

### Briefs **CM Usman Buzdar tests** positive

DNA



sources of the Chief Minister House confirmed on Monday. "A sample of the chief minister was taken for the [coronavirus] test after after he felt ill," said the source. "The chief minister had quarantined himself after feeling sick.' Pakistan, like many other countries around the globe, is braving the second wave of the coronavirus. Pakistan's health ministry revealed that 80 more people had died on Saturday, bringing the country's total death toll to 9,330.

### Bilawal calls for PM to resign

DNA LAHORE: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Monday

### lashed out at the govern ment for being "unaware" of ground re-

# No NRO to **Opposition**, says Shibli

Info Minister says the opposition proposed that NAB should not have powers to take up cases reported before 1999



### NAVEED MIRAJ / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Syed Shibli Faraz has said the government will never offer any kind of NRO to the opposition. Speaking at a news conference in Islamabad on Monday, he said the opposition had proposed 34 out of 38 amendments in the National Accountability Ordinance to hide corruption of its leadership committed in the past.

He said they pressurized the government by proposing these amendments, at a time when the government was seeking opposition's cooperation in Financial Action Task

### Force related legislation to bring Pakistan out of FATF's grey list.

Syed Shibli Faraz said the opposition proposed that NAB should not have powers to take up cases reported before 1999 and should only take notice of corruption cases reported in the last five years. He said the opposition also suggested that corruption cases of less than one billion rupees, willful default or writing off loan, and offence of money laundering should stay out of NAB's purview.

The Minister said another proposal is to change the definition of Benamidars, giving free hands to make corruption in the name of wife and children. It was proposed to allow convicts to contest elections till final disposal of their cases and disqualification should be up to only five years. He said opposition desired to make redundant the international mutual legal assistance law and dealing it under law of evidence of Pakistan. Syed Shibli Faraz said these amendments if incorporated will grant corrupt leaders of opposition an NRO plus, making the NAB practically dysfunctional. He said the gang of corrupt leaders is misleading the people by holding mass gatherings in the country. He said the opposition attempted to create a divide among institutions responsible for country's security.

Lankan envoy meets Naval Chief SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Pakistan Vice Admiral (retired) Mohan Wijewickrama called on Naval Chief Amjad Khan Niazi in Islamabad on Monday.

According to a statement released here, the two sides exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and promotion of bilateral cooperation in maritime domain. They also discussed maritime security situation in

the region. Pak rejects

### ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, Vice Admiral D.S Mohan Wijewickrama. - DNA Qureshi tells UAE Pak stance on Israel

On the matter of visas, the foreign minister insisted it is a temporary issue which will be resolved soon

### ABID RAZA

MULTAN: Pakistan has appraised the Emirati leadership of its position on Israel and stressed that Islamabad will not recognise Tel Aviv until the Palestine issue is resolved.

Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi denied any pressure on Pakistan to recognise Israel in a media talk in Multan Monday.

He said the Emirati leadership appraised him of their interests.On the matter of vi-

the UAE nor the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia perceive New Delhi as a replacement for Islamabad," he said.

The foreign minister said he discussed at length the Kashmir conflict with the Emirati leadership and pointed out similarities with the Palestine issue. He exchanged views on the Afghan peace process and appraised UAE on the recent Taliban Political Commis-

sion visit to Islamabad. The foreign minister condemned India for trying to hurt Pakistan every chance it gets and cited the EU Disinfo Lab's latest expose on Indian-backed fake NGOs and the news website's strategy to defame and discredit Pakistan.



lasting solution for the conflict is agreed on. Qureshi said Islamabad will make decisions in Pakistan's

alities and called on Prime Minister Imran Khan to resign if he cannot provide solutions to the issues being faced by the people. Speaking to the media in Lahore, he said: "I think the government is not aware of ground realities. The current government doesn't realise the kind of issues the people are facing [and] their hatred for a system which deprives them of meals "Our puppet premier can't give an answer as to what he is doing for the public.

### Rulers living in luxury

### FIAZ CH.

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sen Sirajul ator Haq has said that how the rulers living in luxury pal-

aces could understand the problem of a common man and make sincere efforts to address them. Talking to II workers here on Monday, he said the PTI was the continuation of the former regimes and it deceived the masses in the name of "change" and "Madina state." The PTI, he added, from the day it came to power to till today did nothing to bring reforms in any sector including the health and education which the prime minister had declared his priority.

### Inside...

Ashrafi urges people's role for making country more peaceful – Page 02

Police finalise foolproof security for Christmas – Page 03

Shafqat stresses nation to foil enemies narrative through unity – Page 04

"Shanghai spirit" a solid foundation for solidarity – Page 05

Baku condemns Belgian, Dutch parliaments' resolutions – Page 06

> UK cut off over fears about new COVID strain - Page 07

President urges Ummah to develop scientific knowledge - Page 08

## Pakistan, Saudi Arabia vow to strengthen ties

Saudi ambassador and PM Imran Khan discussed bilateral cooperation between the two nations

### A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki called on Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday, and discussed bilateral cooperation between the two nations and the fight against the novel coronavirus.

"The exchange of views focused on bilateral cooperation and the COVID-19 situation," the prime minister's office said in a statement. "The resolve



to further strengthen the 2.6 million Pakistanis currently live in the kingdom. strong, longstanding Pakithe biggest job market for stan-Saudi Arabia fraternal ties was reaffirmed." Pakistani nationals and a Pakistan and Saudi Arabia major source of foreign reare long-time allies. Over mittances.

### PM starts billion tree honey drive

the Clean and Green Paki-

stan campaign - spoke on

several matters, including

the biggest challenges that

The green Pakistan cam-

paign aims at promoting

tree plantation to support

the production of honey in

the country under the Ten

according to available

data, have been cooperat-

ing with each other in the

The COVID 19 hit the

especially suffered a lot as

it had to undergo severe

economic crunch because

security domain also.

Pakistan faces.

### KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday spoke about the various challenges being faced by Pakistan, lamenting how previous governments had not planned or envisioned where the country would be beyond its five years. The premier, speaking during the launching cer-Billion Tree Tsunami Proemony of the Billion Tree gramme (TBTTP). Honey Initiative - part of

Addressing the event, PM Imran Khan said the nation needs to take care of its environment as the forest cover in the country is less than the world's average forest cover.

"We have polluted our rivers [...] The groundwater is also getting polluted," he said.

## India's denial

### SAIFULLAH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has categorically rejected the denial by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs to accept responsibility for targeting the observers of United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UN-MOGIP) by the Indian oc-

cupation forces. The deliberate targeting of a UN vehicle engaged in discharging the mandate of the UN Security Council (UNSC) constitutes a grave violation of India's obligations, under the UNSC Resolutions and the UN Charter, which includes the obligation to ensure the safety and security of the UNMOGIP Observers. condemnation of the In-

bassador appointed bassador extraordinary and maintain peace along the Line of Control and the Working Boundary. The Indian side is also

urged to allow UNMOGIP to play its mandated role as per UNSC Resolutions.

position during his recent sas, the foreign minister inofficial visit to the United Arab Emirates. "I briefed them on our Israel-Palestine policy," he said, adding that Pakistan will not establish ties with Israel until a

sisted it is a temporary issue which will be resolved soon. He emphasised that the Emirati leadership believes there can be no substitute for Pakistan, "Neither does

**New Belarus** envoy arrives in Pakistan

The embassy has also written letter to all diplomatic and UN missions in Pak as well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan

### DNA

in

as

ISLAMABAD:



Pakistan. The ambassador-designate of Belarus has arrived in Pakistan. The Embassy of Belarus in Pakistan has formally announced arrival of the new ambassador. The embassy has also written letter to all diplomatic and UN missions in Pakistan as well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

## Chinese envoy meets COAS

### NAVEED MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong called on Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Monday to discuss various important issues. According to a statement

released by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). the two discussed issues of mutual interest, bilateral cooperation as well as the regional security situation. Issues pertaining to the CPEC were also discussed during the meeting. Referring to the Chinese Defense Minister's visit to Pakistan earlier this month, Army Chief General Bajwa said the agreement signed would further strengthen relations between the two countries According to ISPR, Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong appreciated Pakistan's role for peace and stability in the region.

## Will Saudi Arabia also recognise Israel? It is quite painful to see leading Muslim countries at the loggerheads these days. Muslim world has

already been witnessing divisions and tumultuous times. The Israeli factor has just added fuel to the fire **ISLAMABAD:** 

Israel ter of the states seeking Prime Minister Benjamin normalisation of relations Netanvahu's reported visit with Israel or so is the to Saudi Arabia on Novemstance of such countries. ber 22, 2020 and before We have to keep in mind that UAE and Bahrain's that UAE-Israel interacrecognition of Israel has tions at various forums are led to many controversies. not something new. As re-A new debate is on whethports suggest, there are a er leading Muslim counnumber of people of Israeli tries such as Pakistan and origin living in the UAE for Indonesia will also recoglong time. Most of them nize Israel or not. have been actively engaged in business activities. Similarly, both countries.

But before we discuss Pakistan. Indonesian or for that matter other Muslim countries reaction, let us try to understand as to what led the UAE and other countries to give outright recognition to Israel and thus invite ire from most of the Muslim countries albeit it appears to be purely an internal matstricted tourists to come to Dubai. UAE's Israel initiative, it is believed, is likely to prop up otherwise the sagging and sinking economy of the Gulf state. As regards Saudi Arabia, Riyadh appears to be very much on board and may be ready to normalize ties with Israel however it has not done so owing to certain factors.

The Saudi leadership perhaps is waiting for any other big Muslim country such as Pakistan or Indonesia to first recognize Israel. If these two countries do so then Saudis can do it rather easily. Nevertheless. UAE economy hard. Dubai both Pakistan and Indonesia have categorically ruled out any such possibility. of the pandemic that re-And that may be a ma-

# SITUATIONER

Ansar M Bhatti ior factor that has led to

straining of Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations. Saudi Arabia is more concerned about its security for which it needs support and protection no matter where it comes from. The major threat, from Saudi perspective, stems from

Iran. Well placed sources reveal that another factor that has contributed towards severing of Pakistan, Saudi ties happens to be the Iran factor. There is a view in Saudi Arabia that Pakistan, for past few years, has offered a number of incentives to Iran while completely disregarding its long-standing relations with the Kingdom- a view which, has been shelved by Islamabad many a time.

Israel ostensibly turns out be the major beneficiary in the whole exercise for it will have now the opportunity of strengthening its foothold in the Gulf region. This arrangement will allow Israel to keep an eye on Iran and Pakistan as well. Israelis are well known for

one thing- you give them room for standing, they will make room for sitting themselves. And once they sit, it is next to impossible to dislodge them.

Therefore after few years it is very much likely that people having Israeli origin may occupy key positions within the governments of countries they will be living in. This starch reality has to be kept in consideration while giving the Israelis recognition and space.

All said and done, it is quite painful to see leading Muslim countries at the loggerheads these days. Muslim world has already been witnessing divisions and tumultuous times. The Israeli factor has just added fuel to the fire. There seems no one who could do its part to cobble together this fractured relationship. The OIC seems to be the key victim of this wheeling and dealing.

On 21 August 1969 a fire was started in the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Amin al-Husseini, the former Mufti of Jerusalem, called the arson a "Jewish crime" and called for all Muslim heads of states to convene a summit and thus OIC came into being. The OIC, therefore, after these recognitions will certainly lose its relevance.

Endnote: A top UAE diplomat who is quite familiar in Pakistan as well likely to be named as the first UAE Ambassador to Israel.

Pakistan reiterates its dian attack on the United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan Observers and their vehicle and calls upon India to respect the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding

# $\mathbf{02}$

# NATIONAL

### Islamabad **POST** Tuesday, December 22, 2020

## **Briefs**

### Legendry poet 'Hafeez **Jalandhari**' remembred

ISLAMABAD (APP):Re



nowned writer, poet and composer of National Anthem of Pakistan 'Hafeez Jalandhari

was remembered on his 38th death anniversary across the country on December 21 to pay rich tributes for his literary and patriotic services.

Jalandhari was born in Jalandhar, Punjab in British India on January 14, 1900. After the independence of Pakistan in 1947Jalandhri migrated to Lahore. From 1922 to 1929, Jalandhri remained the editor of a few monthly magazines namely, Naunehal, Hazaar Dastaan. Teehzeeb-e-Niswan and Makhzin while his first collection of poems Nagma e-Zar was published in 1935, PTV news channel reported. Famous for writing the lyrics for `Qaumi Tarana', the national anthem of Pakistan which he wrote in 1952, Jalandhri actively participat ed in Pakistan Movement and used his writings to propagate for the cause of Pakistan. In early 1948, he joined the forces for the freedom of Kash mir and got wounded. Jalandhri wrote the Kashmiri Anthem, "Watan Hamara Azad Kashmir". He wrote many patriotic songs during the Indo-Paki stani War of 1965.

### 'Khan to never compromise with plunderers' ISLAMABAD: Minister for Wa

ter Resources Muhammad Faisal Vaw da said that Imran Khan

would never compromise with those who plundered national kitty and earned billions of rupees after coming into politics.

