



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Briefs**

**President to inaugurate 23rd SDC**

**RANA FARRUKH**  
ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi will inaugurate the 23rd Sustainable Development Conference (SDC 2020), the flagship annual activity of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), on December 14, 2020. The mega event titled 'Sustainable Development in the Times of COVID-19' will be concluded on 17 December 2020 with the closing remarks by Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan. Conference is being held on a digital platform and interactive sessions can be attended by registering at www.sdpi.org/sdc.

**China says relations with Pak very strong**

**BEIJING:** China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners and the bilateral relations between the two countries have become even stronger in economic and trade development, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Hua Chunying said on Friday. "China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners. The bilateral relations have become even stronger in economic and trade development," she said in response to a question asked by APP.

**No pressure of resignations**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz has said the government will not come under any pressure because of the drama of resignations staged by the alliance of opposition parties. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad he said the opposition parties will never forward their resignations to the Speaker. Shibli said PDM will fail in their designs and they have no political future.

**Holiday Notice**

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

## India making false claims about vaccine

India is trying to build narrative that while Pakistan remains epicenter of terrorism, India is healing the world

NAVID MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to create so-called soft image India is desperately trying to win world sympathies falsely claiming it has the ability to cater to 50 per cent of global demand of Coronavirus vaccine. Reports suggest that Russia is all set to start deliveries of its vaccine Sputnik V to foreign markets with manufacturing in India, Brazil, South Korea and China and four other countries. Pfizer, the American company has already started supplying vaccine to various countries, the UK being the first one. UK has already started administering vaccine to its citizens. According to further details, India claims to provide 50 % of global demand for various vaccines; five COVID 19 vaccine candidates, including two indigenous are in clinical trials in India; Bharat Biotech's head has offered PH III trials to Pakistan. The company needs 20,000 volunteers. Independent sources confided to this scribe that India has started using vaccine diplomacy to the fullest in SAARC region and beyond and will try to build narrative that while Pakistan remains epicenter of

**Russian scholars term Sputnik 'risky'**

**DNA**  
MOSCOW: A group of researchers at prestigious Russian universities has criticized the development of the Russian anti-covid Sputnik V vaccine as "completely unacceptable" and "ridiculous." The criticisms were made in an open letter which raises new concerns about the lack of sufficient data on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. Experts say Russia's state-run Gamaleya Research Institute, which is rapidly developing the vaccine, has ignored requests to share data, despite public commitments to do so. terrorism, India is healing the world by providing COVID 19 vaccine. Nevertheless, the India move seems to have scuttled after its fake network exposed in Pakistan and elsewhere regarding spreading of false information and propaganda.

## PM Imran reshuffles federal cabinet

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant cabinet reshuffle, Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday changed portfolios of three ministers and appointed Abdul Hafeez Shaikh as the Minister of Finance. Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed has been given the portfolio of the Ministry of Interior while Ijaz Shah, who held the post of interior minister, has been given the Ministry of Narcotics Control. Ministry of Railways, formerly led by Ahmed, has been given to Azam Khan Swati. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, formerly finance advisor

who took oath as a federal minister earlier today, will now chair the Ministry of Finance. This the fourth federal cabinet reshuffle since the PTI government came into power three years ago. The move comes days after a division bench comprising Justice Aamir Farooq and Justice Ghulam Azam Qambrani of the Islamabad High Court ruled that the prime minister's advisors and special assistants have no executive authority vested in them to chair or become members of cabinet committees.

## World must take notice of Indian propaganda: FM

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday called upon the United Nations and the European Union to take notice of and initiate a probe into a massive disinformation and propaganda campaign being "run by India" to promote anti-Pakistan sentiment on an international level. He was addressing a press conference alongside Special Assistant

**Indian diplomat summoned over CFVs**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Friday summoned a senior Indian diplomat to record a strong protest on recent ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) by Indian forces and stressed compliance of the 2003 ceasefire understanding.



ISLAMABAD: Governer Punjab Chaudhry Sarwar calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

**NACTA issues threat alert**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) on Friday issued a threat alert against Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) public gathering in Lahore on December 13, saying that it could be attacked, media reported. According to an alert issued by the NACTA, attacks on the PDM leadership could be carried out in the next few days and the top-tier leadership of the opposition alliance could be assassinated. It issued directives to all concerned stakeholders for improving and tightening security arrangements for the PDM gathering and political leadership. "A meeting of the terror outfits was also held to plan an attack on opposition leadership," it said.

## PDM sets stage for 'a historic jalsa'

"We believe that the PDM's first phase has been successful, and after December 13, we will enter the second phase", said Bilawal

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: PPP chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday that a historic jalsa would take place in Lahore on December 13, and Pakistan Democratic Movement would send a strong message to Islamabad. "Just like Karachi, Peshawar, and Gujranwala, Lahore will also send a strong message to Islamabad [proving] that our puppet prime minister stands alone [in the capital]," he said, addressing a press conference alongside PML-N vice-president Maryam Nawaz. The PPP chair, stressing



that the people of Pakistan are in favour of democratic forces, said that the government and its "facilitators" should know that they will not be able to stand between the masses and their aspirations for long. "We believe that the PDM's first phase has been successful, and after December 13, we will enter the second phase."

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**Remittances remain above \$2b**

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan maintained a strong momentum in workers' remittance for a the sixth consecutive month in November with over \$2billion, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported on Friday. Workers' remittance increased 28.4% year-on-year in November 2020, pushing the cumulative flows to \$11.8 billion during the July-November FY21 with a rise of 26.9% compared to same period last year. "This significant growth reflects continued government and SBP efforts to formalise remittances under Pakistan Remittances Initiative (PRI), growing use of digital channels amid limited international travel, orderly exchange market conditions and improved global economic activity," said the central bank.

## Pakistan ensures KSA its support for Olympics 2030

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Al Maliki on Friday called on Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination, Dr Fehmida Mirza in her office in Islamabad. Dr Fehmida Mirza warmly welcomed the Saudi Ambassador and discussed matters pertaining to sports, tourism and other affairs of mutual interest. Saudi Ambassador briefed the Federal Minister that Saudi Arabia is planning to host Olympics 2030. Dr Fehmida Mirza ensured all-out support from Pakistan for

## PM Imran for protection of tourist spots

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has underlined the need for protection and preservation of environment of tourist spots in the country. He was addressing a ceremony in Islamabad on Friday after witnessing an agreement signing between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and World Bank for ECO Tourism. Addressing a ceremony in Islamabad today PM said the model of development of tourist resorts should be such which should benefit and local population and provide livelihood opportunities to them. This he said will make our tourism sector sustainable and help in preserving the tourist spots.

## 'Pakistan-Iran cooperation vital for region'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has said that Pakistan and Iran are brotherly Islamic countries which have strong mutual ties based upon brotherhood and Islamic fraternity. Talking to Iranian Ambassador Syed Muhammad Ali Hussain in Islamabad today, he said enhancing ties between both countries would harness regional development and prosperity. The Iranian Ambassador said his country values high ties with Pakistan and is desirable to enhance these ties on the basis of trade and business. He appreciated the role of Pakistan for bringing regional peace.

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## European Union provides € 58m for water security

The announcement follows the signing of two new financing agreements by Noor Ahmed, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The European Union will provide EUR 58 million (PKR 11.1 Billion) to support the Government of Balochistan in its efforts to address water scarcity and improve access and quality of primary and middle-level education in the province. The announcement follows the signing of two new financing agreements by Mr. Noor Ahmed, Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Ms. Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan. The five-year Euro 40 Million programme on water governance - to be implemented from 2021 - will contribute to the transition in the arid regions of Balochistan towards sustainable, low water in-

tensive agricultural and livestock farming systems. The support will include incentives for farmers to use water more efficiently and unleash the potential of livestock by supporting sustainable rangelands management, with a special focus on the most vulnerable groups. This will not only contribute to improved productivity by making better use of scarce water resources, but also help improve ground-water recharge in the medium to long-term. The programme will also focus on strengthening public extension services to ensure farmers receive appropriate support on water for agriculture and livestock. The programme will be implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) in collaboration with local partners.

The European Union will also provide EUR 18 million (PKR 3.4 million) in support of the Government of Balochistan's efforts to strengthen the education systems in the province. The 'Balochistan Education Support Programme II', will work towards ensuring that all children have access to basic education and improving the quality of education. The four-year programme will be implemented by the United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF. It will involve local communities in school development planning, help enhance the training of teachers, and support stronger education institutions. In the COVID-19 context, the programme will also focus on SOPs for safe school reopening and operation, as well as on enrolment and retention drives in targeted

districts to avoid massive drop-outs due to the pandemic. The programme will also introduce innovative elements, such as work on inclusion of parallel education systems in mainstream education policy. Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, Androulla Kaminara said, "These new programmes are the result of a sustained collaboration between the European Union, the Government of Balochistan, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs to tackle the substantial development challenges in the province and unleash its potential. Balochistan is one of the regions of Pakistan at greater risk from climate change, which threatens livelihoods. Also considering the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19, it is crucial to invest in low water agriculture to reduce poverty and

malnutrition. In the education sector the EU is renewing its commitment to helping children, especially the most vulnerable, to receive an education and be able to follow their dreams, contributing to a better future for Pakistan." Secretary EAD, Mr. Noor Ahmed hailed the EU and Pakistan's long-term partnership and appreciated the EU's support in Rural development, Education, Good Governance and Rule of Law under the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP 2014-20). Ambassador of EU reiterated commitment of European Union to broaden and deepen the development cooperation with Pakistan, and to launch next Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-27 which will primarily be focused on priorities of the Government of Pakistan.

## Briefs

## ATC seeks final challan in motorway case

DNA

LAHORE: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Lahore on Friday ordered police to present the final challan in the motorway gang rape case. Abid Malhi, Shafiqat Bagga, the prime suspects in the case were presented before the court by the police after their judicial remand ended today.

The hearing was presided over by the AC Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta. The court directed the police to present a complete challan of the case and adjourned the hearing until December 24. On September 9, the woman along with her children was waiting for help on the Lahore-Sialkot motorway after her car ran out of fuel when she was forcefully brought out of the car at gunpoint and gang-raped in Gujjarpora area on the outskirts of the provincial.

## Three more doctors die of coronavirus in Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: Three doctors have lost their lives battling with the novel coronavirus in Karachi, during the last 24 hours. According to the Sindh health department, a retired doctor of Jinnah Hospital, Dr Tahir Amin, Dr Waqar-ud-din who was working at a private clinic in the port city and former DG health Dr Abdul Sattar lost their lives to the COVID-19. Meanwhile, as many as 103 healthcare workers have lost their lives while battling the deadly outbreak of novel coronavirus in the country. According to statistics provided released by the Health Ministry, so far 10,925 healthcare workers have contracted the COVID-19, including 6,791 doctors and 1,360 nurses and 2,774 staff of the hospitals. Overall 10,038 healthcare workers have recovered their health from the virus while 666 are under isolation after testing positive for COVID-19. As per the province-wise break, in Punjab, 1,600 doctors, 400 nurses and 638 healthcare staff contracted the coronavirus. In KP, 1,260 doctors, 409 nurses and 1,153 health staff were diagnosed with the pandemic. Similarly, 2,221 doctors, 407 nurses and 519 health staff tested COVID-19 positive, the report said. 516 doctors, 32 nurses and 93 healthcare workers in Balochistan, 794 doctors, 68 nurses and 106 healthcare staff in Islamabad, 121 doctors, two nurses, and 89 health staff in Gilgit-Baltistan and 279 doctors, 42 nurses and 176 healthcare staff were diagnosed with the coronavirus.

