



Islamabad POST

Thursday, December 03, 2020

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

President assures support to UNDP for digitization

Detailed News On Page-08

Biden sets new demands for Iran deal return

Detailed News On Page-08



Former PM Zafarullah Jamali dies

Detailed News On Page-01



Briefs

Pak, India clash will threaten world peace

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that by continuously violating ceasefire violations, India has been violating international laws and the international community must know that confrontation between two nuclear-armed countries would be dangerous for the world peace. He attended the TRT World Forum 2020 through video link. The forum focusing on the theme 'Shifting Dynamics: The International Order in a Post-Pandemic World' was also attended by Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu.

Govt relying on 'pack of lies'

DNA

BAHAWALPUR: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq said that rampant poverty and hunger in southern Punjab are proofs of the fact that the PTI's promises to divert funds for the development of the area after coming into power was eyewash and pack of lies. While addressing a press conference in Bahawalpur on Wednesday, he said the PTI like the PPP and the PML-N kept the people of the southern Punjab in darkness.

Ex-PM Zafarullah Jamali dies

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Former prime minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali died of cardiac issues on Wednesday. Jamali, 76, was shifted to Armed Forces Institute of Cardiology Sunday night after complaining of chest pain. He was placed on ventilator on Monday after his health condition deteriorated. He had recovered from COVID-19 in May earlier this year. A political leader from Balochistan, who born in 1944, served as the 15th prime minister of Pakistan from 2002 until his resignation in 2004.

UK approves use of vaccine from next week

The Boris Johnson led government has brought 40 million doses of the vaccine, which has 95% efficacy in its final trials

DNA

LONDON: The United Kingdom became the first country in the world on Wednesday to approve the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine with the vaccine expected to be rolled for use from next week. According to British newspaper Guardian, the vaccine has been approved for emergency use by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority (MHRA). The publication reported that the first dose of the vaccine may arrive in the United Kingdom in the coming days. It added that the Boris Johnson led government has brought 40 million doses of the vaccine, which has 95% efficacy in its final trials. "Today's emergency use authorisation in the UK marks a historic moment in the fight against COVID-19. This authorisation is a goal we have been working toward since we first declared that science will win, and

Continued on Page 06

Zalmay announces 'significant milestone'

- says the two sides had recognised a three-page agreement that codifies rules for negotiations on a political roadmap and a "comprehensive ceasefire"

DNA

WASHINGTON: The Afghanistan peace process has reached a "significant milestone" with the two sides agreeing on the rules and procedures for a comprehensive ceasefire and political roadmap, revealed US envoy Zalmay Khalilzad. Taking to Twitter, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad said that the two sides had recognised a three-page agreement that codifies rules and

Pakistan hails the breakthrough

SAIFULLAH \ DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has welcomed the announcement regarding the agreement reached on rules and procedures by the Afghan parties in Doha to secure a negotiated settlement for peace in Afghanistan. In a statement, the Foreign Office, said this is another significant step forward, which reflects a common resolve of Afghan people. The statement said it is an important development contributing towards a successful outcome of Intra-Afghan Negotiations, which we all hope for.

procedures for negotiations on a political roadmap and a "comprehensive ceasefire". Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in the Senate, Senator Dr Shahzad Waseem exchanging views with Chinese Deputy Chief of Mission Pang Chunxue. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong presenting a souvenir to Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Senator Shibli Faraz. - DNA

'Pakistan to provide free Covid vaccine'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary National Health Services Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC) Dr Nausheen Hamid on Wednesday said that the cabinet has approved initial funds to purchase coronavirus vaccines and these would be available to citizens for free.

In a conversation with a private news channel during programme "Geo Pakistan", she said the government has been working to arrange funds for a vaccine and it is expected it would be available by the second quarter of 2021.

Dr Hamid said that Phase-3 trials of a China-made COVID-19 vaccine are underway in Pakistan and are proceeding smoothly.

2829 new cases, 75 deaths reported

FAIZ CH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported at least 2,829 new COVID-19 cases and 75 deaths from the virus in the last 24 hours as a rapid increase in the number of infections continues.

According to the latest stats released by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), at least 35,197 people were tested, of whom 2,829 tested positive for the virus. The positivity rate now stands at 8.04%. The death toll recorded in the last 24 hours is the highest in a single day since July 9. So far, 8,166 people have succumbed to the virus in Pakistan.

Shibli for enhanced Pak-China cooperation

Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong said that Chinese side would extend all possible cooperation for enhancing media ties

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz in a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong here on Wednesday emphasised need for enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and China in the fields of media and culture. The minister while calling for promoting cultural linkages said cooperation in film sector needed special focus.

In this context Senator

Shibli Faraz mentioned the launch of Pakistani movie "Parvaz Hai Janoon" in China on November 13 saying it had been hailed by Chinese public and film professionals. "We would like to strengthen cooperation in the field of film as this is one of the vital mediums to promote and project the core values and cultural heritage of any society."

The minister also conveyed the desire of the Film Producers Association of Pakistan for a meeting with the Chinese ambassador to discuss

film cooperation. The minister said that CPEC was an important project for both China and Pakistan as it strengthened and promoted regional connectivity.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, he said, was keen to expedite various CPEC projects. The minister also emphasized the need to highlight benefits of CPEC projects for the general public. "We are eagerly looking forward to the projects under the second phase of

Continued on Page 06

Nawaz declared proclaimed offender by IHC

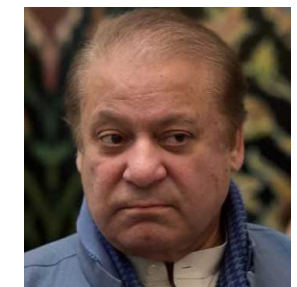
IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was declared a "proclaimed offender" by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday.

The orders were issued by the two-member bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani.

The bench was seized with the appeals filed by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif against his sentences in the Al Azzia and Avenfield cases.

During the hearing, Foreign Ministry Director Europe Mubashir Khan told the IHC that he had received the court's advertisements regarding Nawaz Sharif and sent it to the Pakistani High Commission in London.



An officer of the Federal Investigation Agency, in his statement to the court, said he delivered the advertisements at Nawaz Sharif's residences in Jati Umrah and Model Town in Lahore. Aijaz Ahmed told the bench that he had visited the Model Town residence first where he met the security team. He added that he informed them of the advertisements and also shouted Nawaz's name loudly.

Inflation eases to 8.3pc in November

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's CPI inflation reduced to 8.3 per cent in November from 8.9pc in October due to a slight drop in the price of perishable prod Inflation was recorded at 12.7pc in November 2019, showed data released by the PBS. On a month-on-month basis, it increased by 0.8pc in November as against an increase of 1.3pc in the same month last year.

In urban areas, inflation increased by 7.0pc on a year-on-year basis in November as compared to an increase of 7.3pc in the previous month and 12.1pc in November 2019. On a month-on-month basis, it increased by 0.6pc in November 2020 as compared to an increase of 1.3pc in the previous month and an increase of 1.0pc in November 2019. In rural areas, inflation increased by 10.5pc on a year-on-year basis in November 2020 as compared to an increase of 11.3pc in the previous month and 13.6pc in November 2019.

Inside...

UK authorities asked to extradite Nawaz Sharif, says Shahzad - Page 02

ICCI organizes awareness seminar on HIV/AIDS - Page 03

CGSS,PU to enhance Pak and Azerbaijan academic ties - Page 04

Afghanistan's murky drawdown - Page 05

Thai PM wins crucial legal battle amid renewed protests - Page 06

Brexit helped UK accelerate Covid vaccine approval: govt - Page 07

Pak-China cooperation in education sector urged - Page 08

GB will soon get provincial status, says PM Imran

The Premier also slammed opposition parties, saying former finance minister Ishaq Dar lied during his BBC News' show 'HARDtalk'

DNA

GILGIT: Prime Minister Imran Khan says the government will work on fast track basis on provincial status of Gilgit-Baltistan to address the sense of deprivation of the people of the region. Addressing the oath-taking ceremony of new cabinet member of Gilgit-Baltistan in Gilgit today (Wednesday), he said a committee to this effect will be constituted and it will work under timelines. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that the new government in GB will set new standards of governance that will improve the living standard of the

people. Unveiling his plan for development and welfare of the people of GB, Imran Khan said the present government's Ehsaas Programme, which is the largest poverty alleviation program of Pakistan history, will be introduced in GB as well. PM slammed opposition parties, saying former finance minister Ishaq Dar lied during his BBC News' show 'HARDtalk'. "If you want to see stress, you should have seen Ishaq Dar's face yesterday," the premier said, taunting the PML-N leader. Soon after his interview PTI lawmakers took to social media to bash the former finance minister.

PM approves Civil Servants Rules 2020

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has approved Civil Servants Efficiency and Discipline Rules, 2020 to ensure transparent and effective internal accountability of civil servants. To speed-up the process of ensuring efficiency and discipline among civil bureaucracy, the tier of Authorized Officer has been eliminated, leaving only two tiers, which include Authority and Inquiry Officer and Committee. The two-tier process will resolve the issue of decision of disciplinary proceedings at lower level by awarding minor penalties by the Authorized Officer, without seeking approval of the authority. To facilitate just decisions of the cases, opportunity of personal hearing shall now be provided by the Authority or Hearing Officer. For the first time, plea bargain and voluntary return have been included in the definition of misconduct and such Civil Servants shall now be proceeded against. Similarly, procedural issues relating to provision of record, slackness on part of departmental representatives, suspension, proceedings against officers on deputation, leave, or scholarship have been clearly provided in the new rules. - DNA

Responding to the PML-N leader's claims of financial transparency, Federal Minister for Industries and Production Hamid Azhar stated that "Dar has been exposed for the umpteenth time". In his address on Tuesday, PM Imran took a jibe at the Opposition leaders too, including Nawaz Sharif and former president Asif Ali Zardari. He referred to Opposition leaders as a "corrupt mafia", saying that they do not care about the country. The mafia is just hatching conspiracies to save their looted wealth, PM Imran Khan said. The premier said he has known Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari for the past 30

years. "We have seen God's wrath bestowed on them," he said, accusing the two leaders of going to London and Dubai, respectively, with the help of lies. Referring to the PDM's recent jalsas, PM Imran Khan said: "People are dying from the coronavirus and the Opposition is holding public rallies." He said all the people of GB will be provided health insurance with the issuance of Sehat Insaaf Cards under which they can get free medical facility at any hospital up to one million rupees. He said the under-construction 250-bed hospital in Gilgit will be completed. (Picture on Page 02)

Pak condemns Nigeria terror attacks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has strongly condemned terror attacks and loss of precious lives in Nigeria and expressed sympathy and condolence with bereaved Nigerian families. Talking to his Nigerian counterpart Geoffrey Onyeama on telephone on Wednesday, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi expressed hope for early recovery of fifty citizens kidnapped by terrorists. He said Pakistan condemns such criminal acts to destroy peace and stability of any country, including terrorism and violence.

