



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

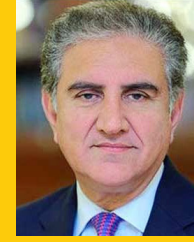
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Shavkat Mirziyoyev's greeting remark on the constitution Day

Detailed News On Page-06

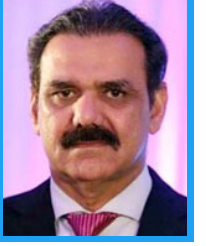
PDM needs to review its policy, says FM Qureshi

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Earth breaking in Rashakai Zone soon

Detailed News On Page-01



Briefs

Shibli asks citizens to avoid PDM rallies

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Referring to Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)'s upcoming public gathering in Lahore, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz Tuesday asked the citizens to stay away from its rallies to save their own and their families' lives from the second wave of coronavirus pandemic. Addressing a post-cabinet press briefing along with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar, Shibli urged Lahoris and others to refrain from falling into the PDM leaders' trap as they were liar and deceitful, and had nothing to do with the public welfare.

Corona's second wave lethal

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr Faisal Sultan on Tuesday urged the citizens to strictly observe the COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) as the second wave is more lethal and severe in Pakistan. "The disastrous effects of the second wave can only be alleviated by taking precautionary measures across the country by citizens," Dr Faisal Sultan said while addressing a media briefing at NCOC.

Moeed for think-tank cooperation

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Security Dr Moeed Yusuf on Tuesday called for enhanced coordination among think tanks. He was chairing the Seventh meeting of Advisory Board of the National Security Committee here, said a press release issued here. The prominent think tanks of the country attended the meeting where the matters pertaining to peace and stability in the region were discussed.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. - DNA

Opp MPs to submit resignations by 31st

The PDM president said that a standing committee of the Opposition's alliance will be held which will decide the schedule of strikes, protests and jalsas in various divisional headquarters of the country

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: JUIF chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has asked all Opposition parliamentarians to send their resignations to their party heads by December 31, as the PDM gears up to hold its rally in Lahore on Sunday. "All Opposition lawmakers, from the national and provincial assemblies throughout the country, should send in their resignations to their respective party leaderships by December 31," said the JUIF leader and the PDM chief, flanked by PPP

PDM needs to review its policy: FM Qureshi

NAVEED MIRAJ / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi says the PDM needs to review its policy of holding public gatherings in view of the alarmingly growing number of Coronavirus cases. In a statement, he said the positivity ratio in Lahore is touching 10 percent where the PDM wants to hold a public meeting. The Minister said it is not time for holding public gatherings if we see the threats being posed to human lives due to the pandemic. He said internal instability is not good for the country as there is grave situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the Afghan peace process is entering into its final stage.

chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz. The PDM president said that a standing committee of the Opposition's alliance will be held which will decide the schedule of strikes, protests and jalsas in various divisional headquarters of the country. "It will also be decided when to hold the long march [against the government] and its date will also be decided," he said. Fazl said that the PDM's upcoming Lahore jalsa will be a "historic" one, and will prove to be the "last nail" for the government.

Earth breaking in Rashakai Zone soon

NAVEED MIRAJ

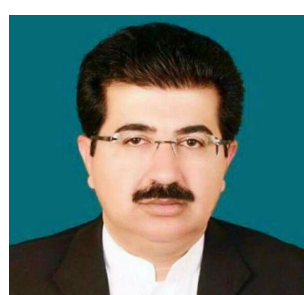
ISLAMABAD: Chairman CPEC Authority Lt. Gen (ret) Asim Saleem Bajwa Tuesday said the earth breaking in Rashakai Special Economic Zone under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would be held soon.

This he said during a meeting with Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser here at the Speaker House. During the meeting they discussed the progress of ongoing development projects under CPEC in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Asim Bajwa assured the Speaker of early completion of Dera Ismail Khan Motorway and other projects under CPEC in the province. Asad Qaiser said CPEC was harbinger development and prosperity in Pakistan. He said the timely completion of CPEC projects in KPK was need of the hour as with completion of the projects, a new era of development and prosperity would begin in the province.

CPEC to bring prosperity: Sanjrani

Talking to Chinese Ambassador he said exchange of parliamentary delegations have enhanced relations

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani said that the friendly relations between Pakistan and China are setting new direction of socio-economic development of the region. Talking to Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong he said exchange of parliamentary delegations has enhanced bilateral social, political and economic relations. The Senate Chairman said parliamentary democracy plays a pivotal role in strengthening bilateral contacts. He said promotion of people to people contacts will further strengthen economic partnership. Sadiq Sanjrani said CPEC will bring prosperity and development to the region. - DNA



The people, he said would get new employment opportunities after launch of Rashakai Economic Zone. The Speaker said with the development of CPEC and Special Economic

Zones (SEZs), new business opportunities would be created. Besides business and trade, the transportation services would also be improved in the province, he added.

Pakistan, Holland hold parleys

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The 8th round of Pakistan-The Netherlands Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) was held in the virtual format today. Special Secretary (Europe) Dr. Aman Rashid and Director-General for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands, Mr. Thijs van der Plas, led their respective delegations. The two sides discussed the whole spectrum of bilateral relations, including political, economic, trade and investment, climate change, cooperation on multilateral issues as well as developments in their respective regions. While expressing satisfaction at the steady growth in bilateral ties, it was reiterated that high-level interactions were necessary for further strengthening relations. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the level of cooperation at international fora, including at the UN and agreed to continue supporting each other.

Opp spreading Coronavirus, says PM Imran

The cabinet discussed the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) judgement regarding the special assistant and advisers to the premier. PM Khan directed his legal team to look into the legal aspects

ANSAR BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Expressing concern over a recent spike in Covid-19 deaths, Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Tuesday the second wave of the coronavirus is proving to be deadlier than the first one. Chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet, Prime Minister Khan issued directives for the authorities concerned to ensure strict enforcement of the government-defined SOPs to halt the spread of the deadly disease. Continuing his tirade against opposition parties, he said they are spreading the coronavirus by holding rallies. They are resorting to public meetings in order to hide their corruption, the prime minister maintained. The cabinet, among other issues, discussed the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) judgement regarding the special assistant and advisers to the premier. PM Khan directed his legal team to look into the legal aspects of the ruling.

In pursuance of the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) directives, the cabinet took up a plea seeking to cut ties with France over French President Emmanuel Macron's Islamophobic remarks and republication of blasphemous caricatures. The premier tasked Foreign Minister Shah

PM is scared, says Maryam

ABID RAZA / DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-president Maryam Nawaz has said that the incumbent regime has founded and scared Prime Minister Imran Khan is sure that his government is going home. Maryam Nawaz took to Twitter on Tuesday and said Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) Lahore rally will be held and the government will be sent packing. The PML-N leader also shared a video in which it can be seen that the Minar-e-Pakistan ground - where PDM's rally is scheduled on December 13 - is being watered. It is pertinent here to mention that the government has disallowed the public gathering in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mahmood Qureshi to raise the issue with Muslim countries. An IHC single bench comprising Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani had called for the case to be sent to Prime Minister Imran Khan for placing it before his cabinet for necessary action.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China Nong Rong met with Ali Haider Zaidi Minister of Maritime Affairs, and shared in-depth views on advancing the development of Gwadar Port and the Free Zone. - DNA

2,885 new Coronavirus cases reported in Pakistan

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The total active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan on Tuesday were recorded 44,241 as 2,885 more people tested positive for the deadly virus during the last 24 hours. Eighty-nine corona patients, 85 of whom were under treatment in hospital and four out of the hospital died on Monday, according to the latest update issued by the National command and

COVID positivity reaches 8.58 %

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National COVID Positivity Ratio on Tuesday continued to rise as it was recorded 8.58 percent where 2,486 Coronavirus patients were in critical condition across the country with the number of critical patients rising at a fast pace. The highest positivity ratio was observed in Karachi which was 21.80 percent followed by Mirpur 18.31 percent and Muzaffarabad 16 percent, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC).

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'Bharat Bandh': Indian farmers strike to press for demands - Page 07

Pak among top five with most investment in HI of 2020: WB - Page 08

Pakistan vows to end violence against women

Some international and regional organizations as well as civil society groups have also expressed their interest to partake in this initiative

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has joined a key group launched at the United Nations to coordinate actions aimed at the elimination of violence against women and girls that has intensified since the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic. Seventy-seven UN Member States and observers have already joined what is called the "Group of Friends", which will meet on quarterly basis, according to the organizers. Some international and regional organizations as well as civil society groups have also expressed their interest to partake in this initiative.

Addressing the group on Monday, Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram said that Islamabad fully supports Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's call to end violence

against women during Covid-19. "We continue to support all efforts that aim to end violence against women," he said.

Noting that Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable, the Pakistani envoy said it was evident from the sharp spike in domestic violence and abuse against women and girls during lockdowns.

Pakistan is following a whole of government approach to ensure that women and girls have necessary protections available to them against violence, harassment and abuse, he said, adding its recovery response remains focused on the well-being and protection of women. "Our Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, has led the way to protect the rights of women

and also promote their well-being, especially during the current pandemic," Ambassador Akram added. "We are progressively strengthening pro-women legislation," he said. "Our Parliament has recently passed bills to counter rape and honour killings, prevent early and forced marriages, and expanded



workplace protections for working women. "Under the leadership of the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Development, Dr. Sania Nishtar, we are taking concrete measures to uplift women from the shackles of poverty," the Pakistani envoy added.

Through the flagship Ehsaas Programme, he said, the government is reaching out to millions of underprivileged women and providing them cash assistance and social protection within their homes. More than 7 million women have received assistance through this programme in which the government has so far rolled out Rs.144 billion.

"We will continue to work passionately at home and abroad to strengthen all efforts aimed at

elimination of violence against women and girls," Ambassador Akram told the group.

Opening the meeting, the Head of the European Union Delegation to the UN, Ambassador Olof Skoog, said that the "Group of Friends" will make efforts to turn commitments to protect women into action.

Noting the ongoing initiatives at national and international levels, he said the Group will serve as a platform to highlight good practices, identify shortcomings and mobilize further efforts.