## Murad vows to strengthen Sindh police

DNA

LARKANA: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed Inspector General of Police to further strengthen provincial police by providing them latest equipment and gadgets and also impart them latest training for performing different duties, including handling riots and fighting against terrorists and bandits. "Sindh has the honour to have the oldest police force in South Asia, therefore our police must be well trained, well-equipped, well behaved and a thoroughly professional." This he said while addressing a programme organized to distribute offer letters among the newly Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) pass Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASD) here at Police Training School Larkana. The ceremony was attended by CM Senior Advisor Nisar Khuhro, Provincial Minister Sohail Anwar Syal, MNA Khursheed Junejo, PPP leader Jameel Soomro and IG Sindh Mushtaq Maher. The CM said that the Sindh police was the oldest police in South Asia, therefore its performance, efficiency and professionalism must be upto the mark. He said that the Sindh police have some old model GSM locators for which he directed the Inspector General of Police to upgrade them and purchase other gadgets and weapons. "o matter whatever it would cost to the government, he would arrange," he assured the police department.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi administering oath to Dr. Abdul Hafeez Sheikh as federal minister at aiwan e sadr. – DNA

## Pak, US business council stresses on enhanced ties

He urged the new leadership of US including president elect Jeo Biden to provide direct markets access to Pak products to strengthen its national economy which suffered irreparable trillions of dollar loss in fight against terror in the region

DNA

LAHORE: Pak-US Business Council Friday underscored need of enhanced partnership with the United States and the importance of regional connectivity to Central Asia via Afghanistan for greater regional integration besides boosting bilateral trade. Talking to delegation of exporters and importers led by Rana Anwaar Ul Haq here today founder chairman Pak-US Business Council and veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik invited

US private sector to lend financial supports to Pakistan for building connectivity with the central Asian region via Afghanistan. He said Pakistan is financing important projects like khyber-Pass Economic Corridor and CASA-1000 (Central Asia-South Asia power project) for regional connectivity. He stressed the urgent to fully mobilise more financial resources through USA's Development Finance Corporation and its private sector to achieve the desired results of regional connectivity. He said "USA is providing economic assistance for more

stable, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan". Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan is implementing around \$30 billion worth foreign funded projects in different sectors. He appreciated the USA's \$4.2 billion support under Pakistan enhanced partnership agreement since 2010." He urged the new leadership of US including president elect Jeo Biden to provide direct markets access to Pak products to strengthen its national economy which suffered irreparable trillions of dollar loss in fight against terror in the region. He said Pakistan's colossal sacrifices to quell

and stamp out spate of terrorism were appreciated worldwide and widely acknowledged huge human losses besides destruction of infrastructure. About Pak-US trade prospects, he said Pakistan 6th largest country by population, its trade with the US rose 0.5 percent from \$5.29 billion to \$5.31 billion in October 2020. He said Pakistan is currently 56th largest trading partner with US with \$6.6 billion in total (two way) during the year 2019 while the US goods trade deficit with Pakistan was \$ 1.3 billion. Iftikhar Ali Malik said that it's high time for the US pri-

vate sector for direct or indirect investment in different sectors of Pakistan as Prime Minister Imran Khan has offered an excellent historic package of incentives to foreign investors under one window policy and all foreign investments across the world pouring in Pakistan have given full lawf protection, he added. He said 2757 Pak products valued \$23.631 billion were exported to 202 countries and 4096 products worth \$40.07 billion were imported from 212 countries in 2019 and this wide margin must be addressed by boosting exports of Pak products.

## 'Ready to work in Pakistan'

DNA

LAHORE: Welcoming superstar Engin Altan as one of their own, Ertugrul fans in Pakistan were over the moon when the man himself made his way to Lahore. In a press conference held today, Altan addressed the audience that showered him with love and adoration, courtesy of his popularity playing the lead in the historical drama series Diliris Ertugrul. He called it a pleasure that "Pakistan's prime minister loves the TV series and loves me", thanking Imran Khan for his role in suggesting the show to Pakistanis and encouraging them to watch it.

"It's a huge television series and it's an honour for us that Pakistanis love it," he added, thanking fans for their love over the last few months as

he tried his best to do justice to the role of the historical figure. "My peers worked very hard and we can see the fruit of it in all your love." Delivering some good news, he said he was open to working in Pakistan. "Why not?" he exclaimed. "If you have a good story for me, why not." He added that this was his first visit and he couldn't get an opportunity to explore the rest of the country. "But I'm aware how breathtaking the scenery is and InshaAllah whenever opportunity knocks, I would love to visit [again] one day." "I love the Lahori food as well! It's a bit spicy but very tasty," he said, exclaiming "Lahore, Lahore hai!" much to the delight of his fans who chanted the popular slogan back. We're keeping our fingers crossed for a Pakistani production starring Engin Altan.



LAHORE: Famous Turkish actor Engin Altan aka Ertugrul Ghazi visited Badshahi mosque Lahore during his two day trip to Pakistan. – DNA

## Pak Navy and ANF seize drugs in Arabian Sea

The drugs, valued at approximately Rs 1.8 billion, were to be smuggled to unknown destination through Arabian Sea

DNA

KARACHI: In a joint operation, Pakistan Navy (PN) along with Anti-Narcotics

Force (ANF) apprehended 200 Kg of Ice and 99 Kg of Crystal off Jiwani, Baluchistan. The drugs, valued at approximately Rs 1.8 billion, were to be smuggled

to unknown destination through Arabian Sea. The seized drugs were handed over to ANF for legal proceedings. Successful execution of joint Anti-Narcotics

Operation is a demonstration of PN resolve to counter illegal activities in the Maritime Zones of Pakistan and promote maritime security in the region.



## Coke Studio is set to air episode 2

DNA

KARACHI: With episode one of Coke Studio 2020 being well received by both critics and the public on December 4, 2020, Coke Studio will be launching episode 2 on December 11, 2020. The second episode will feature the legendary Rahat Fateh Ali Khan singing a Tarana with classical singer Zara Madani, Wajih Naqvi performing her solo debut with a song about having faith in one's self and Ali Pervez Mehdi coming together with Meesha Shafi for a catchy Punjabi folk song. The first song for the second episode, Dil Tarpe, features Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and Zara Madani coming together to perform a Tarana bringing a fusion and Qawwali-like flavour to the track. In the song, the protagonist is exhibiting distress by emotionally imploring their beloved to have mercy on the heart; longing for the comfort and peace of their beloved's company. Talking about the song, Zara Madani said, "This song is

about longing with a very special spiritual connotation; a conversation taking place between a person and their inner self where one pleads for help from the Almighty." Excited about the new collaboration, Rahat Fateh Ali Khan said, "I don't think anyone has ever experimented with a tarana the way that we have tried to in this season," said Khan. The second song for the episode is Wajih Naqvi's solo debut on Coke Studio performing Yaqeen, a song written and composed by the artist herself. Carrying a modern pop-rock style, the song has pronounced elements of Indian classical instruments, thus classifying as "raga rock", a popular musical genre from the 60s. With its powerful lyrics, Yaqeen tells the story of a woman showing resilience and self-reliance in the journey of life. "If men and women are not encouraged or taught to rely on themselves or have faith in themselves, this usually leads them not really knowing who they are and what they are truly capable of.

## Master changan unveils changan alsvin

DNA

KARACHI: Master Changan Motors Limited has proudly unveiled the latest generation, Pakistan's first Euro-5 Smart sedan car, the Changan Alsvin, at a press conference held in Karachi on 11th December, 2020 at the Marriott Hotel.

The Changan Alsvin is one of the most anxiously awaited sedans by not only car fanatics but mass-market consumers. The design language of the Changan Alsvin expresses it as a 'smart sedan' due to its unmatched technology, comfort, and luxury all while providing the nimbleness of a hatchback, and that too at an accessible price – truly standing by its motto – "Drive Your Dreams".

Danial Malik – CEO of Master Changan Motors – explained some of the exclusive features, "The Alsvin brings the Pakistani consumers an impressive array of automotive technology that is being introduced for the first time in Pakistan these include; Pakistan's first Euro5 engine, Dual-Clutch Automatic Transmission, Start-Stop Technology (SST), Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS), and a 7 inch Human Machine Interface (HMI) that allows the user to reconfigure multiple functions such as air conditioning, lighting, and locks."

## Ashrafi rejects US commission report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council and Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi Friday rejected placing Pakistan on violators of religious freedom list and invited United States Commission on International Religious Freedom to visit Pakistan and analyze the ground realities that minorities and others are enjoying complete religious freedom here. Talking to media persons, he said the US report has been prepared on the basis of bigotry, biasedness, lack of knowledge and for propaganda purposes which has no link with the reality. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides complete religious freedom to minorities, others and guarantees their all rights. The enacted blasphemy law has protected various lives in Pakistan and its wrong use has ended in last two years. Ashrafi asked US not to object over Pakistani laws on the basis of assumptions. Government of Pakistan and Ulema challenge the detractors to highlight the misuse of blasphemy laws. Pakistan will raise the issue with US on government level and will provide facts to the commission.

## Italy sees Pakistan strong economic partner:CG

KARACHI: Italy considers Pakistan a key economic partner in South Asia and the both countries are working on increasing cooperation and partnership in trade, investment, defence and technology sectors. The economic and defence ties between Italy and Pakistan are getting stronger despite COVID-19 pandemic. Italy is a major investor in Pakistan. Its investment amounted \$ 56 million in 2019-20, up 45 per cent from last year. It has invested in major projects of energy, pharmaceutical, chemical and information technology sectors, said Italian Consul General in Karachi, Danilo Giurdanella here on Friday. The Italian Consul General was speaking at a local hotel, to journalists at the launch of "Week of Italian Cuisine in the World", which is an annual event of Italy to promote its cuisine worldwide. The Consul General expressed his satisfaction over increasing cooperation between Italy and Pakistan in many areas. "Italy is becoming a major export destination for Pakistani goods and services. Pakistan posted a trade surplus with Italy in 2019-20," he said adding that against the imports of \$ 490 million, Pakistan's exports to Italy amounted to \$730 million in 2019-20. – APP

## Briefs

### AD launches annual report

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Affairs Division (EAD) on Friday has released its first annual report on Foreign Economic Assistance which provides comprehensive analysis of Pakistan's external inflows, outflows, external public debt and debt servicing. The objective of the report is to provide readers including researchers, economists and development partners with the opportunity of gaining a deeper understanding of the external economic assistance position of Pakistan, said a press release issued here.

The government of Pakistan has been receiving foreign economic assistance mainly to achieve two major strategic objectives, sustainable social and economic growth as envisioned in its development plans to reduce poverty and inequality and to address the fiscal imbalances for enhanced macroeconomic stability. The report reflects that the government signed new agreements worth \$ 10.4 billion with various development partners and foreign banks as compared to \$ 8.4 billion last year, registering growth of 23.8%.

Under the new agreements, the development partners are likely to disburse the committed amount in the next five to six years. — APP

### Gang of car lifters busted

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Car Lifting Cell (ACLC) of Islamabad Police has busted a gang of car lifters comprising five members and recovered fake invoices and ten vehicles from them worth Rs. 30 million, a police spokesman said on Friday. According to details, a special team headed by In-Charge ACLC Fiaz Ahmed Ranjha succeeded to arrest five car thieves identified as Farhad, Ali, Waseem, Shehbaz and Iqba. Police team recovered ten vehicles worth Rs. 30 million, devices used in tempering vehicles, fake stamps of various showrooms and invoices from them. During the preliminary investigation, it was revealed that they used to temper the chassis and engine numbers of new vehicles through device and later sell them at market through preparing fake invoices. They got these tempered vehicles registered at Excise and Taxation Offices of Peshawar, Lahore and Islamabad. After getting the complete details, police team is making effort to recover the fake registered vehicles. The vehicles recovered from these gangsters have been found stolen from various areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi and their registration numbers are as follows: ADP-013 (Corolla), AMZ-423 (Atlas), ES-502 (Corolla), AKU-684 (Atlas), RX-697 (Vigo), SLO-7212 (Cultus), EZ-949 (Corolla), APC-024 (Atlas) and two other Corolla cars.

### IESCO issues power schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued a power suspension program for Saturday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00am to 02:00pm Khor, Fatehpur, Mandi Bhalwal, Scheme, Matawa, RCCH, II, I, II, V, Sihala, Daultalah, Adhi, Bani, Katarian, Holy Family, F Block, Ajmal Shaheed, F-7, Abbaspora, Sanaullah Shaheed, CMH Jhelum, Shukrila, Mandi Bhalwal, Fatehpur, Khor, Sarai Alamgir, F-6 Machine Mohalla, Pakhwal, Dina III-Rohtas, Madukals, Padial, Col. Muhammad Akram, Sandal, Gujar Khan, City Sohawa, Malhawal, Galyana, Smoot, Sihala, AWC Housing, Rashid Minhas, Dharek, Burhan, Islampura, Purmiana, Hameed, Gondal, Nard Topa, Fawara Chowk, Aminabad, Wasa.