Addressing a press conference here along with Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Ali Amin Gandapur, the minister criticized the JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman and said that those having nothing before coming into politics have become owners of billions



LAHORE: Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, secial representative on the religious harmony and the middle east addressing to interfaith Christmas celebration-2020. - DNA

## Ashrafi urges people's role for making country more peaceful

He said that it was a responsibility of the Muslims to protect and take care of the minorities and non-Muslims. He mentioned that Pakistan was the country of everyone, who was living here

LAHORE: Special Aide to Prime Minister on Inter-religious Harmony Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has urged all sections of society to play their roles for making Pakistan a more peaceful and prosperous country. Addressing the media at the Interfaith Christmas Celebration-2020, along with Provincial Minister Human Rights and Minorities Affairs (HR&MA) Ijaz Alam Augustine at Lahore Peace Centre in Pak Arab, he wished happy Christmas to entire community and said that the government had taken all possible steps to ensure that the pandemic did not spread

during the Christmas gatherings. He mentioned that the Christian community and their religious leaders had promised to strictly following the standard operating procedures (SOPs) during the Christmas holidays to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Ashrafi said that all minorities living in Pakistan were enjoying complete religious freedom as all their rights were protected as per the country's Constitution, adding that no one could snatch these rights from them. He maintained that Pakistan was the best one in the entire region regarding religious

freedom as all minorities were absolutely

free to celebrate their religious events. He called upon scholars and clerics of all religions to advocate and promote the message of peace, brotherhood and inter-faith harmony in the country. He said, "Today, we have gathered here to take part in celebrations of Christmas with our Christian brothers." He said that it was a responsibility of the Muslims to protect and take care of the minorities and non-Muslims. He mentioned that Pakistan was the country of everyone, who was living here. Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Ijaz Alam Augustine said that Christmas is the season of sharing love, peace, joys and happiness. He wished very blessed Christmas to the Christian community and also congratulated Fr. James Channan and the organisers for holding such a beautiful programme and inviting very energetic audience. Ijaz Alam said that there was no doubt that since the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government came to power, religious minorities celebrated their festivals at the official level with complete freedom, while for the first time in Pakistan's history.

### NICVD rejects allegations of running water hydrant

DNA

KARACHI: The National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) on Monday rejected allegations of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KW&SB) of running an illegal water hydrant.

According to NICVD spokesperson, the institution is not running any water hydrant and has been timely paying the KW&SB bills. "The water connection of the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases was disconnected without any reason."

He further said that due to the disconnection of the water supply connection, the patients and operations at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases are being affected. He demanded of the KW&SB to immediately restore the water supply connection so that operations can be done on time and patients can take a sigh of relief. Earlier, the administration of the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases had moved to the Sindh High Court (SHC) after the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) initiated an investigation into corruption allegations.

### Teachers end protest after talks with Pb law minister

LAHORE: Negotiations of Punjab Teachers Union with Provincial Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Cooperatives Basharat Raja on Monday were successful after which the teachers postponed their ongoing protest. The delegation was headed by Chaudhry Sarfraz while other officials including Rana Liaquat and Muhammad Imran were also present in the delegation. The Punjab Teachers Union informed the Punjab Law Minister about their demands and issues. Raja Basharat said that when the demands of the Punjab Teachers Union could be resolved through consultation, it was not appropriate for the teachers to take the law into their hands. He said that a decision regarding today's meeting would be taken soon with the consent of the Chief

For the first time in the history of Red Bull Basement, the Global Workshop went 100% digital leveraging the latest cutting-edge technologies to create a virtual world full of surprises. The 'uniThink' team was amazed to see how Red Bull gave them the experience of connecting virtually as if they were physically present. "Before the workshop started, we thought it will just be a normal video conferencing thing. But we were surprised by the whole virtual world they had created for us. We definitely loved the Gather Town and how close it was to just being physically present there," shared Farhat.

Gov ready for negotiation except NRO : Malik Amin of the people and democra-

ATTOCK: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister

DNA

and next elections would be held in 2023. Malik Amin

Two Pakistani students take a top three spot at IEE

### DNA

cy. He said the government LAHORE: After making their idea would complete its tenure stand out from the 131 local applications in Red Bull Basement Pakistan, two IBA students, Hira Siddiqui and Warisha Farhat took their idea 'uniTh ink' to the Global Workshop. They ended up in the top 3 out of 38 finalists from around the world.

help was a bigreason for uniThink's success," added Farhat."It was a wonderful experience overall. They were very accommodating at all points of the Basement. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't have known about so many aspects of selling an idea or data policies." Siddiqui

"The pitch was our focus in the week before the workshop. The training we got on the first day was really helpful in designing our pitch structure. We changed the pitch almost 10 times, and then we finally felt it was just the way we wanted it to be."

of rupees and they would be made accountable. He said that Imran Khan would not compromise with such elements who plundered national kitty and earned billions of rupees after coming into politics.

### Sharaqpuri submits resignation to speaker

### WEB DESK

LAHORE: Sources privy to matter



Ahmed Sharaqpuri, which quoted him as saying that his resignation should be considered accepted if the entire PML-N panel resigns from the assembly. Speaking over his resignation, the estranged PML-N lawmaker said that he had offered to submit joint resignations to the speaker. "PML-N lawmakers from NA-120, PP-137, PP-138, and PP-139 should also resign from their assembly seats," he said adding that he was part of a panel with lawmakers on these constituencies, who supported each other in the

nation from the assemblies.

provided to different villages of NA 55 and NA 56 Attock. Commenting on narrative of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) he said, its agenda was based on vested interests having no concerns with the problems

Malik Amin Aslam said soon was ready to have negotigas facility would also be ations with PDM except National Reconciliation Ordinance, which could not be given at any cost. Amin Aslam visited Rural Health Center Rangoo where he was briefed about the health facilities being provided to the people of area.

## PIA to lay off 3,500 employees

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) а will lay off its 3,500 employees under the voluntary Jaleel separation scheme by the end of this month (December-2020). According to the details, the national flag carrier, under its restructuring plan, offered the voluntary separation scheme (VSS) to its 3500 employees. If the separation of the required number of 3500 employees is not met through the scheme, then the mandatory separation scheme will be launched in January 2021. A PIA spokesperson said that the excess employees will be mandatorily retired based on performance, discipline and value addition of election and was still committhe employees. The mandated to his offer for joint resigtorily retired employees will not be offered VSS financial

package and other facilities. According to the restructuring plan available with the media, PIA's head office will be shifted to Islamabad in the new year. In order to control its human resource expenditures, the airline will reduce its aircraft to employee ratio from 500 to 250 employees per aircraft. Earlier on December 15, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) had planned to cut down the number of its employees to 7,500, less than half the current strength of its workforce, to reduce cost. The sources quoting a re-

port submitted to the Supreme Court in the suo motu case involving the national flag carrier had said work on its business revival plan has begun as it has decided to bring in a mandatory scheme after the voluntary separation scheme.

Siddiqui and Farhat believe that the Red Bull Basement platform has given them the boost they needed to kickstart their plans for 'uniThink'.

"We have already gotten immense support from the mentors and the judges who helped us in each of the development stages and further beyond that," said Farhat. They particularly credited Austrian entrepreneur Mathias Haas and strategy consultant Debra Bordignon from Australia for mentoring and assisting them with their final pitch."Their

shared the difference she telt in pitching with the local startups and then with top finalists from around the world. For her, it was a whole different experience, which introduced her to many aspects of a successful pitch.

"When we were pitching our idea locally, we had just formed it. There were no numbers or statistics to support it. It just existed in our heads. However, pitching with the global startups was a better-informed experience because we had done all our work and research and calculated all the numbers. We were more confident in pitching 'uniThink' at the Global Workshop than we were before." She continued,

of government employees. "In the same way, we will take all possible steps to address the legitimate demands of the teachers," he assured. The teachers' representatives said that they were grateful to the Chief Minister and the Punjab Law Minister for listening to their demands. "This act has increased our confidence in the Punjab government," they added. – APP

Minister of Punia

Raja Basharat said that the

present government has met

many long awaited demands

### **Rangers** foil smuggling bid of NCP goods

### DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Rangers Sindh along with Pakistan Customs foiled a smuggling bid of non custom paid (NCP) goods worth over Rs. 10 million at the border of Sindh and Balochistan. Rangers acting on a tip off at Abdul Jabbar Shaheed check post located at Sindh-Balochistan border, recovered NCP goods including 12060 kg betel nuts, 31 packets cigarettes, 10 packets Indian gutka, 82 bags of salt, 99 tyres and others, according to a news release issued here on Monday. The seized items have been handed over to customs authorities.

LAHORE: Special assistant to Chief ministr Punjab, Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan cutting cake in Christmas celebration ceremony. - DNA

# **'Christians playing role in country's development'**

Speaking on the occasion, he said the success in the world and hereafter lied in the service of humanity. He urged the philanthropists to service the masses by taking part in health and education sectors

CHICHAWATNI: Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said on Monday the Christian community had been playing a significant role in the development of the country which should be appreciated at every level.

Addressing a cake cutting ceremony to mark the Christmas in Chak No 190/9-L near here, he said that doors of Governor's House were open for christian community all the time. Greeting the Christians community ahead of Christmas, the Governor assured to resolve their problems on priority basis.

He announced to install a water filtration plant in Chak 190/9-L to provide clean drinking water to its residents. Ch Sarwar also distributed jackets

among the children of four nearby villages. Earlier, the Governor inaugurated a private school in Ghaziabad. Speaking on the occasion, he said the success in the world and hereafter lied in the service of humanity.

He urged the philanthropists to service the masses by taking part in health and education sectors.

The governor said that Sarwar Foundation would extend help for the expansion of school, adding the Foundation would also establish a health centre and handicraft school for girls and install a filtration plant in the village. He said the Sarwar Foundation had started to serve the masses by establishing a hospital in Rajana in 2005, where

better healthcare facilities were being provided to the poor people.

He said the Sarwar Foundation was providing health facilities to the people of Chichawatni by entering into a joint venture with Rai Ali Nawaz hospital. The governor eulogized the services of late Shabbir Kiyani for providing the opportunity of quality education to the people of area by setting up Trust in Ghaziabad. He said that Sarwar Foundation was the biggest apolitical institution which was providing clean drinking water facility to 2 million people of the province.

On the demand of people, the Governor promised to make Chachawatni-Burewala road dual carriageway in the limits of Sahiwal district. - APP



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### **Briefs RCB** seizes 4 truckload goods

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has confiscated four truck loads goods from different markets under its campaign against encroachments. According to RCB spokesman, the anti-encroachment operation on the special instruction of Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) was being conducted on daily basis. He said, the grand clean-up operation against encroachments had further been accelerated.

He said, encroachments were removed from Tench Bhatta, Peoples Colony, Bakra Mandi Road, Chor Chowk and Allahabad and four truckload goods were confiscated while enforcement teams also removed illegal banners from different areas. The vendors found selling their products while displaying on footpaths and different roads were imposed fines with warnings, he said adding, the encroachments both temporary and permanent were being removed. - APP

### 11 gamblers rounded up with stake money

RAWALPINDI: Police on Monday arrested 11 gamblers and recovered Rs 52,380 cash stake money, 11 mobile phones and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Kotli Sattian police team under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO), acting on a tip-off conducted a raid in its jurisdiction and arrested 11 gamblers namely Salik Nawaz, Hassan Nawaz, Liaquat Azeem, Zafran, Farhan, Umair Ahmed, Qadeer Ahmed, Nabeel Ahmed, Ubaidullah, Yasir Mehmood and Sabeel Tariq as they were allegedly involved in



RAWALPINDI: Vice President RCCI Mr. Shahraiz Ashraf Malik met with Mr. Khurram Khan, Senior Investment Advisor, China Road & Bridge Corporation (CRBC). - DNA

# Police finalise foolproof security for Christmas

## Walk-through gates will be installed at the entrance of the Churches and the visitors will be checked through metal detectors

### DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police have finalized a security plan for Christmas under which all churches have been divided into three categories and over 2800 police personnel including Elite Force commandos will be deployed to ensure foolproof security. According to a police spokesman, no one will be

allowed to park vehicle near ened at the entry and exit Walk-through points of the city and spegates will be installed at cial checking was ordered for this special occasion. the entrance of the Churches and the visitors will be He said, the City Police checked through metal

Officer (CPO) Muhammad Ahsan Younas had directed the SPs, DSPs and SHOs to ensure effective patrolling in their respective areas. Plain clothed and wellequipped policemen would perform duties near fective, he said adding, the Churches and public places. he added.

The security of the churches will be monitored through closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras while a control room will be set up where all the departments concerned will work jointly to keep an eve on the security arrangements. Sharpshooters will also be deployed on the rooftops of different buildings.

The City Traffic Police (CTP) will make arrangements for parking vehicles for the visitors of the churches and the parking lots will be set up nearly 100 feet away from the churches.

The police and other law enforcement agencies have divided 159 churches of the district into A, B and C categories.

Additional security personnel will be deployed at the churches falling in A-category. The worshipers will to check security arrangements and deployment. be checked at three points.

The roads adjoining the entry points of the churches will be sealed with barbed wires while elite commandos and sniper-shooters will be deployed at rooftops. police vehicles The

**RAWALPINDI:** Ratta Amral equipped with cameras will police have busted a dacoit also remain stationed outside the churches. The senior police officials will make surprise visits to churches on Christmas

members besides recovering cash, three motorcycles and other valuable items. According to a police spokesman, a police team

gang identified as Gujjar

Gang and arrested its two

**Attock** 

virus cases

surge

to 970

DNA

ATTOCK: After four new

positive cases of coronavi-

rus surfaced in district At-

tock during last 24 hours,

the total number of the

cases tested positive across

the state reached to 970

on Monday, it was officially

said. According to health au-

thorities, with the advent of

winter and non-observance

of standard operating proce-

dures (SOPs), the number of Covid-19 patients had in-

creased in Attock city and other towns of the district

Chief executive District

health authority, Dr Jawad Ellahi among the newly de-

tected patients as many as

Three belongs to Attock

city and one in Hazro. He

informed that the number of active patients in the district

is 167 in which 153 are home isolated and all are asympto-

matic while 3 others are un-

He said that as many as three

suspected patients are also

admitted in the district head-

quarters hospital in which

two are critical while two others stable. He informed

that number of suspected patients in the district raised

to 20,656 while screening of as many as 24,107 persons

is carried out across the district in which 19, 104 were

tested negative. Responding another question, he said that

result of as many as 582 pa-

tients is awaited so far across

the district. He said that so

far 789 patients are recov-

ered from this deadly disease.