Briefs

Hurriyat's forum thanks OIC

ISLAMABAD: Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir has expressed gratitude to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for reaffirming its support to the Kashmir cause, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS), a resolution adopted unanimously during the 47th Session of OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers in Niamey, Niger, reiterated the Muslim Body's strong support to the Kashmir cause and categorically rejected illegal and unilateral actions taken by India since 5th August 2019. Tehreek-e-Hurriyat in a statement issued in Srinagar thanked the OIC members in general and Pakistan in particular for raising the Kashmir issue. It also hailed the continuous efforts of Pakistan for highlighting the Indian brutalities in IIOJK. It hoped that Pakistan's support to the Kashmir cause would remain uninterrupted till the realization of Kashmiris' right to self-determination. On the other hand, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in a statement in Srinagar strongly condemned the reign of terror unleashed by Indian troops in the occupied territory particularly in HMT and its adjoining areas in Srinagar. It said that Indian troops enjoying unbridled powers under black laws were perpetrating crimes against humanity in IIOJK to suppress the Kashmiris' just struggle for securing their right to self-determination. It said that the Kashmiris would continue their freedom struggle despite Indian state terrorism. Indian troops barged into the residential houses in HMT and nearby areas in Srinagar during nocturnal raids, dragged out civilians, thrashed them mercilessly and forced them to chant Hindu slogan. Several people were injured in the brutal action of the occupational troops. — APP

'National parks to help promote eco-tourism in GB'

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam on Wednesday said the two new national parks for Gilgit Baltistan announced by Prime Minister Imran Khan would help promote eco-tourism in the region. Addressing a news conference here, he said the Himalaya National Park and the Nanga Parbat Park, announced under the prime minister's 'Protected Areas Initiative', would span over 3,600 square kilometers, five per cent of the GB's total area. Comprising unique ecological areas with very high altitude biodiversity as well as precious flora and fauna of snow leopards, Himalayan brown bear, Ladakh urial, Ibex, Marco Polo sheep and blue sheep, the two parks would play a crucial role in promoting eco-tourism in the country, he added. The SAPM said the Protected Areas Initiative was aimed at ensuring the protection and preservation of the country's natural assets through designation and management as national parks. — APP

PDM has no regard for human lives: CM

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on Wednesday said the PDM had no regard for human lives and this bandit brigade even tried to point-scoring on coronavirus. In a statement issued here, the Chief Minister regretted the opposition was indifferent to public safety as coronavirus was still spreading. Those who had no regard for human lives could not understand the public issues, he said, adding the opposition always adopted an irresponsible behaviour. The people of Multan had shown a mirror to the opposition, he said. The CM asserted the PDM was a mixture of rejected elements having no agenda for people. He said that 11 opposition parties could never compete with an honest and trustworthy leader like Imran Khan. He said holding public meetings would be enmity with the people as the corona situation was becoming serious. The intransigence of the PDM had put the lives of the people at stake because this bandit brigade had no pain for the masses, he remarked. — APP



GILGIT: Prime Minister Imran Khan witnessing the oath taking ceremony of Gilgit-Baltistan cabinet. — DNA

UK authorities asked to extradite Nawaz Sharif, says Shahzad

"On 5 August 2019, India moved to alter the disputed status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and change its demographic structure," he said

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Accountability and Interior Barrister Mirza Shahzad Akbar Wednesday said that United Kingdom (UK) authorities have been asked to deport the convicted former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from their country. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad flanked by Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Political Communication Shahbaz Gill, he said Pakistan has written a letter to UK to cancel the visa of Nawaz Sharif which was issued for medical treatment after taking an undertaking. The six month visa has not yet extended by UK. "Negotiations were continuing with UK for the deportation of Nawaz," he said adding that the last two governments did not make effort

to deport former head of Mutha-hida Quomi Movement (MQM) Altaf Hussain from UK. Shahzad Akbar said PML (N) leader and former Finance Minister Ishaq Dar stood totally exposed in the recent BBC interview. The interview made it clear as to why Dar was an absconder and not appearing before the courts. Castigating Ishaq Dar, he said Dar had wrongly said that he has only one property in Lahore, whereas the former finance minister has properties/bank accounts in Pakistan as well as in Dubai. The British authorities have also been requested for the extradition of Ishaq Dar.

He wondered why Dar had brazenly leveled baseless allegations of custodial killings over NAB in such an important

forum like BBC. "It is incomprehensible that on whose orders Dar agreed to interview BBC. It was a desperate effort to negate accusations leveled against him." The opposition has miserably failed to gather a few thousand people in Multan on Monday last. They had managed to gather only a small number of people in their public meeting. Opposition was now trying to hold another small gathering "Jalsi" in Lahore. They have endangered the lives of the people by exposing them in crowds.

He said the people are also not attending the public gatherings of the opposition parties in large numbers. The opposition parties must act responsibly and stop playing with the lives of the people as the second wave of

Covid-19 is proving to be more fatal. People have forgotten Ishaq Dar like people. The recent results in Gilgit-Baltistan has proved that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was still the most popular party in the country.

Speaking on the occasion Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Political Communication Shahbaz Gill said Ishaq Dar was trembling while interviewing. Country's enemies including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leadership were trying utmost to declare Pakistan a fascist country. Their nefarious designs had already been foiled. Ishaq Dar in his interview said that the general elections in Pakistan were stolen — BBC anchor retorted PML-N should have filed an election petition. He said BBC

was trying to interview Nawaz Sharif since long. The interview of Dar was combination of shamelessness and humiliation. In Pakistan, he said Ishaq Dar enjoys the status of mid-wife in money laundering. Dar should come back to Pakistan and can give interview to Pakistan media but he would have to clear himself from corruption cases. "The people who could not become clerk had remained finance minister of Pakistan," he said Vice President PML-N Maryam Nawaz was a habitual liar. In his remarks, Special Assistant on Political Communication Shahbaz Gill said the corrupt leaders sitting abroad should come back to the country and face the courts. He said these leaders plundered the national exchequer. — APP

Delegation of PID Lahore visits virtual university

DNA

LAHORE: The delegation was received by GM Marketing Virtual University Ms. Rubina Ali. The officials in the delegation included DG PID Mr. Saeed Sheikh, Deputy Director Ms. Uzma Saleem, Deputy Director Ms. Ishrat Akhtar and Information officer Ms. Sameera Liqat. PID Officials attended a meeting chaired by the Rector Virtual University Mr. Naeem Tariq along with GM Marketing VU Ms. Rubina Ali and GM VTV Mr. Babar Ali. Matters related to news media and improving coordination between the Press Information Department and Virtual University were discussed. The delegation visited vari-

ous departments of the University and was also given a presentation on the functioning and rapid growth of Virtual University. PID delegation acknowledged the important role of Virtual University for the provision of quality education across Pakistan and abroad. They also appreciated the role of Virtual University for providing access to the knowledge through learning opportunities to the students across the country. GM VTV Mr. Babar Ali briefed the guests about the Virtual University's Television Network during the visit of guests to the TV Department. PID Officials appreciated the standard of education set by Virtual University and its network all over Pakistan.



LAHORE: Deputy Chairman Senate Senator Saleem Mandviwalla visited the residence of Shaheed Wing Commander Nauman Akram here in Lahore and met his family members. Nauman Akram was career officer of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and embraced Shahadat on 11th March, 2020, when his F-16 aircraft crashed near the Shakarparian area of the federal capital while carrying out rehearsal for the Pakistan Day Parade. — DNA

ANF seizes 3302.47 Kg drugs worth US\$ 1.051 bln

The seized drugs comprised of 2189.5 Kg Hashish, 92.317 Kg Heroin, 52.400 Kg Opium, 0.250 Kg Methamphetamine, 961 Kg Morphine, 0.247 Kg Diazepam Tab, 0.400 Kg Ecstasy Tab, 2.500 Kg Hashish Oil & 3.856 Kg Suspected Chemical.

DNA

KARACHI: Proving its commitment to eradicate drugs from our homeland, Anti Narcotics Force Pakistan seized 3302.47 Kgs narcotics valuing US\$ 1.051 Billion internationally, arrested 21 culprits and impounded 9 vehicles including one boat in conducting 27 counter-narcotics strikes throughout the country, the ANF said on Wednesday. The seized drugs comprised of 2189.5 Kg Hashish, 92.317 Kg Heroin, 52.400 Kg Opium, 0.250 Kg Methamphetamine, 961 Kg Morphine, 0.247 Kg Diazepam Tab, 0.400 Kg Ecstasy Tab, 2.500 Kg Hashish Oil & 3.856 Kg Suspected Chemical. ANF Balochistan, the staff of Police Station Nokundi, Balochistan recovered 50 Kg Opium from Killi Hassanabad at Tehsil Nokundi & District Chaghi, Balochistan. In another operation, the staff of Police Station Turbat recovered 50 Kg Heroin from Corolla X-Car at Mirani Dam road near D Baloch Kech Corolla Tehsil Turbat District Kach. In third operation, Police Station Turbat recovered 500 Kgs Hashish from dry rainy nullah situated near M-8 Turbat Gwadar road District Kech. In fourth operation, the staff of

Police Station Regional Directorate Balochistan recovered 61 Kgs Morphine from Qilla Koulak Tehsil Gullistan & District Qilla Abdullah. ANF Rawalpindi, the staff of Police Station ICT Islamabad during routine checking at International Mail Office, Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi recovered 0.086 Kg Diazepam Tabs (Qty 457) from suspected parcel. The parcel was being sent to Australia. Sender name of suspect parcel Mujahid Abbas resident of Multan & Recipient Ms Jade Baird FAO Neil Isles 3/41, Paringa road Muarrie QLD 4172, Australia. In another operation, Police Station ICT, Islamabad during routine checking of International Mail Office Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi intercepted a parcel being sent to UK and recovered 0.086 Kg Diazepam Tab (Qty 457) from the said parcel. Sender name of the said parcel S Dilshad resident of Lahore and recipient name Mark Dewar 8, Sydney Street, Craigs Hill, Livingston EH54 5HH UK. In third operation, the staff of Police Station ICT, Islamabad during routine checking of International Mail office Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi intercepted a parcel being sent to UK and recovered 0.075 Kg Diazepam Tab (Qty 400) from the said

parcel. Sender name of said parcel S Dilshad resident of Lahore and recipient name Sonia Mr Daren Gordon 5 Hammond Court, Watmill Lane, London N118 1FA UK. In fourth operation, the staff of Police Station Regional Directorate intercepted a suspected consignment from IDHS Courier & Cargo service office, Al-Bil Plaza, Chandni Chowk, Rawalpindi and recovered 2.740 Kg Heroin (Brown) wrapped in 2 x hoods from said parcel of one card board box containing 15 x Gents Hoods & 10 x Pants. The Parcel was booked by Muhammad Wajid resident of Islamabad with CNIC copy in the name of Zafar Ullah Khan resident of Karachi East and was being sent to Maria Kristalova resident of Brad Ford, UK. In fifth operation, the staff of Police Station Gilgit conducted an operation at Ehsan Ali link road, Kashrote, District Gilgit and recovered 1.400 Kg Hashish from his personal possession of arrested accused Latif Anwar resident of District Gilgit. In sixth operation, the staff of Police Station Islamabad intercepted Honda Motorcycle near G-13, Markaz, Islamabad and recovered 2.330 Kg Hashish oil from personal possession of arrested accused namely Kashif Marwat and Sohail Anjum Qureshi resi-

dents of Islamabad. On Pointation of arrested accused, the staff of Police Station conducted further raid on a narcotics manufacturing laboratory covert from the House situated in Islamabad and seized 0.170 ltrs Hashish Oil and 3.856 Kg Suspected Chemical and other drugs manufacturing equipment from the house. In Seventh operation, Police Station Regional Directorate intercepted a Pakistani national accused Fayaz resident of Swabi at Islamabad Airport who was travelling to Madina (KSA) through flight No.PK-9713 and recovered 3.627 Kg Heroin from his trolley bag plastic hard sheets. ANF Punjab, the staff of Police Station Faisalabad raided near Sannat Singh Railway Crossing Jhumra road, Faisalabad and recovered 1.500 Kg Hashish & 0.250 Kg Methamphetamine from Suzuki Mehran Car. Muhammad Nadeem resident of Sargodha was arrested on the spot. In another operation, the staff of Police Station Mianwali raided near Chowk Azam, Sofia Hotel & Restaurant MM road District Layyah and recovered 3.500 Kg Hashish from the arrested accused namely Saeed Abbas resident of Layyah. In third operation, the staff of PS Faisalabad intercepted a Motorcycle near Marzipura -Chowk

Ameenpur road Faisalabad and recovered 4.800 Kg Hashish from personal possession of the arrested accused namely Muhammad Akram and Amir Shahzad residents of Faisalabad. In fourth operation, Police Station Faisalabad intercepted a Pakistani national accused namely Mazhar Saleem resident of Azad Jammu and Kashmir at International Airport Faisalabad who was travelling to Dubai through flight No.FZ-344 and recovered 1.218 Kg Heroin which was tactfully concealed in the bottom of his bag. In fifth operation, ANF Lahore intercepted a suspected parcel at TCS Office Cargo Complex Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore which was booked for UK. After thoroughly checking of parcel which was consisted of four Trays, six Glasses, Sixteen Cups and one Pot and recovered 1.182 Kg Heroin which was tactfully concealed in one pot. Sender of the parcel name Muhammad Ismail resident of Peshawar and recipient name Raja Adil Mana resident of UK. In sixth operation, the staff of Police Station Multan intercepted two vehicles near Toll Plaza Tounsa Sharif Indus Highway Tehsil Tounsa Sharif District DG Khan and recovered 238.800 Kg Hashish from secret cavities made in two seized vehicles/cars.

Dacoits steal chicken eggs worth millions

DNA

MANDI BAHAUDDIN : Four members of a gang were arrested in Mandi Bahauddin for stealing chicken eggs worth millions of rupees, the police said on Wednesday. Over Rs1 million in cash and eight cars were seized from their possession as well. According to the police, the suspects stopped vans leaving poultry farms early in the morning. "They would be present on the route of the vehicles and then stopped them midway at gunpoint," DPO Syed Ali Raza said. "The men tied up the drivers and then threw them in the field, making away with the vans and the eggs," he said, adding that the suspects committed similar crimes in Sargodha, Gujrat, Jhelum and other parts of Punjab. During questioning, they confessed to their crimes. A case has been registered and further investigations are under way. DPO Raza said that the valuables seized will be given back to their rightful owners.