# Overseas Pakistanis urged to invest in Pakistan

Pakistan Trade Minister Shafiq Shehzad said that special incentives have been given for investment and trade in Pakistan on the special instructions of Prime Minister Imran Khan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Investment Forum 2020 organized by UK Pakistan Business Council was held in UK Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir through Zoom. Azad Kashmir Minister for Finance and Health Dr Muhammad Najeb Naqi Khan was the Chief Guest and Chairman UK Pakistan Business Council.

Javed Malik President UK Pakistan Business Council UK Saleem Sheikh President Pakistan Business Council Pakistan Khurshid Barlas and other senior officials and experts from various walks of life attended the event.

Dr. Najib Naqi Khan said that it is necessary to take full advantage of the conducive environment available for investment. The Chairman of the Council, former Ambassador Javed Malik, while talking said that overseas Pakistanis in Pakistan and es-



pecially in Azad Jammu and Kashmir can invest with full confidence. Growth will be achieved UK Business Coun-

cil UK President Saleem Sheikh said that due to the Corona epidemic, business activities can be promoted

through the business community. Secretary Industry and Commerce Khawaja Muhammad Ehsan said that

the business situation in the world is changing. In this regard, the Pakistan Business Council has provided an

excellent platform. Advisory Board UK Pakistan Business Council Dr. Ghulam Murtaza said that it is important to promote trade relations between the UK and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The Council should be given the status of an Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Pakistan Trade Minister Shafiq Shehzad said that special incentives have been given for investment and trade in Pakistan on the special instructions of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Khurshid Barlas, President, Pakistan Railway Business Council Pakistan, said that Pakistan should keep in touch with the Council of Traders and Investors to take advantage of the business incident in UK and Azad Kashmir. The people have rendered invaluable services in all walks of life and the Kashmir Committee is playing an important role in the United Kingdom as well.

## Capital records 319 fresh corona cases

ISLAMABAD: COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the federal capital as 319 new Corona cases were reported from the city during the last 24 hours, National Command and Operation Center (NCO) said on Friday. According to an official of NCO, as many as 275 cases were reported on Thursday while 359 cases were reported on Wednesday. He said so far 34,014 cases were reported from the federal capital while 353 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added 27,205 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in differ-

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

## No cut in patient care services in PIMS

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services on Friday said that uninterrupted free quality medical services will be provided at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) to incoming patients even after the implementation of Medical Teaching Institutions (MTI). Contradicting the false information about MTI, the spokesman of the ministry said that the patient care service will further improve in Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) with the implementation of Medical Teaching Institutions while the MTI will also protect the rights of hospital's workers. He said that the government will ensure provision of quality medical services to people at hospitals and innovative steps are being taken in this regard. He said that the ministry has started reformation in health sector on the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan to make improvements in this sector. He said that the work has

been started to implement MTI in Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and in this regard the first meeting of Board of Governors was held at the hospital during which Dr Hamayun Mohmund has been elected as chairman of the board. The spokesman dispelled this impression that the fees at hospitals will increase with the implementation of MTI. He added MTI is being implemented for ensuring better services for general public. He said that the performance of hospitals will improve with MTI and people will get better health services at the public hospitals. He added all deserving and poor patients will be able to receive quality services. He said that the MTI will be applicable only on those employees who will join it while those employees who will not join it will continue to work as civil servants. He said that better future opportunities will be available for hospital staff with this system. — APP

## ICCI, Pink Ribbon join hands against breast cancer

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and Pink Ribbon Pakistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to raise awareness about breast cancer with joint efforts and play a role to control it. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President ICCI and Omer Aftab CEO Pink Ribbon Pakistan signed the MoU during a ceremony held at ICCI. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that breast cancer was on the rise in Pakistan as roughly one in eight women was vulnerable to develop it in their life. He said that almost 30 percent of cancers in women were reportedly breast cancers and 3

percent women were dying from this disease. He said being a developing country, it was difficult for Pakistan to provide treatment to every cancer patient, therefore, it was very important to take preventive measures to avert any bad scenario. He said that contrary to around 98 percent survival rate, almost 50 percent breast cancer patients in Pakistan reportedly died due to delayed diagnosis as the ailment was usually concealed owing to attached taboos. He emphasized for concerted efforts to create massive awareness by including the business community, intelligentsia, media, and health experts to prevent the prevalence of breast cancer in the country. He hoped that MoU of cooperation between ICCI and Pink Ribbon Pakistan would be instrumental in raising better

awareness about this fatal disease and reducing its mortality rate. Ms. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President and Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI said that poor diet, smoking, eating adulterated food & liquids and alcohol were some major risk factors for breast cancer and urged that society should be educated to avoid using these things. They said that breast cancer could be diagnosed at an early stage by guiding and educating the women about its major causes. They said that ICCI would organize awareness sessions and seminars on the causes of breast cancer and how to control it. They said that ICCI would also use its publicity platforms to create awareness about this fatal disease. Omer Aftab, Chief Executive Officer, Pink Ribbon

Pakistan highlighted the role of his organization to fight against breast cancer. He said that Pink Ribbon Pakistan was in the process of constructing Pakistan's first dedicated breast cancer hospital, which will be a breakthrough in breast cancer management in Pakistan. He said that breast cancer patients will be treated with world class health-care technology and hoped that their hospital would contribute significantly towards reducing the breast cancer mortality in Pakistan. He said that this year, the government organized many awareness sessions about breast cancer, which was laudable and hoped that the government would make effective policies besides providing better health facilities to control this fatal disease in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President ICCI and Omer Aftab CEO Pink Ribbon Pakistan during signing ceremony of MoU. — DNA

## CDA begins Park Enclave II up lift work

According to detail, CDA's work on various residential projects is underway while considering the residential requirements of the city. Park Enclave II is one of these residential projects

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) began work of development in Park Enclave II after the delay of five years here on Friday. According to detail, CDA's work on various residential projects is underway while considering the residential requirements of the city. Park Enclave II is one of these residential projects. The project is on 659 kanal. The projected cost of the project is Rs 23,73,00,00. Work on roads of Park Enclave II is underway. In the first phase the work on 9 roads is continued. 2 more roads will be completed in the coming week. Total 28 roads



will be constructed under this project. Work on other sides will be started just after the completion of roads. CDA achieved another milestone after starting the work on the project which was being neglected for last 5 years. Work on basic infrastructure development is continued. People of the city were demanding for increasing residential facilities. CDA has started working on various projects according to requirements of the citizens. While considering the provision of residential facilities to the masses as its top priority, CDA has announced to open new sectors side by side starting work on delayed projects.

## NLPD to hold day-long "Bedil Conference"

ISLAMABAD: In connection with three hundred years celebration of Persian poet Mirza Abdul Qadir, National Language Promotion Department (NLPD) will hold a day-long "Bedil Conference" on December 31. Renowned poet Iftikhar Arif will be the chief guest of the conference to pour light on his poetic vision. According to an official, Akhtar Usman, Dr. Ali Komail Qazalbash, Dr. Naeem Ghazi and Talib Husain Talib will also discuss about his major poetry contributions. He said that the opening ceremony of the famous poet Akhtar Usman's book, entitled 'Bedil A Study' will also take place during the conference. The famous poet Manzar Naqvi will moderate the session of Bedil's famous poetry. He said that he is considered as one of the prominent poet in Persian literature and owns his unique style. Both Mirza Ghalib and Dr Allama M. Iqbal were also influenced by him, he stated. — APP

## Expert warns to properly dispose of used masks

ISLAMABAD: Environmentalist Mariam Bashir warned on Friday that the concerned authorities should pay attention to properly disposed of the used masks otherwise these can cause a major threat to the environment. Talking to a private news channel, she said an estimated 52 billion masks would be produced this year in all over world but it is sad to quote that around 1.56 billion masks were not properly disposed of after its use by the authorities.

She said this negligence on the part of authorities has become a major threat to marine life as well as life of the birds was in danger. She said that if we talk about just of Pakistan, according to a report, it generates around 48.5 million tons of solid waste a year, which has been increasing more than 2 percent annually.

Like other developing countries, Pakistan lacks waste management infrastructure, creating serious environmental hazards. Most municipal waste is either burned, dumped or buried on vacant spots, threatening the health and welfare of the general population. She said the above details show that the problem of waste management was already going severe in Pakistan while now the used masks not to be disposed of properly will add to it. This will not only damage the ecosystem but also increase the chances of spread of Covid-19, she added. She further said that not only used masks but also sanitizers and all products that contain plastic must be disposed of properly adding the government should make arrangements to recycle this waste. She also expressed concern that garbage pickers in Pakistan could be affected as there is no proper mechanism. — APP

## Faisal mosque main hall de-sealed

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration Friday de-sealed the main hall of the Faisal Mosque after its administration assured of the proper implementation of the coronavirus-related standard operating procedures within the vicinity. The mosque's hall was sealed by the local administration last week over the reported violations of the health guidelines issued by the government to curb the virus spread during its second wave, said a news release. The district administration has strictly prohibited the gathering within the mosque vicinity before and after the prayer times. — APP

## Briefs

## AIOU announces tutorial meetings' schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the tutorial meetings' schedule for the programs offered in autumn 2020 semester including matriculation, FA (General), FA (Dars-e-Nizami) and BA (Associate Degree). According to the university's academic calendar, the duration of the study period for matriculation and FA programs ranges from November, 2020 to February 2021, whereas the duration of the study period for BA (Associate Degree) programs is from December 16, 2020 to April 10, 2021. The timings for these tutorial meetings are from 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm. The Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum has directed all the tutors, students as well as employees of the regional offices to strictly observe COVID-19 SoPs during these tutorial briefings. It is pertinent to mention here that these tutorial meetings serve to be very instrumental and fruitful in engaging tutors and students for developing interconnectivity and coordination in a system based on distance mode of education. Tutorial meetings' schedule is available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk).

## CTP issues 10,244 challan slips on wrong parking

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi in order to ensure smooth flow of traffic on city roads issued as many as 10,244 challan tickets during November to the motorists and motorcyclists, parked in a wrong way. According to Incharge CTP Lifter Squad Kamal Ahmed, a grand operation was launched against wrong parking, double parking and parking in no-parking areas. Special squads with lifters were formed to control wrong parking problem in the city, he said adding, awareness banners had also been displayed in this regard at important city roads. Traffic wardens and field officers had been directed to take strict action against parking rules' violators who create hurdles in smooth flow of traffic on city roads. He said, on the directives of City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, orders had been issued to all the field officers to take action in accordance with the law against double parking, wrong parking and one-way violators particularly on Murree Road, Airport Road, Mall Road, Peshawar Road, Raja Bazar, Commercial Market, Sadiqabad and other congested areas to ensure smooth flow of traffic. All out efforts were being made to regulate city traffic, he said and urged the citizens to cooperate with traffic police so that road problems could be resolved and people could be facilitated. - APP

## ICRC announces art competition winners

ISLAMABAD: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Friday announced the winners of the art competition. Through the promotion of arts and local talent, the competition aimed to promote empathy and respect for healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ICRC received ninety entries for the competition. The first prize went to Muhammad Talal, second prize to Muhammad Umer Khan, and third prize to Zile-Fatima Naem. Each winner will be awarded a cash prize of Rs 100,000, Rs 80,000 and Rs 60,000 respectively. Apart from the top three winners, Noor Fatima, Hafsa Saleem and Rana Salman received special mentions on behalf of the judges and the ICRC, with a cash prize of Rs 30,000 for each. Launched as part of the Healthcare in Danger (HcID) initiative's Bharosa Karein campaign, the competition was centered around the themes of celebrating healthcare heroes, destigmatizing healthcare, and promoting kindness and inclusion during the COVID-19 pandemic.



