

# Islamabad POST

Saturday, December 26, 2020

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**Quaid-e-Azam day celebrated with traditional zeal**

Detailed News On Page-01

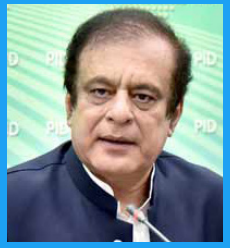
**Iran envoy greets Pakistani nation on Quaid Day**

Detailed News On Page-01



**Shibli pays rich tribute to Quaid-e-Azam**

Detailed News On Page-01



## Briefs

### CPEC key project of Belt & Road

**DNA**  
BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin, during a regular press conference hailed CPEC as a major contributor towards the national development of Pakistan and termed it a booster of regional connectivity. He said that CPEC is the pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative and it has maintained a positive momentum since its launch in 2013. Moreover, he also congratulated 18 Pakistani award-winning employees working on CPEC projects including the Gwadar Port, energy, and infrastructure.

### Economic diplomacy top priority

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that economic diplomacy is an important part of the diplomatic priorities of the federal government. FM Shah Mahmood Qureshi chaired a high-level session regarding economic diplomacy in Islamabad. He said that there was a need to harmonise the diplomacy as per the modern requirements by using the latest technology which will be ensured in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, various aspects related to the promotion of economic diplomacy came under consideration.

### People should support PPP

**DNA**  
KARACHI: While paying tribute to the founder of the nation, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has on Friday said people should support his party to complete Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's mission. In his message on the Quaid's Day, Bilawal Bhutto said Jinnah's mission of making Pakistan a role model state.

### Holiday Notice

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

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## No power on earth can undo Pakistan: COAS

The Chief of Army Staff said Unity and Discipline shall always remain guiding principles of our great nation



NAVEED MIRAJ / DNA

**RAWALPINDI:** Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said no power on earth can undo Pakistan. In his message in connection with the birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he said the nation is celebrating Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's anniversary with great reverence and commitment upholding his message of hope, courage and confidence.

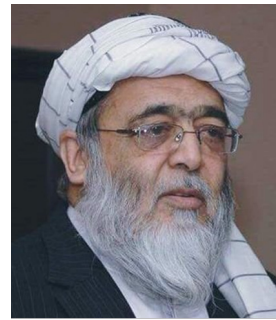
The Chief of Army Staff said Unity and Discipline shall always remain guiding principles of our great nation. 145th birthday anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was celebrated with traditional zeal across the country. Earlier on Thursday, the civilian, military and intelligence leadership expressed the resolve to ensure the defence of the country with the support of the people "at all costs". The resolution was expressed in a meeting between Prime Minister Imran Khan and Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, who called on the former in Islamabad today. Inter-Services Intelligence Director General Lt Gen Faiz Hameed was also present on the occasion. During the meeting, professional matters pertaining to the Pakistan Army, and the external and internal security situation were discussed, according to the Prime Minister's Office. The meeting expressed concern over "continuous human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir". Ceasefire violations and "frequent provocative measures" by the Indian forces along the Line of Control also came under discussion.

## JUI-F expels Maulana Sherani, Hafiz Hussain

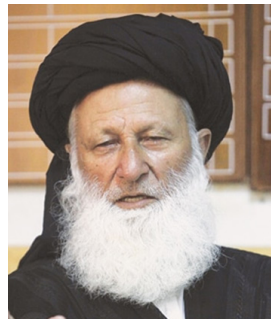
It is pertinent here to mention that Maulana Sherani had strongly criticized PDM

SHUJAAT HAMZA

**PESHAWAR:** The Disciplinary Committee of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) has expelled four members of the party, over violation of party discipline. Sources privy to the development said basic membership of the JUI-F leaders namely Maulana Muhammad Khan Sherani, Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, Maulana Gul Naseeb Khan and Shujaat Mulik has been ended. The decision was unanimously taken by the committee members Agha Ayub Shah, Maulana Abdul Wasay and Maulana Abdul Haqueem. It is pertinent here to mention that Maulana Sherani had strongly criticized



committee members Agha Ayub Shah, Maulana Abdul Wasay and Maulana Abdul Haqueem. It is pertinent here to mention that Maulana Sherani had strongly criticized



Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and termed JUI-F President Fazal-ur-Rehman as an expert liar.

Continued on Page 06

## US 'concerned' over SHC ruling in Daniel Pearl case

**WASHINGTON:** The United States on Thursday expressed concern over the Sindh High Court's (SHC) ruling directing the release of the accused in the Daniel Pearl case, saying that they will be "closely following" the case. "We are deeply concerned by the reports of the December 24 ruling of Sindh High Court to release multiple terrorists responsible for the murder of Daniel Pearl," said the State Department's Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs in a series of tweets. The bureau said that they were "assured" by Pakistan that the "accused have not been released" as of yet. It also acknowledged that the case was ongoing adding that they will be following it closely. "We continue to stand with the Pearl family through this extremely difficult process. We continue to honour Daniel Pearl's legacy as a courageous journalist," said the State Department. A day earlier, the SHC declared the detention of the accused exonerated in the Daniel Pearl case illegal and ordered their immediate release. The court declared the notification regarding the detention of Umer Shaikh and four other accused illegal and ordered their immediate release. The court also directed officials to place the accused on the Exit Control List. - DNA

## Safe and effective vaccine will be bought: Dr. Faisal

He further said that providing low cost and quality vaccine to the people was a target, however, it was important to be completely safe instead of low cost

SAIFULLAH / DNA

**ISLAMABAD:** Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Dr Faisal Sultan on Friday said that the government will be preferred to import COVID-19 vaccine based on transparent scientific research data. "If the company's research will prove that the prepared vaccine was not only safe but also effective, then the vaccine will be imported, he added. Talking to a private news channel, he said that the six largest pharmaceutical companies in the world are at the forefront of developing the coronavirus vaccine, but the company that will present scientific research data in a transparent



manner will be met the standard. He further said that providing low cost and quality vaccine to the people was a target, however, it was important to be completely safe instead of low cost. There will be no compromise on the quality of the vaccine, he added.

Earlier on Tuesday, Dr Faisal Sultan said that corona vaccine would be available in Pakistan by March next. The priority would be given to health workers and the people of above sixty five age regarding vaccination, he stated in an interview with a private television channel. "We are in touch with three companies for purchasing the coronavirus vaccine," he stated. Commenting on second layer of COVID-19, he said: "It was a dangerous layer that had affected a large number of people around the world." He urged the general public to adopt the standard operating procedures (SOPs), to protect the family members from the spreading virus.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi and leader of the house in senate, Dr. Shahzad Waseem attending a Quaid's day ceremony at Aiwan e Sadr. - DNA

## President Alvi for following Quaid's vision

SHAHEEN HANIF

**ISLAMABAD:** President Dr Arif Alvi Friday urged the children of Pakistan to excel in every field of knowledge and skills by adhering to the principles of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and make the country rise. "Great countries are built by strong and disciplined nations, who are committed to grow in every sphere of life with hard work, commitment and sincerity of purpose," the President told a gathering of children at an event marking the Quaid's birth anniversary. The programme titled "Quaid and children" was part of the special celebrations for the Quaid Day, held every year at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President called upon the children to study the life of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on who selflessly he struggled hard for the creation of Pakistan.

## Maryam Nawaz to reach Sukkur

ABID RAZA

**LAHORE:** Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz vice president Maryam Nawaz will reach Sindh today on a two-day visit. Maryam Nawaz will leave for Sukkur via motorway, where she is scheduled to address the party workers convention. She will also attend the death anniversary event of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto on December 27 in Larkana. It may be noted that PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had invited PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz to attend his mother's death anniversary event at Garhi Khuda Buksh, earlier this month.

## 'PDM's agenda is non-democratic'

Shibli Faraz said the opposition leaders did not go to any constitutional forum to register their complaint of any alleged rigging

RANA FARRUKH

**ISLAMABAD:** Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz says the PDM is pursuing a non-democratic agenda of destabilizing an elected government. Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan in Islamabad on Friday, he said the opposition parties want to get power through non-democratic means. The Minister said the opposition leaders did not go to any constitutional forum to register their complaint of any alleged rigging in the last elections, but rather resorted to activities aimed at destabilizing the country. He said the contradictory statements being made by the PDM leaders suggest that their campaign is going to last. He said the dissenting voices within the JUI-F, including that of Maulana Akhtar Sherani and Hafiz Hussain Ahmed, prove that the party head has been pursuing his vested interests. Speaking on the occasion, Ali Amin Gandapur

## Shibli pays rich tribute to Quaid-e-Azam

**ISLAMABAD:** Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz on Friday paid rich tribute to father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his birth anniversary. "On December 25, we pay tribute to sincere and great leader, who materialised dreams of people of sub-continent by defeating the imperialism of that time with prudence, determination and steadfastness," he tweeted. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal were ideal leaders of Pakistani nation, he said in a series of tweets. Prime Minister Imran Khan was determined to transform Pakistan into a modern, Islamic, welfare democratic state in line with the ideology of Quaid. "We want to develop the new Pakistan in line with the vision of Jinnah," he said. "By the grace of Allah Almighty, the new Pakistan will be true portrayal of Quaid's dream", the minister said. - DNA

said the JUI-F chief has started using threatening language against the institutions when asked to give answer of his properties. He said Maulana Fazlur Rehman will have to answer for his assets.

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## Briefs

## MQM-P Amir Khan tests positive for coronavirus

DNA

KARACHI: Senior Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) leader Amir Khan has tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

After being diagnosed with the COVID-19, Amir Khan has quarantined himself at his residence and has appealed masses and the party workers to pray for his recovery. The second wave of the COVID-19 has claimed several lives of people belonging to various walks of life including, journalists, politicians, and judges, and others. On November 30, Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leader and former provincial minister Sindh Muhammad Adil Siddiqui died due to complications caused by the novel coronavirus. Adil Siddiqui who had arrived in Islamabad earlier this month was admitted to hospital after contracting coronavirus. The politician was on a ventilator at a private hospital in Karachi, where he was pronounced dead by the medical team.

## CTD foils major terror bid in Bajaur

SWAT: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) has foiled a major terror bid in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bajaur by arresting four suspects and seizing a huge quantity of explosive material and two vehicles.

During a raid, CTD officials have arrested four alleged members of a banned outfit. Police told media that a major terrorist bid was foiled by the timely action of security officials by arresting suspects and seizing explosive material from their possession. Earlier on Wednesday, Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of the Punjab Police had claimed to apprehend a terrorist belonging to an outlawed organisation during a raid in Bahawalpur. The CTD had said that acting on a tip-off, the law enforcement authority carried out a raid in Bahawalpur to arrest an alleged terrorist, who was planning to target sensitive installations. "The terrorist is identified as Abdullah Khan and belonged to an outlawed organisation," the CTD had said while further claiming that a hand grenade and a pistol was recovered from his possession.