Two members

of dacoit gang

arrested

der treatment in district.

especially Hazro.

betting while playing cards. Police recovered Rs 52,380 cash stake money, 11 mobile phones and other items from their possession. - APP

### 12396 virus cases in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: After an addition of 75 more COVID-19 confirmed cases during last 24 hours, the total number of positive cases has reached to 12396 in the district. According to a data shared by the district administration, 68034 C-virus suspects have so far been brought to the quarantine facilities of the district,out of which 9954 recovered af ter treatment.

COVID-19 Resently 108 confirmed patients were admitted in different hospitals of the city including 37 belonged to Rawal Town.31 Potahar town,14 Rawalpindi cantt,10 Gujar khan,4 Taxila, 6 Kahuta,4 from Kalar syedan, and 2 Murree, he said. The result of 56188 suspects were tested negative while reports of 903 still awaited, he added. – APP

### PAL to hold conference on Children's Literature

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) has planned to organize International Two-day Conference titled "Children's Literature: Past, Present and Future". The national and international writers, scholars and researchers are invited to present their research papers and date of holding conference would be scheduled after submission of research papers. Research papers on given topics and other relevant topics from Children's Literature written in any regional national and international language can be sent however, the articles will be accepted only in Urdu and English languages. According to an official, "editorial Committee of the conference after extensive scrutiny will decide

the acceptance of your research article and you will be communicated the same for writing of a complete research paper". - APP

## **PNCA** launches 'Seen Studio'

detectors. Best possible

security arrangements will

be ensured to avoid any un-

toward incident in the city.

The security duty at pub-

lic places including parks

would be made more ef-

security has also been tight-

Churches.



limited audience.

DNA

The musical sequel is meant ISLAMABAD: PNCA initiatto provide a recreational platform to its audience trapped ed a musical series entitled "Seen Studio". The series by the 2nd wave of pandemic aimed to conduct recording which restricted the music sessions of all kinds of mulover's mobility. At the same sical genres like pop, clastime this is another oppor-

sical, folk, fusion etc. with tunity to experience diverse musical forms of Pakistan. First two episodes of this series have been recorded at PNCA auditorium without audience which will be launched on 1st of January on the occasion of New Year at PNCA official face book page.

## PML-N Senator Kalsoom Parveen dies of coronavirus

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Senator Kalsoom Parveen has died while battling against the novel coronavirus -19 on early Monday morning. According to the Senate Secretariat, the lawmaker breathed her last at a private hospital in Islam-

abad due to coronavirus-related infections. Kalsoom Parveen had been put on a ventilator after her condition deteriorated earli-

er this month. Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in his condolence message has

ator Kalsoom Parveen for her democratic, parliamentary, and political and social services. He also expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the death of Senator. He prayed for the departed's soul as well as strength

**IHC** directs govt to form ZTBL's board

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday maintained its stay order till January 18, against the demotions of ZTBL's 112 employees and directed the federation to form its board. Chief Justice Athar Minallah conducted hearing on the petition, filed by 112 employees of Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL) against their demotions. At the outset of hearing, ZTBL lawyer said the ZTBL president had the authority to take such decision. The chief justice expressed displeasure with the federation and said it had failed to make the ZTBL board functional in the last three years. Deputy Attorney General Tayyab Shah informed the court that a summary was presented to the cabinet in that regard but it was rejected. A new summary had been sent to the cabinet for the approval, he said. The chief justice said the

ZTBL was clearly violating the directions of Supreme Court. The board was not formed in last three years to take policy decisions, Justice Minallah said. He asked the lawyer that under what law the ZTBL managing director was taking policy decisions as it was the mandate of the board. This was not a good way, the court had been noting it since long,

Nine major train mishaps in two years ML-1 would help transform the overall organization, besides ensuring safety of the passengers. he added

ISLAMABAD: Around nine major accidents of passenger and goods trains have occurred in the entire network of Pakistan Railways across the country from August 2018 to December 2020. In these accidents during last two years, around 134 persons died, 167 sustained injuries while the financial damage faced by the Pakistan Railways was above Rs 410 million, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said Pakistan Railways was in process of revamping and upgrading the existing railway infrastructure through installation of Main Line-I project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The ML-1 would help transform the overall organization, besides ensuring safety of the passengers, he added. The official said, on the directives of Minister for Railways concentrated efforts were being made to prevent the accidents in future to save the lives of the public. He said up-gradation of 550 vulnerable unmanned level crossings was also being carried out throughout Pakistan Railways network in collaboration with the respective provincial governments. "The Directorate of Public Relations has circulated different video messages over social media for the awareness and information of general public regarding crossing the railway crossings in a safe way," he said. The official said there would be conversion of old age kerosene oil based signals with light emitting diode on main line as it had better visibility. He said the training and refresher courses were being conducted regularly at the Pakistan Railway Academy Lahore and regular inspections in accordance with prescribed standards and quota. This process was being constantly monitored at appropriate levels and special bulletins and instructions were issued regularly for guidance of staff, he added. The official said cameras were being installed inside locomotives on line inspections of officers and staff. - APP

under the supervision of SHO Ratta Amral was constituted which after hectic efforts managed to net two dacoits namely Sharif Gujjar and Ali who were member of the gang and allegedly involved in a number of dacoities in different areas.

They confessed to have committed dacoities and other crimes in different areas. The police recovered cash, weapons and three motorcycles from their possession, he added. - APP

### 45 outlaws including seven POs held

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police on Monday arrested 45 outlaws including seven proclaimed offenders from various areas of the city and recovered mobile phones, narcotics and weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said.

According to details, a police team comprising police officials of Shalimar and Karachi company police stations arrested three accused Mansoor, Tallah and Naseem Khan and recovered 700 gram hashish and one gram cocaine from their possession. Kohsar police arrested two accused Nawaz and Shakaz and recovered stolen mobile phones from their possession. Banigala police arrested an accused Shoaib and recovered one 30 bore pistol from him. Ramana police arrested an accused Qamer Iqbal and recovered one 30 bore pistol from him. Tarnol police arrested Sultan Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol from him. Ramanan police arrested accused Qamer Iqbal and recovered and one 30 bore pistol from him. Shahzad Town police arrested an accused Muhammad Ul Hassan and recovered one 30 bore pistol from him. Sihala police arrested three accused Hassan Imtaiz, Arbab, Ashiq and recovered 232 gram hashish and two 30 bore pistol from their possession. Lohibher Police team raided at a Sheesha Center in Bahria town (Phase-IV) and nabbed 25 persons. Cases have been registered against these nabbed persons and further investigation is underway

from them.

Shahzada

### for the family during this he said. - APP difficult time. - APP paid tribute to the late Sen-PUCAR presents stage play 'Munna Shrarti'

Director PUCAR Rawalpindi Waqar Ahmed addressing at the occasion said that stage play had pivotal role in highlighting social issues because it had great impact on the mind of the people through dramatic performance and characterization

### **IBRAR KHAN**

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Council of the Arts in order to provide neat and clean entertainment facility to the people of twin cities presented a stage play 'Munna Shrarti' with aim to highlight social issues.

The play was written by Liaqat Shah and directed by Sajjad Ahmed. Jhalak Ali, Arshad Khan, Anjum Abbasi, Saima Khan, Kha-



# **TWIN CITIES**

## Islamabad **POST**

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

## **Briefs**

### NAHE, HEC to begin capacity building trainings

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) is organizing a series of trainings under its capacity building programme today. This includes trainings for HEC staff in collaboration with the National Information Technology Board (NITB).

The trainings will begin on Tuesday, 22nd December, with a comprehensive session on E-office procedure. E-office is an electronic system of office and operational management which will help make functions more efficient and improve accountability at HEC. The programme is being implemented across various ministries in the government, and has been approved by the Federal Cabinet and the National e-Govern-ment Council. The capacity building programme will have weekly workshops for HEC employees. It will last for next four weeks, and is expected to train more than 600 individu als. This will help support staff as services increasingly move online and ensure efficiency, consistency and transparency across the board.

Textile

exports up

4.88% in 5

months

ISLAMABAD: The exports

of textile commodities with

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood received Prof. Dr. Darkhan Kydyrali, President, Intl Turkic Academy & Coord Gen. COMSTECH Dr.Iqbal Choudhary. FS appreciated the launch of Al-Farabi Forum. Views exchanged on coop on scientific matters & promotion of Iqbal studies. ( Related news on Back Page ). – DNA

## Shafqat stresses nation to foil enemies narrative through unity

Shafqat Mahmood said being a nation all the challenges should be faced with unity. He said Pakistanis were proud of their Armed forces as the institution had always rendered sacrifices of lives for protection of motherland

nessed an increase of 4.88 ISLAMABAD: Minister for percent during the first five Federal Education and Profesmonths of the current fissional Training Shafqat Mecal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The textile exports hmood Monday stressed the nation to foil the enemies narwere recorded at \$6044.536 rative against Pakistan through million in July-November unity. Addressing a National (2020-21) against the ex-& Educational Seminar titled ports of \$5763.117 million "Hum Pakistani" through a vidin July-November (2019-20), eo link, the minister said that showing growth of 4.88 uniformity in our educational percent, according to latest system was a dire need and we data of Pakistan Bureau of must remain united to foil the Statistics (PBS). The textile negative plans of the country's commodities that contributed in positive trade growth

enemies. The seminar was organized here by National Book Foundation, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in collaboration with Centre for Policy Analysis and Development (CPAD). Shafqat Mahmood said being

a nation all the challenges should be faced with unity. He said Pakistanis were proud

of their Armed forces as the institution had always rendered sacrifices of lives for protection of motherland. He said Islamic scholars have a pivotal role in countering sectarianism and extremism besides building a society. He also stressed upon the important role of Ulema in peace building in light of "Paigham-e-Pakistan".

The enemy of Pakistan had always tried to implement their narrative in Pakistan. Shafqat said and added that Pakistani narrative should be strong for the success of movements.

He also urged the nation to compete the narrative that is behind the terrorism.

Today, Pakistan was progressing under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and with the efforts of incumbent government, the economy was now on the right track, the minister mentioned. He said the government was making all-out efforts to bring uniform education system in the country, adding, his ministry was striving to formulate a uniform curriculum for all social classes in order to bring

unity among the society. Shafqat said the nation was in urgent need of research culture to compete the world. Addressing the Seminar, Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training Wajiha Akram underlined the need of understanding the ideology of Pakistan. She also stressed to create awareness among youth about this ideolo-

gy. She said it was the responsibility of each and every person to play a role for bringing prosperity and development in the country. Commenting on Kashmir issue, she said Pakistani nation was ready to sacrifice their lives for Kashmiris. The government was fighting the Kashmir case successfully at all international forums, she remarked. Kashmir was integral part of Pakistan and will remain, she mentioned. - APP

### Police nabbed 6 outlaws.

### DNA

ATTOCK: Police during different raids in various parts of Attock arrested six accused and recovered 30 liquor bottles, one 30 bore pistol and two rounds of ammunition in a raid.

Police sources said that Hassanabdal police raided a gambling venue and seized money and gambling items. Arrested accused included one liquor seller Ravi Kumar besides recovery of 30 bottles of liquor.

He said that in another raid Ringo police team recovered 30 bore pistol and 2 rounds of ammunition from accused Shahid Mehmood son of Muhammad Nazar. Police arrested four accused including Zamrud, Irfan Ahmed, Liagaut Javed and Chen Pervaiz. Police also confiscated amount at stake worth Rs 17,600, a total of five mobile phones worth Rs 40,000, a motorcycle worth Rs 40,000 and Rs 112,600 have been recovered. Police registered cases and further investigation was underway

### Court to indict Gilani on Jan 12

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Monday fixed January 12 to indict former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and others in a reference pertaining to illegal award of advertisement campaign contract to a private firm.

AC-II Judge Muhammad Azam Khan conducted hearing on graft reference filed by National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Yousaf Raza Gilani and others accused appeared before the judge and marked their attendances. However, co-accused didn't appear before the court at this the judge fixed another date for indictment. The court directed all accused to ensure their attendances on next hearing and adjourned the case till January 12. – APP

IHC clubs identical petitions ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday clubbed a petition with identical case pertaining to social media rules and sought comments from Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA). Chief Justice Athar Minallah conducted hearing on petition filed by a citizen Amber Rahim Shamsi against the social media rules. The petitioner prayed the court to stop PTA for banning various apps. The court ordered to club the case with social media rules petition and served notices to PTA. The hearing of the case then adjourned till January 25. - APP

Telenor champions gender equality in

increased by 12.28 percent by growing from \$1013.648 to \$1138.174 while the ex ports of towels increased by 14.24 percent, from \$317.488 million to \$362.702 million. The exports of tents, canvas and tarplin grew by 58.05 percent, from \$31.786 to \$50.238, while the exports of readymade garments increased by 4.36 percent. from \$1155.536 million to \$1205.167 million and the exports of madeup article (excluding towels and bed wear) increased by 15.53 percent, from \$265.824 million to \$307.115 million

included knitwear, exports

of which increased from \$1320.740 million last year

to \$1510.129 million during the current year, showing

Likewise, exports of bed wear

growth of 14.34 percent.