ISLAMABAD: Syed Zulfiqar Bukhari, special assistant to PM for overseas Pakistanis and hrd and British high commissioner Christian Turner welcoming the inaugural flight of Virgin Atlantic airline to Islamabad. - DNA

# Virgin Atlantic's maiden Pakistan flight lands

Virgin Atlantic will operate the state of the art Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft on all routes from Pakistan, offering the airline's Upper Class, Premium and Economy cabins. Passengers can take advantage of over 1,000 hours of in-flight entertainment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Virgin Atlantic touched down in Islamabad from Manchester on 11th December for the first time. The airline follows this up with new routes departing from Islamabad to London Heathrow on 13th December and departing from Lahore to London Heathrow on 14th December. UK is home to the largest Pakistani diaspora community in the world, with around 1.6 million people. The new Virgin Atlantic services will provide vital connectivity for friends and relatives visiting family and loved ones, in addition to serving growing demand for business and leisure travel. Virgin Atlantic will operate the state of the art Boeing

787-9 Dreamliner aircraft on all routes from Pakistan, offering the airline's Upper Class, Premium and Economy cabins. Passengers can take advantage of over 1,000 hours of in-flight entertainment, which includes a selection of Urdu films and TV programmes. Virgin Atlantic will offer Halal food options for customers along with its award-winning service. Virgin Atlantic will offer seamless connectivity via London Heathrow to North America, offering speedy connections to destinations such as New York JFK, Boston and Los Angeles. Virgin Atlantic will also offer onward connectivity alongside its transatlantic joint venture partner Delta Airlines to more than 200 destinations within North America. As well as transporting customers, Virgin Atlantic

will offer a fast, efficient cargo service. This will enable growing trade volumes between exporters and importers in both the UK and Pakistan. The UK is the largest export market for Pakistan in Europe, transporting high volumes of goods such as textiles, apparel and machinery. Passenger safety is Virgin Atlantic's number one priority and the airline has implemented a 'Fly Safe, Fly Well' programme during the Covid-19 pandemic. Alex McEwan, Country Manager - South Asia at Virgin Atlantic, commented, "We are thrilled to bring our award-winning service to customers in Pakistan. We are confident that passengers will love flying with us on our cutting-edge Boeing 787 Dreamliner to London Heathrow, Manchester and beyond to

North America. Our services will promote trade and provide vital connectivity between UK and Pakistan, enhancing already close ties. It has been a monumental effort to enable our set up in Pakistan, and I would like to thank the British High Commission and the Pakistan authorities for their unwavering support'. Dr Christian Turner, British High Commissioner Islamabad, Pakistan, commented; "Virgin Atlantic's arrival in Pakistan for the first time is a historic moment. Our 1.6 million strong Pakistani diaspora in the UK is at the heart of our ties. 18 months ago we had no British airlines flying in Pakistan; today we have over 20 direct flights a week to both Islamabad and Lahore. This is a sign of confidence in Pakistan

and will improve people to people links and boost trade. Followed by the change in travel advice and return of England cricket team to Pakistan, it further shows #UKPakDosti." To ensure the health and safety of customers and crew, Virgin Atlantic is implementing additional measures to offer peace of mind in the airport and when taking to the skies. These include enhanced and thorough cleaning practices at check in, boarding gates and on-board including the use of electrostatic spraying of high-grade disinfectant in all cabins and lavatories before every flight, ensuring no surface is left untouched. Safe distancing will also be adhered to wherever possible, and mask wearing will be required throughout the journey.

## PIAF chief wants focus on enhancing exports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Association Front chairman Mian Nauman Kabir has asked the government to focus on accelerating exports volumes and prioritize the trade issues with a view to achieve consistency in current account surplus, otherwise, the economic problems and balance of payment could further disturb. The PIAF chairman, in a joint statement along with vice chairman Javed Siddiqi, said the low exports volume and rising trade deficit were chronic issues which should be resolved permanently. He said exportable items should be produced in accordance with the international demand to fully exploit the benefit of GSP-Plus status. He said that several industries and sectors were neglected in past. He said decisions should be made

in national interest, keeping aside the personal agenda. Mian Nauman Kabir called for a holistic approach to speed up economic growth, as COVID-19 has adversely impacted the world's economy as well as Pakistan's trade and industrial sectors. The PIAF Chairman said the government has already missed its annual export target for the first two years. For the current fiscal year, the export target was reset at \$27.7 billion, requiring at least 6 percent growth. He said the government has to formulate long-term and consistent policies for the revival of industry and considerable improvement in exports, as contrary to regional countries, Pakistan's exports have remained stagnant during the past 40 years, and unless attention was paid to all factors that hamper industrial and exports growth, the country might not be able to achieve desired results.



ISLAMABAD: Delegation of RCCI led by President. Mohammad Nasir Mirza visited Mari Petroleum and met with CEO, Fahim Haider. President thanked MPCL for its participation in the CPEC CARs Gwadar event. - DNA

## Chinese envoy apprised about functioning of ISSI

Dr. Talat Shabbir briefed the Ambassador about the working of CPSC, its achievements in the past two years and also shared the planned activities for the upcoming year

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted H.E. Ambassador Nong Rong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG ISSI, welcomed the Ambassador on his first visit to ISSI and briefed him about the structure of ISSI and its contribution in enhancing China-Pakistan ties. Director China-Pakistan Study Centre, Dr. Talat Shabbir briefed the Ambassador about the working of CPSC, its achievements in the past two years and also shared the planned activities for the upcoming year. He said that the centre was serv-

ing as a forum for learning about Chinese society, history, culture, politics, economy, and government, and also, it

provides policy inputs to the Government and relevant stakeholders on Pakistan-China relations.

Later, an interactive session was held between DG ISSI and Ambassador Nong Rong. DG ISSI apprised the Ambassador

on the emerging regional and international geopolitical developments and its impact on China-Pakistan relations. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG ISSI concluded the meeting by thanking the Ambassador Nong Rong for visiting ISSI. The Institute of Strategic Studies is an autonomous, non-profit research and analyses organization. It is devoted to provide an in-depth understanding and objective analyses of regional and global strategic issues, affecting international peace and security. The Institute also promotes a broad-based and informed public understanding of vital issues affecting Pakistan and the international community as a whole.



## Police held kite seller

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police, in a crackdown against kite sellers and kite-flying, conducted raid and arrested a kite seller besides recovering 400 kites and seven string rolls from his possession. According to a police spokesman, Race Course police arrested Muhammad Jamal and recovered 400 kites with seven string rolls from his possession. A case has been registered against the accused. He said that police, on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas, conducted raids against the kite flying ban violators and took action in accordance with the law. - APP

## Rain likely in capital

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department Friday forecast cloudy weather with chances of rain in capital during next 24 hours. A deep westerly wave present over central and upper parts of the country and likely to persist next 24 hours, a MET office reported. While, very cold in North Balochistan. However more rain-thunderstorm (snowfall over the hills) is expected in Potohar region, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Fog is likely to prevail in plain areas of Punjab and Upper Sindh during morning hours. Rainfall recorded in (mm): Balochistan: Khuzdar 07, Nokundi 03, Dalbandin 02, Punjab: D. G Khan 02, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Dir (Upper 06, Lower 01), Sindh: Jacobabad 04, Gilgit-Baltistan: Astore 01. Snowfall (Inches): Astore 01 inch. Lowest minimum temperature's recorded in (°C): Leh -07°C, Gupis, Kalam, Parachinar -04°C, Skardu -03°C, Malamjappa, Bagrote and Astore -01°C. - APP

## Automobile sale rises 40% in Nov

ISLAMABAD: Sale of cars in the country increased by 40 per cent in November compared to same month of the preceding year. Sale of cars rose to 11,914 units in November compared to 8,524 units during same period of previous year. Sale of cars during first five months (Jul-Nov) also increased by 13.58 per cent when compared with the sale during same period of the year 2019-20. According to data released by Pakistan Automobile Manufacturers Association (PAMA) on Friday, as many as 55,779 cars were sold in the period under review as compared to 49,107 units in same period of last year. The breakup figures show that 2,088 units of Honda civic and city were sold during November this year as compared to the sale of 1,074 units last year, thus showing a jump of 94 percent. Toyota Corolla cars' sale however witnessed negative growth of 21.54 per cent as it went down to 1,704 units in the corresponding month from 2,172 units in same period of previous year. Suzuki Swift also witnessed a negative growth of 38 per cent as its sale fell to 114 units from 184 units in November 2019. Similarly, the newly launched Toyota Yaris also witnessed a decline as its sale plunged to 2,338 units in November from 3,058 units last month. - APP

## SECP unveils CIA regulations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission (SECP) has notified the Corporate Insurance Agents Regulations, 2020. A press release issued by SECP on Friday said that the initiative was aimed to strengthen the regulatory regime for distribution of insurance through corporate insurance agents, including bank assurance. The regulations also include code of conduct for corporate insurance agents of insurance companies to clearly define their role and responsibilities while dealing with the policyholders. The regulations also aimed at curtailing the issue of mis-selling and ensure provision of maximum and clear information regarding company's term and conditions of an insurance policy. The regulations also include measures to promote technology driven modes of corporate insurance agents.

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## China's nuclear aspirations

By MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

In an attempt to achieve a competitive advantage in the domain of nuclear technology, China recently launched its nuclear sun. According to sources, the HL-2M Tokamak reactor will provide a source of clean energy. The reactor is run on magnetic fields that combine hot plasma. It is reported that the temperature of the core of this reactor can reach over 150 million degrees Celsius. China's ambitions to work on nuclear fusion energy and now making the first successful stride in this regard will gain global attention. China is planning to collaborate with France, where the scientists are already working on the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor. While China has been striving to produce a smaller-scale nuclear reactor since 2006, the HL-2M Tokamak reactor will be a step forward in China's plans to create a clean energy source. In the years to come, the world's natural resources will be depleted beyond measure. They are already being consumed at a rapid pace. An alternate clean source of energy was required to pursue micro and macro level operations related to trade, commerce, transportation, manufacturing, and other fields. With the mammoth costs of creating and running the HL-2M Tokamak reactor, China has teamed up with several countries. They include the European Union, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, the United States, and India. With nuclear fusion energy, the world will harness another source of energy that may replace natural alternate energy sources. The humans' dependency on the sun may as well become a secondary concept when most or all of the commercial needs to produce energy will be fulfilled by the HL-2M Tokamak reactor. This may represent a daunting futuristic reality where humans are capable of producing clean energy that can facilitate them to live on isolated areas on Earth or transfer the same technology to the Moon, in case there is a plan to create a research and residential base on the Moon.



## Inclusion needed

In a critical letter to the PM late last this week, Asia Internet Coalition (AIC) voiced the concerns of major technology companies regarding the new social media rules, titled Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content Rules 2020, implemented in the country. Given the fact that they are some of the biggest stakeholders in the matter, their demand for greater inclusion in the decision-making process is justified. It is imperative that the government accommodates their needs because otherwise, they may threaten to suspend all operations in Pakistan.

According to AIC, PTA agreed to provide a draft copy of the rules in a bilateral meeting. However, the amendments were passed without any consultation, thereby inviting doubt over how credible the process has been. The giant firms like Facebook and Google have asserted that the lack of transparency has created a trust deficit between them and the authorities. Furthermore, they pointed out that the rules passed are legally questionable because they are not suited for global internet platforms and rob users of rights to expression and privacy—going beyond the ambit of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016 (PECA).

This lack of inclusivity in policymaking goes against the essence of democracy, a form of governance that demands for all voices to be represented, and must be corrected by the government. It is vital to understand that such rules not only affect the end user but also the diverse internet and social media platforms available. Thus, it is criminal to neglect the relevance of these companies. Fortunately, it is well within the power of the government to make this right, so long as they act urgently. They can choose to engage with the AIC now and amend the rules in a way that facilitates their needs as well. This will prevent them from boycotting the country and suspending their services indefinitely—an act that will surely take Pakistan decades back in the field of technology.

## The day when it happened

By Mehr Ispahani



Five accused were also acquitted. Those, who have been given death penalty, included masterminds, executors and abettors or facilitators. During the last two decades, Pakistan has been the worst hit country by terrorism.

It began like any other morning in Peshawar's Army Public School. Students were busy with their books while teachers delivered lectures. At least 132 students and nine teachers were killed in the assault with around the same number injured. Following a military rescue operation, the siege ended around eight hours after it began with all six militants killed. Marked as the 'Black Day' in Pakistan, 16th December

evokes anguish and spine-chilling memories of the drab morning on which the Taliban assailants stormed the school and opened indiscriminate firing on the students.

