan wants peace in Afghanistan," he said. The Prime Minister said peace and connectivity was the best way to ensure prosperity of Pakistan, Afghanistan and also the entire region. He said close cooperation between the committees from both sides and intelligence agencies would lead towards finding effective solutions for peace and stability. He said Pakistan played a consistent role in Intra-Afghan dialogue and noticed with concern the increasing level of violence despite the Qatar peace deal inked between the United States and Taliban in Doha, Qatar this February. "Now again to build trust, we will help the Afghan government to meet their expectations," he said. Earlier, President Ashraf Ghani welcomed the Prime Minister, saying the visit was a "step to strengthen faith and cooperation". "Our common focus will be poverty eradication and empowerment of our countries," Ghani told the media persons on the occasion. Ashraf Ghani acknowledged that Prime Minister Khan came to Kabul with an "important message to help end violence". He said enduring peace within the framework of joint cooperation was important to lead towards a comprehensive ceasefire. "All of us need to understand that violence is not an answer, but an inclusive politics," he said. With PM Imran Khan's visit, Ghani said a "foundation of trust was established today" to continue the journey towards sustainable peace. He announced to visit Pakistan in near future on the invitation of Prime Minister Khan.

Chinese envoy meets Asad Umar

From Page 01

Minister Asad Umar welcomed the ambassador on his new assignments and extended best wishes for his endeavors. He said that China-Pakistan relationship extended beyond the government to government cooperation as the bond between the people of the two countries was also very strong. The Chinese ambassador thanked the minister and said that the Chinese side also highly values the relationship and it would be his endeavor to build on the work done in the last many years.



KABUL: Afghan National Cricket Team present singed bat and ball to Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan. – DNA

Destructions in Karabakh shows Armenian mindset

Garakhanbayli village of liberated Fuzuli region. No solid building has been left. Vandalism did not know any limits. More crimes of Armenia will surface. International media will cover all crimes of Armenia," Hjiyev tweeted

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan presidential aide Hikmat Hajiyev has said that the scale of destruction in Fuzuli region, which has recently been liberated from occupation, shows how far Armenia is from the civilized world. "Only facade of building has been left in Fuzuli. The scale and magnitude of destruction in de-occupied Fuzuli region of Azerbaijan shows how Armenia is far from the civilized world. It is a scorched earth policy. Vandalism and barbarism," Hikmat Hajiyev wrote on his official Twitter account on 18 November. In a different tweet, Hajiyev posted a video, saying: "Entrance of Fuzuli city of Azerbaijan after liberation. Once it was a city of 100,000 more population. No solid building has been left." The presidential aide also wrote about the region's Garakhanbayli village, posting a video from the village. "Garakhanbayli village of liberated Fuzuli region. No solid building has been left. Vandalism did not know any limits. More crimes of Armenia will surface. International media will cover all crimes of Armenia," he tweeted.

Hajiyev posted in another tweet the video of a destroyed area. "It is not a rain forest or jungle. It is also not a city of the apocalypse. It is ruins of Fuzuli city of Azerbaijan. Razed to the ground and abandoned. Let's the international community see the vandalism of Armenia. Deliberate destruction and pillage of property, cultural heritage," he said. "In 455 A.D. Rome city burned and pillaged by tribes called Vandals. Their reputation sealed for all of history as synonymous with their act of destruction-Vandalism. After seeing Armenia's destruction in once-prosperous Fuzuli city vandalism may have new synonyms," he wrote. In a separate tweet, he described the area in the video he had posted as "Armenia's fortification lines along the southern front - in Fuzuli region". The presidential aide also wrote about the handmade missile launcher found in the region, posting a photo from the scene. "We are in liberated villages of Fuzuli. This handmade inaccurate missile launcher used by Armenian army against densely populated nearby villages. Such handmade systems were used mainly in Syria. Armenians



recruited mercenaries from the Middle East," he tweeted. In a comment to the video showing the explosion of white phosphorus projectiles, he said: "In front of cameras of international media white phosphorus projectiles fired by Armenia was disposed in Fuzuli region. Use of white phosphorus is banned." To recap, Azerbaijan invited foreign journalists to cover the state of lands liberated from the Armenian occupation. Earlier, President Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan will take Armenia to an international court for all material and moral damages it had inflicted. Meanwhile, Azertag reported that in an interview with journalists, Hajiyev said that "white phosphorus was widely

used by the Armenian armed forces for burning forests around Shusha". Hikmat Hajiyev said: "What we see here is another fact proving that the white phosphorus was used by the Armenian armed forces. The representative of the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) has provided detailed information about it. White phosphorus munitions were also previously used by the Armenian armed forces." He added that Azerbaijan had earlier reported about the wide use of white phosphorus by the Armenian armed forces for burning forests around Shusha. "White phosphorus was widely used by the Armenian armed forces not only in these operations but also in previous ones - during the battles in April 2016. They mainly targeted civilians, civilian facilities, fields, as well as the Azerbaijani Armed Forces. Now, we are collecting information to appeal to international organizations, as well as inform the International Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Although white phosphorus is not considered a chemical weapon, it has harmful health effects. Once absorbed into the

human body, it can cause sudden death and severe burns," he added. Ninety-four Azerbaijani civilians have been killed and hundreds of others have been injured in Armenia's armed attacks. The Azerbaijani army liberated several cities and nearly 300 of its settlements and villages as well as some strategic heights from the occupation of Armenian forces during 44 days. About 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory - including Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent regions - had been under Armenian occupation for nearly three decades. Armenia failed to implement four UN Security Council resolutions that urged the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the invading forces from the occupied territories. On November 10, Baku and Yerevan signed a Russia-brokered agreement to end fighting and work towards a comprehensive solution. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev hailed the agreement as a victory for his country and a defeat for Armenia, saying Baku's military success enabled it to gain an upper hand to end the three-decade occupation of its territory.

