



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

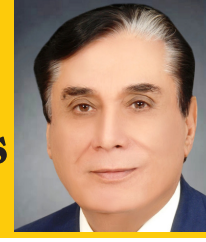
Price Rs. 20

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Shibli Faraz lauds PM Khan speech at UN

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Briefs

Shibli lauds PM speech at UN

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Friday said that proposing a ten point agenda to the world to cope with COVID-19 speaks volume about the leadership qualities of Prime Minister Imran Khan. In his latest tweets on Friday, he said the prime minister in fact has proved himself as a voice of the poor by demanding in unambiguous terms establishment of five hundred billion rupees fund and cancellation of loans of the poor countries as well as recovery of plundered amount from the corrupt politicians and criminals.

Bilawal Bhutto tests 'negative'

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has tested negative for COVID-19, days after contracting the deadly virus. The PPP chairman tested positive for the novel coronavirus on November 26. Confirming the news through his Twitter handle, Bilawal said that he has tested positive for COVID-19 and has gone into self-isolation with mild symptoms. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari isolated himself after his political secretary Jameel Soomro tested positive for coronavirus.

Govt mulls disease centre

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The PTI government is planning to establish a Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - similar to the Atlanta-based national public health institute in the United States, Special Assistant to PM on National Health Services Dr Faisal Sultan told a news outlet.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

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Coronavirus is worst global crisis

The only way we can have the fiscal space to maintain and revive growth is through access to additional liquidity

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan has said that the coronavirus pandemic has claimed the highest number of lives after World War-II and termed it as the most serious global crisis. He was virtually addressing the UN General Assembly's two-day special session on the response to the deadly coronavirus pandemic and forge a united path forward to better recovery, including access to a vaccine. PM Imran Khan said the only way we can have the fiscal space to maintain and revive growth is through access to additional liquidity. Underlining the need for reforming the international financial architecture, he called for building an inclusive and equitable debt management mechanism, constructing a democratic and SDG-focused trading system, and installing a fair international tax regime. Besides, the premier also proposed concessional financing to lower income countries through multilateral development banks; provision of loans at lower costs, mobilizing 100 billion US dollars per year for climate action in developing countries, and halting of illicit financial outflows from developing to rich countries. Alluding to the effects of the pandemic, the Prime Minister said the Covid-19 pandemic has infected nearly 65 million people and killed sadly close to 1.5 million. He expressed hope that whenever the vaccine is available, it must be offered to everyone. He said we provided a relief package of

PM Imran urges masses to use citizen portal

KHAYAM ABBASI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan said Friday that the Pakistan Citizen Portal was a step towards empowering the people of the country. "You saw that 3 million people made use of the Pakistan Citizen Portal," said the premier, praising the initiative. PM Imran Khan said that the portal was instrumental in pointing out which government departments were providing services to people and highlighted those that were not. "What did this reveal? It revealed that in Pakistan, the local government system is not functioning at all," he said. "Insha'Allah, we are about to bring a new local government system in the country which will bring about a revolution."

around 8 billion dollars to support the poor and to keep the economy afloat during the pandemic. He proposed a ten-point agenda for urgent action, which called for: Debt suspension till the end of the pandemic for low income and most stressed countries. Cancellation of debt of least developed countries.

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CPEC to modernise Pakistan's economy: Moin

Ambassador Moin praised China's positive economic growth, which he said was reflective of its effective pandemic control and prudent economic policies



DNA

BEIJING: China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as one of its most prominent and successful flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative, had laid a sound foundation for modernization of Pakistan's economy. This was stated by Pakistan's ambassador Moin ul Haque while addressing opening ceremony of the 11th International Infrastructure Investment and Construction Forum (IIICF) in Macao, says a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Friday. "In the next phase, the convergence of traditional and digital infrastructure would be essential for unleashing the potential for growth in diverse areas such as agriculture, science and technology, industrial relocation and vocational training", the Ambassador said. CPEC's growth and success had highlighted the centrality of modernizing infrastructure to achieve the sustainable development goals. The Ambassador called on enterprises and private cap-

ital to play a greater role in enhancing international connectivity alongside governments, financial institutions and MDBs. At the invitation of the China International Contractors Association (CHINCA), Ambassador Moin ul Haque participated in the opening ceremony and spoke on the theme of "Challenges and Opportunities: Outlook on International Infrastructure Development in post-COVID-19 era". Ambassador Moin praised China's positive economic growth, which he said was reflective of its effective pandemic control and prudent economic policies. He expressed confidence that China would continue to drive global economic growth and recovery after the pandemic. The Ambassador noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had changed the modes of life and work, and new modes of infrastructure investment would play a key role in post-pandemic recovery.



DHAKA: Pakistani High Commissioner Imran Ahmed Siddiqui meets Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. - DNA

Pak reports 55 deaths by coronavirus

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan has reported 55 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 410,072. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 8,260 on Friday. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), 3,262 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Sindh remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic in terms of cases followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Punjab has overtaken Sindh in most number of casualties. Till now 179,240 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Sindh, 121,753 in Punjab, 48,264 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 17,333 in Balochistan, 31,639 in Islamabad, 7,151 in Azad Kashmir and 4,692 in Gilgit-Baltistan. Furthermore 3,115 individuals have lost their lives to the epidemic in Punjab, 2,983 in Sindh, 1,389 in KP, 169 in Balochistan, 332 in Islamabad, 174 in Azad Kashmir and 98 in GB.

Australia has new CG in Sindh

ATHAR SUFI / DNA

KARACHI: The Australian Government has appointed Jahanzeb Awan as its new Honorary Consul in Karachi, with consular jurisdiction over the Province of Sindh. Barrister Jahanzeb Awan, Advocate Supreme Court of Pakistan, is a partner and head of litigation at a law firm in Pakistan and specializes in civil, commercial, constitutional and tax matters and appears before the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the High Courts of Sindh, Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar. Mr Awan also serves on the board of various charitable organizations.

Pakistan, BD look to rebuild ties

A statement issued by the High Commission on Friday said Sheikh Hasina expressed "good wishes" for Pakistan

NEWS DESK / DNA

Rohingya refugees shifted to Bangladesh

ISLAMABAD: In a rare move, Pakistani High Commissioner in Dhaka Imran Ahmed Siddiqui met with Bangladeshi Premier Sheikh Hasina Wajid in a bid to strengthen ties between the two countries. A statement issued by the High Commission on Friday said Sheikh Hasina expressed "good wishes" for Pakistan after she was informed that the country held the Bangladeshi leadership and people in high esteem and affection.

BANGLADESH: Some 1,600 Rohingya refugees have been shifted to the remote island of Bhasan Char in the Bay of Bengal. According to human rights groups, many people were not willing to relocate and were forced to move, BBC reported Friday. Bangladesh, however, maintains that all the refugees willingly moved to the island and no one was coerced to do so. According to the government, relocating some of the refugees to Bhasan Char will ease the overcrowding in camps that house more than 1 million Rohingya, a Muslim minority group that fled Myanmar to escape persecution. - DNA

The statement said the Bangladeshi premier welcomed Siddiqui and assured him of full support in the

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Ms. Wada gets Japanese FM award

Ms. Wada is a Japanese national and resides in the KP province of Pakistan



Visited exceptionally talented sculptor, Rakhmat Wali, with my grand niece on Aug. 3

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan has announced to award the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendations for FY 2020 to Ms. Wada Akiko, President of Rumbur Development Welfare & Conservation Society in recognition of her significant contribution towards the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and Pakistan. Ms. Wada is a Japanese national and resides in the KP province of Pakistan. Every year, the Foreign Minister's Commendations are awarded to individuals and groups with outstanding achievements in international fields, in order to acknowledge their contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries and areas. Continued on Page 06

Pakistan rejects Indian stance on Jadhav

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan categorically rejects incorrect and misleading assertions made by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) regarding the legal proceedings currently taking place in the case of Indian Naval Commander Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav.

It is evident that by casting aspersions on the Indian High Commission's own legal Counsel, the Indian government is looking for an escape from the legal proceedings in Commander Jadhav case. The Government of India is reminded that in pursuance of the judgment of International Court of Justice (ICJ), Pakistan had invited the Indian High Commission to meet with Commander Jadhav and appoint a lawyer on his behalf so that proceedings to review and reconsider Commander Jadhav's conviction could commence.

China to expand weather program

WEB DESK

BEIJING: China this week revealed plans to drastically expand an experimental weather modification program to cover an area of over 5.5 million square kilometers (2.1 million square miles) - more than 1.5 times the total size of India. According to a statement from the State Council, China will have a "developed weather modification system" by 2025, thanks to breakthroughs in fundamental research and key technologies, as well as improvements in "comprehensive prevention against safety risks."

UK sets new climate target ahead of UN Summit

New plan aims for at least 68% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the end of the decade, compared to 1990 levels

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced a new ambitious target to reduce the UK's emissions by at least 68% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. Recognising the urgency to go further to tackle climate change, the UK's new target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - our Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Climate Agreement - is among the highest in the world and commits the UK to cutting emissions at the fastest rate of any major economy so far. Today's target is the first set by the UK following its departure from the EU, demonstrating the UK's leadership in tackling climate change. Over the past decade, the

UK has cut carbon emissions by more than any similar developed country and was the first major economy to legislate for net zero emissions by 2050. The announcement comes ahead of the UK co-hosting the Climate Ambition Summit on Saturday 12 December, which will coincide with the fifth anniversary of the historic Paris Agreement. The summit calls on countries around the world to submit ambitious NDCs or other climate plans as we head towards the UN COP26 climate talks, which the UK Government is hosting in Glasgow next year. This new target meets the recommendation of experts at the independent Climate Change Committee who advise the government on emissions targets. The UK's path to meeting this

target is backed by the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution, which will create and support up to 250,000 British jobs by 2030. The plan sets out ambitious policies and investment, with the potential to deliver over £40 billion of private investment by 2030, so that we can de-



velop innovative technologies and make significant strides in cutting emissions across energy, transport and buildings. It also provides a roadmap of further action the UK will be taking to reduce emissions in the coming decades, encouraging similar levels of ambition from businesses, organisations and nations around the world. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said: "We have proven we can reduce our emissions and create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the process - uniting businesses, academics, NGOs and local communities in a common goal to go further and faster to tackle climate change. "Today, we are taking the lead with an ambitious new target to reduce our emissions by 2030,

faster than any major economy, with our Ten Point Plan helping us on our path to reach it. "But this is a global effort, which is why the UK is urging world leaders as part of next week's Climate Ambition Summit to bring forward their own ambitious plans to cut emissions and set net zero targets." Business and Energy Secretary and COP26 President Alok Sharma said: "Tackling climate change is the one of the most urgent shared endeavours of our lifetimes, demanding bold action from every nation to prevent catastrophic global warming. "As a country, we have demonstrated we can both rapidly cut carbon emissions, while creating new jobs,

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Govt to discontinue Rs25,000 prize bonds

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has decided to discontinue Rs25,000 denomination prize bonds. The move is aimed at addressing concerns of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that has put Pakistan on its grey list over reported failure to check money laundering and terror financing. In the first phase, the Rs25,000 denomination bonds will be converted into premium bonds with their registration to start by December-end. Afterward, the Rs15,000 and Rs7,000 denomination prize bonds will be registered. The sources said that bond holders will have to submit a copy of their CNIC and fill a form to be provided by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for encashment of their bonds. The prize on all types of denominations will not be given in cash but transferred to bond holders' account. Earlier, the government had discontinued Rs40,000 denomination prize bonds to check the practice of parking of ill-gotten money through these bonds in line with the Paris-based global watchdog's guidelines.

PIMA calls for ban on all public gatherings

DNA

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA) on Friday recommended banning public gatherings amid a sharp increase in the number of coronavirus cases. The PIMA leaders observed that the masses are not taking the second wave of the COVID-19 seriously and demanded to declare wearing face masks mandatory. "Fine should be slapped over masses roaming at public places without face masks." The association also demanded of the government to reduce business hours and slap a complete ban over holding public gatherings, rallies, and other mass gatherings amid coronavirus outbreak. They regretted that despite calling them front line workers in the fight against the pandemic, they are not being provided the due equipment. On November 17, Jamiat Ulama-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman had rejected a ban imposed by the federal government on public gatherings in the country amid rising COVID-19 cases. "We reject a ban on public gatherings in the guise of COVID-19 pandemic and they would be held as per schedule," the JUI-F chief had said. He had said that it is not a government formed from the public mandate and therefore they would not hold any sort of negotiations with them. "We also reject the results of the Gilgit Baltistan elections," Maulana Fazlur Rehman said.