Police had claimed to arrest two 'terrorists linked to the Indian spy agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)' in Karachi in a separate action. — DNA

## Mysterious explosion rocks bank building in Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: A mysterious explosion has taken place inside a bank in Paposa area of Karachi which damaged the shutter and cracked window glasses of the building. Rescue officials reached the site after a mysterious explosion rocked a bank on Friday. The bank was closed following a public holiday today. No casualty was reported so far. Heavy contingents of police and Rangers immediately rushed to the site. The security officials cordoned off the area and commenced investigating into the incident.



HYDERABAD: Members of Pakistan Youth Action Committee holds a rally in connection of Quaid E Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah birthday in which they burn the Indian flags during the protest out side Hyderabad Press Club. — DNA Photo by Jan Ali Laghari

## CDA completes grand operation against illegal constructions

Land mafia has illegally constructed houses at the said area. Notices have been issued to them to leave the land themselves otherwise CDA will do operation and demolish the construction

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) completed preparations for a grand operation against land grabbers, encroachments, and illegal constructions here on Friday. Notices have been issued to those who have grabbed the government's lands in Jabba Tili, Bhika Syedan, Saidpur, and other areas. However, operation against encroachments is continued in the city.

According to detail, CDA has fastened its pace of operation against encroachments. During last one week, CDA demolished two rooms at IJP road, 5 under construction rooms in sector C-16,



3 under construction boundary walls at Saidpur, 02 DPC, 02 rooms and a grill at Bari Imam. Encroachments at the roads of sector G-7 and G-8 have been

removed and the recovered goods have been captured. Similarly a mega anti encroachment operation conducted at Khhana pull and 5 trucks of goods were captured. In collaboration with BCS 2 buildings were sealed in the industrial area I-9 and I-10.

Illegally constructed rooms in Muslim Colony have been demolished. Notices have been issued to 30 homes in Jaba Tili. CDA has allotted plots in Bhika Syedan but could not give occupation yet. Land mafia has illegally constructed houses at the said area. Notices have been issued to them to leave the land themselves otherwise CDA will do operation and demolish the constructions.

## PMA cadets assume guards responsibility

DNA

KARACHI: As the nation celebrated 144th birth anniversary of Founder of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on Friday with traditional zeal, an elegant change of guards ceremony was held at the Quaid's mausoleum in Karachi. Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) cadets assumed the guards' duties. Commandant PMA Major-General Omer Ahmed Bokhari was the chief guest and inspected the contingent comprising seventy eight (78) cadets, including six lady cadets from Pakistan Military Academy. He offered Fateha, laid a wreath of flowers and recorded his impressions in the visitor's book. Of the 78 PMA

cadets, 72 represented 144 and 147 Long Course while lady cadets were from Lady Cadet Corps 17.

It is worth mentioning here that a public holiday was declared at all the government institutions and educational institutions and the national flag remained hoisting atop all public and private buildings. The day dawned with Qur'an Khawani at the Quaid's mausoleum. Special programmes were held across the country to shed light on the Quaid's struggle for creation of Pakistan and to highlight his guiding principles of unity, faith and discipline. Public and private organizations arranged functions to highlight different aspects of the life of Quaid-e-Azam.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafqat cutting cake on the occasion of Christmas. — DNA

## 15 fake trade bodies identified in Balouchistan

DNA

LAHORE: Chairman United Business Group (UBG) and veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik Friday hailed the timely decision of Director General Trade Organisation (DGTO) barring 15 fake trade bodies of Balouchistan for casting votes in the annual election of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). Talking to newsmen here today he said that it will pave the way for fair, free, transparent and impartial annual election of the apex body of chamber being held on December 30.

He said DGTO further ordered that Mrs Sonia and Mrs Mehreen Akhtar can not be nominees of Quetta Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Fpcci election. He said that we will also be successful in getting exclude another two bogus votes of Loralai Chamber of Commerce and Industry by submitting undeniable lawful documentary evidence. UBG Presidential candidate for FPCCI Khalid Tawab said that engineer Daroo Khan Achakzai former President FPCCI and Haji Jamal Uddin Achakzai had challenged these 32 bogus votes on the grounds that these 15 trade bodies are not existing anywhere in the entire province and how their bogus votes can be included in the final list? Pervaiz Lala, VP candidate from Punjab seat said that 90 percent voters from the province have publicly announced to support in forthcoming election.

## APPSF announces long march if schools are not reopened

DNA

KARACHI: President All Pakistan Private Schools Federation (APPSF), Kashif Mirza has said that as many as 10,000 private schools have been closed in Pakistan thus far. Mirza said that 20,000 private schools would be closed if the academic year commences from September. In his tweet, he announced that a long march would be staged if schools are not reopened on 11 January as per the education ministers' decision. He said due to the closure of schools as many as 10 million children have left the schools.

Meanwhile, an inter-provincial education ministers conference slated for December 30 (Wednesday) has been postponed and rescheduled for Jan 4. Federal Minister for Education Shafqat Mahmood will be chairing the meeting in the first week of the next month. On November 23, the federal government had announced to shut all educational institutions across Pakistan from November 26 till December 24. Winter vacations would start from December 25 to January 10, Shafqat Mahmood had announced at a press conference after a meeting of inter-provincial education ministers.

## President Alvi urges children to follow Quaid's principles

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Friday urged the children of Pakistan to excel in every field of knowledge and skills by adhering to the principles of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and make the country rise. "Great countries are built by strong and disciplined nations, who are committed to grow in every sphere of life with hard work, commitment and sincerity of purpose," the President told a gathering of children at an event marking the Quaid's birth anniversary. The programme titled 'Quaid and children' was part of the special celebrations for the Quaid Day, held every year at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President called upon the

children to study the life of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on how selflessly he struggled hard for the creation of Pakistan. He said only a person with such impeccable character and strong will could achieve this tough goal, which everyone believed as impossible. The President urged upon the parents and teachers to help build strong character of the young generation right from their earlier age as they would turn out to be the next leaders of this country.

He said Pakistan had been handed over to the future generations by the Quaid as a "trust", and now it was their duty to make the country strong and prosperous. President Alvi said no one

should have any doubt about Pakistan which, he said was "destined to rise". He mentioned the rapid progress in sciences the world over and the way it was breaking all barriers in the world of technology, with latest innovations and developments.

He termed as vital the study of sciences for the progress of any country in contemporary age. He said Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had a belief that the Pakistani nation would build their country which would earn respect and admiration in the comity of nations.

President Dr Arif Alvi also urged the children to strictly follow the life and teachings of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be

upon Him), as only by following the greatest leader of all times. He recalled the address of the Quaid of 11 August 1947, wherein he promised that the minorities would be fully able to pursue their religions freely without any fear or persecution and the State would ensure the sanctity of places of worship—mosques, temples, churches, etc. He said Pakistan was created on democratic principles and on the basis of a kind of referendum where the people demonstrated their democratic right to choose their separate homeland. The President asked the children to follow in letter and spirit the guiding principles of faith, unity and discipline. — APP

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## Briefs

### FBR seizes goods worth Rs. 29b in FY21

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has seized smuggled goods valuing Rs. 29 billion from July to December, 2020 showing 37 percent increase in comparison with the corresponding period of last previous year, during which it seized smuggled goods worth Rs. 21 billion. This showed considerable progress witnessed in the value of seized smuggled goods in the ongoing current Financial Year, said an FBR press statement issued here. Similarly, the statement added, Duty Drawback of Rs. five billion were paid from July to December. Pakistan Customs has intensified the countrywide operations against the transportation and marketing of smuggled goods which has lessened the negative impact of smuggling on the economy.

### PMD forecast partly cloudy weather in Capital

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Friday forecast partly cloudy and dry weather in Capital during next 24 hours.

It said that partly cloudy and very cold in north Balochistan and upper parts predicted, however, Partly cloudy weather condition with rain and snowfall expected in Gilgit-Baltistan, Upper Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and north Balochistan. Dense fog likely to prevail in plain areas of Punjab and upper Sindh during morning hours. Continental air prevailing over most parts of the country. A fresh westerly wave likely to approach upper and western parts of the country on Saturday and may persist in upper parts till Monday morning. Minimum temperature's recorded in (°C): Leh -13, Gupis -10, Skardu -09, Astore -08, Kalam -07, Parachinar -06, Kalat, Quetta -05, Bagrota and Gilgit -04. - APP

### Police raids Sheesha center; 13 netted

RAWALPINDI: City Police have raided illegal Sheesha Center operating in a private housing society on Friday and arrested 11 persons besides seized Hukkas, its substances, flavoured tobacco, coals and other items. A police spokesman informed that following the information, Rawat Police under the supervision of SP, Saddar Zia ud Din Shah carried out an operation at a Sheesha Center located in a private housing society and held eleven accused namely Danish, Zil Hassan, Nabeel, Usman, Naveed, Naem, Abdur Rehman, Taimoor, Junaid, Shahkar Ijaz, Anwar Ghani, Turab Ali and Talah Mehmood. Police team also recovered 20 'Huqqas', flavors, tobacco, coals and other items from their possession, he said. - APP

### ICT admin plants 5000 trees at G-11

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Treaty (ICT) administration on Friday planted around 5000 plants at sector G-11 to increase green cover at the area. The volunteers of tiger force, workers of Non-governmental Organization and members of civil society participated in the drive under clean and green Islamabad campaign. The Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Hamza Shafiqat distributed quilts among the poor and needy people. The DC also appreciated the volunteers and hoped that they will continue participate in such activities. Meanwhile the Deputy Commissioner also inaugurated cleanliness drive at sector I-14 to improve the sanitary conditions. - APP