US senators seek to block arms sale to UAE

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Three US senators said they would introduce legislation to block President Donald Trump's \$23 billion worth arms sale effort to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Senator Bob Menendez, a Democrat from New Jersey, Republican Senator Rand Paul from Kentucky, and Democratic Senator Chris Murphy from Connecticut, said Wednesday in a joint statement they will introduce four separate Joint Resolutions of Disapproval to reject Trump's effort. "The Trump administration circumvented the informal congressional review process that grants the Congressional committees of jurisdiction time to ensure proposed arms sales of this magnitude are consistent with US values, national security objectives, and the safety of our allies," the statement said. Menendez, who is also a ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the Congress should assert its authority over the US' foreign arms sales. "As I tried to warn the Trump administration, circumventing deliberative processes for considering a massive infusion of weapons to a country in a volatile region with multiple ongoing conflicts is downright irresponsible," he added. Sen. Murphy said he supported the normalization of relations between Israel and the UAE, but warned that Trump's arms sale may flood the Middle East with more weapons and cause an arms race in the region. Reminding that the UAE had violated arms sales agreements in the past, Murphy said the weapons it may purchase could be used in violation of the US and international law. The Trump administration formally notified lawmakers on Nov. 10 of its intent to sell more than \$23 billion in arms to the UAE, which include the F-35 stealth fighter jets, Reaper drones, air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles and other munitions. Abu Dhabi fully normalized relations with Israel as part of Trump's push to have Arab states open diplomatic ties with the country. Despite warm relations with the UAE, Israeli lobbies have expressed discomfort with advanced arms sale to the tiny Arab country.

Pakistan, South Africa enjoy excellent relations

From Page 01

South Africa considers Pakistan an important market for business cooperation and is keen to further enhance the volume of bilateral trade. Under its 'Engage Africa Policy,' Pakistan looks forward to further deepening its political, and economic ties with South Africa. In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG ISSI, stated that Pakistan has always been at the forefront of independence struggles of African countries, and has facilitated various African Liberation leaders. He highlighted how the current government of Pakistan is laying special emphasis on building ties with the African continent through its "Engage Africa" policy. He also said that from the African continent opportunities like AFCFTA and Vision 2063 are welcoming developments. He concluded by saying that both Pakistan and South Africa have great potential to work together for maximum mutual benefits.