The tragic incident hardened Pakistan's resolve in fight against terrorism and brought the nation together. Four terror convicts identified as Maulvi Abdus Salam, Hazrat Ali, Mujeeb Rehman and Sabeel were executed at a high security prison in Kohat for their involvement in the APS attack. They were sentenced to death by the military courts. Pakistan men linked to December's massacre. The role of the Armed Forces is appreciated in uprooting the terrorists from their so-called safe havens.

Since the establishment of military courts, 345 terrorists were given death penalty and 296 rigorous imprisonments of varied durations, ranging from life imprisonment to a minimum duration of five years. Five accused were also acquitted. Those, who have been given death penalty, included masterminds, executors and abettors or facilitators. During the last two decades, Pakistan has been the worst hit country by terrorism. More than 70,000 citizens including 6,900 security personnel have perished due to terrorism and alongside inflicting the loss of \$123 billion to the state. The year 2008 witnessed the worst onslaught of terrorism in Pakistan. During that year, 2,267 Pakistani citizens were killed in 2,148 terrorist incidents that included 63 suicide attacks. In May 2009, the government launched a military operation called Rah-e-Raast (the Right Path) in Malakand (Swat) Division against terrorists. More than one and a half million people had to be temporarily displaced before the launch of this operation. In 2009, another military operation, Rah-e-Nijat (the Path of Riddance) was launched in South Waziristan Agency after the Swat operation. The gains of this operation could not be consolidated due to lack of required public support; the environment was also

not as much conducive as it was in the case of the Swat operation. On the night of June 8, 2014, the terrorists launched a brazen attack at Karachi airport killing 28 people. The post-operation intelligence confirmed that planning of this attack took place in the terrorist sanctuaries in North Waziristan. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) a terrorist outfit took the responsibility thereby challenging the writ of the state. The government launched a full-scale operation in North Waziristan Agency on June 16, 2014; Operation Zarb-e-Azb (Swift and conclusive strike). On the night of June 8, 2014, the terrorists launched a brazen attack at Karachi airport killing 28 people. The post-operation intelligence confirmed that planning of this attack took place in the terrorist sanctuaries in North Waziristan. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) a terrorist outfit took the responsibility thereby challenging the writ of the state. The security forces, in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, continued their surge in urban areas to eliminate hiding terrorists. Since remnants of the terrorists fled away to far flung areas of Balochistan focus of intelligence based operations also shifted accordingly. "Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars." - Khalil Gibran. These children who seek education are a promise for a better future of Pakistan. These children are a promise of peaceful Pakistan. These children are a dream of prosperous Pakistan. These children are the warriors of light in the battle with darkness. These students of the APS Peshawar are the real heroes of our nation. They witnessed their friends and their teachers die in front of them. They watched the horrors of the gore massacre and the grim darkness of death. But yet these students faced the grisly reality and firmed their resolve for attaining education. These students of the APS Peshawar are the real heroes of our nation. They

witnessed their friends and their teachers die in front of them. They watched the horrors of the gore massacre and the grim darkness of death. But yet these students faced the grisly reality and firmed their resolve for attaining education.

The students who lost their lives that day and those who survive dare the peaceful warriors of this battle; and hold the torch of hope for victory. The incident prompted the civil and military leadership of the country to unite and launch a national action plan against terrorism. The barbaric killing of innocent children melted the hearts of those who have been on a killing spree across the world for years now. A lot of effort was put in by the teachers and the staff. They not only kept themselves composed but also guided the students towards life. Operation Zarb-e-Azb has successfully been completed by February 2017 after achieving the desired results, replaced with another operation named 'Radd-ul-Fasaad' to conduct Counter-Terrorism operations by Rangers in Punjab, to keep continue the ongoing operations across the country, focus on more effective border security management, countrywide explosive control and de-weaponisation and pursuance of National Action Plan. The brazenness of the APS massacre united all the political parties and military leadership of the country to unanimously condemn the attack and make the National Action Plan (NAP) to eradicate terrorism. The blood of the innocent united the nation against all forms of extremism, terrorism, violence and hatred. On this day while paying tribute to our young martyrs, we also laud the sacrifices of our armed forces, police and law-enforcing agencies in the fight against the scourge of terrorism.

(The writer is Peshawar based freelance columnist)

## Government hospitals are giving death instead of life!

Attiya Munawer



It is very unfortunate that irreparable loss of seven precious lives has taken place, but instead of being ashamed, those responsible are blaming each other, it is beyond comprehension that the incident took place in the hospital and the oxygen supply company is being held responsible

In a civilized society, the importance of human life in general and in Islam in particular is immense. Islam says, whoever saves the life of one person, it is as if

he saved the life of all humanity and whoever kills one person, it is as if he has killed the whole humanity. Our society is very demanding of the implementation of Islamic teachings, but the consciousness of Islam is not common here, that is why human lives are being mistreated in hospitals, and the recent example of which is the tragic incident of Khyber Teaching Hospital Peshawar where seven patients, including five COVID-19 patients, died due to lack of oxygen in the hospital. The management seems to be negligent in this incident, but the management is placing the entire responsibility on the oxygen supply company to save itself. It is very unfortunate that irreparable loss of seven precious lives has taken place, but instead of being ashamed, those responsible are blaming each other, it is beyond comprehension that the incident took place in the hospital and the oxygen supply company is being held responsible. While the company's job is to provide oxygen, it is the job of the hospital administration and doctors to provide oxygen to the patients and take care of them. The incident took place at night and the administration is being informed about it the next day at noon. It entirely shows the negligence of the administration, even knowing that the Coronavirus pandemic has engulfed the entire country. How can such shortcomings be tolerated in the treatment of patients? Although the hospital's board of governors has set up a committee to investigate the incident, there is a need for those found responsible to be severely punished rather than replaced or fired, but we do not have a tradition of punishment.

The management of Khyber Teaching Hospital seems to be clearly responsible for the incident. However, the entire responsibility is being shifted to the oxygen supply company to save itself. According to the preliminary investigation, on December 4, a company called Pakistan Oxygen had supplied 3,700 cubic meters of oxygen, while the hospital tank could store up to 7,000 cubic meters of oxygen. In this regard, the General Manager Administration of Oxygen Company has clarified that the same hospital needed 30,000 cubic meters of oxygen in October, which they supplied. While in November, when the hospital asked for more supply, they provided about 60,000 cubic meters, which is about 2,000 cubic meters on a daily basis. The oxygen company had supplied the hospital with excess oxygen on December 4, keeping in view the November average supply, while the hospital management has been claiming after the incident that the company's vehicle was delayed due to oxygen problem. The oxygen company has termed this claim as 'false' and said that the hospital administration was saying it to cover up its incompetence. The hospital administration called when the supply ran out and we immediately sent a vehicle, which can be checked from hospital records. The management of this hospital did not extend the contract of Oxygen Company in a timely manner and did not even inform the company about the timely supply as per its requirement. Due to this irresponsible behavior, seven precious lives were lost but the administration is showing great shamelessness and arrogance. This is not the first case of death of patients in the country. Numerous such incidents have filled the history of government hospitals, which shows how bad the condition of all government hospitals in the country is. From the hospital administration to the staff, their irresponsible

attitude towards people has not been hidden from anyone. So, the incidents that happen to the patients on a daily basis demand special attention of the government. The same will happen after the investigation into the Teaching Hospital Peshawar incident, as it has been happening before, because in hospitals across the country, from the management to the doctors and staff, there is a mafia wreaking havoc on government hospitals that guarantees the development of private hospitals. Unless this mafia is stopped, there will be no positive change in the condition of government hospitals.

The PTI government is taking most of the steps to provide health facilities to the people, but the common man is deprived of the fruits of the government's measures. The government ministers seem to be dynamic as far as statements are concerned, but in practice the performance is zero. On the other hand, from the construction of hospitals to the purchase of modern equipment, corruption has reached its peak, but there is no one to hold it accountable. There is an extreme indifference in government hospitals that death is being given instead of giving life and these death dealers are none other than their own Messiah who is depriving the patients of the right to breathe by not giving them oxygen. The government will have to take steps to improve the performance of the hospital management. The presence and continuity of oxygen supply in the hospitals is a must, in which case any kind of negligence will result in the said incident. In view of the dangerous situation of the hospital, it should be made possible to provide oxygen to the patients from time to time in the hospitals, so that the patients could not be put to death as a result of any negligence in the future.

## Briefs

## Haris returns to Melbourne Stars for BBL 10

KARACHI: Pacer Haris Rauf will return to the Melbourne Stars squad for the ongoing Big Bash League (BBL) season 10. The 27-year-old Haris will be available to play for Stars in January. Haris inclusion in the Stars squad was confirmed after the schedule of South Africa's tour of Pakistan was announced. The scheduling of three T20Is after two Tests paved the way for Haris to rejoin Stars.

Haris is currently in New Zealand with Pakistan's T20I squad ahead of their series against the Black Caps later this month. Pakistan will face New Zealand in three T20Is on December 18, 20 and 22 before two Test matches, starting on December 26 and January 3. Haris was an integral part of Stars last season where he took 20 wickets in his 10 matches, including a memorable hat trick against the Sydney Thunder at the MCG and five wickets against the Hobart Hurricanes in Moe.

## Imad Wasim signs BBL deal

## SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: "I'm very happy that I can come back to the Melbourne Stars this season and play at the MCG again," Haris said in a statement released by Stars. "It was an unbelievable journey last season and changed my life in so many ways. The Stars fans were very supportive of me and I can't wait to play in front of them again. The support of all the Pakistan community in Melbourne was fantastic and hopefully we can put in some big performances this season." he added. Haris will be the third Pakistani to play in BBL 10 as Imad Wasim will represent Melbourne Renegades while Dilbar Hussain will play for Stars.

## World must take notice of Indian propaganda: FM

## From Page 01

to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Security Moeed Yusuf, regarding a report released earlier this week by the Brussels-based EU DisinfoLab. In a new investigation, titled Indian Chronicles, the group exposed another Indian network that aims to reinforce pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan (and anti-Chinese) feelings in India. Addressing Friday's press conference, Qureshi said that Pakistan has been consistently alerting the international community to India's designs and intentions and that the findings of the report "corroborated our stance and stamped our claims". After discussing the results of the report and its implications, the foreign minister called upon the international community and international institutions to take action on its findings.

"We urge the UN human rights machinery [...] the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [...] as well as human rights experts to take a serious look as to how a prestigious platform such as the human rights council was thus misused," said Qureshi. The foreign minister said that it is necessary that government-owned and sponsored organisations are scrutinised and denied UN platforms if they are found "spreading fake news and hate". Qureshi mentioned that this disinformation network had manipulated EU parliamentarians and abused the legal institution by using the EU letterhead. "We also urge EU authorities to take notice of this massive campaign against Pakistan and not let their legal institutions and frameworks be abused in such a blatant manner," the foreign minister said. "Additionally, we call on the EU parliament to begin a credible investigation into the manipulation of the EU parliament and its legislative process by these fake organisations involved in anti-Pakistan propaganda." Qureshi also called upon the Reuters news agency to disassociate itself from India's ANI and "reconsider their existing partnership" since the latter was identified in the report as being complicit in the mass propaganda network and dissemination of fake news.



BAKU: Ramiz Ayvaz oglu Hasanov, deputy foreign minister of Azerbaijan visited the embassy of Pakistan to sign the condolence book opened for former Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali. Pakistan ambassador Bilal Hayee was also present at the occasion. — DNA

## EU, UK 'remain apart' on post-Brexit trade deal issues

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The UK and EU "remain apart on fundamental issues", the EU Commission president said Friday. Speaking at a news conference in Brussels on the closing day of the EU Council meeting, Ursula von der Leyen said negotiations between both sides are working on those differences. "We have repeatedly made clear to our UK partners that the principle of fair competition is a precondition

to privileged access to the EU market," von der Leyen said.