# President, PM urge nation to follow footsteps of Quaid

The premier said that Quaid had a vision for the Muslims of the subcontinent which got translated in the shape of Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In their separate messages paying tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan have urged the nation to follow the footsteps of great Quaid in all walks of life and make Pakistan a strong and prosperous country. In his message, President Dr. Arif Alvi has paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the occasion of his 144th birth anniversary for founding a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. The president urged the nation in his message to follow Jinnah's footsteps in all walks of life and make Pakistan a strong and prosperous country. Dr. Arif Alvi said we should reaffirm our commitment to building a state that respects the diversity of its people and provides equal opportunities to its citizens irrespective of their religion, caste, creed or colour. He said on this day, we

must also remember the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, who are being subjected to the worst kind of state-terrorism for over seven decades. In his separate message, Prime Minister Imran Khan has urged the nation to live the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's ideals of Unity, Faith and Discipline with a renewed national spirit so that we make this country rise above all seen and unseen challenges. In his message on the birth anniversary of the Founder of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, PM Imran Khan paid rich tribute to Muhammad Ali Jinnah for his role in the creation of Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan while paying rich tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for his role in the creation of Pakistan has urged the nation to pay a befitting homage to "our great Quaid" by following his footsteps in all walks of lives. "Let us live the Quaid's ideals of Unity, Faith and Discipline with a renewed national spirit so that

we make this country rise above all seen and unseen challenges," he said in a message on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the founder of nation. "On this eventful day when Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was born, a proud nation was destined to come into being. I feel blessed to have opened my eyes in a free environment bestowed upon us by God through his chosen personality who was none other but our beloved Quaid." The premier said that Quaid had a vision for the Muslims of the subcontinent which got translated in the shape of Pakistan. "Therefore, there is no other pleasure more real to us as a nation than the commemoration of his birthday. As a prime representative of whole nation, I owe immense gratitude, love and devotion towards my beloved leader Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah," he added. He said that in the modern history of mankind, there were a few people who garnered such a wide popularity as our Quaid did. "His

determination to carve a nation out of chaos and relentless deprivation was miraculous and insuperable against all odds and challenges", he added. PM Khan said that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had a firm faith in God and His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which guided him through a long journey comprising of ordeals, deceptions and dejections but culminating in grandeur, décor and eternity. "He is a role model not merely for us but for Muslims of whole world because of the universal vision he instilled in the creation of Pakistan. With the adorable actions which spoke louder than words, he became an actual prototype of honesty and righteousness," he added. "We trace not a single discourse by our beloved Quaid on the innumerable sacrifices he made for the cause of his nascent nation rather it is only through his actions that we learn of all those grieving losses he personally went through." "Together, let us beseech Allah that He grants us strength to

realize our destiny of becoming the strongest nation on earth as rightly visualized by our Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah," said Imran Khan. It is pertinent to mention here that the nation celebrated Quaid-e-Azam's birth anniversary with traditional zeal and renewed commitment to work hard for progress and prosperity of the country. Public holiday was declared at all the government institutions and the national flag remained hoisting atop all public and private buildings. The day dawned with Qur'an Khawani at the Quaid's mausoleum in Karachi. An elegant change of guards ceremony was held at the Mazar-e-Quaid where Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) cadets assumed the guards' duties. Commandant PMA Major-General Omer Ahmed Bokhari was the chief guest and inspected the contingent comprising male and female cadets. He offered Fatiha, laid a wreath of flowers and recorded his impressions in the visitor's book.

### Ringleader of gang held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A joint team of Criminal Investigation Agency (CIA) and Shalimar Police teams has nabbed a ringleader of an Afghan criminal's gang and recovered snatched cash worth Rs. five million, two cars, DVR and weapons from him, police said. According to details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Aamir Zulfiqar Khan ordered crackdown against criminals including those involved in street crime. Following these orders, DIG (Operations) has directed all zonal officers to accelerate their efforts to curb the crime in the city. Following these directions, SP (Sadder-Zone) Muhammad Sarfraz Virk and SP (investigation) Malik Naem Iqbal constituted special team under supervision of DSP CIA Hakim Khan, DSP Zulfiqar Ahmed including Sub-Inspector Zafar Iqbal, ASIs Safdar, Fayyaz Ahmed, Mohsin Ali and others. This team nabbed wanted member of dacoits' gang involved in snatching cash and other valuables at gun point along with other accomplices. He has been identified as Zazay alias Zaray s/o Nageeb-Ullah alias Gul Agha resident of Afghanistan while police team also recovered snatched cash worth Rs. 5 million, two cars, DVR and weapon from him. During the preliminary investigation, he confessed his involvement in incidents of looting people in areas of Shalimar, Ramana, Kohsar, Golar police stations and Rawalpindi.

### PNCA arranges cultural activities on Quaid Day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) arranged cultural activities titled "Millat Ka Pasban" on Friday to pay homage to Quaid-e-Azam on occasion of his 144th Birthday with traditional zeal and zest. The celebrations were being aimed at educating the youth about the Quaid's vision and Pakistan's ideology. Special events were arranged on the day to highlight and promote ideas and views of the father of the nation, particularly with regards to rule of law, supremacy of constitution and upholding of democracy. Various colourful tableaux, patriotic songs were presented to commemorate the struggle of the Quaid for the creation of Pakistan. - APP



ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Iqbal Cheema in a meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

### DRAP's mobile App starts receiving complaints

ISLAMABAD: The MED safety mobile application of Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan's (DRAP) has started receiving complaints on adverse drug reactions (ADRs) from citizens across the country for taking action. Sharing details of the mobile App with the APP, Director Pharmacy Services DRAP Dr Abdur Rashid Friday said in case of any such grievance, the victims could lodge a complaint with DRAP through the App. He said only seven countries had developed such mobile App so far for the purpose. The World Health Organization (WHO) would directly receive complaints on any matter regarding drugs' adverse reactions. Complainants would receive immediate acknowledgment of receipt of their reports, he added. They could submit reports on adverse reactions even when offline or to view and submit updates to previously submitted reports, Dr Abdur Rashid said. He said there was a watch list of medications to receive personalized news and alert. While using that option one could create a watch list for drugs for receiving specific news. He said on emergency cases, quick action would be taken and in that regard standard operating procedures (SOPs) had been developed by the authority. - DNA

### NPPMCL pays Rs. 5.69b to PDFL

ISLAMABAD: National Power Parks Management Company (Pvt) Limited (NPPMCL), a public sector power generation company, paid Rs. 5.69 billion to Pakistan Development Fund Limited (PDFL) as part repayment of debt of Rs. 32.00 billion acquired for the establishment of 1230MW Combined Cycle Power Plant Haveli Bahadur Shah, Jhang and 1223MW Combined Cycle Power Plant Balloki, Kasur. NPPMCL is one of the biggest public sector power producers in the country and to date has supplied 38 billion units of electricity into the national grid. NPPMCL contributed approximately 10% electricity in the total generation of the country in previous fiscal year. - DNA

### 'Pakistan to progress as per vision of Quaid-e-Azam'

**Ijaz Shah said that each citizen had equal rights in Pakistan and will emerge as successful nation in the world**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Narcotics Control, Ijaz Shah on Friday said that Pakistan would be made progressive country as per vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and minorities enjoying equal rights in a country would be facilitated. In his message in connection with Quaid birth anniversary and Christmas, the minister said that Pakistan would be made as developed state and all challenges being faced by the country to be countered successfully. He said that sectarianism and extremism would be rooted out and all of the problems would be resolved through unity as well as national harmony among the people. Ijaz Shah said that each citizen had equal rights in Pakistan and will emerge as successful nation in the world. He also renewed commitment to make all possible efforts to get rid of the drugs menace and to counter all external and internal challenges with unity and boldness.

### IT industry sees record exports surge

It's worth mentioning here that Minister for IT Amin ul Haque has set a target of \$5 billion for export remittances

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Information Technology & IT enabled Services (ITeS) export remittances comprising of computer services and call center services have surged to US \$648.940 million at a growth rate of 38.16% during July-November of FY 2020-21, in comparison to US \$469.713 million during July-November of FY 2019-20. According to a press statement here Friday, this is the highest growth rate for the FY 2020-21 (July-November), achieved by Pakistan's IT sector since 2018 when growth rate for the corresponding period was just 13%. Minister for IT & Telecommunication Amin Ul Haque, lauded the latest exports performance of Pakistan's IT Industry. He said that the initiative for bringing the IT companies from secondary and tertiary cities into the mainstream is well under way for ensuring holistic growth of Pakistan's IT industry and that the PSEB

registration fee for IT & ITeS companies, including call centers and IT startups, belonging to underserved areas of the country have been completely waived in order to boost growth of IT industry in the under developed parts of the country and thus contribute to organic growth of IT Industry across Pakistan. It's worth mentioning here that Minister for IT Amin ul Haque has set a target of \$5 billion for export remittances through information technology and IT-enabled Services during the next three years. The PSEB performance in just 5 Month of current Fiscal year a great milestone to reach the targeted destination. "We are taking all possible steps to ensure sustainable growth of Pakistan's IT industry and to ensure close coordination with the IT industry and associated stakeholders" Minister IT stated. Incentives to the industry include zero income tax on IT and ITeS exports till June 2025, tax breaks for the PSEB-registered IT startups for three years, up to 100 percent foreign ownership of IT and ITeS companies, up to 100 percent repatriation of profits for foreign IT and ITeS investors, tax holiday for venture capital funds till 2024, among other incentives, he added. This growth is especially laudable keeping in view the current global economic challenges thereby demonstrating the resilience of Pakistan's IT industry ecosystem and is a tribute to Pakistan's IT industry professionals, Pakistan's IT sector exports products and services to over 100 countries and counts world's largest entities among its regular clients. Pakistan's IT sector is the largest net services export industry in Pakistan's economy. Managing Director, Pakistan Software Export Board, Mr. Osman Nasir said that all possible efforts are being made to achieve US\$5 billion remittances inflow from the country's IT sector by Year2023 as per target set by Minister IT Amin Ul Haque.

### Capital records 123 fresh corona cases in 24 hours

Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of the capital

ISLAMABAD: COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the federal capital as 123 new coronavirus cases were reported from the city during the last 24 hours, National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said on Friday. According to an official of NCOC, as many as 238 cases were reported on Thursday while 67 cases were reported on Wednesday. He said so far 36,844 cases were reported from the federal capital

while 402 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added 31,575 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. They also started taking actions

on violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related with the coronavirus while visiting marriage halls, markets and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration also sealed schools, shops, workshop and restaurants on violation of SOPs. The inspection teams also issued notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops. Commenting on the situation, an official of Min-

istry of National Health Services said that several local level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. He advised the citizens to continue following the social distancing, use of mask and other precautionary measures to stop increasing local transmission of COVID-19 in the city. He said the government had adopted effective strategy to combat COVID-19 that resulted reduction in

coronavirus cases in the country. He said a strategy was made to control coronavirus keeping in view the global information, focusing on data with integration of local data in a scientific way. He said the ministry had also asked the administrations of public and private organization functioning in the ICT to strictly monitor the SOPs to ensure protection of their employees from the COVID-19.

### 'PDM's revolution has frozen in cold'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry, while taunting Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), said on Friday the weather is so cold that the revolution has frozen. The federal minister took to Twitter and said PDM will hold long march, tender resignations and stage sit-in once the revolution is de-frozen. Earlier, Fawad Chaudhry tweeted, "Happy Birthday #QuaideAzam we lost your dream of progressive and modern Pakistan in the midst of Governance chaos, Extremism and historical errors, Geography also took its revenge, we will not lose hope and keep our efforts to create a Pakistan of your dreams Inshallah."

of your dreams Inshallah."



## Briefs

## Abbasi got one time permission to travel abroad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal government on Friday gave one-time permission to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi to travel abroad for 15 days. According to sources, permission from the federal government was given on a humanitarian basis after it emerged that his sister and her husband are critically ill after suffering from COVID-19. According to a notification, the former prime minister was given one-time permission to travel abroad after a summary moved in the federal cabinet allowed removing his name from the Exit Control List (ECL). It is pertinent to mention here the name of Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was included in the no-fly list on the recommendation of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a similar order in November last year, in pursuance of the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Nov 16 verdict on ex-premier Nawaz Sharif's travel abroad, the Ministry of Interior issued a memorandum giving him one-time permission to travel abroad for medical treatment.

