



# Islamabad POST

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**PM warns India of befitting response to any misadventure**

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## Briefs

**NAB committed to root out corruption**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Justice (R E T D) Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has said that Logical conclusion of white collar crime mega corruption cases is a challenging task but NAB is determined to root out corruption by putting double efforts. Chairman NAB said that NAB's faith is Corruption free Pakistan and has chalked out anti corruption strategy of Awareness, Prevention and Enforcement which has started yielding excellent results. NAB is an apex national anti corruption organization which has no affiliation with any party, group or individual.

**PDM only making hollow claims**

DNA

KARACHI: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief Sirajul Haq on Sunday said that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) - an 11-party opposition alliance - has done nothing except making hollow claims. Talking to media in Karachi, Sirajul Haq while declaring government and opposition alliance a failure said that they would consider the opposition leaders serious if the Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) dissolved the assemblies, adding that the masses would take it as hollow claims if they didn't resign.

**Dr Faisal vows to help overseas students**

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr Faisal Sultan assured the overseas Pakistanis on Sunday that their children would be provided all help regarding their admission to the medical and dental colleges of the country. He was addressing an online meeting of expatriate Pakistanis from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and other states of the Middle East.

## Pak resorts to UN over vehicle attack

The letter from Pakistan's Permanent Representative requests the UN to forcefully condemn the attack

ANSAR BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has taken up the reprehensible attack by India on the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) Observers and their vehicle along the Line of Control (LoC) with the United Nations, urging it to initiate a transparent investigation into the incident. In a letter addressed to the UN Secretary General (UNSG) and the President of the Security Council, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, stated that deliberate targeting of the UN Observers and their vehicle - which was clearly marked with UN logo and flying a blue flag of the UN - appears to be a new coercive and reckless ploy by India to hinder UNMOGIP's work, and facilitate another Indian military misadventure against Pakistan. The letter also informs the Secretary General and the UNSC that Pakistan had credible information that the RSS-BJP Government

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**PM Imran warns India of befitting response**

NAVEED MIRAJ / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan on Sunday once again reminded the international community of continuous Indian reckless behaviour and reiterated that if it conducted a false flag operation against Pakistan, it would confront a strong national Pakistani resolve with a befitting response at all levels. India's deliberate firing at Line of Control (LoC) on United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) vehicle, despite clear United Nation (UN) markings and flying blue UN flag, showed India's total disregard for all international norms of acceptable state behaviour and respect for international law and the UN, the PM tweeted.

## Oybek Usmanov new Uzbek envoy to Pak

He has been working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1997. Over the years, he headed the Consulate General of Uzbekistan in Karachi

DNA

TASHKENT: At the 10th plenary session of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis the issue of appointing the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan was considered. The senators adopted a resolution on the appointment of Oybek Usmanov to the post of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Islamic



Republic of Pakistan. Oybek Usmanov was born on September 24, 1962 in Tashkent. Graduated from Tashkent State University

(now - National University of Uzbekistan. He has been working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1997. Over the years, he headed the Consulate General of Uzbekistan in Karachi (Pakistan), was the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Israel and the Representative in the Palestinian Authority, as well as Pakistan, worked as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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## UAE visa curbs due to pandemic: Foreign Office

FM Qureshi in his meetings with the Emirati leadership raised the issue of visa restrictions

NAVEED MIRAJ

**Indian diplomat summoned**

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Responding to a media query the Spokesperson stated that during his recent visit to the UAE, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in his meetings with the

Continued on Page 06

the Indian occupation Forces along the Line of Control (LoC) on Saturday, resulting in serious injuries to an innocent civilian. Due to indiscriminate and unprovoked firing by the Indian

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## Gwadar Port goes digital as optic fiber network launched

"Installation of fiber optic cable has equipped Gwadar Port with high-tech web-based one customs (WeBOC) system of goods declaration and clearance," GDA senior official said

NEWS DESK / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar goes digital as the state of fiber optic cable network is finally operationalized in true letter and spirit, ushering in era of modern E-Custom at the Port for easier and simpler trans-shipment and containerized trade on commercialized modules. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, with laying down fiber optic cable, paperless custom procedures has become fully functional, transforming Gwadar into a bustling hub of regional and international trade to

Afghanistan, Central Asia and China. "Installation of fiber optic cable has equipped Gwadar Port with high-tech web-based one customs (WeBOC) system of goods declaration and clearance," GDA senior official said. He also added that Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) completed the project of laying down the new fiber optic cable. He said that the fresh development would play a tremendous role in facilitating traders, custom officers, and agents. "It would make processes simpler, GD clearance system faster and container tracking easier," he opined. Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) Chairman Naseer Khan Kashani said that WeBOC was an indigenously developed, web-based computerized clearance system, providing end to end automated customs clearance of import and export goods. "The system was developed jointly by the Pakistan Customs and PRAL, and was first implemented on trial basis at Port Muhammad Bin Qasim. Subsequently, WeBOC was further rolled out at other terminals and customs stations," he added. Presently WeBOC has over



LAHORE: World renowned boxer Amir Khan posing for a picture with Governor Punjab Chaudhry Sarwar and Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar on the occasion of title fight in Lahore. - DNA

**Rain, snow expected**

DNA

LAHORE: Cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country, while very cold in north Balochistan and upper parts. Light rain (with snowfall over hills) is also expected at isolated places in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. Cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country in the next 24 hours while very cold in north Balochistan and upper parts. However, rain (with snowfall over hills) is expected in Kashmir, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan. Dense fog is likely to prevail in plain areas of Punjab and upper Sindh during morning and night hours. While frost likely to occur in Potohar region including few plain areas of Punjab during morning hours.

**Media free and active, says Shibli**



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal minister for information and broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz has said that he stands by his statement to the BBC that the media is free and active in Pakistan. Talking to a private TV channel, the minister said, "We have full faith in the fundamental, constitutional and democratic right of expression." He further said that he shall take self-criticism in a positive way.

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## Eight killed as car bomb rocks Kabul

Kabul has been hit by a wave of deadly violence in recent months despite the Taliban and govt engaging in peace talks to end the country's long conflict

KABUL: A car bomb killed eight people and wounded more than 15 others in Kabul Sunday, officials said, the latest attack to rock the Afghan capital. Kabul has been hit by a wave of deadly violence in recent months despite the Taliban and government engaging in peace talks to end the country's long conflict. Interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian blamed

"terrorists" for the attack, and said casualties included women and children. A security source said the car bomb detonated in the west of the capital, and a health ministry official also confirmed the blast. "It was a powerful explosion that has caused a lot of damage to houses in the vicinity," the source said. Television footage showed at

least two cars on fire, with plumes of thick black smoke billowing into the sky. No group has so far claimed responsibility. Dozens of people, mostly students, were killed when Islamic State attacked two education centres, including one at Kabul University that saw gunmen open fire on classrooms.

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## 'Warrants can be issued to summon Chairman NAB'

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Senate Deputy Chairman Saleem Mandviwalla on Sunday said that warrants can be issued to summon anyone before the Senate and if National Accountability Bureau

(NAB) Chairman Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal does not appear before the Senate, warrants for him will be issued. He was addressing a press conference in Lahore during which he talked about the list of complaints the Senate has received from

different people pertaining to NAB's maltreatment. Mandviwalla blamed political parties for not making amendments to the NAB ordinance because of which it started intervening in every institution of the country.

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## Briefs

## 'Govt working to control child abuse'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Human Rights Dr Shireen Mazari Sunday said the government was effectively working to control the child abuse and protection for women and children in the country. The previous governments of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had not initiated any work on child abuse and women and children protection, she said while talking to a private news channel. The minister said ban had already been imposed on child labour in Islamabad federal capital and the stern actions would be taken against violators of law. Replying to a question, she said the performance of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government under dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was excellent and marvelous in all sectors.

## 'Opposition's resignations will be accepted immediately'

DNA

LAHORE: Railways Minister Azam Swati has said that those looted the country are forced to stumble on pillar to post. The resignations of the opposition will be accepted immediately and elections will be held. Talking to newsmen in Lahore, he said that when the train arrived in Lahore, the passengers said that our train arrived on time because of you, which embarrassed me. I want all the trains to reach destinations on time. Railways Minister Azam Khan Swati has said that the government is making all out efforts to bring reforms in the national institutions. He said that all old buildings of Pakistan Railways will be restored and renovated to generate revenue. The Minister said that we have set a target to transform Railways into a profitable institution within one year.

## 'Masses rejects PDM's ideology'

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Ali Muhammad Khan on Sunday said masses have badly rejected ideology of (PDM) Pakistan democratic Movement. Talking to a private news channel, he said Pakistan nation has a high level of awareness and they did not accept ideology of PDM. It was proved from the public response in the processions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Lahore, he added. He further said opposition parties for their personal interests presented anti-national and anti-military rhetoric which was rejected by people. In response to a question, he said if 2018 elections were rigged then why petition of opposition was came down. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has come to power after 22 years of struggle and not through any unconstitutional means, he added.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for religious affairs and inter-faith harmony, Noor-ul-Haq Qadri talking to media persons after addressing to Hajj group operators at Haji Camp. – DNA

## 20 new oil &amp; gas exploration blocks to be auctioned: Nadeem

The SAPM said Pakistan, in collaboration with Russia, would start building a 1,100 kilometer (684 miles) gas pipeline to transport the commodity from Karachi to Lahore

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Petroleum Nadeem Babar has said that Pakistan would auction 20 new oil and gas exploration blocks during the next month as part of its strategy to achieve self-reliance in the energy sector. "Bids for the auction are expected to be held by mid-January to encourage exploration activities in the country," he said in an interview with the Bloomberg, a US-based news agency. The SAPM said Pakistan, in collaboration

with Russia, would start building a 1,100 kilometer (684 miles) gas pipeline to transport the commodity from Karachi to Lahore. Under the project, he said, Pakistan would have a majority share of 51 percent to 74 percent, while Russia would own the remainder. He said Pakistan's two state-companies, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited and Sui Southern Gas Company, had started acquiring land for the pipeline, which would be constructed with a leading role of a Russian consortium.

Nadeem Babar said Pakistan, which imported its first cargo five years ago, currently had two Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals. "It's running the two terminals at capacity to meet peak winter demand, with 12 cargoes secured for December and 11 for January." He said two more LNG terminals, Energas and Mitsubishi's Taber Energy, were expected to start in the next few months. The SAPM said Pakistan had LNG deals for 700 Million Cubic Feet per Day (MMCFD) and the government would

decide if the nation needed another medium-term LNG contract for five years after reviewing demand from power generators, the biggest consumers of the fuel, in the next three months. He said Pakistan had also decided that it would only import cleaner Euro-5 diesel from January after doing the same for gasoline earlier this year. "Besides imports, Pakistan also plans to add 150 MMCFD of domestic gas output this month, including 50 MMCFD from the Mari gas field."

## Opp parties has no courage to resign: Buzdar

DNA

LAHORE: Chief Minister of Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that opposition parties have no moral courage to resign from assemblies and they will continue to fix new dates. In a statement on Sunday, he said that the opposition alliance knows that government will hold elections if they resign from the assemblies. Usman Buzdar

said that opposition should have mercy on the nation and give up negative politics. Despite repeated failures, PDM is still dreaming of overthrowing incumbent government, he added. He further said that as long as Prime Minister Imran Khan is in power, these rejected elements will be held accountable for the looted wealth and no matter what they do, government will not give them NRO

## CDA to hire 500 more workers

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken the decision to hire 500 more workers on contractual bases and to buy the latest machinery to improve the sanitation system further here. The jurisdiction of sanitation department has also increased to the union councils of rural areas. The tender has been issued for installing 1000 more dustbins at all the small and big markets of the city to improve the cleanliness situation in the city. According to detail, the sanitation department of CDA is committed to provide best cleanliness services to the masses. The vehicles of the sanitation department which were not in use for a long time are being repaired. The department has increased the machinery as the green

waste has been increased. The department is currently disposing 800 tons waste daily. The sanitation department has increased its jurisdiction to rural areas also to enhance the beauty of these areas. The department is currently working in Bahara Kahu, Bani Gala, Taramari, and Khhana. Dustbins will be installed in the said rural areas soon. To improve the sanitation system, the department has installed green and blue dustbins in sector E-7. The separate dustbins are installed to keep the wet and dried waste separate from each other. In the next phase, these green and blue dustbins will be introduced at diplomatic enclave. The department has decided to hire 500 more workers on contractual base and to buy the latest machinery to assure the cleanliness in the city.