### National book foundation arranges seminar

ISLAMABAD: National Book Foundation (NBF) on Monday arranged a seminar titled "Formation of Pakistan and promotion of national harmony" to highlight the ways possible for promoting the national harmony and integrity. Addressing to participants Managing Director, NBF Qaiser Alam said that we have come together for a national and scholarly seminar that promotes social cohesion and nationalism in Pakistan through the formulation of narratives. He said that "I am glad that the seminar on such an important national topic has been organized by the National Book Foundation". He said that Pakistan is an ideological country which was established under a particular ideology.

MD said that "There is a need to set a practical example through our writings and speeches that will create and promote national harmony and unity in our society". He said that thinkers, poets, writers and intellectuals can develop an ideological narrative and a way of thinking by creating mutual harmony and national unity among the members of the society through their thoughts and ideas. "We have a lot to do and face many challenges to create harmony and promote national character while up holding the national ideology of Pakistan", he added. Talking about NBF's performance he said that for the last 48 years, the institute has been continuously providing services for the advancement of science and literature and so far it has published a large number of articles on science and literature, philosophy, history, science, children's literature and many other important useful and informative topics. - APP

the workplace

want to re-join the corporate world, and/or women who

DNA had never had the opportu-ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakinity to work before. Flexible stan takes pride in leading working hours and working the way when it comes to from home under the indusworkplace inclusion and has try first 'Go Beyond' work established itself as a true model, transportation for champion of diversity. In female employees, giving line with this commitment, them yet another motivatin 2018 Telenor Pakistan ing factor to join the workjoined hands with Chamforce. The organisation also pions of Change Coalition, Australia under their group Male Champions of Change, Pakistan to promote policies and best practices to drive female participation in the workforce. The Champions of Change Coalition Impact Report 2020 highlights sig-

nificant developments in this domain. The report is an annual study with data from 185 organisations. operating in 155 countries, and is one of the largest cross sector voluntary public disclosures on gender equality measures globally. More than 250 leaders of these organisations are active contributors in making workplaces around the world safer, respectful, and

inclusive environments for women. Telenor Pakistan thrives on its diversity. Be it diversity of thought, culture, gender or differently abled people but it also actively works for their inclusion.

The organisation has been recognised by HR Metrics for having the 'Best Practices' for Diversity & Inclusion in the category of 'Flexibility, Work life Integration and Benefits.' Some of the initiatives that embody the spirit of inclusiveness include, Naya Aghaaz, a platform for women who have been on

offers a salaried leave of six months during the maternity period. There is also an in-house day care to facilitate working mothers. Earlier this year, Telenor Pakistan partnered with the World Bank for the 'Girls Learn Women Earn' Initiative with a pledge to train 1000 women entrepreneurs. It's a commitment and a promise to create awareness, champion advocacy and take action to support girls' education and women's active participation in the Pakistani workforce. "Telenor Pakistan works to provide new and creative solutions with the goal of social development and betterment of every individual. irrespective of gender. We stay true to this approach both within and outside the

walls of our organisation, where female inclusion can have a far-reaching social impact that empowers them to make significant contributions towards the socioeconomic development of their families and communities", said CEO Telenor Pakistan, Irfan Wahab Khan. He further said about his role in the Male Champions of Change, Pakistan "I feel great honour in being

It would be mandatory for people coming to one window to wear mask and gloves while having sanitizers and assuring all the SOPs devised against the spread of coronavirus pandemic

CDA to open one window for citizens

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Authority Development (CDA) has decided to open one window while following the coronavirus SOPs here on Monday. Citizens will be provided the facility of one window on the day and time decided by the CDA. There will be complete ban on rush and

irrelevant persons at one window. Elderly and disables will be given priority. According to detail, due to the current wave of coronavirus pandemic the department of one window of CDA was closed for people. Due to closure of one window the masses were facing difficulties in transfer of their properties and they were facing delay in their work. CDA re-

ceived various complaints for opening the one window. However, CDA has decided to keep the one window operation open while following the SOPs to facilitate the masses. It would be mandatory for people coming to one window to wear mask and gloves while having sanitizers and assuring all the SOPs devised against the spread of coronavirus

pandemic. Citizens will be allowed to enter in one window operation only on due date and time. The citizens have been directed to not to bring irrelevant persons along with them. There would be complete ban on entry of other people in one window till the already gone come back. The process of receiving applications for all the other departments of CDA is also underway at one window.

### 'Dadhocha Dam indispensable'

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Capt (retd) Muhammad Mehmood has said that Dadhocha Dam is an indispensable project of public welfare and all departments should make mobilization plans to start fast track work on it.

He said that a site office should be set up at any suitable place to start work on the dam and the missionary should be mobilized on the spot to start the work and steps in this regard should be completed as soon as possible.

He expressed these views while presiding over a weekly meeting at the Commissioner's Office in which the progress of work on Dadhocha, Mahota and Chahan dams was reviewed.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Captain (Retd) Muhammad Mehmood said that all concerned departments should be mobilized to start work on Dadhocha Dam and work in full coordination and action should be taken against the negligent officers without any discrimination. He said that full security would be provided by the police to work on Dadhocha Dam and to mobilize all the missionary, and necessary instructions in this regard have been issued to CPO Rawalpindi and they extended full cooperation.

The Commissioner Rawalpindi said that the process of payment of compensation for the victims of Mahota Dam should be completed by December 30 and all legal requirements in this regard should be fulfilled. - APP

He said that the NAB was responsible for probing white-collar crime and such cases needed time to collect evidence. "We have detected billions of rupees being transferred abroad through benami accounts in the name of Falooda wala [ice cream seller] and chabri wala

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice (retd) Javed Iqbal on Sunday said that they have concrete evidence of money laundering worth billions of rupees from the country. Criticizing those who claim that there was no money laundering from the country, the NAB chairman said that billions of rupees were transferred ille-

gally abroad. He further said that money laundering was the major reason behind the ill-constructed infrastructure in the country. He said that even people were fooled in the name of religion through the Modarba scandal.

Shedding light on the performance of the NAB, Justice (retd) Javed Iqbal said that since its establishment, the accountability watchdog deposited Rs 714 billion looted from the national exchequer. He said that the NAB was



responsible for probing white-collar crime and such cases needed time to collect evidence. "We have detected billions of rupees being transferred abroad through benami accounts in the name of Falooda wala [ice cream seller] and chabri wala [pedlar]," he said. It is pertinent to mention here that the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) received over 400 money laundering cases from the country, a report of the agency revealed showing an increase in

the number of such cases during 2020. "The country reported 409 cases of money laundering during the outgoing year 2020," a report of the FIA said adding that for the first time, even police authorities also referred the money laundering cases to the agency. It said that the FIA received 289 cases of money laundering, referred by the police department. A meeting of the FIA was held in Karachi, where it was decided to register 105 cases against the referred cases.

### ISLAMABAD: Director General ANF Maj Gen Arif giving a souvenir to included amongst other Federal Minister for Narcotics Ijaz Shah. - DNA hiatus from their careers and leaders of change. **'NAB recovered Rs714 billion since establishment'**

## Controlling protests

NLESS a protest displays violence or some excessively illegal activity, the government should never use tear gas and other extreme measures to deal with the protestors. This overreach of authority should particularly not occur at a protest organised by teachers, a largely undervalued and unpaid segment of our society. Unfortunately, it seems the government did go down this route of excess authority in Bani Gala on Saturday. Police resorted to a baton-charge and fired tear gas on hundreds of teachers when they were marching on the residence of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The area was later "sealed" and given under the protection of a well-equipped police contingent that included personnel of the Counter-Terrorism Department and Anti-Riot Unit.

The government can argue that the teachers' protest was unreasonable. They were protesting against new educational reforms by the government, especially the introduction of a policy whereby only teachers who pass the examination of the Public Service Commission and clear the interviews would have regularised jobs. It is true that the government tried to negotiate with the teachers by seeking a meeting, and Islamabad's deputy commissioner, Mohammad Hamza Shafqat, reached the site of protest to listen to the protestors and try to get them to amicably resolve the issue instead. While all these attempts at negotiation clearly failed, it still does not justify the government's use of extreme measures. The breakup of the protest may prove counterproductive for the government, which might find it even more difficult to negotiate with the teachers now.

These reforms should also have been made with more consultation with the ordinary teachers who would have been affected by this policy. The pandemic has already cost many teaching jobs—it is not surprising that a new policy has brought forth anger. It is hoped the government finds a middle ground and this conflict is resolved soon.

# Islamabad POST

### Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

### ABC CERTIFIED

Vol: 01 Issue: 230 Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960 Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



# The need to restructure civic amenities

### MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

HE metropolis of Karachi is becoming a garbage dump with each passing day. The roadsides of major streets are littered with garbage that people discard on their will. The city that was once an example of cleanliness is now a dumpster that tarnishes Pakistan's image home and abroad. The need is to restructure how the concerned municipal authorities worked to keep the city in order. While many of the roads have been broken for months, many localities do not have a proper, well-constructed road. The streetlights may be working in some areas, but many areas do not have an ample system of lightening up the way at night. Indeed the infrastructural development process needs to be overhauled and continuously monitored or else chaos prevails. This ruckus has enveloped Karachi with all of its power.

The system of water supply should also be restructured to ensure all areas of the city receive an equal share of water according to their needs. The concerned authorities must strategize their plans so they can be completed within the given timelines. Here, the question of integrity and loyalty must be of the highest concern. The officials responsible for taking care of Karachi should do so with complete honesty. The authorities must take positive points from the laws implemented by the municipal sectors of foreign cities and replicate them in Karachi and the other metropolis of Pakistan. The need to restructure civic amenities is also essential to bring a positive change in the socio-economic sector of the city. This change will eventually encompass the country. However, the concerned authorities while making such plans should keep the needs and wants of the citizens under consideration. Special emphasis must be given to the common man as their needs are the most neglected.

## "Shanghai spirit" a solid foundation for solidarity

**Vladimir Norov** 



### SPECIAL TO ISLAMABAD POST

The Joint Communiqué of the SCO Heads of Govt adopted on Nov 30, 2020, also emphasized the need, to focus on a shared vision of global prosperity and cooperation sharing the benefits of medical research and development. and to develop adaptive, responsive humane health systems, especially in the current scenario of the pandemic Addressing emerging economic challenges, exclusively of the most economically vulnerable members of the society, the member states intended to promote new approaches and procedures for crisis management, to strengthen and improve the working of the World Health Organization and other intergovernmental organizations

HE UN General Assembly, on 22 December 2005, by resolution, designated December 20 to be the date of observance of International Human Solidarity Day - the first UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. The resolution identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between peoples in the Twenty-first Century.

On the eve of the International Day of Human Solidarity, the SCO Secretary-General Vladimir Norov shared his views about the importance of solidarity regarding the current outbreak of coronavirus diseases (Covid-19).

Since 2005, the world has been celebrating the InternationalDay of Solidarity. International Solidarity Day, is an opportunity to unite like-minded people to act in solidarity across the world trying to address the problem of the people such as; eradicating poverty as well as promote social and human development in developing countries, particularly amongst the poorest segments of the population, including assistance to those affected by natural disasters and refugees.

This day is intended to remind the society of the importance of solidarity in achieving common goals and implementing international agreements and programs, and to promote the unity of beliefs, solidarity of mutual assistance, and mutual support of social groups.

December 20 is therefore a day to celebrate unity in diversity.It raises public awareness of the importance of solidarity for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including povertyeradication. In April this year, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on "Global Solidarity to Fight Coronavirus Disease". The document calls for increased international cooperation in sharing scientific knowledge, and best practices to contain the pandemic and mitigate its effects. "The UN Security Council must show unity in the face of the threat of a coronavirus pandemic," said António Guterres. "Solidarity is an important factor in enabling the countries of the world to work together to maintain peace, achieve sustainable development goals and respect human rights for all, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic", he further added. As the coronavirus spreads.the UNSG also called on G20 leaders to lift sanctions that impede the delivery of food, medical care. and necessities. He also called for the lifting of cross-border trade restrictions to ease the delivery of medical equipment, medicine, and other commodities to combat the epidemic. However, the common pursuit of cooperation and development encapsulates the founding principle of the SCO, and guided by principles of the "Shanghai spirit" the SCO Member States have a consolidated approach in combating threats, and in the difficult context of the coronavirus pandemic, the member states have shown unity and solidarity in providing assistance and support to one another directly, as well as through the SCO mechanisms at various levels. While rigorously adhering to the principles of solidarity which is deeply rooted in the founding principles of the SCO viz "Shanghai Spirit", our Organization, in its daily activities, is urging "international cooperation in solving socio-economic, cultural and humanitarian problems. Moreover, the first high-level SCO event aimed at overcoming the negative consequences of the coronavirus in the SCO space was an extraordinary video conference meeting of theforeign ministries of themember states, which was held on May 13, 2020. The ministers discussed the priorities of SCO activities in the context of the spread of new coronavirus infection. They stressed the importance of deepening international cooperation to overcome the social and economic& trade consequences of the COVID-19 as well as to prevent its negative impact on regional and global security and stability. Resultantly, a Joint Declaration was adopted that reflects the concern about the current situation and emphasizes responsibility on each country in ensuring the sanitary-epidemiological well-being of the population, as ell as stressed the need for concerted and inclusive multilateral efforts with the central role of the United Nations in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, The Moscow Declarationadopted at the end of the SCO Summit on November 10, 2020, also stresses the need to further strengthen international cooperation in combating the spreadof the virus and mitigating the political and socio-economic consequences of the pandemic globally. Besides, the Heads of Member States adopted a statement said"Combating New Coronavirus Infection (COVID-19)", in which they noted the importance of joining international efforts to strengthen the global health system, especially the capacity of the UN's World Health Organization (WHO) to implement the principles of the International Health Regulations (2005). The Joint Communiqué of the SCO Heads of Government adopted on November 30, 2020, also emphasized the need, to focus on a shared vision of global prosperity and cooperation sharing the benefits of medical research and development, and to develop adaptive, responsive humane health systems, especially in the current scenario of the pandemic. Addressing emerging economic challenges, exclusively of the most economically vulnerable members of the society, the member states intended to promote new approaches and procedures for crisis management, to strengthen and improve the working of the World Health Organization and other intergovernmental organizations.