Resolution passed for legalizing cryptocurrency

SHUJAAT HAMZA

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly has passed a resolution regarding Cryptocurrency and Cryptomining. The resolution demands that federal government must take steps to legalise cryptocurrency and cryptomining in Pakistan. Regarding this waqar Zaka the head of Technology Movement Pakistan said, "One province done, three more to go, KPK visit brought fruitful results. Now I will be going to Punjab, Baluchistan to get these bills passed for crypto, Technology Movement Pakistan producing results even before getting into elections". Earlier, Waqar Zaka had met Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Science & Technology Ziaullah Bangash and urged him to make efforts for legalizing cryptocurrency in the country.

Peshawar women put up harassment posters

DNA

PESHAWAR: The punishment for harassing women in Peshawar is a three-year imprisonment and Rs500,000 fine but despite the law, cases of harassment in public places have been on the rise. Women in the city have, therefore, stepped up to spread awareness about the law and harassment in public spaces. The first step was taken at five BRT stations in Peshawar. Posters have been put up at the stations and announcements are made at intervals. According to KP Ombudsperson Rakhshanda Naz, knowledge centres will be set up at stations as well. "The BRT staff is being trained for dealing harassment complaints and multiple desks have been set up for this purpose." Naz said a number of women have admitted that they have been harassed by men at multiple public spaces but don't know how to file a complaint. After BRT stations, the campaign will be extended to general bus stands too.

Rangers arrests two of burglars gang

KARACHI: The Pakistan Rangers Sindh along with Police arrested two members of a bandits gang and recovered arms and ammunition from their possession. Accused Shahrukh and Waqar Ahmed were arrested with the help of CCTV footages in which they could be clearly identified looting citizens on gun point, said a news release on Wednesday. Accused Waqar was a drug addict. Raids were being conducted to apprehend other accomplices of arrested accused. Both arrested have been handed over to police for further legal proceedings. — APP

Briefs

AIOU uploads merit lists on website

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has uploaded merit lists for merit-based programs offered in autumn 2020 semester including M.Sc Sustainable Environmental Design, M.Sc Public Nutrition and M.Sc Mass Communication. The university is dispatching admission information letter to the selected candidates at their postal addresses. The candidates may verify their admission from the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk).

Upon the special directives of the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, the process of finalization of admission into merit-based programs has been expedited to observe academic calendar of the University and to save precious time of the students. It is pertinent to mention here that the university has offered admissions in various merit-based programs including PhD, M Phil, M Sc, MBA and BS programs. Merit lists for MA TEFL and M Sc Forestry Extension programs will be uploaded very soon.

CDA takes strict notice of trees chopped off

ISLAMABAD: The environment wing of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken strict notice of the incident in which a group of men impersonating as CDA's employees cut down two trees and fled away. According to the statement by the CDA's Environment Directorate "The complaint will be checked in detail. Apparently, it's not the work of any CDA employee but rest assure if anyone is found involved in this he will be given exemplary punishment. However, it is requested that in future if you notice such activity kindly intimate immediately."

The details of the incident revealed that some people came to the place in front of the GSR Laboratories in Blue Area and cut off leaves of the trees stating they came from the CDA's Environment Wing and it was part of their duty.

Later, these people again came and informed the employees of the nearby office that these trees would be cut down as part of the cleaning process initiated by the civic agency. It is pertinent to mention here that some people were also identified in the recent past stealing the wood from the Fatima Jinnah Park. The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) has already recommended the government to make illegal tree felling a criminal offence and convert tree plantation drive into state policy. - APP

PIDA signs MoU with AWECT Netherlands

ISLAMABAD: Amsterdam Waste Environmental Consultancy Technology (AWECT) Netherlands on Wednesday signed MoU with Pakistan Island Development Authority (PIDA) for investment of 1 billion dollar in waste to energy and desalination plant on Bundal island Karachi.

The signing ceremony was attended by federal minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi, Ambassador of Netherlands HE Wouter Plomp, Secretary Maritime Affairs Rizwan Ahmad and Sohail Kokab, Country representative Pakistan for Awect Netherlands, said a press release. At the ceremony Imran Amin chairman Pakistan Island development Authority signed MoU with Evert Lichtenbelt CEO Awect Netherlands. Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi said that following Prime Minister Imran Khan vision on renewable energy initiatives, this was first step towards sustainable development with low emission technology of Netherlands in renewable energy. - APP

ICCI organizes awareness seminar on HIV/AIDS

Addressing the seminar, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the World AIDS Day reminded us to unite in the fight against HIV and to show solidarity with people living with HIV



DNA

ISLAMABAD: To mark the World AIDS Day, the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Islamabad Founder Lions Club organized a seminar to raise awareness about AIDS. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Ch. Haroon Naseer CEO Maroof Hospital, Sheikh Amir Waheed President, Faheem Khan Vice President, Muhammad Naveed Malik Secretary General of Islamabad Founder Lions Club, Dr. Afshan Malik, Dr. Waheed, Dr. Usama, Dr. Me-

hwish, Baser Daud, Safina Shah, Ashfaq Chatha, Nausheen Arshad, Sheikh Jamshed and a large number of business community attended the seminar. Addressing the seminar, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the World AIDS Day reminded us to unite in the fight against HIV and to show solidarity with people living with HIV. He said that in our society people infected with HIV were facing stigma and discrimination, which was preventing them from living a full and happy life and stressed for educating people to change such negative mindsets.

He said that the unsafe blood transfusions and the use of unsterilized medical and dental equipment were the main causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS in Pakistan and the government should take strong measures to ban such unhealthy practices. He stressed on enhancing the capacity of health-care workers, adherence to injection safety standard operating procedures and the ways to implement safe blood transfusions. He thanked the office bearers of Islamabad Founder Lions Club for joining hands with ICCI for organizing seminars on an important topic that would be beneficial for the participants.

Ch. Haroon Naseer, CEO Maroof Hospital and Dr. Usama gave a detailed presentation about the technical aspects of AIDS, its progression, signs & symptoms, diagnosis process, basic knowledge and its treatment options. They informed that 1.7 million people were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in 2019 worldwide, 38 million people were living with HIV globally in 2019 and 690,000 people died from AIDS-related illnesses in 2019 around the world. Sheikh Amir Waheed, M. Naveed Malik, Dr. Afshan Malik, Dr. Waheed, Dr. Mehwish and others also spoke at the occasion and suggested the interventions to prevent this

disease. They said that community leaders and media should be taken on board to raise more awareness about HIV/AIDS in people. They were of the view that better education of people about HIV/AIDS would be helpful in removing the stigma and misperceptions associated with this disease. They said the world was doing much more to control HIV/AIDS compared to the work being done in Pakistan. They said that disposable syringes were banned around the world, but in Pakistan many hospitals were using these syringes because they were cheaper and stressed that their use should be completely banned to save the lives of people.

HEC to bring special students into mainstream

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) is pondering upon measures to bring differently-abled students to mainstream and facilitate them in every possible manner. Different options were under consideration to facilitate differently-abled students including age relaxation, wheelchair friendly buildings, scholarship and fee waivers, and special transport facility

within campuses, the official sources of HEC said on Wednesday. Talking to APP, they informed that ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2020 had already been passed. It extended to the ICT territory and so was also binding on universities in the area, they added. HEC will review its existing policy for differently-abled students in light of this Act. They also highlighted HEC's initiatives to facilitate differently-abled students, including promulgation of

HEC policy on the subject, distribution of wheelchairs, establishment of Well Being Centres and formation of Student Clubs under Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Programme. According to them, HEC was making all out efforts to mainstream such students in the higher education sector. While another Official from HEC told APP that special attention needed to be given to students with visual impairment, hearing disabilities or mobility challenges.

Gold price increases Rs1600

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1600 on Wednesday and was traded at 110,800 against its sale at Rs109,200 the previous day. Likewise, the price of 10 grams gold also increased by Rs1372 and was traded at Rs94,993 against Rs93,621 while gram 22 karat gold was sold at Rs.87,077 Karachi Sarafa Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stable at Rs.1200 and Rs.1028.80. The gold prices in the international market increased by \$30 and was traded at \$1831 against \$1801. - DNA

SOPs being followed during anti-polio drive

RAWALPINDI: The five-day anti-polio campaign which kicked off in the entire district on Monday to cover more than 885,000 children below five years age is in full swing. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Health Authority Dr Sohail Chaudry informed APP that 2964 polio teams, 240 health centers, 307 fixed centers, allied hospitals and tehsil headquarter hospitals are participating in the drive. The CEO said that Standard operating procedure (SOPs) regarding COVID-19 were being followed to ensure the safety of polio teams during the drive. He said polio drops were also being administered at transit points to ensure that all children be immunized below five years age. Sohail said that staff deployed for the campaign have been instructed that no negligence in this regard would be tolerated. "The parents should cooperate with special teams so that the set target could be achieved," he added. Meanwhile Incharge Anti-polio drive Ch Hussain told APP that over 600,000 children have so far administered the polio vaccine on 3rd day while 885,000 children the set target of the campaign would be achieved by December 4. - DNA

Pro Vice Chancellor PU visits Uzbek embassy

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Punjab, Lahore & CGSS Management visited the Embassy of Uzbekistan to Pakistan and met with Lt Col Saad Ullah, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan. During the meeting, various initiatives were brought under discussion including various activities planned for the Regional Integration Center. It was agreed that the establishment of RIC in Punjab University, Lahore will be a significant step in enhancing Pakistan's connectivity in the Eurasian region. Exchange programs for students and professors of Pakistan and Uzbekistan were also brought under consideration to further strengthen people to people contact. Lt Col Saad Ullah acknowledged CGSS efforts for enhancing institutional cooperation, particularly in the academic sector. He further expressed his gratitude to Punjab University, Lahore for their contribution in connecting the student fraternity of both countries. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Fouzia Ali, Assistant Professor, Hailey College of Commerce, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, CGSS, Mr. Jasur Saidahmedov, Third Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Ms. MinahilShawal Afridi, Research Executive, CGSS, Ms. Palwasha Nawaz, Project Executive, CGSS. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Lt Col Saad Ullah, Chargé d'affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan presenting a souvenir to Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Punjab. - DNA

Structural reforms urged against gender violence

"Amid COVID-19, increased reliance on internet for connectivity has highlighted pertinent issue of digital inequality," Dr Suleri said and added that the number of out of school children, especially girls, has been increased due to pandemic and thus, this issue needs to be responded on urgent basis

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Violence against women is a global phenomenon that needs to be responded with full force and unity, however, structural reforms in the system are needed in the societies like Pakistan to implement relevant laws to deal with this menace. This was the crux of a webinar titled: 'Violence against Women and Girls in Pakistan: How to Address This Shadow Pandemic Amid COVID-19 and Beyond' organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here. Wendy Gilmour, the Canadian High

Commissioner in Islamabad, while highlighting the global assistance policy of Canada, said that this policy revolves around strengthening judicial system and supporting victims of such acts of violence. "We work with civil society organizations at the grass roots level to build support systems for the victims of gender-based violence, she said, adding that destigmatizing of reporting rape cases is crucial to ensure victim's access to justice. Ms Khawar Mumtaz, the former Chairperson of National Commission on the Status of Women, said the increasing trend of gender-based violence in our society is quite alarming and must be dealt

with stern and speedy actions." Such incidents are now being reported in media and highlighted widely that is a positive sign," She said. Ms Mumtaz added that the lack of seriousness on the part of state institutions is one major obstacle in the ways of victim's no access to our justice system. Therefore, she maintained, it would be important to build the capacity of people involved in the justice system. Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, the SDPI Executive Director, was of view that marking 16 Days of Activism is a much needed initiative but keeping the intensity of violence against women in our society, we need to work with the same zeal

throughout the year to respond to this menace effectively. "Amid COVID-19, increased reliance on internet and expensive gadgets for the connectivity has highlighted the pertinent issue of digital inequality," Dr Suleri said and added that the number of out of school children, especially girls, has been increased due to pandemic and thus, this issue needs to be responded on urgent basis. Romina Khurshid Alam, the Member of National Assembly of Pakistan, emphasized that policymakers, women parliamentarians, and civil society organizations need to work together to address the structural lacunas such as rape being

treated as a compoundable offense. "We need to focus on the real issues and improve the capacity of institutions for the better implementation of laws," she stressed. Fauzia Shahid, the former secretary-general of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, said that after 1977, the society had systematically been turned anti-women, which ultimately fanned gender-based violence in the country. Asma Shirazi, senior journalist and anchorperson, said that online harassment of women is a new form of violence, which is being used as a tool to silence the dissenting voices by the regimes in an organized manner.