## Rashakai SEZ: A harbinger of prosperous Pakistan

PESHAWAR: Naturally situated at most strategic location with major international markets of Central Asia, Afghanistan, China and SAARC in its close proximity, Pakistan is going to emerge a key hub of investment and trade business in the wake of China Pakistan Economic Corridor projects including multi-faceted Rashakai Special Economic Zone (RSEZ), which is all set for groundbreaking. The country's key strategic location having landlocked Afghanistan in west and onward Central Asian Republics (CARs), Iran in south-west with Middle East countries beyond, SAARC in south-east and China in north-east, India in east and a large active seaport of Karachi in south, have made Pakistan most attractive and favourable for domestic and international investors to earn maximum returns on their investment in projects under CPEC. Following PTI Govt's goal-oriented economic

and investment policies and reforms, the flow of direct foreign investment (DFI) have been diverted to Pakistan under CPEC, a major component of China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, has entered into an advanced phase of industrialization after signing of the landmark RSEZ development agreement between Pakistan and China on September 14, 2020, paving the way construction for gigantic RSEZ on 1,000 acres land located on the most strategic location in Nowshera district. After official announcement of CPEC, around 37 zones have been proposed as Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for all provinces of Pakistan out of which establishment of nine SEZs were prioritized including RSEZ at Nowshera, Dhabeji, Bostan Industrial Zone, Allama Iqbal Industrial City Faisalabad, ICT Model Industrial Zone Islamabad, Industrial Park Pakistan Steel Mills Port

Qasim, Mirpur Industrial Zone AJK, Mohmand Marble City and Moopondass in Gilgit-Baltistan. However, RSEZ is holding a unique competitive advantage due to its close proximity to the first juncture of CPEC route, close location with Peshawar Airport and ML-1 besides a significant resource and manufacturing base, making it an attractive destination for domestic and international investors to capture local and international markets. The project was initiated after MOUs were signed during KP-China Roadshow in April 2017. After long deliberations, KP Govt had signed the Concession Agreement with China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) to develop RSEZ during Prime Minister Imran Khan's historic visit to China where he attended Second Belt and Road Forum (SBFRF) and Beijing International Horticulture Exhibition (BIHE) 2019. – APP



ISLAMABAD: CDA has made special arrangements to dispose of waste. For this purpose also 500 staff also been hired. In addition, old machinery is also being revamped for this purpose. – DNA

## PARC to rebuild the farming community in FATA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, PARC Dr. Azeem Khan, set up the project of Adaptive Research cum Demonstrative Institute (ARDI) at Kam Sarobi, Miranshah, District North Waziristan on 19 December, 2020. Including up-gradation of PARC-AZRC, D. I. Khan, it is the fifth institution to be set up under the PSDP Mega Project (Up-gradation of Aird Zone Research Center) at a total cost of Rs 691.564 million. Within this PSDP mega project, PARC has set up five centers and four institutes. Dr. Azeem Khan indicates FATA is an underdeveloped arid region of Pakistan with having small holder farmers, yet full of agricultural potential. To inculcate modern methods in livestock, dairy and agriculture, establishment of research institutes are important.

## Language carries a rich treasure of knowledge

ISLAMABAD: Other than a medium of communication, language has always been instrumental in shaping identity and worldviews of native speakers alongside protecting their local values, cultural and literary heritage, indigenous knowledge and folk wisdom. However, the rapid changes during the last few decades have posed serious threats to the survival of many languages spoken all over the world. Across the globe, more than 6,000 different languages are spoken, out of which, according to the Foundation for Endangered Languages, around 500 to 1,000 languages are spoken by a handful of people only. Thus every year, the world loses around 25 mother tongues. It means that about 250 languages are lost over every decade. Pakistan is rich in linguistic diversity. The rich language heritage provides the country a reliable source of cultural strength, diversity and social capital. However, amongst them, more than 20 languages are spoken only by a handful of people ranging from a few hundreds to a few thousands. Thus these languages are being faced with extreme danger of extinction. Initially, it used to be the forces of colonization that were looking down upon the local languages, now it is the power of globalization and modernity that has endangered the mother tongues of the local populace. – APP

## 'Pakistan's first digital currency developed'

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka while talking to media said that TMP has developed a working digital currency and a team which will support the government without any compensation. He said that TenUp.io has developed a digital currency for the use of SBP. He added that this currency will eliminate the need for PayPal as it allows you to make the fastest transactions around the world. Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka said that now it is up to the government to implement this currency as soon as possible. – DNA

## 'India building military settlements in Kashmir'

The pro-freedom leadership led by nonagenarian Syed Ali Geelani had cautioned the Indian government against "settling the former Indian army men in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: India is fast-tracking "settlement colonies" in Jammu and Kashmir by transferring land to ex-soldiers, Pakistan-administered Kashmir President Masood Khan claimed on Saturday. In a statement, Khan said India under a "well-thought-out policy is swiftly acting to grab Kashmiri land to turn the whole IOJK [Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir] to its colony". "The IOJK government has expedited the process to transfer 200 kanals [25 acres] agricultural land to the ex-Indian military officials for construction of the military settlement," said Khan. The statement by Pakistan-administered Kashmir, also called

colonies by India in Kashmir have in the past faced resistance from local people. The pro-freedom leadership led by nonagenarian Syed Ali Geelani had cautioned the Indian government against "settling the former Indian army men in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir". According to ThePrint, the land identification process for the said colonies "was expedited in October this year". "It has been said the government wants to bring in troops from outside and settle them here. It is simply not true. The proposed facility will first take care of ex-servicemen who are natives of Jammu and Kashmir. They were state subjects and now domiciles," an official told the online publication.

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## Briefs

## Lok Virsa to display Quaid's vintage car on Dec 24

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) will hold cultural programs to pay tribute to Quaid-e-Azam in befitting manner on the occasion of his 145th birth anniversary. Launching ceremony of "Quaid's Vintage Car" will be held in Pakistan Monument Museum on December 24 by Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, National History and Literary Heritage, Shafaqat Mehmood. Moreover, Lok Virsa has scheduled various events including photographic exhibition to pay homage to Quaid-e-Azam and the services he rendered for the creation of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the sub-continent, Executive Director Talhan Ali Khan Khushvaha said while talking to APP. He said that the main events will be held at Pakistan Monument Museum and Lok Virsa to observe the birth anniversary of founder of nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. ED said that these events would be arranged to educate the youth about the Quaid's vision and Pakistan's ideology. He said that special events will be arranged on the day to highlight and promote ideals and views of the father of the nation, particularly with regards to rule of law, supremacy of constitution and upholding of democracy.

## SC forms five benches for next week

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Gulzar Ahmed has constituted one bench at the principal seat Islamabad and two benches each at SC Lahore and Karachi Registries to hear a number of important cases during the next week, starting from Monday. The first bench is comprised of Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and Justice Yahya Afridi. A two-member bench, comprising Justice Umar Ata Bandial and Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, would hear cases at the SC Lahore Registry. A three-member bench headed by Justice Manzoor Ahmed Malik and comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan would also hear cases at Lahore Registry. A three-member bench headed by Justice Mushir Alam and comprising Justice Sajjad Ali Shah and Justice Munib Akhtar would hear cases at SC Karachi Registry. A two-member bench comprising Justice Maqbool Baqar and Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed would also hear cases at Karachi Registry. - APP

## Six months research fellowship for PhD scholars

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

## CDA chairman praises great work of employees

Shares joys of the Christian community on the eve of the Christmas; says CDA will extend all possible help to them

SAIFULLAH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) has said that every religion in the world values the spirit of service. It is heartening to see CDA workers, employees and staff perform their duties early in the morning. He expressed these views, while addressing a Christmas function at the Chairman's Office as a special guest. A large number of officers and staff including Member Admin, Member Finance, Directors, Deputy Directors were present on the occasion. Addressing the function, Chairman CDA, Aamir Ali Ahmed said that everyone is facing difficulties due to Corona pandemic, lack of resources and the chain of problems will never end. "Whatever the situation, the city's cleanliness, beautification and rehabilitation of infrastructure is our top priority," he said. "Every religion in the world teaches service, we have to work hard, and we have to work hard to succeed. I'm



glad when someone says he sees the CDA staff working. It is not only the CDA administration or our board members who deserve this

praise, but the CDA employees and you workers who work day and night to clean, beautify, repair, rehabilitate, carpet, street lights

the city's streets. The Chairman assured workers to solve their problems, including some increase in salaries. "Not

only at Christmas, we will get together from time to time anyway, so that we can solve your problems in a better way," he added. Dur-

ing the ceremony, special prayers were offered for the security of the country and for getting rid of coronavirus pandemic.

## Pakistan's exports to USA increase 2.27%

The overall exports to USA were recorded as US \$ 1461.063m during July-October (2020-21) against exports of US \$ 1428.525m during July-Oct (2019-20), showing growth of 2.27%, SBP data revealed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports of goods and services to United State of America (USA) witnessed a surge of 2.27 percent during the first four months of financial year (2020-21) compared to the corresponding period last year. The overall exports to USA were recorded as US \$ 1461.063 million during July-October (2020-21) against exports of US \$ 1428.525 million during July-October (2019-20), showing growth of 2.27 percent, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) data revealed. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, exports to USA during October 2020 also increased by 10.28 percent, from US \$ 374.758 million against the exports of US \$ 413.314 million. On month-on-month basis, exports of USA were increased by 9.95 percent during October 2020 in comparison with exports of US \$ 375.907 million in September 2020, SBP data said. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed decline of 10.28 percent in four months, from US \$ 8.173 billion to US \$ 7.332 billion. On the other hand, the imports from USA into the country during the period under review were recorded as US \$ 573.501 million against US \$ 523.520 million last year, showing increase of 9.54 percent in four months of this year. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, imports from USA during October 2020 decreased by 30.49 percent i.e from US \$ 186.639 million last year to US \$ 129.718 million. - APP

## Audition for "Talent Hunt" at PNCA in full swing

ISLAMABAD, Dec 20 (APP): Audition for "Talent Hunt" at the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) to discover best singers and musicians continue to attract the aspirants of music. On daily basis hundred of aspirants were giving audition at PNCA under the supervision of different maestros. Talent Hunt programme is attracting large number of young music artists to show their skills. Renowned professionals and master artisans in different specialized music fields were taking auditions of registered participants at PNCA. According to an official, "the auditions are now in full swing with new students coming to register themselves everyday". He said that the said programme was an effort to promote music field along with polishing the creative skills of the young blood", he added. He said the aspirants were taking keen interest in different form of singing including classical, Sufi and Jazz. He said that any citizen can participate in programme adding that competition for playing instruments will also be held for both boys and girls to present their skills in playing flute, tabla, guitar, violin, keyboard and harmonium, he added. "The programme provides a platform to the young enthusiast to discover and polish their talent in different art forms", he stated. - APP

## Police issue confirmation list of SIs, Inspectors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have issued confirmation list of 38 Inspectors and 141 Sub-Inspectors and approved their names against these ranks. Following directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan, a meeting of the Committee headed by DIG (Headquarters) was held at Central Police Office. The meeting was attended among others by its members including AIG (Establishment) Kamran Adil, AIG (Special Branch), SSP (Headquarters), SSP (Traffic) and DSP (Legal). The Committee approved the confirmation list and issued it.

## PAL to hold "We Pakistani" on Dec 25

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) will hold a national seminar titled "We Pakistani" on December 25 to celebrate Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's 145th birth anniversary. The seminar was aimed to highlight the struggle of Baba-e-Qum for separate homeland and to apprise the young generation about Quaid's life and struggle through which he made a history by bringing Pakistan on world map. Chief Guest of the ceremony will be secretary for National Heritage and Culture Division, Nosheen Javed Amjad. Various well known writers and intellectual will also participate including Amjad Islam Amjad, Dr Ahsan Akbar and Muneer Ahmed to highlight the vision and struggle of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam, an official said on Sunday.

## CDA to restore century old mosque

DNA

ISLAMABAD: CDA will restore 100 year old Mosque which has been discovered during construction of lotus lake at Shakarparian. The mosque is believed to be over 100 years old and it was a worship place for villagers of Pairan, who migrated from the area in the 1960s during Islamabad's development phase. According to an official, CDA Chairman Amer Ali Ahmed has decided to restore this 100 years old mosque, "I have directed my team to take steps for restoration of this mosque, which is also our heritage," he said.

