



# Islamabad POST

Friday, December 11, 2020

**Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily**

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**Sowar Hussain inflicted heavy losses to the enemy**

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**Bill Gates lauds Pakistan's Covid strategy**

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**CPEC a flagship project of Pak, China: Envoy**

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## Briefs

### India banks on fake news: President

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Thursday said that running its anti-Pakistan propaganda set ups through front companies, India banked on fake news for the real new being bad. Commenting on investigation and an extensive report by EU DisinfoLab exposing fake media outlets running anti-Pakistan campaign, the president said the vast pro-India, anti-Pakistan, fake news and disinformation set up existed since 2005. It had grown vast with 750 media outlets despite exposure last year. According to the report, a dead professor and numerous defunct organisations were resurrected and used alongside at least 750 fake media outlets.

### Punjab govt. responsible of arrests

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb said the party workers are being arrested and Prime Minister Imran Khan along with the Punjab government will be responsible if the activists retaliate. Marriyum Aurangzeb spoke to media and said Imran Khan used to claim that he will provide container to the opposition to stage protest and the government issues statements on daily basis of not stopping the rally but workers are being detained despite that. The government cannot stop the masses and it has already lost the psychological and democratic battle.

### Siraj ul Haq calls for patience

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Senator Sirajul Haq has said the politicians have to adopt serious attitude to bring the country out of prevailing crises. Addressing a meeting of central leadership at Mansoor on Thursday, he said the nation was being deceived for years in the name of change and on other slogans but now the people were not ready to listen to the hollow claims of the political parties.



ISLAMABAD: Afghan ambassador Najibullah Alikhel called on Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. – DNA

## PM appeals PDM to postpone rallies

He made it clear that the opposition's public gatherings would make no difference for the govt

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Thursday appealed the opposition parties to postpone their public gatherings for sake of people's lives as COVID-19 patients had already occupied 40 percent of country's hospitals. "In Multan, 64 percent of hospitals' beds are full, 40 percent in Peshawar, 50 percent in Islamabad. At an average, 40 percent of country's hospitals are under occupancy," the prime minister said in a briefing after chairing the meeting of National Coordination Committee on COVID-19 here. He made it clear that the opposition's public gatherings would make no difference for the government rather it was tantamount to playing with people's lives.

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### Shibli Faraz slams blackmailing tactics

RANA FARRUKH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Shibli Faraz has said the opposition parties will get nothing from their blackmailing tactics except embarrassment. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad, he said the stance of the opposition parties is also changing on resignations from the parliament and assemblies. He said this shows they have no consensus and strategy. He said the opposition parties have taken themselves to the blind alley in their lust for power and to save themselves from accountability. The Information Minister said the public gatherings of the opposition also demonstrate their indifference to the health and lives of the people. Shibli Faraz said the opposition parties are hatching conspiracies against the democracy by declaring they will not allow the Senate elections. He said they want to come to power to once again plunder the country. He said the people are fully cognizant of their past and they will not allow them repeat the dark period when the country was put in the debt trap and the institutions were paralyzed. The Information Minister said our politics is based on moral values and the PTI government will not make any compromise on its stance against corruption. He said no NRO will be given to the corrupt leaders.

## CPEC the flagship project of Pak, China

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: SAPM on National Security, Dr. Moeed Yusuf has said that CPEC is a flagship project of Pakistan and China. This was said by him while meeting China's Ambassador to Pakistan NongRong on Thursday in his office. Both dignitaries discussed matters related to China Pakistan relationship. Speaking during the meeting, the SAPM said that the cordial relations between the two countries are setting a path of economic progress in the region. China and Pakistan are united at all fronts and both countries are working



jointly for regional development. The SAPM discussed the Indian dossier. He added that India is trying to sabotage CPEC. But together Pakistan and China are ensuring that Indian attempts will fail. Dr. Moeed Yusuf said that

Continued on Page 06

### Afghan peace vital, says FM

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that Afghanistan and Pakistan had deep-rooted historic ties based on common religion, geography and culture. He said this during a meeting with Ambassador of Afghanistan Najibullah Alikhil who paid a courtesy call on. Referring to the Prime Minister's landmark visit to Afghanistan, the Foreign Minister remarked that the visit built on the sustained engagements witnessed in the recent months between the two countries. The Shared Vision document issued during the Prime Minister's visit had laid down the framework for a forward-looking comprehensive bilateral partnership. The Foreign Minister expressed satisfaction on his meeting with Foreign Minister Haneef Atmar on the sidelines of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) Session in Niamey and underlined the importance of effective follow-up.

### 0.98m Pakistanis sent abroad for jobs

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis, Syed Zulfikar Bukhari has said that the government has sent record breaking 0.98 million Pakistanis to get jobs in foreign countries. Talking to a private news channel, he said these Pakistanis were sent abroad during its first 18 months of the incumbent government. Replying to a question, he said the government will use all legal options for bringing Nawaz Sharif back to the country.

## Vaccine to be available in March

The Special Assistant for Health said that the vaccination campaign would be carried out in three phases

NEWS DESK / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ministry of National Health Services has announced that Coronavirus Vaccine will be available in March 2021 in Pakistan. In this regard, Special Assistant for Health Dr. Faisal Sultan while talking to 'Dunya News' said that the government has finalized the procedure to prevent coronavirus and to buy vaccine. Dr. Faisal Sultan said that under the vaccination plan, vaccine will be available in Pakistan in March 2021. He said we are in touch not just one or two countries but with different countries. He said that government is in touch with all the major vaccine makers. It was very important to allocate money to buy vaccines. SAPM said that in order to buy vaccine, we will see which the most beneficial vaccine is. Some aspects of vaccine procurement are a bit difficult to decide. The committee will make a final decision on the purchase of the vaccine after considering the views of experts.

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### Bill Gates lauds Pakistan's strategy

ISLAMABAD: Bill Gates acknowledged Pakistan's efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic while stimulating economic growth. Prime Minister Imran Khan has also underscored the government's commitment to combat the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic through coordinated efforts and smart lockdowns. He expressed this resolve during his telephonic conversation with Bill Gates, the co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The two sides exchanged views on the COVID-19 situation and polio eradication efforts in Pakistan. The Prime Minister shared Pakistan's policy to control and mitigate the deleterious impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on health and economy. He acknowledged the Gates Foundation's continued support of the Ehsaas Programme, which would help

Continued on Page 06

## Fehmida hails Chinese help

Dr Fehmida warmly welcomed the Chinese ambassador and exchanged views on various matters



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is planning to host next South Asian Games next year and IPC Ministry is looking forward to inviting Chinese Sports experts to ameliorate the sports facilities in the Pakistan Sports Complex before the start of the Games.

This was stated by Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination, Dr. Fehmida Mirza in a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, NongRong on Thursday at IPC Ministry in Islamabad. Dr. Fehmida Mirza warmly welcomed

the Chinese ambassador and exchanged views on matters pertaining to co-operation in Sports, tourism and some other affairs of mutual interests. Dr. Fehmida Mirza said the importance of Pak-China relationship cannot be overemphasized. Both are all-weather friends and our friendship has stood all the tests of time. Dr. Fehmida Mirza said to the ambassador that "your presence in Pakistan will give further impetus to the CPEC projects." While highlighting the importance of sports in public policy and

Continued on Page 06

### COAS pays tribute to Sowar Shaheed

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: The brave son of the soil and martyr of 1971 War Sowar Muhammad Hussain Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, was paid homage on Thursday and wreath laying ceremony was held at the monument of Shaheed. The wreath was laid on behalf of Chief of Army staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release. The ceremony was attended by relatives of Shaheed. Earlier, ISPR Director General Major General Babar Iftikhar in a tweet paid tribute to Sowar Muhammad Hussain Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, for his supreme sacrifice in Zafarwal-Shakargah Sector, 1971. The ISPR director general said; "His fearless actions and indomitable courage inflicted heavy losses to the enemy and single handedly destroyed 16 Indian Tanks." The tweet was followed by the hash tag # Our Martyrs Our Heroes

### FO slams Indian falsehood



SAIFULLAH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office has urged India to eschew the use of false propaganda against Pakistan. At his weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez strongly condemned India's reprehensible tactics against Pakistan that have once again been exposed in its latest report by the EU DisinfoLab. The spokesperson said according to the EU Group's latest report, there is a vast

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Azerbaijan holds military parade dedicated to victory – Page 07

Pakistan-China TCM training project kicks off in Qingdao – Page 08

## Nayyab Ali gets Franco-German HR award

German Ambassador, Bernhard Schlagheck, and French Ambassador, Marc Baréty, jointly presented this award to Ms Nayyab Ali

A.M.BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: To mark the Human Rights Day, every year since 2016, on 10th of December, Germany and France have been jointly presenting the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law to 15 human rights defenders, as a symbol of the common values carried by Germany and France and an illustration of their joint commitment to the protection and promotion of Human Rights. This year, and for the second time since its creation, the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights is given to a Pakistani citizen. Ms Nayyab Ali has been presented with this award as an acknowledgment of her tremendous commitment for the defence and promotion of the rights of the transgender community and its inclusion in the Pakistani society. As a researcher and renowned activist working on gender and minority inclusion

issues, Ms Nayyab Ali has been a resource person for building law enforcement agencies' capacities and sensitization across Pakistan and for tackling the political, institutional and social challenges of the

transgender community. Her expertise, experience and personal journey have led her to become the national coordinator of All Pakistan Transgender Election Network, to be an active member of the spe-

cial committee formed for the review of the bill which became the Pakistan transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018 and also to create the first school for Okara's transgender community.

German Ambassador, Bernhard Schlagheck, and French Ambassador, Marc Baréty, have jointly presented this award to Ms Ali to pay tribute to her inspiring engagement in favor of the rights of the members of her community and of vulnerable women and children. The protection of Human rights is one of the overarching objectives of France's and Germany's external action, jointly with the European Union. This strong commitment is also reflected in the European Union's "Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+)", granting third countries preferential trade access to the EU market with the condition of implementing a series of international conventions. Pakistan and Pakistani people have been beneficiary of the European Union's GSP+ since 2014.



DNA



## Briefs

FPCCI to  
collaborates  
Gulftic-Eipl

DNA

KARACHI: The FPCCI and GULFTIC-EIPL have agreed to collaborate on conducting awareness Session on SASO SABER Certification and Halal Certification all over Pakistan. SASO SABER Certification is mandatory for every single product to be export in Saudi Arabia, this was stated by Qasir Khan Daudzai, Vice President & Incharge FPCCI Capital Office in a meeting with Malik Shah Wali Khan, CEO of GULFTIC-EIPL in FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad. Qaisar Khan Daudzai, Vice President FPCCI expressed his gratitude that being a Pakistani local company have been legally notified by SASO Saudi Standard Metrology and Authority for the purpose of certification. Malik Shah Wali Khan informed that GULFTIC-EIPL is an accredited from Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC) and Gulf Accreditation Cooperation Council (GACC) and issues Halal Certification on Gulf Standard Organization (GSO) for Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan Standards. At the end Vice President FPCCI said FPCCI will arrange Seminar with related Association in collaboration with GULFTIC-EIPL and impact of these activities will grow the quality of products and also boost Pakistan Halal Export.

PFIA condoles  
death of  
SirajQasimTeli

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan FMCG Importers Association (PFIA) has expressed its heartfelt sorrow and grief over the sudden demise of SirajQasimTeli, a leading name of business community. In a condolence message here on Wednesday, Vice Chairman PFIA and Convener LCCI Standing Committee for FMCG Sector Muhammad Ejaz-Tanveer said that SirajQasimTeli had become a strong voice of business community in general and for the people of Karachi especially. He said that his untimely death had created a vacuum which could not be fulfilled. He prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and also prayed that Allah almighty give courage to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

Waqar terms  
technology  
as problem  
solver

SHUJAAT HAMZA



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka has said that the use of technology can solve common problems of Pakistan. In this regard, in collaboration with Technology Movement Pakistan, the students of NED University have developed the first machine to make water by freezing air moisture. Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka said that this machine is used by the people in the backward areas of Pakistan where there is a shortage of water due to lack of pipelines. He said that this machine is very suitable for Tharparkar Cholistan and other backward areas. Waqar Zaka said that the Technology Movement Pakistan is working not only on cyberspace, PayPal, cryptocurrency, Amazon, without winning the elections but also using technology to benefit people of most backward areas by helping people who are not even on social media. He said that the manufacture of such machines at the government level is essential and the Technology Movement assures cooperation with the government of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with Egyptian Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr Tarek Mohammad Dahroug at Naval Headquarters Islambad. – DNA

CDA's operation against  
illegal constructions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) began operation against the illegal constructions and all those constructions which are against the Building By

Laws here on Thursday. The operation was initiated from F series. More than 20 illegal constructions were demolished during the operation. CDA had sent notices to the owners of illegal buildings before conducting the operation. According to detail, the operation

of CDA against encroachments and all the illegal construction is underway in the city. The department of BCS of CDA has started operation against all the buildings which were constructed either without permission of CDA or in violation of CDA By-Laws. Oper-

ation conducted against shops, houses, and class three markets in sectors F-6, F-7, F-8, and F-11. More than 20 encroachments and illegal constructions were demolished during the operation. Similarly, action taken against 4 service stations and 01 guest house

in sector G-9 for violating the Building By-Laws. Illegal water pump was closed to save water. In sector I-12, PHA flats and site office were also sealed during the operation. Heavy machinery of the department of MPO was used in the operation.