FBR issues clarification on 'Naya Pakistan Certificate'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Wednesday issued a clarification on news item published in a section of press with a headline, "Authorities faces legal challenge on tax concession for Naya Pakistan Certificate." The board clarified that Naya Pakistan Certificate, a new instrument launched by the government/ State Bank of Pakistan, qualifies as debt instrument in terms of Clause (5AA) of Part-II of the Second Schedule of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001. Therefore, profit on debt on the Naya Pakistan Certificate is subject to tax @ 10% which is final tax. The statement be added that the aforesaid concessionary tax regime is applicable to non-residents only. Moreover, the statement added, non-residents are not required to file tax return solely for the declaration of tax deduction on profit on debt.

'Rawalpindi will use rain water for harvesting'

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Tariq Mehmood Murtaza Wednesday said that Rawalpindi would be the second city of Punjab to use rain water for harvesting purposes. He said the Authority has already initiated work on the project in collaboration with Turkish NGO.

He said this while chairing a meeting to review the collaboration with UNDP besides Imams of Ghausia Mosque Bangash Colony, Sirajia Mosque Asghar Mall and Bilal Masjid Khayaban e Sir Syed regarding preservation of used and rain water. The Chairman RDA said that water was needed in larger quantity in mosques and the project would be a big model of water preservation.

On this occasion, Research Officer UNDP Waqas Khan told that UNDP would fully cooperate with these three mosques in recycling of its water this regard.

The work on the project would be instantly initiated and the recycled water would be made reusable for bathing, wazoo and gardening purposes, he added and said that the Imams of the three mosques were agreed with the plan in principle.

He thanked the Imams of the mosques and said that the step by the RDA was highly appreciable to preserve and recycle the precious gift of the God.

Later, the Chairman RDA thanked the participants of the meeting, which was attended by Research Officer UNDP Waqas Khan, Deputy Director Finance RDA Muhammad Junaid Taj Bhatti, Mufti Jalal ud Din and Qari Syed Naimat from Sirajia Mosque, Qari Abdul Sattar from Ghausai Mosque and Muhammad Fayaz Khan from Bilal Mosque. - APP

CDA aims effective water management

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Department of Water Supply of Capital Development Authority (CDA) issued more than 30 notices to the citizens upon wasting water in last three weeks.

The water pipes repaired at more than 50 places, more than 20 tube wells repaired upon the complaints, repairing of water tankers, and all the other necessary steps for ensuring the water supply to citizens have been taken.

According to detail, upon the special directions of the Chairman CDA, Aamir Ali Ahmad regarding the provision of water to the citizens of Islamabad the department of water supply is working whole heartedly. Steps are being taken for repairing of pipe lines, tube wells, and motors. Tankers of the department of water supply are working day and night for providing water to citizens.

Briefs

DWS issues 30 notices to citizens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Department of Water Supply of Capital Development Authority (CDA) issued more than 30 notices to the citizens upon wasting water in last three weeks. The water pipes repaired at more than 50 places, more than 20 tube wells repaired upon the complaints, repairing of water tankers, and all the other necessary steps for ensuring the water supply to citizens have been taken. According to detail, upon the special directions of the Chairman CDA, Aamir Ali Ahmad regarding the provision of water to the citizens of Islamabad the department of water supply is working whole heartedly. Steps are being taken for repairing of pipe lines, tube wells, and motors. Tankers of the department of water supply are working day and night for providing water to citizens. During last three weeks the department of water supply restored water supply in the areas including National Park area, sector I-10, sector G-10/3, Rawal Dam, H-9, H-10, G-6, G-11, G-9, G-10, F-6, F-7, F-8, F-9, F-10, I-9, I-10, H-10, Humak town, Pana Faqiraan and others. The citizens to whom the notices have been issued for wasting water have been asked overcome the issue of water waste and report the authority in the written form. Otherwise strict action would be taken against them Under Islamabad Capital Territory, Municipal By Laws 1969 Islamabad and waste of water and illegal connection ordinance 1979.

Death anniversary of Aziz Mian to be observed

RAWALPINDI: The 20th death anniversary of legendary famous Qawwal 'Aziz Mian' will be observed on Decmber 6. Punjab Council of Arts (PUCAR), Rawalpindi has planned a ceremony on Dec-6 in which Imarn Aziz Mian Qawal and others would participate to pay tribute to the master of qawwali Aziz Mian and to provide awareness to youngsters about the country's culture and traditions. He was also a contemporary of Sabri brothers. In 1989, the government of Pakistan awarded him with the Pride of Performance medal. Late Aziz Mian is also credited with performing the longest commercially released qawwali, hashr ke roz yeh poochhoon-ga, which runs to slightly over 115 minutes. Aziz Mina Qawwal died on this day in 2000 and buried in Multan.

Dacoit's gang busted, gold ornaments, cash recovered

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Criminal Investigation Agency (CIA) of Islamabad Police has nabbed four dacoits including two Afghan national and recovered gold ornaments, foreign currency, cash, mobile phones, laptop, wrist watches, motorbike and weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said. According to details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan ordered crackdown against criminals including those involved in dacoity incidents. Following these orders, DIG (Operations) has directed all zonal offices to accelerate their efforts to curb the crime in the city. Following these directions, SP (investigation) Malik Naem Iqbal constituted special team under supervision of DSP CIA Hakim Khan including Sub-inspector Asim Ali Zaidi along with others. This team nabbed four members of a dacoit's gang identified as Sher Agha, Tehseen belonging to Afghanistan and Waheed Gul, Nader Khan residents of Peshawar. Police team recovered gold ornaments currency, cash, mobile phone, laptop, wrist watches, motorbike and weapons from their possession. During the preliminary investigation, they confessed their involvement in incidents of dacoity in twin cities areas and its surrounding. Separate cases have been registered against the nabbed persons and further investigation is underway from them.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of Ali Alizada, ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan after meeting with Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Pro Vice Chancellor, University of Punjab, Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), executive director, CGSS and other management of CGSS. — DNA

CGSS, PU to enhance Pak and Azerbaijan academic ties

It was agreed that CGSS, Islamabad will act as a bridge between the student fraternity of Punjab University and institutions in Azerbaijan for close academic linkages. Teacher, student exchange programs, and joint conferences to promote institutional cooperation were also discussed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On 2nd December 2020, Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Punjab, Lahore & CGSS Management visited the Embassy of Azerbaijan to Pakistan and met with His Excellency Ali Alizada,

Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan. During the meeting, various initiatives were proposed to enhance regional and academic connectivity as well as bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. It was agreed that the Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad will act as a bridge between the

student fraternity of Punjab University and institutions in Azerbaijan for close academic linkages. Teacher, student exchange programs, and joint conferences to promote institutional cooperation were also discussed. It was also decided that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed between Nakhchivan University, Azerbaijan

and Punjab University, Lahore to promote academic cooperation. His Excellency Ali Alizada, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan appreciated the role of CGSS in promoting Pakistan-Uzbekistan cooperation in the Education sector. He also agreed to link various universities in Azerbaijan with Punjab Uni-

versity, Lahore for initiating joint ventures.

The meeting was also attended by Dr. Fouzia Ali, Assistant Professor, Hailey College of Commerce, University of the Punjab, Lahore

• Lt Col Khalid Taimur Akram (Retd), Executive Director, CGSS

COMSTECH-IFS approve over 33 million rupees

Project funding granted in this session ranges from US\$ 7,000 to 15,000 each project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: OIC ministerial standing committee on scientific and technological cooperation (COMSTECH), Islamabad and International Foundation for Science (IFS), Stockholm, Sweden have selected seventeen research projects from 10 OIC member states - Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Togo and Uganda for the session 2020. A total funding of US\$ 210,197 has been granted to these projects. These projects have been granted in the fields of animal production, crop science, food science, forestry/ agroforestry, natural products and social science. Project funding granted in this session ranges from US\$ 7,000 to 15,000 each project. Four Pakistani scientists have won grants worth Rs. 7.806 million for their research projects in this session. COMSTECH-IFS has so

far financed 358 research projects in various disciplines of science and technology in 32 OIC member states by providing US\$ 3.898 million funds. The 358 research projects from Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somali, Sudan, Suriname, Togo, Tunisia and Uganda have been financed under this program. COMSTECH and IFS agreed in February 1998 to enter into a collaborative program to strengthen the capacity in developing countries which are members of OIC to conduct relevant and high-quality research in sciences related to the management, use and conservation of biological resources. The program is funded in equal parts by COMSTECH and IFS.

TCCIA, Secy commerce vow to cement economic ties



DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, led by President Paul Moyi, met with Federal Secretary of Commerce Muhammad Saleh Ahmed Farooqi to

discuss ways to improve trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Tanzania. Pakistan and Tanzania Business Council should be formed, says Paul Moyi, President, Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce

and Industry Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Chairman Trade Promotion Committee RCCI Khurshid Barlas, Executive Committee Member RCCI Fahad Barlas were present on the occasion. On the occasion, Commerce Secretary Muhammad Saleh bin Farooqi said that with better focus

and more efforts, Pakistan could significantly increase its exports with Africa. We are always striving to promote bilateral trade under Lok Africa in line with the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and Advisor to the Prime Minister on Trade Abdul Razzaq Dawood.

Ashrafi warns against politics on religion

He underlined that Punjab University may also hold events to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relation between Pakistan and China

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Maulana Tahir Ashrafi has advised the opposition leaders not to engage in politics in the name of religion. Addressing a press conference, Maulana Tahir Ashrafi said that due to the tireless efforts of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the Kashmir issue was once again highlighted on international forums. Highlighting the issue of Kashmir, Palestine and being the voice against Islamophobia on the global stage is the success of our foreign policy. Tahir Ashrafi also thanked

OIC (The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) for extending unanimous support to Pakistan over Kashmir issue and categorically rejected the question of recognising Israel till resolution of Palestine issue.

Ashrafi who is also Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council, thanked OIC for negating the propaganda of vested interests that Kashmir was not on its agenda, adding that some 57 countries had supported Pakistan over Kashmir issue. The OIC declaration was testimony to successful foreign policy of the country. Until the Kashmir issue is resolved, we will stand with



our Kashmiri brethren as resolving the Kashmir and Palestine issue is the Muslim Ummah's first priority. He urged government and opposition to settle issue through dialogue. However dialogue was not possible on condi-

tion of impeding accountability of the corrupt, he added. He urged the people to follow SOPs to contain the spread of covid-19. Country's mosques were already observing SOPs as Pakistan was the only country in which mosques remained opened during the pandemic prevalence period, Ashrafi added. He said that seminaries and Christian community representatives had agreed to strictly follow the SOPs for prevention of Covid-19 pandemic in their respective Christmas and other gatherings. He said the government would firmly protect the finality of the prophethood

and blasphemy laws. Religion should not be used for political purposes as some people were trying to create Libya like situation in the country, he added. The Prime Minister has demanded enactment of international laws for impeding blasphemy. Lauding the sacrifices of Pakistan Army, he said Pakistani nation had sacrificed over 80,000 lives. He lauded Ulama and Mashaiikh for extending cooperation to government, adding a decree had already been issued (by Ulama and scholars) in which they said that administering polio drops were not against Sharia and people should administer polio drops to their children.

NA to hold event to highlight PWDs' services

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Secretariat would hold a daylong event on Thursday to commemorate international day of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in a befitting manner.

This year, the day would be observed under the theme of "A Better Inclusive Post COVID-19 World For PWDs" with special focus to highlight the services of the PWDs and acknowledging their contributions in spite of their physical hardships and limitations, a National Assembly Secretariat news release said. The commemoration of the day at the Parliament House is the result of special initiatives taken by Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser for the welfare of PWDs and making them inclusive part of the society. Speaker's initiatives for the welfare of the PWDs include formulating special parliamentary committee on PWDs and issuance of directions to make the Parliament building PWDs' friendly. He had also directed to make official website of the national assembly readable for visually impaired, and inaugurated the special mobile app "Equal Access" for integrating their data.

Ashrafi thanked OIC for supporting over Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Allama Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi Wednesday thanked OIC (The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) for extending unanimous support to Pakistan over Kashmir issue and categorically rejected the question of recognising Israel till resolution of Palestine issue. Talking to media persons, Ashrafi who is also Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council, thanked OIC for negating the propaganda of vested interests that Kashmir was not on its agenda, adding that some 57 countries had supported Pakistan over Kashmir issue. The OIC declaration was testimony to successful foreign policy of the country. He urged government and opposition to settle issue through dialogue. However dialogue was not possible on condition of impeding accountability of the corrupt, he added.