## CDA takes action against housing societies

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) decided to strictly ask the owners of housing societies and schemes to implement CDA and ICT Zoning Regulation. Offices of a number of illegal housing schemes and societies have been sealed. According to detail, Islamabad was divided into 5 zones according to ICT Zoning Regulation of 1992. Under zoning regulation the planning and development for housing schemes can be done in E-11 sector of Zone 1, an official of CDA said. Similarly, the work can also be done in Zone 2 and 5. CDA amended the zoning regulation in 2010 and allowed the Housing scheme and Agro farm scheme in Zone 4. The zone 4 was further divided into 4 sub zones. The planning and development of private schemes is being made under SRO64(I)2020. Two directorates of CDA regulated them. The department of Housing was carrying out planning and development of Housing Zone 2 and 5. Whereas the official said that Regional Planning Directorate regulated planning and development of zone 4. The authority was also receiving suggestions to deal with the illegal housing schemes. Few days back CDA sealed the offices of illegal housing schemes including Ayesha Town, Islamabad Cooperate Housing Scheme, Gulf Residencia, Royal City, Royal Residencia, Dream Land City, Babar enclave, Ideal Residencia, Rawal Enclave, and Yar Muhammad Society. However, the CDA was unable to plan any action against old housing societies, which have committed glaring violation of layout plan after getting NoC. In most of cases, they have turned residential areas into commercial areas. In some cases, the housing societies have converted playgrounds and parks into commercial centers in the past but CDA took no action. - APP

## Stage play 'Shadi Ho Tu Aisi' presented at PUCAR

The story revolves round the marital problems and social rituals

RAWALPINDI: A stage play 'Shadi Ho Tu Aisi' was presented at Punjab Council of the Arts which highlighted social issues relating to marital problems. The play was written and directed by Saleem Affandi. Prominent artists, Waheed Minhas, Babar Abbas, Reha Yousaf, Shahzad Ghafar, Sapna Shah, Hina Gul, Liaqat Shah, Hameed Babar, Khawar Ayub and Saleem Affandi were included in the play. The story revolves round the marital problems and social rituals. A large number of people following COVID-19 SOPs watched the play. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said on the occasion that it was appreciable step to highlight social issues through stage play. The people are being provided entertainment in wake of COVID-19 to ease them from mental tension, he added. - DNA

## NBF to hold seminar "The formation of Pakistan"

ISLAMABAD: Natiqia Book Foundation (NBF) will hold a seminar titled "The formation of Pakistan and promotion of national harmony" here today. In collaboration with Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training and CPAD the seminar was an effort to highlight the formation of narrative in Pakistan and promotion of national harmony and national interest, an official said. Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, National History and Literary Heritage, Shafaqat Mehmood will be the chief guest on occasion. Managing Director, National Book Foundation (NBF) Qaiser Alam will preside over the session. The official said that eminent writers and scholars will participate including Dr Muhammad Zia Ul Huq, Dr Qibla Ayaz, Dr Waseema Shehzad, Prof Idrees, Dr Humaira Ishaq nad Hafeez Khan. - APP

## Capital records 212 fresh corona cases

ISLAMABAD: COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the federal capital as 212 new Corona cases were reported from the city during the last 24 hours, National Command and Operation Center (NCO) said on Sunday. According to an official of NCO, as many as 205 cases were reported on Saturday while 259 cases were reported on Friday. He said so far 36,117 cases were reported from the federal capital while 389 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added 30,136 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. They also started taking actions on violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related with the corona while visiting marriage halls, markets and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration also sealed schools, shops, workshop and restaurants on violation of SOPs. The inspection teams also issued notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops. Commenting on the situation, an official of Ministry of National Health Services said that several local level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. He advised the citizens to continue following the social distancing, use of mask and other precautionary measures to stop increasing local transmission of COVID-19 in the city. He said the government had adopted effective strategy to combat COVID-19 that resulted reduction in corona cases in the country. - APP

## Intense fog to continue till end of December

ISLAMABAD: Spokesman Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Dr Khalid Malik on Sunday said fog would persist till the end of this month with increasing intensity in the days to come. Temperature would also falls countrywide including Karachi during the next week, he said. Talking to APP, he said moist water contents would persist in the atmosphere after the current rains in plain areas. He warned people to remain conscious during dense fog especially while driving as it reduces visibility to minimum level during increasing accident chances. In late night or early morning hours the visibility might be decreased to zero, he added. He advised citizens to get updated about weather situation before planning a visit outside city. PMD has also issued its advisory for the convenience of the citizens, he added. - APP

## RCCI inks MoU with Lagos Chamber of Commerce

The document was signed by Chamber President Muhammad Nasir Mirza and Dr Muda Yousuf on the behalf of Lagos Chamber

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) aiming to boost trade, increase exports and networking between the business community of Pakistan and Nigeria. The document was signed by Chamber President Muhammad Nasir Mirza and Dr Muda Yousuf on the behalf of Lagos Chamber. The signing ceremony was held on a virtual platform while Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shahzaib A Malik, members of the executive

committee, Mrs. Temitope Akintunde Assistant Director International and Public Sector Relations LCCI and others were also present on the occasion. Amir Habib Abbasi - Charge De Affairs - High Commission of Pakistan in his virtual address said that all kinds of assistance was being provided to exporters to promote trade. The diplomatic mission is working hard to remove obstacles related to banking channels and NOCs. He welcomed Chamber's suggestions and efforts to promote trade and improve networking. President Nasir Mirza said that the Chamber has always strived to enhance trade relations with African countries. He said that



RCCI desires to further strengthen and diversify the existing bilateral trade relations to the mutual benefit of the two chambers. RCCI president said both the Chambers needed to promote high level contacts and visits, which would further cement bilateral trade

relations. Under the Africa Trade Forum and the government's Look Africa policy, our focus was to explore new markets. The MoU will strengthen the Chamber's Charter, he added. Trade and Commercial Counselor Ali Tamkin Butt also assured full assistance

and cooperation to facilitate both chambers for the exchange of delegations and organizing exhibitions and business opportunity conferences. Muda Yousaf, Director General LCCI, whilst speaking on the occasion, appreciated the interest of Pakistan

in enhancing economic ties with Nigeria and welcomed Pakistan's business community for future joint collaboration. He further added that in future the implementation of Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement will unify the whole Africa into a single market and Nigeria, as a biggest country of Africa, will be a main hub of trade activities. The virtual MoU ceremony was arranged in line with the Look Africa and Engage Africa Policy of the Government of Pakistan to enhance bilateral trade and economic relationships with African countries. RCCI, after FPCCI, is the only Pakistani Trade Chamber to have a formal MoU with a Nigerian Trade Chamber.

## Briefs

ICRC  
launches  
study on  
violence  
experience

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Over 41 percent of health-care workers in three cities of Pakistan faced some form of verbal and physical violence while battling the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new study conducted by APPNA Institute of Public Health (Jinnah Sindh Medical University, Karachi), University of Lahore and Khyber Medical University with the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The study surveyed 356 health-care workers, including, doctors, paramedics and laboratory technicians, from 24 health-care facilities in Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar.

"There is an erosion of trust between patients and health-care workers in Pakistan," said Dr. Mirwais Khan, who heads the Health Care in Danger (HCiD) initiative of the ICRC. "We needed to see if COVID-19 was making it worse."

RCB gears  
up campaign  
against  
defaulters

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has accelerated up its ongoing campaign against defaulters of property tax, water charges and Transfer of Immovable Property (TIP) tax and collected over Rs 24.6 million during December. According to RCB spokesman, the RCB teams on the directives of Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) were conducting raids in different areas to take action against the defaulters. He urged the residents to pay all taxes else strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against the defaulters and heavy fines would also be imposed. To a question he informed that the Board has approved as many as 1810 maps of illegal buildings under in ongoing amnesty scheme while nearly 568 maps of such buildings are under process.

He advised the residents to regularize illegal buildings under amnesty scheme which would continue till December end. The amnesty scheme for illegal domestic structures, launched by RCB had been extended until December 31.

He informed that the board had launched an amnesty scheme for illegal residential buildings under which the owners had been asked to legalise their illegal structures without fines. — APP

RDA not to  
approve new  
societies

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) will not approve new commercial or residential projects without proper plan for rainwater management said Chairman, RDA Tariq Mehmood Murtaza.

He informed that the Authority has finalized rules to utilize precious rainwater. "Rawalpindi becomes second Rainwater Harvesting City in the Punjab," RDA Chairman said. He said that after the implementation of RDA's initiative with regards to rainwater harvesting, Rawalpindi will be the second city in the Punjab to introduce eco-friendly measures. Keeping in view the depleting fresh water resources, it has become most important to collect and use rainwater, he added. Talking about mosques, he said that there was more consumption and need for water in mosques and in order to meet their needs it could be further enhanced and there would be a bigger model of rainwater harvesting. The water coming out of the mosques was free of chemicals and ideal for irrigation, he said. The rainwater collected will be used for ablution and usage in wash rooms. The ablution water will be collected and used for watering plants and grass in the parks.

Rainwater harvesting is a new phenomenon for the people of Rawalpindi, but it is very useful for saving water for irrigation, gardening, at car wash stations and flush tanks, he said. In short it could be used for anything except human consumption, for which there would be a need of filtration process. — APP

President opens int'l moot  
on Al-Farabi at COMSTECH

The two-day conference (21-22 December) is being organized jointly by COMSTECH (the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation) and the Government of Kazakhstan in celebration of the 1150th anniversary of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi

MAHNOOR ANSAR/DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi will inaugurate on Monday an international conference titled Global Al-Farabi Forum at the COMSTECH Secretariat in Islamabad. The two-day conference (21-22 December) is being organized jointly by COMSTECH (the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific

and Technological Cooperation) and the Government of Kazakhstan in celebration of the 1150th anniversary of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, the great Muslim philosopher and scientist who hailed from the lands now included in Kazakhstan. The two-day Conference includes lectures, both in person and online, by leading international experts on early Islamic thought, history and philosophy.

The list of speakers includes Prof. Asad Q. Ahmed of Berkeley, Prof. Peter Adamson from Munich, Prof. Ann Druart from Washington, Prof. Iftikhar Malik from Bath UK, Prof. Galimkir Mutanov of Al-Farabi University of Kazakhstan, and Dr. Darkhan Kydyrali of the International Turkic Academy.

The distinguished guests include Assistant Secretary General of OIC,

Ambassador Askar Mussinov, and the Kazakhstan Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Mr. Berik Aryn. Over 120 scholars from several countries (Pakistan, United Kingdom, Kazakhstan, Cameroon, Nepal, Somalia and Sudan) are participating in this major international event. The lectures cover different aspects of the multi-faceted contributions of Al-Farabi as the pioneer who served

as a bridge between the ancient Greek thought of Aristotle and others and the early Islamic civilization. For his seminal and profound contributions in developing the foundations of Islamic philosophy Al-Farabi came to be known as the Second Master, the ultimate authority in philosophy after Aristotle. Besides the opening session, inaugurated by the President, the conference has five working

sessions with lectures, followed by a closing session with a panel discussion titled "Science and the Islamic World-A philosophical assessment", with a focus on identifying the intellectual and physical impetus required for scientific uplift in the Islamic world of today. The objective of the event is to highlight the great scholarly traditions of Muslims.

'Insurance  
industry failed  
amid pandemic'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Convenor FPCCI Central Committee on Insurance Dr Murtaza Mughal on Saturday said the insurance industry has failed to deliver amid pandemic calling for new products and reforms in this sector so that it can deliver in challenging environment. Talking to Senior Vice Chairman Insurance Association of Pakistan (IAP) and CEO Alfalah Insurance Abdul Haye and other industry experts, Dr Murtaza Mughal said that claims are being avoided because the policies were not designed to pay out when there is a pandemic; and if paid, it will push service providers to insolvency. He said that insurance is meant to act as a safety net for people and businesses but presently some type of government-backed scheme is needed. He said that SECP and Insurance Association of Pakistan (IAP) must join hands to boost the insurance sector so that it can

play its due role in the national development while improving the insurance penetration which is a prerequisite for a stable economy. He emphasised on increasing insurance penetration in Pakistan which is less than 1 percent of the GDP as against the global average of around 5 to 6 percent. Dr. Mughal who is also president of Pakistan Economy Watch stressed on the need of implementation of compulsory third party motor insurance and compulsory group medical insurance in Pakistan which is pending with SECP since 2018.

He was of the view that annually almost 20,000 people die in road accidents while many more get injured and they are not compensated. CEO Alfalah Insurance Abdul Haye was of the view that in wake of current pandemic private employers having more than 50 employees should provide health insurance cover to their staff while enforcement of compulsory group life insurance in Pakistan for companies should be considered.

ICCI holds Quran  
Khawani for late  
presidents

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) held a Quran Khawani for its former President and renowned business leader Munawar Mughal (Late) at the occasion of his 6th anniversary, Quran Khawani and Dua was also held for departed former Presidents of ICCI including Siddique Butt (Late), Raza Khan (Late), Khalid Masood Bhopla (Late), Muzammil Husain Sabri (Late) and Ch. Aslam (Late). Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Khan Vice President Islama-

bad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mian Akram Farid Chairman Founder Group, Executive Committee Members, former Presidents, senior members and large number of business community participated. At the end, Dua-e-Maghfrat was held for Munawar Mughal (Late). Munawar Mughal (Late) had died on 20th Dec: 2014 due to cardiac arrest. He was one of the founding members of ICCI. He served twice as President ICCI and was also elected as Vice President, FPCCI. During his life, he rendered great services for the business community of the region and was a very popular business leader.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Editor Daily Islamabad Post, CENTRELINE and DNA News Agency Ansar Mahmood Bhatti in a meeting with Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei. — DNA

Mobile phone  
imports rise  
45.26%

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed an increase of 45.26 percent during the first five months of current financial year (2020-21) as compared to the corresponding period last year. Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$ 724.085 million during July-November (2020-21) as compared to the imports of US \$ 498.463 million during July-November (2019-20), showing growth of 45.26 percent, according to the latest data issued by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones rose by 50.04 percent during the month of November 2020 when compared to the same month of last year. The import of mobiles into the country during November 2020 were recorded at US \$ 166.124 million against the exports of US \$ 110.723 million in November 2019. On month-on-month basis, the imports of mobile phones also witnessed increase of 155.30 percent during November 2020, as compared to the imports of US \$ 65.069 million during October 2020, according to the data. — DNA

OGRA rejects  
petrol crisis report

The commission also took the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) to task. It accused it of "apathy, incompetence flavoured with malpractices, and disregard to laws/rules"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority has rejected the inquiry commission report on the petrol crisis and are preparing a response. It has been accused of turning a blind eye to the petrol crisis in June, and not properly fining oil companies for breaking the rules. In a meeting chaired by acting chairperson Noorul Haque, officials called the allegations made by the commission untrue. They said that the oil companies were fined as much as the law allowed them.