Ambassador Skoog also thanked UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed for her presence and for being a key supporter and driving force of this initiative. - Agencies

Five bullet-riddled bodies recovered

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: Bullet-riddled bodies of five men were discovered by the police on Tuesday in Turbat district of Balochistan. According to police, three bodies were found from Tajaban and two from Heronak in Turbat. The identities of the bodies have not been established yet. Further investigation into the incident was underway, the police said. On Nov 15, 2017, bullet-riddled bodies of 15 men were found in the Gerok area of tehsil Buleda in Kech district near the Pak-Iran border. All the deceased belonged to Punjab province and were kidnapped while trying to sneak into Iran.

Briefs

UBG Leaders
Condolence
to Siraj Teli
demise

DNA

KARACHI: United Business Group (UBG) Patron-in-Chief S.M. Muneer, Chairman Iftikhar Ali Malik, Secretary General Zubair Tufail, Chairman UBG Sindh Khalid Tawab, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, Gulzar Feroze, Abdul Sami Khan, Syed Mazhar Ali Nasir, Ikhtiar Baig, Mumtaz Sheikh, Tariq Haleem, Hanif Gohar, Shaheen Ilyas Sarwana, Noor Ahmed Khan, Waheed Ahmed, Shabnam Zafar, Naveed Bukhari, Sheikh Umar Rehan, Ahmed Chino, Ikram Rajput and other UBG members have expressed their condolence over sudden demise of Chairman Businessmen Group (BMG) and former President of Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Siraj Kasam Teli passed away on Tuesday in Dubai due to cardiac arrest.

The UBG leaders paid homage to Siraj Kasam Teli, saying that he was a true and fearless man and that he had created a new way of thinking in trade politics at the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In their condolence message, the UBG leaders prayed Allah to rest his soul in heaven and give courage to his family to bear this irreparable loss, Amen.

Punjab cabinet
okays NOCs
for 5 cement
plants

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab cabinet on Tuesday approved issuing no-objection certificates (NOCs) for establishment of five new cement plants in the province.

This was announced by Chief Minister Usman Buzdar in a post on his official Twitter handle. He said there were only twelve cement plants in the province till recently but the cabinet, with persistent efforts of his team, approved NOCs for five more plants.

These new plants will bring a collective investment of Rs150 billion to Rs200 billion to the province in addition to creating employment opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people, the CM said. Earlier, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood had said cement sector registered the "highest-ever" monthly sale of 5.735 tonnes in October growing by 15.83 per cent as compared to last year's corresponding period. He tweeted it is even more encouraging to note that cement export grew by 19 per cent in October, 2020, fetching US\$32.86 million as compared to US\$27.62 million worth of exports last year. Overall cement exports grew by 10.8 per cent to US\$ 105.18 million during July-October 2020 from US\$ 94.97 worth of exports recorded during corresponding period of last year.

OLX auto
inspection
service
introduced

DNA

ISLAMABAD: OLX, Pakistan's number one online marketplace, has introduced its auto inspection service under the 'OLX Autos' umbrella to facilitate car sellers and buyers residing in the twin-cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Under the OLX auto inspection service, formerly known as CarPro, a detailed car inspection is carried out supported by a comprehensive post inspection report which accurately indicates the current condition of the used vehicle. The OLX auto inspection service saves time and adds confidence for the buyer and seller to carry out the intended transaction without facing any unnecessary hassle or risks that are typically associated with the sale and purchase of used vehicles. The service is also very convenient to avail since the inspection can also be carried out at the customer's doorstep. The inspection is usually conducted by an expert team of certified inspectors using top of the line equipment.



ISLAMABAD: Special assistant Prime Minister on poverty alleviation Dr. Sania Nishtar calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. – DNA

IHC unhappy with CAA on
damaging PIA pilots' image

The chief justice noted that now it had cleared that the information pertaining to alleged fake licenses of 262 pilots was wrong. Accountability was necessary and anyone had to be set responsible for this negligence

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Athar Minallah on Tuesday observed that the procedure of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) for pilots' licensing had made the whole method as suspicious. The chief justice noted that now it had cleared that the information pertaining to alleged fake licenses of 262 pilots was wrong. Accountability was necessary and anyone had to be set responsible for this negligence, Justice Minallah said, adding that the image of national

airline, Pakistani nation and its pilots was badly damaged internationally. The court asked that under what law the secretary CAA had formed board of inquiry. Was there monarchy, it questioned, adding that the whole matter started from this. He gave these remarks during hearing a petition filed by a pilot Syed Saqlain Akhter challenging cancellation of his license and termination from job. Addressing to the counsel of CAA, the chief justice asked that if this country was run under the

law or the wishes of someone. Additional Attorney General Tariq Khokhar submitted the notification of appointment of DG to the court to this the chief justice appreciated the step of federal government. The petitioner's counsel pleaded that the appointment of DG CAA was against the orders of the court. The Chief Justice said that it was the job of the federal government. It was not legally clear in law that how a DG would be appointed, no matter who appoints the DG.

The petitioner's lawyer prayed the bench to declare the suspension of his client pilot's license as illegal act. At this, the court asked that who would decide the suspension or restoration of the pilot license, whether any disciplinary inquiry was started against the pilot. The court asked the petitioner's lawyer not to hurry. The petitioner's lawyer said show cause notice was issued to his client twice and we submitted reply. The Board of Inquiry Commission was formed under chair of secretary CAA, he said.

The court asked that under what law this commission was formed and who were the people involved in it? The whole issue started with this Board of Inquiry, Justice Minallah noted. The petitioner's counsel said that the report of the Board of Inquiry was never received. The bench said that where it was written in the law that the federal government could temporarily appoint someone as DG or secretary, the Lahore High Court did not order the secretary to issue show cause notice.

'Pakistan effectively
combating scourge
of corruption'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi said that Pakistan had taken a number of measures to effectively implement International Anti-Corruption Conventions including those under the UN Convention Against Corruption. "In order to combat the scourge of corruption, Pakistan has taken effective steps by enforcing strict accountability regime that has greatly helped in curbing the menace of corruption," the president said in a message on the occasion of 'International Anti-Corruption Day' being observed on December 9. "We reaffirm our commitment on this day to eliminate corruption and promote transparency and accountability in the governance system," a press release quoted the president as saying. According to press release, the president said that observance of the day was aimed at addressing the challenge of corruption. "Corruption is a serious challenge eroding the economic edifice of a society and promotes social and economic disparities in the country," he observed. "We need to plug the loopholes in our system by re-examining the laws

and enforcing stringent measures to put an end to corrupt practices in the country," the president emphasized. In addition, he said they required to create awareness about the scourge of corruption and, in this regard, media could play a vital role in promoting high moral standards and good ethical values. The society as a whole needed to support the government in its endeavour to uproot the culture of corruption, he added. The president further urged every citizen of Pakistan to strongly discourage and resist corrupt practices, in any form they encounter, and report the same to the relevant agencies for proceeding against the corrupt elements. "This is a responsibility that falls not only on National Accountability Bureau (NAB) but it is the shared responsibility of all citizens to play their role in eliminating corruption. The whole nation must stand united and support the government to wage Jihad against this evil so as to purge our society of corruption. I am hopeful that if we act together, we can make an economically strong and corruption-free Pakistan for our succeeding generations," he observed.

PDM irresponsible behavior
despite corona shameful

The opposition was feeling no shame for playing with the lives of innocent people, she added. She said that 429 confirmed cases had been reported and 41 patients had died in Punjab during the last 24 hours

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM) Punjab on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said on Tuesday the irresponsible behaviour of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) was shameful in the wake of increasing number of corona patients. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, she said that cheap narrative of PDM leaders was dead now as the people have rejected it. The opposition was feeling no shame for playing with the lives of innocent people, she added. She said that 429 confirmed cases had been reported and 41 patients



had died in Punjab during the last 24 hours. She said the number of corona patients in Punjab had reached more than 124,000. The number of active corona patients had reached 9,363 and a total of

3,218 patients have died in Punjab, she added. The rate of deaths during the second wave was continuously increasing and holding public meetings in this situation was sheer enmity with the people, she added. The insensible opposition leaders were unable to understand the severity of the situation and putting the lives of the people in danger only to safeguard its political interests, he asserted. The patriotic Pakistanis would not fall into the trap of opposition and defeat would be the fate of PDM on December 13, she added. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Christian Turner, British high commissioner to Pakistan called on federal minister for Aviation Ghulam Sarwar Khan. – DNA

'Corruption undermines norms of society'

He said fighting against corruption is a global concern. Corruption is a social malice that can be seen anywhere and is like a tumor, aggressively spreading in public life

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Corruption, a serious crime, undermines social, economic norms of societies and affects the countries around the world, said National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Justice (r) Javed Iqbal said Tuesday. In his Anti-Corruption Day being observed on today, to highlight its devastating impact on socio-economic development of the member countries and to create awareness against it. He said fighting against corruption is a global concern. Corruption is a social malice that can be seen anywhere

and is like a tumor, aggressively spreading in public life. It breeds injustice, which ultimately results in collapse of a nation and society if not cured. Thus, the significance of this day is increasing over time as the general public is getting more and more mindful of its repercussions. NAB being the focal agency of Pakistan under United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) is determined to weed out this scourge of corruption and to make Pakistan Corruption free. However, corruption is a complicated social phenomenon, which cannot be fought by employing a

narrow singular approach of enforcement as it would fail to yield any results. Similarly, it would be impractical to expect a single agency to do the job on its own without complete support of society. So NAB being the apex anti-corruption agency and mandated to eliminate corruption, corrupt practices, is operating through a three pronged strategy of Awareness, Prevention and Enforcement. In order to eradicate this evil from society, it has consistently engaged all stakeholders and is incessantly combating this national menace with unflinching resolve

through its multi-pronged strategy, which has started yielding remarkable results. In addition, NAB has played a role of torch bearer for other anti-corruption organizations by putting a maximum limit of 10 months for expeditious disposal of white-collar crime cases. In order to discourage money laundering; it has established "Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML & CFT) Cell". This shows the Bureau's commitment and compliance towards resolution of international community. NAB is also the founding Chairman of the SAARC Anti-Corruption

Forum and is a role model for SAARC countries. It is also pointed out that due to its strong resolve against corruption, the Bureau's endeavours have been appreciated and endorsed by different reputed national and international organizations like PILDAT, Mishal Pakistan, Transparency International, World Economic Forum that testifies people's confidence and trust upon NAB's performance. Similarly, having confidence in the impressive performance & integrity of NAB, China has also signed an MoU with NAB to watch over CPEC projects being undertaken in Pakistan.