"In continuation of the Ministry's memorandum of even number dated 13.11.2019. It has been decided by way of an interim arrangement to allow One Time Permission to Muhammad Nawaz Sharif s/o Mian Muhammad Sharif...to travel abroad for his medical treatment for a period of 04 (four) weeks during his bail period," read the memo.

## 'Maulana Ajmal revealed that Nawaz sent him to Israel'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr Shahbaz Gill, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan for political communication, said Friday that JUI-F leader Maulana Ajmal Qadri has revealed that Nawaz Sharif had sent him to Israel. In his tweet, the SAPM added that after Maryam Safdar's confession on Twitter that Nawaz Sharif sent two delegations to Israel, Maulana Ajmal Qadri has also admitted that he was part of one such delegation. He wrote that the nation now asks Maryam Safdar, an expert in lies, deceit, fraud and corruption, that why did Nawaz Sharif become an agent of Israel?

Continuing, he further wrote that this new revelation makes it clear why Nawaz Sharif spews venom against the Pakistani army. Now, the nation wants to know how long has this been going on.

## Coke Studio 2020 to release fourth episode

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The fourth episode will be featuring an exciting combination of soulful solo performances by the melodious Sanam Marvi, classical singer and emerging artist Aizaz Sohail (who is making his debut this season) and an upbeat desi hip-hop track by king of Punjabi rap, BOHEMIA. Karachi December 25, 2020: Coke Studio 2020 is all set to ring in the New Year with the fourth episode of the season. Featuring Sufi stalwart Sanam Marvi, classical singer and emerging artist Aizaz Sohail (who is making his debut this season) and king of Punjabi rap BOHEMIA, the fourth episode is all set to air on December 25, 2020. The fourth episode will be featuring an exciting combination of soulful solo performances by industry veterans and emerging acts. The first song is by the melodious Sanam Marvi who will be singing Anhol, classical singer Aizaz Sohail will be singing Megh, an experimental North Indian classical track and BOHEMIA, the pioneer of punjabi-rap, will be performing an upbeat desi hip-hop single. Anhol is a semi-classical spiritual song on the woes of worldly love. Composed in Raag Aiman, an Indian classical raag of Kalyan, it is a delicate raag that expresses itself through the longing of a lover waiting for their beloved.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser on Religious Harmony, Allama Tahir Ashrafi in a meeting with ambassador of Palestine, Ahmed Rabei. – DNA

## Webinar discusses Pak's role in UN peacekeeping efforts in Africa

The session was chaired by Executive President IPS Khalid Rahman, moderated by Dr Tughral Yamin, associate dean, CIPS-NUST and non-resident fellow at IPS, and addressed by Brig (r) Mirza Salim Baig, Brig (r) Imran Rasheed and Brig (r) Azam Agha from NUST, Islamabad

MAHNOOR ANSAR/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's noteworthy contributions for UN peacekeeping missions across the world, especially Africa, provide an opportune area to strengthen its diplomatic and trade relations with the countries provided with the support. The thoughts were shared in a webinar titled 'Pakistan's role in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa', which was jointly organized by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, Centre for International Peace and Stability Studies-National University of Science and Technology (CIPS-NUST), and Centre for Asian African Studies (CAAS), Bradford-UK, as part of the Institute's 'Understanding Africa' project. The session was chaired by Executive President IPS Khalid Rahman, moderated by Dr Tughral Yamin, associate dean, CIPS-NUST and non-resident fellow at IPS, and addressed by Brig (r) Mirza Salim Baig, Brig (r) Imran Rasheed and Brig (r) Azam Agha from NUST, Islamabad. The speakers shared their eye-



witness accounts of Pakistan's contributions in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa in the form of three case studies. Brig (r) Salim Baig shared his experiences and observations from the Democratic Republic of the Congo where Pakistani troops were not only engaged in peacekeeping efforts, but also identifying gaps and imparting trainings to other potential peacekeepers, whereas its Female Engagement Teams (FET) were delivering lectures to the community's over English language, computer skills, sanitation hygiene, mental hygiene, gender equality and legal rights of the women.

Rasheed homed on the activities of Pakistani peacekeepers in the Central African Republic sharing there were over 1200 personnel of Pakistani contingent in United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), including an Infantry battalion, an aviation unit and two engineering companies. They are tasked with restoring normalcy in the region through, providing aviation support and repair and maintenance of roads etc., he added. Agha apprised about the contribution of Pakistani troops in ONUCI (The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire) in Ivory Coast

through their contingents of field engineering company, transport battalion, staff officers and MI-LOBS (Military Observers). Speaking of the condition of African states in general, the speakers were unanimous that the exploitation of natural resources, such as gold, diamond, cobalt, etc. by outside players and former colonial powers for their vested economic interests, and not any ethnic, religious and political rifts, was a major reason behind the prevailing conflicts and deprivation within the African region. They stressed that the UN ought to show more political will to stop such external interference by putting an embar-

go on the export of all mineral and natural resources from the conflict zones, as following any such measure, the conflicts may not take very long to end. Yamin too rued over the apparent lack of will or purpose at the part of the UN in bringing about peace, stating that sometimes it feels that the UN agencies are competing more with each other for recognition than to strive for the real objectives. He also pointed that it was the African and South Asian countries that were among the top ten contributors to UN missions in terms of troops whereas the developed countries were not seen contributing that much to the cause, which could also be seen as an indicator of the lack of intent at their end. Rahman, in his concluding remarks, said that the accounts shared by the speakers were not only the eye-witnessed case studies but also a representation of today's global governance context. The endeavor of peacekeeping has many dimensions associated with it e.g. political, social, cultural and economic, but it's the humanitarian aspect that should always serve as the real motivation behind any such work.

## Pakistani labourers can now extend passport validity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Terming as a gift from Prime Minister Imran Khan, Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed has announced an extension of the passport validity from five years to 10 years without any additional fee to facilitate the country's labour community working abroad, especially in Middle Eastern countries. Addressing the media after visiting the office of the directorate general of the Immigration and Passport in Islamabad, Sheikh Rasheed said, the new passport will be issued at the previous fee of Rs 3,000 and this decision will be implemented from January 1. The minister clarified that the decision would not be applicable on 'official and red' passports as the facility was only

meant for Pakistan's labour class. The minister said a new E-passport would be launched from April 28 next year and it would help maintain data on modern lines and improve the country's image abroad. The minister said an express service was being launched across the country under which home delivery of Passports would be provided to citizens. "The facility has been activated in Islamabad and will soon be available in Rawalpindi," he added. An SMS service had also begun from today (December 24) in a bid to inform passport holders six months before the expiry of their passports, he said. He said the passport and immigration department was short of funds and assured that their financial matters would be resolved at the earliest



ISLAMABAD: ICCI President Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan is giving notification of Political Sub-Committee Convener to Zia Khalid Chaudhry. Vice President Abdul Rehman Khan and Khalid Chaudhry are also present on the occasion. – DNA

## 'Govt taking steps as per Quaid's vision'

Senator Faisal Javed also paid tribute to Aftab Changezi for making sculpture of Quaid-e-Azam. Chairperson Peace and Culture Mushaal Hussein Mullick said that Kashmir is unfinished agenda of Pakistan

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Senator Faisal Javed has said it was very unfortunate that as a nation they could not make Pakistan according to vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He was addressing at inauguration of sculpture of Quaid-e-Azam made by international fame sculptor Aftab Ahmed Changezi and cake cutting ceremony to mark birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad

Ali Jinnah under auspices of Punjab Council of the Arts. He said that Quaid-e-Azam was blessed by God to make impossible to possible. He said that Pakistan was leading to a developed state and would be made Quid's Pakistan. He added that Naya Pakistan would be free from corruption. Senator Faisal Javed also paid tribute to Aftab Changezi for making sculpture of Quaid-e-Azam. Chairperson Peace and Culture Mushaal Hussein Mullick said that Kashmir is un-



finished agenda of Pakistan. She said that true meaning of liberation are known to the people of Indian occupied Kashmir. Naheed Manzoor said that Pakistan can be made a developed country by following footsteps of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Aftab Ahmed Changezi said that it was great honor for him to make sculpture of Quaid-e-Azam. The ceremony was anchored by Naeem Akram Qureshi. Director PUCAR Waqar Ahmed thanked distinguished guests.

## 'Joint efforts needed to cope with second wave'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology and Telecom, Syed Amin Ul Haque on Sunday urged joint efforts of all national institutions to cope with second wave of Covid-19. Chairing an emergency meeting on handling of Covid-19 challenges he said the Ministry of IT and Telecom was committed for promotion of information technology in the country, radio Pakistan reported. He said role of IT was vital for tackling Covid-19 pandemic, while the efficient use of IT help improve online education system. Lauding the role of telecom industry, he said Ministry of IT would fully cooperate with telecom industry, adding that all the issues of cellular mobile operators would be resolved.

## 'No space for forceful conversions in Islam'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East, Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi Friday said the forceful religious conversions and underage marriages won't be permitted in the country as our religion Islam does not allow this. Talking to a delegation headed by Chairman National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Chela Ram Kewlani, Ashrafi said that there was no space for forced conversions in Islam and steps were being taken in collaboration with Ulema-Mashaykh and leadership of different religions to stop forceful conversions and marriages. The propaganda of Indian lobbies on the issue of religious freedom violation in Pakistan has been exposed as minorities living in Pakistan have more rights as comparing to India and other parts of the world. Ashrafi announced holding joint sitting of different religions and religious schools of thoughts in Islamabad during the second week of January 2021. Responding to a question, Ashrafi stated that 'Kelash Community' is very respected in Pakistan and he will personally visit Chitral to address the issues of minorities. NCM chairman lauded the appointment of Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi as Special Representative to Prime Minister on Interreligious Harmony as positive step for minorities in Pakistan.

## SPI witnesses nominal increase of 0.11%

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation for the week ended on December 24, for the combined consumption group, witnessed nominal increase of 0.11 percent as compared to the previous week. The SPI for the week under review in the above mentioned group was recorded at 140.89 points against 140.73 points registered in the previous week, according to the latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 7.66 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16=100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The Sensitive Price Indicator for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732 witnessed 0.13 percent decrease and went down from 146.04 points in last week to 145.85 points during the week under review. Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption groups from Rs17,732-22,888 also decreased by 0.02 percent while the inflation for income groups ranging from Rs22,889-29,517; Rs29,518-44,175; Rs29,518 to Rs44,175 and above Rs 44,175 per month increased by 0.06 percent, 0.14 percent and 0.16 percent respectively.