In this difficult time, it will not be appropriate to recognize the job well done of doctors and medical workers of the SCO countries - who are on the front line in the fight against Covid-19. They are risking their lives and working selflessagainst modern threats. Like the creation of the United Nations to bring the peoples and nations of the world together to protect peace, human rights, and social and economic development, the SCO has for nearly 20 years sought to establish harmony among its members based on

solidarity to "maintain international peace and security. The priority goal of the SCO, under the SCO Charter, is to promote comprehensive and balanced economic growth, sustainable development in the region based on the equal partnership to improve the living conditions of the peoples of member states. The current pace of the spread of coronavirus pneumonia is a serious blow to the economies of all countries around the world. Rising unemployment and poverty are even more threatening, even in advanced economies. A report on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals reported that 1.6 billion workers already face a 60% drop in income. Loss of income, lack of social protection, and rising prices mean that poverty now threatens even those whose economic situation was previously stable. According to experts, the number of people living below the poverty line could rise sharply, while World Bank analysts predict an increase of 150 million poor people in the world in 2020-21.

All SCO Member States have made significant progress in fighting poverty based on their national plans. For example, China, the most populous country in the world, has elimi-

ly as well as with enthusiasm in treating the infected. The governments of the SCO countries took measures to reward the hard work of doctors and medical workers with dignity. Undoubtedly, the State's care, solidarity, and moral support will energize their spirit and will impart a sense of confidence and victory in the fight against the disease.

Their work was noted by the leaders of our countries in a statement adopted at the end of the Moscow SCO Summit said, "We note with sincere respect and gratitude the selfless work of doctors and medical personnel, specialists of sanitary and epidemiological services, laboratories and research centers that are at the forefront of the fight against coronavirus". I would also like to mention the work of volunteersofthe SCO Member States, whoare actively assisting doctors, the sick, the poor, and those in need. They delivermedicines, food, and provide first aid to thosewhom the doctorcould not reach in time. Showing solidarity, they have made an invaluable contribution to supporting and assisting those who need help in these difficult times.

On the SCO Secretariat's actions, a banner is placed at the entrance of the Secretariat, reads"The virus has no national borders; the epidemic is our common enemy! Only joint international cooperation will defeat the pandemic!"

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, videos on social media, publications, articles, and photo collections, where the peoples of the SCO countries calling forunity, solidarity, mutual assistance in the fight against the virus,got full support from all the quarters, its media space and reach is highly increasing. In February this year, when a new type of virus was raging in China, the Secretariat also organized a flash mob in support of medical workers and the PRC's response to the disease. Under the slogan "We believe, we are together, we will win!" the Secretariat staff addressed the doctors and medical staff in their native languages with words of support and a call for unity.

On the first night of publication alone, the video received more than 80,000 views. It is now also available on the secretariat's official website, as well as on its Telegram channel. *http://rus.sectsco.org/news/20200213/626597.html* Students of the multinational SCOLAR Youth Platform of the SCO Secretariat, being quarantined, also prepared a joint video: "Now is a difficult period when the strength of spirit is tested, all of us - being in China and abroad - want to say that you are not alone". Also, the students from Uzbekistan in the city of Wuhan from the SCOLAR Youth Platform issued a statementthat said, "Wuhan - we are with you! We believe you will beat the disease!"

On the importance of showing solidarity in the fight

**Together for peace** 

### nated poverty in 2020, and thus the Chinese have entered the middle-income society. This means that China is 10 years early in implementing the first point of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. A report published on the UN website indicates that, according to the World Bank's methodology, there are virtually no people in Russia who are classified as "absolutely poor. The country's effective anti-poverty policy envisages at least halving the national poverty rate by 2024. In this context, I would like to note that the SCO is also becoming a platform for the exchange of practices to eradicate poverty. This year Pakistan proposed to create within the Organization a special working group on combating poverty - the SCO Center of Excellence for Poverty Reduction, as well as the exchange of positive experiences and best practices in this area. In addition to that, Uzbekistan has initiated the creation of a meeting of heads of ministries and agencies responsible for fighting poverty and the adoption of the SCO program of cooperation in this sphere.

Bearing in mind that most poor people live in remote urban and rural areas, the SCO Summit on November 10 this year adopted a Concept of Cooperation of Member States in Developing Remote and Rural Areas in the Digital Age, and the action plan for implementation of the SCO Development Strategy 2025 was approved. Both documents are aimed at establishing cooperation in the sphere of fighting poverty and improving living standards in the SCO region.

In conclusion, I would like to note that modern technologies have made the world a much easier and more convenient place to meet, to communicate, to transfer funds, and to provide help to those in need. But the perfection of technical advancement means nothing when one lives an empty life in a closed world. Only by working together with a commitment,we can achieve truly meaningful results. And only by working in solidarity,we would be able to effectively address the global problems that arise.

In these difficult times, amid the raging coronavirus pandemic, political instability in different parts of the world, global poverty issues, climate disasters, terrorism, and other destructive factors that hinder good neighborliness and joint development, it is more important than ever to remember the reasons for establishing such significant dates as Human Solidarity Day. The SCO countries are ready to make every effort to jointly confront emerging threats to stability in the region and the world. And we call on the international community to stand in solidarity in all its manifestations for sustainable development.

- The writer is the SCO Secretary-General

### Muhammad Azam Khan

The security of Gwadar port along with associated maritime infrastructure and seaward approaches is mandated to Pak Navy. A specially configured contingent comprising of professionally trained, fully geared and agile manpower stand guard to secure smooth functioning of the port HE present day world seem to have come full circle since the events of 9/11. Traditional threats now eclipse the previous dominant concern over non-traditional threats. The rise of China has become the most momentous event of the twenty first century. A rapid surge in China's economic and military prowess is spawning an era of new world order. Never since the end of cold war did the United States find itself so challenged as it is today. With China and Russia forging a formidable strategic partnership as embodied in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the two expanding their worldwide influence, the competition appears to be expanding from "Eurasian heartland" to "Eurasian Rim" namely, South Asia, Middle East, and South East Asia.

By far the greatest shift in the regional nay global order in recent times has been China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). CPEC is the flagship project of BRI. The port of Gwadar on the western fringes of Pakistan's Makran coast constitutes what could be conveniently called the "bedrock" of CPEC. It is from this port that China will connect to Africa, Middle East, and other parts of the world. It will also serve as the "gateway" for transit trade to and from Central Asia. The security of Gwadar port along with associated maritime infrastructure and seaward approaches is mandated to Pakistan Navy. A specially configured contingent comprising of professionally trained, fully geared and agile manpower stand guard to secure smooth functioning of the port. To add on, surveillance and monitoring facilities along the coast and well-established, "Joint Maritime Information and Coordination Centre"(JIMCC) of Pakistan Navy meanwhile ensures early warning of any developing threat.

As new threats surfaced in the aftermath of 9/11, safely and security of major maritime highways became a paramount global concern. With some of the vital international sea-arteries traversing close to Pakistan's Makran coast, country's navy quickly occupied strategic maritime space in the western Indian Ocean as part of effort in GWOT. Pakistan Navy then assumed the mantle of providing security and assurance of safe passage to legitimate commerce in the said sea expanse. A sustained participation in US led Combined Task Force 150, aimed at combating maritime terrorism, human and narco trafficking and other crimes at sea besides engagement in anti-piracy coalition (Task Force 151)has been a valuable contribution by Pakistan Navy.

"Pakistan Navy on its part is maintaining a robust security posture along the Pakistani coast and in the regional seas to deter the nefarious elements from illicit activities in the maritime domain". The institution of "Regional Maritime Security Patrols" (RMSP) in the Indian Ocean region in line with UN Convention on Law of the Sea is meant to "pursue the country's national interest with strategic autonomy".

The participation in Coalition operations in Combined Task Force 150 and Combined Task Force 151 proved well for the larger good of the international community and regional maritime security. This continued for well over decade and a half. The period was punctuated with Pakistan Navy assuming command role of these combined coalition forces on several occasions. The navy also seized contraband cargo shipment at high seas and provided humanitarian assistance to regional countries on several occasions. That was not all. Apart from enduring participation in various international coalitions, Pakistan Navy instituted a largescale multinational exercise "Aman" or "Peace" in 2007. The mega event directed at building bridges, increasing interoperability as well as ocean governance. This meant presenting a collective response to maritime threats and challenges that had universal implications.

Today "Aman" is more than "Peace". It would not be wrong to title it as "aman-o-amaan" "peace and security", as the literal meaning in Urdu suggests. Since the first in the series held in 2007, Amanhas been scheduled on biennial basis. A widely participated international maritime conference, IMC that precedes the drills at sea, cobbles renowned maritime scholars from across continents. The papers read in the IMC by erudite intellectuals dissect ocean related problems to propose innovative solutions, a necessity in contemporary era as security of littorals and regional prosperity is closely tied to blue economy.

Aman has enlarged in scope and extent. In 2019, the exercise saw participation by more than 40 countries while the exercise this year (Aman-21) involves an unprecedented list of countries. Symbolizing maritime security and stability in a volatile region, Aman is and shall remain a harbinger of peace and pride for Pakistan.

# WORLD / SPORTS



## Briefs

### Trudeau to be vaccinated publicly

MONTREAL: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will receive the Covid-19 shot in public once those in his age group are in line to be vaccinated, he said in an interview broadcast Sunday. Canada began vaccinating people in highrisk categories - including frontline health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities on December 14, with a relatively limited supply of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

"Absolutely," Trudeau told the CBC public network in a year-end interview. "When my turn comes, I will do it publicly and enthusiastically." Trudeau added that he would follow the recommendations of public health experts. "Whenever, you know, healthy adults in their 40s are open to getting vaccines, I'll be getting vaccinated," said the prime minister, who turns 49 on Christmas Day, December 25. Trudeau's wife Sophie Gregoire Trudeau tested positive for the coronavirus in March, and he spent two weeks in self-imposed quarantine. He said Sunday he might have had an extremely mild case of the disease. - APP

### England hires S.African batting legend Kallis

### SPORTS DESK

LONDON:South African cricket icon Jacques Kallis will be a batting consultant for England's tour of Sri Lanka, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced on Monday.

The 45-year-old is third on the all-time list of Test run-scorers with 13,289 -he also took 292 wickets.

Kallis coached Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League and worked with the South Africa team, but was not part of the set-up for England's recent coronavirus-disrupted tour. "Former South Africa all-rounder Lacques Kallis

# Baku condemns Belgian, Dutch parliaments' resolutions

Bayramov expressed regret over the Belgian Parliament's decision. He stressed that despite the inclusion of the references to the norms and principles of the international law and relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council to this decision as a result of the Belgian government's explanation

### DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan has strongly condemned draft resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh adopted by the Belgian and Dutch parliaments containing baseless and biased allegations against Azerbaijan and Turkey, the Foreign Ministry reported. During the plenary session of the House of Representatives of the Belgian Federal Parliament on December 17, a draft resolution titled "Support to the initiatives of Belgium and international organizations for a lasting solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and a ceasefire" was adopted. The ministry described as "unacceptable" that the document reflects biased opinions despite the fact that it includes references to the norms and principles of international law, as well as the Resolutions No 822, 853, 874 and 884 of 1993 of the UN Security Council, after the explanation provided by the Belgian Government. Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, who is on a working visit to Belgium to attend a meeting of the Azerbaijan-EU Cooperation Council, also protested the resolution. During the meeting with Sophie Wilmes, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade and Federal Cultur-

### Azerbaijan to allocate \$1.3b for liberated lands

BAKU: The Azerbaijani government will allocate AZN 2.2 billion (\$1.3bn) for reconstruction works in the liberated territories in 2021, the Finance Ministry has reported. According to the draft state budget for 2021, AZN 2.2 billion are envisaged for financing reconstruction measures in the liberated territories. In particular, these fund will be used to restore the infrastructure (electricity, gas, water, communications, roads, education, health, etc), as well as cultural and historical monuments. Moreover, the funds dedicated for defense and national security, maintenance of the judiciary, law enforcement agencies and prosecutor's office amounted to 23.4 percent of the state budget expenditures for 2021, which is by 16.3 percent or AZN 937.7 million (\$551.5M) more than in 2020. Earlier it Azerbaijan allocated over AZN 9 million (\$5m) to compensate damages to its citizens that suffered from Armenia's aggression during the six-week war over the Nagorno-Karabakh region from September 27 to November 10. Under the order, 9,068,128 AZN (\$5,334,192) that were originally calculated on the basis of the lists submitted by the relevant working groups, will be financed from the 2020 Azerbaijani state budget's reserve fund. – DNA

al Institutions, Bayramov said that the resolution by the Belgian Parliament reflected baseless and biased allegations against Azerbaijan, as well as brotherly Turkey. Bayramov expressed regret over the Belgian Parliament's decision. He stressed that despite the inclusion of the references to the norms and principles of the international law and relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council to this decision as a result of the Belgian government's explanation, the document contains a number of issues not reflecting the reality causes a serious concern to the Azerbaijani public. In turn, Sophie Wilmes expressed the interest in developing cooperation between the two countries. She stated that Belgium has always acted in accordance with international law in the development of bilateral relations. Drawing attention to the process of establishing long lasting peace and sustainable development in the post-conflict period, Sophie Wilmes said that Belgium will be pleased to participate in this process. In a separate report on December 20, the ministry condemned anti-Azerbaijani resolutions adopted by the Dutch parliament. "Recently, we observe that the Parliament of the

Kingdom of the Netherlands has adopted resolutions against Azerbaijan that do not reflect the truth and are completely biased. Thus, the 11 resolutions adopted by the House of Representatives of the Dutch Parliament since October 7 on the situation in the region were one-sided, reflecting baseless and biased claims, and openly expressed anti-Azerbaijani and anti-Turkic position. The resolution 'On the provision of humanitarian assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh' adopted on December 17 again distorts the truth, reflects unfounded allegations against Azerbaijan and Turkey," the ministry said. The ministry added that Azerbaijan reject all the allegations and urged the Dutch parliament to stop displaying one-sided position. "We strongly reject these resolutions of the Dutch Parliament and call on the House of Representatives to renounce its unilateral position and act in accordance with the norms and principles of international law. The Netherlands, as well as the other European countries whose parliaments adopted biased resolutions, instead of fomenting hostility can contribute to the development of the countries of the region in peace, stability and prosperity by supporting the new security and cooperation framework in the region created by the joint statement signed on November 10, 2020," the ministry said in its statement. As part of his working visit to Belgium, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov met EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Joseph Borrell, EU Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Oliver Varhely and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Federal Cultural Institutions Sophie Wilmes. All meetings

focused on the latest situation in

Nagorno-Karabakh and further co-

operation with the EU.