CTD arrests
terrorists
involved in
sectarian
killings

KARACHI: The Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Tuesday claimed to have arrested two suspected militants allegedly affiliated with proscribed Sipah-e-Muhammad's Agha Hassan Group and got trained from a neighbouring country. According to CTD DIG Omar Shahid Hamid, the arrested militants identified as Karar Hussain alias Pathan and Kamran Haider alias Kami had received militancy training from neighbouring country. They were trained for using arms, ammunition, suicide jackets, Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), Vehicular Borne IED (VBIED), anti-aircraft gun and counter surveillance training. Both the arrested during initial interrogation confessed their involvement in number of sectarian target killings. Accused Kamran confessed killing Jamia Binoria's Maulana Yousuf Ludhianvi, Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai and Sipah-e-Sahaba's Mufti Mehmood. The accused was involved in killing of 7 activists of Sipah Sahaba who were returning from gathering in Sher Shah, SITE, MMA leader Wasif Aziz in 2007 and others. Accused Karar Hussain alias Pathan was also involved in various sectarian target killings. The CTD also recovered a 30 bore pistol and a 9MM pistol with 9 live rounds from the possession of arrested accused. DIG Omar Shahid Hamid said that further investigations were underway and more confessions were expected from the arrested accused. – APP

1122 conducts
awareness
session on
Covid-19

PESHAWAR: Rescue service 1122 of Dir Lower on Tuesday conducted a campaign to educate masses regarding precautionary measures against the spread of Covid-19 and to get prompt services of the Rescue 1122 in case of emergency. The awareness Rescue raising sessions were held on the directives of Director General Rescue 1122 KP Dr Khatir Ahmed says media spokesperson of the service. On the occasion District Incharge Izzar Alam urged to strictly adopt precautionary measures including wearing masks and maintaining social distance to stop spread of the contagion. He also educated about the services the Rescue service provided during the pandemic and informed them to make a free call on 1122 in case of emergency to avail these services. A large number of local people including shopkeepers participated where the Rescue workers briefed them about coronavirus disease. – APP

AG unearths
irregularities
in Daanish
Schools

DNA

LAHORE: The Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) has unearthed financial irregularities and fraud worth Rs11.39 billion in Punjab's Daanish Schools and recommended the provincial authorities to immediately remove the responsible officers. The top auditor exposed the corruption worth over Rs11 billion in its three-year special audit report 2019-20, regarding the Punjab government-run Daanish schools. The report has been handed over to the Punjab government. The report stated that violations of Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules and the usage of sub-standard material in the development projects have been detected, whereas, serious financial irregularities worth over Rs5.74 billion in 73 cases were also unearthed during the audit. The administration of Daanish Schools had been found involved in financial fraud worth Rs5.1 million. It emerged that the administration awarded the contract for meal and transportation of the admitted schoolchildren approximately 3 per cent more than its actual cost. Moreover, Daanish Schools' former managing director (MD) Zahoor Hussain had neglected PPRA rules and merit during his tenure.

Briefs

IAG lauds Pak efforts against Polio

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication (IAG) on Tuesday appreciating the efforts of Pakistan in fight against polio has assured its full support for complete elimination of this crippling disease from the country. In its 7th annual meeting held at OIC Secretariat at Jeddah, the IAG called upon religious leaders and influential community leaders in Pakistan and Afghanistan to fully support ongoing polio eradication efforts and mobilize parents and caregivers to regularly vaccinate their children against polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases. This year's IAG meeting, which was held virtually, and organized by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), discussed the persistence of polio virus transmission and protecting children from the crippling disease of polio, says a fax message received here from Jeddah. Addressing the meeting, Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre, Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI), Dr Rana Muhammad Safdar said that Pakistan was successfully running its anti-polio drives to protect children from the disease. He said "The government is committed to make Pakistan Polio-free. We are determined to close the immunity gap in children which had unfortunately widened because of disruption of essential services due to COVID-19 pandemic." He said, "Ensuring timely and repeated vaccination of children is critical for us to reduce the immunity gap and protect them against polio. I am confident, together we will achieve our target of making a safer, healthier and polio-free Pakistan for our children." - APP

Four fair-price stall cancelled

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has cancelled four fair-price stalls at various locations in the city and booked two shopkeepers for selling fruits and vegetables at exorbitant rates to the buyers. Chairman, market committee, Roshdil Khan Hoti took action against the violators during his surprise visit at various stalls, following public complaints for non-compliance of official rates. He was accompanied by other ICT officials during the visit. The stall cancelled included, Prime Minister staff colony, G-11/2, G-11/4 and F-10/2, while the owners of stalls were shifted to police station for further legal actions. However, the stall at G-10 goal chowk and other were found adhere to price list, said a statement issued by ICT. Talking to APP on Tuesday, Roshdil Khan said around 21 stalls were established across the city, a month ago, in collaboration with Capital Development Authority (CDA) and local administration so the people can purchase fruits and vegetables at controlled rates. - APP

HEC offers six months research fellowship

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has offered a six months research fellowship abroad to full-time PhD scholars, enrolled in the higher educational institutions of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The HEC sources told APP on Tuesday that the fellowship has been awarded under HEC's International Research Support Initiative Programme (IRSIP). They said that the purpose of this programme was to enhance research capabilities of PhD scholars, and also develop linkages between Pakistani and foreign institutions. HEC receives applications for IRSIP throughout the year, and fellowships are awarded on quarterly basis after thorough evaluation of applications, they informed. HEC, the sources told, encourages applicants to apply as soon as they fulfill the basic criteria. They students may visit <http://hec.gov.pk/site/IRSIP> for further information, they added. - APP



ISLAMABAD: PIMS employees shouting slogans during a protest against MTI ordinance in front of NPC. - DNA

NUST stands among int'l awardees for GCRF project

NUST team is being represented by Professor Dr Imran Hashmi and Professor Dr Sher Jamal Khan from NUST Institute of Environmental Science and Engineering (IESE), and Dr Aneela Javed from NUST Atta-ur-Rehman School of Applied Biosciences (ASAB)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has awarded a project quantifying the Transmission Routes of Gastroenteritis (GastroPak) to a consortium of researchers from the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Pakistan, Earlham Institute UK, University of Warwick UK, Cranfield University UK, Institute of Development Studies UK, National University of Ireland Galway, University of Agriculture Faisalabad and Brigham and Women's Hospital USA. The grant is worth GBP 2 Mil-



lion, out of which GBP 0.534 Million, has been granted to NUST, said a news release. The project is being led by Professor Dr Christopher Quince from Earlham Institute and University of Warwick, while the NUST team

is being represented by Professor Dr Imran Hashmi and Professor Dr Sher Jamal Khan from NUST Institute of Environmental Science and Engineering (IESE), and Dr Aneela Javed from NUST Atta-ur-Rehman School of Applied Biosciences (ASAB).

The research is aimed at quantifying rate of different non-vital Gastroenteritis Transmission in Pakistan, including social, biological, chemical and technical factors through agriculture, sanitation,

drinking water, food, and person-to-person contact. The study will further ascertain the effectiveness of alternative waste water treatment technologies for gastroenteric pathogen removal contrasting relatively low-technology methods, such as managed wetlands, with higher-technology membrane bio-reactors. Felicitating the researchers on this meritorious accomplishment, Lt Gen Naveed Zaman, HI (M), (Retd), Rector NUST, hoped that this phenomenal achievement would inspire more researchers from the university to acquire such international grants in the future and bring accolades to their university and the country.

USC transforming into fully automated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Utility Stores Corporation of Pakistan (USC) on Tuesday established Information Technology (IT) infrastructure in the corporation to transform it into a fully automated organization to facilitate its consumers. According to a press release, the corporation has established a modern data center with Private Cloud in its head office during the financial year 2019-20. The automation would provide greater business insights through more accurate and timely financial information. It will also help USC to save operating cost and repetitive and time consuming processes would also be automated. USC would be able to forecast its income and expenses more accurately and budgeting can be done in a better and cost effective manner. Recording prices of products along with discounts or subsidy will help USC to control prices while centralized sales monitoring will bound store staff for timely sales deposits. Highlighting further details, the USC press release added that data center has the



capacity to meet current and future IT infrastructure requirements and was the only data center in any Public Sector organization in Pakistan, built on "Open Stack Cloud environment". Moreover, a robust data communication network has been established in its Head Office and office located in G-9 Markaz, Islamabad. An international leading ERP System has been deployed on USC data center and customization of ERP system as per USC requirements is under process. All USC stores and warehouses would be automated and linked with central ERP System for real time sales and inventory management. All USC business processes including Supply Chain, Warehousing, Financials, HR, Payroll, and E-Commerce will be automated by June, 2021.

Once the ERP system implementation is completed purchasing activity will become a structured process whereby situation arising due to over or under stocking of inventory can be controlled. The whole inventory would be controllable and the corporation would be able to forecast amount of items needed, thus preventing both product shortages and overstocking. Through automation of USC, synchronization of warehouses and retail outlets data into the centralized data center will provide a consolidated view of the corporation performance. The automation will help identifying trends in top selling items and locations. This will enable stocks to be moved with precision and achieve higher sales volumes. Also the automation will enable USC to start targeted subsidy for the poorest segment of the society with the surety that subsidy is dispersed to the right individuals. A pilot project of deployment of Point of Sale (POS) system is successfully executed initially at 10 Utility Stores.

Islamabad DC seeks volunteer role for green cover

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat on Tuesday appealed volunteers to throw seeds balls while walking through different trails to increase green cover at Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP). He asked the visitors of MHNP to collect a bag of seed balls free of cost from the counter displayed at the entry point of each trail and throw them on your way up the trail. Talking to a group of media persons, the DC said each bag contained 25 seed balls and about 1.5 million seed balls with four pine seeds each (six million seeds) has been thrown into Margallas. Some 25 trips were made each day for the last two weeks to spread 1.5 million seed balls at the Margallas, starting from Daman-e-Koh to Bara Kahu, he said. "Even if 50 per cent seeds get successfully planted, three million trees would be added to MHNP," he remarked.