## Census contentions

IT has taken three years for the government to validate the 2017 National Census—even then the approval has not been without complaints. The MQM, which earlier had emphatically rejected the results but is now an ally of the PTI government, submitted a dissent note. The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has rejected the federal cabinet's decision to go ahead without an audit in randomly selected blocks to remove "massive lacunae in the controversial" headcount exercise. An accurate and representative census is necessary for the good functioning of the country. PPP has valid concerns against the census—it contends that the count on de jure method does not count migrants from other provinces in the population of the province where they were presently living, which has affected the Sindh results, and according to PPP, disenfranchises Sindhis. This logic can be extended to the other provinces as well. A fair and accurate census provides a strong database for which the government can consult to make well-informed policy decisions—methodologies which leave behind certain populations in the census will lead to weaker policy for those segments of society. Inaccurate census data can lead to discrepancies in funding allocations to provinces, which can severely affect government province. Five percent for a recount is not too difficult and can be managed. While these contentions are valid, the timing of this, three full years after the census took place, sheds light on how poorly coordinated the process has been. This inordinate time delay is causing many problems. The government's solution does not seem practical at this point—it has suggested holding a census after every three years, instead of ten years as it mostly has been. Yet considering the long delay that the validation of this census has taken, this suggestion seems unlikely—it seems it would be better if the different political parties could pull off a thorough census after every five years, rather than a highly contentious one after three years.

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## Democratic facade

A S votes for the first local election in IIOJK are being counted, an international team of reporters from the New York Times was brought into the region to carry out a curated tour in the hopes of validating democratic legitimacy. A close look into the political environment of Kashmir will show anything but. Prominent politicians have been disenfranchised just as the population continues to struggle under extreme lockdowns. If anything, the only logical conclusion these reporters can come to is that the entire electoral process has been a sham. Last year, after suspending Kashmir's special status, the BJP government arrested hundreds of separatists, moderates, politicians, advocates and journalists that, to this date, are still sitting in jails. Most of the prominent politicians that remain have been detained in their homes and threatened to forego their position in the elections. On the other hand, those who have been freed, like Farooq Abdullah, are either fighting unwarranted cases on money laundering or links with militants—as in the case of Rehman Para. Another factor worth taking into consideration is that the elections were called abruptly, leaving parties only a week to prepare and register their candidates. What made the situation much worse was that the permission to campaign, especially for local parties, was usually denied thus robbing them of the same platform extended to others. For over a year and a half, the people of Kashmir have been living under dire circumstances and when the time for voting came around, they were robbed of the opportunity to vouch for individuals who understood their grievances and were intent on fighting for them. The people of the region, whether officials or common citizens, have systematically been marginalised to the point of complete alienation. Surely, a democratic region is not based upon political and social subjugation. Neither should it require for legitimacy to be established externally but instead should be reflected in the circumstances of the people.

# Christmas day and rights of minorities

Sajjad Shaukat



A delegation of US Commission on International Religious Freedom visited Pakistan in May 2017 and called on the then Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs Khalil Tahir Sandhu in Lahore, who briefed the members of the delegations about the steps, policies and laws made by the Punjab government for the welfare and safeguard of minorities' rights in the province

BESIDES Quaid-e-Azam Day, every year, December 25 is also celebrated as the Charismas Day across Pakistan.

On this very Day, members of the Christian community attend special services at illuminated churches where prayers are offered for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. Residential colonies and churches are decorated with twinkling lights and stars. On the occasion, Pakistanis also say, "Happy Christmas" to the Christians and also participate in their celebrations. In December 2016, ahead of Christmas Day, former Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique had inaugurated a special Christmas Train which travelled across the country spreading Christmas cheer. In December 2017, the then Punjab Minister of Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Khalil Tahir Sandhu had stated: "Minorities in Pakistan have complete equality and liberty to enjoy basic rights at par with other citizens and perform their religious obligations in a free environment."

Every year, the Punjab government provided a special grant for religious festivals like Christmas, Holi/Devali etc. In the government jobs, 5% quota had been allocated for minorities, under which more than 5 thousand youth had been given jobs in public institutions.

A delegation of US Commission on International Religious Freedom visited Pakistan in May 2017 and called on the then Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs Khalil Tahir Sandhu in Lahore, who briefed the members of the delegations about the steps, policies and laws made by the Punjab government for the welfare and safeguard of minorities' rights in the province. The delegation which also met the ex-Chief Minister of Punjab Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had shown satisfaction on these measures, including Minority Advisory Council which was already working for the rights of the minorities in Punjab. Similarly, in February 2018, again, Khalil Tahir Sandhu had stated that the Punjab government has ensured protection of minorities

without any discrimination across the province and all the basic facilities have been provided to minorities.

Last year, on this very day, Prime Minister Imran Khan took to Twitter to wish Christian citizens a happy Christmas. President Arif Alvi wished Christians across the world and in Pakistan a merry Christmas and included a quote by Jesus regarding peace in his message.

Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif also extended Christmas wishes to members of the community, writing: "May this day bring peace, happiness and prosperity for all!" PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in his Christmas message on Twitter said: "May this day be one of peace and joy for all, and let the message of tolerance and inclusiveness resonate across the world today."

In a ceremony attended by Pakistan's Minister for Minority Affairs and Human Rights, Ijaz Alam, and other members of the cabinet, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Usman Buzdar, stated: "The Christmas celebrations held across Pakistan helped to promote religious harmony...religious minorities, including Christians, have played an important role in the development of Pakistan...their efforts are praiseworthy and fundamental to the country...Pakistan belongs to all of us...People of different faiths enjoy equal right and complete religious freedom in the country".

He specifically cited the government's focus on providing equal opportunities to minorities as well as the minority's empowerment package that the government introduced to provide millions of rupees for student scholarships for minority students.

Notably, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah—the founder of Pakistan, who was against every sort of extremism, had favoured a moderate Pakistan where other religious communities and minorities would also live without any restriction, along with the Muslims. In his speech, Quaid-e-Azam said: "You are

free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan.

You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the state...We are starting in the days where there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between ones caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens, and equal citizens of one state."

It may be recalled that August 11 was official declared National Minorities Day by the then government in 2009 in line with the historic speech of Mohammad Ali Jinnah at the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947.

Hence, in accordance with the vision of Quaid-e-Azam, the Constitution of 1973 protects the real rights and interest of minorities, living in Pakistan.

On the other side, India which claims an arch secular state has surprised the world because of continued attacks on other minority groups, especially Christians, Muslims and Sikhs—and events of forced conversion of Christians and Muslims into Hindus.

However, Pakistan which came into existence on the basis of Islamic principles provides respect and protection to all the minorities, as mentioned in the Constitution. Besides other minority groups, particularly Christians are not only serving in the armed forces, but are also working in other departments. Without any discrimination by the Muslims, they run their own business and are also working in private sectors.

Undoubtedly, we can conclude that while commemorating the Quaid-e-Azam Day, December 25 is also celebrated as the Charismas Day across Pakistan.

— *The writes on international affairs and is author of the book: US vs Islamic Militants, Invisible Balance of Power: Dangerous Shift in International Relations*  
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## VUI- a new challenge

THE world was battling COVID 19 when a new virus emerged. British scientists had already alerted the World Health Organization (WHO) about a new strain of coronavirus, calling the virus VUI-202012/01 (short for the first "variant under investigation" in December 2020). It is said to cause 23 different mutations in human body. 62% of new cases in London are related to the virus, which has reached three more countries other than the United Kingdom. Fifty countries have suspended all passenger flights from Britain until January 01, due to the threat posed by the new virus. According to the World Health Organization, after the United Kingdom, nine such cases have been reported in Denmark, a number of others in the Netherlands, two in Australia, and one case has been diagnosed in Singapore. In light of this situation, scientists around the world are trying to determine whether the vaccines developed so far will be effective against this new virus, with global experts warning that the next six months could be the worst for COVID-19, as it is feared that 30 million people will die.

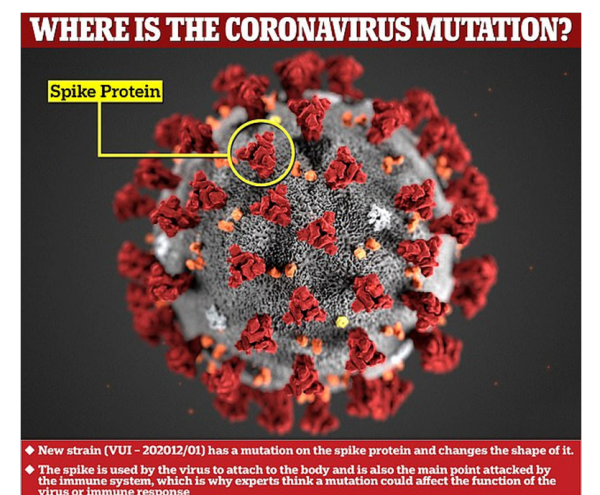
Coronavirus' new variant-VUI has caused panic across Europe, with people fleeing the UK, but other countries have imposed travel bans. The World Health Organization has already instructed European countries to take steps to prevent a new outbreak in Britain. A spokesman for WHO Europe said scientists were trying to determine if the new strain could spread more rapidly, the disease could be serious in humans and whether vaccines would be effective against it? Most scientists were skeptical when British Health Secretary Matt Hancock announced the presence of the new strain of the virus.

However, as the situation has changed in the last few days, several scientists say that preventing this new epidemic could be a serious challenge.

The influx of VUI virus with coronavirus is a major challenge in the world. In this context, Pakistan which has been under second corona attack since early last month and is gradually intensifying these days may face severe difficulties while the majority of the population in the country is still not following the SOPs. We need to make SOPs a part of our daily routine to prevent the spread of new variant with the coronavirus. Several countries, including Britain, Germany and France, have again come to a complete lockdown and the UK has cut off air links with many countries, including Pakistan, and has also banned residents of other countries from entering the UK by land. Similarly, South Asian and Arab countries are now returning to lockdown, and until the coronavirus is completely eradicated, all countries will continue to adhere to SOPs.

The damage caused by the corona virus so far is one of the greatest tragedies in human history. More than 1.5 million people have been killed by the coronavirus until now, while the death toll in the affected countries, including Pakistan, has risen sharply and it has reached 9,500. A total of about 5 million people in the country have been infected with COVID-19. People were already scared of the spread of coronavirus, now report of possible arrival of a new variant and dangerous upsurge could also spread terror. The world is very worried about the deaths of COVID-19. In this context, if the reports of vaccine approval are considered, the situation seems to be particularly satisfactory. The Vaccine was given to several front line medical staff and arrangements are being made for its arrival and use in Pakistan as well. For this, the government has allocated Rs 1.5 billion.

Efforts by the Pakistan Ministry of Health regarding coronavirus are encouraging, but there is a need for authorities and the Ministry of Health to be aware of the emergence of a new variant virus



◆ New strain (VUI - 202012/01) has a mutation on the spike protein and changes the shape of it.  
◆ The spike is used by the virus to attach to the body and is also the main point attacked by the immune system, which is why experts think a mutation could affect the function of the virus or immune response

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Attiya Munawer





## Briefs

## South Korea reports highest daily COVID cases

## FOREIGN DESK

SEOUL: South Korea on Friday reported over 1,200 new coronavirus cases, the highest daily infections reported since the pandemic outbreak in the country, the country's Health Ministry said. With 1,241 new cases and 17 more deaths in the past 24 hours, the country's caseload reached 54,770 and the death toll hit 773, according to Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency. So far, 38,048 people have recovered from the disease. The country's daily cases remained between 800 to 1,078 during the last week. Last Monday, the government toughened its coronavirus restrictions in the capital Seoul and its surrounding areas and banned gatherings of five or more people to stem the spread of the virus. The capital Seoul, neighboring Gyeonggi Province, and Incheon are already under level 2.5, the second-highest coronavirus restrictions where gatherings of 50 or more people are prohibited.