2nd wave of virus needs prudent handling

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With the emergence of the second wave of the novel Coronavirus, the country may face serious health-governance challenges at both policy and implementation level that, if not addressed, might jeopardise and reverse the gains made in the first phase of the fight against the pandemic. The first monthly COVID-19 response monitoring report, released by the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability-Free and Fair Election Network (TDEAF-FEN), observed an increase in the number of new confirmed cases from 313,431 to 333,970 and 324 deaths (rising from 6,499 to 6,823 dead) during October, 2020. This report is based on the data collected through stakeholders' surveys and direct observation of enumerators deployed in 20 project districts. The sense of urgency for a more serious and focused response by the government is not only dictated by the rampant increase in infections but also by the state of critical factors such as limited infrastructural capacity at the district level, need for capacity building of first-line responders, as well as stakeholders like members of civil society organisations (CSOs) and journalists.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairing the meeting on mobile manufacturing policy in Islamabad. – DNA

President Arif Alvi for financial inclusion of PWDs

Addressing the meeting, the President stated that DAPs were a vulnerable segment and it was the collective responsibility of society to work for their facilitation and economic welfare

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has underscored the need for financial inclusion of the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) enabling them to play their role in the socio-economic development of the country. He said that it was essential to bring differently-abled people (DAPs) into the mainstream and empower them economically. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting on financial inclusion of PWDs, at Aiwan-e-Sadr Friday. The meeting was attended by SAPM on Poverty Allevia-

tion and Social Safety (PASS), Dr Sania Nishtar, Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Dr Reza Baqir, Chairman Pakistan Banks Association (PBA)/President Habib Bank Limited (HBL), Mr Muhammad Aurangzeb and the CEOs/Presidents of 27 leading banks of the country also participated via video-link. Addressing the meeting, the President stated that DAPs were a vulnerable segment and it was the collective responsibility of society to work for their facilitation and economic welfare. He emphasized the need to enhance financial inclusion of DAPs and improving the accessibility infra-

structure for them. SAPM on PASS, Dr Sania Nishtar apprised the meeting of the measures taken for the uplift of DAPs under Ehsaas Program. Governor SBP, Reza Baqir, briefed the meeting about the compliance status of the decisions taken in the previous meeting held with CEOs/Presidents of banks in February 2020. He highlighted the initiatives taken by SBP for the welfare and facilitation of DAPs. He remarked that SBP had made it mandatory for all banks/Micro-Finance Banks to construct ramps and ensure accessible banking infrastructure for PWDs. He said that SBP had allocated

targets to banks with regard to refinance schemes and had also instructed them to ensure the construction of ramps at the entrance points of banks within a period of 2 years. He apprised that a Working Group to be comprised of representatives of banks, SECP and PWDs would be constituted to make recommendations for the economic empowerment and well-being of PWDs. President HBL/Chairman PBA, Muhammad Aurangzeb, updated the meeting about the steps taken for the facilitation of DAPs. He informed that 525 branches with accessible infrastructure

had been completed while 1100 PWDs had been provided financial assistance and 151 Talking ATMs were installed throughout the country. The CEOs/Presidents assured that they would continue to support the efforts for the facilitation and financial inclusion of DAPs. The President appreciated the measures taken by the Central Bank and other commercial banks of the country for the facilitation and economic well-being of PWDs. He underlined the need for creating awareness among the DAPs about the refinance schemes and other facilities being offered by banks.

Govt approaches Gavi to make coronavirus vaccine

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services will submit an application to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to make the coronavirus vaccine available in Pakistan. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Health said the government will apply to COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, that GAVI is co-leading. The COVAX facility is a global collaboration to speed up the development, production and access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines. GAVI started accepting applications for the availability of vaccines on November 17.

The health ministry said the recommendations of the Special Working Group on improving immunity of citizens have also been approved. They were approved in a meeting of the coordination committee chaired by PM's aide on health Dr Faisal Sultan. Dr Sultan said the government is making efforts to ensure safe and effective vaccines as soon as possible and protection of healthcare workers fighting on the front-line in the fight against coronavirus. Pakistan has so far recorded 410,072 COVID-19 cases and 8,260 deaths. On Friday 3,262 new cases were reported and 55 new deaths. The number of people who have recovered from the virus has reached 350,305.

UBG launches campaign for FPCCI election

DNA

LAHORE: The United Business Group (UBG), the largest alliance of chambers and associations in the country, Friday launched aggressive 3rd round of campaign to muster support from voters in the forthcoming annual election of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. UBG Chairman and veteran trade leader Itikhar Ali Malik while addressing the UBG panel contesting the federation election said 90 percent voters from Punjab and KPK

will take all stakeholders into confidence while framing proposals and recommendations for submission to government. He said in 3rd round, chambers and associations in Karachi, Sindh and Balochistan will be focused and during fourth final round all provincial headquarters will be visited. He said that Sindh and Balochistan traders, chambers and associations have already expressed solidarity with UBG delegation headed by SM Muneer. Candidate for Vice President from Punjab seat Almas Hyder who is also former President Lahore

Chamber of Commerce and Industry informed the participants that he also personally visited separately all major cities of the Punjab and met the voters to have first hand information about their genuine problems being confronted by them since long. He said he assured them all their support to them if voted to power. He announced that after coming into power, he will hold two convention of all chambers and affiliated associations to address their problems mainly aimed at boosting economic activities in the province.

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CPEC projects to bring prosperity in KP: Qaiser

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser Friday said timely completion of CPEC related projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) would open new avenues of prosperity and economic stability all over the country. The speaker made these remarks while chairing a high-level meeting, held at the Parliament House to review progress on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) related projects

in KP, said a news release. He asked the departments concerned to strive for early and timely completion of CPEC related projects in the province. The meeting was told that Rashakai Economic Zone would be inaugurated soon. Moreover, matters pertaining to Dera Ismail Khan Economic Zone came under discussion. Transformation of the Dera Ismail Khan Economic Zone into a special industrial zone and the Peshawar Circular Railway projects were also discussed in detail.



LAHORE: Special assistant to chief minister Punjab, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan addressing meet the press at Lahore press club. – DNA

PARC, WFP join hands for promotion of agriculture

A delegation of World Food Programme led by its Senior Program Policy Officer, Ms. Manuela Reinfeld visited PARC-AZRI, Umerkot and discussed the areas of mutual collaboration in order to promote the agriculture sector in desert areas for food safety and security of people living in these areas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) and World Food Programme (WFP) here on Tuesday reiterated their resolve for working together and strengthening bilateral cooperation to develop and promote agriculture and livestock sectors in desert areas of Pakistan. Consensus to this effect was

shown in a meeting of WFP and PARC Arid Zone Research Institute Umerkot, sindh, said a press release. A delegation of World Food Programme led by its Senior Program Policy Officer, Ms. Manuela Reinfeld visited PARC-AZRI, Umerkot and discussed the areas of mutual collaboration in order to promote the agriculture sector in desert areas for food safety and security of people living in these areas.

Director General PARC-SARC, Dr. Attaullah Khan along with other high officials were also present in the meeting and apprised delegation about the search activities conducted in the institute. While, briefing about the on-going activities and future prospects of PARC sub-station, Dr Attaullah Khan told the WFP delegation, that PARC AZRI Umerkot was working on the reclamation of desert areas of Pakistan.

To eliminate drought and turning the barren deserts into grasslands, PARC in collaboration with the international development partners and donor agencies replicating successful agriculture and livestock models. These models helped to create livelihood opportunities to the communities living in these areas, besides providing them food for daily consumption, he added. The delegation also reviewed the research and development

activities carried out by the research institute and its impact on local communities. They took keenly interest in models being developed included fish farming model, kitchen gardening, advanced Irrigation and bio-gas plant. While appreciating the efforts of researchers and scientists, WFP delegation expressed their interest to enhance bilateral cooperation with PARC to promote livestock and agriculture sectors.

Punjab records 670 fresh virus cases

DNA

LAHORE: The coronavirus claimed 24 more lives in Punjab during the past 24 hours, taking the provincial death toll from the disease to 3,115. According to a spokesperson for the Primary and Secondary Health Department, 670 fresh infections detected during this period, pushing the total number of cases thus far reported across the province to 121,753. Of the total fresh cases, 301 were detected in Lahore and 71 in Rawalpindi, the health department said. Fifty-five more people died of the coronavirus in the country over the last 24 hours, according to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO). According to the latest statistics, 3,262 tested positive for COVID-19 during the last 24 hours after the tests of 44,627 people. The figure of patients recovered from the virus has reached 350,305. There are now 51,507 active cases in the country.

SPI in single digit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar said on Friday that the Sensitive Price Index (SPI) recorded another decrease of 0.23 per cent this week. In a Twitter message, Asad Umar said that the sugar price reduced sharply by 7.5 per cent this week after a decline of nearly 5 per cent last week. He said that the reduction in the inflation rate has been sustained now for the past several weeks with SPI consistently in single digit. Earlier on Wednesday, Prime Minister Imran Khan had said that the ex-mill price of sugar came down by Rs20 per kilogram in 20 days due to the government's effective intervention in the matter. Talking on Twitter, PM Khan said the distribution of imported sugar at control rates and timely start of the crushing season was also ensured. "Distribution of imported sugar at control rates and timely start of crushing season also ensured. I have asked provinces to ensure fair and swift cane payments are made to farmers," he wrote on his official Twitter handle. The premier has also asked provinces to ensure fair and swift cane payments to farmers. It may be noted that the sugar prices in the country have witnessed a decline in wholesale and retail markets.

CS: GO tournament comes to Pakistan

DNA

LAHORE: The International Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) tournament Red Bull Flick, the first-ever 2v2 tournament, is finally launched in Pakistan, bringing in a brand-new game mode to the Pakistani amateur and professional players. The player registration period continues from Dec. 3 to Dec. 11, 2020. The tournament will officially begin on Dec 12 and go on until Dec. 19, 2020. Registered players will fight for the top 8 spots in the two online qualifiers and the winners from each one will battle in the national finals on Dec. 26, 2020. Red Bull Flick not only offers the CS:GO amateur and pro gamer a chance to play in the first-ever 2v2 tournament, but also provides them with five brand new maps and a new game mode with a suite of unique settings and game mechanics to keep the competition varied. The maps are titled Castle, Garden, Speedway, Matrix, and Himalaya, and are available to play on Steam. Meanwhile, the unique game mode 'Hold The Flag' in Red Bull Flick will allow the players to face off in a King-of-the-Hill style match-up where the pairs will have hold and defend the flag on the new maps for 45 seconds. The Red Bull Flick Grand Final Winners will bag a grand prize, which will be kept a secret until right before the national finals. Watch out for the big reveal or you might miss it. Renowned gaming personalities and CS pros including PokemOn, Soulm8, and Hsb are all set to experience a face-off under the Hold the Flag Spot. "Providing an international opportunity for Pakistani gamers is rarely seen before," said Saad Ahmed, one of Pakistan's top CS:GO players popularly known by his game-name 'PokemOn'.

Briefs

National voters day to be observed on Dec 7

ISLAMABAD: National Voters' Day will be observed across the country on December 7 to create awareness about importance of registration as voters.

The day is celebrated in commemoration of first general elections of Pakistan held on December 7, 1970. On this day in 1970, voting took place in 300 constituencies of National Assembly on general enfranchisement of the Unicameral Parliament of Pakistan.

The primary purpose of commemorating the day is to create awareness among the general public with regard to importance of vote and inclusion of all segments of the society in electoral process.

The main event in this regard will be held at Election Commission of Pakistan Secretariat in Islamabad. Chief Election Commissioner will address the main event. Events in this regard will also take place at the Provincial Offices of the Election Commission of Pakistan. COVID-19 SOPs will be observed at all the events to be organized by the ECP. - APP

'COVID-19 cases increasing'

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Capt (R) Anwar Ul Haq Friday said that the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic was more deadly as compared to the previous one in the country, the number of coronavirus patients were increasing rapidly in the district. Chairing a meeting to review anti-coronavirus arrangements here at his office, he directed the officials to ensure implementation of C virus SOPs at public places. He said that if want to defeat the COVID-19, we must follow the SOPs regarding it including wearing of face masks, maintaining social distance and by avoiding crowded places.