IHC extends Asif Ali Zardari's interim bail

Zardari's counsel Farooq H Naek had filed an application with the court requesting that his client be exempted from appearing in person in the fake bank accounts case

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday extended the interim bail of former president Asif Ali Zardari until January 19, in a case related to a suspicious transaction of Rs8 billion in a money laundering case. The former president sought an extension in his bail and exemption from the court appearance owing to his medical condition. The court will now continue the further hearing of the case on January 19. Former president Asif Ali Zardari's medical report was submitted, yesterday, with the IHC stating that he'd sustained head injuries during a fall. Zardari's counsel Farooq H Naek had filed an application with the court requesting that his client be exempted from appearing in person in the fake bank accounts case. The medical report further revealed that the ex-president was readmitted to a hospital on November 22. The report said the ex-president had a swelling in his head and pain on the left side of the chest after the fall adding that the chest pain increased whenever he walked. Zardari also complained of tension and pain in the lower back. The report said a CT scan of the ex-president's brain was also conducted and he was advised against travelling on medical grounds. - DNA



ANF reviews steps to combat drug trafficking

DG ANF directed the force to deal with the main smugglers of narcotics with iron hands. He also directed to come hard on absconders and proclaimed offenders in drug offences, and emphasized on taking proactive and innovative steps to curb the drug trafficking and disruption of drug supply

STAFF REPORT / DNA

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force held Force Commanders Conference at Headquarters ANF Rawalpindi under the chairmanship of Director General Major General Muhammad Arif Malik HI (M). Force Commanders of all ANF Regional Directorates and Senior Staff Officers attended the conference. Director General showed satisfaction on the overall organizational performance of ANF. Progress on counternarcotics operations, international commitments, drug prevention and awareness programs, and treatment of drug addicts at ANF drug treatment centers was comprehensively reviewed during the conference. Current drug situation and emerging tendency towards use of synthetic drugs were also analyzed.



During the conference, stringent measures were recommended against drug use in educational institutions. Director General ANF directed to accelerate the ongoing nationwide drive for apprehension of elements involved in distribution of drugs in educational institutions. DG ANF directed the force to deal with the main smugglers of narcotics with iron hands. He also directed to come hard on absconders and proclaimed offenders in drug offences, and emphasized on taking proactive and innovative steps to curb the drug trafficking and disruption of drug supply. Besides, aspects related to enforcement, intelligence, assets investigation, prosecution, mass awareness, finance, administration and infrastructure development were discussed at length, while futuristic goals were also set forth with special focus on undertaking fresh initiatives and capacity building plans.

AAUR secured 1st position in UI ranking 2020

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) has been ranked first in all over Pakistan and stands at position 201 among 912 participating Universities of the world as per latest UI GreenMetric World Universities ranking 2020. UI GreenMetric University Sustainability Ranking is a world university ranking to assess and compare campus sustainability efforts. The criteria for the ranking of Universities includes campus setting & infrastructure, energy & climate change, waste, water, transportation and education & Research. The Arid Varsity has been ranked as 201 among the top 912 universities of the world with a total score of 6775 as per UI GreenMetric World Universities ranking. Prof. Dr. Qamar-uz-Zaman, Vice Chancellor of PMAS-AAUR congratulated the faculty members, students and staff for achieving this position and expressed that the university is working hard to provide the atmosphere where quality education & research can prosper. He further informed that the University has been awarded four Research Projects including National Center of Industrial Biotechnology, Center for Agriculture Strategy Development, pilot project for Data Driven Smart Decision Platform for increased Agriculture Productivity and National Center for Livestock Breeding, Genetics & Genomics, which will be established at PMAS-AAUR. - APP

1386 professional beggars arrested

RAWALPINDI: The city traffic police (CTP) have arrested 1386 professional beggars on charges of begging alms from road users during the last month, informed the City Traffic Police (CTP) spokesman here on Tuesday. The cases were registered against 24 professional beggars under 9-Vagrancy Act with different police stations. The CTP has launched grand operation following the instructions of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) against professional beggars and held 1386 from roads, squares and outside shopping malls. Chief Traffic Officer Syed Akbar Ali said special squads have been constituted to arrest the professional beggars from the city. He made it clear that professional beggars would be dealt with iron hand. He said the traffic police would continue action against the beggars and would not allow them to disrupt the traffic flow. On the other hand, Professional beggary is becoming a social menace as more and more beggars including physically fit, healthy and young men, women and children are turning towards this profession. Mosques and other religious places are also amongst the most profitable sources for the professional beggars. - APP

Two dacotis held for looting jewelry shop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Kohsar police have arrested two persons involved in a dacoity at jewelry shop in Super Market and looting Rs. four million as well as 400 tola gold from there, a police spokesman said on Tuesday. According to details, three persons looted Rs. four million and 400 tola gold at gun point from Honey Jewelers situated in Super Market, sector F-6 on November 23, 2020. Following this incident, Kohsar police registered the case on the complaint of Sheikh Muhammad Fareed. IGP Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfikar and DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed directed SP (City) Omer Khan to trace the culprits. He constituted special team under supervision of ASP Ayesha Gul which included SHO Asjad Mehmud, Sub-Inspector Kamal Khan and others.

Briefs

11 gamblers held with valuable

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The City police Tuesday claimed to have arrested 11 gamblers and recovered 12 mobile phones, stake money of Rs 38530, gambling tools and other articles from their possession. A Police spokesman informed that SHO Ratta Amral police station along with other team members raided in their jurisdiction and netted six gamblers namely Haroon Rasheed, Muhammad Akhter, Muhammad Adnan, Majid Shahzad, Adeel Bhatti and Adil Awais while Amanat Ali, Muhammad Ameer and Muhammad Yasin managed to escapes from the scene. Police sized stake money of Rs 26,680, seven mobile phones, playing cards and other valuable from their custody. In another operation, Saddar Wah Police apprehended five alleged gamblers namely Muhammad Imran, Mujahid Khan, Junaid Ahmed, Naem Khan and Ali with stake money Rs 11,850, five mobile phones and gambling tools from their custody. Police registered separate cases against all of them and started investigation.

PHP registers 135 cases against violators

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Highway Patrol Police Rawalpindi Region has issued performance report for the last month and some 135 cases were registered against outlaws in miscellaneous cases. According to SSP Rawalpindi Region Sajid Kayani, a total 135 accused and 28 outlaws were arrested while 62 cases were registered against those who endangered the lives and property of the people by driving negligent and over-speeding, 43 against those who installed substandard and non-passing cylinder vehicles. 08 cases were registered against illegal and unlicensed firearms holders, 08 cases were registered against drugs dealers while 14 miscellaneous cases were registered. A total of 135 cases were registered against the violators. Patrolling Police Rawalpindi Region also arrested 28 fugitives and handed them over to the concerned police station. While 1308 traveling people were provided necessary assistance in time and 43 people were rushed to the hospital in various accidents by giving first aid on time. Punjab Highway Patrol Rawalpindi Region has always been striving to serve the people and protect their lives and property. — APP

Travel restrictions most effective way to control Covid

ISLAMABAD: International travel restrictions may only be effective at controlling the spread of Covid-19 when applied in a targeted way, according to research published in The Lancet Public Health journal. The new study also suggests that travel restrictions can be effective in countries close to a tipping point for exponential growth but not in those where it is already spreading rapidly among the population, Medical Daily reported. "We recognise that these measures carry a high economic and social cost, so it's important that governments use travel restrictions in a targeted way," said from Mark Jit from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the UK. "Before introducing restrictions, they should take into account local infection figures, epidemic growth rates, and the volume of travellers arriving from countries heavily-affected by the virus," Jit added. The authors used detailed flight data to compare the number of expected Covid-19 cases arriving from international flights (assuming no travel restrictions) with the number of infections arising from transmission within individual countries. They produced estimates of international travellers in May and September 2020 based on two scenarios. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Visitors admire art work displayed on the occasion of an exhibition. — DNA

COVID vaccine drive needs antidote to conspiracy theories

"Given the history of vaccine resistance this is an alarming number and not just for Pakistan but also for world, which depends on universal vaccine coverage to control spread," Bilal Gilani, the pollster s executive director, said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Helping to lead a mass trial for a Chinese-made COVID-19 vaccine in Pakistan, a country where anti-vax sentiment can turn lethal and conspiracy theories are endemic, Dr. Mohsin Ali has heard all kind of questions from anxious, prospective volunteers. "Is this going to take away my reproductive ability? Is this going to kill me? Is there any 5G chip in this? And, is there a conspiracy to control people en masse?" he said, recounting the sometimes bizarre doubts clouding people's minds. "I get many questions like this," he told Reuters at Islamabad's Shifa International Hospital, before adding "I try to answer them with logic and on the level of the individual asking them.

Some still refuse."

The hospital is one of a number in Pakistan where phase III trials are underway for Chinese vaccine developer CanSino Biologics Ad5-nCoV candidate. The government last week announced it had begun the vaccine procurement process, though it has not said whether it will purchase CanSino's candidate or an alternative. Worryingly, a Gallup Pakistan poll conducted last month showed 37% of Pakistanis would not get a vaccine once one became available. "Given the history of vaccine resistance this is an alarming number and not just for Pakistan but also for world, which depends on universal vaccine coverage to control spread," Bilal Gilani, the pollster s executive director, said. Countering anti-vax sentiments

is a worldwide problem, but in Pakistan it is more dangerous than almost anywhere else. Dozens of people have been killed in attacks on polio vaccination teams over the years, and the fear and mistrust that spawns such violence has made Pakistan one of two countries, including neighbouring Afghanistan, where the crippling disease has still to be eradicated. Several times every year, polio vaccination drives aim to inoculate millions of children, but in some areas they are often met with refusals from parents who believe conspiracy theories about the vaccine. In more volatile parts of the country, militancy played a role in attacks on polio immunization teams, notably after a doctor was accused of running a fake vaccination campaign to help the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency

track down Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011. Yet the dangers of polio have been well known for decades, whereas COVID-19 is a new disease, and authorities have struggled to communicate the urgent need to stamp it out. "Many people still don't believe it is a real disease," said Tauqeer Hussain Mallhi, an Assistant Professor at Al-Jawf University, in Sakakah, Saudi Arabia, who studies vaccine effectiveness in Pakistan. A national lockdown was quickly abandoned a few weeks into the virus spread as too many of Pakistan's more than 207 million people were economically vulnerable, and social distancing remained difficult as the public continued to gather in markets and mosques. Infection numbers have continued their morbid ascent with

2,885 new cases and 89 deaths reported on Monday - taking the total infections to over 423,000 and fatalities close to 8,500. Experts say Pakistan is only doing a fraction of the testing it should be doing. Cleric Qibla Ayaz, the head of the Council of Islamic Ideology, which advises the government on social and legal issues, said many of the conspiracy theories about COVID-19 are coming from Western countries, spread by social media. "For now the majority of scholars have said the vaccine and other treatments are important... but there are always extremists as there are with polio," Ayaz told Reuters. "Given the kind of Westphobia we have in Pakistan, it might be better to obtain a vaccine from Russia or China, instead of the U.S. or UK.