CM condemns  
politicisation of  
corona by pdm

DNA

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar has condemned the politicisation of COVID calamity by the PDM and regretted the opposition is holding meetings while people are catching this virus. In a statement, the CM stated playing with the lives of the people is no politics but sheer impasiveness. The nation will

never forgive the opposition over its irresponsible attitude in the wake of a second corona attack. This pandemic has affected the whole world but fails to dent the opposition, he added. The CM advised the people to follow necessary precautionary measures and remain confined to their homes to remain safe from this virus. Similarly, they should also follow the policy of social distancing, he added.

Navy takes over command of  
multinational combined taskforce

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy assumed Command of Multinational Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) for the ninth time in a formal Change of Command ceremony held at HQ Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Bahrain. Commodore Abdul Munib took over the Command from Rear Admiral (LH) Nejat Inanir of Turkish Navy.

While addressing the audience, the incoming Commander CTF-151, Commodore Abdul Munib assured that his team is fully geared up to shoulder this significant responsibility. He also

lauded the outgoing Rear Admiral (LH) Nejat Inanir of Turkish Navy and his team for their dedicated efforts to achieve set objectives during the tenure of command. Commodore Abdul Munib re-affirmed his resolve to continue with the same spirit and further highlighted the strong relationship between Pakistan Navy and the Coalition Maritime Forces in pursuit of their common objective for a secure maritime order in the region.

CTF-151 is one of the three Combined Task Forces operating under Commander CMF. Its mission is to suppress piracy in Horn of Africa, Gulf of Aden

and adjoining ocean space under CMF. Prior assuming the Command, Pakistan Navy has the distinction of commanding CTF-151 on eight occasions in the past, which is a manifestation of the trust among the coalition partners. The ceremony was attended by Ambassador of Pakistan H.E Mr Afzaal Mahmood, Ambassador of Turkey H.E Mr Kemal Demirciler, Vice Admiral Samuel J Paparo US Navy, Commander Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Rear Admiral Mohammad Yousif Al Asam, Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Force and other senior diplomats and Naval officers.

Opposition and history of  
political alliances

Formation of Pakistan Democratic Movement PDM seems like a breath of fresh air for the opposition parties The center of attention for opposition is security establishment that is believed to be real power behind the central government

SAMREEN ISHAQ

We have seen turbulent situation in the politics of Pakistan since its independence. If we look at the current political scenario of our country, our political system is divided into many political parties which are divided on the basis of their ideologies, sects, and priorities but when it comes to their concerns or that serves their political interests all the political parties are on one page recently we have exceptional example of Pakistan Democratic Movement PDM. Under the banner of PDM we have seen opposition in the mood of giving tough time to the present federal government by their strong multi-party alliance. Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) has adopted 26 points resolution and at the top it describes as "selected prime minister" and calls for the end of the role of the establishment in politics of Pakistan. In the beginning Pakistan people's party (PPP) and (PML-N) seemed to be

reluctant to reach such position that could derail the democratic political process in Pakistan after the departure of General Musharraf in 2008. Formation of Pakistan Democratic Movement PDM seems like a breath of fresh air for the opposition parties The center of attention for opposition is security establishment that is believed to be real power behind the central government. This unfamiliar stance of the opposition alliance has become a clarion call but whether this could help provoke masses it is the real test of the opposition. Making and breaking of political alliances is not a new hall mark in the politics of Pakistan. Different types of alliances were formed when political parties were not given adequate representation in parliament and democratic process hold off under authoritarian rules. Political alliances always reach the dead end once the objective are achieved by political coalition, these parties would revert to their old opponent positions and engage themselves in the struggle for the political power in the country. PDM is formed

under different political scenario although political parties have competent representation in the constituent assemblies and have hold up in the power structure as well. Pakistan have a history of political alliances. First alliance of Pakistan was formed against military rule of Ayub Khan in 1964 when five political parties formed an alliance and named it as Combined Opposition Parties (COP). It was an intimidating alliance with its roots in East and West Pakistan. Alliance put up the name of Fatima Jinnah against Ayub Khan for presidential elections. It was an unusual election in which only 80,000 basic democrats who were members of urban and regional councils and set up electoral college for assembly and presidential elections. During campaign Ayub Khan declared Fatima Jinnah as "foreign agent". Amid the allegations general Ayub Khan won the election of 1965. In 1967 after two years' opposition parties again formed alliance incidentally with the same name called Pakistan Democratic Movement which was renamed later as Demo-

cratic Action Committee (DAC) for the revival of democracy which was led by Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. In 1977 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto completed his five-year term and parliamentary elections were held but polls were marred by allegations of massive rigging and several opposition parties formed alliance and named it as Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). Alliance rejected the results of the election of 1977. It was different type of alliance as it was not against military rule or establishment rule in politics it was against civilian government which had affected trading and business classes by Bhutto's radical nationalization of industries and private enterprises. As a result of long protests of PNA Bhutto agreed for negotiations and both sides reached on holding of fresh elections. Movement for the restoration of democracy (MRD) was formed against military regime of General Zia ul Haq. In 1983 a civil disobedient moment was launched and protestors got engaged with military confrontations with the enforcing bodies.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MAINTENANCE DIVISION (CIVIL)  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE.

## Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis on NIT cost from the contractors duly enlisted with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in appropriate category & having valid PEC license for the works as detailed below:-

S.#	Name of work	NIT Cost	Earnest Money	Tender Cost	Date and Time of Receiving of tenders.	Date and Time of opening of Tenders
1	Renovation Of Chairman Senate Office, Chairman Senate Retiring Room, Chairman Waiting Area, Deputy Chairman Senate Office, Senator Service Centre at Parliament House Islamabad	Rs. 17,501,990/-	Rs. 400,040/-	Rs. 5000/-	05-01-2021 at 11:30 am	05-01-2021 At 12:00 noon
2	Renovation up-gradation of litigation branch, fixing of wall paper, rolling blinds in room No- 141,423, 237, 415, 431-A, 141 sofa and Chairs upholstery work and provision of different furniture items for NA Sect at P/House IBD	Rs. 2,055,678/-	Rs. 6,1678/-	Rs. 2000/-	05-01-2021 at 11:30 am	05-01-2021 At 12:00 noon
3	Up-gradation of general entry gate No-05 and provision of furniture at P/House, IBD	Rs. 1,809,413/-	Rs. 54,282/-	Rs. 2000/-	05-01-2021 at 11:30 am	05-01-2021 At 12:00 noon

- Tender Forms / Documents can be purchased on cash payment (Non-refundable) for the work mentioned above from the office of Deputy Director (Civil) Parliament House CDA. Last date for submission of applications for purchase of Tender Form / Documents is 01-01-2021 (12:00 noon). No tender Form will be sold / issued after 01-01-2021.
- Application for issuance of tender documents shall accompany the name, address(s), signature of contractor, valid enlistment / renewal of Firm with PEC & Completion certificate of similar nature of work done during last 3 years.
- The owner of the Firm should submit the application and collect the tender by himself. In case of authorized person, authority letter (regarding the particular work) in favour of the person deputed on the letter pad of the firm in required along-with copy of CNIC subject to verification from the original CNIC.**
- Earnest Money in the shape of Call Deposit bearing **Name of Firm** in favour of Deputy Director (Civil) Parliament House, CDA from local scheduled Bank of Islamabad must accompany with the application. Without call deposit no application for issuance of tender will be entertained. Cash / cheque will not be accepted.
- If any contractor wants to participate in tender opening process through their representative, they should issue authority letter on letter head pad of the firm depicting complete valid address & contact numbers along with attested copy of CNIC.
- Tenders for the works mentioned above will be received and opened by the Director (Coord) P/House, CDA on due date and time in presence of contractors or their authorized representative who care to attend.
- The contractors who are interested to participate in above mentioned tenders they will have to submit their experience certificates of completed work of similar nature, list of employees and machinery while submitting application otherwise tender will not be issued.
- The contractor will submit the documents as per item No. 16 of instructions of tender documents along with their tender, without which tender will be liable for rejection.
- In case the total bid amount is less than 10% below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10% of NIT amount. This call deposit shall be in addition to the earnest money for the work and shall be deposited at the time of submission of bids. Bids not carrying the performance security shall be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of the project.
- Security Clearance of firm is mandatory. The Security clearance shall taken from AIG, Special Branch through Parliament House Authorities that should include security clearance of representative, Engineers and work etc. without Security clearance the firms shall not be entertained to participate in the tenders.
- PEC Certificate & Professional Tax Certificate in original will be seen before issuance of Tender.**
- CDA may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance of bid or proposal. The CDA shall upon request communicate, to any supplier or contractor who submitted a bid or proposal, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- Advertisement is also available on CDA web site [www.cda.gov.pk](http://www.cda.gov.pk) and PPRA web site [www.ppra.gov.pk](http://www.ppra.gov.pk)

DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
Maint. Div Civil, P/H, CDA  
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Tel # 051-9022471

PML-N's  
MPs submit  
reisgnations

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Rabia Nusrat, Zaibun Nisa Awan, Tahir Jamil, Irfan Aqeel, Muneeb-ul-Haq and other leaders have submitted their resignations to the party leadership. Several members of the national and provincial assemblies from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz had tendered their resignations to the party leadership earlier as well. Those who had handed over their resignations included Hina Pervez Butt, Bilal Akbar, Sania Ashiq, Chaudhry Bashir Virk, Chaudhry Azhar Qayyum Nahrta, Khail Das Kohistani, Saiful Muluk Khokhar, Afzal Khokhar, Iftikhar Hussain Chhachar, Hamid Hameed and Sohaib Berth. Raheela Khadim Hussain, Uzma Bukhari, Aniza Fatima, Samiullah Khan, Farooq Tarar, Chaudhry Bilal Akbar, Chaudhry Adil Bakhsh Chatha, Jahangir Khanzada, Akhtar Hussain Badshah and Akhtar Memon of PML-N also submitted their resignation to party high command. Pakistan peoples Party's (PPP) Punjab Assembly members Hassan Murtaza and Ali Haider Gillani, son of former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani, submitted their resignations to PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Maryam  
moves court  
against seizure  
of Nawaz's  
property

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz has approached an Islamabad accountability court against seizure of her father Nawaz Sharif's property in the Toshakhana reference. She filed an application in the court on behalf of her father. After an initial hearing, Judge Syed Asghar Ali issued notices to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and others to submit their response to the application by December 16. Sharif's seized house in Murree is registered in the name of his late wife Begum Kulsom Nawaz, the application stated, adding it was purchased before the date mentioned in the reference. The house was divided among the family members after her death and a court had already given a verdict regarding the division, the application said. Pleaded with the court to set aside the order regarding the seizure of the house. In October, the court had ordered the authorities concerned to seize the former prime minister's assets. – APP



Briefs

AIOU  
organizes  
online  
workshop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University(AIOU) has organized online workshops on, Aaghi LMS portal, for reappear, again reappear and liftover students of B Ed, M Ed, MA and MSC programs who could not attend the workshop(s) of their respective courses in spring 2020 semester owing to constraint(s) of any kind. These workshops would be conducted online on Aaghi LMS portal from December 11- 16, 2020. According to a notification issued by the Directorate of Regional Services, usernames and passwords have been shared with such students which are required for gaining access to Aaghi LMS portal. The university has, further, instructed the all such students not to deposit any fee for the said workshop(s) and the same would be charged at the time of issuance of degree. However, if any student has, already, deposited the fee, he/she keep fee challan form in safe custody which would be acceptable while clearing the dues for degree issuance. The students who have not received their username and password can access their respective regional offices for this purpose.