"We will decide on Sunday whether we have the conditions for an agreement or not." Ursula von der Leyen's remarks came ahead of the Sunday deadline, which was agreed Wednesday night in a meeting with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson in Brussels. "One way or the other, in less than three weeks, it will be new beginnings for old friends," von der Leyen added. On Sunday, the UK and EU will decide whether there is



agreement to continue to work on a post-Brexit trade deal or end negoti-

ations. The main disagreements are over how much of the EU rules the UK will follow after the transition period, how any deal will be enforced and disputes resolved, as well as fishing rights in UK waters. Johnson said Thursday night that there is a "strong possibility" of no trade deal with the EU. He said the ministers agreed with him that "the deal on the table is really not at the moment right for the UK," adding that he told the Cabinet to get ready for a no-deal exit. "They've brought back the idea of

this equivalence between the UK and the EU which basically means that whatever new laws they brought in we would have to follow or else face punishment, sanctions, tariffs or whatever," said Johnson. The trade deal needs to be finalized and ratified should it be agreed upon before the transition period ends to avoid chaos for businesses. The UK left the EU at the end of January, but a transition period to allow the parties to work on a trade deal kicked in until the end of the year.

## Pakistan confers civil award on Chinese minister

## DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan has awarded Zhong Shan, Minister for Commerce with the "Hilal-i-Pakistan" award in recognition of his outstanding services towards Pakistan and strengthening of Pakistan-China relations. According to Gwadar Pro, Ambassador to China Moin

ul Haque conferred the "Hilal-i-Pakistan" civil award of Pakistan upon Mr. Zhong Shan, on behalf of the President of Pakistan at a special Investiture Ceremony held at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse. Speaking at the ceremony, the Ambassador said the award recognized Mr. Zhong's contributions as a great friend of Pakistan and an ardent advocate of Paki-

stan-China friendship. In his capacity as Minister for Commerce, he had been instrumental in promoting the 2nd phase of the Pakistan-China free-trade agreement, which came into effect at the start of 2020 and facilitating Pakistan's active participation in headline events such as the China International Import Expo and the 17th China-ASEAN Expo.

Zhong stated that the award was not only a personal honor bestowed by the President of Pakistan but also a symbol of the trust and confidence Pakistan reposed in the time-honored all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. China's Ministry of Commerce would continue to deepen economic and trade ties with Pakistan.

## Stokes, Archer rested for England's tour of SL

## SPORTS DESK

LONDON: All-rounder Ben Stokes and fast bowler Jofra Archer have been rested for England's two-test tour of Sri Lanka in January, but both will return for the series in India the following month. The duo were omitted from the 16-player squad and seven travelling reserves named by the England selectors on Friday. "The national selectors will provide a block of rest for all multi-format players at various points over the winter period," the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement, confirming both will return for the India series. England depart on Jan. 2 and will play both tests at the Galle International Cricket Stadium, the first starting on Jan. 14 and

the second on Jan. 22. Both will be behind closed doors. England will be subject to quarantine in Hambantota on arrival in Sri Lanka. During that period, the players will be able to train for five days from Jan. 5-9 at the Mahinda Rajapaksa International Cricket Stadium. The series was called off in March because of the COVID-19 pandemic with England already in Sri Lanka. As well as Stokes and Archer, Surrey batsman Rory Burns will miss the Sri Lanka tour as his wife is expecting their first child during the second week of January. Ollie Pope, recovering from a shoulder injury sustained in September during the home test series against Pakistan, will join the squad and continue his rehab in readiness for the four-match test series against India starting in February.



QUEESTWON: Pakistani players in action during 2nd practice match ahead of NZ series. — DNA

## Team Green beats Team White

## DNA

QUEENSTOWN: Team Green has defeated Team White in the second scenario-based practice match. Team Green posted 150 runs for the loss of eight wickets in 20 overs after opting to bat first. Mohammad Hafeez and Babar Azam scored 48 and 40 runs respectively. Shaheen

Shah Afridi took 6 wickets for Team White. Team White led by Shadab Khan was given a revised target of 175 runs in the allotted 20 overs. They managed to score only 160 runs for the loss of 8 wickets in 20 overs. Zeeshan Malik scored 50 while Haider Ali made 45 and Abdullah Shafiq scored 35. Wahab Riaz, Usman Qadir and Imad Wasim took two wickets each.

## US set to sanction Turkey over Russia deal

## MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States is poised to impose sanctions on Turkey over its acquisition last year of Russian S-400 air defense systems, five sources including two US officials told Reuters on Thursday, a move likely to worsen already problematic ties between the two NATO allies. The long-anticipated step, which is likely to infuriate Ankara and severely complicate relations with the incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden, could be announced any day, sources said. The sanctions would target Turkey's Presidency of Defense Industries and its head, Ismail Demir, sources have said. They would be damaging but narrower than the severe scenarios some analysts have outlined. The Turkish lira weakened as much as 1.4 percent following the news. US sanctions could harm a

## U.S. sanctions would 'disrespect' Turkey: Erdogan

ISTANBUL: President Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday U.S. sanctions over Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 missiles would be disrespectful of a NATO ally, after sources said Washington was poised to take the step likely to worsen bilateral relations. Turkey's lira tumbled nearly 2% after Reuters, citing sources, reported U.S. sanctions are set to be announced as soon as Friday and target Turkey's Defence Industries Directorate. They would be enacted by U.S. President Donald Trump as President-elect Joe Biden prepares to take office on Jan. 20, and could test diplomacy already strained by disputes ranging from the conflict in Syria to a Turkish cleric living in exile in the United States. "For America to get up and confront Turkey with a matter like CAATSA is disrespectful to a very important NATO partner," state-owned Anadolu agency cited Erdogan as saying of the so-called CAATSA sanctions, which target weapons deals with Moscow. "After the U.S. transfer of power we will no doubt see the trend much more clearly," Erdogan added of the coming Biden presidency. "So it is for us to be patient and see."

Turkish economy struggling with a coronavirus-induced slowdown, double-digit inflation and badly depleted foreign reserves. A senior Turkish official said sanctions would backfire and hurt ties between the two NATO members. "Sanctions would not achieve a result but be counter-productive.

They would harm relations," the official said. "Turkey is in favor of solving these problems with diplomacy and negotiations. We won't accept one-sided impositions," he said. The decision will have repercussions far beyond Turkey, sending a message to US partners around the world who might

consider buying Russian military equipment and have been warned repeatedly about US sanctions. Turkey's leader, President Tayyip Erdogan, had hoped to prove US threats hollow, betting the relationship he developed with US President Donald Trump would insulate Ankara from punitive

US action. Having forged a working relationship with Erdogan, Trump long opposed US sanctions against Turkey despite the advice of advisers. Officials in his administration internally recommended sanctions against Ankara in July 2019, when the Turkish government started taking delivery of the S-400s, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters. But sanctions appeared likely even if Trump did not act, the sources said. The final version of the \$740 billion annual US defense authorization legislation, which the Senate is expected to vote on as early as this week, would force Washington to impose sanctions within 30 days. One source said the timing of the sanctions decision was in part designed to get ahead of the legislation's passage. Several sources said they were expecting the US sanctions announcement on Friday but one said it could come any day and perhaps as soon as Thursday.

## '3 weeks preparation cannot be done in one week'

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Misbah credited his troops for making sacrifices in these tough times which is not just good for international cricket to go forward but for New Zealand Cricket too. "It is important for everyone to take the sport forward and has to make sacrifices just like Pakistan cricket gave here in New Zealand," he added. Misbah accepted that the bowlers in the team don't have experience of that caliber but still, they are pacers who have been playing consistently. "It's a new learning curve for bowlers wherever they go but still Shaheen Shah and Wahab Riaz have the experience, Haris Rauf has played in Australia. Yes, experience of high stature isn't in the team but they are getting into that groove where they can surprise on the given day," he added. Misbah believes that the series against New Zealand would be difficult but they can match up with the Kiwis as they have quality in bowling but admitted it would be a challenging task for batters. It must be noted that the team is under training and is playing intra-squad practice matches at the events center in Queenstown. They will travel to Auckland on December 15 for a T20I series against New Zealand, starting from 18 December.

## PDM sets stage for 'a historic jalsa'

## From Page 01

And all of you will see that this government will pack its bags itself," he said. Bilawal, replying to a question, said that all the parties in PDM were political parties and that they would not want to create such a situation that benefits a "third force". Speaking on the decision to submit resignations, Bilawal said that he would take the matter up with his party's Central Executive Committee. Meanwhile, Maryam thanked Bilawal for inquiring about PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif's health and expressing his condolences over her grandmother, Shamim Akhtar's, death. "We ate together [...] and spoke on several matters of PDM and the upcoming jalsa," she said. The PML-N vice-president, slamming the Centre, said that they were considering holding a dialogue "after they realised that their government is slipping away from them". Maryam reiterated that the jalsa would be held at Minare-Pakistan.

## Indian diplomat summoned over CFVs

## From Page 01

Due to "indiscriminate and unprovoked firing" by the Indian occupation forces in in Hotspring Sector of the LoC on Dec 9, a 55-year-old woman had suffered serious injuries, the Foreign Office said in a statement. It noted that Indian occupation forces along the LoC and the Working Boundary (WB) had been continuously targeting civilian populated areas with artillery fire, heavy-caliber mortars and automatic weapons. This year, India has committed 2,940 ceasefire violations, resulting in martyrdom of 27 people and serious injuries to 247 innocent civilians. In the meeting with the Indian envoy, the FO said killing of innocent civilians was condemned as deplorable and "against all established humanitarian norms and professional military conduct".

## Pakistan ensures KSA its support for Olympics 2030

## From Page 01

Saudi Arabia drive to host Olympics 2030. Federal Minister extended an invitation to the Saudi Ambassador to visit the Pakistan Sports Complex. Saudi Ambassador thanked Dr Fehmida Mirza for profuse hospitality and admired her profound concerns for the betterment of Sports infrastructure in Pakistan.

## Briefs

## Turkey, Azerbaijan ink passport-free travel regime

DNA

ANKARA: Turkey and Azerbaijan have signed a protocol allowing mutual passport-free travel for nationals on both sides, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said on Friday.

The agreement was signed Thursday during a visit by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Azerbaijan, with a Turkish Foreign Ministry statement the following day saying that the protocol allowing travel with ID cards would pave the way for the people of Azerbaijan and Turkey to "intertwine further." After Azerbaijan revoked visa requirements for Turkish citizens, the residence period for the country's nationals was extended from 30 days to 90 days, noted the communique. "With this protocol signed by our Minister [Mevlut Cavusoglu] with his Azerbaijani counterpart, the two countries' citizens will be able to go to Turkey and Azerbaijan by presenting their identity cards only," it added.

The statement further said the newly-signed protocol would not only enhance "contact between our peoples" but "is also very meaningful in terms of showing the state of our relations with Brotherly Azerbaijan." Turkish President Erdogan, Presidential Spokesman Ibrahim Kalin, Foreign Minister Cavusoglu, and Communications Director Fahrettin Altun yesterday attended the Victory Parade ceremony in the Azerbaijani capital Baku.

## Biden and Harris named Time's Person of the Year

MONITORING DESK

NEW YORK: US President-elect Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris have been chosen as Time magazine's Person of the Year in 2020. "The Biden-Harris ticket represents something historic," Time tweeted. The Democratic pair beat three other finalists: frontline healthcare workers and Dr Anthony Fauci, the racial justice movement, and President Donald Trump, who lost the White House race. Time has been choosing the year's most influential person since 1927. "For changing the American story, for showing that the forces of empathy are greater than the forces of division, for sharing a vision of healing in a grieving world, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are TIME's 2020 Person of the Year," wrote Time's editor-in-chief Edward Felsenthal. Mr Biden and Ms Harris, who was not mentioned on Time's initial shortlist, are yet to publicly comment on the announcement. In 2016, Mr Trump, then also president-elect, received the same recognition from the magazine. Every year, Time chooses a person, a group, an idea or an object that "for better or for worse" has had the most impact on the events over the 12 months. In 2019, the publication expanded Person of the Year to include such categories as a Businessperson of the Year, Entertainer of the Year, Athlete of the Year and the Guardians of the Year.

## New e-service for entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan

DNA

BAKU: The Small and Medium Business Development Agency of Azerbaijan has launched a new e-service, the agency told media. As part of the digital transformation program, an opportunity has been created to take an online queue for entrepreneurs wishing to use the services of SME Houses, said the agency.

"Entrepreneurs can download the 'SME Queue' app on their mobile devices through the Android operating system (via GooglePlay). A user who has downloaded the application can register and create a personal account by entering the serial number and PIN of the ID," said the SME agency.