PIA air crash report issued

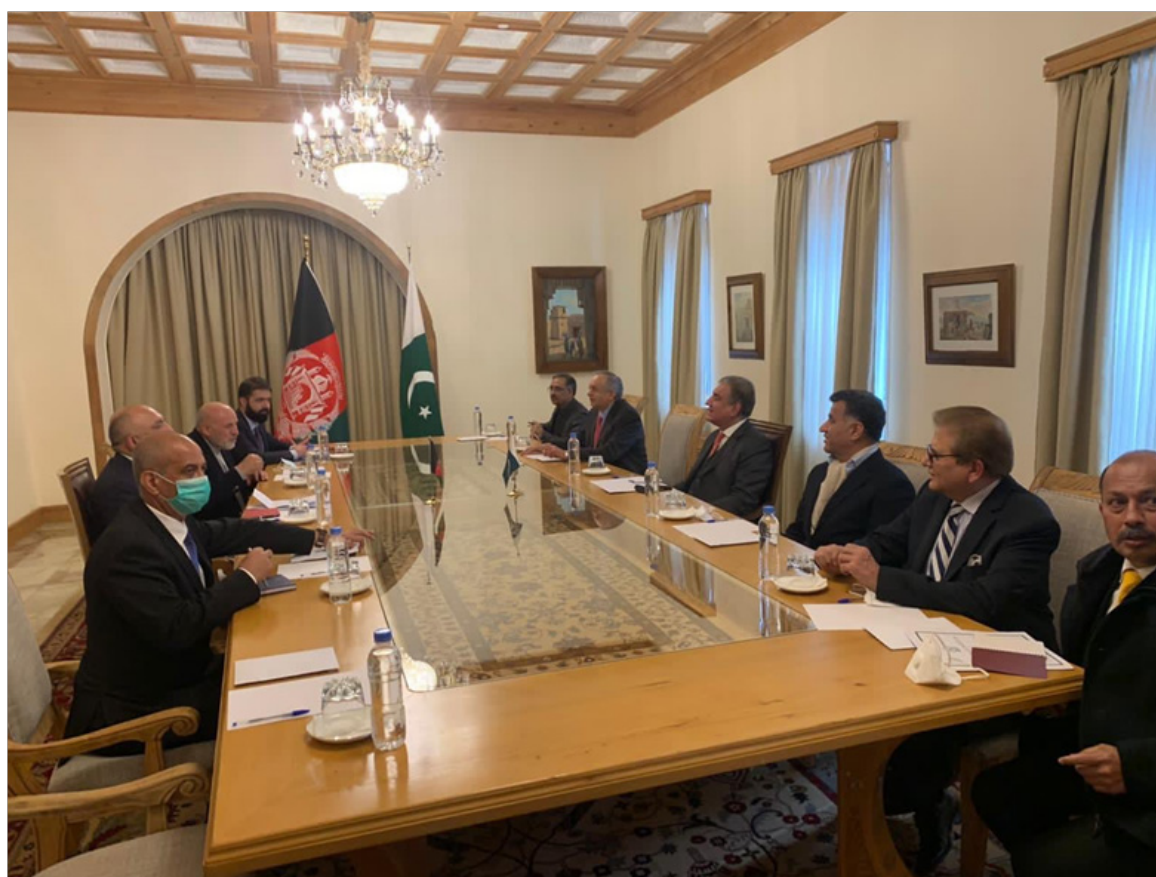
From Page 01

The CAA's report said that the PIA's Engineering and Maintenance Department was responsible for the air crash and not the pilot as the aircraft met the tragedy due to a technical fault. The report said that three technical faults had been identified which had led to the plane crash and these were: (i) Fracture of one of the power turbine blades of Engine No.1 (ii) A broken/ fractured pin inside overspeed governor (iii) Probable pre-existing contamination inside Propeller Valve Module (PVM).

UK's largest military investment since cold war

LONDON: The United Kingdom pledged to end the "era of retreat" by announcing the biggest military investment since the end of the Cold War, despite the coronavirus crisis pummeling the economy, as it seeks to define its post-Brexit role on the world stage. Prime Minister Boris Johnson wants to carve out a leading role for the UK in a new era of global cooperation and free trade, backed by modern military and cyberspace capabilities. Johnson said the increased spending reflected the need to upgrade military capabilities, including pioneering new technology with plans for a new space command and artificial intelligence agency. In a speech to Parliament on Thursday outlining the first conclusions from the biggest review of foreign policy and defence in three decades, Johnson will announce an extra 16.5 billion pounds (\$22bn) for the military over the next four years. The defence budget is currently just under 42 billion pounds (\$55.5bn) a year. "I have taken this decision in the teeth of the pandemic because the defence of the realm must come first," Johnson said in a statement. "The international situation is more perilous and more intensely competitive than at any time since the Cold War and Britain must be true to our history and stand alongside our allies. To achieve this, we need to upgrade our capabilities across the board." At a time of heightened global uncertainty, the continued rise of China and after four years of US President Donald Trump's international diplomacy, the UK's 2016 vote to leave the European Union has thrown its own role and global influence into doubt. – APP

resolution emphasizes that state unitary enterprises and companies with a state share of 50% or more, regardless of the number of employees and the amount of income from the sale of goods and services, do not belong to medium-sized enterprises. The document proposes, from 1 January 2021, to reimburse 50% of the costs of attracting foreign specialists and all costs of training employees at retraining courses at the expense of the State Employment Fund. It is also proposed to reduce the



KABUL: Foreign minister of Pakistan Shah Mehmood Qureshi met with Afghan Foreign minister Hanif Atmar on the sidelines of the PM Imran Khan's visit to Kabul. – DNA

CCI to support businesses in Uzbekistan

According to the document, small businesses will include individual entrepreneurs, microfirms (up to 10 employees and net revenue of up to 1 billion soums per year), small businesses (up to 100 employees and net revenue of up to 5 billion soums per year).

DNA

TASHKENT: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) has developed a draft resolution of the President of Uzbekistan "On measures to introduce a mechanism to encourage and support medium-sized enterprises." The draft resolution was published for discussion. The CCI document proposes to establish criteria for business entities from 1 January 2021. According to the document,

small businesses will include individual entrepreneurs, microfirms (up to 10 employees and net revenue of up to 1 billion soums per year), small businesses (up to 100 employees and net revenue of up to 5 billion soums per year). Medium businesses will include companies with up to 250 employees and net revenue of up to 15 billion soums per year. Companies with more than 250 employees and net revenue of more than 15 billion soums per year will be considered large businesses. The draft

resolution emphasizes that state unitary enterprises and companies with a state share of 50% or more, regardless of the number of employees and the amount of income from the sale of goods and services, do not belong to medium-sized enterprises. The document proposes, from 1 January 2021, to reimburse 50% of the costs of attracting foreign specialists and all costs of training employees at retraining courses at the expense of the State Employment Fund. It is also proposed to reduce the

temporary financial difficulties can postpone the payment of taxes for 6 months by notifying the tax authorities. The document proposes, from 1 January 2021, to introduce a procedure for providing subsidies and guarantees to medium-sized enterprises at the expense of the Entrepreneurship Support Fund. The draft resolution proposes to give an advantage to medium-sized businesses in the allocation of space in economic zones and public auctions with state property.

Briefs

U.S. names new ambassador to Venezuela

CARACAS: The United States confirmed the nomination of its new ambassador to Venezuela in a Senate vote on Wednesday even though the two countries broke their diplomatic ties last year. James Story, who was confirmed as the ambassador, had been serving as the Charge d' Affaires for the Venezuela Affairs Unit at the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, Colombia, after the United States withdrew all its diplomats from its Caracas embassy. The United States and Venezuela stopped exchanging ambassadors in 2010. In 2019, the two countries broke off their diplomatic relations shortly after Washington announced its backing of Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido as the country's leader. — APP

NZ confirms to purchase 5 mln vaccines

WELLINGTON: The New Zealand government has confirmed an in-principle agreement to purchase up to 5 million COVID-19 vaccines from Janssen Pharmaceuticals after clinical trials and regulatory approval.