### PCB allows families on overseas tours

### SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has decided to allow members of the national cricket team to accompany their families at

home and overseas tours. According to sources, PCB will hold discussions with other host boards in this regard while families will be allowed to stay with them in the home series.

The decision came after the cricketers went through a hard time in isolation during the ongoing New Zealand tour. PCB aims to create convenience and easiness for the players in these difficult situations. Taking care of the personal lives of the players with cricket is the top priority of the PCB. A message has also been conveyed to the players through team management.

Squad members will be able to keep families together from the home series against South Africa, starting from January 26. The families will have to follow all the COVID-19 protocols while being in the bio-secure bubble. It must be noted that the Pakistan team is scheduled to tour South Africa, Zimbabwe, England and the West Indies next year, while they are also scheduled to play several home series.

### NZ squad confirmed for 2 Tests

KARACHI: A 13-member New Zealand squad has been confirmed for the Test series against Pakistan, starting from December 26. The hosts will be up against Pakistan in two Tests at Bay Oval, Mount Maunganui and at Hagley Oval, Christchurch. Captain Kane Williamson returns to the side after missing the second Test against West Indies in Wellington to be with his wife Sarah ahead of the birth of their first child.

Daryl Mitchell remains as the pace-bowling all-rounder in place of Colin de Grandhomme who was last week ruled out of the series with a stress-reaction to his right ankle. Following consecu-



joins the England setup for the first time as batting coaching consultant," the ECB said in a statement. England will leave for Sri Lanka on Lanuary 2 and play

Lanka on January 2 and play two Tests before going on to tour India. Both Tests will be played in Galle, starting on 14 January and 22 January. It will be England's first tour since the visit to South Africa had to be brought to a premature end earlier this month after two members of the touring party tested positive for Covid-19. They later tested negative.

England played all three of the scheduled Twenty 20 internationals but none of the three ODIs, the first of which was postponed after a positive test in the South African entourage.

### Real Madrid beat Eibar in Lali ga

### **SPORTS DESK**

MADIRD: Karim Benzema opened the scoring with his seventh league goal of the season and then set up Luka Modric as Real scored twice in the opening 13 minutes. Captain Kike Garcia responded for Eibar with a spectacular curled finish from the edge of the box before half-time.

Both sides had chances in a hard-fought second half, but Lucas Vazquez sealed the points for Real in injury time. Zinedine Zidane's side moved above second-placed Real Sociedad but has played two games more than leaders Atletico, with the city rivals level on points. Atletico are away to Real Sociedad in a key game at the top on Tuesday, with Los Blancos facing Granada a day later It is now five wins in a row for Real in all competitions, but they were made to work hard against Eibar despite their early dominance. The hosts stuck to their task despite Benzema's well-taken finish from Rodrygo's cross and Modric's second into the roof of the net from the Frenchman's cutback, and were rewarded by Kike's wonderful goal after 28 minutes. But Sergio Ramos produced an excellent tackle to prevent Eibar at one end, before Benzema played in Vazquez in the closing stages

ISLAMAVBAD: Through the agreement signed in the framework of the debt relief scheme by Paris Club and G20 lender countries, France, 4th creditor of Pakistan, suspends its bilateral government loan repayments worth 189,7 millions USD. Acting Ambassador of France and Secretary Economic Affairs Division exchanging documents. Head of Economic Section of the French embassy is also seen in the picture. – DNA

### Babar, Imam ruled out of first NZ test

### SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistan captain Babar Azam and opener Imamul Haq have been ruled out of the first Test starting in Mount Maunganui from December 26. Wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan will lead Pakistan in the absence of Babar Azam in the first Test. Rizwan will become Pakistan's 33rd captain to lead the side in the longest format of the game. Babar had had fractured his right thumb a day after Imam had fractured his left thumb during training sessions in Queenstown last week. Both are yet to return to nets with the team's medical staff closely monitoring their progress. The decision on their participation in the second Test, which starts

in Christchurch on January 3, will be made closer to the time. Meanwhile, the tour selection committee has named prolific domestic run-scorer Imran Butt in the 17-player squad for the Test series against

New Zealand. Balochistan's 24-year-old Imran Butt scored 191 runs in the three ongoing four-day first-class Quaid-e-Azam Trophy matches before joining the New Zealand-bound tour party. He had topped batting charts in the 2019-20 Quaid-e-Azam Trophy with 934 runs at an average of over 62 with four centuries and three half-centuries. Also returning to the Pakistan Test side are Abid Ali, Azhar Ali, Fawad Alam, Haris Sohail, Mohammad Abbas, Naseem Shah, Shan Masood, Sohail Khan and Yasir Shah.

# Indian farmers vow to carry on protests

The farmers, including a large number of older people, said they would endure the bitter winter sweeping northern India, including the capital New Delhi, to force Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration to rescind the laws introduced in September

### FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Tens of thousands of Indian farmers, protesting over agricultural laws that they say threaten their livelihoods, have vowed to carry on their around-the-clock sit-ins despite cold weather that has already led to some deaths among them. Farmers from the northern states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and the desert state of Rajasthan have camped on key national highways for weeks demanding a repeal of the laws, withstanding temperatures dropping to 2-3 degree Celsius. The farmers including a large num

The farmers, including a large number of older people, said they would

endure the bitter winter sweeping northern India, including the capital New Delhi, to force Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration to rescind the laws introduced in September. "It's very difficult to camp out in this weather, but we aren't scared," said Balbir Singh, an octogenarian from the Patiala district of Punjab. "We won't go back until our demands are met. Even if we have to die here, we will." Since late November, when thousands of farmers arrived in trucks and tractors to camp out on the borders of New Delhi, nearly 30 people have died, several of them as a result of freezing weather, farmers said. About ten people have been killed

in road accidents near the protest sites, they said. "We don't want more people to die in this protest, and I hope Modi and his government take back the laws soon," Paagh Singh, 76, said, wrapped in a blue blanket. "It's a democracy, and he (Modi) has to listen to us."

As temperatures dropped, one of the main protest sites turned into a sea of small tents and tarpaulin-covered tractor trolleys. But some demonstrators have to spend the night sleeping in the open air.

"I don't care how cold it gets," said farmer Surminder Singh. "I'm neither scared of the cold nor of Modi. Our struggle will continue until the laws are withdrawn." tive two-nil series wins over the West Indies this month and India earlier this year, Blackcaps are just behind India in third on the WTC points table. A series sweep against Pakistan and a heavy defeat for India in Australia would see them well placed to return to Lord's in London for another ICC Test Championship Final.

New Zealand Test squad Kane Williamson (c), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner, BJ Watling (wk), Will Young. – APP

### Akbar, Ayaz guide Balochistan to 370

KARACHI: Akbar-ur-Rehman and Ayaz Tasawar posted half-centuries, handing 169run first innings lead over Northern on day two of their ninth round Quaid-e-Azam Trophy fixture at the UBL Sports Complex on Monday. Northern's skipper Nauman Ali recorded his sixth fifer of this season, bowling Balochistan out for 372. He returned six for 107 from 46.1 overs. The 34-year-old left-arm orthodox now has 61 scalps at an average of 21.79. Balochistan were provided a solid start as their captain Imran Farhat and Ali Rafiq put a 101-run stand for the opening wicket. Imran added 24 runs to his overnight score before he became one of Nauman's victims on 77. A firm 139-run alliance for the fourth wicket between Akbar (82 off 155, four fours and five sixes) and Ayaz (69 off 105, nine fours and two sixes) set Balochistan to post an imposing total. Northern pacer Waqas Ahmed took three wickets for 63 runs, while the remaining wicket was taken by all-rounder Mohammad Nawaz, Second-ranked Northern will begin their second innings on Tuesday, the penultimate morning of the match. At the State Bank Stadium, Sindh made a strong comeback after they were bowled out for 217 by Southern Punjab in the first innings. They dismissed SP for 247 courtesy of four for 81 by Mohammad Asghar, A consolidated bowling performance from Sindh allowed Southern Punjab a slender 30-run lead and bagged them five bowling points that took their bonus points tally from the

## US reaches long-awaited deal for virus aid

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",

NEW YORK: After months of wrangling, US lawmakers have agreed to a roughly \$900bn (£660bn) package of pandemic aid, including money for businesses and unemployment programmes. The money is set to accompany a bigger, \$1.4tn spending bill to fund government operations over the next nine months.

Many Covid-19 relief programmes were set to expire at the end of the month. About 12 million Americans were at risk of losing access to unemployment benefits.

The House of Representatives and the Senate are expected to vote on the package on Monday. It will then need to be signed into law by President Donald Trump.

What do we know about the package? The new package will include one-off \$600 stimulus payments to most Americans, and will boost unemployment payments by \$300 per week. It is also set to include more than \$300bn in support for businesses, and money for vaccine distribution, schools and renters facing eviction.

The deal was announced on Sunday by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican. "We can finally report what our nation has needed to hear for a very long time: More help is on the way," he said.

The package, he added, contained "targeted policies to help struggling Americans who have already waited too long".

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, both Democrats, said the package delivered "urgently needed funds to save the lives and livelihoods of the American people as the virus accelerates".

media caption'We used to donate to this food bank, now we rely on it' The bill does not include substantial aid to local governments, which had been a top priority for many Democrats. Mr Schumer said the package did help local governments indirectly by providing money for schools, Covid-19 testing and other expenses.

He said the package would "establish a floor, not a ceiling, for coronavirus relief in 2021", and that Democrats would push for more aid after President-elect Joe Biden took office on 20 January.

Congress was expected to pass the bill by Friday, but negotiations continued through the weekend. The delays led to concerns over whether the government would shut down without a spending bill. Washington has been operating on temporary funding since October, the start of the federal government's financial year. What about previous aid?

What about previous aid? In March the US approved more than \$2.4tn in economic relief, including one-off \$1,200 stimulus payments, funds for businesses and money to boost weekly unemployment payments by \$600.

The package was credited with cushioning the economic hit of the pandemic, which cast more than 20 million Americans out of work this spring and drove the unemployment rate up to 14.7% in April.

IS reac Mr Pompeo sai what it is", Foreign Desk

# **BUSINESS / WORLD**

## **Briefs**

### Russia reports record virus cases

### DNA

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday reported a new record increase in coronavirus infections, as some experts said the pandemic had hit the country harder than government statistics suggest.

Health officials reported 493 new virus deaths and 29,350 cases, bringing total infections to 2,877,727 - the fourth-highest in the world. Total fatalities stood at 51 351. Moscow and the second city of Saint Petersburg were the hardest hit, recording 7,797 and 3,752 new cases. Russia has reported a much lower death rate compared to other badly hit countries, raising concerns that authorities have downplayed the figures. Alexei Raksha, a former de mographer at Russia's state statistics agency, said he believed around 250,000 had people died from the coronavirus. Raksha, who left the Rosstat statistics agency in July, told AFP that the Russian health ministry and the consumer health agency "downplay and falsify" coronavirus figures.

Russia's second wave has surged in recent weeks, but officials have not reimposed a strict nationwide lockdown launched in the early days of the pandemic and many Russians flout social distancing and mask-wearing rules. The pandemic has overwhelmed Russia's already underfunded hospitals, while many medicines used to treat the coronavirus have disappeared from pharmacies. Authorities in Saint Petersburg said that less than 4 percent of hospital beds remained available in the city of some 5 million people. The northwestern city reported 77 new fatalities over the past 24 hours, the highest in the country.

Germany urges Iran to avail chance for rapprochement

FOREIGN DESK



ISLAMABAD: Chinese officials giving a briefing about vaccines. Officials claim Chinese vaccine is more effective. - DNA

# UK cut off over fears about new COVID strain

France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, Belgium, Israel and Canada shut off travel ties after Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned that a highly infectious new strain of the virus was a danger to the country

### FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The United Kingdom was on Monday shut off from much of Europe after its closest allies cut transport ties due to fears about a new strain of the coronavirus, sowing chaos for families and companies just days before it exits the European Union's orbit.

France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, Belgium, Israel and Canada shut off travel ties after Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned that a highly infectious new strain of the virus was

a danger to the country. Johnson will chair an emergency

particular the flow of freight in and out of Britain. France shut its border to arriv-

als of people and trucks from the United Kingdom, closing off one of the most important trade arteries with mainland Europe, a step Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said was surprising.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible,' Shapps told Sky. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but that given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well predue to continue on Monday. Johnson on Saturday cancelled Christmas plans for millions of British people due to what he said was a more infectious strain of the coronavirus, though he said there was no evidence that it was either more lethal or caused a more severe illness.