Earlier, Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun called on the health authorities and local governments to respond "strictly" to violations of social distancing rules. "A joint government monitoring team found through onsite inspections that there were still many places that were not following the antiviral measures properly," Yonhap News Agency quoted the prime minister as saying.

## FIFA extends PFF Normalisation

ZURICH: The Bureau of the FIFA Council has decided to extend the mandate of the PFF normalization committee (NC), which was due to expire on 31 December 2020, until all tasks have been completed, but until no later than 30 June 2021. The decision was taken with the primary objective of allowing the NC to fulfill all of the tasks entrusted to it in its mandate. However, FIFA announced that following the decision of the chairman of the NC to step down from his position by the end of 2020, FIFA would appoint a new chairperson in due course, who will have to pass an eligibility check to be carried out by the FIFA Review Committee as per the FIFA Governance Regulations. Meanwhile, FIFA appointed Muneer Sadhana as acting chairman of the PFF NC after Hamza Khan's exit from the organization. Hamza informed FIFA and Asian Football Confederation (AFC) that he does not further wish to continue as chairman of the PFF NC. It must be noted that FIFA extended the mandate of PFF NC in May this year. In 2019, FIFA formed a normalization committee with an assignment to conduct free and fair elections in the federation.

## KPL to be new addition to cricketing world: Imran Ismail

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Imran Ismail on Friday said the 'Kashmir Premier League' would be a new addition to the cricketing world and it would provide a platform to the new talent in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to come forward. Prime Minister Imran Khan had a vision of promoting tourism, sports and culture in the country and the league would help realize it. He said while addressing to the inaugural ceremony of the Kashmir Premier League (KPL) as a chief guest here at the Sindh Governor House. Chairman of Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Shehryar Khan Afridi presided over the event. The governor said that the commencement of the Kashmir Premier League was a good omen as the whole world would now see the difference between Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir (IIOK) and the AJK. Roads and streets were blocked in the IIOK whereas cricket matches were being played in the AJK, he added. Imran Ismail said the entire Pakistan would support the KPL. — APP



ETHIOPIA: Shozad Abbas Pakistan, ambassador to Ethiopia called on Abune Mathias, Archbishop of Axum and successor of Negus the Great and congratulated the Christian community of Habasha on Christmas Day. — DNA

## ‘Pak, China to jointly work for development of tourism’

London remains bound by the EU's rules during a transition period that runs until midnight on December 31, when the UK will leave the the bloc's single market and customs union

BEIJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque on Friday said there was an endless potential of tourism industry development between Pakistan and China believing that the two countries would work together for development of industry. "A Chinese website has been set up for this purpose, which I believe will be available to you soon. In view of the long-standing friendly relations between China

and Pakistan, I am sure that our two countries will work together to develop the endless potential of the tourism industry of both sides," he said while delivering a speech via video on the Unveiling Ceremony of Qingdao Boutique Tourism Promotion Association. He emphasized upon the significance of tourism in strengthening cultural exchanges, investment promotion and social and economic development between countries



on the occasion, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Ambassador Haque said, development of tourism played a vital role in the development of China's rural and remote areas. It was also an indispensable part of the task of getting rid of poverty. During the recovery period of the epidemic era, its importance has been further demonstrated in many countries, including China. He said Pakistan, as a country

with an ancient civilization, its beautiful landscape and rich cultural diversity is rapidly growing into a major tourist destination in the region. Pakistani government was actively promoting related tourism construction to attract more international tourists to take Pakistan as their preferred tourist destination. He also highlighted investment opportunities for the development of tourism infrastructure in Pakistan. — APP

## Pak-China coop in film industry stressed

BEIJING: President of China Film Import & Export Corporation Ms. Xiao Ping has said that the year of 2021 marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Pakistan and he wanted to take the importation of 'Parwaaz Hai Junoon' as an opportunity to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in film industry between the two countries. "The principle to import foreign films to China was 'origins, themes and genres in diversity. Thanks to Belt and Road Initiative, we have imported films from Pakistan and other countries, so that Chinese audiences would have a better understanding of their history, culture and people," she said in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN) on Friday. "Parwaaz Hai Junoon is one of the top five highest-grossing films of Pakistan. It is a patriotic story mixing colourful song and dance numbers, a love story and action elements. In the future we will stay tuned for Pakistani films, take into account their genres and market performance and choose the suitable ones for Chinese audiences," she said. In recent years foreign

films with well-written scripts and gripping stories like Chalard goes going (Thailand), Contratiempo (Spain), Andhadhun (India), Perfetti sconosciuti (Italy) had made a hit in China, winning both box office and public praise. Therefore, according to Xiao's experience, Pakistani films could draw lessons from their ways of success into China's film market. "Hollywood and some European countries invest heavily in marketing and promotion for their films, and the publicity of Pakistani films seems to leave room for improvement." Second, she said, was to nurture audience. "The importation of films from every country follows a process of nurturing audience. Foreign films could be promoted online or on TV in advance to make Chinese audience aware. It's better to cultivate their interest slowly before hitting the big screen." Last but not the least, the story itself mattered, she added. "Now Chinese audiences are more interested in what's going on around them. They are more into down-to-earth issues and small joys and sorrows of everyday life, so the choice of theme and content is critical." — APP

## Turkey to start using China's Covid-19 vaccine

## DNA

ANKARA: Turkey will receive its first shipment of China's Sinovac coronavirus vaccine within days as preliminary domestic tests showed it was 91% effective, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said on Thursday. Ankara in the next few days will also sign a deal with Pfizer/BioNTech for 4.5 million doses, with

the option to buy 30 million more from the US pharmaceutical giant and its German partner, Koca said. Turkey will initially receive three million doses of Sinovac and have the option for 50 million more as it begins inoculations next month, starting with healthcare workers and the most vulnerable. Koca said the first shipments of the Chinese vaccine will be sent to Turkey on Sunday. The preliminary tests on

7,371 volunteers in Turkey showed that the Chinese vaccine was 91.25 per cent effective, although phase three tests were still not complete. Turkey "will be able to vaccinate 1.5 million or even two million people per day," Koca said, adding that the "first stage" of vaccinations would cover nine million people. The nation of 83 million has officially recorded 19,115 Covid-19 deaths and 2.2 million virus infections.

## Indonesia: Vaccines expected to arrive in 2021

## DNA

JAKARTA: Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto, has said that several COVID-19 vaccines apart from Sinovac's are scheduled to arrive in Indonesia in the second quarter of 2021. "The government has sent a Letter of Interest (for the vaccines) and is in the process of negotiating," Hartarto said during an online discussion for Outlook 2021 in Jakarta on Thursday.

He said vaccines from AstraZeneca, Pfizer, and a vaccine from the Covax program are expected to arrive in the country in the second quarter of 2021. "From Covax, the government also has a commitment of (vaccines for) 10 percent (of the population), so this is being pursued regarding time. Of course, in terms of funds, procurement and access have been fully prepared by the government," Hartarto, who is also head of the Team for Handling COVID-19 and Na-

tional Economic Recovery (PC-PEN), said. The Covax program is being led by the global vaccine alliance GAVI. The Coordinating Minister said he hopes that the commitment to provide the COVID-19 vaccine can be increased to 20 percent of the population. "There is a commitment from GAVI. GAVI is also preparing for 10 percent of the population and could be increased to 20 percent, mainly for pandemic and economic recovery. The

game changer is vaccination and vaccination is a priority for the government," he added. He also said the government has access to another vaccine - Moderna's. Earlier, 1.2 million doses of the Sinovac vaccine arrived in the country and are now waiting for permission from the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM). Hartarto said 1.8 million doses of the Sinovac vaccine are expected to arrive in January, 2021 along with raw materials for producing 15 million doses of the vaccine.

## Botha appointed as head coach of United

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Former South African spinner Johan Botha has been appointed as new head coach of two-time winners of Pakistan Super League (PSL), Islamabad United for the upcoming sixth season. The announcement came a day after United parted ways with last season's head coach Misbah-ul-Haq. The 38-year-old had previously worked as the Fielding Coach for Islamabad United in PSL 2. "I am very happy to be back at Islamabad United, the franchise where I got my first taste of the Pakistan Super League at PSL 2. Since then I have had different experiences at the PSL as well as a range of coaching stints at various tournaments around the world," Botha said in a statement. "My plan is to bring all these experiences together and hopefully create another memorable PSL for Islamabad United," he added. It must be noted that Botha recently came out of retirement to take part in the Australian Big Bash League (BBL) for Hobart Hurricanes.

## JUI-F expels Maulana Sherani, Hafiz Hussain

## From Page 01

Terming Maulana Sherani, an honest man, Maulana Gul Naseeb had said the parameters of authenticity have now changed in the JUI-F after the inclusion of rich members in the party.

The election ticket of JUI-F was being awarded on the basis of the money after the joining of Talha Mehmood and Azeemullah, he had claimed. Earlier, Maulana Sherani had criticised JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman, asking how Maulana Fazlur Rehman could call PM Imran Khan a "selected" leader when he, himself, was "selected".

## SA seek red ball revenge in first test vs Sri Lanka

PRETORIA: South Africa return to the test arena for the first time in 11 months on Saturday hoping to arrest a dismal slide in the five-day game and with revenge on their minds as they host Sri Lanka in the first of a two-test series at Centurion Park. They have lost eight of their last nine tests, a run that began in February 2019 with a shock 2-0 home defeat by Sri Lanka who became the first Asian side to win a series in the country. They have slipped to number six in the world, behind fifth-placed Sri Lanka, and have a host of questions to answer, not least around a brittle top six and the balance of the side.