"This agreement forms part of our portfolio approach to ensure that we have the ability to access a range of vaccine options, if and when a suitable vaccine is developed and approved," Research, Science and Innovation Minister Megan Woods said in a statement on Thursday. It is an initial agreement with Janssen Pharmaceuticals, and a formal advance purchase agreement is expected to be finalized in coming weeks, Woods said.

The agreement with Janssen would see the first doses of up to 2 million delivered from the third quarter of 2021, with the option to purchase up to 3 million additional doses, which would be delivered throughout 2022, she said.

"A key point of difference for the Janssen vaccine is that it's likely to be a single-dose vaccine and is compatible with standard vaccine distribution channels, so it may potentially be more efficient to administer," said the minister. Woods said Janssen, along with its parent company Johnson & Johnson, have a very strong track record producing safe and effective pharmaceutical products for use globally and in New Zealand. This announcement follows the government's recent agreement to purchase 1.5 million doses of vaccine, enough for 750,000 people, from Pfizer and BioNTech, and works alongside other aspects of the COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy, including membership of the global COVAX facility, according to the statement. — APP

Coronavirus cases in Africa cross two million mark

FOREIGN DESK

RABAT: Total coronavirus cases in Africa have surpassed the two million mark despite a slow addition of reported infections compared with other regions around the world, the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said. With the African Union's health body reporting 2,013,388 cases on Thursday, the continent now represents less than 4 percent of the world's total cases, which many experts believe to be an undercount. They believe many COVID-19 infections and related deaths in Africa are likely being missed as testing rates in the continent of about 1.3 billion people are among the lowest in the world, and many deaths of all types go unrecorded. Africa has reported less than 48,000 coronavirus deaths so far. Countries such as Sudan, Chad, and Egypt have reported the highest death rates across the continent at 7.81 percent, 6.28 percent and 5.82 percent respectively. South Africa has the continent's highest number of reported COVID-19 cases at less than 750,000, with a death rate of 2.71 percent, according to a Reuters tally. With the continent representing nearly 16.7 percent of the world's population, about 15 coronavirus cases are reported for every 10,000 people. Africa's lower number of infections and deaths compared with Europe, South America and the United States can in part be attributed to several factors aside from a likely undercount.



KARACHI: RCCI delegation in a group photo after the meeting with Secretary TADP. — DNA

Sino-Pak collaboration moves towards social development area

Due to Chinese remarkable ability and good services in the machinery sector, more capital investment from China is taking place which makes Pakistan getting sufficient in production

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing collaboration between China and Pakistan under CPEC is moving from infrastructure into the social development area. This was stated by Badar uz Zaman, Commercial Counsellor of Pakistani Embassy in Beijing at the opening ceremony of Online Pakistan Industrial Exhibition, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN). In the past, high technology machinery was hardly accessible in Pakistan and the price of it was quite

Pakistani woman achieves distinction at China Festival

DNA

SHANGHAI: A Pakistani woman Almas Ilyas won a prize of Highest Potential Overseas Author at the China Online International Literature Festival in Shanghai, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The online literature is a distinguished form of literature which has prevailed in China in the past 15 years.

As online literature booming in the Chinese market, Webnovel (webnovel.com), a cross-platform Internet service aiming to bring online literature to the world, was launched by Tencent's China Literature Group in Apr 2018. Webnovel has attracted more than 100,000 overseas writers and published more than 160,000 online literature works. Most of them are original authors from BRI countries,

including Pakistan, Singapore, Philippines and Bangladesh and so on. At the same time, China has exported more than 10,000 Chinese online literature works to more than 40 BRI countries. Almas started her writing career in Dec 2018, "In the past two years, my novels have become very popular, and one of them has been read more than ten million times on Webnovel," she said.

high. Due to Chinese remarkable ability and good services in the machinery sector, more capital investment from China is taking place which makes Pakistan getting sufficient in production. CPEC has been contributing towards construction of Pakistan, major projects in the energy sector have already been completed and more new projects are expected. "We are now targeting the areas related to health currently. Many Chinese companies are interested in the supply of health-related equipment to Pakistan and they are collaborating with Pakistani universities and formal surgical companies.

Police crackdown ordered on democracy protests

Prayut, who seized power in a 2014 coup, issued a statement Thursday warning protesters will be hit with the full force of the law

BANGKOK: Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha ordered security agencies on Thursday to crack down on pro-democracy protesters, days after police used tear gas and water cannon at a Bangkok rally. The country has been rocked since July by youth-led protests demanding a new constitution, unprecedented calls to reform the un-touchable monarchy, and for Prayut to resign.