People stand on the platform next to the last scheduled Eurostar train from London to Paris ahead of travel restrictions imposed by the French government on the UK in London, Britain December 20, 2020. The new variant contains 23 different changes, many of them associated with alterations in a protein made by the virus. Shapps said Britain had done some of the best global analysis

ready at large in other countries. Chief Scientific Adviser Patrick Vallance said on Saturday; he thought the new variant may be in other countries but also might have started in the United Kingdom.

The British government triggered plans it had for stacking up trucks in the southeast county of Kent - part of its plans for potential disruption when the United Kingdom exits the EU's orbit with - or without - a trade deal at 2300 GMT on Dec. 31. Trucks are being stacked on the M20 motorway through the county, heading towards the ports, which is closed to normal traffic. A nearby airport will also be used to hold freight.

to France will affect the export of goods such as fish and shell fish from Scotland to Europe, and the import of food for British supermarkets if, as expected, European drivers refuse to travel.

Trucks have been told to avoid Kent to prevent any further build up of trucks. "The closure of France to UK traffic, including accompanied freight poses difficulties for UK capacity to import and export key goods during the busy Christmas period," said Andrew Opie, director of food & sustainability at the British Retail Consortium.

in 2015 to 76 in 2020. 'The number of people in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity has risen from 13.9 million in November 2019 to 16.9 million, or 42 percent of the population in November 2020," the statement read. According to OCHA, the economic and social conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic have

also exacerbated protection risks for vulnerable families. Many Afghans, according to the source, had already depleted limited financial, mental, and social coping capaci-

### Indonesia's capital extends COVID-19 restrictions

Islamahad POST

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

JAKARTA: The Jakarta administration on Monday extended its transitional period of the large-scale social restrictions for another two weeks until Jan. 3, the city's governor said. The move was made to prevent possible further spikes during Christmas and the holiday season.

"We will monitor the mobility of the population and control it so that there is no transmission, both from outside to Jakarta and vice versa, so it is necessary for us, especially families in Jakarta, to refrain from doing holiday activities outside homes, especially out of Jakarta," Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan said in a statement. Jakarta, which is home to more than 10 million people, remains the epicenter of Indonesia's COV-ID-19 outbreak, with 163,111 cases in the capital as of Sunday. – APP

### UN agency warns over Afghans food insecurity

KABUL: About 16 million Afghans, including 5.5 million who were lacking food insecurity, have been in urgent need of aids in Afghanistan, a UN aid agency warned Monday. The Kabul-based Office for Coordination of the Humanitarian Aids (OCHA) said in a statement that 16 million Afghans will be in need of humanitarian aids in 2021. The agency said over the past five years, the food security situation in the war-torn country, has steadily deteriorated and the percentage of insecure people doubled from 37

BERLIN: German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Monday urged Iran not to waste the opportunity offered by the prospect of Joseph Biden's United States administration returning to the nuclear non-proliferation deal. Speaking after a video conference of officials from the countries in the JCPOA deal, Maas said that Iran should avoid taking any tactical steps that would make it hard for Biden to reverse President Donald Trump's decision to quit the deal. "To make possible a rapprochement with the U.S. under Biden, there should be no further tactical maneuvers of the kind we've seen too many of in the recent past," he told reporters. "This chance, this last window of opportunity, must not be wasted.'

TIKA sets up

marketplace

in Azerbaijan

DNA

BAKU: Turkey's state-run aid

agency on Monday established

a "from village to city" market-

place in Azerbaijan's capital

Baku with the aim to promote

the agricultural products pro-

Established with the coopera

tion of the Agriculture Ministry

of Azerbaijan and the Turkish

International Cooperation and

Development Agency (TIKA),

the marketplace will offer the

agricultural products produced

by the farmers directly to the

city residents. Azerbaijan's

Agriculture Minister Inam Ka-

rimov, Turkey's Ambassador

to Baku Erkan Ozoral, and TI

KA's Program Coordinator in

Baku Teoman Tiryaki attended

the opening ceremony among

others. Karimov told reporters

that Azerbaijan traditionally

sets up agricultural products

sale centers every year before

New Year's Eve. Emphasizing

that the aim is to deliver farm-

ers' products to the consumers

at affordable prices, Karimov

said that all operations in the

marketplace will be carried out

in compliance with measures

to curb the spread of coronavi-

rus. He also praised TIKA for

the cooperation in the project

and thanked those who con-

tributed to the establishment

Speaking at the ceremony,

Ozoral reiterated that vegeta-

bles, fruits, and foodstuffs will

be sold directly from the farm

ers to the consumers at the

most affordable prices.

of the marketplace.

duced by the farmers.

response meeting on Monday to discuss international travel, in

pared for disruption.

Talks on a Brexit trade deal were it was simply seeing what was al-

of the mutations of the virus so

The closure of the Channel Tunnel and ports for onward travel

ers across to the UK without a guarantee they can return to the EU in a timely manner."

of Okhotsk, which borders

Russia. It did not elaborate

Japan is buying longer-

range missiles and con-

sidering arming and

training its military to

strike distant land tar-

gets in China, North Ko-

rea and other parts of

Asia. A planned jet fighter,

the first in three decades,

is expected to cost around

\$40bn and be ready in the

2030s. That project, which

will be led by Mitsubishi

Heavy Industries with help

from the US company Lock-

heed Martin, gets \$706m in

Japan will spend \$323m to

begin the development of a

long-range anti-ship missile

to defend the Okinawan is-

land chain in its southwest.

Other big purchases in-

clude \$628m for six Lock-

heed F-35 stealth fighters,

including two short-take-

off and vertical-landing

(STOVL) B variants that

will operate off a convert-

The military will also get

\$912m to build two com-

pact warships that can oper-

ate with fewer sailors than

conventional destroyers,

easing pressure on a navy

struggling to find recruits

in an ageing population.

ed helicopter carrier.

the new budget.

on the incident.

"While goods can enter from

France, few haulage firms will be

willing to send trucks and driv-

Japan sets record

military budget

## **Chinese FM emphasizes** dialogue, cooperation with EU

BEIJING: No matter how the international situation changes, China and the European Union (EU) should stay on the right track of dialogue and cooperation for mutual benefit, and properly manage and control differences, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Monday. Wang made the remarks when meeting envoys to China from the EU and 27 of its member states in Beijing. Saying this year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and the EU, Wang added relations have made

Practical cooperation has become a highlight of the development of China-EU relations, Wang said, adding that China has become the largest significant progress while overcoming trading partner of the bloc for the the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

first time. The two sides have formally signed the China-EU agreement on geographical indications and are expected to reach the China-EU investment agreement. The two sides also decided to establish two high-level dialogue mechanisms on environment and climate as well as digital cooperation. Wang said China and the EU, as two important forces in the process of multi-polarization, should jointly provide more stability to the world. "For China and the EU, cooperation far outweighs competition, and our areas of consensus far exceed differences. China-EU are mutually beneficial partners and bilateral relations are strong.

## Navalny says tricked FSB agent into admitting poisoning

MOSCOW: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny claimed Monday he had tricked a security agent into admitting the FSB domestic intelligence agency sought to kill him this summer and placed poison into his underwear. In a bombshell blog post the Kremlin critic said he called a man called Konstantin Kudrvavtsev, claiming he was a chemical weapons expert with the Federal Security Service. "I called my killer. He confessed everything," Navalny said on



Twitter. Navalny said he disguised his phone number and presented himself as an aide to Security Council chief Nikolai Patrushev, explaning he needed information for an official report on the attempted poisoning. He did not provide any proof of his claims, saying a voice analysis "would demonstrate that it is indeed" Kudryavtsev.

Apart from the blog post the opposition leader published an audio recording and a transcript of the phone call and released a video of him conducting the conversation.

FOREIGN DESK TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's government approved a ninth consecutive rise in military spending on Monday, to fund the development of an advanced stealth fighter and longerrange anti-ship missile to counter China's growing military power.

The Ministry of Defence will get a record 5.34 trillion yen (\$51.7bn) for the year starting in April, up 1.1 percent from this year. With Suga's large majority in parliament, enactment of the budget is all but certain. Suga is continuing the controversial military expansion pursued by his predecessor, Shinzo Abe, to give Japan's forces new planes, missiles and aircraft carriers with greater range and potency against potential foes, including neighbouring China.

On Monday, Japan's Joint Staff revealed in a Tweet that aircraft were scrambled on December 18 in response to a suspected intrusion into its airspace over the Sea of Japan, bordering the Korean peninsula and Russia, and the Sea ties due to prolonged conflict or recurrent natural disasters. Financial strains and fear of catching COVID-19 meant that facility-based primary health and trauma services were underutilized in 2020, resulting in deteriorating health needs in 2021. the statement noted.

### Thailand hit by worst covid surge

### FOREIGN DESK

BANGKOK: After months of avoiding the surge in cases seen by its neighbours, Thailand has been hit by its worst Covid-19 outbreak yet.

Tens of thousands of people are being tested after hundreds of cases linked to its biggest seafood market.

It has locked down Samut Sakhon, the coastal province near the capital Bangkok, home to the market which employs mostly migrant workers from neighbouring Myanmar. Workers have been ordered to stay home. Thailand was the first country outside China to register cases of Covid-19. But it has recorded a relatively low virus caseload since, with just over 4,000 cases and 60 deaths before this latest outbreak. How did this surge begin?

It started with a 67-year-old Thai female prawn seller testing positive on Thursday.

Her case at Mahachai market - the heart of Thailand's multi-billion-dollar seafood industry - set the mass testing in motion. Four cases were reported the next day and by Sunday that number had jumped to 689 - most of them Myanmar migrants, the public health ministry said.

It added that the woman had no history of leaving the country and authorities were searching for the source of the infection. What has the response been? Along with stepping up testing, Myanmar workers who live around the market have been ordered not to leave their residences, according to AFP news agency. We are locking and banning them from moving," the health ministry's permanent secretary Kietphgum Wongit said, adding that the workers were being provided with food and water. Lines of migrant workers - mostly from Myanmar - were seen waiting for their coronavirus swab in the market on Sunday, alongside some Thais.

## **8 rockets target US embassy in Baghdad**

He added that travellers who arrived on Sunday would be subject to secondary screening and other health measures. A follow-up statement from the government said cargo flights were not included in the ban

### **MONITORING DESK**

BAGHDAD: A volley of rockets has targeted the United States' embassy in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, Iraq's military said, sparking fears of renewed unrest as next month's anniversary of the US assassination of a top Iranian general draws near.

An Iraqi military statement on Sunday said an "an outlawed group" launched eight rockets targeting the Green Zone, injuring one Iraqi security person manning a checkpoint and causing material damage to some cars and a residential complex, which is usually empty. The US embassy's C-RAM defence system, which is used to

### US blames Iran-backed militias

WASHINGTON: The United States has blamed Iran-backed militias for a rocket attack Sunday on the heavily fortified Green Zone in Iraq's capital. Iraq's military said an "outlawed group" fired at least eight rockets, injuring one Iraqi soldier and damaging some buildings and cars. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad said no embassy personnel were hurt, and that there was some minor damage to the compound. An embassy missile defense system was activated to deflect the attack. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the United States "strongly condemns the latest attack by Iran-backed militias." "We call on all Iraqis to support their government's efforts to reinforce Iraq's sovereignty, to bring to justice those responsible for these reprehensible attacks and ensure that all the currently Iran-backed militias are under state control," Pompeo said in a statement late Sunday. The United States is reducing its troop levels in Iraq. In response to multiple previous rocket attacks, it has threatened to shut its embassy in Baghdad unless the Iraqi government acts to control Iran-backed militias. - DNA

destroy missiles midair, was activated to deflect the attack, the embassy said in a statement. "The US embassy confirms rockets targeting the International

Zone [Green Zone] resulted in the engagement of embassy defensive systems," the statement said, adding that there was minor damage to the embassy compound.

"We call on all Iraqi political and governmental leaders to take steps to prevent such attacks and hold accountable those responsible," the statement said.

The thundering sound of the defence system could be heard by Associated Press reporters located on the other side of the Tigris river. The C-RAM system was installed by the US in the middle of the year as armed groups stepped up rocket attacks targeting the embassy and its premises.

The US withdrew some staff from its embassy in Baghdad earlier this month, temporarily reducing personnel before the first anniversary of the US air strike that killed Iran's top general, Qassem Soleimani, outside Baghdad's airport on January 3.

The US officials said the reduction of the staff stemmed from concerns about a possible retaliatory attack.



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### **Briefs** 4 Afghans die in Kandahar explosion

KANDAHAR: Four civilians, including two teenage boys, were martyred and one civilian wounded when a tricycle vehicle was struck by an improvised bomb in Kandahar, a southern province of Afghanistan on Monday, a provincial police spokesman confirmed.

"The incident came after the vehicle touched off an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Bodahi village,Arghandab district at mid-day on Monday. The wounded were shifted by locals to a district hospital," spokesman Jamal Baraikzai told Xinhua.

The five affected people were aboard the tricycle, which was destroyed in the blast, he said.

Militants in Afghanistan have been using home-made IEDs to make roadside bombs and landmines to target security forces, but the lethal weapons also inflict casualties on civilians. More than 800 civilians were martyred and over 2,330 others wounded in IED explosions in 2019, according to figures of the UN mission in the country. – Agencies

### Govt's day of reckoning is near: Hamza

### ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Leader of the Opposition in Punjab Assembly, Hamza Shehbaz, has said that PTI government's day of reckoning is near and despite its repeated efforts, PML-N is united under the leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif and Mian Shehbaz Sharif.Hamza Shehbaz Sharif also has tendered his resignation at a parliamentary meeting of the party on Monday. Hamza Shahbaz presented the resignation and said that he would abide by whatever decision is taken by the party and PDM.