On the occasion, the health officials briefed the DC that 131 more people had become its victims during the last 24 hours out of which 128 were reported from Rawalpindi district while 3 belonged to other districts. He briefed that 23 cases were reported from Potohar town, 23 Rawalpindi Cantt, 59 Rawal town, 7 Gujar Khan, 3 taxila, 3 Murree, and 10 from Kahuta. Recently 24 patients were admitted in Holy family Hospital, 14 Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 27 Institute of Urology and 3 in the Hearts international hospital who were being provided the best health care facilities, he added. The official briefed that 5 people were died due to this deadly virus during last 24 hours. - APP

Govt releases Rs. 1.78 bln for textile sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood on Friday said that the government has released Rs. 1.78 billion for textile sector under Drawback of Local Taxes and Levy (DLTL) scheme.

"I hope this will resolve the liquidity issues of our exporters and enable them to enhance exports" the adviser said this in a tweet. The DLTL for non-textile sector would also be released shortly, he added.

"I am happy to share that export of animal casings from Pakistan to Japan has resumed after a ban of four years," he added while commending the efforts made by country's trade section at Tokyo. "I advise our trade missions to actively engage the importers for promotion of Pakistan's exports. "I urge the exporters to take benefit of this opportunity and move full speed ahead," Razak said. The Adviser to PM hailed the significant growth observed in country's export in different sectors for the months of November 2020.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Kashmala Tariq attended a luncheon meeting with ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan, Lis Rosenholm and discussed issues regarding gender equality, harassment and fight for women rights. - DNA

TI Pakistan, WEF laud NAB's anti corruption efforts

Transparency International Pakistan has been working with NAB since 2000, on awareness and preventive efforts to eradicate corruption, and has held many workshops, trainings, and seminars, especially on NAB's interaction with business community and bureaucrats, assisting in NACS, UNCAC etc

SHAHEEN HANIF / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Justice (RETD) Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has chaired a meeting to review overall performance of NAB at NAB headquarters. He said that Transparency International (TI) Pakistan and world Economic Forum have appreciated NAB's overall performance in eradication of corruption and corrupt practices especially the report of Transparency International Pakistan issued on July 30, 2020 in which Mr. Sohail Muzaffar Chairman Transparency International (TI) Pakistan has stated that NAB under the leadership of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB, anti-corruption drive has resulted in an excellent impact much needed since its in-

ception, and NAB has so far made recovery of Rs 466 Billion which is a remarkable achievement.

Transparency International Pakistan has been working with NAB since 2000, on awareness and preventive efforts to eradicate corruption, and has held many workshops, trainings, and seminars, especially on NAB's interaction with business community and bureaucrats, assisting in NACS, UNCAC etc. Honorable Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB said that NAB is determined to eradicate corruption in all its forms and manifestations as corruption is the mother of all evils. In order to further improve the quality of inquiries and investigations on the basis of solid and documentary evidence, NAB has started combine investigation Team (CIT) system in order to conduct inquiries and investigations



comprising of one senior investigation officer, one junior investigation officer, Additional Director investigation as case officer, legal counsel, financial expert, land revenue expert and forensic expert under the supervision of Director and DG concerned to benefit from collective wisdom. NAB has established its own Pakistan Training and Research Academy in which

specialized training has been started to impart investigation officers as well as Prosecutors officers on modern lines in order to conduct investigations of cases of money laundering and white collar crime cases.

NAB has also established Anti Money Laundering Cell in NAB headquarters as well as witness handling cells in all the regions to improve the standard and quality of investigations as per law. NAB is regularly reviewing the performance of NAB through computer based specially devised state of art monitoring and evaluation systems but also physically inspecting through Chairman NAB's Inspection and Monitoring Team (CMT) to further review overall performance of NAB.

On the instructions of Chairman NAB, Special complaint cells have been established in NAB Head-

quarters and all bureaus to listen to the complaints of the business community as NAB has great regard for the business community which play a vital role in the development of the country. Moreover, Honorable Hussain Asghar, Deputy Chairman NAB has life long experience in investigation of white collar crime cases.

Similarly, Zahir Shah, DG Operations NAB and all DGs of Regional Bureaus of NAB are working very hard to ensure conduct of complaint verifications, inquiries and Investigations in an analytical way in order to overcome the shortcoming if any well in time. NAB intends to incorporate experienced legal counsel, prosecutors, deputy prosecutors and additional prosecutor general in its legal team in order to have vigorous prosecution of the Honorable Courts.

AJK President briefs envoys of OIC members

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan along with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Foreign Secretary Sohail Mehmood met OIC envoys based in Islamabad to thank them, on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, for OIC's strong and unambiguous support to Kashmir cause during the OIC-CFM Session in Niamey. Briefing the diplomats at Foreign Office, the President appreciated all the 57 OIC states for firmly standing with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and unanimously rejecting the unilateral and unlawful actions of India in occupied Kashmir, condemning attempts to change the demography of occu-



ried territory by settling non-Kashmiri Hindus in the disputed territory, and demanding withdrawal of all unilateral illegal actions. "The reiteration of the OIC's principled position on Kashmir was also reflected in the declaration and people of the Jammu and Kashmir are thankful to all OIC's countries for their steadfast support to their cause," Khan also expressed his deep appreciation to Pakistan and member-states to

help the representatives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to address the OIC foreign ministers at Niamey and listen to them. "The adoption of an effective, strong and comprehensive resolution by OIC Foreign Ministers is the victory of Pakistan's principled stand on the Kashmir issue, and at the same time, it is an important development for the struggle of the Kashmiri people. President Masood said that

Pakistan Foreign Office headed by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi had played a key role in this achievement.

The foreign ministry under the leadership of FM Shah Mehmood Qureshi, he added, worked day and night, and turned the tide at the Niamey moot, getting the resolution approved and ensuring meaningful participation and address of the Kashmir delegation in the conference.

The State President said that the OIC had steadfastly stood by the people of Jammu and Kashmir since the approval of its first resolution on Kashmir in 1990. He asserted that nine million Muslims of occupied Kashmir, who are part of the Muslim world, were looking towards the Muslim community around the world for the help and rescue from Indian tyranny.

"Violence against Women" to be held on Dec 6

Multi dimensional event was being arranged in accordance with 16 days of Women Activism, to create awareness to sensitize women about their due rights being affected in domestic violence as majority of them was unaware of their basic rights

ISLAMABAD: Nomad art Gallery will hold an art exhibition themed "Violence against women, Empowerment and the way forward" on December 6. In collaboration with Shanaakht Trust, they will be featuring different events including Art exhibition, music, readings, mural paintings, mime, live art, crafts display and various performances. Multi dimensional event was being arranged in accordance with 16 days of Women Activism, to create awareness to sensitize women about their due rights being affected in domestic violence as majority of them was unaware of their basic rights. According to an official, various artist will participate including Ibrar Ahmed, Abbas Shah, Ahmed Habib, Farrah Mahmood, Masood A Khan, Riffat Khatak, Saima Aslam, Samreen Asif, Samina A. Akhtar, Sumera Javed, Sayed Irfan and Zia Zaidi. He said that musicians and artist will mesmerize the audience with their spell bounding performances. Theme based paintings will be displayed including crafts work. There was dire need to educate women regarding their fundamental rights to protect them from physical violence, he stated. - APP

Mandviwalla granted bail in NAB case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday granted pre-arrest bail to Deputy Chairman Senate Saleem Mandviwalla and his alleged front man Tariq Mehmood in a NAB investigation.

The court accepted the bail against Rs 0.5 millions surety bonds each and served notices to the anti graft body for submission of comments. A division bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Ghulam Azam Qambrani conducted hearing on interim bail petitions of the two accused.

Death anniversary of Aziz Mian

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Council of the Arts will arrange a ceremony to observe 20th death anniversary of legend Aziz Mian Qawal on 6th December 2020 at 6 pm at its auditorium.

Prominent personalities will throw light on work and personality of Aziz Mian Qawal while son of Aziz Mian Qawal Imran Aziz Mian Qawal will give special performance on the occasion.

Hearing against Pervaiz Ashraf adjourned

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Friday adjourned hearing till January 15, on rental power projects against former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. The hearing of the case was adjourned without further proceeding due to the leave of AC-III Judge Syed Asghar Ali. Meanwhile, AC-I Judge Muhammad Bashir adjourned hearing against former chairman Ogra Toqeer Sadiq till December 9, without any further proceeding due to the absence of prosecution witness. - APP

Three bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested three bike lifters and recovered four stolen motorcycles, cash Rs 21,000 and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Morgah police in their crackdown against criminal elements, managed to net two bike lifters namely Saleem and Ghulam Ali and recovered three stolen motorcycles, cash Rs 21,000 and other items from their possession. He said, Police also recovered weapons and other items from their possession. He informed that a Police team was constituted under the supervision of SHO Morgah which conducted a raid and nabbed the bike lifters. As per preliminary police record, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he added. He stated that other members and facilitators of the bike lifter would also be arrested following preliminary investigations with the detainee culprits. Meanwhile, Banni police also rounded up a bike lifter identified as Rustam Khan and recovered a stolen motorcycle and weapon. - APP

Prayers at Faisal mosque

ISLAMABAD: The people of twin cities prayed for the protection against the global pandemic of coronavirus as the whole nation observed Youm-e-Dua on Friday here at Faisal Mosque. President of Pakistan and Chancellor International Islamic University (IIU) Dr Arif Alvi had already announced that the nation will observe Youm-e-Dua on Friday to pray to Almighty Allah for protection against coronavirus pandemic. At Faisal Masjid, renowned scholar Professor Dr. Sohail Hassan of IIU who also led the Jumma prayer, prayed for protection of country against pandemic. The prayer was also joined by President IIU, Dr. Hathal Homoud Al-Otaibi, teachers, employees of the university and people of twin cities. - APP

CDA removes encroachments from Malpur

Heavy machinery of the department of MPO along with department's men power was used in operation against encroachments. CDA's team faced resistance from land mafia during the operation. Cases have been registered against the land mafia, the PR added

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) conducted operation against encroachments in Malpur on Friday. According to a press release of CDA, the authority conducted an operation against the encroachments in Malpur and retrieved 1600 kanal forest land from mafia. Land mafia has occupied the government's land at various places in the city since a long time. CDA has been conducting operations against land mafia in past also, but every time it happened that the mafia successfully got



control on the retrieved land again. This time, the authority conducted operation upon the special directions of Chairman CDA. The operation was conducted under the supervision of Director General Enforcement. Other officials of the department and workers of CDA were also present at the occasion. Heavy machinery of the department of MPO along with department's men power was used in operation against encroachments. CDA's team faced resistance from land mafia during the operation. Cases have been registered against the land mafia, the PR added.

Briefs

One dead, 8 injured in Rawalpindi explosion

RAWALPINDI: At least one person died and eight others sustained wounds after a blast in a parked auto rickshaw at Rawalpindi's Pir Wadhai bus station on Friday. A Police spokesman informed that a blast took place in a Chinggi rickshaw which was parked at the bus stand, resulting in the windows and mirrors of multiple shops nearby shattered following the explosion. Soon after the incident rescue officials rushed to the spot and shifted the injured identified as Bilal 26, Qasim 18, Abdur Rehman 77, Zafeer 19, Alaudin 28, Ibrahim 19, Abdul Manan 25, Ishaq Rehman 35 to Holy Family Hospital (HFH) for emergency treatment while the dead body of Muhammad Afzal Khan 45 was shifted to Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH) for legal formalities. Spokesman said that a heavy contingent of police have cordoned off the area while bomb disposal squad and other concerned law enforcement agencies were on the scene and commenced a thorough investigation into the incident. The nature of the blast is still being determined, he said, however the possibility of terrorism could not be ruled out as yet, he added.

CDA conducts operation against encroachments

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) conducted operation against encroachments in Malpur on Friday. According to a press release of CDA, the authority conducted an operation against the encroachments in Malpur and retrieved 1600 kanal forest land from mafia. Land mafia has occupied the government's land at various places in the city since a long time. CDA has been conducting operations against land mafia in past also, but every time it happened that the mafia successfully got control on the retrieved land again. This time, the authority conducted operation upon the special directions of Chairman CDA. The operation was conducted under the supervision of Director General Enforcement. Other officials of the department and workers of CDA were also present at the occasion.