"Ogra cannot remain silent to these accusations," said an Ogra official.

"We will respond to the inquiry report." A 15-member Inquiry Commission submitted a 163-page report on the petrol crisis that took place in June. The commission noted that the industry broke many rules and regulations which went unchecked by Ogra. Therefore, the commission has recommended departmental proceedings against OGRA officials and asked for the regulatory body to be dissolved within six months. The commission noted that the petroleum division banned oil imports in March, when international prices were declining, Pakistani consumers were denied any benefit

from cheaper petrol. The commission largely held Ogra accountable for the crisis. It said that Ogra symbolically fined oil marketing companies for not lifting stocks from refineries according to the rules. The OMCs drier up the petrol stocks as the people struggled to buy fuel. Crowded petrol pumps were seen where petrol was available amid the first Covid-19 wave. The commission also took the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) to task. It accused it of "apathy, incompetence flavoured with malpractices, and disregard to laws/rules." The report has also criticized the role of OMCs, especially Byco.

Capital  
records 212  
fresh corona  
cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the federal capital as 212 new Corona cases were reported from the city during the last 24 hours, National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said on Sunday. According to an official of NCOC, as many as 205 cases were reported on Saturday while 259 cases were reported on Friday. He said so far 36,117 cases were reported from the federal capital while 389 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added 30,136 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. They also started taking actions on violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related with the corona while visiting marriage halls, markets and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration also sealed schools, shops, workshop and restaurants on violation of SOPs. The inspection teams also issued notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops. Commenting on the situation, an official of Ministry of National Health Services said that several local level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. He advised the citizens to continue following the social distancing, use of mask and other precautionary measures to stop increasing local transmission of COVID-19 in the city.

PAC arranges  
ceremony  
to mark  
Christmas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A ceremony held at Punjab Council of the arts to mark the holy eve of Christmas. Federal Parliamentary secretary Sheikhh Rashid Hafeez was the Chief guest of the Evening. While addressing the ceremony he said, inter-religion harmony among the different religions is the guarantee of strong Pakistan. Islam is a religion of peace, which gives others religion complete religious freedom. Pakistan is a peaceful country, where all religious minorities living in peace, he added. Director Waqar Ahmed Said that, Pakistani is a peaceful society. Where all citizens have complete right like freedom of speech, education and more irrespective of their religion. Christian community is playing a vital role in the progress of Pakistan. A number of people from Christian community attend the ceremony. At the end of the ceremony Christmas cake was also cut.

Rehabilitation  
of China  
creek bridge  
in full swing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The rehabilitation work on China creek bridge, located at city's economic hub near Karachi Port Trust and connecting City Station with Karachi port directly, is in full swing. The direct and easiest connectivity between the two places will be a major stepping stone towards achieving a smooth and sustained platform for freight operations of Pakistan Railways. The Divisional Superintendent Pakistan Railways Karachi Mr. Arshad Salam Khattak visited the bridge today morning and inquired about the details of repair and rehabilitation work there. He said that the importance of Railways' freight service had equated the department directly with the country's economy. "A vitalized freight service is the indication not only of a nation's progressive Railways but its prosperity also" remarked Mr. Arshad Salam Khattak while interacting with the officers and staff present at site. He directed the deputed officials for making the bridge "serviceable" at the earliest so that it could be streamlined in Freight operation.

## Observance of laws urged for MHNPP conservation

The webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) to brainstorm on the solutions for integrated conservation and protection of Margalla Hills National Park (MHNPP). Well-known biodiversity expert and conservationist ZB Mirza was the keynote speaker

ISLAMABAD: The experts speaking at a webinar on Sunday urged the government institutions to work according to their mandate and scope of work without any discrimination to conserve the natural ecosystems and habitats of the Margalla Hills National Park (MHNPP). Stringent implementation of laws, capacity building of communities to understand the importance of the habitat they are living in, and participation of citizens and other stakeholders are very important in planning and implementation of the plans for the National Park. They asked the relevant institutions to make necessary amendments in the legislative framework guiding the conservation and protection of the Margalla Hills National Park. The land-use change, eye-soaring construction, heavy street lights, massive traffic and no system of sewage and solid waste management are the main challenges which are being ignored by the hand-cuffed government institutions.

The webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan)

to brainstorm on the solutions for integrated conservation and protection of Margalla Hills National Park (MHNPP). Well-known biodiversity expert and conservationist ZB Mirza was the keynote speaker while the panel of experts included UN Habitat Country Manager Jawed Ali Khan, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed, Institute of Urbanization Executive Director Mome Saleem, Eco-Conservation Initiatives (ECI) Executive

Director Azhar Qureshi, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) Project Coordinator Maryam Shabbir, President Islamabad Crescent Lions Club Bashir Ahmed and Regional Coordinator Association of Lions Clubs International Sibtain Raza Lodhi. Biodiversity expert ZB Mirza said vested and material interest has destroyed the Margalla Hills National Park while the custodians of the park remained indifferent to the havoc played with the bio-

logical diversity of the Park. The Rawal Lake and the Shakarparian, the other two major parts of the park, have been impacted the most. Despite court orders, the city managers and the federal government could not stop the poisonous waste going to the Rawal Lake while the state institutions destroyed the green cover of the Shakarparian. ZB Mirza said tree-plantation is not the solution to biodiversity conservation but a hazard in

many cases. Biodiversity depends on the ecosystems which are being destroyed callously. We need to check our population and consumption of natural resources to reduce stress on the natural system. Many researches have been done but dusting in the shelves of the universities. No one is interested in using them. We have studies on the Margalla Hills National Park as well but they are neglected while planning any fiddling in the National Park. We have to bear the brunt of the unwise decisions. UN Habitat Country Manager Jawed Ali Khan said we need to adhere to laws stringently and check the land-use change. Stakeholders and communities are not included in the planning stage for any initiative being taken in the National Park. Unfortunately, the Pakistan Environment Protection Council is dormant for years though it has a very important role in the federal policies and projects. Citizens are seen nowhere in the planning and monitoring of the projects. Same is the case of the Margalla Hills National Park. — APP



## Vaccination campaign

It is evident that any response by governments to counter the pandemic through vaccination programmes needs to be well-thought-out, comprehensive, prepared but also quick. Now is the time for the federal and provincial governments to map out proper vaccination strategies, as global vaccines start rolling out. Though Pakistan has not so far procured one, it needs to stay on top and have programmes in place for effective distribution. Thus the Sindh government's quick response of a detailed vaccination plan must be appreciated. The plan has identified four phases in accordance of the priority of people who should be the first to receive COVID-19 protection, with the early phases focused on frontline health workers and senior citizens, and the last two phases reserved for people with co-morbidities and then at last, the general population. Considering that Pakistan is being active on the vaccination front, taking part in clinical trials, it should hopefully not be too far that the country too procures one. For that to happen as soon as possible, Pakistan needs to have vaccination distribution strategies planned out across the country so it can present a credible case for efficient eradication of the virus. The other provinces could learn from Sindh's plan. Still there are a lot of other factors to counter in to make the plan really well-rounded. The government should look back to its previous vaccination campaigns and epidemic-response strategies for inspiration. Additional planning is needed to operationalise a vaccination response to COVID-19, which is much larger in scope and complexity than other previous outbreak-related vaccination responses. Breaking down vaccine recipients into phases is the first step. To ensure equitable access to vaccinations, information about populations and the logistical requirements for providing them access to COVID-19 vaccination services, along with figuring out how to break down taboos and stigmas of vaccinations, is the bigger step, and it requires collective collaboration between provinces, the federal government and WHO and other public health organisations.



## A constant threat

As the government has stated consistently in recent times, the threat from India is very real and also imminent. The eastern neighbour has continued to make a mockery of international conventions and ethics, both in peacetime and in conflict. In our case, try as we might, our refusal to engage in violence has not helped; New Delhi has continued in its attempts to exchange fire whenever possible. Though Pakistan has never initiated cross-border exchanges across the LoC, the Indian state continues to target innocent civilians here in Pakistan. It refuses to allow neutral observers in Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir, and now, when Pakistan had set up a visit for UN observers on the LoC, the Indian Army went as far as to specifically target the vehicle that clearly identified itself as one carrying UN officers. This is not the first time this has happened either. Thankfully the officials escaped unhurt, like in the incident in 2018. However, it is time the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) acknowledges these serious breaches by India. A cursory look at the UNMOGIP website shows that beyond making the performative visits on the Pakistani side (India does not grant access), there is not much the organisation has done to deescalate matters. UNMOGIP has the evidence to show that the Indian side has regularly breached ceasefire and has consciously attacked civilians and yet has not brought this up in front of the international community. In any case, Pakistan will not sit silent. The Foreign Minister has brought up this issue diplomatically, in his meetings with other state leaders, and brought the international media into the loop as well. Other states must take notice, before India manages to incite more violence. Its failures are there for the world to see. And it looks like it will not rest until it has more failed attempts to stir up any form of conflict with us across the border.

# Anti-State Oligarchs – Story of Vladimir Gusinsky Part-II

Dr M Ali Hamza



The unimaginably quick wealth accumulation was not enough, thus in 1993, MOST Group co-founded the Segodnya (“TODAY”) newspaper, the NTV television company

THE epigraph of Pakistan Supreme Court's order for special probe into corruption allegations against Nawaz Sharif resounds: “behind every great fortune there is a crime”. But the misled anti-state individuals forget their crimes on the way to the surprising fortune. Another case of a Russian opportunist can make us understand the stream behind the great fortune and how to pull the strings.

Vladimir Alexandrovich Gusinsky was born in a lower middle class Russian family, where the mother worked as an engineer at Gazprom, and the father was a simple worker. Although, he entered the Moscow Institute of the Petrochemical and Gas Industry, but was an academic failure: as he recalled himself “I was a bad student, played cards, was fond of women, and drank a lot.” Later, in 1981, he earned a degree in theatrical arts and started his professional career as mass-events' organizer: days of culture, regional holidays, etc. In the absence of events, he also worked as a taxi driver. Within 5 years he had some recognition in the sector, and became the Director General of the “Cultural program for foreigners” at the 1986 Goodwill Games. With the surprising luck in 1986, together with Boris Khait (later-the president of the investment group ‘SpasskieVorta’) he created the Cooperative “METAL”, which produced a number of goods like medical bracelets made of copper wire, to metal garages. Moving forward, in 1988 he founded the consulting and information cooperative “INFEX”, which provided consultative services to interested foreign investors, and helped them bypass the bureaucratic formalities in the USSR. Moreover in May 1989, INFEX and the American law firm Arnold & Porter established a joint venture on parity basis and as a result in October of the same year, MOST-Bank (MOST is Russian for Bridge) was formed. In 1990, the Americans withdrew from the project and “MOST” became a Russian enterprise. In 1992, 42 of Gusinsky's companies transformed into a holding called “Joint Stock Company (JSC) “MOST Group”, and Gusinsky became the President and the Director General. As president of JSC, Gusinsky successfully ran a construction business that was also involved in the production of building materials and other real estate transactions. Remember the scenario in which these handpicked people like Gusinsky were given opportunities to establish businesses in an open market environment (read part 1 for the reference). The unimaginably quick wealth accumulation was not enough, thus in 1993, MOST Group co-founded the Segodnya (“TODAY”) newspaper, the NTV television company, and became a sponsor of the radio station “Echo of Moscow”.