The purpose for creating the mobile app is to provide prompt service for entrepreneurs who apply to SME Houses, and thereby minimizing contacts between people, which is appropriate to the pandemic period, the agency noted. In the coming days, it will be possible to download the app via the AppStore.



BUCHAREST: Ambassador of Pakistan to Romania, Dr. Zafar Iqbal and Flavius Caba Maria, President, middle east political & economic institute (MEPEI) on occasion of signing MoU between MEPEI Bucharest and Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). – DNA

## Macron's plans backfired by Aliyev's stance: Erdogan

"If Armenia joins this process and takes positive steps, a new chapter could be opened in Turkey-Armenia relations," he added. During his visit, Erdogan attended a victory parade at the Azadlig Square to celebrate Azerbaijan's recent military success in liberating Upper Karabakh from nearly 30 years of the Armenian occupation.

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev's stance on the Upper Karabakh issue has backfired the French president's plans, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Friday.

Speaking to reporters during his visit to Azerbaijan's capital Baku, Erdogan said: "Perhaps, France will end Azerbaijan-France relations with the steps it has taken so far, apart from various agreements and so on. This is political inexperience. Referring to a recent motion passed

by the French National Assembly which calls on the French government to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh - an internationally recognized Azerbaijani territory - as a separate republic, Erdogan said French President Emmanuel Macron, who is currently the president of the OSCE Minsk group, had no positive contribution to the process.

On Azerbaijan's victory in Nagorno-Karabakh, Erdogan said it opened a new page in the history of Caucasus and the region's history will be shaped in a new direction. A six-party platform on the Karabakh

dispute that Turkey is working on will be a win-win initiative for all parties, the Turkish president said.

"If Armenia joins this process and takes positive steps, a new chapter could be opened in Turkey-Armenia relations," he added. During his visit, Erdogan attended a victory parade at the Azadlig Square to celebrate Azerbaijan's recent military success in liberating Upper Karabakh from nearly 30 years of the Armenian occupation. During the press conference, Erdogan also criticized the US for passing a bill that includes sanctions against Turkey over its purchase of Russian

air defense systems in 2017.

"The US move to make Turkey confront an act called CAATSA [Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act] is a disrespect against a very important partner in NATO," Erdogan said. Erdogan said former US President Donald Trump and his predecessor Barack Obama had always spoken of Turkey's membership in NATO with pride and that positive steps had been taken with both presidents during their respective administrations.

"Now, the Democrats are coming to

power. So, what's happened that such CAATSA sanctions will be imposed on Turkey now?" he asked, adding that he and President-elect Joe Biden also knew each other well.

Noting that Turkey is set to receive 50 million doses of novel coronavirus vaccines from China, Erdogan said 10 million of these would be acquired in the first delivery alone. "When we start, I'll get vaccinated," Erdogan said, urging people in Turkey not to worry about side effects. He underlined that the Chinese company producing the vaccine had already proved itself in the world.

## Azerbaijan lifts state of war

DNA

BAKU: The Azerbaijani parliament on Friday lifted the state of war, which was in force in certain cities and regions of the country.

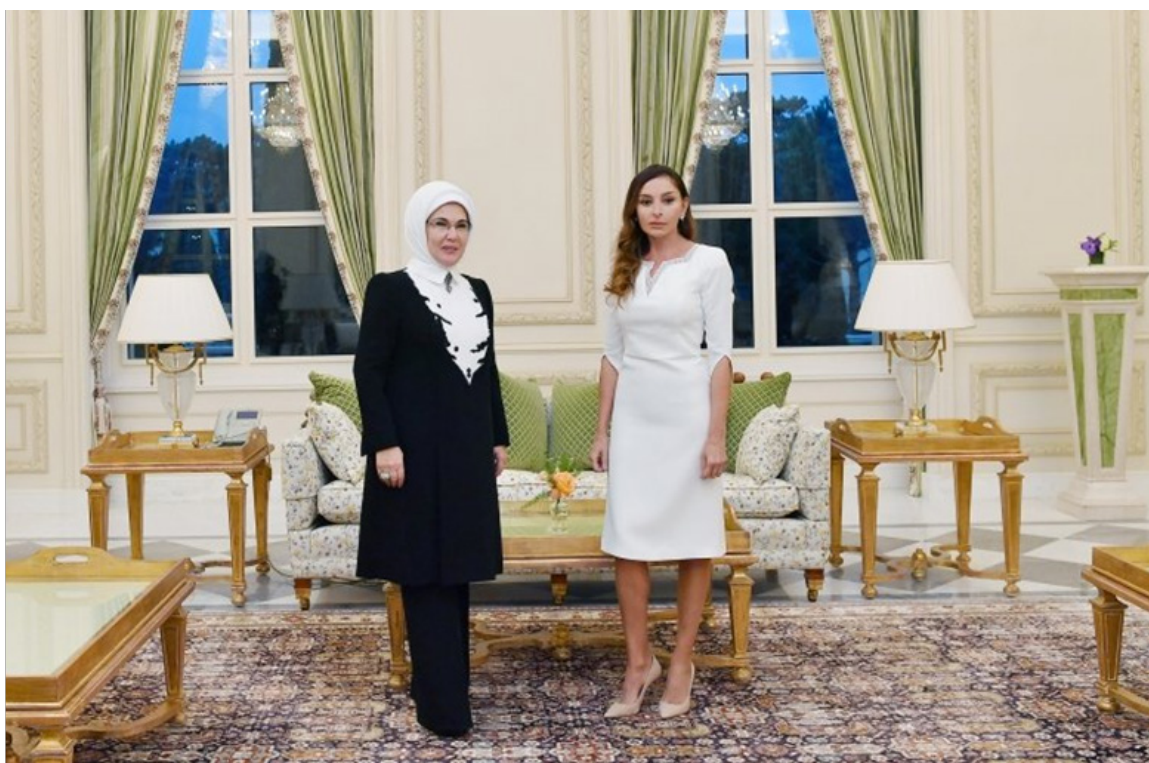
The parliament approved the decision of President Ilham Aliyev, lifting the state of war imposed since Sept. 27 when the Azerbaijani army started an operation

to liberate its territories from the Armenian occupation. During the state of war, constitutional rights and freedoms and property rights of both Azerbaijani citizens and foreigners in the country were partially and temporarily suspended, and a curfew was imposed in some regions for specific hours.

Relations between the former Soviet republics have

been tense since 1991 when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions. When new clashes erupted on Sept. 27, the Armenian army launched attacks on civilians and Azerbaijani forces and violated several humanitarian cease-fire agreements. During the 44-day conflict, Azerbaijan

liberated several cities and nearly 300 settlements and villages from the Armenian occupation. The two countries signed a Russian-brokered agreement on Nov. 10 to end fighting and work toward a comprehensive resolution. The truce is seen as a victory for Azerbaijan and a defeat for Armenia, whose armed forces have been withdrawing in line with the agreement.



BAKU: Azerbaijan's first lady Mehriban Aliyeva and first lady of Turkey Emine Erdogan posing for a photo during their meeting. – DNA

## Pakistan consulate organizes webinar on textile exports

DNA

OTTAWA: On the instructions of High Commissioner Raza Bashir Tarar, a webinar was organized by the Consulate General of Pakistan, Toronto on 10 December, 2020, on the "Textile sector exports to Canada". The objective of the webinar was to understand opportunities and challenges in the Canadian market for textile exporters from Pakistan. The webinar was moderated by Mr. Azhar Husain, Commercial Counsellor, Consulate General of Pakistan, Toronto. Mr. Abdul Hameed, Consul General of Pakistan, Canada Textile Incorporated, a leading importer of textile products in Canada and Mr. Kashif Mehtab Chawla, one of the owners of Al-Karam Towel Industries (Pvt.) Ltd. In his opening remarks, Consul General Abdul Hameed highlighted the huge size of Canada's apparel retail market of \$28 billion, which is expected to grow to \$29.5 billion by 2025. He pointed out that Canadian market is highly competitive where e-commerce is gaining more

popularity than traditional retailers. He highlighted that total exports of textile sector of Pakistan to Canada was around 1.3% of the latter's total textile imports. Mr. Azhar Husain also briefed the audience on key figures of the overall trade between Pakistan and Canada, and the tariff regime for import of products from Pakistan and other countries. The panellists highlighted the tariff disadvantage for Pakistani products in Canada, and emphasized that Pakistan should focus on research and development and quality related certifications to meet international standards. They underlined the textile trade related bottlenecks such as lack of exporters' database, lack of focus on R&D, high cost of utilities, high landing cost due to MFN tariffs, and high tax rates. There was a need to hold seminars and exhibitions where buyers in Canadian market could meet the Pakistani exporters, and explore business opportunities especially related to value added and finished goods. It was also emphasised that out of box product offerings would help offset the impact of tariff on the product cost. The speakers encouraged the new comers to come up with new ideas and brand their products with online presence.

## EU to discuss arms exports to Turkey with NATO

"We also spoke about how questions about arms exports must be discussed within NATO. We said that we want to coordinate with the new U.S. administration about Turkey," Merkel told a news conference

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: EU leaders plan to discuss arm exports to Turkey with NATO allies and Washington, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Friday, after Greece pushed for an arms embargo on Ankara.

Merkel spoke after a summit where the bloc's 27 leaders agreed to prepare limited sanctions on Turkish individuals over an energy exploration dispute with Greece and Cyprus but postponed any harsher steps until March. "We also spoke about how questions about arms exports

must be discussed within NATO. We said that we want to coordinate with the new U.S. administration about Turkey," Merkel told a news conference. The European Union and NATO are planning to hold a summit with U.S. President-elect Joe Biden after he takes office in January. Many EU states are also members of the NATO alliance.

Merkel's comments underlined a hardening stance on Turkey among EU governments, many of whom have in the past resisted punitive measures on Ankara, a NATO ally, candidate for EU membership and host to Syrians

fleeing civil war who would otherwise seek refuge in Europe. But member states have also grown increasingly critical of Turkey's involvement in Libya and its purchase of a Russian weapons system, among other flashpoints. The United States is already poised to impose sanctions on Turkey over those purchases, Reuters reported this month.

Tensions have also flared over Turkey's decision to send oil-and-gas drilling ships to waters off southern Cyprus where Greek Cypriot authorities have already awarded hydrocarbon exploration rights to

Italian and French companies. Turkey says it is operating in waters on its own continental shelf or areas where Turkish Cypriots have rights. Its president Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday he was not concerned by any sanctions the bloc might impose.

The EU exported only 45 million euros (\$54.53 million) worth of arms and ammunition to Turkey in 2018, including missiles, according to EU statistics office Eurostat, but sales of aircraft amounted to several billion euros. The United States, Italy and Spain were the top exporters of arms to

Turkey from 2015-2019, according to the Sweden-based Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a leading conflict and armaments think tank.

EU governments agreed in October 2019 to limit arms sales to Turkey but stopped short of a bloc-wide ban. The bloc currently bans arms sales to several states including Russia, Belarus, Syria and Venezuela. EU governments including Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden said last year they were halting or restricting arms export licence approvals for Turkey.

## NL expels 2 Russian diplomats over 'spying'

FOREIGN DESK

HAGUE: The Netherlands on Thursday expelled two diplomats working at the Russian embassy over allegations of spying, a Dutch intelligence agency said. An intelligence officer - who worked as an accredited diplomat at the Russian embassy - was engaged in spying activities in the field of technology and science and built a substantial network of sources, all of which are or have been active in the Dutch high-tech sector, said a statement by Dutch intelligence agency AIVD. AIVD said the Russian intelligence officer was interested in information about artificial intelligence, semiconductors and nanotechnology, and most of this technology is useful in both civil and military applications, the statement said. The other Russian intelligence officer, who was also accredited as a diplomat at the Russian embassy in The Hague, played a supporting role, it said. Both diplomats worked for the Russian civil intelligence service SVR, it said, adding they have been declared "persona non grata" by the Foreign Ministry.