Clashes outside parliament Tuesday between pro-democracy protesters and hardline royalists marked a steep rise in violence, with six people shot. A day later, some 20,000 people massed in Bangkok's main shopping district, and protesters daubed anti-royal graffiti outside the Thai National Police headquarters. Prayut, who seized power in a 2014 coup, issued a statement Thursday warning protesters will be hit with the full force of the law. "The situation is still not resolved in any good direction and is likely to develop into more conflict leading to more violence," he said. "If this is left... it may damage the nation and the most beloved institution," he added, referring to the monarchy. He said the government and

security agencies need to "intensify their practices", and enforce all sections of all laws. This could mean more charges under the country's harsh royal defamation laws, which are routinely interpreted to include any criticism of any aspect of the monarchy — including content posted or shared on social media. King Maha Vajiralongkorn asked the Thai government in June to suspend using the lese majeste laws, but human rights critics say there is a host of other legislation that authorities can use to target democracy activists. Asked if the government was giving the nod to police to pursue lese majeste charges, spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri did not rule it out. "The protesters should respect all laws in general. We don't specify whether we would be enacting any laws specifically," he told AFP. The king sits at the apex of Thai power, supported by the military and the kingdom's billionaire clans, and the royal family enjoys support from mostly older conservatives. Lawmakers have this week been discussing various proposals for constitutional change, which mostly exclude any reform to the monarchy. — APP

Hilal-i-Pak conferred on Chinese Minister

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan on Thursday conferred Hilal-i-Pakistan on Song Tao, Minister of International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) Central Committee in recognition of his outstanding services towards Pakistan and strengthening of Pakistan-China relations

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque, on

behalf of President Dr. Arif Alvi, conferred the award upon Song Tao at a special investiture ceremony held here at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse. Song Tao, also a member of the 19th CPC Central Committee, has been a great friend of Pakistan and an ardent advocate of Pakistan-China friendship. In his capacity as Minister IDCPC, he has been instrumental in promoting the sustainable and healthy development of

Pakistan-China exchanges in the spheres of people-to-people contacts and party-to-party linkages. Song Tao has played a key role in fostering greater mutual understanding between the CPC and various political parties of Pakistan, thereby contributing to consolidating the all-around social consensus on the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Co-operative Partnership and jointly building a closer

Pakistan-China Community of Shared Future in the New Era. He was also the force behind to strengthen political support for realizing CPEC's potential as a game-changer for Pakistan's socio-economic development. The special investiture ceremony was attended by the senior officials of International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) and officers of Pakistan Embassy, Beijing.



BEIJING: On behalf of the President of Pakistan DR. Arif Alvi, ambassador of Pakistan to China Moin ul Haque conferred the award of 'Hilal-i-Imtiaz' on Song Tao, the Minister of International Department. Minister Tao is a great friend of Pakistan and an ardent advocate of Pakistan-China friendship. — DNA

Report finds Aussie war crimes in Afghanistan

This shameful record includes alleged instances in which new patrol members were coerced to shoot a prisoner in order to achieve that soldier's first kill, in an appalling practice known as 'bleeding'

CANBERRA: Australia's elite special forces "unlawfully killed" 39 Afghan civilians and prisoners, including summary executions as part of initiation rituals, according to evidence in a searing military inquiry now being referred to a special war crimes prosecutor. A years-long internal investigation into military misconduct was released Thursday, prompting the Chief of the Australian Defence Force to admit a "destructive" culture of impunity among special forces leading to a string of alleged murders and cover-ups spanning years. "Some patrols took the law into their own hands, rules were broken, stories concocted, lies told and prisoners killed," General Angus Campbell said, apologising

"sincerely and unreservedly" to the people of Afghanistan. "This shameful record includes alleged instances in which new patrol members were coerced to shoot a prisoner in order to achieve that soldier's first kill, in an appalling practice known as 'bleeding'." The report also reported evidence that troops were engaged in "body count competitions", and covered up unlawful killings by staging skirmishes, planting weapons and adding names to target lists respectively. The military's own inspector general produced the harrowing 465-page official inquiry into events between 2005 and 2016 that detailed dozens of killings "outside the heat of battle". It recommended 19 individuals be

referred to Australian Federal Police, compensation be paid to the families of victims, and the military makes a slew of reforms. Campbell went a step further, saying those involved had brought a "stain" on their regiment, on the armed forces and on Australia, and would be referred to the office of the special investigator for war crimes. He also moved to revoke distinguished service medals awarded to special operations forces who served in Afghanistan between 2007 and 2013. After the September 11, 2001 attacks, more than 26,000 Australian uniformed personnel were sent to Afghanistan to fight alongside US and allied forces against the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other Islamist groups. Australian combat troops

officially left the country in 2013, but since then a series of often-brutal accounts have emerged about the conduct of elite special forces units. They range from reports of troops killing a six-year-old child in a house raid, to a prisoner being shot dead to save space in a helicopter. Prime Minister Scott Morrison attempted to cushion the blow of the report, telling Australians last week to brace for the "honest and brutal truths" contained within the heavily redacted document, which censors many highly inflammatory details. Morrison also called his Afghan counterpart Wednesday to foreshadow "some disturbing allegations" that the government was taking "very seriously". The office of President Ashraf

Ghani said Morrison had "expressed his deepest sorrow over the misconduct". The Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs labelled the actions detailed in the report as "unforgivable" but acknowledged its publication as an "important step towards justice". Last week, Morrison announced the appointment of a special investigator to prosecute the alleged war crimes, a move aimed at forestalling any prosecution at the International Criminal Court. The revelations will "definitely" be used by the Taliban to restate calls "for foreign forces to withdraw from Afghanistan", Srinjoy Bose, an international relations lecturer at the University of New South Wales, told AFP. — APP