Federal capital records 245 fresh corona cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the federal capital as 245 new corona cases were reported from the city during the last 24 hours, National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said on Tuesday. According to an official of NCOC, as many as 402 cases were reported on Monday while 422 cases were reported on Sunday. He said so far 33,061 cases were reported from the federal capital while 341 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added 26,603 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of

Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. They also started taking actions on violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related with the corona while visiting marriage halls, markets and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration also sealed schools, shops, workshop and restaurants on violation of SOPs. The inspection teams also issued notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops. Commenting on the situation, an official of Ministry of National Health Services said that several local level administrative decisions were made to control the disease.

'Ending gender-based violence crucial for peaceful society'

Religious scholars discussed the issue of GBV in detail and jointly signed a declaration condemning gender-based violence and pledging to play their role in sensitizing communities in order to prevent and eliminate GBV

ISLAMABAD: Religious leaders and scholars from different faith groups on Tuesday emphasized upon ending all forms of violence against women and girls terming it critical to building a peaceful society and maintaining and promoting interfaith harmony. They were invited for a dialogue by UN Women, Provincial Office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and EAW Alliance KP as part of commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV) said a press release issued here. A global campaign that runs from November 25—International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

— to 10 December, the International Human Rights Day. The event was attended by religious scholars, members of EAW Alliance, UN officials and civil society. Religious scholars discussed the issue of GBV in detail and jointly signed a declaration condemning gender-based violence and pledging to play their role in sensitizing communities in order to prevent and eliminate GBV. They observed that, women, being the most vulnerable segment of the society and deprived of their basic rights, were more prone to violence followed by transgender community. "There is a need to strengthen state-run social protection networks and ensure the pro-

vision of required support to the vulnerable groups," the scholars underlined. "For prevention of gender-based violence, the State has primary responsibility to protect its citizens and religious leaders have a strong potential to influence the lives and behaviour of those who follow their faith and share their beliefs," stressed the participating scholars. Zainab Qaisar Khan, Provincial Head UN Women KP, said that like other parts of the world, GBV was also rampant in Pakistani society. "It can happen anywhere, anytime and across all classes irrespective of education level and income status. It can happen against boys, men,

elderly and transgender but mostly the target are women and girls," she remarked, while adding that GBV included, but was not limited to, domestic abuse, sexual violence including rape and honour crimes. Qamar Naseem, Co-Chair EAW/G Alliance, threw some light on the role of religious leaders, while stating that religious leaders had great influence and could play a significant role in shaping the behaviours of local communities. He said, "It is essential to engage religious scholars from different faith groups, as a practical strategy, to raise awareness on gender-based violence and address the issue." — APP

Three drug smugglers held

ISLAMABAD: Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) of Islamabad Police has arrested three drug smugglers and recovered a total of 24 Kilograms hashish and 1060 gram Ice from their possession, a police spokesman said. According to details, a team headed by DSP Hakim Khan nabbed three drug smugglers during checking in different areas and recovered a total of 24 kilogram hashish and 1060 gram Ice from their possession. They have been identified as Khuram Masih, Saleem and Ameer Rehman while further investigation was underway from them after registering cases. DIG (Operations) has appreciated this performance and directed all police officials to remain vigilant in their respective areas and ensure arrest of those involved in ugly business of drug pushing.

SC adjourns Daniel Pearl murder case

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday adjourned hearing of a case against acquittal of accused by the Sindh High Court (SHC) in American journalist Daniel Pearl murder case till Wednesday. A three-member special bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Mushir Alam and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Yahya Afridi, heard the appeals filed by the Sindh government and Pearl's parents challenging the acquittal of the previously convicted men by the Sindh High Court (SHC). The petitioners challenged the April 02 high court verdict that overturned the sentences of four convicts in the case. During the course of proceedings, Justice Sardar Tariq asked the prosecution to answer two questions related to the confession statement of the accused. He asked why did Fahad make the statement that he was making a statement to save himself? He asked what was the purpose of this statement? The accused was also saying that he was beaten, he added. Advocate Farooq H Naek, counsel for the Sindh government said that there were two separate statements of the accused. Justice Tariq asked the counsel why he was saying the statement before the judge was an extra-judicial statement. Farooq H Naek said that the media report was attached with the case and no one asked the accused any question as he gave verbal statement himself. He said that all the accused were in touch with each other from the meetings in the hotel.

Islamabad police trace 79 murder cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have traced a total of 79 murder cases during this year including 23 blind murders and arrested 204 culprits allegedly involved in these crimes. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed assigned special task to Homicide Unit, Zonal Superintendents of Police (SPs), SP (Investigation), heads of all police stations of Islamabad police to resolve murder cases and provide relief to the families of victims, a Police official said. There was no alternate to life, however, it was the responsibility of police to trace the killers of innocent people and provide justice to the bereaved families, he said. Following police efforts, 77 murder cases including 22 blind murders were traced and a total of 201 alleged killers were arrested after collecting forensic as well as other vital evidences. After arrests of the accused, challans were submitted and collected evidences were produced before the court, he informed. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan and DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed, also appreciated performance of police. They announced to award cash prizes and commendation certificates to those police officials who successfully investigated these murder cases.

ICCI for extending PM's construction package

He said that over 70 allied industries were associated with the construction sector and boom in construction activities would boost the business of allied industries besides creating plenty of new jobs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the real estate and construction sector has the potential to uplift the economy and put Pakistan on the path of sustainable economic growth, therefore, he urged that government should further extend PM's construction for another year that would attract maximum investment to Pakistan and bring a revolution in the construction industry. He said this while addressing as chief guest the inauguration ceremony of Asasa Real Estate and Builders launched by Ms. Attiya Liaqat CEO, the first female entrepreneurs who launched a real estate company in Gulberg Green, Islamabad. Ali Nawaz Awan MNA and SAPM on CDA Affairs, Sheikh Amir Waheed former President ICCI, Sardar Tahir Mehmood President Federation of Realtors,

Muhammad Naveed Malik former Senior Vice President ICCI, Najeer Malik President Gulberg Estate Agents Association, former MNA Dr. Azhar Jadoon, Ch. Na-deem ud Din Gujjar, Irfan Mew,

Rana Qaiser, Umair Khan, Malik Shaher Amir, Adeel Chaudhry, Rao Bilal Anwar and others were present at the occasion. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that housing demand was on the rise

in Pakistan due to rapidly increasing population as the country needed to build around 12 million houses per year to bridge the huge gap and added that extension in construction package for one more year would facilitate the construction of more houses across the country, especially for the low income segments of the society. He said that over 70 allied industries were associated with the construction sector and boom in construction activities would boost the business of allied industries besides creating plenty of new jobs. He said that the real estate and construction sector played key roles in the economic development of a country and the government should provide more incentives to this sector for achieving better economic growth and employment generation. He congratulated Ms. Attiya Liaqat, CEO, Asasa Estate and Builders for launching her career in real estate and wished her great success. He stressed that the government should make more conducive policies for economic empowerment of women so that they could play a more effective role in the economic development of the country.



Heightening tensions

EVEN those with the rudimentary knowledge of subcontinental history are aware of the tensions that have existed between Pakistan and India since 1947. The issue of Kashmir lies at the centre of these tensions, and has resulted in two major wars, fought in 1948 and 1965 and a more minor skirmish in 1999. In 2003, a ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control was reached. This marked a period of some peace. But since then, there has been a gradual return to violence, creating fears around the world that South Asia could become a nuclear flashpoint with both Pakistan and India possessing a sizable arsenal of nuclear weapons. The situation has worsened since the election of the BJP government, led by right-wing hardliner Narendra Modi in 2014, with repeated fighting over the Line of Control, and continued belligerence by India. The situation reached its worst after the Pulwama attack in February 2019, which was followed by aircraft incursion by India into Pakistan. The revocation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution in August last year – ending independent status for Jammu and Kashmir – added to tensions and led to even more Indian violence against Kashmiris. Since then, we have seen no improvement in relations between Pakistan and India. Pakistan has now put forward a dossier of papers and presented it to the UN stating that it shows irrefutable evidence of Indian-sponsored terrorism in Pakistan. Pakistan holds that the evidence points to the involvement of Indian consulates and embassies located in neighbouring countries playing a role in running terrorism operations in Pakistan with the support of local elements. In turn, India has accused Pakistan of sending in freedom fighters from foreign countries such as Syria into Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan has dismissed the charges as baseless with a Foreign Office spokesperson stating that there is no truth behind them at all. Let us not forget that till now Pakistan has been disappointed over the lack of international response to its complaints about Indian intervention inside Pakistani territory, with constant urging to 'show proof'. Now that it has provided a dossier, there is expectation that something will be done about this. At the same time, it is essential for the two countries to sit down and talk. A failure to do so could lead to further crisis and a more disturbing situation for the entire region.