Addressing a parliament



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi addressing with the participants of "The Global Al-Farabi Forum", at COMSTECH. - DNA

## **President urges Ummah to** develop scientific knowledge

The President mentioned that the COMSTECH is the only major institution in OIC, established for the socio-economic development of the Ummah through the application of science and technology

### STAFF REPORT / DNA

to join hands with this prestigious ISLAMABAD: Dr. Arif Alvi, Presinstitution and work together for ident of Pakistan pointed out the renaissance of the Ummah. that the pace of scientific devel-He said that COMSTCH is only opments in the present era is institution of OIC hosted by Paso rapid that will widen the gap kistan and lauded COMSTECH further between the developed efforts for promotion of scientific cooperation and the uplift of the and developing Muslim countries OIC countries. He made these if immediate and focused actions are not taken. He identified the remarks in his address to the spirit of enquiry and boldness as inaugural session of the Global characteristic of the Muslim sci-A-Farabi forum organized jointly entists and philosophers in the by COMSTECH and the governglorious days of Muslim science ment of Kazakhstan. and philosophy. The opening session was also

The President mentioned that the addressed by the Coordinator COMSTECH is the only major in-General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. stitution in OIC, established for the socio-economic development of the Ummah through the appli-

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan's tex-

tile production and exports

have largely recovered

from the COVID-19 pan-

demic shock and are back

on growth trajectory both

in terms of the quantity

and dollar value. This was

reported by Gwadar Pro

quoting it's commentator

and economic expert Prof.

Cheng Xizhong on Monday.

Prof. Cheng referred to

data released by the Paki-

stan Bureau of Statistics

(PBS) on December 18

Darkhan Kydyrali, President International Turkic Academy and the Kazakhstan Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Berik Aryn.

All the speakers emphasized the need of the advancement of science and technology in the OIC member states and resolved to follow the tradition of the renowned muslim scholar Abu-Nasr Al-Farabi to recapture the golden era of the Ummah.

The Coordinator General COMS-TECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary in his address announced that COMSTECH and the Turkic Academy would continue the tradition set by this Global Al-Farabi Forum by organizing similar fo-

the eminent astronomer scientist Ulugh Beg in Uzbekistan.

In his address, the Assistant Secretary General of OIC ensured the full support for the development of science and technology in OIC member states. Dr. Darkhan Kydyrali, the President of International Turkic Academy appreciated COMSTECH for organizing the forum on such a renowned scholar and resolved to take this tradition further and hold such forums on other renowned muslim scholars. The two-day conference is being organized in celebration of the 1150th anniversary of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, the great Muslim philosopher and scientist who hailed rums on renowned Pakistani phi- from the lands, now are part of losopher Allama Dr. Muhammad Kazakhstan. The two-day event Iqbal, in Turkmenistan, and on includes lectures, both in person

and online, by leading international experts on early Islamic thought, history and philosophy. It is being organized for the first time in Pakistan. Over 120 scholars from Pakistan,

United Kingdom, Kazakhstan, Cameroon, Nepal, Somalia and Sudan are participating in this event. The lectures would cover different aspects of the multi-faceted contributions of Al-Farabi as a philosopher and a scientist. 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 identi-

## ECP clarifies elections' queries

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has finally made a statement regarding the Senate elections and the controversy surrounding the date for the elections. ECP said various speculations had been been made in the media over the conduct of the Senate elections in the last few days. In a brief statement issued Monday afternoon, the ECP said various statements were issued over the Senate election and certain opinions were expressed over the responsibilities of the ECP, which created ambiguity.Till now, the commission had issued no statement, but now feels there is a need to provide legal and constitutional clarity over the matter, the statement read.

Here are the clarifications Election Commission of Pakistan made; Half of the Senate members will retire on March 11, 2021 after completing their six-year term. According to the Constitution, elections cannot be held before the 30-day period on seats that will fall vacant after the expiry of the term of the members of the Senate, the ECP said, quoting Article 224(3) of the Constitution.

This means elections on vacant Senate seats cannot be held before February 10, 2021. The last four to five Senate elections have been held in the first week of March. This time too, the ECP will announce the date for the Senate elections at a suitable time, according to the law and Constitution.

### Hafeez asks provinces to monitor prices

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Sheikh Monday urged the provincial governments to strictly monitor the prices of eggs and vegetable to maintain stability in prices across the country. He was chairing the meeting of National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC). according to a finance ministry press statement. He directed the Secretary Commerce to call a meeting with representatives of the Provincial governments and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to take further steps in this regard. During the meeting, the Secretary Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) presented before NPMC the current status of wheat and sugar stocks. The improved availability of both commodities has resulted in significant decline in prices for the consumers. Among others, the meeting was attended by Adviser to the PM on Commerce Abdul Razaq Dawood. SAPM on Revenue Dr. Waqar Masood, Secretary MNFS&R, Special Secretary Commerce, Additional Secretary Industries and Production, Chairman FBR, the Provincial Chief Secretaries, MD PASSCO, MD Utility Stores Corporation (USC), Chairperson Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), Chairman Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP), Member Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) and senior officials of Finance Division. The National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC) reviewed the price trend of essential commodities. - APP

ry meeting of the party in Punjab Assembly, Hamza Shehbaz said that the country's economy is in shambles at the hands of novice and confused rulers, whose punishment is being meted out by the public.

The gang of incompetents is trying to hide behind state institutions in order to hide their own failures, he added. He added that despite PTI's repeated efforts, PML-N is united under the leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif and Mian Shehbaz Sharif. Hamza Shehbaz said that soon, with the Grace of Allah, the tide will turn and real democracy will flourish in the country under the leadership of PML-N. The PML-N leader said that the government has become

hollow. "I want to say with confidence that when Pakistan's sinking economy will be chronicled. NAB and its alliance with Imran Khan Niazi will be at the forefront", he said.

### "Iwenty politicians under serious security threat'

### NIHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Monday that twenty politicians including Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F) President Fazal-ur-Rehman are under serious security threat.

"More than 20 political leaders including few from the opposition have serious life threats", Sheikh Rasheed said while talking to media in the federal capital. He said Fazlur Rehman and other political leaders have been informed about the threats posed to their lives and precautionary measures.

The federal minister said there is no political future of Fazal-ur-Rehman. He also claimed that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) will participate in the upcoming Senate elections. Saving that coronavirus is spreading quickly across the globe as well in the country, the minister urged the opposition parties to reconsider their call of the long march. Refrain from putting lives of masses in danger in the pandemic, he added.

M. Iqbal Choudhary, the Assistant Secretary General of OIC, Ambassador Askar Mussinov, Dr.

that shows Pakistan's tex-

tile and clothing exports

grew by 4.88 per cent

year-on-year to \$ 6.04 bil-

lion between July to No-

vember this financial year

compared to \$ 5.76 billion

in the same period last fi-

nancial year. He noted, the

Pakistani government has

recently announced a lucra-

tive energy package to help

textile industry recuperate

from the COVID-19 shock.

The package does away with

peak electricity rates, offers

reduced tariffs on additional

power consumption, and fix-

es power price at \$ 0.07 a

'Pakistan textile production recovers from virus shock'

EU watchdog approves Pfizer-

BioNTech Čovid-19 vaccine

THE HAGUE: The EU's drug regulator authorised the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine on Monday, and said there

was no evidence it would not work against a new strain found mainly in Britain. The European Medicines Agency said the

"historic" step paved the way for vaccinations to finally start within days across the 27-nation EU where cases of the disease

are surging. The Amsterdam-based regulator moved the decision forward from December 29 under pressure from EU gov-

ernments, after Britain and the United States gave the green light weeks earlier. "It is a significant step forward in the fight

against this pandemic that is causing suffering and hardship," EMA chief Emer Cooke told an online press conference as

evening." The EU has said it will start coordinated Covid-19 inoculations on December 27. - Agencies

cation of science and technology.

He urged the OIC member states

unit and gas tariff at \$ 0.065

per MMBtu. The present

government of Pakistan has

taken special measures to

gradually improve the busi-

In order to improve the sus-

tainability of the develop-

ment of the textile industry

and have clear direction and

objectives, All Pakistan Tex-

tile Mills Association (APT-

MA) is formulating a long-

term development strategy

It plans to attract \$ 7 billion

of investment in the next

five years, so as to increase

the export volume of tex-

for the textile industry.

ness environment.

tiles and clothing by 100%

According to Cheng Xizhong

, Pakistan's textile produc-

tion and exports have some

main advantages. First, the

industrial chain is relatively

complete. Pakistan is one of

the few textile countries in

the world with the produc-

tion capacity of the whole

At present, there are 1,221

cotton ginning mills, 442

spinning mills, 124 large-

scale textile and garment

factories and 425 small-

scale textile and garment

factories in Pakistan.

industrial chain.

to \$ 26 billion, he added.

fying the intellectual and physical impetus required for scientific uplift in the Islamic world of today.

**PIA** cancels its flights to Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), consequent to Saudi government's decision of a week-long suspension of all international flights, has announced to cancel its flights scheduled for monday to different destinations in Saudi Arabia. Talking to media in Karachi, PIA spokesman, Abdullah Khan said it is due to resurgence of COVID-19, that flights are being stopped and duration of this suspension may be further extended. He said national flag carrier decided to cancel its flight Nos. PK-9739 and PK-9760 from Multan and Lahore to Jeddah. Moreover, those on routes Lahore-Jeddah-Lahore, Islamabad-Dammam-Islamabad, Lahore-Dammam-Lahore and Karachi-Medina-Karachi have also been cancelled. He said flights from Lahore to Medina, Medina to Karachi, Madina to Multan and Karachi-Jeddah-Karachi are also suspended. He said that these flights would remain cancelled till Saudi Arabia opens their airspace for international flights. - DNA

### Rented people can't afford to stage Dharna: Qadri

KARACHI: Federal Min- Haji Camp, he said "I don't ister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri Sunday said that opposition leaders have announced to submit resignations on January 31st but they have not mentioned the year.

she announced the decision. "This is really a historic scientific achievement, within less than a year a vaccine will have been Talking to media after atdeveloped and authorised against this disease." The EMA approved a one-year "conditional marketing authorisation" for tending a Hajj Conference the vaccine developed by US giant Pfizer and German firm BioNTech, with the European Commission set to formally sign with the representatives of off on it within hours. "It's a decisive moment in our efforts to deliver safe & effective vaccines to Europeans!" European Hajj Organisers Association Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said on Twitter. "Now we will act fast. I expect a @EU\_Commission decision by this Pakistan and Hajj Organisers Association Sindh at

think they (opposition leaders) will submit any resignations before 2023"

The minister said that staging sit-in was not an easy task. Prime Minister Imran Khan had an extensive experience in staging sit-ins. Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri said that inflation was due to the corruption of previous rulers. The rented people can not stage sit-in in freezing cold nights of Islamabad. - APP

## China-Pak joint drills not targeting any third country

China and Pakistan are holding the joint air force training dubbed 'Shaheen-IX'; which will continue until the end of December

### DNA

BEIJING: A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Monday said the ongoing joint air force exercise between China and Pakistan was a routine drill and it was not targeting any third country.

"The relevant cooperation is a routine arrangement between the two militaries. It is not targeting any third party," Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing held here. China and Pakistan are holding the joint air force training dubbed 'Shaheen-IX'; which will continue until the end of December. This is the ninth time the air forces of the two countries have

held joint training. The first Shaheen joint training was in March 2011 in Pakistan. The last time was held in Northwest China in August 2019 and lasted for half a month. The training in 2019 involved some 50 aircraft, the most personnel and the

most complete combat units. To question that the month long exercise was seen by Indian experts as a larger strategic posture and matter of concerns for India, he said, "As all weather strategic cooperation partners, China and Pakistan have friendly exchanges and cooperation in many areas including politics, economy, military, and security". He hoped that the rele-

vant party could view the exercise



being conducted in Pakistan, in an objective manner and said, "We are committed to jointly upholding regional peace and stability." According to Chinese defense ministry, the joint training, which is one part of the China-Pakistan military cooperation plan in 2020,

will play a positive role in promoting the development of military relations, deepening practical cooperation between the air forces of the two countries and improving the actual combat training level of the two forces. Commenting on the exercise, the Chinese experts said the joint air force training between the two countries amid the COVID-19 pandemic showed the profound friendship between China and Pakistan, which is conducive to improving the comprehensive combat capability of the two militaries. Fu Qianshao, a Chinese military aviation expert told the Chinese media that although the timing of the joint air force training this

year is later than previous years,

the fact that it was held as usual shows the deep friendship between China and Pakistan and the importance the two countries attach to military exchanges. The China-Pakistan Shaheen joint training saga has been conducted on a regular basis and rotated in

China and Pakistan. Fu believes that through years of exchanges the two militaries can learn a lot, especially in the field of actual combat training, which is conducive to improving the comprehensive combat capability of the two militaries. The confrontations between India-Pakistan and China-India will not affect the normal military exchanges between China and Pakistan, said Fu.

DNA ISLAMABAD: A virtual award ceremony for outstanding Pakistani staff of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects was held on Monday. According to Pakistan-China Institute (PCI), the ceremony is under the auspices of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan. The Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan H.E Nong

Pakistani

workers

of CPEC

rewarded

Rong and Asim Bajwa, the Chairman of CPEC Authority are the chief guests.

Published by Ansar Mahmood Bhatti, Printed at Rohani Art Press, Islamabad: Ph: 051-2266165, Email: newsroomisbpost@gmail.com