Pakistan, US launch innovative platform

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), in partnership with the U.S. government, launched an innovative online platform that will enable the Government of Pakistan to more quickly and effectively evaluate the safety and effectiveness of medicine, leading to greater health security in the country. The Government of Pakistan and the United States, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), worked together to create the platform to comply with international pharmaceutical standards. The platform, called the Pakistan Integrated Regulatory Information Management System (PIRIMS), will integrate the registration, inspection, licensing, and monitoring of approved medicines. With PIRIMS, regulators can more quickly and effectively monitor medicines in the development and approval processes, and pharmaceutical companies will be able to more quickly and easily apply for permission to produce a medicine. In the past, it could take several years and cost millions of rupees for a pharmaceutical company to register a drug; that time and cost will now be greatly reduced, allowing Pakistani companies to bring safe, effective medicines to market more quickly and less expensively. This partnership will allow Pakistan to increase its participation in the international pharmaceutical market and apply for Level Three Compliance with the World Health Organization's Global Benchmarking Tool, a globally accepted model to evaluate the maturity of a country's regulatory framework.

Improving ties

PAKISTAN and China firmly believe that regionalism and working together is the way forward to prosperity and address security concerns. The two sides have already signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enhance defence ties. General Wei Fenghe, National Minister of National Defence of China, meeting with General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), suggests that the two sides value each other's strategic and military significance. Perhaps, the most significant proof of China Pakistan's time-tested friendship is the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the flagship project of China's Belt One Road Initiative (BRI). The coordination between and cooperation of the two sides was evident during the 5th Meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Gwadar's development. While the two sides evaluated the projects' progress, they also vowed to connect Gwadar port to the second phase of Free Trade Zone (FTZ) through Eastbay Expressway by 2021's end. Since operations at Gwadar port have already started, it is now time to ensure that the port city has a world-class inter and intra city communication network. Gwadar Port's connectivity with FTZ will bring many dividends for Beijing and Islamabad. But the biggest beneficiary will be the locals whose lives will change due to the socio-economic activity that will kick-start once the road projects complete. On the one hand, the road infrastructure from the port to the FTZ will accelerate business activity there; on the other, it will attract investors to the city. While we have already entered the second phase, access to telecommunication is missing from the scene. The lack of telecommunication networks can emerge as a significant stumbling block in the overall development of Gwadar. Therefore, Pakistan must do all that it takes to provide telecommunication facilities there. After all, the development of Gwadar means progress for CPEC and the rest of the country. The greater common good demands from us to remain focused and continue working on Gwadar's development.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

ABC CERTIFIED

Vol: 01 Issue: 214

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Willing for talks

PRIME Minister Imran Khan categorically announced not to allow the PDM rally in Multan. His spokespersons suggested imprisonment for those attending the rally. Scores of opposition workers were subsequently hauled up and the access to the rally's proposed venue blocked with containers. As the highly motivated PDM workers advanced pushing aside obstacles, the administration belatedly announced it was removing barricades to allow the rally to be held. The PDM's success has raised its confidence while it has created doubts about the government's ability to stop the Lahore rally scheduled for December 13 and the subsequent march on Islamabad. The need for talks is in the air now. Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed who has so far been predicting the break-up of the PML(N) has suddenly started advising the opposition leaders to enter into dialogue with the government to steer the country out of the political impasse. Imran Khan's total administrative experience consisted of leading a cricket team to win the World Cup. His major success story is collecting donations for a first-class cancer hospital run by a dedicated team of professionals. Mr Khan misled many by maintaining that the most important hurdle in the country's progress were corrupt politicians. Once they were in jail every problem the country faces would be fixed by him. With him as Prime Minister, patriotic expatriates would send home of millions of dollars, enough to run the country. Once in power, Mr Khan has tried to run the country, which is much more complex than a cancer hospital, through unelected advisers presented as the best specialists in their field. After two and a half years of the persecution of politicians, the country faces the worst economic situation due to lack of competence on Mr Khan's part. This has implications for national defence also. All the opposition parties are willing to hold talks, albeit with the powers that be, with one condition. The country has to be run strictly in accordance with the Constitution, with no institution transgressing into another's turf.

Afghanistan's murky drawdown

Iqbal Khan

The EU pledged 1.2b euros (\$1.43b) over four years, but emphasised aid was conditional. Norway will keep aid to Afghanistan at around NOK 650 million in 2021, and continue at same until 2024. However, Norway could reduce the aid if the peace talks and anti-corruption efforts fail. "Our support and further levels (of support) will be assessed on the basis of the authorities' efforts against corruption," Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soreide (H) said. She added that satisfactory progress in the peace process is also important. "Our assistance will support the Afghan authorities'

USANNAH George and Dan Lamothe reported for Washington Post on November 27: "The United States has closed at least 10 bases around Afghanistan. But drawdown details remain murky". Closure of bases is part of the complete withdrawal of the US military. Many officials in Afghanistan say "they are uncertain of what's to come despite a fast-approaching deadline". Little is known about the current status of many bases in Afghanistan's most volatile conflict zones where the US support for Afghan operations is critical in pushing back the Taliban. Some American bases have been completely handed over to Afghan security forces. Others may have been vacated and left in place in a way that they could be occupied again in the future if considered necessary. "It is also unclear how much equipment - more difficult to move than people - is left at each of the closed installations". Back amongst the US strategic circles, two narratives: all is well in Afghanistan, as well as, it's as bad as in 2001 are being kept afloat simultaneously, to either continue with Trump's policy of complete withdrawal of troops, or to switch over to Biden's concept of keeping around 10,000 boys in Afghanistan. There are also suggestions about a breakthrough in the talks, reporting that both sides have agreed to include the US-Taliban agreement, UN endorsements for the Afghan peace process, commitments of the negotiating teams and the will of the Afghan people as the foundational base for upcoming negotiations. Being beneficiary of ongoing chaos in Afghanistan, President Ashraf Ghani's dispensation was never in favour of engaging Taliban and it made sure that the process does not move ahead on the pretext that "the Taliban's demand are against Afghanistan's Constitution". Presidential spokesman Sediq Sediqqi told reporters on November 25 that the Taliban's demand is "against the Constitution." Sediqqi said peace is a priority for President Ghani and that the Taliban should join the peace process as it is supported by the international community. He added that the deadlock in the talks has not broken so far; "Afghan Republic's negotiating team is trying to break any deadlock and keep the Taliban at the table of negotiations." International community continues to show concern about the high level of violence in the country resulting into snowballing of civilian casualties. Nearly 50 percent spike in violence has been reported amid peace talks, causing around 6,000 civilian casualties during this year. As reported by the US Special In-

spector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), in its quarterly report to the US Congress on November 5, attacks, both, against Afghan forces and civilians were 50 percent higher in the three months towards the end of September when compared to the previous quarter. The watchdog reported 2,561 civilian casualties this quarter, including 876 deaths, up by 43 percent from the April to June period. An immediate ceasefire in Afghanistan is the most sought after item in the peace process. Reportedly, Afghan chief negotiator Mohammad Massoom Stanikzai and presidential peace advisor Salam Rahimi made an unannounced trip to Kabul, seeking President Ghani's approval for the agreed formulation. The Taliban and the Afghan government have been engaged in talks in Doha, since September. The discussions quickly became bogged down by disputes on the agenda, the basic framework of discussions and religious interpretations. Dozens of foreign nations, international institutions and the European Union took part at a virtual global conference hosted from Geneva. Donor fatigue was evident during the November 24 UN hosted donor conference. Though donors pledged billions to Afghanistan, most of them also attached strings. Many countries imposed restrictions over pledged funds, like, progress in talks between the Taliban and the government, among others. United States and Germany, introduced restrictions on future funding and some committed for just the next year - departing from four-year pledges made in the past. "We're pleased to pledge today \$300m ...with the remaining \$300m available as we review progress in the peace process," US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale said in a virtual address to the conference. The US has been contributing roughly \$800m a year in civilian aid in recent years. Hale said "significant progress" had recently been made, including a tentative agreement on ground rules that could allow negotiators to proceed to the next stage of forming an agenda, however, an increased level of violence in the country seems to depict a different reality in terms of progress. Germany pledged 430 million euros (\$511m) in 2021 and signalled it would keep contributing until 2024 but also stressed that progress towards ending almost 20 years of war was needed. The European Union pledged 1.2 billion euros (\$1.43b) over four years, but emphasised aid was conditional. Norway will keep aid to Afghanistan at around NOK 650 million in 2021, and continue at

same until 2024. However, Norway could reduce the aid if the peace talks and anti-corruption efforts fail. "Our support and further levels (of support) will be assessed on the basis of the authorities' efforts against corruption," Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soreide (H) said. She added that satisfactory progress in the peace process is also important. "Our assistance will support the Afghan authorities' goals of democracy, sustainable development and modernization, help lift people out of poverty, improve governance, reduce corruption, and improve the daily lives of Afghans," EU Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen said. Uncertainty over whether the compromises needed for peace might lead to backsliding on human and women's rights has also made some countries wary about making long-term commitments to an Afghan administration, which needs foreign money to cover about three-quarters of its spending. "Afghanistan's future trajectory must preserve the democratic and human rights gains since 2001, most notably as regards to women and children's rights," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. "Any attempt to restore an Islamic emirate would have an impact on our political and financial engagement," he added. The UK said it would pledge \$227m in annual civilian and food aid. Curbing corruption was another wish on the part of countries considering donations. Afghanistan is likely to receive 15 to 20 percent less funding than the roughly \$15.2b pledged at the last conference in Brussels in 2016 due to uncertainties over the peace process and Covid-19. President Ashraf Ghani has estimated that aid covers about 75 percent of the country's public spending. Breshna Omankhel has reported for VOA that former NATO commander expects Joe Biden Administration to Keep Troops in Afghanistan. James Stavridis, retired US Navy admiral and former military commander of NATO, said the US and its allies should keep about 10,000 troops in Afghanistan, for the foreseeable future to pressure the Taliban into a peace agreement with the Afghan government. More than one prophecies are being aired about the future prospects of Afghan peace process. Afghanistan's Presidential Palace has confirmed the predictions by many other individual think tanks and individual strategists that there had been no progress in Doha Talks. Taliban have effectively time out Donald Trump. And they are looking forward for a fresh start with Joe Biden.

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

PDM may head towards breakdown

Mohsin Hassan

Fazlur Rehman of JUI, Zardari of PPP, Maryam Nawaz of PML-N, Asfandyar of ANP, Mehmood Achakzai of PKMAP and six other opposition parties forming the PDM are the most seasoned and experienced politicians of our country. But, together they have made a serious political blunder by continuing adamantly holding public gatherings at the cost of lives of the general public amid the vast and wide spread of deadly coronavirus. This is something which they shouldn't have insisted upon only in defiance of the government