Electric  
fan exports  
increase  
11.97%

ISLAMABAD: The exports of electric fan from the country witnessed an increase of 11.97 percent during the first four months of financial year (2020-21) as compare to the corresponding period of last fiscal year. The country exported electric fan worth US \$8.575 million during July-October (2020-21) as against the exports of US \$7.658 million during July-October (2019-20), showing growth of 11.97 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the exports of electric fan also rose by 28.97 percent by going up from 435,000 to 561,000, according to the data. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the exports of electric fan grew by 31.95 percent during the month of October 2020 as compared to the same month of last year. The exports of fan from the country during October 2020 were recorded at \$1.210 million against the exports of \$0.917 million in October 2019. On month-on-month basis, the exports of electric fan however decreased by 29.73 percent during October 2020 as compared to the exports of \$1.722 million in September 2020, the PBS data revealed. - APP

WPC 16 days  
activism  
campaign  
concluded

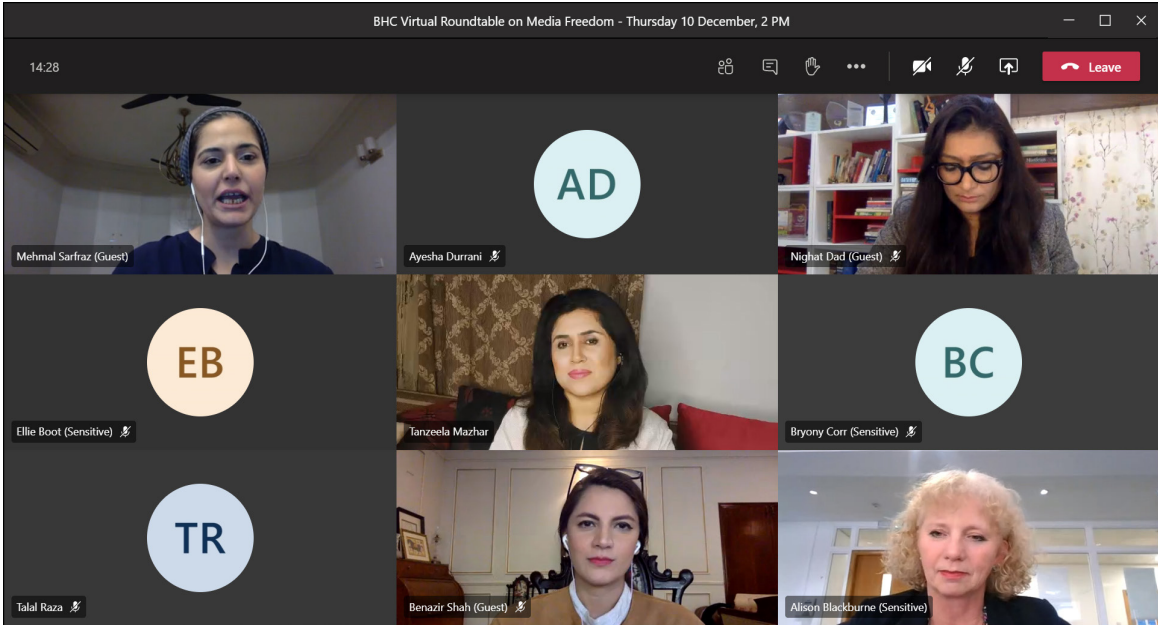
ISLAMABAD: Women Parliamentary Caucus 16-days activism campaign against women violence concluded here on December 10 on International Human Rights day which was started on Nov 25 on International day of elimination of violence against women. The 16-day activism campaign, aimed to address violence against women. Talking to APP, Secretary Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC), Munaza Hassan said that WPC committed to work on women rights, particularly, focusing on domestic violence that reported in rural areas. Adding she said that WPC would play an active role in freeing the country from all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination. She indicated that violence against women was the most pervasive violation of human rights worldwide. She informed that the 16 Days campaign was used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women. - APP

A vibrant media an essential  
element of a democracy

British High Commission Holds Roundtable on Media Freedom

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commission hosted a virtual roundtable discussion to demonstrate the UK's support on Media Freedom and the latest trends in the media freedom landscape in Pakistan, with a particular focus on women journalists. The event, chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner Alison Blackburne, brought together prominent journalists and media freedom activists. The list of those attending were: Miss Mehmal Sarfaraz, Miss Benazir Shah, Miss Tanzeela Mazhar and Miss Nighat Dad. Deputy High Commissioner Alison Blackburne raised



concerns around censorship and self-censorship and the roundtable discussed journalists' safety and the particular challenges faced by female journalists. Deputy High Commissioner Alison Blackburne said: "A vibrant media is an essential element of a vibrant democracy. Women have an important role to play in the media, and should be able to do so on an equal basis with their male colleagues. The UK has long promoted and defended media freedom, both at home and in supporting the development of a strong and independent media around the world, including in Pakistan. We remain strongly committed to media freedom, and to championing democracy and human rights."

Pharmaceutical  
exports to Nigeria  
increased

*There are currently over 130 pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria but Pakistan Pharmaceutical Industry is expected to penetrate through steady growth into the Nigerian Pharma Industry*

ISLAMABAD: Federal Capital, Islamabad (Pakistan) - Incumbent President (NCP) Chief Daniel Ilesanmi Imuzie expressed his personal views after a visit to Max Pharmaceuticals Rawat Industrial Estate, Rawalpindi. He said that the pharmaceutical imports from Pakistan to Nigeria have crossed more than double to US\$1.3 trillion during the year 2020. \* He added that although there are currently over 130 pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria but Pakistan Pharmaceutical Industry is expected to penetrate through steady growth into the Nigerian Pharma Industry. Secretary General (NCP) Engr. Michael Lance Okafor highlighted that Nigeria Pakistan Pharma products have very bright future as Nigeria and Pakistan have similar disease burden with a significant proportion of deaths attributable to communicable diseases... ..with Malaria, Diarrhea and Dysentery being common amongst Pakistanis and Nigerians. He added that there have been many laudable efforts by NAFDAC - the main regulatory body in Nigeria - to standardize the pharmaceutical industry despite the fact that Nigeria has critically low levels of human and infrastructure resources for health care. - DNA

SNGPL, SSGC resolved  
168,164 complaints

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The two-state companies, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC), working under the Petroleum Division, have so far collectively resolved around 168,164 complaints, out of 173,627, received through the Pakistan Citizens Portal. Prime Minister Imran Khan

had launched the portal on October 28, 2018, for prompt redressal of grievances against the public sector organizations, where since then around 3 million people registered themselves and reported 2.7 million complaints, out of which 2.5 million have so far been settled. Since the portal's launch, the SNGPL has resolved 152,431 complaints, out of 155,901. Whereas among

these 3,059 were new and 411 were in the process, according to official data available with APP. Similarly, the SSGC resolved 15,733 complaints, out of 17,726 including 1,106 new. While 887 are in process. Petroleum Division is vigorously pursuing its national role to ensure the sustainable supply of oil and gas for economic development and growth of the energy sector in Pakistan.

RCB completes 25  
projects worth Rs 6m

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), Engineering Branch has completed 25 projects worth Rs 6 million during November. According to RCB spokesman, the Engineering Branch of RCB on the directives of Cantonment Executive Officer had launched various projects including repair work of roads and streets and improvement of water supply lines worth Rs 6 million in Masrial Road, Ilyas Colony, Shalley Valley, Range Road and Bhatta Chowk areas.

To a question he informed that the Board has approved as many as 1800 maps of illegal buildings under an ongoing amnesty scheme while nearly 570 maps of such buildings are under process. He advised the residents to regularize illegal buildings under amnesty scheme which would continue till December end. The amnesty scheme for illegal domestic structures, launched by RCB had been extended until December 31. He informed that the board had launched an amnesty scheme for illegal residential buildings under which the owners had been asked to legalise their ille-

gal structures without fines. The owners of the illegal buildings would pay a fee of Rs 2500 to have their building map made by an approved architect which would be submitted to the Board for formal approval, he said and informed that three field offices had been set up in Allahabad, Valley Road and 'Baraf Khana, Masrial Road' to facilitate the residents. He said, special awareness campaign had also been launched through banners, posters and newspapers ads. He said, the Board was giving approval of the maps of illegal buildings particularly residential within three days.

ECP to  
continue  
playing role in  
elevating HR

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will continue playing its role in elevating human rights in the country by making the electoral process more transparent and inclusive. This was stated by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja on Thursday in a message on International Human Rights Day. He said that International Human Rights Day reminds us to protect human rights and human value. "I would like to endorse the right to vote as the fundamental human right. One of the most critical ways that individuals can take part in governmental decision-making is through voting." He said that to vote, to be elected and to have equal access to public service is the basic right of every citizen. He said that ECP is firm in making the electoral process in the country all inclusive by encouraging all segments of society to take part in the electoral course.

Police arrest  
eight POs

RAWALPINDI: Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested eight Proclaimed Offenders (POs) including two most wanted allegedly involved in heinous crimes. According to Rawalpindi police spokesman, special raids on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Muhammad Ahsan Younas were conducted by Rawalpindi police to net POs, court absconders and other outlaws. Rawat police managed to net two A category POs namely Rafaqat Ali and Nazakat Ali wanted in a murder case. Similarly, Rawat police also nabbed three POs of B category identified as Sajid Mehmood, Muhammad Iqbal and Tasawar Hussain wanted in different cases. Ratta Amral police conducted a raid and arrested two B category POs namely Muhammad Qadeer and Raja Mehboob wanted in a fraud case. City police apprehended a B category accused namely Amirzad against whom a theft case was registered in City Police Station. He said, the police crackdown against criminals would continue and the outlaws would be sent behind the bars. - APP

President allows  
15-day extension  
for appeals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday decided to consider the appeals and representations, which had become time-barred due to lockdown during first wave of pandemic but were filed within 15 days of reverting to normal office working. The President extended the relief to applicants who were supposed to file their petitions and appeals with his office between March 20 to July 30, 2020 - the period of partial or complete lockdown as announced by the federal and provincial governments. President Alvi took the decision in line with the policy of the government and the notification issued by Supreme Court of Pakistan that aimed at facilitating litigants during lockdown as the Institution branch of the Court was closed for filing of cases keeping in view the Limitation Act, 1908. The Limitation Act, 1908 provides the time frame in which a remedy can be availed. The President emphasized that as restricted movement and scarcity of transport in lockdown led to difficulties, the similar Limitation Act was required to be applied on the representations filed with the President Secretariat. To accommodate parties under Limitation Act, the President, therefore, extended the time by approving condonation of delay for the representations and appeals which were filed by August 15, i.e. within fortnight of the end of lockdown.

Modern Economic  
Zones to be developed:  
Chairman RDA

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Tariq Mehmood Murtaza has said that modern Economic Zones would be developed under Rawalpindi Ring Road project. Tariq Mehmood said that the incumbent government was well aware of the problems being faced by the traders and businessmen. He said, "We are making all out efforts to provide conducive environment to the business community and special economic zones will be developed along Rawalpindi Ring Road like Faisalabad Industrial Zone." He said, all possible steps would be taken to implement recommendations of the businessmen. He said, the Punjab government would encourage the industrialists and provide all possible facilities to the investors under Ring Road project. Tariq Murtaza said that building planning would be finalized in consultation with the Chamber of Commerce and the private sector. The project would be taken forward with the suggestions, recommendations and consultation from Rawalpindi Chamber and Islamabad Chamber. He said, the objective to construct the ring road is to improve economic connectivity and road transport efficiency in the twin cities, Rawalpindi-Islamabad through constructing a ring road and associated facilities. The Punjab government has added 10 new commercial and residential zones in the Rawalpindi Ring Road Project Economic Corridor (RRPEC). He said, the CM had approved the project to ease traffic congestion and boost economic activity in the region. The authorities concerned had also been directed to begin the project as soon as possible, he added. The Punjab government has released Rs6.7 billion for land acquisition, he said adding, the project will give a new look to the city. Landfill sites would also be identified under a section of the bay where solid waste management and dumping sites would also help in keeping the area clean, he said. Tariq Murtaza informed that 65.6 kilometre (km) long Ring Road would have six lanes on each side like the motorway. The service roads would also be constructed along the main road while RDA would plant 0.15 million saplings on the entire route of the signal-free corridor. - DNA

Postal Rest  
Houses  
available  
for general  
public

ISLAMABAD: Postal Rest Houses available in all four provinces including Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan at affordable rates for the general public. According to Pakistan Post, the Rest Houses comprised of three categories A-B-C. The per day rent for Category-A Rs. 3,000, Category-B Rs. 2,200 and Category C per day rent Rs.1,200. Category-A Rest Houses are available in Karachi City, Multan, Jhelum, Mianwali, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, NathiaGali, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Shadman Lahore, Lahore Cantt, Sialkot GPO, Sialkot Cantt., Faisalabad GPO and Quetta. Category-B Rest Houses are available in Attock, Murree GPO, Chitral, Abbottabad, Ayubia, Kohat, D.I.Khan, Mirpurkhas, Sorab, Amri, Taftan, Qallat, Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Gilgit, Sust, Skardu, Gujrat, Sargodha and Layyah. While Category-C Rest Houses serve the general public in Pindi Point Murree, Saidu Sharif, Bannu and Ziarat. The present government had been opened Postal Rest Houses, across the country located at attractive places for the general public and tourists at cheaper rates last year. Spokesperson of Pakistan Post said that to promote tourism in the country and generate more revenue for the department the initiative has been taken on the directions of the Minister for Communications and Postal Services Murad Saeed. - APP

Strict action  
directed  
against over  
speeding

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP), Speed Camera Squad has been directed to take strict action against over speeding and rash driving. According to Senior Traffic Officer (STO) Rawalpindi Syed Abid Abbas Shah, the Speed Camera Squad had been directed to conduct regular checking at main roads particularly Old Airport Road, New Airport Road, Taxila, Kalar Syedan and Meharabad sector. He informed that the squad issued 1267 challan tickets to the rules violators during last month. He said, the CTP had formed a special camera squad to check over speeding on various roads. The CTP were making all out efforts to control over speeding and violation of traffic rules aimed at minimizing road traffic accidents. He said, the Camera Squad had been directed to take strict action in accordance with the law against over speeding and wrong overtaking. CTP Education Squad was also making efforts to create awareness among road users about the road safety laws. He advised the road users to obey traffic rules and cooperate with Traffic Wardens in order to reach their destinations safe and sound. - APP

IHC seeks  
compliance  
in missing  
person case

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday directed the law enforcement agencies to comply with the production orders pertaining to the missing person Imran Khan within five weeks. The Registrar of Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances appeared before Chief Justice Athar Minallah, who heard the case, and submitted the copy of production orders issued by the commission. To a court's query regarding police investigation, the investigation officer said that they had also reached the same conclusion like the commission. The production orders directed to produce the missing person within six weeks. The court observed that it was an appropriate order and it would for remaining five weeks for its implementation. The court then adjourned the case. - APP

Pfizer hands PRCS Rs 20 million grant

CEO Pfizer Pakistan S.M Wajeesh handed the certificate to Chairman PRCS Abrar ul Haq in a simple ceremony held at the National Headquarters (NHQ) here on Wednesday

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pfizer Foundation has formally handed a PKR20 million (\$123,671) donation certificate to Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS). CEO Pfizer Pakistan S.M Wajeesh handed the certificate to Chairman PRCS Abrar ul Haq in a simple ceremony held at the National Headquarters (NHQ) here on Wednesday. Acting Secretary General Dr Adeel Nawaz, Advisor on Coordination and Transformation Col (Retd) Shahrukh, Advisor on Resource Mobilization Anjad Pervez and officials of PRCS were present on the occasion. The PKR20 million grant has been routed through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The grant will help address the urgent



needs of PRCS, which is making relentless effort to minimize the spread of the virus within communities and strengthen the healthcare system against the future public health threats. The grant will also contribute towards capacity enhancement of PRCS' Rawalpindi Corona Care Hospital (RCH) by setting up a special ward and covering its operating expenses for six months. Abrar ul Haq acknowledged Pfizer's global contribution for COVID 19, particularly for Rawalpindi Corona Care Hospital. "PRCS, being an auxiliary to the government, is at the forefront of fighting this pandemic and augmenting the government's response to the disease," he said. S.M Wajeesh said Pfizer had been operating in Pakistan for over 60 years and is fully committed to serving the patients through its innovative solutions.