The political meddling package was ready at this junction, therefore at the end of 1993, during the first Duma elections; Gusinsky financed the election campaigns of two political parties: Russia's Choice, and Yabloko. Then in 1996, he created and headed the Russian Jewish Congress, which allowed him to establish contacts with the most influential representatives of the Jewish community, not only in Russia, but throughout the world, and this was the beginning of Gusinsky's god syndrome. Moving on in 1997 he left MOST Bank and took over the top position in the Media-MOST holding, which included the television companies NTV, NTV+, TNT, radio Echo Moskvy, as well as print media - the newspaper Segodnya, magazines Itogi, Seven Days, A caravan of stories”. By the year 2000 Gusinsky became co-owner of New Media Internet (sites Inpressa.ru, Newsru.com, Superstyle.ru, Ej.ru and others) and in 2001 he founded the TV channel RTVi (Russian Television International) and got his footprint throughout the globe. By this time Gusinsky fell prey to his own vicious desire of accumulating power to a level, where he could access and control the strings in Kremlin. For instance in 1999 an alliance, which included President Yeltsin, and a group of powerful businessmen, publicly known as the “Family”, was formed. This alliance brought in Vladimir Putin as the successor to President Yeltsin. At the same time, Gusinsky positioned himself outside of the “Family” and supported the election of anti-Kremlin alliance of Primakov&Luzhkov. This was the beginning of the conflict between Gusinsky, the Family, and Putin. In the same year, when Kremlin accused Chechen separatists of terrorist attacks in Moscow and other cities in Russia, Gusinsky's NTV decided to take on the state, airing the opposite opinion. NTV started its own investigation of the matters, built anti-Kremlin narrative, and Gusinsky refused to end such activities. This was the breaking point in the relationship between Gusinsky and the Kremlin. Though, he began feeling himself above the law, but it is customary for mere mortals to repay debts. In his awe, he did not really care about the repayment of loans. Unfortunately, other leaders of Media-MOST and NTV, which was part of it, succumbed to the same mood of their own exclu-

siveness. With this attitude, the Gusinsky empire was simply doomed to collapse. It all started in March 2000, immediately after the victory of Vladimir Putin in the first round of presidential elections in Russia. Gazprom demanded that Media-MOST must immediately repay \$212 million, which the gas monopoly had transferred to Credit Suisse First Boston, as a guarantor for the Media-MOST loan. The negotiations did not lead to anything, and on June 13, Vladimir Gusinsky was arrested on charges of fraud: according to the prosecutor's office, Gusinsky illegally took over Channel 11 of St. Petersburg television, paying \$5,000 instead of \$10 million for it. Formally, this case had nothing to do with the conflict with Gazprom. A month later, it became known that the agreement had been signed and Gazprom was buying Media-Most for \$773 million, of which Gusinsky received only \$300 million, the rest went to pay off the debt. Immediately after that, Gusinsky emigrated from the country, having flown with his family to Spain. In September of the same year, the Russian Prosecutor General's Office announced the continuation of the investigation. Soon Gusinsky was put on the international wanted list. In April 2001, the businessman was charged with new money laundering charges. At the same time he transferred his media business to the state-owned Gazprom-Media. The Media-MOST holding was liquidated by a court order in May 2001. In general, we could say that fortune favored Gusinsky. He always managed to avoid prison in a wonderful way. Even in the stagnant years, he was prosecuted for fraud, however, he ended-up missing the jail. But one must not stretch one's fortune to the limits, and one must pay the cost of good-fortune. Fundamentally Gusinsky disregarded the designers of his astounding fortune, thus he started screwing with the CRAFTERS of his “luck”. Pakistan has its own fools, who believe that it is they who are king makers. They have started roasting their fortune makers, but have completely overlooked the fact that on the way to such startling financial growth they have left behind some dirty patches, and State has the record. Will Pakistan bring these misled fools to their knees as Kremlin did? Another case study will be presented in the next part.

## The flight of the Hip

Maj (R) Naem Ahad

Chief of Staff Eastern Command, while passing the instructions for surrender, ordered destruction of equipment including artillery guns, tanks, and aircraft. The CO Aviation Squadron suggested that instead of destroying copters, they should be flown to Pakistan via Burma. After obtaining the approval from GHQ

It was similar sort of a situation just like portrayed in the 1965 film ‘The Flight of the Phoenix.’ The rugged and dependable helicopter known as Hip was somewhat damaged and it was not cleared to carry much load. The crew's flight between Dhaka to Sittwe formally Akyab (Burma) via Cox's Bazaris over 2 hours. The Indians had dominated the skies completely, so this flight was restricted to the night time. Despite success being unlikely, how the pilots carried out this mission, was against all odds. The news of escape had spread like a jungle fire in the cantonment. We the children were woken up in the midnight and asked to throw some clothes on and get ready. Born and bred in an army family this order was not something novel, rather it was like a daily routine. While rubbing our eyes we somehow quickly changed our clothes. We had recently moved from out flat in posh Dhanmondi to military cantonment in Philkhana located south of Dhanmondi in Dhaka. The word Philkhana means ‘stable for elephants’. It was a transitory accommodation but comparatively safe place to live. Half asleep we could hear the unpleasant revving noise coming from the running engines of some vehicles waiting outside our temporary accommodation. I heard my elder cousin ‘Bhijan Khurshid’ informing my mother ‘A few army jeeps have just arrived and waiting outside to take us to some ground where Army helicopters are almost ready to fly to Burma.’ He added “we have been asked only to take light and necessary items.” My father wrote following about my brave mother and his own financial condition “Beside courage and strong conviction of my wife in our capabilities to defend east Pakistan and

her refusal to leave East Pakistan, I had no money to send my children by air prior to Eid-ul-Fitr, when flights were open. At or around that time I was offered monetary assistance by Maj M Ashraf, Punjab DQ, but my wife refused to leave.” I found this in my father's file. Just before my father's posting to East Pakistan our house, which was a wooden hut, had caught fire at ‘Cat Colony’ in Kharian Cantonment and burnt to ashes. There was literally nothing left out of it. I would like to mention another short excerpt from my father's POW file. He stated, “On night of 15/16 December 1971 when fall of Dhaka was the talk of the town, Maj M Ashraf DQ contacted me on telephone and sought my permission to put my family on board helicopters leaving Dhaka for Burma.” As I understand from my father's account he did not leave his sector, a link in the chain of defence of Dhaka, as he expected some helicopter landing in open ground ahead. The helicopters were parked at different locations in the golf course in the cantonment and each one of them had a large crowd around it. All glass windows of the helicopter were blinded with mud for safety reasons. Earlier, Chief of Staff Eastern Command, while passing the instructions for surrender, ordered destruction of equipment including artillery guns, tanks, and aircraft. The CO Aviation Squadron suggested that instead of destroying copters, they should be flown to Pakistan via Burma. After obtaining the approval from GHQ, the consent to fly-out was given to the CO by Lt Gen AK Niazi. The families were taken to Golf Course. It was chilly night; we the children were shivering. There were 3 troops carrying Mi-8 heli in the golf course. The grass was almost one-foot tall as the course had been left unattended for some time. There were dim lights inside the helicopter's cabin and it was inundated with the strong smell of aviation gasoline. My brother and I occupied the two empty seats somewhere in the middle of the cabin not far from the helicopter's door. The lights of the cabin were turned off and the pilots switched on the engine. The rotor blades started to spin with a whining sound. As it was late night and I was so tired. I searched for my mother and other siblings, around me thinking they would be seated, by now, somewhere inside the helicopter. Something was not right I panicked and started to shout for my mother. I told my brother I want to go back to them. In my heart I did not want to leave her alone in this crisis. I got up from seat and leapt towards the cabin door, jumped out of the helicopter and ran towards my family. The minute I came out of the helicopter and a few more boarded and the door was shut closed. My brother did not get a chance to stop me. Maybe he did not have time to think or come out as he was holding the little child. The helicopters rotors started to spin quickly blowing air all around it. We moved away from the helicopter as it lifted off the ground into the air and disappeared in the clouds. At 0320 hours the first Mi-8 Helicopter took off, followed by the second helicopter after some minutes. I met Ali Kuli at his residence in Rawalpindi. Just before the dinner while we were sipping the soup he recounted the whole story. I also read an article where he narrates about my brother ‘Myself, Maj Akram and Maj Jawahar were to take off as number 2 in the formation at 0330 hrs. Our copter had dented rotors which restricted the pay load. There were families with luggage but in the end we had only ladies and one odd young

boy. This young boy is a Major in the army now and every year without fail he rings or meets me in December.” These helicopters carried around 30 women and children each, against the 16 authorised passengers and had full internal fuel tanks. Later while serving at PAF I gained some flying experiencing. Therefore, I relate and visualise and fully appreciate how unsafe and hazardous this night operation was. The risks at night are different and higher, but they were quantified and mitigated by our experienced and heroic pilots who were cautious and well-versed in techniques for flying safely at night. So it was our experienced and brave pilots who took the risk to take off from the golf course that was enclosed by tall trees on that pitch dark night with an over loaded helicopter. It was only the proficiency and determination of the 4 Aviation Squadron pilots that made it a success. According to a very reliable source 139 women and children were evacuated that night, nearly double the number normally permissible. “We somehow were the first to land at Akyab Airport, Burma. As we switched off at intersection a Burmese soldier approached and asked us in Urdu, “Are you Pakistani? We replied yes, we are. He inquired are you Muslim? We replied in affirmative. He then said my name is Mustapha Kamal and I am a Muslim too.” Narrated Ali Kuli Khan. At Akyab, my brother wanted to change his dirty clothes and take a shower. So he asked Mrs Maj Gen M Jamshed for some spare clothing. She did not have any clothes to give. So my brother removed the curtain from his room wrapped it around his body and washed his clothes. While he was in the corridor draped with the curtain just like a saffron robe of a Buddhist hermit monk. Mrs Gen Jamshed and her daughter saw him in that state. Her daughter pointed to my brother and said to her mother “Ami (Mother) I also want to wear these clothes.” We were still in Bangladesh after the fall of Dhaka where we learnt that one of the helicopter has been shot down. This was very worrying but then we learnt that it was only a rumour. The cutting below is from a Pakistani newspaper which reported that a total of 115 persons, including 97 women and children who had escaped from East Pakistan to Burma during invasion, were flown into Karachi from Rangoon on board a special chartered flight early Tuesday morning. Amongst the repatriated there was one non-commissioned officer and three first officers of PIA and two officials of the Met Office at Patenga. Most of these were the family members of the Armed Forces on duty in East Pakistan. On arrival at Karachi, they were taken to the Army Transit Camp. No journalists were allowed to contact them until that night. The world's oldest news agency AFP had reported from Rangoon that another 100 West Pakistanis are anticipating their repatriation in the Burmese capital and likely to be flown back home in a day or two. The journalist who wrote the above article misspelled my elder brother name however my father's name and rank is correct. Also my elder brother was just over 13 years. He writes his name as Nasim with an ‘I’ and his surname is ‘Ahad’ and not ‘Ahmad’. My brother had not left the house to play with the children of another Army officer in the neighbourhood as it was night time when we all were taken to the golf club where helicopters were parked and then my managed to escape to Burma. However, it is correct that rest of family members were left in East Pakistan. Then the journalist wrote

about an Army officer's wife, whose name as Shaheena. she and her child were moved to Hotel Intercontinental Dhaka. Like us she was taken away by PAF officials to a waiting helicopter at Golf ground which flew her out to Akyab in Burma. The lady informed the reporter that on the way the helicopter was upon by the Indians troops and the pilot was injured but he safely landed his craft. After, the Pakistan Embassy stationed in Rangoon provided the evacuees with relevant travel documents and they were sent to Karachi. The journalist also reported that amongst the PIA officials are Mr. Ahmad, Mr Pervez Iqbal and Mr Ahmed. Everyone knows how brave was my big hearted mother. During 1965 war ‘Chacha Sharif’ our orderly caught a suspicious man dress up like a ‘faqir’ i.e. a spiritual mendicant dervish from just outside our house. He a tall and strong man. At that time my father posted as officer commanding of a Bomb Disposal Company we were living at 949 Cobb Lines, which was next to President's bodyguard. The man was trying to climb the walls of PGB and peering through the gates of our house. So Chacha Sharif brought this man to my mother and told her about his suspicion. The man pretended to be deaf and dumb. After some probing he started to speak fluent Hindi/Urdu. Together they searched him and found some maps hidden in his pockets. Together they tied him with ropes Chacha cycled to the nearby unit and reported the matter. Military Police came and arrested him. I found something else about my mother in my father's file. My father wrote ‘Maj Ashraf DQ spoke very highly of my wife who before proceeding to the first helicopter conveyed this message to me. “I have not been able to see my husband but please convey to him that I will prefer him receive bullets in his chest rather than to hear he received them in his back. Tell him not to worry about children.” My uncle, two elder cousins, one younger brother and sister and myself were repatriated in January 1974. While we were still in the PoW camp, my elder brother who had returned from Burma stayed with my uncle in Rawalpindi. He was enrolled at FG Sir Syed School. One day he narrated about narrow escape to his classmate Qamar. Qamar went home and in turn related the story to his mother who was moved by the episode. Time passed on. On our return from India in January 1974 I got admitted in the same school. My parents and youngest sister were repatriated in April 1974. After 3 or 4 months my father got posted to the Northern Areas and we all settled in Abbottabad. My brother and I got admitted in Burn Hall School. After his matriculation he got selected for Army and joined the first entry of JCB 1 on 26 Nov 1976. Whereas his friend Qamar finished the school and joined Gordon College. In 1978 the two old friends met again at PMA course mates from 62nd Long Course. In 1980 as 2nd Lt they got posted to different stations. Some years after they met again at CMH. Qamar had brought his mother for some medical check-up whereas my brother was with his wife. Capt Qamar introduced: “Ami-jan do you remember Nasim? He is the one who escaped from East Pakistan and his family was taken to India as POW.” My brother said “Aunty remembered me and both Farrah and Aunty became close friends.” To this day they are good friends even though Gen Qamar Bajwa is the current COAS-ranked as the 68th most influential person in the world.