FPCCI assures support to PSX

KARACHI: "FPCCI is ready and willing to cooperate with all institutions and organizations including Pakistan Stock Exchange to promote business activities that generate wealth and economic wellbeing of people of Pakistan", stated by Mian Anjum Nisar, President FPCCI while addressing the meeting organized by FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Capital Market & Securities at FPCCI Head Office Karachi. He further said that the Capital market enhances efficient financial intermediation. It increases the mobilization of funds and therefore improves efficiency and volume of investments, economic growth and development. The discussion was mainly focused on capital formation and the possibility of providing public funds to the established and developing companies. It was agreed that FPCCI will actively update its database about the profile of all companies in Pakistan so that their need for capital can be assessed and delivered to them via capital markets. Mr. Haroon Askari, Convener of FPCCI Central Standing Committee on Capital Market & Securities highlighted the role of capital market as it helps in capital formation and economic growth of the country. — APP

Pandemic adds \$15 trillion in world debt

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: In the first three quarters of 2020, global debt increased by \$15 trillion to reach \$272 trillion as the pandemic forced businesses to shut and pushed people out of jobs. After a large surge in the global debt-to-GDP ratio (from 320% to 362% year-on-year in the first half), the increase in the third quarter was more modest, due to strong global recovery, the International Institute of Finance said on late Wednesday. The global debt is expected to reach \$277 trillion, 365% of world GDP, as of the end of this year. As of the end of the third quarter, the debt-to-GDP ratio was 432% in mature markets while 250% in emerging markets. On a global scale, non-financial corporates' debt was \$79.6 trillion, governments' was \$77.6 trillion, financial sector's was \$65.6 trillion and households' was \$49.2 trillion, as of the end of the third quarter. All sections posted increases on a yearly basis. The coronavirus has claimed 1.34 million lives worldwide and infected 56.2 million since it emerged last December. Measures, such as curfews and travel bans, to stem the spread of the virus effected economic activity dramatically all around the world.

US COVID death toll surpasses 250,000

DNA

NEW YORK: More than a quarter-million people have died from COVID-19 in the United States, the Johns Hopkins University tally recorded on Wednesday, marking a bleak new milestone for the pandemic. The US, which has now registered 250,029 fatalities, has by far the highest national death toll, ahead of Brazil with 166,699 deaths, India with 130,993 deaths and Mexico with 99,026. President Donald Trump has consistently downplayed the threat of the virus, seldom wearing a mask and holding large, packed rallies while campaigning for the November 3 election that he lost to Joe Biden. Trump — who has not conceded the race — and his administration appear to be blocking the transition of power to President-elect Biden until the Trump campaign's legal challenges are settled. On Wednesday, Biden warned, "There's a whole lot of things that we just don't have available to us," including real-time data on personal protective equipment and the distribution plan for COVID-19 vaccines. Keeping this information could slow his transition's team's ability to prepare to handle the virus, Biden has said. Social distancing, mask-wearing and other measures are followed unevenly in some parts of the US despite a surge in recent cases and deaths. New York City cancelled in-person classes and shuttered schools on Wednesday, retreating from its position as one of the first large school systems to reopen. The country has recently recorded more than 1,000 deaths and 150,000 new cases each day.

Briefs

Shahbaz, Hamza to get bullet-proof vehicles

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: An accountability court in Lahore on Thursday ordered the authorities to use a bullet-proof vehicle when bringing PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shahbaz to court for hearings related to his money-laundering case. During the hearing of Shahbaz Sharif's petition, the administrative judge of the Accountability Court Jawad-ul-Hassan added that Shahbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shahbaz will not be allowed to travel in an armoured vehicle from now onwards. Home Secretary Punjab and SP security were also present during the hearing.

On November 11, the accountability court in Lahore had indicted Shahbaz Sharif, Hamza Shahbaz, and others in a money laundering case. The suspects, however, pleaded not guilty. Speaking to media outside the courtroom, Shahbaz had dismissed the NAB cases as "baseless" and termed them politically-motivated. The former chief minister is accused of accumulating assets worth Rs7,328 million in connivance with his co-accused family members, benamidars, front persons and close associations and for developing an organised system of money laundering.

2547 more corona cases recorded

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The total active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan on Thursday were recorded 32,005 as 2547 more people tested positive for the deadly virus during the last 24 hours. A total 18 corona patients, who were under treatment had lost their lives in hospitals due to COVID-19 on Wednesday, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). No COVID affected person was on ventilator in Balochistan, while 234 ventilators elsewhere in Pakistan were occupied, out of 1,806 allocated for COVID-19 patients.

Some 36,899 tests were conducted across the country on Wednesday, including 11,960 in Sindh, 13,754 in Punjab, 3,025 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 6,132 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 841 in Balochistan, 240 in Gilgit Baltistan (GB), and 947 in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Around 326,674 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count.

Karachi Circular Railway inaugurated

DNA

KARACHI: The Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) on Thursday started partial operations on a 14km cleared stretch of the around 55km route of the old KCR. Initially, trains would run along the Karachi City-Orangi-Karachi City route while operations on the remaining tracks would be launched later, Pakistan Railways (PR) Chairman Dr Habibur Rehman Gilani said earlier.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Minister for Railways Sheikh Rashid revealed that the KCR fare would be Rs30 per route and in the first phase four trains would be run daily from Pipri to City Station. He added that a travelling pass for the KCR would be available for Rs750. Rashid said there was a huge land mafia on the KCR tracks and the Sindh government would try to clear it. "In 25 years, the land mafia has taken over the KCR tracks.