## Briefs

EU-Pak body  
censures India  
for misguiding  
world

DNA

ISLAMABAD: EU-Pak Friendship Federation Europe Chairman Chaudhry Pervaiz Iqbal Losar Thursday censured India for misguiding the European Union (EU), United Nations and even its own people about Pakistan by publishing fake news. The condemnation came in the backdrop of an investigative report, issued by the EU DisinfoLab to reveal India's information warfare against Pakistan. Commenting on the latest report of EU DisinfoLab, Losar in a news release said India had been misguiding the EU for the last 15 years. He said India had been using 750 media houses and registered 550 websites lately to peddle its anti-Pakistan propaganda. More than 10 Non-governmental organizations were being used by India for the purpose, he added. The chairman maintained that the main purpose of Indian propaganda was to isolate Pakistan from the world but in fact it had isolated itself by doing so. He said India cannot hide its terrorist armed forces' atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) with such type of propaganda.

SC reserves  
decision  
on bench's  
formation  
Faiz Isa case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its decision regarding formation of a bench for hearing review petitions in Justice Qazi Faez Isa case. A six-member larger SC bench headed by Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah heard the review petitions filed by Justice Qazi Faez Isa, Mrs Sarina Isa and different bar associations of the country. The petitioners have challenged the June 19 split order of a 10-member bench on the petitions filed against a presidential reference that sought Justice Isa's removal due to his failure to mention his family members' foreign properties in his wealth statement. The bench observed that it would announce the decision at an appropriate time after considering the arguments of the lawyers. During the course of proceedings, the Advocate-on-Record said Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Latif Afridi could not appear due to illness. Justice Bandial observed that the court wanted to ask some questions from Latif Afridi, who also could not appear on the previous date of hearing. Mentioning Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's case, he asked Advocate Munir A Malik, counsel for Justice Qazi Faez Isa, to read paragraph 27 of Justice Dorab Patel in the Bhutto review case decision and sought his opinion about the composition of the bench.

MoHR  
celebrates  
int'l human  
rights day

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Human Rights in collaboration with UN Women held an event at the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centre for Women to commemorate Human Rights Day and mark the end to 16 days of activism campaign against gender-based violence. The theme for the event was "Strengthening Access to Justice for Survivors." The event featured the inauguration of a new computer lab at the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Centre for Women by Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari. Speaking at the event, the Minister emphasized the three areas of focus of the Ministry of Human Rights i.e. on overcoming gaps in legislation, strengthening implementation, and increasing awareness about human rights. Dr Mazari emphasized the importance of increasing reporting on the Ministry's 1099 human rights helpline and application. — APP

ICCI calls for withdrawal  
of ban on indoor dining

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan demanded that the said notification should be withdrawn immediately to save the businesses from further troubles. He said this while addressing a gathering of traders in F-10 Markaz, Islamabad



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries said that due to the lockdowns in the past and the spike in the 2nd wave of Covid-19 pandemic, business activities have declined significantly. However, in these tough conditions, the district administration has issued a notification banning indoor dining in restaurants, while open dining in restaurants has been prohibited after 10 pm, which was not understandable. Therefore, he demanded that the said notification should be withdrawn immediately to save the businesses from further troubles. He said this while addressing a gathering of traders in F-10 Markaz, Islamabad. He visited F-10 Markaz Islamabad leading a delegation of ICCI and congratulated the newly elected Office Bearers of Traders Welfare Association on their remarkable victory in the election. Vice President ICCI Abdul Rehman Khan, Founder Group Chairman Mian Akram Farid, Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi, Zafar Bakhtawari, Khalid Chaudhry, Naveed Malik, Mehboob Ahmad Khan, Rana Qaiser, Saeed Khan, Chaudhry Javed and others.

drawn immediately to save the businesses from further troubles. He said this while addressing a gathering of traders in F-10 Markaz, Islamabad. He visited F-10 Markaz Islamabad leading a delegation of ICCI and congratulated the newly elected Office Bearers of Traders Welfare Association on their remarkable victory in the election. Vice President ICCI Abdul Rehman Khan, Founder Group Chairman Mian Akram Farid, Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi, Zafar Bakhtawari, Khalid Chaudhry, Naveed Malik, Mehboob Ahmad Khan, Rana Qaiser, Saeed Khan, Chaudhry Javed and others.

Ahmad Khan was elected as President, Waqar Bakhtawari Senior Vice President, Chaudhry Farooq Hussain Vice President, Mian Safdar Ali Coord Secretary, Kashif Sabri Finance Secretary, Asghar Abbasi Information Secretary, Chaudhry Ziaullah Hinjra Joint Secretary and Malik Sultan Ijaz Additional Secretary of Traders Welfare Association F-10 Markaz, Islamabad. Tahir Abbasi Group Chairman and Akbar Siddique Patron Chief were also present on the occasion. Ahmad Khan, President of Traders Welfare Association F-10 Markaz and Tahir Abbasi, Group Chairman

thanked the ICCI delegation for visiting their market to congratulate the new team of TWA F-10 Markaz. They said that ICCI has always been cooperating with market association of F-10 Markaz and hoped that it would continue to cooperate with it in resolving the key issues of traders. They expressed displeasure over the notification issued by the district administration to ban the indoor dining at restaurants and prohibition on open dining after 10 pm and demanded that the ICT Administration should immediately withdraw the notification in question, otherwise, the business community would

face more problems. ICCI Vice President Abdul Rehman Khan, Founder Group Chairman Mian Akram Farid, Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, Zafar Bakhtawari and Mian Maqbool also congratulated the newly elected Office Bearers of TWA, F-10 Markaz and said that ICCI has always been playing a positive role for the development works in markets. They said that Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President ICCI along with the Chairman CDA was visiting various markets to assess the conditions of markets so that CDA could start the required development works in markets on priority basis to facilitate the traders.

Fawad visits  
GITEX  
Technology  
Week 2020

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Federal Minister of Science & Technology, Fawad Chaudhry, recently visited GITEX Technology Week 2020 held in Dubai, UAE. During his visit, the minister met with Charles Yang, President of Huawei Middle East, who offered the minister a closer view of cutting-edge 5G technologies, cloud and AI platforms, smart office solutions, as well as smart city and smart education solutions for an increasingly digital world. Spacelee, Vice President of Huawei Middle East, and Mark Meng, CEO of Huawei Pakistan, were also present during the showcase. The minister thanked Huawei for its continued investments in Pakistan and support for the development of Pakistan's ICT Industry.

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Schlagheck hosted a few participants of the first batch of Shana Bashana – a project jointly launched by Siemens and GIZ and funded by Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development to address the gender bias that exists in women's access to skills development and participation in labour market. The Shana Bashana project offers technical and vocational training to females in non-traditional fields of work, and then places them at the Siemens Offices in Islamabad and Karachi as interns. This program will create an enabling environment for women to join the TVET workforce and enhance their economic security. Above all, the project challenges gender stereotypes and promotes equal opportunities for men and women in all occupations! – DNA

German ambassador hosts  
reception for participants

## 10th Pakistan Mountain Festival kicks off

It was a rare opportunity for the very busy female art teachers who hardly find time to continue exploring their own creative passion. Most of the time, they are teaching and grooming their students and taking care of their families

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 10th edition of Pakistan Mountain Festival kicked off with an online exhibition of paintings titled "The Colours of Margalla Hills" on Thursday. As many as 17 oil-on-canvas paintings, one each of an artist from twin-cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, have put on display on the Facebook page of the Pakistan Mountain Festival. The paintings are done in a live painting competition in the Margalla Hills National Park. The objective of the activity was to capture the beauty and the biological diversity of the mountain environment. The participating artists are Riffat Ara Baig, Marriam Rasool, Beenish Azam, Saima Ashraf, Beenish Ali, Mahsoun Mustafa, Mobin Abbas, Sana Sagheer, Samina Azhar, Sadia Ali, Fadia, Ma-

diha Usman, Mariyam Mush-taq, Fizza Azhar, Shumaila, and Abeera Habib. Pakistan Mountain Festival is an annual flagship event of Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) to celebrate the United Nations International Mountain Day (IMD) that is marked worldwide on December 11. Devcom-Pakistan is the only organization in Pakistan that celebrates mountains and its people and culture very religiously since 2002 – the International Year of Mountains. Briefing about the painting exhibition, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said, "The artists did these paintings on three different spots in the Margalla Hills National Park. We invited all the female art teachers of the twin cities to take part in it. It was a rare opportunity for the very busy female art teachers who hardly find time

to continue exploring their own creative passion. Most of the time, they are teaching and grooming their students and taking care of their families. On-the-spot painting for art teachers was a creative retreat and continuity of their expression for the projection and mainstreaming of the mountain's ecosystems. I believe that art can be used in multiple ways to enhance aesthetics in society leading to conservation and protection of nature to cleansing of the social environment. He said, the work is very meaningful and up to quality standards but due to new normal we have to go for an online exhibition instead of an art gallery just to observe the SOPs against the Covid-19. However the effort is to environmentally sensitise teachers especially those teaching art. They can give a push to the environmental conserva-

tion efforts through aesthetically enriched visuals. There is a need to engage and sensitise teachers their active role in the conservation efforts. A sensitised teacher is more effective than anyone else in the society because of the social status that a teacher enjoys in the society." Riffat Ara Baig, coordinator of the competition said, "It was quite unusual for the art teachers to take part in the competition when they organise such events for their students. Competing to explore and be recognised for their creativity as experienced teachers and practicing artists, the response has been very exciting and encouraging. The enthusiasm of the art teachers showed their passion to be competitive even in this phase of life." Ms. Baig said that several art teachers have asked to expand the scope of the initiative to make it a permanent

programme to be able to develop and groom a devoted group of art-activists to engage youth and their families in awareness raising. This way, outreach can also be established in the communication of climate change and other relevant subjects. Beenish Ali, one of the participants said, "I would like to say thanks for organizing and arranging such a competition to appreciate nature, and especially in this time and age when life is going on so speedily that we don't have time to stand and stare and appreciate the beauty of nature, it has been a wonderful platform for the nature lovers. Nature can have a profound effect on our senses; the gateways from the outer world to the inner were really enjoyable. Everything was positive and well organized, and the feedback on what was happening the entire way was an awesome experience."

Secy APNS  
condoles  
death of Saeed  
Abbassi

"Sarmad Ali, Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society has expressed profound grief on behalf of APNS Office Bearers and members of the Executive Committee over the sad demise of Mr. Saeed Abbasi, brother-in-law of Raja Mehtab Khan, Chief Editor, Ausaf Group. The APNS has offered condolence to the bereaved family and prayed that Almighty Allah rest the departed soul in eternal peace and give them courage and patience to bear the loss.

Police launch  
search  
operation in  
Pirwadhai

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police on special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi on Thursday launched a search operation in Pirwadhai Bus Stand and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Pirwadhai Police Station, said a police spokesman. He informed that heavy police contingent, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and Ladies police under the supervision of SHO Pirwadhai Police Station conducted operation in the area and searched 15 hotels and 70 shops while 385 persons were also interrogated. According to Superintendent Police (SP) Rawal, the search operations to net criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly being conducted under National Action Plan in different areas of the district particularly to ensure law and order.