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Adjusting to digital life

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

THE world has been using the Internet for well over two decades and applications on smartphones for over a decade. Their importance and usability were greatly admired when lockdowns were imposed in March across the world's cities in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. These digital applications used on laptops, desktops, and cell phones have aided us in completing our daily tasks with ease. Whether it is typing a document and checking errors in it, connecting through video calls, purchasing products, ordering food, booking a ride, or conducting classes for that matter. Such applications have enabled us to continue with our life's activities despite being under a lockdown. Millennials were the most attuned to using such applications and they adapted to this change without any hassle. They had been connecting with friends and classmates over such applications and social media tools and had an idea of how to use them when they went into isolation. The problem, however, was for the adults and senior citizens to adapt to using such technologies. Although many adults already had a smartphone, they were not properly utilizing its features as compared to the younger generation. They had to learn the basic concepts of using digital media applications. Such was the case with senior employees who had to participate in virtual meetings or faculty members who had to take online classes. The need of the hour was and will be to keep learning, unlearning, and relearning how to use digital media technology for effective results. With the Covid-19's second wave upon us and most of the offices and all of the educational institutes working online, we must keep updating our knowledge by knowing more about the latest digital media technologies and how to incorporate them in our lives.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day

Justice (R) Ali Nawaz Chowhan



The Supreme Court had observed that the "Jirgas" and "Panchayat" was in violation of the constitution, but these continue to function. The process of induction of Judges for the special courts also needs a review as we hear of allegation of misconduct against some. Once special judges are inducted they are out of sight of the High Court. The quality of the judgment of some of the special courts is questionable

HUMAN Rights Day is annually celebrated on 10th December every year. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, as the main United Nations official and his office plays a major role in coordinating efforts for the yearly observation of Human Rights. Every year a theme is given the latest being "Stand up for the Human Rights". In its proclamation on 10th December 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), The General Assembly enunciated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

We are celebrating this day for the second year without the National Commission for the Human Rights. A functional body which has been made dysfunctional. Perhaps with a design. And we now see manipulations for the inductions of new incumbent of choice. On this day as we stand up for the Human Rights we have to think of those who are placed below the poverty line in Pakistan and elsewhere. COVID-19 has added to their miseries. One of the main purposes for the creation of Pakistan and reflected in the letters of Allama Iqbal to Quaid was to remove poverty among the Muslims. In this context we have as yet to decrease our population living below the poverty line. The mother of all evils. The main minorities' communities in Pakistan complain of forced conversions in Punjab and Sindh. On the global gender gap index, Pakistan was ranked 151 out of 153 by the World Economic Forum. At least 2846 cases of child abuse were documented, this includes Gang Rapes. About 162 mine related deaths took place last year. There is no evidence of progress in implementation of safety and health standards in the mine sector. The countries expenditure on health is still less than 1% of its GDP against the required standard of 6%. The journalists complain about curbs on freedom of opinion and expression besides, harass-

ment. There was an excessive and arbitrary use of Exact Control List. The Supreme Court of Pakistan was unhappy on the performance of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The senate of Pakistan has already moved a privilege motion against NAB. The Dawn editorial on NAB performance dated 1st December is a charge sheet against NAB. There is also spike in the Cyber Crime and Online Harassment across Pakistan. Prisons in Pakistan remain over crowded with occupancy rate of 134%. In Punjab about 187 prisoners on death row suffer from mental illness, seventeen people are convicted of Blasphemy. This includes Junaid Hafeez of Bahauddin Zakariya University. There are about 10,000 Pakistanis incarcerated in overseas Prisons. The Supreme Court had observed that the "Jirgas" and "Panchayat" was in violation of the constitution, but these continue to function. The process of induction of Judges for the special courts also needs a review as we hear of allegation of misconduct against some. Once special judges are inducted they are out of sight of the High Court. The quality of the judgment of some of the special courts is questionable. I wonder why we can't have a unique Court system in the interest of Justice. There is decadence in respect of Criminal Justice. It has been reported that the Supreme Court overturned the death penalty in large no of judgments between 2010-2018. The Supreme Court is burdened with more and more cases because of defective investigations, poor judgments of the courts below including service tribunals. The whole process before the plenary courts takes years to conclude. This is impairing confidence in the judicial system as people are taking Law into their own hands. A report on pending cases in Punjab subordinate judiciary counts these at number 1,12,000. While in the Lahore High Court these were 1,65,000 cases. In case of Peshawar, over 1,97,000 cases were pending with the District Judiciary. 40,700 cases were pending before Peshawar High Court. In case of Baluchistan, over 4,800 cases were pending before the High Court and about 13,000 cases were pending before District Judiciary. The Islamabad High Court had about 16,000 cases pending. In case of Sindh, There were 83,920 cases pending in the High Court and 1,78,000 cases pending before the District Judiciary. Justice

delayed is Justice denied. Delayed justice is a denial of fundamental Human Rights guaranteed by the constitution and thus violation of basic Human Rights. Therefore there is a need for streamlining the system and case management. The Judicial Academies are best places for training of Judges in this context. The UN Human Rights committee was not satisfied with the report on the covenant of Civil and Political Rights, specifically in the context of extra judicial killing, enforced disappearances and the use of the death penalty. I'm of the view that we put a moratorium on death penalty until we are able to streamline our criminal justice system. There has also been increase in women trafficking, over 600 women were trafficked as brides to a neighboring country.

The child protection laws are still to be implemented in areas of Domestic labor and Child Marriage. Violence against Transgender community continues unabated, same is the case with Ahmadiyya community as we hear of murders in KPK and Punjab. A large number of people were found HIV-Positive, about 80% were below the age of 15 Years. So there is no protection. According to the world Air Quality Report for 2019, Pakistan is ranked amongst the worlds most polluted countries. There is acute water shortage problems in Karachi. The cases of hate speech continue to rise. The NGO's also suffered the indiscriminate brunt. There is a need for improving our performance in the 28 Human Rights treaties. These are being implemented by the Treaty Cell headed by the Attorney General because of the inability and lack of capacity of the Ministry of Human Rights to handle treaty matters. It is hoped that the Human Rights violations now rampant will be systematically checked through advocacy, awareness and adjudication of now many hundred cases pending before the National Commission as it is dysfunctional. This is a pure judicial function. How can we protect fundamental rights and Human Rights without a robust and dynamic judicial system?

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The future of Saudi-US ties in the Biden era

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami



At the Saudi domestic level, Riyadh has introduced significant reforms at all levels over the past five years and many of the allegations that the Democrats hurled at Riyadh are now redundant. Historically, the US Democrats and the left have focused on specific issues like human rights

SAUDI Arabia and the US have shared a long strategic alliance, ever since President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with the founder of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, King Abdul Aziz, in 1945. Saudi-US relations have continued to evolve in a way that serves the interests of both countries. Although ties have sometimes cooled and experienced tensions, as is always the case with political relations between countries, the relationship between the two has not fundamentally changed. It has pivoted on strong strategic cooperation in the region and the world. Some analysts, however, are expecting a potentially significant shift in Saudi-US relations during the term of President-elect Joe Biden. According to their viewpoint, relations between Washington and Riyadh will deteriorate, perhaps surpassing the decline in relations witnessed during the term of former President Barack Obama. This is because Biden worked in the Obama administration and contributed to its foreign policy positions at the time. This is in addition to his close relationship with Obama, who played a big role in urging US voters to vote for Biden, and the president-elect's decision to appoint a handful of prominent Obama-era officials to his administration.

While this viewpoint has gained traction in media circles, one can boldly and definitively say that Saudi-US relations will not, during the Biden administration, achieve the same highs as witnessed during Donald Trump's term. This is for several reasons. Saudi Arabia was President Trump's first foreign destination after taking office and, on his watch, Saudi-US relations witnessed great harmony in terms of several economic, security, political and geopolitical issues. This level of harmony may be described as exceptional, even in the framework of the strong relations that exist between the two countries. Nevertheless, if we take a wider and more comprehensive view of the history of relations and common interests between Riyadh and Washington, over more than seven decades, we will find that the Biden administration is unlikely to be

an exceptional case. This is because Saudi Arabia is neither a banana republic nor a marginal state. Rather, it has great global economic and political weight. It is also the most prominent exporter of energy and the holder of the largest oil reserves in the world, while the spiritual status of the Kingdom, with it embracing the Two Holy Mosques, gives it a hefty and unique position. In addition, Riyadh is a distinguished international partner in combating terrorism, countering it intellectually and stifling it financially, and is the largest contributor to the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism. Furthermore, Washington recognizes the influence of Saudi Arabia on global energy prices. A recent and good example in relation to this is the letter written by US shale oil companies to Trump asking him to discuss with Saudi officials the possibility of raising energy prices to a level that serves the interests of both countries. The fact that the cost of extracting shale oil is double that of conventional oil illustrates the importance of Saudi Arabia to the US domestic economy. Besides, Middle Eastern experts who witnessed the significant developments in the region that took place during the Obama administration – including the so-called Arab Spring protests, the support provided to political Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and the developments in Arab-Israeli relations – know that it will be almost impossible to turn back the clock. In fact, many controversial issues and topics from that period have become much clearer to the Arab public, particularly Saudi society. At the Saudi domestic level, Riyadh has introduced significant reforms at all levels over the past five years and many of the allegations that the Democrats hurled at Riyadh are now redundant. Historically, the US Democrats and the left have focused on specific issues like human rights. They have also pushed for regional negotiations and political settlements without offering firm solutions to regional problems. Rather, they have primarily wanted to leave a legacy. This is a mistake that the Oba-

ma administration made and hopefully the next US administration will learn from in order to refrain from pushing the region into further conflict. In brief, Riyadh has sufficient capacity to defend its national interests and build good relations with the incoming US administration, as has always been the case with previous US administrations, while enjoying privileged relations with other international actors, such as China, Russia and the EU. Biden's four-year term will not lead to a big shift in the long-standing Saudi-US relations. Rather, the Biden administration is expected to be busy with domestic issues, the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, and rebuilding Washington's strained relations with Europe. In relation to Iran, the Biden administration might seek a new nuclear agreement. However, this agreement will be preceded by consultations with Washington's Gulf allies, particularly Saudi Arabia, as Biden's position on Iran's hostile behavior and missile program is in line with Saudi Arabia's. In addition, Biden is expected to be tougher on Turkey in relation to Recep Tayyip Erdogan's projects on both the European and Libyan fronts. This is also in line with Saudi Arabia's position. Contrary to reports in the media, I do not rule out positive developments in Saudi-US relations and the signing of major deals between the two allies. Lastly, we must keep in mind that the statements made during election campaigns should not be taken too seriously, as they are primarily projected to persuade voters. The comparison of Trump's statements against Saudi Arabia during his election campaign with his positions after his arrival in the White House provides a telling example. In fact, this sort of rhetoric is a regular feature of every election campaign. Perhaps former Saudi Ambassador to the US Prince Bandar bin Sultan's description of the election campaign period as "silly season" is apt in this regard.

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Briefs

NZ Health officials clear Pakistan squad

SPORTS DESK

CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand public health officials have cleared almost the entire Pakistan cricket squad to leave their managed isolation facilities later on Tuesday. New Zealand Cricket had said on Monday that the squad, which has been tested for COVID-19 five times since arriving two weeks ago, was scheduled to leave isolation on Tuesday pending final approval from local health officials.

"After extensive testing and completion of their time in managed isolation in Christchurch, the Canterbury DHB medical officer of health is satisfied these people pose a very low risk to the community," the Health Ministry said in a statement. One unidentified member of the 53-strong squad, however, would stay in the facility after he tested positive on day six of their mandatory 14-day isolation. One member of the squad also repeatedly tested negative in isolation but had been in quarantine in Auckland after showing signs of infection when they arrived. Six tested positive for COVID-19 upon arrival while four others were identified as positive during their isolation, although those cases were considered "historical", the Ministry said. The squad are scheduled to fly to Queenstown later on Tuesday for an intra-squad game before the first of three T20 matches on December 18. The team will then play a two-test series from December 26.