"We've got a young team," captain Quinton de Kock said this week. "We need our younger guys to come through and learn fast so we can have a structured team. "That's what I would hope for from this season, for the new guys to come in and start scoring runs and putting up their hands." They start the first test without key fast bowler Kagiso Rabada, who has a groin problem, but will be buoyed by the fact both matches will be played on fast, bouncy Highveld pitches. Left-arm seamer Beuran Hendricks has been withdrawn from the squad along with batsman Keegan Petersen. Neither player entered the tour bubble when the players gathered on Saturday, after two positive COVID-19 results were detected last week. Hendricks' absence means Glenton Stuurman is almost certain to make his test debut at the age of 29, with his ability to move the ball both ways off the pitch and his excellent recent domestic form putting him ahead of rivals. The retirement of Vernon Philander suggests Wiaan Mulder or Dwayne Pretorius are likely to play in an all-rounder role. The make-up of Sri Lanka's side is much harder to predict after they brought a squad of 21 players "to cover all positions", according to coach Mickey Arthur. They are missing injured stalwart Angelo Mathews and Oshada Fernando in their top-six batting lineup, but Arthur is upbeat about their ability to cope with South Africa's quicks. "We have had camps and intra-squad games and have tried to keep the players as sharp as they can be," he said. — APP

## Christmas celebrated under pandemic's shadow

As with other new variants or strains of Covid-19, this one carries a genetic fingerprint that makes it easy to track, and it happens to be one that is now common

## Pope urges vaccine access for all

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis has called on world leaders to ensure unfettered access to coronavirus vaccines for everyone. In a Christmas Day address delivered online for the first time, the pontiff warned against putting up "walls" to treatments. The pandemic meant this year the annual Urbi et Orbi message was not presented from the balcony at St Peter's Basilica to huge crowds, as is tradition. Instead the Pope spoke from a lectern in a chamber inside the Vatican. Pope Francis' warning comes amid concerns that wealthier countries are buying up disproportionate doses of vaccines to the detriment of poorer ones. "May the Son of God renew in political and government leaders a spirit of international cooperation, starting with health care, so that all will be ensured access to vaccines and treatment," he said. "In the face of a challenge that knows no borders, we cannot erect walls. All of us are in the same boat." The Pope said the effects of the health crisis showed the need for global unity was greater than ever. "At this moment in history, marked by the ecological crisis and grave economic and social imbalances only worsened by the coronavirus pandemic, it is all the more important for us to acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters." The pontiff called for generosity and support to victims of the pandemic, singling out women suffering domestic violence during lockdown. — APP

15 staff and choir members. And in Catholic-majority Philippine, services were rocked when a 6.3-magnitude earthquake

struck the country, capping off a troubled yuletide already muted by bans on parties and carol singing. Despite warm weather,

the usual picnicking crowds also avoided the sands of Sydney's Bondi Beach, while the waves were empty of surfing Santas and

patrolling police officers enforced social distancing rules. Pope Francis, spiritual leader of 1.3 billion Catholics across the globe, celebrated Christmas Eve mass in St Peter's Basilica before fewer than 200 masked faithful, mostly employees of the tiny state of Vatican City. The mass, traditionally held at midnight, had been moved forward by two hours to 7:30 pm (18:30 GMT) to meet Italy's curfew rules. Before the pandemic hit, several thousand believers and tourists had obtained precious tickets to attend the papal mass. On Thursday evening, St Peter's Square, usually thronged with people on Christmas Eve was deserted, illuminated by the glow of its towering Christmas tree and the lights of a police car. — APP



## Briefs

## Russian police raid Navalny ally's flat

MOSCOW: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny said police early Friday raided the apartment of an ally and detained her after he tricked a security service agent into admitting he was poisoned. Navalny, 44, on Monday said he had impersonated an official in the Kremlin's Security Council and got an admission of guilt from a toxins expert with the FSB domestic intelligence that poison had been placed in his underwear in August to kill him.

"Today, police came to Lyubov Sobol's apartment at 7 am," Navalny's Anti-Corruption Fund said on Twitter. The 33-year-old's phone was switched off and both Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh and the head of Navalny's fund, Ivan Zhdanov, said they did not know where she was. Sobol's husband and daughter have been allowed to leave the flat.

Western governments say Navalny has been poisoned with Novichok, a Soviet-designed nerve agent in a stunning case that has further dented Moscow's relations with leading European countries and sparked mutual sanctions.

Sobol went to the Moscow apartment where the man Navalny had spoken to is believed to live on Monday evening. She was detained and spent more than six hours at a police station. Speaking to AFP at the time, she expressed concern about a possible criminal probe against her. Writing on Twitter on Friday, Navalny linked the police raid to Sobol's attempt to speak to the FSB agent he identified as Konstantin Kudryavtsev. Sobol, a lawyer by training, has announced plans to run for parliament next year. — APP

## Israeli strikes on Syria kill six

BEIRUT: Israeli missile strikes on Syria killed at least six Iran-backed fighters Friday, a war monitor said. The dead were all foreign paramilitaries fighting alongside President Bashar al-Assad's forces, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The missiles, which were fired from Lebanese airspace, hit positions held by militias in the Masyaf district of Hama province, Observatory chief Rami Abdul Rahman said. One also targeted a government-run research centre, where surface-to-surface missiles are developed and stored, the Britain-based watchdog said.

The Israeli military said it would not comment on reports in foreign media. The research centre in Masyaf has been hit several times by Israeli strikes in recent years, the Observatory said.

## Boko Haram kills seven in Christmas Eve attack

KANO: Boko Haram jihadists killed at least seven people in a Christmas Eve assault on a village in Nigeria's restive northeast, local sources told AFP Friday. Security agencies had in recent days warned of an increased risk of attack during the Christmas holiday.

Fighters in trucks and motorcycles stormed Pemi, a predominantly Christian village in Borno state Thursday, shooting "indiscriminately" and setting buildings on fire, said Abwaku Kabu, a militia leader. In many parts of Nigeria, communities have resorted to self-defence to armed vigilantes or militias, who work alongside the army. "The terrorists killed seven people, burnt 10 homes and looted food supplies that were meant to be distributed to residents to celebrate Christmas," Kabu said. A body was found Friday morning, local community leader Ayuba Alamsan said, raising the number of dead to seven. The toll could rise as villagers fled into the bush during the attack and some people are still unaccounted for. The assailants, who drove from the group's nearby Sambisa forest enclave, looted medical supplies from a hospital before setting it ablaze, the militia leader said, adding they also burnt a church and abducted a priest. The village is located only 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Chibok, where Boko Haram kidnapped more than 200 schoolgirls six years ago.



ISLAMABAD: Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman alongwith Directors and senior officials of ISE REIT during cake cutting ceremony on the eve of Christmas. — DNA

## 'Int'l community must not ignore Armenian vandalism'

"All our villages, historical and religious monuments have been destroyed by the enemy. The whole world should see it," Aliyev said during the tour in Gubadli, adding that the Armenian authorities will be held accountable for these crimes

DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has urged the international community to react to the destructions that Armenians had committed on Azerbaijani territories they held under occupation for nearly three decades. He especially criticized UNESCO for failing to respond to Armenian vandalism. On December 23, President Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyev visited Gubadli and Zangilan regions, areas recently liberated from three decades of Armenian occupation. "All our villages, historical and religious monuments have been destroyed by the enemy. The whole world should see it," Aliyev said during the tour in Gubadli, adding that the Armenian authorities will be held accountable for these crimes.

Driving the car on the way to Gubadli, Aliyev commented on the scenes he witnessed along the road that passed through Azerbaijan's liberated villages. "Notice how they have felled the trees. See what the wild enemy has done — it has felled all the trees... See what the enemy has done. The whole world should see this," Aliyev stressed. Aliyev spoke about double standard of some countries, whose parliaments have adopted anti-Azerbaijani resolutions. "Let the countries that have adopted res-



olutions against us have a look and open their eyes... For us, these resolutions are of no importance, they are just a piece of paper. But the fact is that the accusations against us are baseless again. Members of the French Parliament, members of the Belgian and Dutch parliaments, have a look and see what did your dear Armenians have done to these lands? Look at the map, look up the encyclopedia and see which country Zangilan and Gubadli districts are part of," he said. Aliyev condemned the lack of international attention to Azerbaijan's destroyed national and religious heritage against the

background of concerns over the protection of Armenian sites. "Some are raising the issue of the religious heritage of the Armenian people in the liberated lands now. But why didn't anyone raise the issue of our national and religious heritage? A UNESCO official has recently made an unfounded statement that they had allegedly asked us but Azerbaijan remained silent. We have repeatedly appealed to UNESCO for 30 years, repeatedly stated that our mosques have been destroyed, our historical sites have been destroyed, our historical sites have been Armenianized. Have

they sent a mission here at least once? Has our request been answered at least once? As soon as the war ended, they started to protect the sites of the Armenian people," he said. President Aliyev urged UNESCO and other international agencies to inspect the destroyed scenes. "We are protecting all sites, we are protecting the sites of all nations, and the world knows that. But you should have a look, there was a mosque here, UNESCO, come here, come and see this. The Council of Europe, do not remain silent, come and see this! All our mosques are destroyed. Is it possible to destroy mosques? Is it not a crime to demolish a mosque? How much longer will this injustice last? How long will this hypocrisy last? How long will these double standards last? How long will this Islamophobia last? It was the Armenians who destroyed it. Can someone introducing himself as a civilized person and is even accepted by some foreign patrons as such do this? Can a civilized person keep pigs in a mosque? Let the whole world see this! Let Muslims of the world, the peoples of Muslim countries see this," he stressed. "Everything along the road is destroyed — from Jabrayil region to the liberated lands in Gubadli... All buildings, all houses, our historical sites, our mosques and graves have been destroyed by the hated enemy."

## Luxembourg parliament's motion against int'l law: FM

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry has described as biased and against the international law the motion adopted by the Luxembourg Parliament on the liberated Nagorno-Karabakh region.

In a statement published in its official page on December 25, the ministry said that the motion, put forward by Claude Wiseler, a pro-Armenian member of the Christian Socialist Political Party, distorts the truth about the situation in the region and makes completely baseless accusations against Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The ministry said that the motion that was adopted on December 24 by the Chamber of Luxembourg, has no legal force and is contrary to international law and UN Security Council resolutions, which reflects the biased position of this body.

Furthermore, the ministry said that if members of the Luxembourg legislative body had thought about the future of the region, including Armenia, they would have promoted the implementation of the trilateral statement dated 10 November and taking advantage of new opportunities for cooperation to build peace, security and prosperity in the region. "Apparently, the Chamber of Luxembourg is not interested in the new situation created by resolving the long-lasting conflict in the region, implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions, and restoration of the rights of IDPs, whose fundamental rights have been violated for decades, it is rather interested in instigating enmity between the states of the region."

## Hong Kong imposes 3 week quarantine for visitors

HONG KONG: Hong Kong extended its compulsory quarantine to three weeks for almost all international travellers from Friday, saying the measure was needed to prevent new, more infectious, coronavirus variants from spreading. The government said expert advice suggested that the incubation period of the virus could be longer than 14 days in some people — so passengers will now have to undergo compulsory quarantine in designated hotels for three weeks, rather than the previous two. Only travellers arriving from mainland China, Macau, and Taiwan will be exempt from the tighter restrictions. The government also announced a ban on people who have stayed in South Africa in the past 21 days from entering Hong Kong.