IS PDM heading towards breakdown? A detailed and critical analysis of the sessions, meetings and rallies by the opposition parties' leaders of the newly formed Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leads to the conclusion that the alliance negated its core agenda adopted at the very outset of its launch or adopted during their own terms of government or share in it. The creation of National Accountability Bureau (NAB), the charges against Asif Ali Zardari and blames on each other are a few examples. Further dents are visibly appearing as PTM's Mohsin Dawar has announced that he is not affiliated with the PDM, because he has continuously been ignored. Whereas Gen (ret) Abdul Baldir and former Chief Minister of Balochistan Sanaullah Zehri have already left the alliance. It is now clear that the PML-N leadership, despite an opportunity arising out of the sad demise of the Nawaz Sharif's mother, is not returning to Pakistan; this has caused a major psychological and moral dent to the PML-N Quaid in particular and the PDM in general. "Nothing can be more sacred and important for a man than his parents", they observe, but by not accompanying with her body, he has almost alienated himself from political arena of future. Likewise, Bilawal Bhutto has contracted coronavirus, right at a time when his sister was going to wed and he has just come back from a busy election campaign in Gilgit-Baltistan. The fact that the PDM had defied all requests and SOPs to save the leaders and their followers from the deadly demon, which has now resulted in many contracting Covid-19 positive. This has left a resentful mark in the eyes of general public. Fazlur Rehman of JUI, Zardari of PPP, Maryam Nawaz of PML-N, Asfandyar of ANP, Mehmood Achakzai of PKMAP and six other opposition parties forming the PDM are the most seasoned and experienced politicians of our country. But, together they have made a serious political blunder by continuing adamantly holding public gatherings at the cost of lives of the general public

amid the vast and wide spread of deadly coronavirus. This is something which they shouldn't have insisted upon only in defiance of the government. Somebody in the PDM should have told them that coronavirus is neither political nor does relate to PTI. It is threat to everybody's life. It attacks lethally at gatherings and inflicts heavy casualties like it did in Italy and Iran. Same has happened with Bilawal Bhutto, and one wishes that he may recover soon, come healthy and sound. The second wave of coronavirus is spreading at intense pace due to which more than 50 deaths are being recorded daily, averagely. It may take more than six months to receive the vaccine and only solution left is the safety measures which the PDM is adamantly ignoring. Yes, they may not accept it because it's against their political ego, but they must kindly understand that the common sense directly relates to the lives of innocent people. Their gathering in large numbers, at your call, for your vested interests, will put their life at risk of death as the resurgence of coronavirus is already playing havoc due to mishandlings by the government. This is like going insane to fulfilling venomous objectives. Playing with people's life is a deliberate attempt to obliterate masses - for the sake of no return. If PDM continues to do so, and the cases of coronavirus contract increase manifold, the public sentiment will vote against them, which will obviously be a political death of PDM. This 'happy' marriage of convenience by opposition's political parties finds it difficult to proceed further under Maulana Fazlur Rehman, whose agenda is to talk against the state institutions only. All the political parties are losing their vote banks due to the statements of Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who is said to have close relations with the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. Moreover, the opposition parties have accepted Maulana Fazlur Rehman's leadership for a political convenience, they are cashing in on Fazlur Rehman's grievances as well sentiments against the government. Fazlur Rehman also knows it - so there stays lack of trust in between everyone. Maulana Fa-

zalur Rehman may have a political clout because of his acumen in the affairs, but he has not a leadership quality as such. The leaders of Nawaz Sharif team and Zardari-led PPP understand this fact but they might be using him as the PDM head for their own political convenience. On the other hand, however, a foreign news service, which has a record of accurate, impartial, independent journalism, has in its one of the articles on Maulana Fazl-led PDM surprisingly given a view that seems contrary to its tradition; there are so many factual mistakes and outright misstatements. While writing about the arrest of NS's son-in-law the article forgets to mention that he did violate law by disrespecting the Quaid's mausoleum. It also deplores 'censorship' on Mohsin Dawar's speeches, but misses that the PML-N had itself not invited him to the rally, while Fazlur Rehman stops him from attending PDM meetings. Regarding banning NS's speeches live, why not the same can be questioned about Trump's allegations, which Twitter and TV have stopped to cover live? Why should there be double standards when the content of NS' allegations against 2018 elections is almost the same as Trump's? On NS disqualification, the article obfuscates the context; he was disqualified by a 5-member bench of the apex court in July 2017, a year before the elections, in Panama leaks case and he was convicted in graft cases involving his London flats. Whatever the fate may be of the PDM, it is yet to be seen but it is in the interest of general public that the opposition parties must stop holding rallies and public gatherings in order to save lives of their leaders and followers. The opposition parties are really pulling crowd but at the risk of their lives. If one man catches the coronavirus from a public gathering, imagine he will spread it not only in his family or office or mosque, but everywhere, multiplying the coronavirus positive cases. If this continues, the people would reject PDM and the opposition may head towards an obvious breakdown.

- The writer is Nowshera based contributor

Briefs

Shibli for enhanced Pak-China cooperation

From Page 01

CPEC, particularly those related to the agriculture sector," the Minister said.

"We would like to benefit from Chinese expertise and know how to develop our agriculture sector and enhance crop yield. Development of agriculture sector would contribute to food security," the Minister added. The minister also put forth proposals for training of media personnel in modern media concepts.

Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong said that Chinese side would extend all possible cooperation for enhancing media ties. He said China had plans to invite a Pakistani media delegation to visit different cities of China once the COVID-19 pandemic subsided.

The Chinese ambassador also emphasized close coordination between media of the two countries to rebut negativities about the CPEC projects. The minister on this occasion extended invitation to his Chinese counterpart to visit Pakistan to explore avenues for furthering cooperation in the fields of media and information. Both sides stressed the need to be in constant liaison to strengthen ongoing cooperation. The meeting was attended by the senior officials of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

UK approves use of vaccine from next week

From Page 01

we applaud the MHRA for their ability to conduct a careful assessment and take timely action to help protect the people of the UK," CEO of Pfizer Albert Bourla was quoted by Guardian.

"As we anticipate further authorisations and approvals, we are focused on moving with the same level of urgency to safely supply a high-quality vaccine around the world. With thousands of people becoming infected, every day matters in the collective race to end this devastating pandemic."

According to the BBC, Pfizer-BioNTech was among a group of companies that had managed to develop a vaccine from concept to reality. The process to develop it took only 10 months.

The channel reported that the group that is most likely to receive the vaccine first are people at highest risk. The channel reported that the these groups may receive the first stocks of the vaccine before Christmas. The vaccine has to be administered in two injections, 21 days apart, with the second dose being a booster.

Zalmay announces 'significant milestone'

From Page 01

Khalilzad praised the development, saying that it was proof that both parties to the conflict can "agree on tough issues". "We congratulate both sides on their perseverance. We thank Qatar for its facilitating role as host," he tweeted. The US envoy said that as negotiations seeking a political roadmap and comprehensive ceasefire begin, the US will work hard for "serious reduction in violence and even a ceasefire during this period". Pakistan has been instrumental in persuading the Afghanistan government and the Taliban to discuss options for peace. The move by Islamabad aims to put an end to the conflict that has been raging for the past 19 years in Afghanistan now. However, Islamabad has time and again warned the world against spoilers in the peace process, saying that New Delhi was against peace and stability in the war-torn country. In a video conference a few days ago, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had said that the objective of the negotiations was for the Afghans to make decisions about their future. "The Afghans alone must be the masters of their destiny without outside influence or interference." "Spoilers from within and from without will pose formidable challenges. Constant vigilance will be required to guard against their machinations," Qureshi had said.



ANKARA: Chief of Naval staff of Pakistan Admiral Amjad Khan Nizai during his Turkey visit met Turkish defense minister, Hulusi Akar in Ankara. The two sides discussed the further development of Pakistan-Turkey relations. – DNA

Thai PM wins crucial legal battle amid renewed protests

"The plaintiff did not commit acts that constituted conflicts of interest. He did not seek personal gains, whether directly or indirectly, nor breach ethics," a judge said. "His ministerial post therefore does not end according to the constitution."

DNA

BANGKOK: Thailand's constitutional court has unanimously ruled in favour of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha in a conflict-of-interest case brought by opposition politicians that could have resulted in his removal from office if found guilty. Prayuth has remained in military housing despite his retirement from the army in 2014, months after overthrowing an elected government, saying he needed to stay

there for security reasons.

On Wednesday, the court said the former army chief's stay in the residence was in line with the army's rules, and that the safety of the prime minister and his family was the government's priority. "The plaintiff did not commit acts that constituted conflicts of interest. He did not seek personal gains, whether directly or indirectly, nor breach ethics," a judge said. "His ministerial post therefore does not end according to the constitution." Pheu Thai, the main opposition

party, brought the legal challenge and, if it had succeeded, would have forced Prayuth and his cabinet out of office. The "not guilty" verdict means that Prayuth can stay in power. The court's decision comes with tension high after months of protests to demand Prayuth's removal – a call he has rejected. As the judgment was read out, pro-democracy protesters massed for a fresh rally at a major intersection in northern Bangkok. "I'm not surprised because I think the court received the

directive from the top and the court is not fair," Reeda, 26, a graduate student, told AFP news agency as demonstrators gathered at Lat Phrao intersection. "In the past, they always decide decisions that contrasts with the feeling of the people." Protest group Free Youth said in a statement on Wednesday: "The fight is not over. When he can do no wrong, this country is headed to a breaking point." Protesters and critics accuse Prayuth of engineering elections

last year to keep hold of power. He has said the vote was fair.

A protest movement that began in July to seek Prayuth's removal and to call for a new constitution has also broken taboos by demanding reforms to the monarchy to curb the powers of King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

The pro-democracy movement is facing legal action of its own, with five key leaders charged on Monday under Thailand's strict royal defamation laws, which have not been used in two years.

8th member of Pakistan squad tests positive

SPORTS DESK

CHRISTCHURCH: An eighth member of Pakistan's cricket squad has tested positive for COVID-19 as the team undergoes quarantine in Christchurch, New Zealand health authorities said on Wednesday. The health department said there was one new confirmed case among the squad and a further two members were being investigated, adding to the seven who previously tested positive over the past week. The department said the team would not be allowed to train together until doctors were confident it would not lead to more coronavirus cases. Director-general of health Ashley Bloomfield issued the team with a "final warning" last week for flouting social distancing protocols at their hotel. No further breaches have been reported since. Two of the original six cases last week were subsequently found to be historical, meaning they were not infectious, while the other four were active. A seventh member of the squad tested positive on Saturday. The 53-member tour party, led by skipper Babar Azam, arrived in

Christchurch on November 24 for two weeks of quarantine which is mandatory for all overseas arrivals in New Zealand. All tested negative before leaving Lahore for the five-match tour, which is scheduled to begin with a Twenty20 international in Auckland on December 18. Two of the eight positive tests have been deemed "historic" and not infectious with the PCB saying in a statement that those players are now isolating on the same floor as other members of the squad who have tested negative.

The PCB added that following day nine tests on Thursday, those who continue to return negative test results are expected to be able to train for the rest of their time in managed isolation and after day 12 tests those who clear the 14-day health check will be able to leave managed isolation. "The PCB has been maintaining a close contact with the Pakistan team management in New Zealand and have kept them updated on the return to training process," the statement said. "The management and the players are fully supportive of the process and keen to get back on to the field as soon as they are compliant with the New Zealand Government rules."

KSA slams killing of Iranian scientist

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's permanent representative to the United Nations reacted to the Friday assassination of Iran's prominent nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhriadeh, calling on Tehran to practice restraint. While Saudi Arabia is the only Arab neighbor that has not officially condemned the terrorist at-

tack against the Iranian physicist, the country's UN representative, Abdullah bin Yahya Al-Moallemi, called on Iran to exercise restraint and do not take any action in response to the heinous move. "Targeting any Muslim scientist will harm the whole Muslim Ummah," he said on Tuesday but claimed that an emotional reaction will not bear positive results. The Saudi diplomat seized the opportunity

to use the issue for continuing the blame game on Iran's peaceful nuclear activities, saying, "We urge Iran to demonstrate its goodwill to the international community over its nuclear program so that it does not endanger its children and scientists in this way." However, he did not refer to Saudi Arabia's clandestine nuclear activities that have recently drawn the attention of the global community.

Claiming that Riyadh's policies have always been in line with maintaining peace and stability in the region, Al-Moallemi labeled Iran's missile program as "corruptive". The Saudi envoy also criticized Iran's decision to increase the level of uranium enrichment in response to the lack of commitment by the European parties to the JCPOA and the assassination of its prominent scientist.



LAHORE: Players struggling to get hold on the ball during Maj Gen Saeed-uz-Zaman Janjua Memorial Polo Cup 2020 played between Newage and Platinum Homes. Newage won by 7.5-6 at Jinnah Polo & Country Club. – DNA

WHO recommends masks indoors if ventilation poor

The UN health agency also urged people not to wear masks during vigorous physical activity, and not to use masks with valves, saying they bypassed the filtration function of the facemask

GENEVA: The World Health Organization on Wednesday recommended wearing facemasks when indoors with other people, if the ventilation has been deemed inadequate, in an update to its Covid-19 guidance on masks. The new recommendations apply in areas of known or suspected cluster or community transmission of the new coronavirus. "WHO advises that the general public should wear a non-medical mask in indoor (eg shops, shared workplaces, schools) or

outdoor settings where physical distancing of at least one metre cannot be maintained," the new guidance says. "If indoors, unless ventilation has been assessed to be adequate, WHO advises that the general public should wear a non-medical mask, regardless of whether physical distancing of at least one metre can be maintained." The UN health agency also urged people not to wear masks during vigorous physical activity, and not to use masks with valves, saying they bypassed the

filtration function of the facemask. In its fourth update on mask guidance during the pandemic – the last was in August – the WHO called for wider use in health-care settings, especially in areas plagued by infection clusters or community transmission. In such cases, the WHO recommended "universal masking for all persons (staff, patients, visitors, service providers and others) within the health facility (including primary, secondary and tertiary care levels; outpatient care;

and long-term care facilities)" It also called for the wearing of masks by inpatients when physical distancing of at least one metre cannot be maintained or when patients were outside of their care areas. More generally, the WHO continued to advise anyone suspected of having Covid-19 or awaiting test results to wear a medical mask when around others. As for face shields, WHO said they "provide a level of eye protection only and should not be considered

as an equivalent to masks" when it came to protection against respiratory droplets. The organisation said however that if masks were not available, or if people had difficulty wearing a non-medical mask – for example people with cognitive, respiratory or hearing impairments – then face shields may be considered as an alternative. "If face shields are to be used, ensure proper design to cover the sides of the face and below the chin," the guidance said. – APP

Shoaib moves in Tennis semis

ISLAMABAD: Top seed Muhammad Shoaib of Pakistan downed 3rd seed Ruslan Serazhetdinov of Russia in the Boy's Singles quarterfinal of the General Tyre ITF J5 Junior Tennis Championships week II here at the PTF Complex on Wednesday. Shoaib beat Ruslan without any resistance by 6-1, 6-4. In the Boys singles event, Shoaib, Rohan Belday, Siddhartha Lama and Roy Keegan moved into the semi-finals. Unseeded Siddhartha Lama of USA also displayed quality tennis to beat Zalan Khan of Pakistan 6-0, 6-4 and will face Shoaib in the semifinal.