Police launch search operation in Chakri

RAWALPINDI: Police on the special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi on Friday launched a search operation in Chakri, Sehla6 and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Chontra Police Station, said a police spokesman. He informed that heavy police contingents, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and Ladies police under the supervision of SHO Chontra Police Station conducted search operation in the area and searched a large number of houses while several persons were also interrogated.

House burglar held, valuables recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Lohber police has nabbed a ring leader of burglars' gang involved in thefts at houses and recovered cash and gold ornaments worth Rs. 3.7 million from him, a police spokesman said. According to details, a team of Loi Bher police station including ASI Waris nabbed a house burglar identified as Ali Raza resident of District Khushab and recovered stolen cash, gold ornaments worth Rs. 3.7 million and pistol along with ammunition from him. Case has been registered against the nabbed person and further investigation is underway from him. DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed has appreciated this performance of Lohber police team and announced cash prizes and commendation certificates for team members.



RAWALPINDI: Rescuers examining the site of blast in a tri-cycle rickshaw at Pirwadhai bus terminal. – DNA

Punjab govt to facilitate ICCI for industrial estate

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that the Punjab government will encourage and facilitate the investors for making investment along the Rawalpindi Ring Road while the Punjab Board of Investment will extend all possible assistance towards the establishment of industrial estate

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Punjab on Business, Investment & Trade Affairs and Chairman Punjab Board of Investment and Trade said that Punjab Government would extend all possible cooperation and facilitation to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry in its endeavours for the establishment of a new industrial estate along Rawalpindi Ring Road Project or in the jurisdiction of Punjab Province. He said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Rawalpindi Development Authority that called on him in Lahore to discuss the setting up of industrial estate and industrial zones along the Rawalpindi Ring Road project. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Dr. Wasif Khurshid Secretary Industries, Commerce, Investment and Skills Development Department Government of Punjab, Dr. Erfa Iqbal CEO PBIT, Tariq Mahmood Mur-



taza Chairman and Ammara Khan DG RDA, Aamer Saleemi Chief Operating Officer FIEDMC, Khalid Javed and Shaban Khalid former Presidents ICCI, Syed Asad Mashadi former President and Sheikh Hafeez former Senior Vice President RCCI were present in the meeting. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said that the Punjab government will encourage and facilitate the investors for

making investment along the Rawalpindi Ring Road while the Punjab Board of Investment will extend all possible assistance towards the establishment of industrial estate as the main objective of R3 project was to bring progress and prosperity to the region as SEZs, cottage industry, business hubs, wholesales markets, theme park and other projects would be set up along

this important project besides solving the traffic congestion issues of the twin cities. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry ICCI highlighted the importance of a new industrial estate in Islamabad region to promote industrialization as the current industrial zones in the federal capital have reached their full capacity due to which setting

up new industrial units has become a problem for potential investors of the region. He said that ICCI wanted to develop a new industrial estate for Islamabad region on FIEDMC model in order to give boost to industrial activities. He lauded the Punjab Government for initiating consultation process with all the stakeholders and added that the Ring Road project would undoubtedly give boost to business and industrial activities in the region. Tariq Mahmood Murtaza, Chairman RDA said that planning for industrial zones and commercial areas along R3 project would be done in consultation with ICCI and RCCI and the project will be taken forward with suggestions, recommendations and consultation from both Chambers. Ammara Khan DG Rawalpindi Development Authority gave a detailed presentation about the proposed location of industrial zones on the R3 project. The representatives of RCCI said that space should be provided for relocation of the wholesale market and cottage industry towards Rawat and industrial zones should be established along the motorway.

PTA asked to justify social media rules

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Friday directed Pakistan Telecommunication Authority to satisfy the bench that the recently issued social media rules do not violate Article 19 and 19(A) of the Constitution of Pakistan. IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard a petition filed by the Pakistan Bar Council challenging Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight, and Safeguards) Rules 2020 framed by the PTI government under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (PECA) and directed PTA to consider objections raised by the PBC. During the hearing, the judge

was irked by the PTA counsel's attempt to cite social media rules in place in India. "Do not mention India here. If India suppresses freedom of expression, will we also do the same?" he questioned. "We are very clear on the fact that we will not allow violation of fundamental rights," he remarked. "Who recommended these rules and which authority approved it?" asked the judge, to which the PTA counsel said they sought recommendations from PBC. The PBC counsel, on the other hand, pointed out that some of the rules violate rights granted by the Constitution. Justice Minallah observed that the social media rules that discourage criticism also suppress accountability.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's ambassador to Sudan, Dr. Sarfraz Ahmad Khan Sipra calls on foreign minister, Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi at ministry of foreign affairs. – DNA

Portal for Kafaalat beneficiaries facing failures

The payments under Kafaalat program Phase-I were continued smoothly across the country, ensuring COVID precautionary measures including maintaining social distancing, hand sanitization and setting multiple payment counters

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar Friday announced the opening of a web portal to address complaints of Kafaalat beneficiaries facing failure in biometric verification. In her tweet, the special assistant said "Ehsaas has opened a web portal com-

plaints.pass.gov.pk to address the bio metric failure issue being faced by the Kafaalat beneficiaries while receiving their payments". The Kafaalat beneficiaries facing bio-metric failure in receiving payments can report at the web portal immediately. The payments under Kafaalat program Phase-I were continued smoothly across the country, ensuring COVID precautionary measures including maintaining social

distancing, hand sanitization and setting multiple payment counters. Dr. Nishtar urged the beneficiaries to keep their Computerized National Identity Cards with them at the time of receiving their payments and receive their computerized receipt. It is pertinent to mention here that the payments for July-December 2020 to the beneficiaries of Kafaalat program of Ehsaas were continued across the country.

The Ehsaas Kafaalat payment will be made in two phases. The Phase-I has commenced under which payments would be made to 4.3 million women beneficiaries. Each beneficiary will be paid Rs 12,000 covering the period July to December 2020. The combined payment for six months was being made. The prime minister had already given approval to increase this number to seven million women

which means seven million households would be benefited from this program. The payments to additional beneficiaries will be made December 2020 onwards and the process will be completed in the current fiscal year. In Pakistan, most of the digitally and financially excluded segments are destitute women. Ehsaas Kafaalat ensures financial and digital inclusion of deserving women across the country.

Member of house burglaries gang busted

ISLAMABAD: The Lohber police Friday busted a wanted member of house burglaries gang and recovered cash, gold ornaments and weapons from him. According to police spokesman, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan had ordered crackdown against criminals including those involved in theft. Following these orders, DIG (Operations) has directed all zonal officers to accelerate their efforts to curb the crime in the city. As per the DIG directions, SP (Rural) Farooq Anjad Butter constituted a special team under the supervision of DSP Rukhsar Mehd, including Station House Officer (SHO) Lohi Bhir Sub-Inspector Shahid Zaman, ASI Waris Ali and others, which successfully busted a wanted member of a thief gang. The accused identified as Ali Raza resident of District Khushab. – APP

Commissioner paid surprise visit to RMC

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi division Capt (R) Muhammad Mehmood here on Friday paid a surprise visit to Rawalpindi Metropolitan Corporation (RMC) and inspected the entire premises. He visited various offices and sections of RMC and expressed his displeasure over the rusted cupboards, broken furniture, irregularities in office records and bad cleanliness conditions of kitchen and bathrooms there. The Commissioner directed the concerned officials to take special care of visitors and make comfortable seating arrangements for them as the salaries of government officials are paid from the taxes of the public. He said that the non-availability of comfortable seating in government offices was injustice with the people. He also directed the concerned officials to maintain up-dated office record and action would be taken on negligence in this regard. Chief Officer MC Ali Abbas Bukhari and other concerned officials were also present on the occasion. – APP

CDA to construct 100 public toilets

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has started construction of modern toilets in major shopping malls, shops and public parks across the city, while existing toilets were also being upgraded. According to a press release of CDA, 100 toilets in the first phase and 15 more toilets in the second phase would be constructed. More toilets would be constructed in each sector as per requirement later on. Upgraded and new toilets would be leased out to private companies for the period of 10 years, it added. According to the details, as per the need and demand of the city and traders, the sanitation department of CDA has started construction of toilets in all major and small markets, shopping malls and shops of the city. In this regard, the sanitation wing was constructing new toilets in F-6, F-7, F-8, F-10 and F-11 sectors.

Police launches mass public drive

ABBOTTABAD: Hazara police, during mass public outreach campaign, conducted hundreds of meetings with Ulama, traders, minorities, public liaison committees, educational institutions and also organized Open Kuthcheries for coordination with the people. The Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police Hazara Qazi Jameel ur Rehman said that public outreach campaign was launched with the objective to bridge the gap between the masses and the police department, this campaign has provided an opportunity for peace-keeping and to highlight the public issues. He further said that during the three months long mass public outreach drive, police have tried to address the public grievances on the local level while conducting open kuthcheries and meeting with all stakeholders in their area.

Forgotten virus

WHILE the focus for the last one year has been on the Covid-19 pandemic and the devastation it has caused on a global level, it is easy to forget that the HIV/AIDS problem is a very real one too for Pakistan. Numbers are not easy to estimate. It is, however, stated by UNAIDS that the figure ranges from somewhere between 46,000 people who live with HIV/AIDS and over 200,000 people living with the disease. The stigma that still surrounds the virus is still present in our country. For this reason, many people do not come forward to report AIDS or to seek treatment for it. This worsens the situation. The worst affected population is those who use injectable drugs. The finding in 2019 in Larkana of infection among over 900 people, many of them children, pointed to the danger of misusing injections. The use of injections, drips and other procedures which involve the penetration of the skin with potentially unsafe medical equipment is a huge factor in the spread of AIDS. It is this factor that should be dealt with most urgently by the government. Other high risk groups include transgender persons, men in same-sex relationships, female sexual workers and others also need to be made aware of the disease so that they can be treated. While private organizations have attempted to create some networks of people living with HIV, this is not sufficient. The government too needs to step in and create awareness about transmission modes and how to prevent the disease. It also needs to make drugs available to people and let them know that the disease can now be treated effectively by antiviral drugs used around the world. Currently, Pakistan reports 25,000 new cases of HIV/AIDS every year. This is the highest number in the Asia Pacific after the Philippines. Pakistan's situation is then not a happy one, as was highlighted by advocacy groups on World AIDS Day which falls on December 1. HIV/AIDS needs to be dealt with as a major health problem. Failing to take heed of it will only lead to more people becoming infected. All this requires a more careful analysis and much greater effort to prevent the spread of the disease.

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Bureaucratic Reform

MOVING towards concluding 2020 on a positive note, the Civil Servants' Efficiency and Discipline Rules has been approved by PM Imran Khan. Not only would this initiative incur greater transparency and accountability within the system but it will also bring about adherence to the law, especially needed within the problematic operational structure of the Pakistani Civil Service. According to the announcement made by the government, the arrangement of the dispersal of authority has been altered to eliminate the Authorised Officer and leave processes in the hands of the Authority and Inquiry Committee. This is positive because it resolves the problem of inconsistent decisions about disciplinary action at lower levels. No longer will officers be able to get away with misdemeanours through experiencing negligible repercussions. Similarly, provisions on plea bargains and voluntary returns have been made so that accountability is held supreme under this faction of the government. Lastly, the rules have also set specific timelines for procedures such as inquiries, responding to changes and passing decisions on cases. This sense of urgency is especially important considering that often, due to an absence of a fixed timeframe, cases remain open for years. For a body like the civil service, that is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the country, such a lackadaisical approach is unacceptable. Now, the hope is that this new regulation will be followed sincerely, to improve bureaucratic performance, and will be improved upon in the future. The matter of postings, the duration of postings within a specific department as well as providing comprehensive reasons for a change in position, so as to incur a greater check on the government, need to be addressed sooner or later. However, for now, we must eagerly wait to see how the Efficiency and Discipline Rules pan out.