Australia wins to stop India series sweep

SYDNEY: Australia held on for a thrilling 12-run victory in a dead-rubber final T20-international against India Tuesday despite an imperious knock of 85 from Virat Kohli. Once the Indian skipper was out 11 balls from the finish, his team's hopes diminished and they failed to sweep the series after wins in the opening two games. Matthew Wade hit his highest T20 score of 80, while an eventful Glenn Maxwell half-century lifted Australia to 186 for five after India won the toss. India were 174 for seven in reply. Maxwell survived two reviews, was caught off a no-ball, and had a six prevented by the athletic Sanju Samson fielding over the rope before finishing with 54 off 36 balls.

S. Korea inks deal to vaccinate 44M people

SEOUL: South Korea has secured early access of COVID-19 vaccines developed by four pharmaceutical companies and from a global vaccine project for 44 million people, the health ministry said Tuesday. The Ministry of Health and Welfare said it has pre-ordered 64 million doses of vaccines by four drugmakers - AstraZeneca Inc., Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson's Janssen and Moderna - for 34 million people.

The World Health Organization's global vaccine project, known as COVAX, will supply the vaccine of AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Sanofi for 10 million people. The government will each purchase 20 million doses from AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Moderna, which requires two shots, and buy 4 million doses from Johnson & Johnson's Janssen, which requires one shot. The ministry said it has already signed a deal with AstraZeneca and will ink contracts with three other companies later this month, adding it has set aside 1.3 trillion won (US\$1.2 billion) of its budget for the vaccine purchase. The pre-ordered vaccines, enough to cover 88 percent of the nation's population, will be shipped as early as February, but the ministry said it has not yet decided when to kickstart the vaccination program. "As developments of vaccines are not yet completed, and there are still concerns over their safety and efficacy, we will flexibly decide the vaccination schedule considering various factors," Health Minister Park Neung-hoo said in a briefing. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ali Alizada, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan has met with Nabeel Munir, Additional Secretary UN & EC of MOFA of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. - DNA

'Long way apart' from EU on Brexit talk, says Johnson

"It is looking very difficult at the moment. We will do our level best. I would say to everybody there are great options ahead for our country."

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Tuesday that Britain and the European Union remain far apart, as he prepares to head to Brussels to try to salvage a post-Brexit trade deal. "I am always hopeful, but I have to be honest with you, the situation at the moment is tricky," he said, touring a hospital in London for Britain's historic rollout of a coronavirus vaccine. "Our friends have to understand the UK has left the EU to exercise democratic control. We are a long way apart still," he added, ahead of face-to-face talks with EU commission chief Ursula von der Leyen lat-

er this week. "It is looking very difficult at the moment. We will do our level best. I would say to everybody there are great options ahead for our country." Asked if he would try to do a deal right up until the wire, Johnson said: "Yeah, of course." "We're always hopeful but you know there may come a moment when we have to acknowledge that it's time to draw stumps and that's just the way it is," said Johnson, referring to a cricketing term for the end of play. "We will prosper mightily under any version and if we have to go for an Australian solution then that's fine too." After the negotiating teams' latest session in Brussels - and with just over three weeks until Britain leaves



the EU's single market on December 31 - Johnson held a phone call with von der Leyen late on Monday and secured an invitation to head over in person. "We agreed that the conditions for finalising an agreement are not there due to the remaining significant differences on three critical issues: level playing field, govern-

ance and fisheries," the pair said in a joint statement. "We asked our chief negotiators and their teams to prepare an overview of the remaining differences to be discussed in a physical meeting in Brussels in the coming days." It was not immediately clear whether Johnson's visit would be a separate event, or whether he might be slotted in before an EU summit on Thursday, with the 27 EU leaders meeting in person. The announcement of Johnson's trip came after a pessimistic day of talks, during which EU negotiator Michel Barnier told sceptical members of the European Parliament that Wednesday was the effective deadline for a solution ahead of the summit.

Barnier and UK counterpart David Frost were due to hold another session on Tuesday in Brussels, to review their progress and draw up a report for their leaders. "Both sides will undertake additional efforts to reach a deal," Germany's Europe minister Michael Roth said. "We want to reach a deal, but not at any price. What we need is political will in London. "Let me be very clear: our future relationship is based on trust and confidence. It is precisely this confidence which is at stake in our negotiations right now." In one olive branch, the UK government said it was ready to revoke clauses in Brexit legislation that have provoked legal action by the EU and undermined trust in London.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Senator Shibli Faraz briefs the media persons about the decisions taken in the Federal Cabinet Meeting. - DNA

Lukashenko slams olympic ban amid protests

MINSK: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Tuesday threatened to take the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to court for banning him from Olympic events over athlete discrimination. Olympic chiefs on Monday cracked down on the Belarus National Olympic Committee, headed by Lukashenko, for discriminating against its athletes for their political views. Since Lukashenko's controversial re-election to a sixth term in August Belarus has been in the throes of its worst political crisis in modern history, with protesters taking to the streets and authorities cracking down hard on the opposition. A number of prominent Belarusian athletes have supported Lukashenko's critics and demanded an end to

the crackdown. Speaking on Tuesday, Lukashenko threatened to sue IOC President Thomas Bach and other top officials. "We need to go to court. Let Bach and the gang explain what my fault is," Lukashenko said in remarks released by his office. "I haven't taken part in these events for 25 years and will survive in the future. But have you gathered all the countries and made a decision? Ok I will survive, but why are you involving children?" Lukashenko's son Viktor, 45, is the first vice-president of the NOC. In October, the IOC launched an investigation into claims by Belarusian athletes who said they were being discriminated by the country's authorities due to their political views. - APP

Mirziyoyev's greeting remark on the constitution Day

Today, relying on this enormous power, our people courageously overcome hard trials and selflessly work for the sake of building a new Uzbekistan - a free, comfortable and prosperous life in the country

DNA

TASHKENT: I sincerely congratulate you on a remarkable holiday - the 28th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and express my deep respect and the best of wishes. Unfortunately, this year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, we are not able to hold large-scale celebrations occasioned to the Constitution Day. Yet despite this, with all our hearts do we feel the joy and splendor of this holiday. It is marked with special enthusiasm in work teams, educational institutions and mahallas. Four years ago, relying on the provisions and principles of our Basic Law, we adopted the Actions Strategy and started delivering on extensive, accelerated democratic reforms. They have been built on the 7 amendments made to the Constitution, 5 codes and about 250 laws as the legal foundation. Over the past brief span of time,

our society, the mindset of people has radically changed in political, legal and socio-economic terms, and every one of our fellow countrymen and women makes a commendable input into the advancement of our nation. All this is indicative of the vitality and tremendous potential of our Basic Law. Today, relying on this enormous power, our people courageously overcome hard trials and selflessly work for the sake of building a new Uzbekistan - a free, comfortable and prosperous life in the country. Indisputably, these achievements, themselves an outcome of the extensive legal opportunities enshrined in our Constitution, make us all feel specially proud. On the basis of the constitutional norm "The people are the sole source of state power", an effective and sustainable system is being formed to ensure the supremacy of the Constitution and laws, whereby it is not the people who serve government bodies, but the latter serve the former. Amid the current



intricate times when the world has been changing rapidly, the system I have just mentioned, built on the norms of the Constitution, has fully justified itself in overcoming diverse trials and addressing new threats, the pandemic in particular, and in eliminating the consequences of natural and man-made disasters that took place earlier in the year in Bukhara and Syrdarya regions. We have been implementing systemic democratic reforms that are irreversible and designed to ensure the principles of power of the peo-

ple, social justice and humanism our Constitution is imbued with. First of all, our every effort is aimed to secure and realize every person's rights guaranteed by the Basic Law to receive qualified medical services and robust social protection. During the pandemic, priority is placed on protecting public health, helping out citizens who lost their jobs, and entrepreneurs. The established Anti-Crisis Fund has raised 10 trillion soums, which is directed at providing financial support for the healthcare system, social infrastructure, population and enterprises. During the passing year, more than 500 thousand entrepreneurs and over 8 million citizens have been provided with benefits in the amount of about 34 trillion soums, an additional 2.6 trillion soums were assigned to augment the size of social benefits, material assistance and boost employment. Within the framework of the Affordable Housing State Program, once the most pressing social prob-

lem, more than 13 thousand of our compatriots were granted keys to new apartments this year alone. In addition, a beautiful and modern town with multi-storey buildings and social infrastructure has been built for the families affected by the disaster at Sardoba reservoir. Imbursement of initial payments for housing for more than 1,000 women who find themselves in difficult life situations is also among the kind actions. In the course of spearheading proactive gender policy, accelerated work continues to improve the social and political status of women. All of this helps to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic and the resulting economic and social crisis, as well as to bolster the confidence of our citizens in the future. Extensive efforts are undertaken to ensure in practice the constitutional principle of justice. Thus, in order to reduce poverty, new effective mechanisms of social support are being introduced. In accordance with home visit studies conducted to enquire into the prob-

UN declares Dec. 27 int'l epidemic preparedness Day

DNA

WASHINGTON: The UN on Monday declared Dec. 27 as the "International Day of Epidemic Preparedness" as the coronavirus has taken over a million lives since emerging nearly a year ago.

The General Assembly proclaimed the day "to highlight the importance of the prevention of, preparedness for and partnerships against epidemics," said the UN in a statement. The adoption came days after hundreds of world leaders took part in a virtual special session of the international body in response to COVID-19. They demanded urgent action to guarantee equitable distribution of coronavirus vaccines during their addresses Thursday and Friday. Vietnam's UN Ambassador Dang Dinh Quy introduced the text, saying COVID 19 is not the first pandemic, nor will it be the last. "The pandemic caught us off guard, but it also has served as a wake up call for improving our preparedness," he said in the statement. Worldwide, the death toll from COVID-19 has surpassed 1.5 million since the virus was first detected in Wuhan, China in December last year. The number of infections totals more than 67.5 million and recoveries over 43 million, according to the latest figures from US-based Johns Hopkins University.