## Egypt to provide free vaccine to citizens

FOREIGN DESK

CAIRO: Egyptians will be provided free Chinese Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine, local daily Egypt Today reported on Friday citing Egyptian Health Minister Hala Zayed. The Sinopharm vaccine has 86 percent efficacy against COVID-19, according to Egyptian and UAE officials, after Cairo completed clinical trials. Zayed, the Chinese Ambassador to Egypt Liao Liqiang and acting Emirati Ambassador to Egypt Mariam Al-Kaabi supervised the arrival of the first batch of the vaccine at Cairo International Airport, coming from the UAE. Zayed further said that Egypt has signed an agreement with the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization "to secure the provision of further vaccine doses," the report said. Medical staff in isolation hospitals and chest and fevers hospitals will be given the priority to take the Chinese vaccine, Zayed said. Cancer or kidney failure patients, elderly people and those suffering from chronic diseases will also be prioritized, she added. Egypt recorded 445 new coronavirus cases and 22 deaths in the past 24 hours, raising the total number of infections to 120,147.

## US advisory panel endorses Pfizer vaccine

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: A United States government advisory panel has endorsed the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, a critical step towards the vaccine's final approval for eventual distribution across the country.

A panel of outside advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Thursday evening voted 17-4 in favour of the vaccine, with one abstention, deciding that its benefits outweigh any risks for use by individuals aged 16 years and older. The FDA is expected to authorise the vaccine's distribution in the coming days. That means that millions of doses of the vaccine soon could be distributed across the US, which has the highest number of COVID-19 infections and deaths linked to the novel coronavirus in the world. "Americans want us to do a scientific review, but I think they also want us to make sure we're not wasting time on paperwork as opposed to going forward with the decision," FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn said before the meeting. Both the United Kingdom and Canada have already authorised the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, with the first doses administered in the UK earlier this week. Canada said the vaccines will be ready to be administered as of next Monday. Al Jazeera's Patty Culhane said the FDA advisory panel's session on Thursday, which was broadcast live and streamed online, lasted eight hours. "The debate was whether or not to give it (the vaccine) to 16- or 17-year-olds," Culhane said. The US has recorded more than 15.5 million cases of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally, and more than 291,000 deaths have been reported.

**Briefs**

**SCODA welcomes Pakistani community**

**DNA**  
SHANGHAI: The management committee of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Demonstration Area (SCODA) exchanged views with the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on economic and trade cooperation. According to Gwadar Pro, recommendations for nine industrial parks in Pakistan to interact with SCODA, investment policy and model of SCODA and other related issues were discussed. Mr. Xiang Zhiqiang, member of the Party Working Committee and Deputy Director of the Management Committee of SCODA welcomed KCCI and its member enterprises to carry out trade cooperation. He advocated KCCI to lead various business associations and enterprises to exchange visits, enhance mutual understanding, promote cooperation, seek common development in agriculture, transportation, science and technology, humanities and other fields with SCODA once the epidemic is over. "We wish to establish a dedicated communication and coordination mechanism to deepen the cooperation," he added. Shamsul Islam Khan, Vice President of KCCI stated that Pakistan's economy is based on agriculture, and its seafood, fruits and other high quality agricultural products can be sold in China and exported to neighboring countries through cooperation with SCODA.

**3,047 new cases; 50 deaths reported**

**KHAYAM ABBASI**

ISLAMABAD: The total active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan on Friday were recorded 44,582 as 3,047 more people tested positive for the deadly virus during the last 24 hours. Fifty corona patients, 47 of whom were under treatment in hospital and three in their respective homes or isolation facilities died on Thursday, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in Punjab and followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. It added that out of the total 50 deaths during last 24 hours 28 patients died on ventilators. No COVID affected person was on ventilator in Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) while 366 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in Pakistan. The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 67 percent, ICT 51 percent, Peshawar 40 percent and Lahore 35 percent. The Oxygen beds (oxygen providing facility other than ventilator as per patient's medical requirement) were also occupied in four major areas as in ICT 60 percent, Multan 50 percent, Peshawar 60 percent and Rawalpindi 56 percent.

**WFP chief urges world to help prevent famine**

Waking up in this wealthy, modern, technologically advanced world, it's hard to imagine us going through a famine like that. But my tragic duty today is to tell you: famine is at humanity's doorstep. For millions and millions of people on earth



**DNA**

ROME: Waking up this morning in the beautiful city of Rome, it is hard to imagine that in about 400 AD this city experienced a massive famine that ended up killing almost 90% of its population. Students of history associate something else with that ancient

date: the beginning of the Fall of the Roman Empire. Now, did the famine cause the fall? Or did the fall cause the famine? I think the answer is yes - both. Waking up in this wealthy, modern, technologically advanced world, it's hard to imagine us going through a famine like that. But my tragic duty today is to tell you: famine is at humanity's

doorstep. For millions and millions of people on earth. Failure to prevent famine in our day will destroy so many lives and cause the fall of much we hold dear. On behalf of Secretary-General Guterres of the United Nations, our Board, our sister agencies, our incredible partners and donors and most importantly on

behalf of 19,000 peacemakers at the World Food Programme, and for all those who came before us, especially those who died in the line of duty and their families who carry on, and on behalf of the 100 million hungry people we serve, to the Norwegian Nobel Committee, thank you, for this great honour. Also, thank you for acknowledging our work of using food to combat

hunger, to mitigate against destabilization of nations, to prevent mass migration, to end conflict and... to create stability and peace. We believe food is the pathway to peace. I wish today that I could speak of how working together we could end world hunger for all the 690 million people who go to bed hungry every night. But, today we have a crisis at hand.

**Opponents' rallies won't affect govt: Sh. Rasheed**

**SUJAAAT HAMZA**

ISLAMABAD: Newly appointed Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Friday said that political opponents can fulfill their desires by holding rallies but it will not affect the government. Addressing a press conference after assuming the charge as Minister for Interior on Friday, he said that there is no restriction on the opposition parties to hold a gathering in Lahore. He, however, said they will

fail in their designs to fan anarchy in the country. The minister said that the opposition parties wanted to get rid of their cases by pressuring government, adding that PM Imran Khan became popular from Minar-e-Pakistan rally but the PDM will become unpopular. "I have not been given any task and I know my responsibilities," he said and added there will be good news for Imran Khan after December 13 and if there is current opposition then Imran Khan will also win the next election. Expressing determination

to make efforts to improve overall law and order situation in the country, Rasheed vowed to introduce modern border management system, provide passport facilities to the poor and bring improvement in the matters of immigration. The interior minister went on to say that Prime Minister Imran Khan will succeed in its mission to steer the country out of all challenges. He said rule of law and constitution will be ensured in the country and we are committed to fight money laundering.

**Reason behind Ijaz' exit comes to light**

ISLAMABAD: The reason behind Brigadier (ret'd) Ijaz Shah leaving the Interior Ministry has come to light. The seasoned politician has now been given the portfolio of Federal Minister for Anti-Narcotics. According to state media, Ijaz Shah had requested to be relieved from the duties of Interior Minister due to falling health and engagements after the death of his brothers. According to state media, this was told in a statement issued by the Interior Ministry on Friday. - DNA

**PML-N, PPP pushing politics towards anarchy: Dr. Firdous**

**RAJA PERVAIZ**

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Punjab on Information Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan said on Friday that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) were pushing politics towards anarchy and spreading violence in Lahore for their own personal gains keeping aside the national interests. Talking to a private news channel, she said that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) specially PML-N and PPP were misleading the people to gain their selfish agenda, adding that, actually they wanted chaos



in the country and wanted to rest all the responsibility on the government, which we will not allow. "One of the opposition's agenda is to influence the senate election by threatening to resign", she added. She said that the opposition did not care for the lives of people, which was also their responsibility.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser receiving Ambassador of Iran Syed Mohammad Ali Hosseini. - APP

**Permission not granted for PDM rally**

LAHORE: Punjab Law Minister Raja Basharat has said that the provincial government has not granted permission to Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) for holding a rally in Lahore and action will be taken over violations. Raja Basharat further said that those act as facilitators of the PDM rally will also face action by the provincial authorities. The statement came forth after the conclusion of a session of the provincial intelligence committee. It has been approved that cases will be registered against PDM leaders for holding a political gathering. During the session, the officials of Punjab's home department briefed that permission could not be given for a public gathering due to the spread of novel coronavirus. The relevant authorities will make arrests besides filing cases against those violating the orders. The home department of Punjab sent the minutes of the meeting to the Prime Minister Office (PMO) regarding the decisions taken in the session today. It is to be noted that the Local administration of Lahore had refused a request from Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to hold a public gathering at the Minar-e-Pakistan owing to spike in COVID-19 cases. On the other hand, the PML-N had geared-up its preparations to face the power of the state and formed a special baton-wielding force. - DNA

**Pak assures support for stable Afghanistan**

**WEB DESK**

NEW YORK: At the United Nations, Pakistan has reiterated to support a peaceful, stable, prosperous and sovereign Afghanistan at peace with itself and with its neighbours. Speaking at a debate on situation in Afghanistan in General Assembly, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Munir Akram said Pakistan will continue to manifest its solidarity with the people of Afghanistan. He also commended fresh progress in the ongoing talks in Doha aimed at ending the conflict in Afghanistan. However, he warned against spoilers' ploys to undermine efforts for a peaceful settlement in the war-torn country. Munir Akram said Pakistan will continue to support the Intra-Afghan Negotiations and looks forward the way for an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political solution.

**55 stranded Pakistanis return from Bangkok**

**KHAYAM ABBASI**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) confirmed on Friday it has boarded its flight from Bangkok flying back to Pakistan 55 of its stranded citizens which had been detained due to expired visas. Stranded Pakistani people were overstaying their legal visit in the country as their visas had expired leading Bangkok authorities to imprison them. These Pakistani are our brothers and we cannot leave them abandoned and forlorn, PIA said on Friday. The national flag carrier said their plane, having on board the Pakistan citizens, has departed Bangkok for home-bound flight.

**India politicizing Lakhvi issue: FO**

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: In response to the media query regarding basic household expenditure exemption granted by the UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee to Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, a UN-designated individual, the Spokesperson stated that the exemption was in line with the established procedures and practices of the Committee. The Spokesperson expressed disappointment that a certain section of the Indian media was unnecessarily politicising this issue to cast negative aspersions on Pakistan's efforts to implement its obligations. The Spokesperson also called on the UNSC member states to take notice of the breach of confidentiality of the Committee's proceedings and records and their malicious use by the Indian media. Such irresponsible attitude not only reflects blatant disregard of the procedures of UNSC, it is also a mockery and violation of UNSC resolution.

**Pakistan, Tanzania sign two MoU's**

BODOMA: High Commissioner for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the United Republic of Tanzania, Muhammad Saleem called on Dr. Palamagamba John Aidan Mwnluko Kabudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania in Dar es Salaam. Two MoUs were signed during the meeting. The MoUs provide the institutional framework for structured dialogue between the two friendly countries in political and economic fields to elevate the relations to higher levels. Both sides are also working on various other initiatives including exchange of highlevel visits, trade delegations and people-to-people contacts to further strengthen the existing cordial ties. The bilateral trade between Pakistan and Tanzania during financial year 2019-20 valued US\$ 154 million. Pakistani business community has invested around US\$490 million in the Tanzanian economy providing employment for 5,400 Tanzanian nationals. Both countries are working on realizing the existing trade and investment potential following a Tanzanian trade delegation's recent visit to Pakistan from November 25 to December 01. - DNA

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

As per iFLYTEK, they are now collaborating with Pakistan's NCAI and NUST to work on the AI Outbound Calling System for Epidemic Prevention and Control

**DNA**

BEIJING: China's AI company eyes smart control of COVID-19 in Pakistan. China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday. The company will launch an AI Outbound Calling System for Epidemic Prevention and Control in Pakistan next month as the second wave of coronavirus grips Pakistan, according to iFLYTEK, a Chinese company well-known for its AI products and their sector-based applications. It stated this while at-

tending the 12th China Overseas Investment Fair (COIFAIR). 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. Mr. 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. He said he visited the iFLYTEK before and in addition to translation machines, he was introduced with different technologies they are offering. "They are very active in education, healthcare and translation, he added. "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. "Our Voice Chatbot from the AI Outbound Calling System will telephone users to quickly learn their physical conditions and provide healthcare suggestions. The system can quickly discover people at high risk of COVID-19 and the health center could immediately response if any to reduce the risk of infection and prevent coronavirus. People in close contact with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Pakistan would receive phone calls.

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