Reining in Hezbollah should be key part of Iran talks

Khaled Abou Zahr



This is especially the case in countries where humiliation by Hezbollah and other Iranian proxies has been rampant. Whether in Syria, Iraq or Lebanon, Hezbollah's actions and those of its entourage have been consistent in humiliating others, who are left to suffer and to let the wounds of injustice and inequality heal in silence. This is by no means the only reason for the rise of Daesh, but there is a symbiotic interaction between the two

AS President-elect Joe Biden's foreign policy team begins taking shape, one of the most-discussed topics among Middle Eastern analysts is the US strategy toward Iran. Most are expecting a return to a deal, as some members of Biden's team were involved in the negotiations during the Obama administration. This echoes the hopes of European countries, which are eager to get a deal back in place. It is interesting to note that the more experts predict that the US and Europeans will push for a deal with the Iranian leadership and are favorable to this scenario, the more the Iranian leadership plays hard to get and adds refusals and conditions to the way this deal should look. On the other hand, there have been some good suggestions from the new US foreign policy team on how to avoid some of the shortfalls of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Most of these voices suggest that, this time, any nuclear deal should also include an agreement on the Iranian ballistic missile program, as well its interference and behavior in the region. If pursued, this seems like a good step – if not essential. The inclusion of Arab countries in the discussion mechanism would also be a positive and good suggestion, as the region needs stability among all its countries. However, this more comprehensive and constructive agreement is something the Iranians do not want. They would prefer to “bucketize” each subject to maximize their gains. Mostly, they believe they can increase their control over the various countries where they are involved, from Lebanon to Iraq and Yemen, and this is mostly thanks to Hezbollah. It is for this reason that attention toward countering Hezbollah and its illegal activities is important. Regardless of the content and nature of the expected US-European engagement with Iran, it is important to continue stopping Hezbollah's illegal activities and designate it as a terrorist entity globally. This is for many reasons, and not for Lebanon alone, but for the security of the Middle East and the world. Firstly, in the same way that there has long been a view that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has exacerbated violence and pushed the region to ex-

tremism, one could say the same about Hezbollah's impunity in Lebanon and abroad. Indeed, if the Palestinian cause does not today seem to be the same symbol of injustice that might have once pushed some youths toward extremism in the region, it is a certainty that Hezbollah's acceptance as a respectable political force by some in the Western media and European countries has pushed more Sunni youths toward extremism. This is especially the case in countries where humiliation by Hezbollah and other Iranian proxies has been rampant. Whether in Syria, Iraq or Lebanon, Hezbollah's actions and those of its entourage have been consistent in humiliating others, who are left to suffer and to let the wounds of injustice and inequality heal in silence. This is by no means the only reason for the rise of Daesh, but there is a symbiotic interaction between the two. I am always puzzled as to what makes the Hezbollah model of non-state actor acceptable when compared to others. Even when it comes to Lebanese politics, how can analysts still push the argument of separation between its political and armed wings? This is all semantics. Hezbollah is just like Daesh or Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi: A dangerous non-state actor and a terrorist organization. Therefore, it should be treated as such. At the very least, this should be the focus of its regional and international presence. Secondly, Hezbollah has been conducting illegal activities – such as drug smuggling and blood diamond trading – on a global level, from South America to Africa. Sometimes it more closely resembles a criminal organization than an ideological resistance movement, as it claims to be. This is especially true as it relies on these illegal activities to finance its operations. These illegal networks are the same ones it also uses to prepare and conduct terrorist activities, adding to the many reasons it should be blocked. Therefore, the US Treasury should continue its efforts regardless of any negotiations with Iran. The EU should do the same. As negotiations with Tehran become evident, there should be no appeasement of the regime through looking the other way when it comes to Hezbollah's activities, such as what happened with Syria in the previ-

ous negotiations. This would be a big mistake. There should be no silence regarding Hezbollah's malignant activities in Lebanon and elsewhere. This focused action would be a sign of US and international strength toward getting a better and stronger deal with the Iranians for the benefit of the region. The stopping of Hezbollah should not be put on the negotiating table, it should be a fait accompli presented to the Iranians. This organization has been a net exporter of destabilization and, while sanctions are not the best solution, surrendering to Hezbollah's diktats and vision for Lebanon and the Middle East is even worse. Therefore, when it comes to Hezbollah's global activities, there should be continuous and focused action to stop it and weaken it. This will not only empower stronger negotiations, but will also create a new set of rules toward the Iranian regime. I am a strong believer that Arab countries are looking for stability and peaceful relations with Iran. However, one cannot accept the chaos Hezbollah is bringing to Lebanon and the region. How can we accept a non-state actor with hundreds of thousands of missiles – one that controls all sorts of illegal activities? How can we accept a non-state actor that sends troops to fight and kill the local populations in Syria, Iraq and Yemen? How can we accept that it has ammonium nitrate stocks and other explosives hiding across Lebanon and the world? How many explosions and lives lost will be enough to stop this organization? Is it because it is backed by Iran? When it comes to the strategy of countering Iran, there has been a focus on Tehran without getting sidetracked by all the theaters it is involved in and the proxies it has deployed. This makes sense. However, Hezbollah is the symbol of Iranian destabilization and malignant interference. Hence, empowering it to continue unchecked would not only make any deal a failure, but would also destroy any regional peace agreement that could boost positive relations among neighbors.

• Khaled Abou Zahr is CEO of Eurabia, a media and tech company. He is also the editor of Al-Watan Al-Arabi.

– Courtesy Arab News

BoG playing black sheep against Lead Pakistan

Munir Ahmed



Perhaps, LEAD Pakistan would be no more as an independent think tank on climate change when it is needed the most just because of greed and lust of a few masked professionals who lacked integrity for an internationally known Pakistani organization. The closure of the organization would be a deliberate criminal act of murder

LEADERSHIP for Environment and Development (LEAD Pakistan) finally proved to be the worst case of nonprofit governance in its 27th year. For the last about two years, the members of its own Board of Governors (BoG) have played all the tricks to hunt down a gradually grown up and self-sustaining organization. It was launched in 1994 as a country chapter of the New York based LEAD International, the Rockefeller Foundation initiated in 1991 to mark the UN decade of environment and sustainable development. Over the years, LEAD Pakistan grew up to national and international repute while other regional and country chapters were closed down because of the financial crisis after the Rockefeller Foundation stopped funding them in 2000. LEAD Pakistan's success surely be dedicated to the leading professionals and visionary men and women of integrity who served its BoG for 25 years. The organization was led from the front by Ali Taqeer Sheikh, a forward looking professional, since its inception to the day he was asked to resign. It happened early this year after a conspiracy was hatched two years back. It began with the proposal from Shahnaz Wazir Ali, then a LEAD Pakistan BoG member, proposed to dissolve the organization and handover to LUMS (Lahore University of Management Sciences). During her tenure, Shahnaz Wazir Ali got her cronies appointed on the Board to cluster a majority for her proposal. Now the 'harvest' is on with the forced resignations from the LEAD Pakistan Chief Executive and the Director Programmes. The only allegation was that management has failed to win any projects recently while they were getting 'huge salaries'. It was a naked threat to the sustainability of the organization. The BoG took this deliberate decision for an organization having reserves of PKR 140 million in its bank account in addition to the tangible and intangible assets and knowledge products.

We all know that the nonprofit sector is under severe distrust in Pakistan for the last few years. Donors and INGOs have flown to other parts of the world. The re-registration process, launched some years back, is quite tedious, cumbersome and unduly lengthy. A thorough investigation of the executive members and the founders by several security agencies working under the Ministry of Interior. Then, a specific tasks-based MOU signed with the Economic Affairs Division to apply for the projects and grants. The organization is subject to 'inspection' of records and computers at any time. Only about 60 INGOs and national organizations could have signed the MoU so far because the process takes much longer, and has excluded many organizations from the development sector. Some smart organizations could survive somehow using their skills and reserves while many are still struggling for NOC. Their Board members could not help them who were supposed to strengthen their respective organizations. In the given scenario, closing down the LEAD Pakistan is an intentional murder of the self-sustaining organization that has grown from a sustainable development training program for young leadership to a well-respected think tank on climate change, environment and sustainable development. The LEAD Pakistan BoG is presently being chaired by Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan. He is the same person who is restored by the Lahore High Court as Vice Chancellor of a Faisalabad university despite Punjab's anti-corruption department and NAB cases of financial embezzlement of more than PKR 420 million. Other members include former Member National Assembly (MNA) Malik Uzair Khan, LUMS vice chancellor Dr Arshad Ahmad, LUMS Associate Professor Dr Mohammad Abubakar, Senior Legal Consultant Privatization Commission Ikram ul Haque Qureshi, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Vice Chancellor Dr Nadeem ul Haque,

and PACRA Managing Director Dr. Adnan Afaq. Looking at the stature and status of these 'professionals', no one would believe that they are all working, apparently in connivance, to close down a self-sustaining organization that has developed itself to national and international stature and have huge reserves and assets in the times of recession. But, it's true. They have formed a 'closure committee' to expedite the process to dissolve the organization that they were supposed to strengthen. The members of the Closure Committee include the BoG chairperson Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan, the ex-member BoG Ms Shahnaz Wazir who proposed to windup the organization during her tenure as a Board member, and a present Board member Ikram ul Haque Qureshi, and the interim CEO Ahmad Hassan. They are doing it contrary to the orders of the Registrar of Societies, issued on the instructions of the Lahore High Court, the that has clearly asked the ordered the Board to take necessary steps to address the grievances of the LEAD Fellows Council, the general body of about 250 well-known professionals from different sectors. The due date has passed long back but no action is taken in the right direction. Perhaps, LEAD Pakistan would be no more as an independent think tank on climate change when it is needed the most just because of greed and lust of a few masked professionals who lacked integrity for an internationally known Pakistani organization. The closure of the organization would be a deliberate criminal act of murder. In one way or the other, it seems that the present Board members planned to eat-up PKR 140 million at the cost of a leading organization.

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Briefs

Singapore pledges \$5M for global vaccine effort

JAKARTA: Singapore will contribute \$5 million to help support low- and lower middle-income countries get COVID-19 vaccines, authorities announced on Friday. In a joint press statement, the Foreign Affairs and Health Ministries said that global solidarity is required for an effective international response to the pandemic. "Singapore will contribute US\$5,000,000 to the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Advance Market Commitment (AMC) mechanism, which will help support 92 low- and lower-middle-income countries' access to COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility," the statement said. It noted that the commitment is a part of the country's consistent support for vaccine multilateralism, and the fair and equitable access and allocation of vaccines. "The virus does not respect borders, and no one is safe until everyone is safe. The successful development of safe and efficacious vaccines is a critical step towards overcoming the pandemic," the statement said. It added that Singapore will continue to work closely with its international partners - including UN, World Health Organization, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations to advance vaccine multilateralism and forge a global response to this pandemic. The COVAX Facility is a global risk-sharing mechanism that seeks to procure, equitably allocate and deliver 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines by the end of 2021. As of Nov. 25, Singapore is one of 97 self-financing participants in the facility. - APP

'There is real chance for peace now on Karabakh'

ANKARA: Turkey's foreign minister said the agreement to end the war over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh will have a positive impact on regional stability. "We call on the other members of the Minsk Group, and especially the co-chairs, to refrain from politically motivated actions that would undermine the path to a negotiated solution," Mevlut Cavusoglu told the 27th Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council via videoconference. Recalling that Turkey has always acted in line with international law and legitimacy, Cavusoglu stressed that the country, as a member of the Minsk Group, is committed to supporting all efforts to find a lasting solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. "Now with the latest agreement between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia, after 30 years, there is a real chance of peace. The course will have a positive impact on relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Armenia and Turkey as well as regional stability," he noted. He added that the solution must be based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

Pakistan, BD look to rebuild ties

From Page 01
discharge of his official duties. It added that the high commissioner conveyed the message of goodwill and friendship from PM Imran Khan, which Sheikh Hasina "reciprocated with her greetings and good wishes for the leadership of Pakistan". "The two sides agreed to further strengthen the existing fraternal relations between the two countries," said the high commission. "The meeting was held in a very cordial environment." The meeting comes as part of PM Imran Khan's initiative to improve the tumultuous relations. In July, he had underscored the importance Pakistan attaches to closer ties with Bangladesh during a telephonic conversation with Sheikh Hasina. PM Imran Khan had highlighted the significance of regular bilateral contacts and people-to-people exchanges.