– The writer is a freelance columnist

## Briefs

## Gwadar Port goes digital

From Page 01

CPEC's commercial route runs from Gwadar to western China. The corridor, now worth over \$ 60 billion, needs faster internet connectivity to run its large-scale operations smoothly. Fiber optic cable is a gigantic step to fulfil this commercial need. Achakzai added that the company had taken several initiatives to improve internet connectivity in industrial areas as it acknowledged the importance of communication infrastructure. E-Custom powered up by WeBOC include Goods Declaration, Warehousing and module to handle Break-bulk, modules to handle Commercial Transit cargo for Afghanistan, Manufacturing Bonds, Reverse Transit and Clearances from Border Customs Stations. Basic features of WeBOC include paperless system such as online manifest filing and online payments, 24/7 GD filing (web-based), Risk Management System (Green, Yellow, Red channels), communication with the custodians of goods/port authorities through EDI, online communication with traders and clearing agents. This also includes assessment-based online examination reports and images, First-in, First-out (FIFO) based assessment scheme, online adjudication process, online decision support tools for customs and trade, stricter controls and checks (complete log of all activities), the report added.

## Pak resorts to UN over vehicle attack

From Page 01

was planning to stage a 'false flag' attack to divert attention from its domestic difficulties, and create justification for another misadventure against Pakistan. If that were to happen, Pakistan will exercise its right to self-defence, the letter warns. The letter from Pakistan's Permanent Representative requests the UN to forcefully condemn the attack on the UNMOGIP Observers and call on India to observe the 2003 ceasefire understanding. The UN must respond positively and urgently to repeated calls by Pakistan to strengthen UNMOGIP and improve its ability to observe and report on ceasefire violations, the letter contends. Pakistan has also reminded the UN that the illegal and inhuman military siege and communications lockdown in the occupied territory had now lasted for over 500 days. Highlighting the atrocities and crimes committed by Indian occupying forces against the innocent Kashmiris since August 2019, it has been forewarned that India's ultimate plan is to change the demographic structure of the LoC from a Muslim majority area into a Hindu majority territory. While drawing attention to the deteriorating situation along the LoC, Pakistan's communication recalls that India had committed over 3000 unprovoked ceasefire violations along the LoC and the Working Boundary this year alone, primarily targeting the civilian populated areas resulting in 276 casualties, including 92 women and 68 children, out of them 27 had embraced martyrdom.

## Oybek Usmanov new Uzbek envoy to Pak

From Page 01

Since 2013, he has been the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Egypt. Ambassador Usmanov during his previous tenure in Pakistan contributed greatly towards cementing of bilateral relations. During his tenure relations between two countries were strengthened significantly. He was sent to Pakistan as ambassador in 2006-2007 and he served for more than three years before his next high level posting in Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



HAMILTON: Pakistani player Mohammad Hafeez playing a short during 2nd T20 match against New Zealand, Hafeez scored 99 runs in 57 balls. — DNA

## NZ pummel Pakistan, win second T20 and series

The pitch at Eden Park was a quick one when it was used in the first T20 between New Zealand and the West Indies a month ago. But it was slower Friday and, with the ball stopping, playing shots early was difficult

## WEB DESK

HAMILTON: New Zealand easily chased down Pakistan's 164-run target, pummeling the Pakistani pace attack and winning the match, as well as the three-match series 2-0. Kane Williamson returned to the New Zealand squad in excellent fashion, scoring an impressive 57 runs from 42 balls while Tim Seifert was the pick of the batsmen, scoring 84 runs from 63 balls. Faheem Ashraf was the only Pakistani bowler to pick up a wicket, when he dismissed Martin Gupthill. Since then, there was no looking back for

## Shadab disappointed on mistakes

HAMILTON: Pakistan's stand-in captain Shadab Khan has expressed his disappointment on the batsmen who gave away wickets in the crucial overs of powerplay. The 22-year-old said in a video released by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) after Green Shirts lost the second T20I against New Zealand by nine wickets at Seddon Park. "We repeated the same mistakes and lost both matches in powerplay overs," Shadab said. "If you lose three wickets in the first six overs, 80% of the match is in the favor of the opposition," he added. Shadab did not use the absence of their regular skipper Babar Azam's absence as an excuse for losing the series and thinks cricket is a team game. "Babar is our main player in the batting unit but it's not an excuse. This is not a game of individuals, so you need to perform as a team," he added. Shadab appreciated Mohammad Hafeez's knock of unbeaten 99 and labeled the innings as a 'learning opportunity' for youngsters to play in these types of conditions. Note, Blackcaps have an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series over Pakistan. The final T20I will be played at McLean Park, Napier on Tuesday. — DNA

New Zealand who reached the target in the last over, with four balls

to spare. Earlier, the Men in Green had chosen to bat first against New

Zealand in the second T20 match of the series on Sunday. Pakistan clash

against New Zealand today after losing the first one on Friday.

After hitting a massive six off Tim Southee, Pakistani pinch-hitter Haider Ali departed cheaply. A few deliveries later, Haider was joined by Abdullah Shafique in the pavilion, who was dismissed without scoring a run. Pakistan skipper Shadab Khan and Faheem Ashraf both floundered against New Zealand's pace attack, getting dismissed for 4 runs each before Hafeez took to the crease. The veteran batsman, often criticised for being too old, let his bat do the talking, hitting New Zealand pacers all over the ground for cheeky fours and handsome sixes.

## Messi equals Pele's record with 643 goals



DNA

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi equalled Brazil legend Pele's record of 643 goals for a single club by scoring for Barcelona in Saturday's draw against Valencia. The Argentine, 33, achieved the feat with a diving header just before half-time, immediately after his penalty was saved by keeper Jaume Domenech. Messi scored his first goal for Barca in 2005 against Albacete. Pele scored 643 goals in 19 seasons for Brazilian side Santos between 1956 and 1974. Sadly for Messi, his celebrations will likely be muted after Barcelona failed to beat their mid-table opponents. The result leaves the 26-time champions fifth in La Liga, eight points behind Atletico Madrid, who earlier defeated Elche 3-1 to move to 29 points. Fierce rivals and champions Real Madrid, five points ahead of Barca, play Eibar on Sunday. This should have been Barce-

lona's third league win on the bounce, having led 2-1 in the second half and grown stronger as the match progressed. They were given an almighty jolt in the 29th minute when defender Mouctar Diakhaby gave the visitors the lead when he headed in from a corner after being left unmarked. Valencia had defended well up to that point and felt aggrieved that Barcelona were awarded a penalty just before half-time when Jose Gaya was judged to have pushed Antoine Griezmann over in the area.

After the referee Alejandro Hernandez confirmed the foul following a check of the pitchside monitor, Messi stepped up for what should have been his historic moment. However, Domenech made a brilliant save only for the Argentine to then nod home at the far post seconds later. Barcelona were on top for much of the second half and penetrated the last line of defence once more when Uruguayan defender Ronald Araujo produced an outlandish scissorkick which beat the reach of Domenech. Ronald Koeman's men were desperate to kill the game off with another goal, but as they pressed they were caught by a Valencia counter-attack, which resulted in the deadly Maxi Gomez poking in at the far post.



LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Punjab Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan addressing a press conference along with Pakistani boxer Amir Khan and Muhammad Waseem. — DNA

## Shahid Afridi joins Qalandars for T10 league

He said that league cricket is not just about playing one month of high-quality cricket, instead, the core purpose of the competition is to nurture young talent

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Former Pakistan cricket captain Shahid Afridi has joined Lahore Qalandars for the next edition of the Abu Dhabi T10 League. While speaking to media at the Lahore Press Club, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Lahore Qalandars Atif Rana said that the 45-year-old veteran all-rounder will join the franchise as their icon player. Expressing excitement over his



inclusion in the team, Afridi said: "I am really honoured to

become a part of the Lahore Qalandars franchise." He said that league cricket is not just about playing one month of high-quality cricket, instead, the core purpose of the competition is to nurture young talent. "In that regard, I think there is no franchise better than Lahore Qalandars because they've done a lot of work off the field in bringing forward the young talent," he added. The Abu Dhabi T20 League will start on January 28.

## Russia 'clearly' behind cyber attacks: Pompeo

Mr Pompeo said that US investigators looking into the attack were still "unpacking precisely what it is", and that much of the information would likely remain classified. He said that Russia was trying to "undermine our way of life",

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has blamed Russia for what is being described as the worst-ever cyber espionage attack on the US government. "We can say pretty clearly that it was the Russians that engaged in this activity," Mr Pompeo said on Friday. President Trump downplayed the attack's severity - saying it was "under control" - and cast doubt on Russia's role, hinting at Chinese involvement. The hack, targeting software made by US firm SolarWinds,

was found last week.

However, it had been going on for months. Russia has denied any involvement in the attack. Among the US agencies targeted was the office that manages nuclear weapons. That government organisation, the US energy department, said however that the arsenal's security had not been compromised. Several other organisations around the world, including in the UK, are understood to have been targeted by hackers using the same network management software. Researchers, who have named the hack Sunburst, say it



could take years to fully comprehend what is one of the biggest ever cyber-attacks. In a radio interview with US talk show host Mark Levin on Friday, Mr Pompeo said he believed that Russia had, over a period of

months, penetrated several US government agencies and private companies, along with other companies and governments around the world.

He said there was "a significant effort to use a piece of third-party software to essentially embed code inside US government systems". Along with the US energy department, federal agencies targeted by what has been described as a sophisticated cyber espionage operation include the Treasury and departments of homeland security, state, defence and commerce. Mr Pompeo said that US investigators looking into the at-

tack were still "unpacking precisely what it is", and that much of the information would likely remain classified. He said that Russia was trying to "undermine our way of life", adding that Russian President "Vladimir Putin remains a real risk". In two tweets on Saturday, Mr Trump again turned on what he labels the "fake news media" for exaggerating the matter. image caption Donald Trump and Mike Pompeo have not always had identical views on Russia. He wrote: "The Cyber Hack is far greater in the Fake News Media than in actuality."

## Eight killed as car bomb rocks Kabul

From Page 01

The group has also claimed a series of recent rocket attacks. On Saturday five rockets were fired at Bagram Airfield, a major US airbase north of Kabul, but there were no casualties. That attack was also claimed by IS. Sunday's car bomb comes just two days after 15 children were killed and many more wounded when a motorbike laden with explosives blew up near a religious gathering in a remote part of Ghazni, officials said, blaming the Taliban.

## Warrants can be issued to summon Chairman

From Page 01

He said that the government had issued an ordinance to limit the powers of NAB and confine its role to government and public corruption, but political parties could not reach a consensus on that. "The government held several meetings with the Opposition regarding the matter of NAB's ordinance but they could not come to an agreement," Mandiwala said. "As a result, the ordinance lapsed and NAB was given a chance to intervene in every institution of the country, including private businesses and bureaucracy." He said that NAB is intervening in everything now, including issues related to under-invoicing, and import and export cases, which is not its domain. "The Senate has received a long list of complaints from businessmen in the United States and Canada, who said that they had to leave the country because NAB harassed them," he said.

## UAE visa curbs due to pandemic: FO

From Page 01

Emirati leadership inter alia raised the issues pertaining to visa restrictions on Pakistani nationals as well as the welfare of Pakistani Diaspora in the UAE. Appreciating the contributions made by the Pakistani Diaspora in the UAE, Foreign Minister Qureshi was assured that the visa restrictions were temporary in nature and were imposed due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Spokesperson also referred to the Statement made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, reaffirming the UAE's appreciation of the 1.5 million strong Pakistani community and their active contribution to the growth and prosperity of the country. Noting the interconnectivity of the peoples of the two friendly countries, the Statement stresses the "temporary nature of the recent restrictions imposed on the issuance of visas due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic", the Spokesperson added.

## Indian diplomat summoned

From Page 01

occupation forces in Rakhchikri Sector of the LoC on 19th December 2020, 25 year old Sagheera d/o Muhammad Haneef, resident of Akhori village, sustained serious injuries. The Indian occupation forces along the LoC and the Working Boundary (WB) have been continuously targeting civilian populated areas with artillery fire, heavy-caliber mortars, and automatic weapons. In 2020, the Indian occupation forces have carried out 3003 ceasefire violations to date, resulting in 27 shahads and serious injuries to 250 innocent civilians.

## Sindh, Northern win matches in Pakistan Cup

KARACHI: Sindh and Northern claimed thrilling wins while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded a one-sided win over Balochistan in the third round of the Pakistan Cup One-Day Tournament 2020-21 for Second XIs played on Sunday. In the first match played at KCCA Stadium in Karachi, KP beat Balochistan by 126 runs. Sahibzada Farhan top scored with 53 off 88 balls (four fours, one six) and Mehran Ibrahim contributed 50 off 59 balls (four fours), leading KP to 262/7 in 50 overs. Balochistan's Zainullah took three wickets for 55 runs. Balochistan were dismissed for 136 runs in 34.5 overs. Abdul Rehman Muzamil top scored with 53 runs off 81 balls (three fours, one six) while no other batter showed resilience.

## Briefs

## Malaysia to sign AstraZeneca vaccine deal

DNA

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will sign a deal to purchase the COVID-19 vaccine from British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca. Addressing media on Saturday Malaysian Health Minister Adham Baba said the country reached an agreement with AstraZeneca for the purchase of vaccines.

The vaccines are planned to be brought to the country in February next year and will be enough to vaccinate 20% of Malaysians, the minister said. Last month, Malaysia announced that it had reached an agreement with Pfizer to purchase enough doses to vaccinate its 6.4 million citizens.

Last week, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said that the government is planning to buy more COVID-19 vaccines to immunize as many as 70% of the population.