2,885 new cases reported in Pakistan

From Page 01

Operation Centre (NOC). No COVID affected person was on ventilator in Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) while 336 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in Pakistan, out of 1,765 allocated for COVID-19 patients. Some 33,610 tests were conducted across the country on Monday, including 12,442 in Sindh, 10,735 in Punjab, 4,159 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 5,019 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 403 in Balochistan, 504 in GB, and 348 in AJK. Around 370,451 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 86 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. Since the pandemic outbreak, a total of 423,179 cases were detected so far, including AJK 7,390, Balochistan 17,501, GB 4,746, ICT 33,061, KP 50,078, Punjab 124,191 and Sindh 186,212.

Japan begins space capsule analysis

TOKYO: Scientists in Japan on Tuesday began analysing a capsule sent back to Earth by a probe, hoping to find asteroid material that could offer clues on how the universe was formed.

Officials from Japan's space agency said they were jubilant about the successful return of the capsule, which landed in Australia on Sunday after separating from the Hayabusa-2 probe.

"I'm genuinely appreciative of the fact that the capsule came back, after a 5.24 billion-kilometre round-trip," project manager Yuichi Tsuda told reporters.

Scientists hope it will yield up to 0.1 grams of material collected from the asteroid Ryugu some 300 million kilometres from Earth - though they won't know for sure until they look inside. "I'm really looking forward to seeing (the samples) with my own eyes," Tsuda said. But that isn't expected to happen before at least next week, with a series of steps required first to ensure the material is not contaminated.

For now, the capsule is "in a secure location" at a space centre in Sagami, south of Tokyo, agency director general Hitoshi Kuninaka said. "Now we move to the matter-analysis phase," he said. The samples - collected last year - are hoped to include both surface dust and pristine material stirred up when Hayabusa-2 fired an "impactor" into Ryugu. Scientists hope they can shed light on how the formation of the universe unfolded, as well as on the origins of life on Earth. The space agency has begun carefully processing the capsule, beginning by collecting gas inside. It will be opened later under strict conditions, including a nitrogen-filled box for the capsule. - APP

Briefs

Pakistan Navy celebrates 62nd Gwadar Day

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy celebrated 62nd Gwadar Day with traditional fervour to mark the merger of Gwadar with Pakistan. The Day was celebrated every year whereas various activities were held at Gwadar under the auspices of Pakistan Navy and Commander Coast (COMCOAST), Vice Admiral Zahid Ilyas graced the occasion as Chief Guest, said a Pakistan Navy press release.

The Chief Guest while interacting with the notables, highlighted Pakistan Navy's commitment for the development of coastal region. He also underscored rigorous efforts of Pakistan Navy to ensure Maritime Security of Gwadar Port and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In the historical context, Gwadar was formally handed over to Pakistan in 1958 by Oman.

Initially, a Naval platoon led by the then Lieutenant Iftikhar Ahmed Sirohey of Pakistan Navy landed at Gwadar and unfurled Pakistan's flag.

The day was started by an impressive Flag Hoisting Ceremony held at PNS AKRAM, Gwadar.

Various activities were organized by Pakistan Navy including conduct of boat rally, Hovercraft maneuvers, demonstrations by Special Service Group (Navy) and Naval Aviation at the beach front.

The enthusiasm of the locals remained prodigious wherein large number of spectators enjoyed the events. Gwadar Day celebrations were aimed at rekindling the awareness about the history of Gwadar among the masses.

A large number of audience including Civil dignitaries, Military officials and local notables also witnessed the activities while observing COVID-19 precautions.

103 healthcare workers died of coronavirus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As many as 103 healthcare workers have lost their lives while battling the deadly outbreak of novel coronavirus in the country, Health Ministry reported Tuesday.

According to statistics provided released by the Health Ministry, so far 10,925 healthcare workers have contracted the COVID-19, including 6,791 doctors and 1,360 nurses and 2,774 staff of the hospitals.

Overall 10,038 healthcare workers have recovered their health from the virus while 666 are under isolation after testing positive for COVID-19.

As per the province-wise break, in Punjab, 1,600 doctors, 400 nurses and 638 healthcare staff contracted the coronavirus.

In KP, 1,260 doctors, 409 nurses and 1,153 health staff were diagnosed with the pandemic.

Similarly, 2,221 doctors, 407 nurses and 519 health staff tested COVID-19 positive, the report said.

Pak among top five with most investment in H1 of 2020: WB

The report had termed the current year's Private Participation in Infrastructure as unprecedented because of COVID-19 which has brought many sectors, including infrastructure, to a near standstill

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan for the first time has become one of the five countries in the world with the most investment in the first half-year of 2020, a World Bank report said.

"Pakistan had the fourth highest investment commitments—a new entrant to the top five countries this year—with US\$1.9 billion of investment commitments, accounting for 0.69 percent of GDP," the Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPI) 2020 Half Yearly Report said.

The report had termed the current year's Private Participation in Infrastructure as unprecedented

because of COVID-19 which has brought many sectors, including infrastructure, to a near standstill. Since the beginning of 2020, existing infrastructure projects were delayed or canceled due to supply chain disruptions, travel and shipping restrictions, and other obstacles. Total commitments in the first half of 2020 stood at US\$21.9 billion across 128 projects in 34 countries, a decline of 56 percent from the same period in 2019. COVID-19 has significantly decreased financial closures of investment projects across the globe, particularly in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region.

The report had termed the current year's Private Participation in Infrastructure as unprecedented

the world to reach financial closure in the first half-year of 2020. The coal power project was developed under the umbrella of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It is part of an effort by the Government of Pakistan to improve energy security and reduce the average cost of power generation by transitioning from oil to coal.

The report added that the South Asian Region (SAR) was the region with the second highest H1 2020 investment level (US\$4.9 billion), driven by Pakistan (US\$1.9 billion), India (US\$1.8 billion), and Bangladesh (US\$1.2 billion). In the past few years, China has been an active infrastructure sponsor, speeding up slow progress on major infrastructure projects in South Asia,

especially in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Nevertheless, investment levels saw a 33 percent dip from the first half-year of 2019 levels.

In the first half of 2020, the energy sector outpaced the transport sector, attracting US\$15.1 billion across 73 projects. This accounted for 69 percent of global PPI investments. The transport sector received US\$4.5 billion across 17 projects, accounting for 20 percent of investment commitments in the first half of 2020.

The water sector attracted US\$1.3 billion over 21 projects, and the municipal solid waste sector received US\$889 million across 17 projects. No information and communication technology (ICT) projects were recorded.

Renewable energy continued to play a significant role in new energy-generation projects. Of US\$9.3 billion worth of electricity-generation projects, 67 percent (US\$6.2 billion) of investments were in renewables. The most popular renewable technology in the first half of 2020 was solar, thanks to a strong renewable-energy program in Vietnam. Next most popular was onshore wind technology, mainly due to high investments in Brazil. Investment appeared to be largely debt driven, based on available financing information. Interestingly, institutional investors played a large role, with 28 percent of total investment coming from institutional sources, especially in a natural gas project in Mexico.

Court declares Nusrat as proclaimed offender

DNA

LAHORE: Accountability court on Tuesday has declared Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif's wife Nusrat Shahbaz as proclaimed offender in money laundering case.

During the hearing, the judge said the 30-day deadline that was given to Nusrat Shahbaz to appear before the court has expired. Accused have to present arguments on the testimonies of National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) witnesses by themselves now, the judge remarked.

On the occasion, Shehbaz Sharif said that he was selected as Punjab Chief Minister three times to work for the prosperity of the province.



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Maldives Farzana Zahir in a meeting with Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizade at the Azerbaijan embassy. – DNA

Pak, China trade increases over US \$ 3570 mln

ISLAMABAD: China topped the list of countries from where Pakistan imported different products during the first four months of the current financial year (2020-21), followed by United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Singapore. The total imports from China during July-October (2020-21) were recorded at US \$ 3570.360 million against the US \$ 3145.098 million during July-October (2019-21), showing an increase of 13.52 percent during the period, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by UAE, where from Pakistan imported goods worth US \$ 2188.122 million against the imports of US \$ 2468.414 million last year, showing negative growth of 11.35 percent. Singapore was the at third top country from where Pakistan imported products worth US \$ 871.086 million against the imports of US \$ 727.840 million last year, showing growth of 19.74 percent, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani imports from Saudi Arabia stood at US \$ 634.207 million against US \$ 505.339 million during last year, showing growth of 25.50 percent while the imports from United State of America (USA) were recorded at US \$ 573.501 million against US \$ 523.520 million last year, showing increase of 9.54 percent, the data revealed. The imports from Kuwait were recorded at US \$ 376.881 million against US \$ 365.169 million where as the imports from South Korea were recorded at US \$ 338.495 million against US \$ 235.196 million last year. – DNA

CPEC can support Pak livestock sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can support Pakistan's livestock sector to mitigate poverty, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday.

The CPEC's road network is about three thousand kilometers long, and in some areas along the route, a lot of potential exists to develop the livestock sector and to establish farming busi-

ness, the report said quoting Hafiz Wasi Muhammad Khan, executive member of the Pakistan Agriculture Scientist Forum and renowned agriculture expert in Pakistan.

In an interview to Gwadar Pro, wasi spoke about the importance of creating a new regional economy along CPEC's route as an effort to address issues of poverty and underdevelopment. He also suggested that China may consider providing

machinery and technology to build those areas, particularly for livestock development. This will create a positive image for CPEC and help create an economic cycle that can be good for both China and Pakistan. The beneficiaries of this project will be the underprivileged people who will be gainfully employed through economic activities generated by CPEC. It will also lead to the reduction of poverty in those regions," he contended.

'Lahore gave verdict against government'

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said Lahore gave its verdict against the incumbent government even before December 13. The PML-N spokesperson talked to media and said the entire city was on streets on Monday and the government must have understood that it cannot stop the masses.

The entire country will give a message to the incumbent regime to go home on December 13, she stressed. Marriyum Aurangzeb said the 'rented spokespersons' could not sleep since Monday. There are no differences among PDM and the opponents are spreading false rumors, she said. It is pertinent here to mention that PDM is scheduled to host a public gathering in the provincial capital of Punjab on December 13 at Minare-Pakistan.

Peshawar gynaecologist dies

PESHAWAR: A doctor hailing from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa died of COVID-19 in Islamabad Tuesday night, bringing the number of doctors' death in the province to 27. The Provincial Doctors Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa confirmed the news. The deceased, Dr Aliya Sarfaraz, was the former head of the gynaecology department at the Haripur DHQ Hospital. She had been undergoing treatment for the virus at a private hospital in Islamabad. – DNA

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