BAKU: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva visited the alley of martyrs to commemorate Azerbaijani soldiers who lost their lives in the 2020 Karabakh War. - DNA

Azerbaijan slams French resolution on Karabakh

After day 6 testing, 42 people returned negative and three were under investigation. One tested positive yesterday while the remaining two were announced today

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan has strongly condemned the adoption by the French National Assembly of a resolution entitled "Protection of the Armenian People and Christian Communities of Europe and the East". "The adoption of the resolution... is another completely unjustified, unfriendly and provocative activity of the French Parliament. The adoption of a biased resolution by the lower house after the Senate is a sign of the ongoing campaign against Azerbaijan," the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said in a statement posted on its official website on December 4. The ministry added that as the name of the resolution suggests, the National Assembly members, who have nothing to do with the reality and want to add religious

overtones to the issue, try to present their pro-Armenian positions on artificial grounds. "Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state where people of different religions and ethnicities live as one family in harmony and peace. We reject attempts to portray the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict as a clash of religions and civilizations, and strongly condemn such an approach, which poses a serious threat to peace and security," the ministry added. The ministry ruled out any legal force of the resolution and said that it runs counter to all existing international documents. "However, as in the case of the Senate, given the political meaning of the National Assembly document, we would like to emphasize that these completely wrong resolutions contradict the norms and principles of international law, the UN Charter

and the Helsinki Final Act, UN Security Council resolutions of 1993, and the existing bilateral documents between Azerbaijan and France," the ministry said. Azerbaijan sees this step of the French parliament as a serious blow to the country's mediation mandate overshadowing bilateral relations. "It should also be noted that the French National Assembly has never held a hearing or adopted a resolution on one million Azerbaijanis, who have been subjected to ethnic cleansing and whose fundamental human rights have been violated. This clearly shows that the French parliament takes a completely biased position," the statement added. The ministry added that the French parliament's approach completely contradicted the provisions of the trilateral statement signed by the Azerbaijani, Armenian and Russian leaders

on November 10, 2020, and seriously undermined efforts to ensure peace and security in the region and globally. The statement stressed that the French ambassador will be summoned to the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry over the case and Azerbaijan's strong protest will be brought to the attention of France. Earlier, the French Senate adopted a draft resolution on the recognition of the self-styled entity in Nagorno-Karabakh, which was seriously condemned by Azerbaijan's high-ranking official circles. On November 26, Azerbaijan sent its protest note to France over the resolution adopted by the French Senate on November 25 entitled "On the need to recognize the 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic'". On November 10, Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a Russia-brokered agreement to end fighting in Karabakh and work towards a

comprehensive solution. The November peace agreement ended the 30-years-old conflict between Baku and Yerevan over Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region that along with the seven adjacent regions came under the occupation of Armenian armed forces in the war in the 1990s. For nearly three decades, Armenia failed to implement the UN Security Council resolutions (822, 853, 874 and 884) demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of its troops, which was the main obstacle to the resolution of the conflict. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chaired by the United States, Russia and France had been mediating the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict since the signing of the volatile cease-fire agreement in 1994. The Minsk Group's efforts resulted in no progress as Armenia refused to abide by the UN Security Council resolutions.

India beat Australia by 11 runs in first T20

DNA

CANBERRA: India defeated Australia by 11 runs in the first T20I of the three-match series courtesy of Ravindra Jadeja's 44 runs from just 23 balls to help India set up a target of 162 at Manuka Oval. However, Jadeja didn't come on the field after he was struck on the helmet by a Mitchell Starc delivery that ricocheted off the bat in the final over of India's innings. Yuzvendra Chahal came on as a concussion replacement in the second innings, picking 3-25 in four overs. He dismissed Aaron Finch, Steve Smith and Matthew Wade. Earlier, Australian captain Aaron Finch won the toss and decided to bowl in perfect conditions. Mitchell

Starc struck in his second over when he bowled Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan with a beautiful outswinger to leave the Indians 11 for one. Fellow opener KL Rahul began to take control with some powerful hitting, but with the score on 48, Indian captain Virat Kohli fell for just nine when he tamely chipped a Mitchell Swepson short ball back to the bowler, the young leg-spinner taking an easy catch. Sanju Samson provided stability in middle overs by playing big shots but he was removed by Henriques to leave India at 86 for three. India struggled on 114/6 in 17 overs as all their batters were in the pavilion. But some huge hitting from the injured Jadeja in the last three overs gave the Indian bowlers a good total to defend.



CANBERRA: Players of Indian Cricket team celebrating after taking GJ Maxwell's wicket in first T20 International between India vs Australia. - DNA

Pakistan not allowed to train during isolation

"I have very carefully considered this situation," Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield said in a statement. "At this time, I continue to have ongoing concerns about the risk of cross-infection within the squad."

SPORTS DESK

WELLINGTON: The Pakistan cricket team have had their exemption to train during managed isolation in Christchurch withdrawn due to several members of the squad testing positive for the novel coronavirus, New Zealand's Ministry of Health said on Friday. Eight members of the 53-strong Pakistan squad have tested positive for the virus since arriving in New Zealand. "I have very carefully considered this situation," Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield said in a statement. "At this time, I continue to have ongoing concerns about the risk of cross-

PCB expresses disappointment over NZ decision

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Board (CEO) Wasim Khan has firmly expressed disappointment with New Zealand Cricket (NZC) officials after the Pakistan squad was disallowed to train in managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ). 44 members out of 54 have reportedly tested negative for the fourth time. CEO also showed concern as the Pakistan squad Day 9 swab testing results

have not been made public yet as the team underwent testing yesterday. "I have contacted NZC and the New Zealand Ministry of Health. I have expressed frustration over not being allowed to train," Wasim said. "Further it is disappointing that NZ health ministry has not made public the results of team's fourth COVID-19 test," he added. The health ministry has instructed the national squad to complete its 14-day isolation period at the hotel and they will not train during

isolation which will end of December 8. New Zealand DG Health Dr. Ashley Bloomfield said that the Pakistani team has cases of COVID-19 which are likely to spread, so the team cannot be allowed to leave the hotel in groups. He hoped Pakistani team would accept the difficult decision. 44 members have returned negative while the remaining 10 are COVID-19 positive. Out of 10, six members are active cases while four were declared historical (non-infectious) cases. Under the exemption the squad would have been allowed to train in small groups from the fourth day of their mandatory 14-day isolation until they were

released next week. The initial positive tests that were discovered upon their arrival, however, prompted Bloomfield to temporarily suspend the exemption until the Health Ministry completes an investigation. The squad were also warned for breaching bio-security regulations last week. Pakistan were scheduled to have a four-day game starting on Dec. 10 against New Zealand 'A' upon their release from isolation, but opted instead to play a series of intra-squad matches, New Zealand Cricket said on Thursday. The tourists are due to play three Twenty20 internationals and two tests from Dec. 18, while a Pakistan 'A' tour will also be held concurrently.

UK sets new climate target ahead of UN Summit

From Page 01
new technologies and future-proof industries that will generate economic growth for decades to come. Each party to the Paris Agreement - including countries and international blocs such as the European Union - determines what domestic action it will take and communicates it in a Nationally Determined Contribution. NDCs are at the heart of the Paris Agreement goal, set at COP21 in 2015, to hold the global temperature rise to well below two degrees and pursue best efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. Together, these plans will determine whether the world will achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, including global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible. Many countries have now made net zero commitments and this round of NDCs, which set a 2030 emission reduction target, will need to be consistent with those longer term commitments. The UK's announcement, which reflects the independent Climate Change Committee's advice on net zero, does just this. Today's announcement comes ahead of the UK co-hosting a virtual Climate Ambition Summit on 12 December, which will coincide with the fifth anniversary of the historic Paris Agreement.

Coronavirus is worst global crisis

From Page 01
Restructuring of the public sector debt of other developing countries under an agreed inclusive multilateral framework. A general allocation of special drawing rights of \$500 billion. Expanded concessional financing to lower income countries through multilateral development banks. Creation of a new 'liquidity and sustainability facility', which should provide short term loans at lower costs. Fulfillment of the 0.7% official development assistance commitments. Mobilizing the required \$1.5 trillion annual investment in sustainable infrastructure. Achievement of the agreed target of mobilizing \$100 billion per year for climate action in developing countries. Immediate action to stop the massive illicit financial outflows from developing countries to rich countries, to offshore tax havens and at the same time, immediate return of their assets stolen by corrupt politicians and criminals back to these countries.

Ms. Wada gets Japanese FM award

From Page 06
The Commendations also aim to promote the understanding and support of the Japanese public for the activities of the recipients. Ms. Wada Akiko, President of Rumbur Development Welfare and Conservation Society, has worked selflessly and with full dedication for the welfare of Kalasha people in the KP province, and has been cooperating with the local people to improve their living environment and to preserve their traditional culture for more than 30 years. She also contributed to the development of hygienic facilities to live and the provision of education opportunity for children, and also cooperated in the energy supply improvement project in Rumbur financed by the Japanese Government. This year, the Commendations will be awarded to 172 individuals and 65 groups (20 individuals and 11 groups reside in Japan, and 152 individuals and 54 groups reside overseas). Matsuda Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, congratulated Ms. Wada upon her nomination for the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation for FY2020. "Heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Wada. This prestigious Commendation is the acknowledgement of her efforts and dedication towards the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and Pakistan," said the Ambassador. He also deeply appreciated the services rendered by Ms. Wada for the welfare and betterment of the Kalasha people in the KP province.

Briefs

Japan's parliament approves trade deal with UK

FOREIGN DESK

TOKYO: Japan's parliament on Friday approved a trade deal with the UK set to take effect on Jan. 1. The UK signed its first post-Brexit Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan in October after the two sides reached an agreement in September. The deal will "ensure continuity in bilateral business operations beyond London's end of transition out of the European Union this month," South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported.

Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and British International Trade Secretary Liz Truss had signed the deal in Tokyo. However, the UK has yet to ratify the deal. According to the report, Japanese companies that operate in the UK and in Europe are "still wary about whether London will reach a free trade agreement with the bloc by the end of the transition period."

Armed man killed during attempt to enter Russia

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: One of three armed men was killed when they tried to enter Russia from neighboring Ukraine on Friday, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) said. The incident took place on the border between Ukraine and Russia's Belgorod region, the FSB said in a statement.

According to the FSB, border guards tried to arrest the men, but they faced armed resistance.

"As a result of return fire, one of them was critically injured, and the two others fled back to Ukrainian territory," it said. Belgorod is near areas of Ukraine claimed by Russian-backed separatists. In 2017, a similar incident occurred in Russia's Kursk region, when Russian border guards found a group of unknown people who tried to cross the border outside the checkpoint. When border guards tried to check their documents, a fire-fight ensued, resulting in the death of one guard and one in the group trying to cross.

Uzbekistan to attract carbon credits to create forest plantations

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: The State Forestry Committee of Uzbekistan plans to attract carbon credits to finance the creation of forest plantations, National expert on drought in Uzbekistan Sorbijon Umarov told Trend, commenting on the development of the forestry industry in Uzbekistan. A carbon credit is a permit that allows the company that holds it to emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases. For the development of the forestry industry in Uzbekistan, it is planned to reconstruct and replenish walnut, almond and pistachio forests with high-yielding varieties and the creation of industrial plantations.

In addition, State Forestry Committee plans to expand the provision of natural regeneration and creation of tugi forests, plantations of paulownia and other fast-growing tree species, as well as creation of protective forest plantations in the desert zone, including on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea with modern technologies. The Committee also intends to implement projects on the organization of ecological tourism, expanding the range of cultivated medicinal plants, and the processing of forest products and products of secondary forest use.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada and staff members and their families observing one minute silence for Shaheeds. - DNA

Biden to ask Americans to wear masks for 100 days

"The first day I'm inaugurated to say I'm going to ask the public for 100 days to mask. Just 100 days to mask, not forever. One hundred days." And I think we'll see a significant reduction if we occur that

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Joe Biden has said he will ask Americans to wear masks for his first 100 days in office to curtail the spread of coronavirus. He told media he believed there would be a "significant reduction" in Covid-19 cases if every American wore a face covering. Mr Biden also said he would order masks to be worn in all government buildings. The US has recorded 14.1 million cases and 276,000 deaths from Covid-19 - the highest of any country in the world. Mr Biden is preparing to take office as pharmaceutical giants are poised

to ship millions of doses of coronavirus vaccines to the American public. The UK on Wednesday became the first country in the world to approve the Pfizer vaccine. "The first day I'm inaugurated to say I'm going to ask the public for 100 days to mask. Just 100 days to mask, not forever. One hundred days. "And I think we'll see a significant reduction if we occur that, if that occurs with vaccinations and masking to drive down the numbers considerably." The first 100 days of a new presidency is symbolically important in the US and is seen as a gauge of how a president will get things done. Constitutional experts say a US president has no legal authority to order Americans to wear



masks, but Mr Biden said during the interview he and his Vice-President Kamala Harris would set an example by donning face coverings. Media captionBBC's Laura Foster explains how to wear your mask correctly and help stop coronavirus spreading. The president's executive authority does

cover US government property, and Mr Biden told CNN he intended to exercise such power.