"As for Malaysia, we have already got 30%. I have instructed Health Minister Datuk Seri Adham Baba along with Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar [Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation] to negotiate and increase it from 30%-60% or 70%," Yassin said. The Southeast Asian country has reported 91,969 COVID-19 cases with 433 deaths so far.

## Modi visits Sikh temple as farm protests persist

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made an unscheduled visit to a Sikh temple in New Delhi, kneeling in respect and taking pictures with visitors at a time when the community is leading massive protests against his farm reforms. At least 25 people have died during the protests against the three laws - approved by Parliament in September - so far, police said; several deaths were due to the biting cold weather. Modi, whose security detail often keeps him far from the general public, prayed at the Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib on Sunday, interacted with Sikh religious leaders there and obliged visitors seeking to take pictures with him.

The temple, near Parliament House, was where Sikh saint Guru Teg Bahadur was cremated. "I felt extremely blessed," Modi said on Twitter. But while some social media users and his party colleagues welcomed Modi's visit to the shrine like a "common man, without any restrictions", others urged him to try and end the protests. "A request to @narendramodi please visit #FarmersProtests site as well where #Farmers are peacefully protesting," a Twitter user posted.

## Baghdad, Kurdish govt reach deal on 2021 budget

DNA

BAGHDAD, Iraq Iraq's central government has reached an agreement with northern Iraq's Kurdish Region Government (KRG) on the country's 2021 budget, Baghdad's finance minister announced on Saturday. But in his announcement, Ali Allawi offered no details on the deal between Baghdad and Erbil, the KRG's capital.

A KRG delegation headed by the region's Finance Minister Awat Janab arrived in Baghdad on Dec. 3 to discuss the KRG's share of the budget and the salaries of KRG employees.

The Iraqi federal government had cut the KRG employees' salaries after it said the KRG had failed to abide by a 2019 agreement under which the KRG would deliver 250,000 barrels of crude oil a day to Baghdad, a claim the KRG denies. After the fall of the Saddam Hussein Iraqi regime in 2003, the KRG's share of the Iraqi budget was 17%, but Baghdad cut it to 12% in 2017 after tension with the region following a controversial referendum.



GAWADAR: Inauguration ceremony of Pak-Iran border crossing point at Gabd-Reemdan, halfway btw Chahbahar and Gwadar, held. Minister of defense production Zubaida Jalal and Iranian minister for road & urban development Mohammad Eslami were also present at the occasion. - DNA

## No trade deal unless 'substantial shift': UK

Whitehall sources say it is increasingly likely the UK will end its post-Brexit transition period without a free trade agreement with the EU, meaning that on 1 January the two sides will rely on World Trade Organization (WTO) rules to govern exports and imports

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: There will be no post-Brexit trade deal between the UK and EU unless there is a "substantial shift" from Brussels in the coming days. It is understood there is likely to be a decision before Christmas on whether or not a deal can be reached. The two sides have been in negotiations about how many years it will take to phase in new fisheries arrangements. But an EU source said this was not the only remaining issue left to resolve. "Talks are stuck," they said. "Not just fish. The UK has other demands and the level playing field is not sorted." The level playing field is a trade policy term for a set of common rules and standards that prevent businesses in one country gaining a competitive advantage over those operating in other countries.

'Flexibility needed'

Whitehall sources say it is increasingly likely the UK will end its post-Brexit transition period without a free trade agreement with the EU, meaning that on 1 January the two sides will rely on World Trade Organization (WTO) rules to govern exports and imports.

This could see tariffs introduced on goods being sold and bought - which may lead to increased prices for certain products. A government source told the BBC: "We need to get any deal right and based on terms which respect what the British people voted for."

"Unfortunately, the EU are still struggling to get the flexibility needed from member states and are continuing to make demands that are incompatible with our independence. "We cannot accept a deal that doesn't leave us in control of our own laws or waters."

"We're continuing to try every possible path to an agreement, but without a substantial shift from the [European] Commission we will be leaving on WTO terms on 31 December."

The EU source said Brussels was not seeking to take control away from the UK over its waters.

"The point is what the EU can do, under the agreement, if the UK does not give access. "So the best thing is to negotiate a stable access regime, to avoid getting to that position."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has vowed to keep talking but warned gaps had yet to be bridged.

Senior MEPs in the European Parliament have said they will not be "rushed" into signing off a deal on their side and want to see the text of any agreement by Sunday if they are to approve it by the end of the year. Speaking in the European Par-

liament on Friday, the EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, said that while there was still a "chance" of a deal, the "path was very narrow".

A senior EU source told the BBC's Brussels correspondent Nick Beake: "The Member States are the EU. And as a former member state, the UK knows well that the EU negotiator is there to protect the interest of Europeans."

"We believe it is in both sides' interest to reach a fair deal, which cannot be the case without a level playing field and sustainable arrangements for fisheries," media caption Michel Barnier says negotiations have "just a few hours"

The two sides have been at odds over the length of time it will take to introduce new arrangements once the UK leaves the bloc's Common Fisheries Policy. The UK, led by its chief negotiator, David Frost, has insist-

ed its sovereign rights over its waters must be respected from day one and its fleets must be able to keep a much larger share of their own catch.

The EU is insisting on a much longer transition period, with guarantees on access and how catches are distributed.

The two sides are reported to have made progress in recent days on the issues of fair competition and what to do if the UK is deemed to get an unfair competitive advantage by moving away from EU rules and standards.

If a deal is reached between the two sides, it would need to be agreed by parliaments in the UK and the European Union's member states.

UK MPs have now finished for the Christmas break, but Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove said on Thursday that they could be called back to ratify a deal in the coming days, were one to be agreed.

## Tashkent youth forum 2020 takes place

DNA

TASHKENT: Two days of the Tashkent Youth Forum - 2020, organized by the Tashkent City Administration, the Agency for Youth Affairs and the Youth Union of Uzbekistan, were held at the Congress Hall. The need to hold a youth forum was discussed back on 20 November 2020 during a meeting chaired by the head of state, which dealt with issues of socio-economic development of Chirchik district of the capital. The event

at the same time sums up the results of the festival, which took place during the month under the motto "Tashkent loves youth!"

Registered participants had the opportunity to meet with ministers and heads of state organizations, present their proposals, announce initiatives. At the grand opening on the first day, the khokim of the capital Jakhongir Artikhodjaev noted that young people can reach high peaks at the international level. "You need to strive for progress, you need to be heroes!"

We can do this? Of course we can! You need to be a hero in any area!" he stressed.

Heads of ministries and departments took part in the sections "Social sphere - 2030: prospects for the development of education and health care systems", "Cultural and tourist image of Tashkent - 2030", "Legal Tashkent - 2030", "Digital Tashkent - 2030", "Financial sector of Tashkent and the modern image of the capital - 2030". Youth meetings were held with the participation of Deputy Prime Minister for Social Development Bekhzod

Musayev, Minister of Public Education Sherzod Shermatov, First Deputy Minister of Health Amrillo Inoyatov, Minister of Higher and Secondary Special Education Inomjon Majidov, Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the State Committee for Tourism Aziz Abdulkhakimov, Minister of Culture Ozodbek Nazarbekov, Minister of Physical Culture and Sports Dilmurod Nabiye, Minister of Justice Ruslanbek Davletov, Head of the Anti-Corruption Agency Akmal Burkhanov, Advisor to the Prime Minister Olimjon Umarov.

## Pakistan's measures to uplift textile production lauded

DNA

BEIJING: The present government of Pakistan has taken special measures to further develop textile industry and recently announced lucrative energy package to help recuperate from the COVID-19 shock was also commendable.

These views were expressed by Cheng Xizhong, visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law said here on Sunday. Recently announced lucrative energy package to help textile industry with peak electricity rates, offers reduced tariffs on additional power consumption and fixes power price at \$ 0.07 a unit and gas tariff at \$ 0.065 per MMBtu, Cheng, also a senior fellow of the Charhar Institute said in his article published by China Economic Net (CEN).

He said the present government of Pakistan has taken special measures to gradually improve the business environment. In order to improve the sustainability of the development of the textile industry and have

clear direction and objectives, All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) is formulating a long-term development strategy for the textile industry. It plans to attract \$ 7 billion of investment in the next five years, so as to increase the export volume of textiles and clothing by 100% to \$ 26 billion. Pakistan is the fourth largest cotton producer, the fourth largest textile producer and the twelfth largest textile exporter in the world. The textile industry is the most important pillar industry and the largest export industry in Pakistan.

In recent years, Pakistan's textile industry has been plagued by insecurity, high operating costs, declining competitiveness and sluggish demand in the international market. However, with the steady progress of the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Pakistan's textile industry and textile exports have a bright future, he added. According to his observation, Pakistan's textile production and exports have the following main advantages.

## Nepal president dissolves Parliament

FOREIGN DESK

Nepal's president has dissolved Parliament at the request of Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's cabinet and announced that general elections would be held in April and May, more than a year ahead of schedule.

Sunday's move plunges the Himalayan country, which has seen revolving-door governance since street protests restored multi-party democracy in 1990, into political turmoil as it battles the coronavirus pandemic.

President Bidhya Devi Bhandari's office said in a statement the next vote will be held on April 30 and May 10, as recommended by the cabinet following an emergency meeting. Oli, 68, pushed for a fresh mandate after the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) accused him of sidelining his party in government decisions and appointments. He had led an alliance with former Maoist rebels to a landslide victory in 2017.

"The prime minister has lost the majority in the parliamentary party, central committee and the secretariat of the party," said Bishnu Rijal, an NCP central committee member. "Instead of seeking a compromise within the party, he chose to dissolve Parliament."

## Kazakhstan bans new year parties

NUR-SULTAN: Kazakhstan has banned corporate parties and sporting events over the New Year holidays and tightened quarantine measures at a key oil field in a bid to contain the coronavirus, the government said Sunday. The new restrictions on the holding of mass gatherings and sports events will enter force on December 25 and last until January 5, said a statement released by the office of the prime minister.

Authorities said that tougher measures at the Tengiz oil field where hundreds of employees have contracted the virus will continue "until the epidemiological situation stabilises".

The government also said that it would introduce price controls to make medicines used to treat the virus 24 percent cheaper on average, the statement said.

Year-end company parties are an important source of income for the Kazakh hospitality sector which has taken a battering over the course of a year that has included two coronavirus lockdowns. Kazakhstan's chief sanitary doctor warned in May that the Tengiz oil field where US oil giant Chevron has a 50 percent stake could face closure over rising cases. Kazakhstan, a Central Asian country of around 19 million people, has registered 146,584 cases of the coronavirus with 130,766 recoveries and 2,147 deaths. - APP

## Netanyahu gets vaccine, starts Israel roll-out

WEB DESK

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has received a COVID-19 vaccine jab, kicking off a national roll-out over the coming days. Netanyahu, 71, and his health minister were injected on Saturday with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine live on TV at Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan, near Tel Aviv.

"I asked to be vaccinated first, together with Health Minister Yuli Edelstein, to serve as personal examples and encourage you to be vaccinated," Netanyahu told the television audience.

"This is a very moving moment," he said, adding businesses would soon be able to resume work and people will be able to earn a living as before. The arrival of the Pfizer vaccine, and later on, the one from Moderna, marked "the beginning of the end", he said. Netanyahu and Edelstein must each receive a booster shot in three weeks for optimal protection from the coronavirus. The vaccine will be rolled out at 10 hospitals and vaccination centres around Israel for healthcare workers from Sunday, according to the health ministry. During the course of the week, a ministry statement said, vaccinations will be extended to the general public, starting with those above 60 years of age.

## Netherlands, Belgium ban UK flights

The Dutch public health body, the RIVM, therefore "recommends any introduction of this virus strain from the UK be limited as much as possible by limiting and/or controlling passenger movements"

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The Netherlands has banned flights carrying passengers from the United Kingdom after Dutch authorities found the first case of the new, more infectious coronavirus strain that is circulating in England. The Dutch government, in a statement early on Sunday, said the ban will remain in place until January 1. "An infectious mutation of the COVID-19 virus is circulating in the United Kingdom. It is said to spread more easily and faster and is

more difficult to detect," the health ministry said in a statement.

The Dutch public health body, the RIVM, therefore "recommends any introduction of this virus strain from the UK be limited as much as possible by limiting and/or controlling passenger movements"

The ministry said a case study in the Netherlands "at the beginning of December revealed a virus with the variant described" in the UK. Belgium has also moved to limit incoming cases, saying it will also suspend flight and train arrivals from the UK from midnight (2300 GMT)

Sunday, a government official told AFP. Prime Minister Alexander De Croo told Belgian television channel VRT the ban will be in place for at least 24 hours. Dutch experts said they were looking at how the infection happened and whether there were related cases, it added.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's cabinet's ordered the ban on flights from the UK as a "precautionary" measure, the ministry said, adding that the Dutch government is reviewing other modes of transport.

"Over the next few days, together with other EU member states,

the government will explore the scope for further limiting the risk of the new strain of the virus being brought over from the UK," it added.

The Netherlands is under a five-week lockdown until mid-January with schools and all non-essential shops closed to slow a surge in the virus.