In the third quarter final of Boys singles, Roy Keegan of Britain registered a straight-set win against Alexander Karman of USA in a well contested two-set match.

In the last quarter final, Rohan Belday of USA beat Aki Zuben Rawat of Nepal in another one-sided affair 6-2, 6-2. He would face Roy Keegan in the other semifinal. In the doubles event, Abdullah of Pakistan pairing with Aoi Ooka of Japan caused a major upset in the quarter-final by eliminating 3rd seed Zalan Khan of Pakistan and Ruslan Serazhetdinov of Russia in a thrilling three set match and moved into the semifinal.

In the Girls doubles event, Abhilasha Bista of Nepal, Arina Valitova of Russia and Zoha Asim of Pakistan, Margarita Okhendovskaya of Ukraine qualified for the girls double final.

Boys singles and doubles semi-finals, Girls singles semi-finals and doubles final would be played on Thursday. Boy's Singles Quarterfinals: Muhammad Shoaib (PAK) beat Ruslan Serazhetdinov (RUS) 6-1, 6-4; Siddhartha Lama (USA) beat Zalan Khan (PAK) 6-0, 6-4; Roy Keegan (GBR) beat Alexander Karman (USA) 6-3, 6-3; Rohan Belday (USA) beat Aki Zuben Rawat (NEP) 6-2, 6-2. – APP

Malan achieves highest T20 rating

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Dawid Malan has achieved the highest-ever rating points for batsmen in the ICC Men's T20I Player Rankings after a brilliant run saw him top the series aggregate with 173 runs and help England sweep South Africa 3-0. The left-hander has reached 915 points, the first to cross the 900-point mark after Australian Aaron Finch's 900-point achievement in July 2018. The 33-year-old now enjoys a 44-point lead over Pakistan's Babar Azam (871), whom he overtook to become number one in September this year. Malan played two back to back match-winning knocks. Last night, he smacked 47-ball 99* that helped England go past Australia to take top spot in ICC Men's T20I Team Rankings. England and Australia are now level at 275 points but England are ahead on decimal points. South Africa and New Zealand retain their fifth and sixth positions while the West Indies have slipped behind Afghanistan to 10th place after losing 2-0 to New Zealand. South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen has reached a career-best fifth position from 22nd. He scored 136 runs against England in the three-match series. England's leg-spinner Adil Rashid is now at fourth spot while South Africa's Tabraiz Shamsi is at fifth.

Afridi leaves LPL halfway

SPORTS DESK

HAMBANTOTA: All-rounder Shahid Khan Afridi has left the ongoing Lanka Premier League (LPL) halfway due to personal matters. Afridi, who was representing Galle Gladiators in the league, shared the reason for leaving the event halfway on Twitter with his fans. "Unfortunately, I have a personal emergency to attend to back home. I will return to join back my team at LPL immediately after the situation is handled. All the best," he wrote. It must be noted here that Afridi made his entry to LPL with a splendid 20-ball half-century. He scored 70 runs in three matches with a fifty at an average of 23.33.

Briefs

'40M people victims of modern slavery'

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK :Despite science and technological advances over the past century, millions of people across the world continue to be victims of slavery. To raise awareness of this plague, the UN on Wednesday is observing International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), more than 40 million people worldwide are victims of modern slavery. "Modern slavery is used as an umbrella term covering practices such as forced labor, debt bondage, forced marriage, and human trafficking. Essentially, it refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, or abuse of power," states the UN on its website. The UN says the focus of the day will be to raise awareness of the need to eradicate modern forms of slavery such as human trafficking, sexual exploitation, child labor, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.

Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong jailed

FOREIGN DESK

HONG KONG : Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong was handed a 13-and-a-half-month jail sentence on Wednesday after pleading guilty to inciting an "illegal assembly" during last year's protests. Wong, along with activists Agnes Chow and Ivan Lam, was taken into custody last Monday and has been in solitary confinement since, according to his social media posts. Chow and Lam were handed sentences of 10 months and seven months in jail, respectively. "The days ahead will be tough but we will hang in there," Wong shouted as he was led away. "The defendants called on protesters to besiege the headquarters and chanted slogans that undermined the police force," Magistrate Wong Sze-lai said as she delivered the verdict. "Immediate imprisonment is the only appropriate option." Former opposition lawmaker Claudia Mo told DW that the sentence was slightly shorter than many feared but added that there has been no attempt made to understand what is driving the pro-democracy movement. "Do not underestimate Hong Kong people's determination to fight for their future," she told DW. "In the short-term, things may look bleak because of social restrictions due to the pandemic. But democracy, that is what we are fighting for, is humanity and humanity will always win."

Criminal organizations set to target Covid vaccines

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Interpol has warned that criminals are planning to "infiltrate or disrupt supply chains" and target members of the public with fake vaccine scams as the world looks to immunize against Covid. On Wednesday, Interpol issued a global alert to its 194 member countries outlining potential criminal activity related to upcoming, large-scale Covid vaccination programs. The international policing body highlighted a number of threats posed by criminal activity, including the advertisement, sale and use of fake vaccines. "Criminal networks will also be targeting unsuspecting members of the public via fake websites and false cures, which could pose a significant risk to their health, even their lives," said Interpol Secretary General Jürgen Stock. Interpol also warned governments, pharmaceutical firms and logistics organizations to be aware of attempts by criminals to infiltrate Covid vaccine supply chains.



ISLAMABAD: Nong Rong, ambassador of Peoples Republic of China to Pakistan calls on federal minister for economic affairs, Makhdum Khusro Bakhtyar. – DNA

Brexit helped UK accelerate Covid vaccine approval: Govt

"Our speed and our provision has been totally dependent on the available data in our rolling review," she stressed, insisting the agency had taken no shortcuts in approving the vaccine" said Health Secretary Matt Hancock

LONDON: Brexit has helped Britain accelerate the landmark roll-out of a Covid-19 vaccine while the European Union lags on its own approval, Health Secretary Matt Hancock said on Wednesday. But the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), after giving its green light to introduce the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, gave a more nuanced view. "Whilst until earlier this year we were in the European Medicines Agency (EMA), because of Brexit we've been able to make a decision to do this based on the UK regulator, a world-class regulator," Hancock told Times radio. As a result, Britain was able to "not go at the pace of the Europeans, who are moving a little bit more slowly," he said. Britain formally quit the EU in January, and the EMA has relocated

'No guarantee of Brexit trade deal'

BRUSSELS: Chief EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier warned Wednesday he can not guarantee he will strike a trade deal with Britain, diplomats said, and the next few days will be crucial. "We are quickly approaching a make or break moment in the Brexit talks," Barnier told a video meeting of European envoys, a diplomat said, in an account of the video talks confirmed by other sources. "Intensive negotiations are continuing in London, but as of this morning it is still unclear whether nego-

tiators can bridge the gaps on issues like level playing field, governance and fisheries," Barnier said. Diplomats said Barnier thought the outcome of the eight months of talks would be decided in the next few days, possibly late on Thursday or Friday. UK officials do not recognise a formal deadline, but privately agree the next few days could be crucial. One European diplomat said there was "frustration" among the member state envoys and that "for the moment, we're still not there."

ed from London to Amsterdam. But the country remains in a post-Brexit transition period until the end of this year, and EU pharmaceutical regulations

still apply for now. "We have been able to announce the supply of this vaccine using provisions under EU law which exists until January

1," MHRA chief executive June Raine told a news conference. "Our speed and our provision has been totally dependent on the available data in our rolling

review," she stressed, insisting the agency had taken no shortcuts in approving the vaccine. The EMA on Tuesday said it would hold an extraordinary meeting on December 29 "at the latest" to consider its own emergency approval for the vaccine developed by Germany's BioNTech and US giant Pfizer. Another US company, Moderna, said it was filing Monday for emergency authorisation of its vaccine in the United States and Europe. Britain and the EU are meanwhile locked in tense negotiations to craft a new trading partnership from January 1. Failure to strike a deal will seriously disrupt cross-Channel trade, although Hancock says planes are on standby to replace ships for ferrying supplies of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to Britain from its manufacturing base in Belgium. – APP

'UNSC unlikely to act on killing of Fakhrizadeh'

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Hours after the assassination of a top Iranian nuclear scientist, Iran demanded the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) condemn the killing and take action against those responsible, but diplomats say the call is likely to go unheeded. At a minimum, the 15-member body could discuss Friday's killing of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh behind closed doors if a member requests such a meeting or it could agree on – by consensus – a statement on the issue. But South Africa's UN ambassador, Jerry Matjila, council president for December, on Tuesday said no member had so far requested to discuss the killing or Iran in general. Diplomats also said

there had been no discussion of a statement. The Security Council is charged with maintaining international peace and security and has the ability to authorise military action and impose sanctions. But such measures require at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by the United States, France, Britain, Russia or China. While no party has claimed responsibility for the killing of Fakhrizadeh – viewed by Western powers as the architect of Iran's abandoned nuclear weapons programme – Iran has accused Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office has declined to comment. The US traditionally shields Israel from any action at the Security Council. Washington has declined to comment on the assassination of the scientist.



Canberra : The High Commissioner of Pakistan Babar Amin, today attended, the full time general service officer commissioning course graduation parade, on the invitation of Royal military college (RMC) – Duntroon in Canberra. – DNA

Trudeau backs Indian farmers' protest

The formal application, submitted to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) on Monday, came after final results showed the vaccine candidate developed by the companies was 95% effective in preventing infections

FOREIGN DESK

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Tuesday said that he supports Indian farmers who are currently staging protests against the Indian government in Delhi. The PM was speaking to the Sikh community living in Canada via a video link on the occasion of Guru Nanak's birth anniversary. According to Geo News, farmers from the Punjab province of India are unhappy with new legislation related to farms introduced by the government for which they have been staging protests in the Indian capital of Delhi since September. "I would be remiss if I didn't start by recognising the news coming from India about the protest by farmers. The situation is concerning. We are all very worried about

India slams Canada PM's remarks on protests

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's remarks on the continuing farmers' protests in India has not gone down well with the Hindu nationalist government, which dubbed his comments as "unwarranted". "We have seen some ill-informed comments by Canadian leaders relating to farmers in India. Such comments are unwarranted, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country," India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said on Tuesday.

"It is also best that diplomatic conversations are not misrepresented for political purposes." Speaking at an online event to mark the 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, the Canadian leader said that the news coming out of India was "concerning" and his country would "always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protest". Thousands of farmers have been camping outside the Indian capital, New Delhi, for almost a week now, demanding the scrapping of controversial agriculture laws enacted by the governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

defended the laws and accused the opposition parties of misleading the farmers, who have dubbed the bills "anti-farmer". His government says the new laws will bring much-needed private investment to the crisis-hit agricultural sector. Over the past several decades the share of agriculture in the country's gross domestic product (GDP) has dwindled as the farm sector has been hit with high indebtedness, crop failure, drought and low prices for produce. The sector accounts for 15 percent of the economy but employs more than half of the country's 1.3 billion people.

family and friends," he said. "We know that's a reality for many of you. Let me remind you, Canada will always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protesters. We believe in the process of dialogue. We've reached out through multiple means to the Indian authorities to highlight our concerns. This is a moment for all of us to pull together," said the Canadian Prime Minister. PM Trudeau has always been vocal about the issues of other countries and worldwide communities. Last month, he said that while free speech is a fundamental right, it is "not without limits" and must not arbitrarily or unnecessarily hurt those living in communities. "We will always defend freedom of expression," Trudeau said in response to a question about the blasphemous cartoons by a French magazine depicting Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

'Entire population may not need vaccinating'

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: India may not need to vaccinate all of its 1.3 billion people if it manages to inoculate a critical mass and break the transmission of the coronavirus, senior government officials said on Tuesday. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who toured the facilities of three vaccine makers over the weekend, has emphasised the importance of a vaccine to rein in COVID-19. In October, he said that the government was preparing to reach every single citizen as soon as a vaccine was ready. World Health Organization experts have pointed to a 65-70 percent vaccine coverage rate as sufficient to reach population immunity. "The government has never spoken about vaccinating the entire country," Rajesh Bhushan, the top bureaucrat in India's federal health ministry, told a news conference on Tuesday without reference to Modi. India currently has the world's second-highest number of coronavirus infections, behind only the United States, with 9.46 million cases and 137,621 deaths. The South Asian nation recorded 31,118 new coronavirus cases on Tuesday, the lowest daily tally since November 17, data from the health ministry showed.