8 gamblers  
rounded up  
with cash

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested eight gamblers and recovered Rs 20,290 cash stake money, six mobile phones and other items from their possession. According to Police spokesman, Ratta Amral police acting on a tip-off conducted a raid in its jurisdiction and arrested eight gamblers namely Afzal Ahmed, Aftab, Muhammad Pervaiz, Kamran Khan, Tanveer, Waqas, Rub Nawaz and Ali Raza who were allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. Police also recovered Rs 20,290 cash stake money, six mobile phones and other items. A case has been registered against all the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent Police (SP) Rawal appreciated the police team and directed to accelerate crackdown against outlaws, he added.

56,000  
COVID-19  
suspects  
reported

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Around 56678 COVID-19 suspects have been brought to the quarantine facilities of the district, out of which 10476 cases were tested positive who were provided the required treatment and 8885 discharged after recovery. According to daily situation report issued by Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) Punjab, results of 1649 people were awaited while 44940 were declared negative. "Presently 73 C virus confirmed patients were admitted in various quarantine facilities of the district while 1061 were quarantined in isolation at homes. Meanwhile Chief Executive Officer Health Authority Dr Sohail Chaudhary talking to APP said that the number of C cases are considerably increasing as the 2nd wave of pandemic was more deadly compared to the previous one in Pakistan. He advised the residents to wear of face masks, maintain social distance and avoid visiting crowded places.



## The end game

HOW will things end as the tussle between the PDM and the PTI government continues? At its meeting on Tuesday, the PDM made it clear that it intended to hand in resignations from the National Assembly and all provincial assemblies, including the Sindh Assembly, by the 31st of December. Prime Minister Imran Khan has responded to this by saying that he will not be moved by the mass walkout from the assemblies should they take place, and will simply call a by-election. Of course, this is not entirely in Imran's hands. The Election Commission has to decide when and how to hold so large a by-election; to be very honest, the whole by-elections exercise seems almost impossible to pull off, and also there are other dangers for the ruling party. With a narrow majority in the National Assembly, the question arises of even a small number of defectors being able to alter a majority in the House and how things could change for the worse for the ruling party.

The real question facing the nation at the moment is how things are going to pan out from this point on. The resignations will come only after the gathering in Lahore and then the long march to Islamabad which is still scheduled to take place. We do not know how this will go, whether there will be attempts to block it or if the government will allow it to proceed. But eventually, some end has to be found to the standoff. It cannot continue endlessly. Imran Khan has suggested he is willing to talk on all issues except the NRO which he insists the PDM is attempting to seek. The PDM has denied this. It has also not backed Imran's claims that if NAB is demolished the opposition will return readily to the assemblies. It is not easy to topple a government. The question also is: what happens post resignations? Has the opposition figured out all scenarios – including one in which one party from the opposition may be coaxed into backing off? What then? If a new election does indeed become the only way out, will its results be any different to what we have at present? After all, the same manner in which the government was allegedly (as per the opposition) elected this time around may come into play again. There's also a crucial issue of whether members of the establishment will take part in any talks that could be held and what their role will be. There is too much uncertainty at the moment on what is to happen next. On a larger scale it is also true that the uncertainty is damaging the country. The government must play a role in this and persuade the opposition to either move towards talks for a resolution that includes a constitutional path for the country, a truth commission, and an end to institutional interventions in politics.

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## A Proud Moment

FORMER World Champion Jahangir Khan's re-election as the World Squash Federation emeritus president for a seventh consecutive term is a proud moment for the champion and Pakistan. The six-time world champion stands out as one of the greatest sports heroes Pakistan has ever produced. Jahangir's illustrious career also shows the potential our country has in sports other than cricket.

However, the current situation of sports in the country is abysmal. The government's little to no patronage and the dearth of sporting facilities have left the country's gyms and playing grounds in a dilapidated condition. Pakistani athletes and sportsmen say that they cannot compete in international competitions with outdated equipment and obsolete training methods. Successive governments have remained indifferent to the plight of sports other than cricket in Pakistan. No wonder then, to see the declining performance of our sportspersons. Pakistan's current Prime Minister, Imran Khan, was a great sports icon for the country's youth. Though PM Khan said in the past that he would revive the diminishing opportunities in the industry, however, nothing changed on the ground in two-and-a-half years.

Worth noting is the fact that Pakistan's sports budget is the lowest in South Asia. Little funding to the sports industry is the reason behind our inability to regain our lost prestige in the world of sports. Due to a lack of funding and patronage, so many potential greats like Jahangir Khan never got discovered. Many gifted players' talent has gone wasted due to our lack of attention. Only the present government can genuinely recognise and hone sporting talents in the country. The efforts in sports must be top-down. The state must own neglected games; it should set aside provisions for this purpose. And while making efforts to rekindle the spirit of sports in the youth, the government must also engage the private sector in the process.

# Biden to tone down China rhetoric

Afshin Molavi



President Donald Trump put confrontation with China at the center of US foreign policy, and his weapons of choice have largely been sanctions, tariffs, and rhetoric. But it is not just Trump. In a series of US national security and defense strategy documents, China has been dubbed a "revisionist power" in great power competition with the US. US Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe did not mince his words when he wrote in a WSJ op-ed

WHAT will President-elect Joe Biden do on China? The answer to this question will define the future of our global economy and geopolitics over the next decade and beyond. After all, when the world's top two most powerful countries clash, the world feels the tremors and the disruptions. Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger laid out a worst-case scenario, arguing in a Bloomberg interview last month that "America and China are now drifting increasingly toward confrontation," and "the danger is that some crisis will occur that will go beyond rhetoric into actual military conflict." Chillingly, he said the countries could be sliding "into a catastrophe comparable to the First World War." Even absent a catastrophic First World War-type scenario, a confrontational relationship between China and the US has reverberations far beyond these two countries. Supply chains are disrupted, geopolitical alliances tested, economies strained, and businesses shaken. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, countries are increasingly being asked a tough question by Washington: Are you with us or with them? That is not a question that MENA leaders – or any leader – wants to answer. After all, China has emerged as a top trading partner and source of investment in many countries across the region, as well as Africa and Asia. Leaders from these regions often retort: "Why do we have to choose among the giants?" President Donald Trump put confrontation with China at the center of US foreign policy, and his weapons of choice have largely been sanctions, tariffs, and rhetoric. But it is not just Trump. In a series of US national security and defense strategy documents, China has been dubbed a "revisionist power" in great power competition with the US. US Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe did not mince his words when he wrote

in a Wall Street Journal op-ed last week: "If I could communicate one thing to the American people from this unique vantage point, it is that the People's Republic of China poses the greatest threat to America today." Still, even amid the sanctions, tariffs and fears, US-China trade remains robust. In the first nine months of 2020, China bought nearly \$60 billion of US goods. It has been the third largest export destination for US goods over the past few years. In the past month alone, US soybean and corn sales to China have been exploding, and many leading US companies – stricken by pandemic pain elsewhere – have reported strong earnings in China. However, the confrontation has been growing more ominous, with consulates shut down on both sides, stern rhetoric flying from official podiums and Twitter feeds, Chinese researchers fleeing the US in their thousands after FBI investigations, and proliferating executive orders banning US investment or interaction with high-profile Chinese companies. So, will President-elect Biden reverse course and slow the slide in ties? The answer is likely yes, but we should not expect a dramatic course correction. Rather, we will likely see a lowering of the rhetoric and attempts to work with China on issues like climate change. But we should not expect a China "reset." Friction will remain a recurring theme. On the campaign trail, Biden and senior foreign policy hands in the Democratic Party were far more hawkish on China. Kurt Campbell, the top Asia official in the State Department under President Barack Obama, in September said: "I think there is broad recognition in the Democratic Party that Trump was largely accurate in diagnosing China's predatory practices." News reports quoting Biden foreign policy advisers suggest he will not be quick to remove tariffs, though he will not use them in the same way Trump has. He will instead

seek to confront China through multilateral alliances of "like-minded" states, and will likely lower the rhetoric. Dean Cheng, a China scholar at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, told me that the Biden team is uncomfortable with the framing of China as "an enemy" or "adversary," and does not want to fall into the "great power competition" narrative of the Trump years. Interestingly, Biden's Secretary of State nominee Antony Blinken regularly refers to China as "a major challenge," rather than a major adversary or enemy. Expect the Biden team, as Cheng said, to downplay the Cold War narrative. Cheng also notes that the president-elect will want support from China on climate change. "Given President-elect Biden's view that climate change is an existential threat, they will have no choice but to cooperate with China, the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter," Cheng told me. But he also noted that China in 2021 is not the same China of the late Obama years, and public perceptions of Beijing have shifted dramatically in the US. According to the latest polling from Pew Research, nearly three out of four Americans have a negative attitude toward China. Broadly speaking, the Cold War analogy is weak. China and Chinese companies are far more integrated with the US than the Soviet Union ever was. The world can expect continued friction between the US and China, but business will not screech to a halt, and the lowering of rhetoric and a move away from the great power competition narrative will likely lower the pressure on US allies to choose sides.

– **Afshin Molavi is a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and editor and founder of the "New Silk Road Monitor."**  
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– *Courtesy Arab News*

# Women & Tech Startups - Barriers & Opportunity

Adnan Mughal

In the tech startup space, women entrepreneurs continue to face discrimination in opportunities and benefits offered by ICTs due to lack of access, resources, skills, and education. A key barrier for women entrepreneurs in the tech space is under-representation in tech knowledge and education. Currently, gender disparity is worst for women in digital/STEM careers in Pakistan. Only 16 percent of female computer science graduates are working versus 83 percent men

WOMEN around the world are increasingly using technology and adapting it to their needs. E-commerce can particularly help entrepreneurs, especially women in developing nations' to overcome the usual market access and network challenges as internet-based enterprises can be operated at a very small scale. Moreover, e-commerce also reduces the cost associated with geographic distances, which implies potential gains for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) (including women owned/led enterprises) as they can go global more easily. With digital technology, women have been able to expand economic activity and increase outreach at a minimal cost. However, gender disparity in Pakistan has a significantly low ranking in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020, only ahead of Iraq and Yemen – with limited economic opportunities for women. Despite improvement over time, only half of the female population is literate, compared with 72.5 percent of male population. Female labour force participation stands at only 20.1 percent. Only 1 percent of women are engaged in entrepreneurial activities as opposed to 21 percent of men. Majority of women entrepreneurs are operating in the informal (MSMEs) space, and the concentration of women led businesses is confined to traditional female sectors such as textiles, beauty, food, agriculture and vocational training. In the tech startup space, women entrepreneurs continue to face discrimination in opportunities and benefits offered by ICTs due to lack of access, resources, skills, and education. A key barrier for women entrepreneurs in the tech space is under-representation in tech knowledge and education. Currently, gender disparity is worst for women in digital/STEM careers in Pakistan. Only 16 percent of female computer science graduates are working versus 83 percent men. However, the rise of women-led startups in the last few years in the tech-space is a silver lining. Technology is enabling women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. With the rising variety of women-led small and medium enterprises seen operating online, many women-led startups are creating opportunities by using digital technology. These startups are mostly focusing on areas like e-commerce and retail – particularly clothing, fashion, accessories, food and catering, salon services, event management, health, and education services. While there is no social data to show the number of women-led startups, the startup.pk directory shows that 20 percent of the startups are founded or co-founded by women. Also, the rising engagement of the stakeholders is

an indication of growth. Competitions, awards, donor-led challenges, investment by multiple national and international corporations are examples of these interventions bearing fruit. Also, the share of women tech startups in raising investment is improving, albeit slowly. Most women-led startups that have attracted investment belong to the e-commerce sector, health and health-tech, and education and ed-tech. There is also a rise in international as well as private sector initiatives to support women entrepreneurs especially in the tech space. SheLovesTech (2019) a global platform for international tech companies, investors, entrepreneurs, startups, and consumers to promote technology for women and by women. It recently held a competition in Pakistan and provided winning business grants, and an opportunity to compete in a global challenge. SheLovesTech has till date disseminated 350+ hours of training and more than 100 hours of mentorship. #SheMeansBusiness Programme (2019) launched by Facebook in partnership with Lahore Women's Chamber of Commerce is to provide women entrepreneurs with tools, resources, training, and guidance to run a successful online business. WeCreate Center: It is a community center in Islamabad for women interested in entrepreneurial ventures. The center provides mentoring, training, a networking platform, access to media, markets, and capital along with the technological tools and resources needed for developing businesses. Women in TechPk: Women community offering a platform to discuss professional and career-related issues, seek advice, find mentors and forge organizational alliances and individual collaborations. WE-NET: Pakistan Women Entrepreneurs Network for Trade (WE-NET) is a representative platform for women entrepreneurs in trade of goods and services being established with the support of World Bank Group Pakistan. Karandaaz Women Ventures: Previously known as the Women Entrepreneurship Challenge - a flagship annual initiative of Karandaaz, provides growth capital and business development support to women led businesses to demonstrate their commercial viability for investment and making their portfolio bankable. Financial Inclusion of Women Challenge (FIWC) & Digital Financial Solutions: Through this focused challenge, Karandaaz seeks to support solutions to address the critical issue of women missing out on opportunities otherwise

possible through their financial inclusion such as having agency over money, savings, and access to credit. The program aimed at increasing use of tech by women to increase their economic participation. The proportion of women having digital skills compared to men is perceived to be quite low in Pakistan, which prevents them from adopting technology in digital entrepreneurship. Presence of women in specialized areas that precondition higher level education will grow with increase in female graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. Developing the passion and introducing and exposing young women to STEM subjects and opportunities at an early stage and university level will help address some underrepresentation. Co-operation between IT universities and business enterprises, digital skills apprenticeships for women and mentorship, financial support, and other technical/non-technical support can potentially clear the path toward digital entrepreneurship for women. Women also have less access to other digital learning platforms. Facilitation in the form of dedicated programs can increase the uptake of technology, which can indirectly boost their responsiveness to entrepreneurial opportunities. For example, digital divide has been badly exposed during coronavirus, impacting females harder because of their limited access to the internet and smart devices. In addition, new opportunities like digital health and remote learning/education have cropped up amid the pandemic, where women can monetize their skills better if they are better connected to digital technology. Government-focused programmers and schemes dedicated for women-led tech startups can also be an impetus in shifting women led businesses from conventional sectors into more technology related sectors. Tech startups and technology: enabled entrepreneurship both rely on digital tools like a website, smartphone app, telecom, online platforms or complicated management systems like ERP, supply chain management, payroll, funding etc. Equal access to these facilities through workshops and training for the adoption of digital tools will give a push to digitally enabled entrepreneurship. Finally, the wider ecosystem support, including Karandaaz, will need to strengthen and increase the financial and technical support instruments available as well as promote women role models, women IT experts and IT leaders to encourage aspiring female entrepreneurs.