"I'm going to issue a standing order that in federal buildings you have to be masked."

He added: "Transportation, interstate transportation, you must be masked, airplanes and buses, et cetera." US airlines, airports and most public transit systems already require all passengers and workers to wear face coverings. The Trump White House has rejected calls from American health experts to mandate masks in transportation as "overly restrictive". The Democratic president-elect said he would be "happy" to take a vaccine in public to

allay any concerns about its safety. Three former presidents - Barack Obama, George W Bush and Bill Clinton - have said they are also prepared to be inoculated publicly to show that it is safe. "People have lost faith in the ability of the vaccine to work," Mr Biden said, adding that "it matters what a president and the vice-president do," media captionHow will the new Pfizer vaccine work? Mr Biden's Vice-President-elect Harris, who joined him at the CNN interview, received some criticism from Republicans in September after she said she would not trust Mr Trump's word on a potential vaccine and the assessment of public health experts would be "suppressed" under his administration.

Jordan, Israel diplomats in rare meeting on Palestine

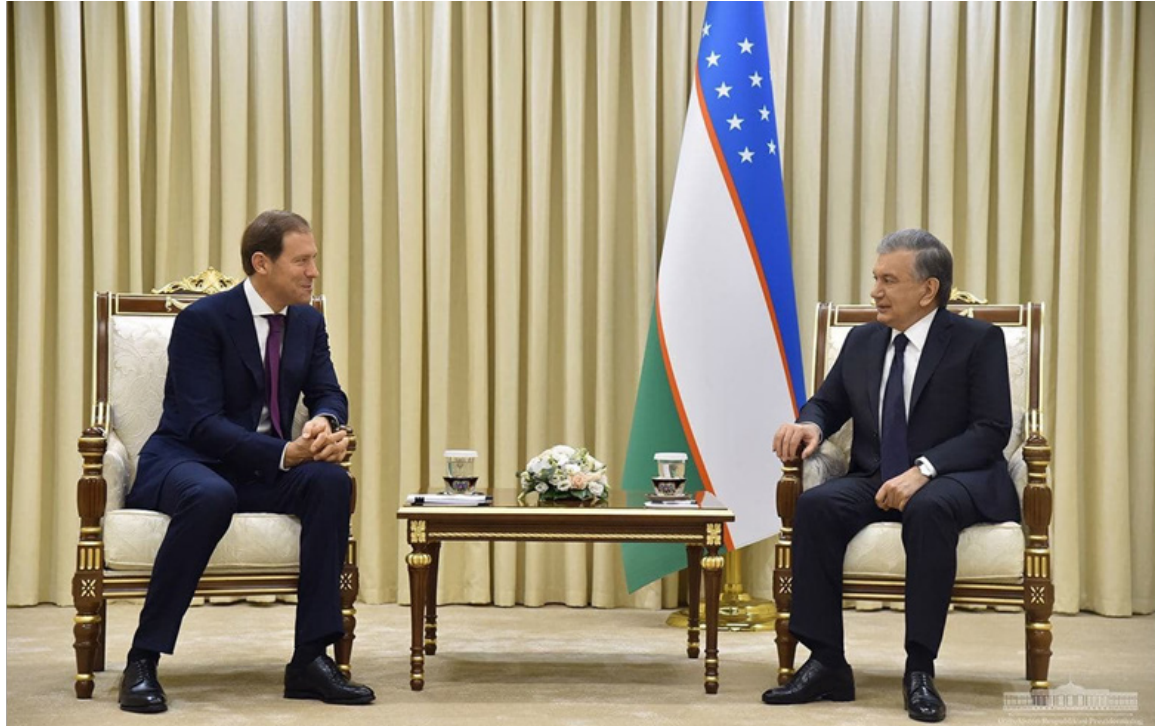
AMMAN: Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi has held a rare meeting with his Israeli counterpart to press for the restart of stalled negotiations between the Palestinians and the Jewish state. Thursday's meeting came days after Palestinian Authority leader Mahmud Abbas visited Jordan as part of an Arab tour to raise support for the Palestinian cause after Joe Biden beat Donald Trump in last month's US presidential election. During the meeting at the King Hussein (Allenby) Bridge crossing between Jordan and the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Safadi said the creation of an independent Palestinian state was key to ending the conflict with Israel.

"There is no alternative to a two-state solution" between Israel and the Palestinians, he told Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, quoted by the official Petra news agency. "It is necessary to return to the negotiating table according to international law in order to find a real solution to achieve a just peace," Safadi said.

Thursday's meeting was a rare encounter between officials from the two countries and the first officially reported between Safadi and Ashkenazi since the latter, a former army chief of staff, became foreign minister in May. Jordan and Israel have been bound by a peace treaty

since 1994, but relations between the two neighbours are often tense. Safadi said resuming talks between Israel and the Palestinians was timely, "particularly in light of the Palestinian Authority's decision to resume security cooperation with Israel". Last month the Palestinians announced they were restoring coordination with Israel that they had stopped in May over to Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank. Israel put on hold its annexation plans, in return for an agreement to normalise ties with the United Arab Emirates announced in August. Abbas held talks in Jordan last week with King Abdullah II ahead of visits to Egypt, where he met separately with President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Arab League chief Ahmed Aboul Gheit.

During the tour, the Arab leaders he spoke to called for stepped up international efforts for a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on a two-state solution. Talks between Israel and the Palestinians have been frozen since 2014, and a US peace plan announced in January has been welcomed by Israel but rejected outright by the Palestinians as biased. The plan was among moves pushed by Trump - including recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's "undivided capital" - that has angered the Palestinians. - APP



TASHKENT: As part of Tashkent metallurgy Plant opening ceremony, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev meets with Russian officials led by Industry & Trade Minister Denis Manturov. - DNA

Egypt: Three human rights members released

FOREIGN DESK

CAIRO: Three members of a leading Egyptian human rights group detained in Cairo last month have been freed following widespread international criticism. The men, who worked for the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), were accused of links with a terror group and "spreading false news".

The UN's human rights agency had described the arrests as "chilling". Celebrities Emma Thompson, Stephen Fry and Scarlett Johansson joined politicians in criticising the arrests. EIPR is an independent group whose work covers a variety of political, civil, economic and social issues. A researcher for the group, Patrick Zaky, who was arrested in February, is still in detention. EIPR says he

is being held on suspicion of spreading fake news, misusing social media and inciting protest without permission. Dozens of activists have been arrested under Egypt's President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, who led the military's overthrow of his democratically elected predecessor Mohammed Morsi in 2013 following protests against his rule. Egypt, however, has repeatedly denied accusations of hu-

man rights violations. In a statement last month, EIPR said security forces had arrested its lead member Gasser Abdel-Razek at his home in Maadi, south of Cairo, on 19 November. It said that days earlier its director of criminal justice, Karim Ennarah, was arrested in the town of Dahab and its office manager, Mohamed Basheer, had been detained in Cairo.

Qatar FM signals progress on resolving Gulf crisis

"We believe the end of the crisis is important for the security of the region and for sake of our people. This crisis needs to end based on mutual respect and the rights of all people of the Gulf

DNA

DOHA: Qatar's foreign minister has said there has been movement on resolving the diplomatic dispute that has pitted the Gulf neighbours against each other but he could not predict whether a breakthrough was imminent or would fully resolve the matter. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt imposed a diplomatic, trade and travel boycott on Qatar in June 2017, accusing Doha of supporting terrorism and having ties with Iran that were deemed too close. Qatar has repeatedly rejected

KSA appreciates Kuwaiti efforts

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia appreciates the efforts made by Kuwait to "bridge the gap" of viewpoints regarding the Gulf crisis, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan tweeted on Friday. "We consider with great appreciation the efforts made by the sisterly State of Kuwait to bridge the gap in viewpoints regarding the Gulf crisis, and we thank the American efforts in this regard, and we look forward to it being successful for the benefit and good of the region," Prince Faisal tweeted. "We've made significant progress in the last few days thanks to the continuing efforts of Kuwait but also thanks to the strong support of President Trump and the US administration towards bringing all parties closer and we hope that this progress can lead to a final agreement which looks in reach and I can say I am somewhat optimistic that we are close to finalizing an agreement between all the nations in the dispute to come to a resolution that we think will be satisfactory to all." Prince Faisal said during his participation at the Med Dialogues. - DNA

the accusations as baseless while highlighting its readiness for dialogue.

"Right now, there is a movement that we hope will put an end to

this crisis," Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, also deputy prime minister, said on Friday.

"We believe the end of the crisis is important for the security of

the region and for sake of our people. This crisis needs to end based on mutual respect and the rights of all people of the Gulf.

"Qatar is not differentiating be-

tween any of the countries. We hope things will move in the right direction but we cannot yet predict if it will be imminent and if it will be resolved in one day." As the price for lifting the blockade, the four nations set a 13-point ultimatum for Qatar, which included shutting down the Al Jazeera Media Network. "There is no country that is in a position to place demands on the other. There are differences that need to be overcome," said Al-Thani. "If there are any disagreements, there must be a discussion to resolve them. We need to build our relationship based on mutual respect of sovereignty," he added.

China's national flag unfurled on moon

BEIJING: The China National Space Administration Friday released images showing China's national flag unfurled from the Chang'e-5 probe on the moon. The images were taken by a panoramic camera installed on the lander-ascender combination of the probe, before the ascender blasted off from the moon with lunar samples late Thursday. In one of the images, a robotic arm to collect lunar samples can be seen next to the flag. China's Chang'e-5 probe was launched on Nov. 24, and its lander-ascender combination touched down on the north of the Mons Rumker in Oceanus Procellarum, also known as the Ocean of Storms, on the near side of the moon on Dec. 1. After the samples were collected and sealed, the ascender of Chang'e-5 took off from the lunar surface late Thursday, and is expected to carry out unmanned rendezvous and docking with the orbiter-lander in lunar orbit, an unprecedented feat. Chang'e-5 is one of the most complicated and challenging missions in Chinese aerospace history, as well as the world's first moon-sample mission in more than 40 years.

Armenian opposition names candidate for premier

FOREIGN DESK

YEREVAN: Armenian opposition parties nominated former Prime Minister Vazgen Manukyan as their candidate for interim prime minister Thursday, calling on current Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to immediately resign. Since the Armenian army's defeat in Karabakh by the Azerbaijan armed forces in November, calls for the government to resign have continued, with 17 opposition parties issuing a joint statement against Pashinyan. Pointing out that the government failed to deal with the rising political and socio-economic crisis in the country, the statement said the "formation of a new government is an urgent need." Manukyan made a commitment to lead the interim government and to take the country to early elections but not participate, according to the statement. It was also stressed that Pashinyan endangers the country's security every day while he is in office, so he must resign immediately. Manukyan served as prime minister from 1990-1991 and defense minister from 1992-1993.

Norway's security agency warns about Russian spying

DNA

OSLO: In a new report, PST states that Russia and China are spying on the Norwegian oil sector. At the same time, Russia believes PST is engaged in "primitive propaganda." "Russian, Chinese, and other countries' intelligence services gather information about the Norwegian petroleum sector," the Police Security Service (PST) stated in a report dated November 5, which was published on the agency's website on Thursday. PST believes that, in addition to the Norwegian authorities, targets include public and private companies, technology environments at universities, and research institutes. Sintef and NTNU are mentioned as examples of research environments that could be intelligence targets. PST also points out that parts of petroleum technology "have a multi-use potential in military purposes, and part of the petroleum technology can also be used in the development of renewable energy." The security agency also believes that people who work or have a connection to the petroleum sector, and people who work with oil and gas policy, are exposed to potential recruitment from foreign countries' intelligence sources. In August, a Norwegian citizen employed by DNV GL was arrested for revealing state secrets to Russia.