ISLAMABAD: Andreas Ferrarese Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan visited NHQ and called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. Both the dignitaries discussed matters related to mutual interests, regional security and bilateral collaborations. – DNA

Rs 600b package for South Balochistan announced

"The country's historic package has been prepared with an integrated strategy to ensure that people belonging to all segment of society should get benefit from this package," he added

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Asad Umar announced on Thursday that the government would spend Rs 600 billion on development projects of nine districts of Southern Balochistan during next three years to improve living standard of local people. Out of the total, the federal government will provide Rs 540 billion, while the rest would be spent by the Balochistan government. Addressing a press briefing here along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz, Minister for Defense Production Zubaida Jalal, and Minister for Communication Murad Saeed, he said the government

would also engage the private sector in some development projects in the area. He said this package was prepared under special direction of Prime Minister Imran Khan who had firm belief on raising the weak segment of society. "The country's historic package has been prepared with an integrated strategy to ensure that people belonging to all segment of society should get benefit from this package," he added. The minister hoped that after completion of this programme, the most impoverished area of the country would see prosperity and it would become practical example of PM Imran Khan's vision of Naya Pakistan.

In the past, he said the approach of allocating money for development projects was different and that was not integrated, however now "we have embarked upon a new system under which all the sectors and ministries will be engaged collectively." For instance, he said in Southern Balochistan, agriculture was the most important source of income for locals for which, the people need water, for which dams would have to be built. Once the water is also available and people start producing grains, fruits and other products, but they did not have resources to sell them in big cities. So the government would establish industries in those areas to

make them able to preserve and add value to their products. Further he said at present, only 12 percent people of the area were enjoying facility of government electricity. "Under this package we will provide electricity to over 57 percent population of the area and for this off-grid electricity option will also be implemented to provide electricity to the scattered population of the area," he added. Similarly, the government would build 16 new dams which will irrigate about 150,000 acre of land. Besides he said around 640,000 children would be given distance education and they would be connected to the teachers in big

cities. Under Waseela taleem programme, as many as 83000 children would be given free education and the government would also pay stipend of Rs 1500 to boy and Rs 2000 to girl's parents on monthly basis. Asad Umar maintained that in health sector, 200 health centers would be up-graded. Similarly he said, 35000 young people of the area would be given training to earn as a freelancer. He informed that the area was suitable for olive and date cultivation so the government would establish an olive processing unit and three date processing units to make the local farmers able to add value to their produce. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan A. Rakhmetullin met with Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Matsuda Kuninori. During the meeting, issues of strengthening trade and economic cooperation between the countries of the region, as well as the situation in Afghanistan and its impact on economic processes in the regions of Central and South Asia were discussed. – DNA

Pakistan strongly condemns killing of four Kashmiris

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the extra-judicial killing of four more innocent Kashmiris in a fake encounter outside the city of Jammu by the Indian occupation forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In the last one year alone, In-

dian occupation forces have martyred more than three hundred innocent Kashmiris, including women and children, in fake encounters and so-called "cordon and search" operations in complete violation of the fundamental precepts of international humanitarian law. The toxic 'Hindutva' ideology, preached and practiced by the RSS-BJP mix, has

resulted in the systematic targeting of Kashmiri youth through extra-judicial killings, torture in custody, enforced disappearances and incarcerations under the cover of draconian laws such as Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), Public Safety Act (PSA) and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). Pakistan calls for immedi-

ate and transparent judicial inquiry, under international scrutiny, into the extra-judicial killings of innocent Kashmiris including these four. We also urge the international community to take immediate cognizance of the rampant state terrorism being perpetrated in IIOJK and hold India accountable for its serious crimes against humanity.

Pak, Denmark to exchange waste disposal expertise

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Denmark have agreed to share experiences and exchange expertise on effective waste disposal and producing energy from waste to lower reliance on fossil fuels. Ambassador of Denmark Lis Rosenholm called on Deputy Chairman Senate, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla here Thursday at the Parliament House to explore ways and means for enhancing mutual collaboration in different sectors, said a press release.

Deputy Chairman Senate called for strengthening trade and economic cooperation as the current volume of trade between the two sides was not up to the mark. He asked the ambassador to persuade Denmark companies to invest in Pakistan and assured that all possible support to set up business in Pakistan. Mandviwalla recalled his visit to Denmark and said that Denmark has established a unique waste processing plants and Pakistan can benefit from Danish experiences to appropriate disposal of waste and mitigate the affects of climate change.