– *The writer is a student at QAU.*



## Briefs

## Vaccine to be available in March

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The Special Assistant for Health said that the vaccination campaign would be carried out in three phases. The vaccine will be provided on an EPI program basis. In the first phase, medical staff will be vaccinated, while in the second phase, people over the age of 60 will be vaccinated.

## Bill Gates lauds Pakistan's strategy

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the most vulnerable segments of Pakistan's population benefit from its expertise in health, nutrition and financial inclusion. Imran Khan commended the Gates Foundation's strong advocacy for the provision of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines to all developing countries. He reaffirmed that eradication of polio remained a key priority of the government. Thanking the Gates Foundation for its critical support in building Pakistan's emergency management capacity for polio eradication, the Prime Minister highlighted that anti-polio campaigns are being intensified across the country. Imran Khan and Bill Gates agreed to continue working together on the shared objectives of eradicating polio and combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

## PM appeals PDM to postpone rallies

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He viewed that the public gatherings would do nothing but to enhance the chances of spreading virus when the pressure at healthcare system including doctors and nurses was already on rise. He said the opposition parties could hold gatherings after two or three months for sake of people's lives for what the government had already closed down educational institutions, indoor wedding ceremonies and dining at restaurants. The prime minister said amid the opposition's public gatherings, it was difficult for the government to justify the enforcement of SOPs like social distancing on other sectors like businesses and mosques. He said the enforcement of SOPs during the second wave was already a challenge across the world as the people were resisting the governments' decisions. He said during the first wave, Pakistan had successfully navigated because the people had taken the precautions as a nation and showed discipline. He said the England and California were again under lockdown and Pakistan could avert any worst scenario just by adhering to the precautions. The prime minister said the indoor gatherings of the people during winter increased the chances of virus spread and any violation of the SOPs would put hospitals under immense pressure to make the country face difficult time. He said Pakistanis, as nation would have to take precautions with use of face mask above all. He told the people that India had faced around 150,000 deaths and around 400 people were dying a day in Iran. "(Therefore) We will have to assist ourselves if we need Allah's assistance," he remarked

## PCB Selection Committee likely to be named next week

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The new Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Selection Committee is likely to be named next week before the first Twenty20 International between Pakistan and New Zealand is played. Head coach Misbah-ul-Haq's tenure as Chief Selector of the national cricket team ended on November 30 after he resigned from the position earlier this year in October.

Following Misbah's exit, PCB had also reportedly discarded the National Selection Committee comprising provincial coaches. The board has decided to reinstate the traditional selection committee consisting of a Chief Selector and three members. While the regional coaches won't be officially a part of the new selection panel, they will still be consulted by the selectors.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi addressed at the concluding session of a panel discussion on "the plight of the women in IIOJK" at ministry of foreign affairs. — DNA

## EU, UK talks go nowhere

The estranged allies are bitterly at odds over fisheries, a topic politically sensitive for France, agreeing on ways to settle future trade disputes and protecting against price dumping from lower production standards

DNA

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the European Union's chief executive gave themselves until the end of the weekend to seal a new trade pact after failing to overcome persistent rifts over a "frank" and "lively" dinner of turbot on Wednesday. Following Brexit, Britain drops out of the EU's trading orbit in three weeks. Failure to agree on new rules to govern everything from trade to energy ties would snarl borders, shock financial markets and sow chaos through supply chains in a world already grappling with the economic cost of COVID-19.

"We agreed that the (negotiating) teams should immediately reconvene to try to resolve these essential issues," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said after the dinner, which she described as "lively and interesting". "We will come to a decision by the end of the weekend," she said, adding that EU and UK positions remained "far apart". With fears running high of a chaotic no-deal finale to the five-year Brexit crisis, a senior UK government source said the leaders' discussion in Brussels was "frank". "Very large gaps remain between

the two sides and it is still unclear whether these can be bridged," said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity. They added Johnson did not "want to leave any route to a possible deal untested" after the premier earlier in the day warned the EU to budge or brace for the most damaging split on December 31 as Britain completes its transition out of the bloc. The estranged allies are bitterly at odds over fisheries, a topic politically sensitive for France, agreeing on ways to settle future trade disputes and protecting against price dumping from lower production standards. Around \$1 trillion in annual trade — currently free

from tariffs and quotas — is at stake if there is no agreement. Johnson said earlier on Wednesday that Brussels wanted Britain to comply with new EU laws in the future or be automatically punished, and that the bloc was insisting that London give up sovereign control over UK fishing waters. "I don't believe that those are terms that any prime minister of this country should accept," he told the British parliament, to cheers from politicians in his Conservative Party. He said "a good deal" could still be done if the EU scrapped its demands, but that Britain would prosper with or without a trade deal with the 27-country bloc.

But German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the EU's most powerful leader, told the Bundestag lower house of parliament earlier in the day the EU would not risk the integrity of its single market of 450 million consumers to accommodate Britain. "We must have a level playing field, not just for today but for tomorrow and beyond..." Otherwise, unfair competition conditions arise to which we cannot subject our companies," she said of the so-called "ratchet clause" through which the EU is seeking to commit Britain to upgrade in sync labour, social and environmental standards, as well as state aid rules for corporate state subsidies.

## Israel, Morocco agree to normalise relations

DNA

RABAT: Israel and Morocco agreed on Thursday to normalise relations in a deal brokered with the help of the United States, making Morocco the fourth Arab country to set aside hostilities with Israel in the past four months. As part of the agreement, US President Donald Trump agreed to recognise Morocco's sovereignty

over the Western Sahara, where there has been a decades-old territorial dispute with Morocco-backed Polisario Front, a breakaway movement that seeks to establish an independent state in the territory. Trump sealed the agreement in a phone call on Thursday with Morocco's King Mohammed VI, a senior US official said. Morocco is the fourth country since August to strike a

deal aimed at normalising relations with Israel. The others were the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan. Palestinians have been critical of the normalisation deals, saying Arab countries have set back the cause of peace by abandoning a long-standing demand that Israel give up land for a Palestinian state before it can receive recognition. Under the agreement, Morocco will establish full dip-

lomatic relations and resume official contacts with Israel, grant overflights, and also direct flights to and from Israel for all Israelis. "They are going to reopen their liaison offices in Rabat and Tel Aviv immediately with the intention to open embassies. And they are going to promote economic cooperation between Israeli and Moroccan companies," White House senior adviser Jared Kushner told reporters.

## Pakistani children displays arts works at Shanghai art fair

BEIJING: Over 200 art works by children from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states including Pakistan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, India and Uzbekistan reflecting the "Shanghai Spirit" was displayed at the Shanghai Art Fair. SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov attended the opening ceremony of the SCO children's art exhibition which is part of Shanghai Art Fair 2020. The SCO pavilion was easily the largest venue at the event, taking up more than 300 square metres of the National Exhibition and Convention Centre in the centre of Shanghai. On the first day alone, more than 20,000 visitors were able to enjoy the children's paintings themed, "The world through the eyes of children and Rallying against the epidemic, protecting our common home," according to a statement issued by SCO Secretariat here. Opening the event, SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov focused on the particular importance of holding such events during a period when cultural interaction is disrupted due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. He noted the need to support and encourage children's love of art in all forms: "It is gratifying that the younger generation in the

SCO, from an early age, shares the principles of mutual support and calls for solidarity. The world is interconnected more than ever and solidarity and co-operation are key to defeating a virus that knows no borders. "Organising such exhibitions, we give children an idea of the cultural diversity across the SCO countries, encourage their interest in art and the right perception of current issues, and strengthen the bridges of friendship, contributing to the continuity of the dialogue of generations, the Secretary-General said. The event included a colourful demonstration of the traditional tea ceremony. After the ceremony, the participants visited other pavilions at the fair and saw more than 100 works by artists from 35 countries. The SCO pavilion at the Shanghai Art Fair 2020 was set up by a partner of the SCO Secretariat for cultural and humanitarian cooperation — the Shanghai Art Fair Company and Yunnan Shanghe Culture and Sport, with support from the People's Government of Shanghai. The Shanghai Art Fair was founded in 1997 by the Shanghai Culture Development Foundation and has been held annually since then. The event has gained status as a famous international art exhibition and is dedicated to compliance with top international standards. — APP



Queenstown: Day 2 of national team, Shaheens training in Queenstown. — DNA

## Indian govt offers concessions to farmers

"The government is ready to consider any additional objections of the farmers if they have any," the minister told reporters. The ultimate aim of the legislation, he said, was to increase farmers' income. "Through these laws the government has eased restrictions on private investment in the agricultural sector," Tomar said

DNA

NEW DELHI: India's agriculture minister said on Thursday the government was ready to consider further changes to divisive reforms that have triggered the biggest protests by farmers in years. Narendra Singh Tomar urged farmers' leaders to come in for another round of talks to end the impasse over new agricultural legislation the government says was

meant to overhaul antiquated procurement procedures and open up the market. Huge crowds have been out on the streets around Delhi since November demanding the government repeal the laws that they say will eventually dismantle India's regulated markets and leave them at the mercy of private buyers. Protest leaders have threatened to intensify their demonstrations from Saturday by blocking national highways and by boycotting

public events held by leaders of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party. "The government is ready to consider any additional objections of the farmers if they have any," the minister told reporters. The ultimate aim of the legislation, he said, was to increase farmers' income. "Through these laws the government has eased restrictions on private investment in the agricultural sector," Tomar said. The current system of pro-

curement where the state set prices would continue, he added. Farmers on Wednesday rejected earlier compromises from the government, including a promise that private market places could be taxed by the state governments at the same rate as state markets. Modi's reforms, voted through in parliament in September with little debate, have particularly angered politically influential farmers groups in

the crop-growing states of Punjab and Haryana. Small farmers fear that once big corporate players enter the market, they will lose government guarantees on prices. "There is no mention of providing legal assurance for the minimum support price for the procurement of crops," Yogendra Yadav, an opposition leader who is taking part in the protests, told Mirror Now TV channel on Thursday.

## CPEC a flagship project of Pak, China

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SAPM mentioned that purpose of economic outreach is coordination among various relevant federal ministries, provincial departments and others and for achievement of targets. The Chinese Ambassador said that Pakistan need to develop Special Economic Zones (SEZs) being set up under the transformative CPEC. Pakistan has special relations and comprehensive strategic partnership with China. The SAPM underlined the need for China and Pakistan to constantly give message to the world that we stand united against all challenges. Both sides also agreed to increase collaboration among think tanks of their countries and to devise a plan for this purpose.

## Fehmida hails Chinese help

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diplomacy, Dr Fehmida Mirza said Sports Diplomacy brings nations and peoples closer. DrFehmida Mirza said that Pakistan can learn a lot from the Chinese model of Economic Zones and for the creation of successful economic zones, the establishment of a strong local government system is a sine qua non. Through Sports diplomacy, Pakistan and China can start exchange programs of athletes and coaches. These initiatives should be incorporated in the CPEC phase-II projects. These initiatives will further ossify people to people relation of both countries.

## FO slams Indian falsehood

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network of fake media outlets, think tanks and NGOs serving Indian interests and involved in amplifying malicious content against Pakistan. He said India is not only spreading disinformation but also abusing international institutions in its desire to malign Pakistan. ZahidHafeez said such Indian ploys of spreading misinformation are doomed to fail. He said by spreading falsehoods, India can neither cast a shadow on the international stature of Pakistan nor can divert the attention of the international community from its horrendous human rights record. ZahidHafeez said instead of wasting more time in peddling falsehoods and fake news, India is advised to put its own house in order and take care of its own issues of poverty, grave human rights violations, exploitation of minority rights and rising radicalism. The spokesperson said the world should take notice of the Indian disinformation campaign and Pakistan will raise this issue at every level. ZahidHafeez said Pakistan has already put forth irrefutable evidence extensively documenting India's active planning, promoting, abetting, financing and executing terrorist activities in Pakistan. He said publication of the recent report by the EU group only substantiates Pakistan's position in front of the international community. Responding to a question about recent threats from New Delhi, the spokesperson said Pakistan has consistently been apprising the world about the possibility of India resorting to false flag operation against Pakistan. He said we forewarn the world community yet again. He said our armed forces are fully vigilant and ready to respond to any misadventure or miscalculation by India.