Briefs

Nation observes Youm-e-Dua

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: The nation observed Youm-e-Dua on Friday for protection against the coronavirus pandemic that is hitting the country badly. The announcement was made by President Dr. Arif Alvi, on Thursday, while speaking after an interaction with Ulemas in Islamabad. He had said a strategy of a combination of prayers, precautionary measures, and taking care of the weak segment of the society will be pursued in the second wave of COVID-19. President Arif Alvi had said Pakistan remained successful in controlling the pandemic in its first wave. He appealed to the masses to strictly adhere to the standard operating procedures to check surge of the pandemic. He had said Ulema have an important role in spreading awareness about precautionary measures. He said they have also agreed to play their effective role in this regard. The president had said Ulema have reaffirmed the SOPs issued for mosques on April 17.

Israel urges citizens to avoid Gulf

DNA

TELAVIV: The Israeli government on Thursday urged its citizens to avoid travel to the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, citing threats of Iranian attacks. Iran has been threatening to attack Israeli targets since its chief nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was assassinated last Friday near Tehran. It accuses Israel, which has been suspected in previous killings of Iranian nuclear scientists, of being behind the shooting. Israel has not commented on the killing. But Fakhrizadeh has long been on Israel's radar screen, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying at a 2018 news conference about Iran's nuclear program: "Remember that name." Israel accuses Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons — a charge Iran denies.

ANF foils smuggling bid opium

KARACHI: The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Sindh Friday claimed to have foiled a smuggling bid of huge quantity of opium and arrested a drug smuggler. The ANF Police Station Clifton, on a tip off, recovered 105,050 kg of opium tactfully concealed in rolling mill machine and arrested Shahid Muhammad Umar s/o Gulam Mohiuddin, said a news release. The recovered drug was being smuggled to Canada. Raid were being conducted to apprehend the other accomplices of arrested accused. Case had been registered and further investigations were underway. — DNA

Pakistan plans to enhance participation in CAEPO

"Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and the whole Guangdong Province are basically a big market for Pakistani products. A lot of Pakistanis are also living in this area and we need to put our foot on this market and we need to show our presence," he said

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistani Mission in Guangzhou is planning to display Pakistani products at the exhibition area of China-ASEAN Expo in Nanning, Guangxi Autonomous Region next year, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. Pakistan would be a special co-operation partner country at the expo and would enhance the participation by more Pakistani products, according to Muhammad Irfan, Commercial Counselor, Pakistan Consulate, Guangzhou. "Pakistan will be participating as a special partner country in China-ASEAN Expo to be held next year as well. So, my plan is to keep this pavilion in this city for the whole year and continue marketing of our goods," Muhammad Irfan said in interview. "We have good quality of ceramics, furniture and textile products and can tap the Chinese market

which is the biggest in the world," he told CEN. He informed that 14 participating companies from Pakistan related to marble, onyx, furniture, garments, and handicraft items are participating in this exhibition in a bid to introduce Pakistani products here and they are very hopeful that it will bring a positive result. About Pakistan's participation as a special partner, he said it is a unique opportunity in the sense that Pakistan is not a member of ASEAN bloc and Pakistan doesn't have any free trade agreement with these ASEAN countries. "Pakistan for the first time has been invited as a special partner country to the event and the Chinese have promoted us through social media and the local media. The local government has branded our products all over the city through advertisement campaigns free of cost," he said. "Nanning is called as one of the gateways for China, so we are in-

roducing our products in this area and it will be very helpful for Pakistani business community," he said. He lauded the Pakistani companies who showed keen interest in participating in this event. When they communicate with the local people, they are very hopeful that this will give good opportunities to Pakistani exports. "Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and the whole Guangdong Province are basically a big market for Pakistani products. A lot of Pakistanis are also living in this area and we need to put our foot on this market and we need to show our presence," he said. "About Pakistan's exports to China, Pakistan has recently signed the second phase of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with China and that was implemented from January 2020. But unfortunately our exporters could not come to this market and have a proper marketing owing to the coronavirus

pandemic," said him. He said that China is the largest importer of meats, fruits and vegetables in the world, and Pakistan has good-quality fruits, vegetables and meat. "We all are working hard to get approval for Pakistani meat producers to send their meat products to the Chinese market. Special team from China was supposed to visit Pakistan for quarantine inspections of Pakistani slaughterhouses and Pakistani animals." "Unfortunately, because of the coronavirus they could not travel. So we are expecting that as soon as the situation becomes better, they will visit Pakistan," he said. Regarding the export of good-quality mangoes to China, he said that Chinese are fond of mangoes and China has developed this technology that they can have a full year of mangoes, and they can produce mangoes. "Pakistani season of mangoes is three to four months. We have a

mango show in Guangzhou and we have promoted our mangoes. People in China, particularly in southern China, were very happy to see the Pakistani mangoes because of flavor and taste. Lots of Chinese importers have been interested in importing Pakistani mangoes. So next year, I'm expecting that the result of this mega event will come and we will be able to get market access for our traders," he said. About the export of cherries, he said they are trying to overcome these issues of quality and promote Pakistani product in China. Presently, more than 3,000 Pakistanis live in Guangxi and Guangzhou area but the number becomes much higher when people from Pakistan visit this area for two months. It is noted that the 18th China-ASEAN Expo is preliminarily scheduled for Sept. 10 to 13, 2021, with Pakistan continuing as the Special Partner Country.

Pak for 'just resolution' of Palestinian issue

DNA

NEW YORK: Reaffirming its full support to the Palestinians' struggle for self-determination and against foreign occupation, Pakistan has urged the international community to help them establish an independent State of their own with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. "The tragedy of Palestine is the collective failure of the international community to uphold the fundamental principled provision of the UN Charter and the binding resolutions of the Security Council," Pakistani delegate Saad warraich told the UN General Assembly. Speaking in a debate on the Question on Palestine, he said that Palestine was the core issue in the Middle East conflict that has spawned regional instability and contributed the most to the anger and frustration among the peoples of the Arab and Islamic world.

India formally protests to Canada

DNA

NEW DELHI: India summoned Canada's ambassador on Friday and said comments made by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau over protests by farmers near Delhi were an interference in its domestic affairs and would seriously hurt bilateral ties. Trudeau, speaking to the Indian community earlier this week in Canada, said that he was concerned about the farmers, most of them from the Sikh-dominated state of Punjab, camped out on the outskirts of Delhi in a protest against farm reforms. The Indian foreign ministry said in a statement that comments on "issues relating to Indian farmers constitute an unacceptable interference in our internal affairs."

No lockdown in Romania after polls

DNA

BUCHAREST: There will be no lockdown after this weekend's parliamentary elections, prime minister Ludovic Orban told television station Romania TV, explaining that the economy can't afford it. "I guarantee [you] 100% there will be no lockdown. Romania can't afford it; we can't afford it from the point of view of the economy, from the point of view of the upcoming period. It will not happen. So, if anyone claims this, I say it is folly; it is actually a campaign lie meant to weaken the support for the [National Liberal Party] PNL. The president also said it very clearly: this is not on

the table. Shutting down the economic activity is out of the question," Orban said. He also said that, over the past few days, the number of people recovering from Covid-19 exceeded that of the infected ones. "For the past seven-eight days, we have seen a downward trend, and what is more, in the past five days out of seven, the number of those recovering exceeded that of those infected. It is true that fewer tests were carried out because of the public holidays, and not all testing centers were open, but the testing activity restarts today under normal conditions, depending on the testing requests," the PM said. Romania reported 4,916 coronavirus cases on December 2 and a share of positive tests of 31.3%. Less than 17,000 daily tests were carried out between November 29 and December 2, when Romanians had a long, 'bridge' weekend because of two public holidays: St. Andrew on November 30 and the National Day on December 1. Fewer tests are usually carried out over the weekends as well. The authorities introduced additional restrictions starting November 9. Schools and kindergartens are closed throughout the country and masks are mandatory in all public spaces, indoor and outdoor. People's movement is restricted during the night (23:00 to 5:00) with some exceptions, while shops and large stores close at 21:00.

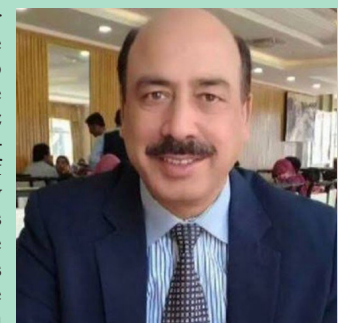
Islamabad Mayor election schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday has issued schedule for the by-election on the vacant seat of Islamabad Mayor. According to the schedule, nomination papers will be received from the candidates on December 11 while scrutiny of the papers will be held on December 16. Polling will be conducted on December 28.

Former judge Arshad Malik dies

RAWALPINDI: Former accountability judge Arshad Malik, who convicted erstwhile Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Al-Azizia reference, has died of coronavirus on Friday in Rawalpindi. He was on ventilator for one week. The deceased's funeral prayers will be offered in Mandra — a town of Tehsil Gujjar Khan. Arshad Malik has left two sons and as many daughters behind in the bereaved family. Let it be known that the Lahore High Court (LHC) had sacked Arshad Malik after an inquiry into his leaked video concluded. The LHC chief justice, while issuing the notification of his dismissal, had said that Arshad Malik was found guilty in the video scandal inquiry. The notification clarified that Arshad Malik was given full opportunity to clear his name, and his position was also heard during the inquiry. — DNA



PM Imran Khan says Mosques cannot be closed

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said that the mosques cannot be closed at any cost during coronavirus pandemic but implementation on SOPs must be ensured. He said this in his meeting with Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noorul Haq Qadri who called on him on Friday. Imran Khan has directed Noorul Haq Qadri to remain in touch with the religious scholars and the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on matters related to coronavirus. The prime minister said the religious scholars should be kept informed about the latest coronavirus trends so that the message of compliance of standard operating procedures (SOPs) continues to emanate from mosques. It was also made clear on the occasion that the mosques will not be shut down but it is imperative to ensure compliance of SOPs. Pir Noorul Haq Qadri also apprised the Prime Minister about the restructuring of Ulema and Mashaikh Council. On November 24, the National Coordination Committee (NCC) had rejected a proposal of the Sindh government regarding the closure of mosques across the country amid a nation-wide spike in COVID-19 cases. "A proposal to shut down mosques should also be considered," Sindh Health Minister Azra Fazl Pechuhu was quoted as saying during the meeting. However, the NCC members had rejected the idea saying that they had already formulated SOPs for the mosque-goers and therefore the places of worship should not be closed down. — DNA



PDM's gathering at Minar-e-Pakistan disallowed

It is pertinent to mention here that COVID-19 cases have witnessed a surge in the country including Punjab province as the second wave of the virus had hit the country

ABID RAZA

LAHORE, Local administration has rejected a request from Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to hold a public gathering at the Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore owing to rising COVID-19 cases in the provincial capital. Speaking to media persons, Deputy Commissioner Lahore Mudassar Riaz Malik while divulging details on the reasons behind the rejection of a request from the PDM, said that only 300 people are allowed to gather under the COVID-19 SOPs. "Even this permission is for the wedding ceremonies," he said. He further said that they could not allow a public gathering at Minar-e-Paki-

Shehbaz Sharif advises Maryam to be careful

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz President Shehbaz Sharif has advised Maryam Nawaz not to take matters to point of no return. According to the inside story of the meeting between Shehbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and Hamza Shahbaz, the opposition leader advised Maryam to keep the window of dialogue open. "Avoid taking matters to point of no return." The meeting also discussed the upcoming public rally of the PDM in Lahore on December 13. The PML-N leaders agreed to use the option of the long march. During the meeting, Shehbaz Sharif showed reservations over Pakistan People's Party (PPP) on resignations from the assemblies and said not to consider this option at this stage. Sources added that a meeting took place between the PML-N leaders during the five-day parole release of Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza. It is to be mention here that Maryam Nawaz has been carrying out the anti-government drive from the platform of the Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDM) and has been adopting a reluctant stand. Sources said that during the meeting, Shehbaz Sharif advised Maryam to consider the option of resignations at the end and not go past the point of no return. — DNA

stan owing to its status as a heritage site. "The ratio of COVID-19 spread in Lahore is witnessing an alarming surge," he further said. It is pertinent to mention here that COVID-19 cases have witnessed a surge in the country including Punjab province as the second wave of the virus had hit the country. According to the latest figures, the coronavirus claimed 24 more lives in Punjab during the past 24 hours, taking the provincial death toll from the disease to 3,115. According to a spokesperson for the Primary and Secondary Health Department, 670 fresh infections detected during this period, pushing the total number of cases thus far reported across the province to 121,753.

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