He said that we are faced with a challenge of environmental degradation and partnership with Denmark in renewable energy and effective waste management would help in having clean and green cities. Mandviwalla also emphasized the need for exchanging parliamentary delegations to bring people of the two sides more close and promote understanding on common issues. He also stressed to enhance the interaction of the Parliamentary Friendship Group of the both. During the meeting, Deputy Chairman Senate said that Pakistan highly values its bilateral relations with Denmark and desires to further build on these relations and take these friendly ties to new altitudes. Deputy Chairman Senate also informed her that Pakistan has done a lot for the empowerment of women and due to the effective legislation women participation can be seen in every sector of life. Senator Seemi Ezdi, member of the Friendship Group called for enhanced institutional collaboration and linkages. – DNA

Inter-enterprise coop proposed for seed industry

Zhang said the association had established communication and cooperation mechanisms with multinational counterparts, and organized member enterprises to visit Pakistan, Uzbekistan and other countries to promote seed industry exchanges and cooperation

DNA

BEIJING: Zhang Qin, Vice President of China Seed Association (CSA) addressed here a webinar themed "China-Pakistan Agricultural Technology Cooperation and Prospects", says a report published by China Economic Net. Zhang said the association had established communication and cooperation mechanisms with multinational counterparts, and organized member enterprises to visit Pakistan, Uzbekistan and other countries to promote seed industry exchanges and cooperation. Touching on the China-Pakistan seed industry collaborative achievements, Zhang said, China is

a major agricultural seed producer and user, with a seed market value of CNY 100 billion. China is also actively promoting international cooperation in the seed industry and boosting the agricultural development of countries along the routes of the Belt and Road. Pakistan is an important agricultural partner of China. According to calculations by the Pakistani research institute, the direct economic benefit per hectare of hybrid rice is 38 percent higher than that of conventional rice, which greatly boosted the agricultural development in Pakistan. Many of our member companies have also grown with the support of Pakistan to achieve a win-win situation, Zhang told the webinar. "Our member company Longping

Hi-Tech took the lead in investing and carrying out agricultural cooperation in Pakistan. The company has established R&D institutions for hybrid rice and corn in Pakistan and has pushed forward the integrated management of seed breeding locally," Zhang said. "The Winall Hi-Tech company I work for also attaches great importance to the win-win cooperation with Pakistan's seed industry and has been committed to promoting the development of China-Pakistan agricultural cooperation since 2007. Last year, Winall and Wuhan-based Huazhong Agricultural University jointly launched an international cooperation class to recruit students from countries along the routes of the Belt and

Road," Zhang added. In the future, Zhang expressed her hope that the two countries would strengthen communication and cooperation of companies, industrial chains and seed management services. Under the guidance of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and the Pakistani Embassy in China, the webinar was jointly organized by China Economic Net, the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies and brought together nearly 300 participants from both China and Pakistan. Earlier, in her opening remarks, "Farhat Asif, the President of Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS) said since agriculture is a pivotal backbone of Pakistani economy, cooperation between Pakistan and China in

this sector will be a destiny changer for Pakistan and us all." She expressed her gratitude to the participants and introduced guest speakers including Nong Rong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Moin ul Haque, Pakistani Ambassador to China and so on. According to Asif IPDS is a Pakistani independent nongovernmental organization aiming to provide strength to Pakistan's effective role in peace and intellect. It has developed research through Pakistan's well built and needed public diplomacy. She highlighted the importance of agricultural sector, stating agriculture is the heart of economy in Pakistan. Meanwhile, China has stronger agriculture and advanced techniques.

Hafiz Saeed sentenced to 10 years in prison

DNA

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Thursday sentenced the leader of the outlawed Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) Hafiz Saeed to 10 years and six months of imprisonment for being involved in an illegal funding case.

The court has also fined Saeed with a hefty amount of Rs110,000 and ordered the confiscation of his properties. Last week, the ATC had sentenced three other JuD leaders to imprisonment, including Zafar Iqbal, Yahya Muhajid, and Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki for illegal funding. Malik Zafar Iqbal and Yahya Mujahid were ordered to spend 16 years in prison, while Makki was awarded a six-month imprisonment sentence.

US supports Pakistani entrepreneurs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The US Government celebrated Global Entrepreneurship Week 2020 by recognizing the achievements of 25 Pakistani entrepreneurs who received grants to establish and expand their small and medium enterprises (SMEs). At a virtual event today, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) recognized the participants who received Challenge Fund grants and created exciting new businesses in the information technology, hospitality, textile, light engineering, and agri-business sectors. USAID funding and support through the Small and Medium Enterprise Activity project helped participants overcome challenges, secure private sector funding, and strengthen their businesses over the past year.

Entrepreneurship and innovation help boost employment, productivity, and trade, as well as drive a nation's economy. Together, the 25 participants and their businesses have created 294 new full-time jobs, generated \$4.2 million in revenue, produced exports valued at \$1.9 million, and leveraged \$1.15 million in private sector investment. "While today marks the successful completion of 25 Challenge Fund grants, entrepreneurship must continue to be promoted and advanced to stimulate economic activity and improve the lives of Pakistanis," said Angela P. Aggeler, Chargé d'Affaires, Embassy of the United States of America. "Global Entrepreneurship Week reminds us that growing the economy and creating employment opportunities for youth can only be achieved by unleashing the energy of young, innovative entrepreneurs."

Current account in surplus for fourth month

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The country's current account witnessed a surplus for the fourth consecutive month in October, rising to \$382 million or 1.6 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) showed on Thursday. The current account was up 547pc month-on-month compared to \$59m in September. "The surplus came on the back of a sustained increase in remittances and a smaller trade deficit," the central bank said. Since the start of this fiscal year in July, the cumulative current account surplus has reached \$1.2 billion, reversing the \$1.4bn deficit recorded in the same period last year, the SBP added. "The current account recorded a fourth consecutive monthly surplus in October [...] an improvement was witnessed on account of better trade deficit as imports declined by 9pc month-on-month compared to exports increasing one per cent month-on-month," said Syed Atif Zafar, chief economist at Topline Securities.