## Kohli consolidates top spot in ICC ODI Rankings

ISLAMABAD: India skipper Virat Kohli has consolidated his No.1 spot in the latest MRF Tyres International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's ODI Batting Rankings issued on Thursday. India captain Virat Kohli's two half-centuries in the recently concluded ODI series against Australia have cemented his spot at the top of the MRF Tyres ICC Men's ODI Batting Rankings. Despite missing the ODI series owing to a hamstring injury, his compatriot Rohit Sharma remains at number two, five points ahead of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam, who is third. During the first ODI in Sydney, India batsman Hardik Pandya missed out narrowly on becoming the third batsman to score a century in the match following Australia's Aaron Finch and Steve Smith. — APP



## Briefs

## Canada approves Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine

OTTAWA: Canada on Wednesday approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, days after Britain became the first country to greenlight and roll it out. "Today, Canada reached a critical milestone in its fight against COVID-19 with the authorization of the first COVID-19 vaccine," Health Canada said in a statement. The vaccine, it said, had undergone a fast-tracked review while it was still in clinical trials, which concluded that it met "stringent safety, efficacy and quality requirements for use in Canada." Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Monday that as many as 249,000 doses would be received in December, with the first shipments to 14 sites across Canada arriving as early as next week and people receiving shots a day or two later. Health care workers and vulnerable populations including the elderly are to be the first to receive it. By September 2021, Trudeau said, most Canadians should be inoculated. Thousands of Britons became the first in the Western world to receive the vaccine on Tuesday at the start of the biggest global vaccination drive in more than half a century. The vaccine — which proved to be 95% effective in late-stage clinical trials — is administered in two doses, 21 days apart. British health officials, however, warned on Wednesday that anyone with a history of significant allergic reactions should not get it right away, after two people suffered allergic reactions and needed treatment. US giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech called Canada's interim order for its emergency use "a historic moment in our collective fight against the COVID-19 pandemic" and "a major step towards returning to normalcy in Canada."

## Jury convicts man in Minnesota mosque bombing

## FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: A jury convicted the leader of an Illinois anti-government militia group of civil rights and hate crime charges in the 2017 bombing of a Minnesota mosque. Michael Hari, 49, was found guilty on all five counts. They include damaging property because of its religious character, forcibly obstructing the free exercise of religious beliefs, conspiracy to commit felonies with fire and explosives, using a destructive device in a crime of violence, and possessing an unregistered destructive device. Prosecutors outlined Hari's hatred for Muslims as his motivation for the bombing during the trial, citing anti-Islam excerpts from Hari's manifesto known as The White Rabbit Handbook, named after his militia group. The number of far-right militias increased during the course of former President Barack Obama's time in office, according to advocacy group the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The total number has decreased since Trump's election in 2016, but the SPLC in 2019 recorded 181 active militias in the US.

## Immigrants in US on temporary status get extension

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration said that it will allow immigrants from six countries to extend their legal US residency under a temporary status for nine months while courts consider its effort to end the programme. President Donald Trump has long sought to terminate the programme, which allows immigrants from countries devastated by war or natural disaster to legally live in the US. President-elect Joe Biden has promised "an immediate review" of it once he is in office and has said he will pursue legislation for long-term residents to remain in the US and seek citizenship. The Department of Homeland Security announced the extension in a notice in the Federal Register. The extension applies to more than 300,000 people from countries including El Salvador and Haiti who are in the United States on what's formally known as Temporary Protected Status.

## Azerbaijan holds military parade dedicated to victory

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his wife Emine Erdogan attended the Victory parade



## DNA

BAKU: A Victory parade dedicated to Azerbaijan's victory in the Patriotic War was held in Baku's Azadlig Square on December 10. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, first lady Mehriban Aliyeva, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his wife Emine Erdogan are attending the Victory parade. Azerbaijani Deputy Defence Minister Lieutenant General Karim

Valiyev who was awarded with Zafar Order, is the commander of the Victory parade dedicated to the magnificent Victory in Azerbaijan's Patriotic War - "The Iron Fist" operation. The parade will feature more than 3,000 personnel, about 150 military hardware, including the state-of-the-art military equipment, missiles and artillery systems, air defence systems, as well as warships and boats. The parade will also feature part of the military booty seized by the Azerbaijani

Army from the destroyed enemy during the Patriotic War. A military orchestra played the "Azerbaijan fanfare". Azerbaijani Defence Minister Colonel General Zakir Hasanov reported to Azerbaijani President, Victorious Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Ilham Aliyev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The heads of state saluted the soldiers. A military orchestra played the national anthems of the Republic of

Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan. At 1345 Baku time, President Aliyev delivered a speech at the parade. At 1402, Erdogan addressed the parade. The parade is being held in Azerbaijan, following a victorious 44-day war to liberate the previously occupied lands of Azerbaijan by Armenian armed forces. The war ended with the Russia-brokered peace deal signed on November 10 by the Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian leaders. A total of 100 Azerbaijani civilians were killed in

Armenia's indiscriminate attacks. As part of its counter-offensive operations, Azerbaijan liberated Armenian-occupied regions and cities. Some 2,783 Azerbaijani servicemen, who fought for the country's territorial integrity, were killed in the war. The work to identify 103 servicemen through the DNA analysis is underway. More than a hundred Azerbaijani servicemen are considered missing. Presently, 1,245 Azerbaijani servicemen are being treated in hospitals.

## India responsible for current military standoff: China

BEIJING: A Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson on Thursday reiterated that the India side was totally responsible for the current standoff between the troops of two countries on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). "The merits of the situation at the border area are very clear and the responsibility totally lies with the Indian side," Hua Chunying said in response to remarks of Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar about China-India border situation, during her regular briefing held here. She dismissed Indian accusation that China had violated multiple agreements signed between the two sides and made it clear that the Chinese side had been strictly observing the agreements signed between the two sides and committed to resolving the border issue through dialogue. "We are committed to safeguarding regional peace and

tranquillity at border areas," she added. Hua Chunying said that in the meantime, the Chinese side was determined in safeguarding its territorial sovereignty, adding, "We hope India can work with us and contribute to solidarity, cooperation and common development." "To yet another question, she said, "About the border issue like I said the situation happened at the border area the merits of it are very clear." The spokesperson said that China had been observing strictly the agreements between the two sides and committed to resolving the border issue through dialogue and safeguarding peace and tranquillity at the border area. "But like all sovereign states we are determined in safeguarding our territorial integrity. So on the Indian side, I think this is a serious question on what it should reflect upon. — APP

## 'Will have to choose form of gov acceptable for all'

## DNA

BISHKEK: A videoconference was held between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the CCC Republic H.E. Mr. Ruslan A. Kazakbayev with the Minister for Cooperation with the Countries of Eastern and Southeast Europe, Central Asia, North and South America of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development of the United Kingdom, H.E. Ms. Wendy Morton. H.E. Ms. Wendy Morton expressed her interest in the development of the internal political situation in Kyrgyzstan. H.E. Mr. Ruslan A. Kazakbayev informed the interlocutor that the situation in the country is stable, the ongoing political processes have returned to the legal field, all branches of



the government of the Kyrgyz Republic are legitimate. H.E. Mr. Ruslan A. Kazakbayev noted that the multinational people of Kyrgyzstan are the only source of power in the country. He will have to choose a form of government acceptable for the country, parliamentary, presidential or mixed. Currently, there are active discussions and discussions in society of all issues relat-

ed to changes in the new Constitution. The events of October 5-10 showed that the freedom-loving people of Kyrgyzstan will never turn away from the democratic path of development. He expressed the hope that the friendly partners of the Kyrgyz Republic in the EU countries and in the UK clearly understand and understand the situation in the country. He also noted

that on January 10, 2021, the presidential elections will be held in Kyrgyzstan, and the subsequent constitutional reform. Further, the sides discussed the preparation for the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-26), which will be held from November 1 to 12, 2021 in Glasgow, Great Britain. H.E. Ms. Wendy Morton, expressed hope for the participation of the Kyrgyz side in the work of this Conference. In turn, H.E. Mr. Ruslan A. Kazakbayev informed H.E. Ms. Wendy Morton about the work carried out in Kyrgyzstan aimed at the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement, ratified by the Kyrgyz Republic in November 2019.

## China's AI company eyes smart control of COVID in Pakistan

BEIJING: China's leading AI company will launch an AI Outbound Calling System for Epidemic Prevention and Control in Pakistan against COVID-19. "We are to launch an AI Outbound Calling System for Epidemic Prevention and Control in Pakistan next month as the second wave of coronavirus grips Pakistan," noted iFLYTEK, a Chinese company well-known for its AI products and their sector-based applications, while attending the 12th China Overseas Investment Fair (COIFAIR for short) recently. As per iFLYTEK, they are now collaborating with Pakistan's National Center of Artificial Intelligence (NCAI) and National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) to work on the AI Outbound Calling System for Epidemic Prevention and Control,

which had revealed rapid and efficient actions of COVID-19 control during the pandemic period in Wuhan, China and South Korea, according to China Economic Net (CEN) on Thursdays. Badar U Zaman, the Commercial Counselor of Pakistani Embassy in China, lauded iFLYTEK's effort to explore the Pakistani market. "Pakistan is a big market and iFLYTEK's products are doing very well. I visited the iFLYTEK before and in addition to translation machines, I was introduced with different technologies they are offering. They are very active in education, healthcare and translation. "iFLYTEK is bringing China and the world together and it is going to get a great success in Pakistan," said Badar U Zaman, adding that Pakistan is very quick at adapting new technologies. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Delegation of RCCI led by President Mohammad Nasir Mirza, Group Leader Sohail Altaf, SVP Osman Ashraf, Former President Asad Mashadi and former SVP Hafeez Shiekh visited Chairman RDA for discussion on Ring Road project. RCCI elaborated her stance for land acquisition, location and area of economic zone. Both organisations assured their cooperation to make this project a success. — DNA

## US Senate backs massive arms sales to UAE

Backers of the sale described the UAE as an important US partner in the Middle East. Opponents criticised the UAE for its involvement in the war in Yemen, a conflict described by the United Nations as one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States Senate has defeated an effort to block the Trump administration's sale of \$23bn in advanced fighter jets and drones to the United Arab Emirates. President Donald Trump had issued a formal threat to veto congressional efforts to block the planned weapons transfer, which is tied to the UAE's normalisation of ties with Israel under the "Abraham Accords". Two procedural votes failed to gain a majority of the 100-member Senate, effectively stopping the effort to block the sale of advanced F-35 fighter jets and Reaper drones. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said the

resolutions seeking to block the arms sale fell far short of the two-thirds support that would be needed to overcome a presidential veto. "It's a little baffling to suggest that, now of all times, a protest gesture with no chance of obtaining a veto-proof majority is a valuable use of the Senate's time," McConnell said in Senate floor remarks. Backers of the sale described the UAE as an important US partner in the Middle East. Opponents criticised the UAE for its involvement in the war in Yemen, a conflict described by the United Nations as one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The Trump administration told Congress on November 10 that it had approved the sale to the UAE of weapons made by General

Atomics, Lockheed Martin Corp and Raytheon Technologies Corp. The deal includes the F-35, the world's most advanced fighter jet; more than 14,000 bombs and munitions; and the second-largest sale of US drones to a single country. The White House said the sales directly support US foreign policy and national security objectives by "enabling the UAE to deter increasing Iranian aggressive behaviour and threats" in the wake of its recent deal with Israel. The veto threat was expected. US law requires congressional review of major arms deals, and lets senators force votes on resolutions of disapproval. But to become effective, the resolutions needed to pass the Republican-led Senate and Democrat-

icled House of Representatives, and garner two-thirds majorities in both chambers to survive Trump's veto pen. Senator Chris Murphy, a leading critic of the arms sale, said on Twitter the Trump administration's move to jam the transaction through quickly, without giving Congress time to review it, was designed to tie the hands of incoming President-elect Joe Biden. Two resolutions seeking to block the sale of F-35s and Reaper drones, failed by votes of 47 to 49, and 46 to 50. All but two Democrats voted to block the deal. One Republican broke ranks to vote against the sale. Biden won the November 3 election and is expected to review the sales. The House of Representatives, which is controlled by

Democrats, is likely to vote in approval of the resolutions. Senator Bob Menendez, a Democrat who forced the Senate votes, argued a US arms sale of this magnitude — without a broader strategy in the Middle East — risks starting a new arms race in an unstable region. "If we really want to talk about countering Iran, we need a comprehensive diplomatic strategy," Menendez said. "Arming partners with complex weapon systems that could take years — years — to come online, isn't a serious strategy to confront the very real and timely threats from Iran," Menendez said. Once the sale goes through, the UAE would become the first Arab nation to acquire the F-35.