The ban on UK flights comes after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and scientists announced on Saturday that the new strain of coronavirus identified in the country is up to 70

percent more infectious. But Johnson said the new variant is not thought to be more deadly and vaccines should still be effective. The British prime minister also said London and southeast England, which are currently in the highest level of a three-tier system of rules, would now be placed in a new Tier 4 level.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said it was in close contact with British officials and would update the public "as we learn more about the characteristics of this virus variant and any implications".

### Briefs

### Pakistani film work get favorable reviews

DNA

BEIJING: Recently, movies and TV series from Pakistan are favorably reviewed among Chinese audiences, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday. From Parwaaz Hai Junoon, a patriotic film screened in China this November, to Churails, a popular web series hit the internet, the peculiar enchantment of latest Pakistani works on different subjects refreshed Chinese people's impression of the country's cultural creation. According to the report, by Dec. 18, Churails has scored as high as 9.2 based on 1,691 user ratings on Douban, China's most popular and authoritative website of movie ratings and reviews. Putting aside the content arousing controversy in the country, the drama has drawn Chinese netizens by the fascinating twists in the storyline, characteristic Pakistani-style pictures, and beautiful exotic music, etc. On Douban, Chinese audiences generously expressed their affection for the TV series. "This is the first time I have watched a Pakistani TV series. Brilliant and high-quality," praised by Jiaoshenmemingzine. Awesome! BGM, pictures and storyline, everything is perfect. As a person who once lived in Pakistan for a short period, I was really amazed by this drama," commented by Leibantiantian.

### COVID-19 takes away 46 lives in Punjab

LAHORE: The COVID-19 took away 46 lives while 722 new cases were reported on Sunday in the province. According to the record shared by the spokesperson for the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (PP&SHD), the number of coronavirus cases in the province reached 131,428 while the total number of deaths had been recorded 3,604 so far. The PP&SHD confirmed that 407 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Lahore, one in Kasur, two in Sheikhupura, three in Nankana Sahib, 55 in Rawalpindi, one in Attock, one in Jehlum, six in Gujranwala, two in Mandi Bahauddin, five in Hafizabad, four in Sialkot, one in Narawal, four in Gujrat, 33 in Faisalabad, two in Toba Tek Singh, four in Jhang, 19 in Multan, three in Lodhara, one in Vehari, two in Khanewal, three in Dera Ghazi Khan, one in Chineot, 20 in Sardogha, nine in Mianwali, nine in Khoshab, 11 in Bhakkar, one in Layyah, 38 in Bahawalpur, 24 in Bahawalnagar, four in Muzaffargarh, 10 in Rahimyar Khan, 22 in Okara, four in Pakpattan and 10 cases were reported in Sahiwal district during the last 24 hours. - APP

### Shafqat directs to formulate Education Policy 2021

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education Shafqat Mahmood has directed to formulate Pakistan Education Policy 2021 through a wide-spread consultative process. In a tweet on Sunday, he said, while we have taken number of initiatives including Single National Curriculum a formal education policy for country is necessary; so on my direction process has been started by Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Education Policy 2021 will ensure a national cohesion and harmony across religious and ethnic divides as well as capturing the divergence that is absolutely essential for the context of Pakistan. It will also nationally converge on key education aspects for standards, educational stages system of exams and admissions, teacher management standards. This policy will ensure equity in education for all children and institutions across the country. - APP

# Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul freight train to be revived

The key requirements for the revival of the ITI train, also called the ECO Container train have been fulfilled. The train is expected to resume operations in 2021

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) freight train is expected to resume operations in early 2021 to boost Pakistan's trade with Turkey and Iran. The railways of Pakistan, Turkey and have mutually agreed to resume regular operations soon after a meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), according to Turkey's Transport Minister, Adil Karaismailoglu. The key requirements for the

vival of the ITI train, also called the ECO Container train have been fulfilled. The train is expected to resume operations in 2021. **ECO project**  
The trial run of the ITI train was launched in 2009 as a project under the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) - 10-member Asian trade bloc. The route has so far only been used for test journeys. The route has been recognized by the UN as an international corridor between the three countries. **Reduce freight time and cost**  
The railway line intends to great-

ly reduce the transit route of the goods from Istanbul to Islamabad. During the trial, the freight train from Islamabad to Istanbul took nearly 13 days to make the 6500km journey. The journey was later further reduced to 11.5 days. In comparison, transporting goods from European countries to Pakistan via seaway took almost 45 days. The train has a maximum capacity for twenty 40-foot containers. **Length of rail route**  
The total length of the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul project is 6500 kilometers (km).

- Iran: 2600 km
- Turkey: 2000 km
- Pakistan: 1990 km

#### Boost trade

The railway line from Istanbul, through Tehran, all the way to Islamabad has been described as "tremendously beneficial" to all three nations. It aims to boost economic cooperation among Pakistan, Iran and Turkey first and with the other ECO member countries afterward. Besides Pakistan, Turkey and Iran, these countries will benefit from the ITI project: Afghanistan,

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

#### Possibility of expansion to Europe

Although the project was launched to promote the economic relations among the ECO founding member countries, however, it offers a short, safe and affordable route for transportation of goods between Asia and Europe. From Turkey, the corridor can link up with the European rail networks via the Marmara submarine railway tunnel (Turkey).



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed addressing his constituents during reception at Freedom House. APP

## CPEC to bring industrial revolution

ABID RAZA / DNA

LAHORE: The super mega project of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is poised to herald industrial revolution and usher an era of prosperity, development, progress besides uplifting the socio economic condition of the poor strata of the society. Addressing a reception held in honour of voters and supporters of United Business Group (UBG) here Sunday UBG Chairman and veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik said that prudent economic decisions taken by the Prime Minister Imran Khan is yielding positive results in stimulating the industrial growth in Faisalabad besides boosting construction industry across the country while relief in power package is also contributing a lot in accelerating economic activities in all sectors. **Khalid Tawab, presidential candidate for the top slot of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry speaking on the occasion said that all chambers and affiliated trade associations of entire provinces of Sindh and Balochistan have reposed unflinching full confidence on the UBG policies by electing their candidates unopposed Vice Presidents which he added speaks of the popularity of the group.**

## 4,000 personnel integrated into KP Police: ISPR

RAWALPINDI: Around 4,000 former Khasadar and Levies personnel on Sunday were integrated into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police after completing four months training in the first phase. In collaboration with Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the first phase of training of former Khasadar and Levies personnel integrated into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police had come to an end, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) here on Saturday. The first phase of training in

different areas of the tribal districts lasted from September to December 2020 in which 4,000 personnel integrated into the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police were trained by expert trainers of Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police. The officials were trained on diverse areas of security including counter-terrorism, quick reaction force, policing, dealing with improvised explosive device (IEDs) and explosives, awareness of modern equipment, physical fitness and firing practice.

## Putin hails Russia's spies, visits intelligence HQ

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday hailed the country's "courageous" spies as he visited the headquarters of the Foreign Intelligence Service to mark its 100th birthday. Putin, who has spent most of the coronavirus epidemic at his residences outside the Russian capital and on the Black Sea, visited the SVR headquarters in southern Moscow amid the controversy surrounding the work of the country's security services. SVR, Russia's external intelligence agency, which succeeded the First Chief Directorate of the KGB in 1991, marks its centenary on Sunday. But December 20 is also the day in Russia when the country fetes all members of the security services including those

from the FSB domestic intelligence agency. Speaking outside the SVR headquarters, Putin, himself a former KGB officer, thanked all those who protect Russia from "external and internal threats" and called them "reliable and courageous people." "Efficient work of security bodies, which is governed

by law and national interests, always was and will be exceptionally important for Russia," he said. "It's one of the most important guarantees of the sovereign, democratic and independent development of our multinational society," Putin added. The 66-year-old Kremlin chief praised the work of SVR which he said influenced the course



## 258 deported Pakistanis arrive from KSA

MULTAN (DNA): Pakistani nationals deported from Saudi Arabia arrived in the country via a Saudi airline on Sunday. The airline, carrying 258 Pakistanis deported from Saudi Arabia, reached Multan. The deported Pakistanis were allegedly involved in criminal activities, according to the Saudi government. A team of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested the suspects and took them into their custody. Earlier on Wednesday, a flight carrying 30 Pakistanis deported from Greece reached Islamabad, while 139 deportees from Saudi Arabia allegedly involved in criminal activities had arrived in Multan. - DNA

## EU rights activist calls out India

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Describing the EU DisinfoLab's revelations as "enormously" damaging, a European Union-based human rights activist Andy Vermaut Sunday called for lawsuit against Indian government to avert recurrence of fake news propaganda. "This should have consequences for Indian government that has the final responsibility. The Indian government should be held accountable for this in the court," Andy Vermaut said who is an official member of "The International Alliance for the Defence of Rights and Freedoms (AIDL) constituted by the United Nations (ECOSOC).

In an interview with Islamabad Policy Research Institute, he urged all the victim parties to sit down together for legal proceedings against India for its "enormous" damage to Pakistan, China, European Union, the United Nations as well as the minorities living in India who were already suffering due to Indian policies.

"If we don't do this, new sites will be created tomorrow. We will have to act on this," the activist said who is also the President of Post-Versa, Human Rights and Fundamental Rights chapter. Andy Vermaut said the Disinfo Lab's revelations showed that even the Indian people were also deceived by their government, as it pretended to have the support of the largest parliament in the world and also the whole EU.

## PEC destroys future of 63 DCET's engineers

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) has not only destroyed the future of 63 graduated engineers of Dawood College of Engineering and Technology (DCET) but neither the federal nor provincial government is ready to redress their issue. The effected students have completed their course and besides holding the degrees neither the PEC has enrolled them and issued recognition yet nor HEC or any other competent authority took any notice during last 11 years. Talking to media yesterday, the President of DCET's Student Action Committee Old Badges 1991-96, Engineer Mustafa Hussain demanded Prime Minister Imran Khan and Supreme Courts of Pakistan's Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed to issue the orders to PEC and other concerned authorities to enroll all effected engineers and save their professional careers. Engineer Mustafa Hussain revealed that the effected engineers are very much angry since last 11 years while their career, status, education and potential even their individual as well as domestic life have reached at end and the affecters are not completely disappointed but planning to take extreme action so, the government should consider this issue most serious and take practical action in this connection.

Engineer Mustafa Hussain revealed that the effected engineers are very much angry since last 11 years while their career, status, education and potential even their individual as well as domestic life have reached at end and the affecters are not completely disappointed but planning to take extreme action so, the government should consider this issue most serious and take practical action in this connection.

## 91% residents worried about Karachi's sanitation

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: A survey conducted by leading public opinion group Gallup Pakistan revealed that about 91% of Karachiites have expressed serious concerns over the poor sanitation situation of the city. According to the survey, the most displeasing factor about the city is the inadequate garbage disposal/ littering (32%) all over the city. Whereas, 27% opined that the biggest challenge faced by the city is the contaminated water supply. On the other hand, about 81% expressed concern over the rising crime rate, and 8 out of 10 citizens, which constitutes 82% of the respondents, have shared that they felt safe in their neighborhood during the day. However, 18% said they were unsafe, 63% said they were safe and 37% said they were unsafe at night.

## UNICEF to provide 1.15m corona testing kits to Pak

UNICEF will provide coronavirus testing kits to Pak with the funding from the World Bank

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The UNICEF has decided to provide coronavirus testing kits to Pakistan as the requirement of the country for the diagnostic kits has increased in the second wave of the disease. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has decided to provide 1.15 million COVID-19 testing kits to Pakistan after soaring cases of the disease in the second spike of the contagious in country, sources said. Pakistan will receive the consignment of testing kits from the UN Agency in January 2021, sources further said.

## Covid-19 claims 80 more lives

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's health ministry on Sunday reported 80 more fatalities from the novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours, bringing the country's total death toll to 9,330. According to the government's coronavirus statistics website (covid.gov.pk), a total of 37,206 COVID-19 tests were conducted across the country over the last 24 hours, revealing a positivity ratio of 7%. The country's National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) said that out of the 80 people who succumbed to the disease within a day, 44 were put on a ventilator. Official figures further showed that 2,615 more people across the country tested positive for the potentially deadly virus within a day, bringing the total number of patients infected with the virus to 454,673. At present, there are a total of 40,553 active coronavirus cases in the country. Since the pandemic broke out, 407,405 people have recovered from the disease. - DNA

According to sources, the UNICEF will provide coronavirus testing kits to Pakistan with the funding from the World Bank. The health authorities have

made contacts on the world level for procurement of the testing kits, sources said. "The provinces will inform the federal authorities about their

requirement of testing kits, and the consignment supplied by the UNICEF will be distributed among the provinces," sources said. "The health authorities will allo-

cate 4,50,000 corona testing kits to Sindh," the sources added. As many as 2,615 new cases of the coronavirus were reported across the country during the past 24 hours, pushing the national tally of infections to 457,288. According to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), 80 more people succumbed to the infection during this period, taking the death toll from the disease to 9,330. A total of 37,206 samples were tested in the previous 24 hours, out of which 2,615 turned out to be positive. The positivity ratio of fresh Covid-19 cases stands at 7.02 per cent, the NCOC said.