Italy tightens antivirus restrictions for Christmas

ROME: Italy will have to adopt strict restrictions over Christmas holidays to avoid a third wave of the pandemic next year, Health Minister Roberto Speranza told parliament on Wednesday. The new rules – which will be effective from Dec. 4 – will include an almost total ban on international movements and between Italian regions, aimed at avoiding the spread of the virus across the country and limiting huge get-togethers. The restriction will be even tougher on Dec. 25-26 and Jan. 1, when citizens would not be allowed to travel even between cities. A nationwide curfew at 10 p.m. will be maintained also on Christmas night and New Year's Eve, likely obliging Italian churches to anticipate the traditional midnight mass. The government is still discussing a few exceptions to these limitations, possibly for students who plan to visit their families in a different region, or elderly parents and grandparents who live alone and would spend the holidays by themselves. Speranza said the three-tier system adopted by the government to contain the second wave of contagion and avert a new lockdown is proving effective. But, he added, restrictions cannot be relaxed now. "We have no illusions," he told Italian lawmakers. "If we let our guard down, the third wave will be around the corner." Italy has recorded a slowdown in the contagion curve in the past four weeks, with infections stabilizing below 20,000 a day, but the number of daily deaths remains high at over 500. – APP

Azerbaijan declares Nov. 10 as Victory Day

FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: The Azerbaijani president on Wednesday declared Nov. 10, the day when Armenia accepted defeat and ended six weeks of fighting in the Karabakh region, as "Victory Day." Ilham Aliyev also designated Sept. 27, when Baku began an operation to liberate its lands from occupation as a "Memorial Day" for the martyrs. Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Upper Karabakh, is a territory recognized as part of Azerbaijan but was under Armenian occupation since the early 1990s. Forty-four days of clashes ended with a Russia-brokered truce, and Azerbaijan managed to liberate five city centers, four towns and 286 villages amid the heavy fighting. Yerevan also promised to evacuate the cities of Aghdam, Lachin and Kalbajar as part of the cease-fire. Meanwhile, the Turkic nation is gearing up for a military parade at the Azadliq (Independence) Square in the capital. Armored vehicles and other weapons captured from the Armenian army will be displayed.

Briefs

Pakistan's exports increase by 7.2%

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports crossed the \$2 billion mark for a second consecutive month in November, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce Razak Dawood announced in a tweet Tuesday. The commerce adviser said exports have increased by 7.2% year-on-year in November, according to the provisional figures received by the government. "We have just received provisional figures for export of goods. I wish to congratulate our exporters that in these very difficult times with resurgence of COVID-19 cases in Pakistan and globally, our exports have increased by 7.2% in November 2020 over the same period last year," he wrote. Exports increased to \$2.156 billion in November 2020 as compared to \$2.011 billion in November 2019. Dawood explained that for the first five months of the current year, the exports increased to \$9.732 billion as compared to \$9.545 billion over the same period last year. He attributed this to the "hard work of our exporters", saying that they deserve praise for this accomplishment. Exports showed first recovery in July after consecutive downturns since March amid the coronavirus lockdown, according to a The News report. An ease in the lockdown paved way for clearance of orders stuck on ports and revived economic activity.

Pakistan, US launch health platform

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), in partnership with the US government, launched an innovative online platform that will enable the Government of Pakistan to more quickly and effectively evaluate the safety and effectiveness of medicine, leading to greater health security in the country. The Government of Pakistan and the United States, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), worked together to create the platform to comply with international pharmaceutical standards. The platform, called the Pakistan Integrated Regulatory Information Management System (PIRIMS), will integrate the registration, inspection, licensing, and monitoring of approved medicines. With PIRIMS, regulators can more quickly and effectively monitor medicines in the development and approval processes, and pharmaceutical companies will be able to more quickly and easily apply for permission to produce a medicine.

Local admin disallows PDM to hold rally

DNA

LAHORE: The local administration in Lahore on Wednesday has refused to allow opposition's Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to hold public gathering at the Greater Iqbal Park on December 13. According to details, the PDM leadership has submitted a formal application seeking no objection certificate (NOC) for the rally at Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore. The organizers also requested the provincial government to ensure security arrangements at the venue to avoid any untoward incident. However, the concerned authorities rejected the appeal of PDM in the wake of preventing increasing coronavirus cases across the country. Federal Minister for Information Shibli Faraz said that no one will be stopped from attending the rally of PDM in Lahore. The government is not afraid of rallies but only wants prevention of coronavirus spread, he said.

Pak-China cooperation in education sector urged

The Director General emphasized that it is imperative to build linkages between academia, think-tanks and policy circles



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Pro Vice Chancellor, Punjab University and Mr. Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, Centre for Global and Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad called on Director General China, Muhammad Mudassir Tipu at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad. During the meeting, Pakistan-China cooperation in the education sector and educational linkages between the uni-

versities of two countries were discussed. The Director General emphasized that it is imperative to build linkages between academia, think-tanks and policy circles. He underscored that China and Pakistan have cooperation in multifaceted areas including in the domain of education and Science and Technology. Highlighting the importance of Pakistan-China cooperation in the education sector, he maintained that there are about 28,000 Pakistani students in China and similarly, there are ten Pakistan Study Centers and eleven Urdu

Language Departments in prominent Universities of China. Mr. Tipu underscored that Punjab University being one of the oldest institutions in Pakistan, may explore the possibility of establishing a China Study Centre at the University. He underlined that Punjab University may also hold events to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar apprised that University has approved the establishment of 'Regional Integration Centre'

aimed at promoting connectivity and universities of the region. He briefed that a number of Pakistani students have learnt Chinese language at Confucius Institute and Institute of Language and Linguistic established at Punjab University. Similarly, the University has established two Centers of Excellence: Area Study Centre for South Asia and Pakistan Study Center, and scores of Chinese students have enrolled in PhD programs at the University of Punjab, he added. The Pro Vice Chancellor highlighted that there is a need to enhance

programs; joint seminars and streamline the admission policies of universities of both the countries. Mr. Khalid Taimur Akram maintained that CGSS is committed to promoting and facilitating educational institutions, conducting roundtable discussions, interactive sessions and webinars. The Director General lauded the efforts of University of the Punjab and CGSS in enhancing Pakistan-China cooperation in the education sector. He assured support in building institutional linkages and connecting universities of the two countries.

President assures support to UNDP

During the meeting, the need to digitalize the parliament for efficient management and decision making in the secretariat and standing committees was discussed

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan aims to improve governance through digital interventions and formally develop its growing Digital Transformation portfolio. To expand this agenda, UNDP met Mr. Arif Alvi, President of the Republic of Pakistan to discuss future collaboration on Digital Transformation between the Government of Pakistan and UNDP. Mr. Tariq Malik, Chief Technical Advisor on Digital Governance from UNDP's Headquarters in New York is leading the mission to create the first formal and strategic portfolio on Digital Transformation, which will aim to drive the agenda with the Government of Pakistan. The meeting with the President served as an important step towards the aspired transformation. During the meeting, the need to digitalize the parliament for efficient management and decision making in the secretariat and standing committees was discussed extensively. It was agreed that incorporation of information technology (IT) in both the Houses of Parliament was necessary to ensure effective monitoring and control over legislative business. UNDP outlined its ongoing support to the Parliament via technical assistance on Business Continuity and conducting a Digital Readiness Assessment of the Parliament. Malik informed the President that UNDP is also supporting in developing a citizens' engagement platform that can be used to understand citizens views on public policy and on upcoming bills in the parliament. In wake of the pandemic, UNDP Pakistan has already been working towards digitalization to ensure continuation of interventions with greater efficiency and inclusion. In the Digital Health space, UNDP has supported the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination in partnership with Sehat Kahani to set up 45 tele-ICUs across the country. This initiative aims to optimize quality clinical care by digitally connecting ICU Specialists with ICU Medical Physicians. - DNA

Biden sets new demands for Iran deal return

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Joe Biden will insist Iran agrees to new demands if it wants the US to return to a nuclear deal and lift sanctions, The New York Times said Wednesday. The Times said the Biden administration would seek to extend the duration of "restrictions on Iran's production of fissile material that could be used to make a (nuclear) bomb" in a new round of negotiations. Iran would also have to address its "malign" regional activities through proxies in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen in the talks that would have to include its Arab neighbors like Saudi Arabia, the report said. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018 and has reimposed crippling sanctions on Iran as part of a "maximum pressure" campaign against the US's arch enemy. Biden, who defeated Trump at the ballot box last month, said during campaigning that he intends to offer Iran a "credible path back to diplomacy". In the Times interview published on Wednesday, the incoming US president stood by those views, saying: "It's going to be hard, but yeah."

Shehbaz, Hamza's parole

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab government extended on Wednesday parole of PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shahbaz for one day. Sources relayed Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar gave approval for the extension during a consultative meeting convened to take up a plea seeking extension in the father-son duo's parole period. The PML-N had submitted an application to the Punjab Home Department for extension in parole period of its president Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shahbaz. They were released on a five-day parole period on November 27 (Friday) following the death of Begum Shamim Akhtar. A large number of people want to come and console the death of Begum Shamim Akhtar with Shehbaz and Hamza, the application said, calling for extension in the parole period. Speaking to the media earlier, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Information Firdous Ashiq Awan said the Punjab government would not allow any extension in parole period of Shehbaz Sharif and Hamza. She said: "Extending release on parole is not a part of government's policy."



ISLAMABAD: Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Syed Mohammad Ali Hosseini calls on Palestinian Ambassador Ahmed Ameen at Embassy of Palestine. DNA

China's smart classroom acclaimed in Pak

Fully sponsored by China's Weidong Cloud Education Group, it is also a flagship project of International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's smart classroom was acclaimed in Pakistan amid rising COVID-19 cases, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. "China's smart classroom has improved our learning efficiency and enriched our learning methods and contents amid the pandemic," noted Pakistani student Khan, expressing gratitude to the state-of-the-art facility. With academic backing from Southern University of Science and Technology (SUS-

Tech), China, Pakistan's Lahore University of Engineering and Technology (UET Lahore) successfully deployed the country's first smart classroom, namely, Weidong Smart Classroom last July. Fully sponsored by China's Weidong Cloud Education Group, it is also a flagship project of International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO-ICHEI). Ever since the first outbreak of COVID-19 in Pakistan, 15,000 students from UET Lahore had conducted distance learning activities

at home via the platform. As the second wave of coronavirus grips Pakistan, the smart classroom became an important aid to local teachers and students when it comes to distance learning. "We used to lecture stu-

dents one by one on IT, but this offline teaching was extremely inefficient, and some might be dissatisfied with our teaching. With the help of China's smart classroom, we could record our classes and

share them with more students. Besides, we could interact with students during this pandemic time; it did help a lot," said Pakistani IT teacher Naeem, adding that homework can also be given out online and the education continues from home. As per student Khan, they can take lessons whenever and wherever they want, and they feel free to communicate with their classmates and teachers during the second wave of the coronavirus, which feared by global as well as local experts, is to worsen during winter. More importantly, the

recorded classes can be played repeatedly and different lectures are open to them, which means they are powered with more education resources. According to operators from Weidong Cloud Education Group, as the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) is promoting institutions of higher learning to seek way towards the digital transformation, this project enables administrators, teachers, students and technicians to exchange ideas and communicate in the field of information and communication technology (ICT).



PIA to purchase eight new airplanes

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has on Wednesday decided to purchase eight new airplanes. The decision has been taken by PIA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Arshad Malik and the airplanes will be acquired on dry lease of six years. All aircrafts will comprise 170 seats and will be handed over to the PIA between January to December in 2021.