## Finance ministry clarifies news report

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: An article appeared in a section of press with arbitrary and selective financial comparison between the current government and the previous regime. The article compares apples with oranges without taking into account a holistic picture. The writer termed the tenure of a previous regime as a period of high growth, low inflation, increased per capita GDP, low interest rates, increasing tax revenues and higher investments. The fact of the matter is that in FY 2018 Pakistan faced multiple fiscal, external and real sector challenges. For instance, the trade deficit was 9.8% of GDP, an overvalued exchange rate had consumed precious foreign exchange reserves, and twin deficits had reached a record level. Consumption led growth had created a balance of payment crisis as well as fiscal imbalance. The current rise in inflation could be traced back to the delay in policy adjustments required in the FY2018. As a result, the present government had to impose a strict financial discipline, curtail excessive government expenditure, increase revenue collection, introduce market driven exchange rate, remove large tax exemptions, discourage imports and stop borrowing from the State Bank of Pakistan.

## Iran blacklists US envoy to Yemen

## FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran imposed sanctions on the United States ambassador to Yemen a day after the administration of US President Donald Trump blacklisted Tehran's envoy to the embattled country. In a statement late on Wednesday, Iran's foreign ministry said Christopher Henzel was blacklisted for his "pivotal role in the occurrence of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen". The ongoing crisis is "the biggest tragedy of the century" perpetrated by a US-led coalition that wishes to break up Yemen, it said. Henzel was designated under a law approved by the Iranian parliament in late July 2017 that is aimed at combating the "violations of human rights and the adventurism and terroristic acts of the US in the region". According to the Iranian foreign ministry, Henzel had an "effective participation" in financing and arming the Saudi-Emirati-led coalition, and violated human rights of the people of Yemen through imposition and enforcing of sanctions. The sanctions come one day after the outgoing Trump administration kept up its "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran by sanctioning Hasan Irlu, Iran's ambassador to Yemen. The US described Irlu as an official in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force and "the Iranian regime's envoy to Houthi rebels" in Yemen.

## ADB predicts a less economic dip for Asia

## MONITORING DESK

Developing Asia is on course to contract this year, but probably less than previously thought as China's economy enjoys a faster than expected recovery, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said on Thursday. Economic growth in developing Asia, a group of 45 nations in the Asia-Pacific, is expected to shrink 0.4 percent this year, the ADB said in an update to September's Asian Development Outlook report, short of its earlier estimate for a 0.7 percent decline. For 2021, the region is forecast to grow 6.8 percent, the bank said. This year's expected decline — the result of lockdowns imposed to tackle COVID-19 — would be the region's first in nearly six decades. The ADB said the prolonged pandemic, which has infected nearly 68 million people and killed more than 1.5 million, remains a risk. Developing Asia's subregions are forecast to contract this year, except for East Asia, which is expected to grow 1.6 percent, higher than earlier projected thanks to faster-than-expected recoveries in China and Taiwan. China, where the coronavirus first emerged a year ago, is projected to grow 2.1 percent this year, faster than the ADB's September estimate of 1.8 percent. The ADB kept its 7.7 percent growth forecast for the world's second-largest economy for 2021.



## Briefs

## Afghan female journalist killed in Jalalabad

JALALABAD: A female television journalist and her driver were shot and killed in the eastern province of Nangarhar in Afghanistan on Thursday, an incident that underscores an increasing trend of violence against journalists in the country. Malala Maiwand, a reporter at the Enikass Radio and TV and a women rights journalist, was killed along with her driver in an attack on their vehicle in Jalalabad, taking the total number of journalists and media workers killed this year in Afghanistan to 10. "She was on the way to office when the incident happened," said Attaullah Khogiani, spokesperson for the provincial governor. Maiwand is not the first of her family to be targeted. Five years ago, her mother, also an activist, was killed by unknown gunmen. Enikass has also been targeted before, with its owner, Engineer Zalmay, kidnapped for ransom in 2018. — Agencies

## Government discontinues Rs25,000 prize bonds

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has discontinued the Rs25,000 denomination prize bonds with immediate effect. It will no longer issue these bonds while those in possession can be cashed or replaced with other bonds by May 31, 2021. If you currently have this particular bond, you have till May 2021 to avail one of three choices. You can cash it any time, convert it into either a Special Savings Certificate or Defence Savings Certificate or convert it into a Premium Prize Bond. People who have these Rs25,000 bonds can cash it or convert them to premium prize bonds of the same denomination by the given deadline. Alternatively, they can get them replaced with Special Savings Certificates or Defence Savings Certificates. If your prize bond has won the draw, you can obtain the prize money by submitting the prize bond to the SBP along with a copy of your identity card.

## Chinese traders feel Pakistan as home: Zukai

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Pakistan is the top priority of Chinese traders. We never feel like we are in another country; instead, we feel it as our home," said Zukai, chief executive of Chinese company Kai Jing and Mawin Jun, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. Pakistani businessmen and institutions also provide full support to Chinese businessmen, he expressed these views during meeting here with Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Mian Anjum Nisar.

## Pakistan-China TCM training project kicks off in Qingdao

"Pakistan has been a consistent friend to China. Earlier this year, when China was fighting against the epidemic, Pakistan, as China's 'iron Brother', overcame its own difficulties, mobilized all sectors and actively sent PPE's to China"

DNA

BEIJING: The opening ceremony of the International Training Program "China Pakistan Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Technical Training Course 2020" kicked off in the Digital Classroom of Qingdao Binhai University, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The TCM Training project is one of the 49 national projects approved by the Ministry of Education and the Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges. It is also the first overseas TCM Technical Training course conducted by Qingdao Binhai University. According to the report, at the opening ceremony, Vice President of Qingdao Binhai University, Liu Lianxin pointed out that as one of China's national quintessence, TCM has rooted in China's traditional culture for thousands of years, it is a profound and sophisticated science. The school invited experts in the field to make sure that the content of this training course is rich and diverse. He further expressed that Pakistani students are welcomed to study in Qingdao Binhai University for the degree of TCM.



"Pakistan has been a consistent friend to China. Earlier this year, when China was fighting against the epidemic, Pakistan, as China's 'iron Brother', overcame its own difficulties, mobilized all sectors and actively sent PPE's to China, which the Chinese people will never forget", he added.

Vice President of Pakistan College of Physicians and Surgeons & Ex-Principal of SIMS, Prof. Ayaz Mahmood expressed his gratitude to Qingdao Binhai University for the careful organization of this training event, emphasized that both China and Pakistan have ancient civilizations and profound histories, as

well as splendid and rich cultural traditions. This training event offered a great opportunity for Pakistani teachers and students, especially young students, to learn about Chinese and Pakistani culture and TCM. The 14-day training course on TCM techniques will be held online. It aims to explain the basic

theories and advanced practical knowledge of TCM to Pakistani teachers and students, with a theory plus practical training method. The content involves meridian and acupuncture General monographs, as well as various massage techniques, Tuna, moxibustion techniques, and compression techniques.

## Pak has great energy sector potential: Christian Turner



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Petroleum Nadeem Babar Thursday hailed the British companies for showing keen interest to invest in Pakistan's energy sector. "The government will welcome investment and the presence of British companies in the energy sector of Pakistan," he expressed these views while talking to UK High Commissioner in Pakistan Dr Christian Turner, who called on him here. According to a news release, the SAPM shared the structural reforms being carried out in the energy sector, especially in view of newly promulgated Renewable Energy Policy of Pakistan. He said the government had set ambitious targets to introduce 20 per cent renewable energy by 2025, and 30 per cent by end of 2030. "With an additional share of 30-40 percent hydel power generation, Pakistan will have the cleanest generation mix as a result." The SAPM apprised the envoy that the government was focusing on assembling and manufacturing of wind turbines and solar panels for renewable energy projects here in Pakistan in with collaboration some foreign companies. — DNA

## Azerbaijan envoy delivers lecture on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

The lecture was arranged by Rawalpindi Law College. The ambassador highlighted various aspects of the issue and how Azerbaijan armed forces valiantly fought and took its territory back from aggressor Armenia

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizade delivered a lecture titled "Settlement of international conflicts: Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, from diplomatic efforts to peace enforcement operation" dedicated to the death anniversary (December 12, 2003) of the National Leader of Azerbaijan. The lecture was arranged by Rawalpindi Law College. The ambassador highlighted various aspects of the issue and how Azerbaijan armed forces valiantly fought and took its territory back from aggressor Armenia. Later the staff of the college presented a shield to Ambassador Alizade and thanked him for gracing the occasion and sharing information with the participants.



## Ex-British advisor lauds Ehsaas program

Sir Michael Barber said the reforms pioneered by the team resulted in the rapid delivery of Emergency Cash to 12m households

ISLAMABAD: The government's Ehsaas program is delivering positive change for the people of Pakistan and has laid the foundations to become a global model for reducing poverty in the country. This was stated by Ex-Chief Advisor on Delivery to former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Sir Michael Barber in a report titled "The Ehsaas Programme: Shifting from Politics of Patronage to Politics of Performance," published by Delivery Associates, a globally respected firm working with governments across the world to achieve measurable developmental impact. Addressing a virtual news conference in Islamabad on Thursday, Sir Michael Barber said the mission of the Ehsaas is an important program for Pakistan in fighting against poverty which is contributing in protecting the most vulnerable segment of the society.

He said the Ehsaas team under the strong leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and supervision of Dr Sania Nishtar has made huge progress in just one year. Sir Michael Barber said the reforms and structural changes pioneered by the team resulted in the rapid delivery of Ehsaas Emergency Cash to 12 million households against the challenging and unprecedented backdrop of COVID-19. — DNA

## Shibli welcomes Michael's report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz Thursday extended his gratitude to a British education reformer Michael Barber for issuing a comprehensive report on the government's flagship project 'Ehsaas'. "Thank you very much Sir Michael Barber! You have been extremely kind and gave us your precious time to share with us your findings on (Ehsaas Programme) and guiding us in that regard," the minister told the media after the British reformer presented his report through a video link in a news briefing arranged jointly by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division. — DNA

## 'PDM resignations will not harm assembly'

DNA

LAHORE: Federal Railways Minister Sheikh Rasheed dismissed on Thursday the Opposition's threat to resign from the assembly, saying it wouldn't have any impact on the lower house of Parliament. "The resignation will not harm the assembly," Rasheed said while talking to the media in Lahore. He was also unfazed by the PDM's long march to Islamabad and told them they are welcome to the federal capital and the winters will be waiting for them. "[Prime Minister] Imran Khan has made an offer - come to the assembly and hold a dialogue," said

the railways minister, adding that if the Opposition should clarify who they want to speak to if not Imran Khan. "Those with whom you want to negotiate are against Nawaz Sharif's statement," said Rasheed. He added that "whatever" the situation maybe, it will not benefit the PDM. The minister said no politician closes the door to dialogue. He said he expects good news for Imran Khan after December 13. The railways minister also hoped that not all members of the Opposition will resign from their seats. He said if they resign, they will not get the "benefits" they are getting in jails and will be treated like "C Class" inmates.

## Haier installs cold chain devices for polio vaccine

DNA

BEIJING: Haier installed 2,184 cold chain devices for polio vaccine in Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. A service team of Haier Pakistan trained health workers on how to manage the 'cold chain' to keep vaccines safe during transportation and storage. Moreover, Haier Pakistan donated protective equipment and living supplies to the locals, including 50,000 face masks and 25,000 food bags with flour, rice, sugar and other necessities to the residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## COVID cases cross 46000, 56 more died in Pakistan

No COVID affected person was on ventilator in Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan, while 357 ventilators elsewhere in Pakistan were occupied

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: As many as 56 COVID-19 patients have lost their lives during the last 24 hours across the country out of which 36 were on ventilators. However, most deaths were reported in Punjab followed by Sindh during the last 24 hours, according to the latest update issued by the National Command & Operation Centre (NCOCC). The total 56 corona patients, who were under

treatment had lost their lives, out of them 51 in hospitals while five died out of hospital due to COVID-19 on Wednesday. The total active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan on Thursday were recorded 46,376 as 3138 more people tested positive for the deadly virus during the last 24 hours. No COVID affected person was on ventilator in Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan, while 357 ventilators elsewhere in Pakistan were occupied. The percentage of occupied vents in the four

major areas is Islamabad 48%, Peshawar 38% and in Lahore 36%. Similarly, the percentage of occupied oxygen beds in the four major areas was, Islamabad 61%, Rawalpindi 55%, Peshawar 51% and Multan 48%. Some 40,202 tests were conducted across the country on Wednesday, including 12,582 in Sindh, 15,405 in Punjab, 4,690 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 5,888 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 527 in Balochistan, 412 in Gilgit Baltistan (GB), and 698 in Azad Jammu

and Kashmir (AJK). Around 374,301 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count. Since the pandemic outbreak, a total of 429,280 cases were detected so far, including AJK 7,517, Balochistan 17,604, GB 4,765, ICT 33,695, KP 50,762, Punjab 125,250 and Sindh 189,687. About 8,603 deaths were recorded in country since the eruption of the contagion, including 3,099 in Sindh, 15 of them died in hospital and three out of hospital on Wednesday.

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