A new variant of the coronavirus, believed to be more infectious, has been spreading in South Africa, and several other countries have placed restrictions on travellers from the nation. Since Tuesday, flights from Britain have also been banned from Hong Kong, following the discovery of a new strain of coronavirus there. Health officials said two students returned to Hong Kong from the UK might have been infected by this new variant. — APP

## US to require negative virus test for UK arrivals

WASHINGTON: US authorities announced Thursday that passengers arriving on flights from the United Kingdom will need to test negative for coronavirus before departure, the latest restriction imposed due to a new Covid-19 variant. News of the strain, believed to be more transmissible, led to nations around the world closing their borders to travellers from the UK. The new rule takes effect Monday and requires a negative test within 72 hours of departure, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in a statement. "This additional testing requirement will fortify our protection of the American public to improve their health and safety and ensure responsible international travel," it added. The US in March halted the arrival of foreign nationals who had visited the UK in the preceding two weeks, which significantly cut air traffic from there. Some airlines, including British Airways and Delta, had already agreed to require passengers test negative before departure to New York from Britain because of the new strain. — APP

## More export orders put garment sector in troubles

DNA

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association has said that a huge number of export orders are being received by the value-added garment industry, however, exporters are unable to finalize them due to unavailability of fabric, especially the denim fabric in the country. PRGMEA (NZ) vice chairman Adeb Iqbal urged the government to also abolish duties on the import of fabrics as well as the denim fabric in line with the import relaxation provided on import of cotton yarn, as value-added garment sector is facing severe shortage of basic raw material of fabrics,

which may lead to a drastic decline in value-added textile export. He said that it was the right decision to remove Regulatory Duty on import of cotton yarn, which will accelerate the country's textile exports but unfortunately the garment, which is the major sector of textile chains, has been neglected, as the reduction in yarn import duty will not benefit it. It is unfortunate that the government's cotton policy has reduced the country's cotton production target from 14 million bales to 9 million bales. Due to the shortage of cotton yarn textile exports were fallen in previous months. He said that the cotton crisis in Pakistan was the biggest threat to the value-added textile sector than corona.



TASHKENT: Ambassador of Pakistan to Uzbekistan Sayyid Ali Asad Gilani met with First Deputy Chairman of the Senate of Uzbekistan. — DNA

## Nadeem explains LNG purchase, sale mechanism

In a series of video tweets on official account of the Petroleum Division, he said the previous government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had introduced the LNG in Pakistan's market without constructing any storage facility

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Petroleum, Nadeem Babar Friday explained in detail the purchase and sale mechanism of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), rejecting all negative and speculative reports appearing in sections of the media for the last one-and-a-half months. In a series of video tweets on official account of the Petroleum Division, he said the previous government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had introduced the LNG in Pakistan's market without constructing any

storage facility and declaring it as petrol, which cost almost double than the locally produced gas. In the given scenario, the SAPM said every LNG shipment had to be consumed within four to five days, in the absence of storage facilities, for berthing of another cargo ship. Declaring the LNG as a petroleum product by the PML-N regime, he said it meant that every consumer using the LNG had to pay the full price of the commodity. He said a question was being asked repeatedly as to why the LNG had not been procured in summer when its price was down, which also showed poor information of the elements spreading speculative news in the media,

he added. The SAPM said it was on record that the government had provided the LNG to each and every consumer whosoever demanded it in all months of the summer season. He said another allegation was being leveled against the government that in summer, the fuel oil was used in power generation that was why the sufficient LNG had not been procured. "It is also totally wrong and based on speculations and misinformation." Nadeem Babar said the previous government in its last summer season had produced 28 percent of the total electricity through the fuel oil, while the present

government in the summer-2019 produced just 5 percent and 3.6 percent of the total electricity in eleven months of the current year. He said all the data in that regard was available on the website of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority. He said there was another misconception that early buying could help lower the cost of LNG, and the government should have procured the commodity for December-January in August instead of October. Elaborating, he said, Pakistan had purchased the costliest LNG in February 2018, the last year of the PML-N in government, at \$ 10.25 per MMBTU (Million Brit-

ish Thermal Unit), with a 71-day gap between tender opening and delivery of the gas. In August this year, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government procured the cheapest cargo in the last five-year trade of LNG, with a gap of just 39 days between the tender opening and delivery. "So it is a totally wrong perception that more days between tender and delivery means more less price," he added. Till-date, the SAPM said, the PTI government procured all the LNG cargoes with an average gap of 61-62 days between tender and delivery, adding the cargoes for December-January had been acquired with a gap of 45-50 days.



## Briefs

### FM felicitates Christmas to Christians

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Friday said minorities in Pakistan have equal rights and the government was providing them opportunities without any discrimination.

In his felicitation message to the Christian community on the eve of Christmas, the Foreign Minister said Pakistan was the only country in the world where minorities were represented in the national flag. The Foreign Minister said providing rights to minorities was part of the Islamic faith and the Constitution of Pakistan also protected this privilege. On the other hand, he said, the neighboring India, which claimed to be secular and a champion of human rights, discriminated against minorities, particularly the Muslims.

### Over 2,100 new cases, 85 deaths reported

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The national tally of total active COVID-19 cases in Pakistan on Friday reached 38,511 with 2,152 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,824 people recovered from coronavirus during last 24 hours. 85 corona patients, 77 of whom were under treatment in hospital and eight in their homes or quarantines died on Thursday, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in Punjab followed by the Sindh. It added that during last 24 hours that out of the total 85 deaths 53 patients were on ventilators. No COVID-19 affected person was on ventilator in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) while 330 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in Pakistan during this time span. Maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 52 percent, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 39 percent, Peshawar 30 percent and Lahore 37 percent.

### 2 people test positive after returning from UK

DNA

PESHAWAR: Two people, who recently returned from the United Kingdom, have tested positive for the novel coronavirus in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. KP Health Secretary Imtiaz Hussain Shah said a total of 149 passengers have recently arrived in the province from Britain. The government has traced 44 people and 32 of their contacts. Another 54 passengers have been identified across seven districts including Peshawar, Swabi and Nowshera. The district administration has been tasked to trace them. The government has been unable to trace 46 people because they provided incorrect residential address. "In the first batch of testing, four people tested negative while results of 25 passengers are awaited," the health official said.



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful aerial view of the Capital. – DNA

# MQM hints at leaving the PTI government

"The government must answer why they are not doing anything to address our concerns despite having the constitutional option to do so?" he asserted

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) on Friday said it has decided to "take a stand" against the PTI-led government while reiterating its demands regarding the 2017 census. Speaking on the issue, MQM-P leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that his party has decided to reach out to the people of Karachi and other urban areas of Sindh to seek their opinion regarding a future course of action. "MQM voters reside in several areas [population blocks] of Karachi, but their number was shown to be zero in the controversial 2017 census," he claimed. "The government must answer why they are not doing anything to address our concerns despite having the constitutional option to do so?" he asserted. He said that the MQM wants to show to the gov-

ernment that Sindh's urban areas were the biggest victim of the 18th Amendment. "The 18th Amendment was a farce," he said. "The last census was conducted after a gap of eight years, I guess the next one will also take place with a gap of eight years," he said. The remarks follow a Thursday press conference in Islamabad during which Siddiqui had claimed that the population of Sindh's major cities was shown to be 25% less than the actual count in the 2017 census. "Our doubts related to the inaccuracy of the 2017 census have proven to be true now," he had said. "We had gone to courts to register our concerns even before the census had begun." Siddiqui's comments came after the federal cabinet on Wednesday authorised the submission of the Sixth Population and Housing Census 2017 report for final approval before the Council of Common Interests. The cabinet also decided to

## PTI to address MQM-P's reservations

KARACHI: The PTI government on Friday moved to address the reservations of the MQM-P over the approval of controversial results of Census 2017 and assured to address them. Talking to private channel, Sindh Governor Imran Ismail said the MQM-P is an important ally of the PTI and added that "there's an excellent understanding" between the two. "The concerns expressed by the MQM-P are genuine and were raised by some PTI members as well," he said. "Other parties have also objected to it." It may be noted here that both MQM-P and PPP had expressed reservations over the census results and its approval. Governor Ismail stressed the ruling coalition will remain intact and the government will address the issue. He explained that the federal cabinet had approved census keeping in view the upcoming local bodies polls. "There is no time left to conduct another census," he said. "So, the government will repeat the exercise in 2022 before the next general elections and remove all discrepancies in the method to ensure transparency." The statement comes after MQM-P leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said the federal cabinet accepted the 2017 census results despite coalition partner's reservations. "Census is a matter of life and death [to the people of Sindh's urban centre]. – DNA

bypass an agreement with parliamentary leaders of the Senate to correct controversial results through a recount of the population in 5% randomly selected population blocks. "We demand the government form a judicial commission to probe the rigged census," Siddiqui had said. "Right now, we are standing with the government, but we also have the option to part ways because we cannot protest against the government while staying in a coalition with it." He had also said that the option to cooperate with the government has ended after the cabinet's approval of the controversial census, adding that the "census is a matter of life and death to [the people of Sindh's urban centres]." A day earlier, Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) had said the party has been left with no option but to take to the streets in protest against the recent decision of the federal cabinet to approve

the controversial National Census-2017. "What is the logic for us now to stay in the government? You (the government) have not implemented even a single point agreed with us," said MQM Convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui while addressing Prime Minister Imran Khan at a news conference with federal Minister for Information Technology Aminul Haq at the National Press Club on Thursday. "Tell us what should we do? Why are we in the government? Why are we in the cabinet? If we are not heard in the parliament, then tell us, should we come out of the elected houses? Is coming on the roads only to seek justice and raise voice against excesses?" Mr Siddiqui said, while addressing Prime Minister Khan and his ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The MQM leader, however, did not give a categorical reply when asked whether or not his party had decided to quit the ruling coalition.

### PTA issues notices to Google, Wikipedia

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) issues Notices to Google Inc. and Wikipedia on account of disseminating sacrilegious content through the platforms. PTA has been receiving complaints regarding misleading search results associated with "Present Khalifa of Islam" and unauthentic version of Holy Quran uploaded by Ahmadiyya Community on Google Play Store. Being a matter of very serious nature, PTA has approached Google Inc. with the directions to immediately remove the unlawful content. The platform has been issued with the notice under Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguard) Rules 2020 ("Rules") to remove the sacrilegious content to avoid any legal action by the Regulator. Complaints were also received regarding hosting of caricatures of Holy Prophet (PBUH) and dissemination of misleading, wrong, deceptive and deceitful information through articles published on Wikipedia portraying Mirza Masroor Ahmad as a Muslim. – APP

### IGP Sindh was not abducted: Murtaza

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Sindh government spokesperson Murtaza Wahab on Friday said that people should be careful while speaking about Inspector-General Sindh as it is a credible designation, adding that Mushtaq Mehar "was not abducted." Addressing a press conference in Karachi, Wahab said that PTI MPA Raja Azhar had filed an FIR against Captain (retd) Safdar, adding that the country has a clear-cut law regarding the sanctity of Mazar-e-Quaid and a report in relation to the matter was also submitted before the cabinet. Wahab said the police had raised a legal point, saying that the application should be submitted to a magistrate instead of police, after which PTI leaders tried to submit another petition but the police rejected it once again. "Under the circumstances, the attitude of PTI members was inappropriate, Wahab said.

## Iran to commemorate Soleimani's martyrdom anniversary in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of the first anniversary of the martyrdom of General Qasem Soleimani, special programs will be held by the cultural missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan, as well as other political and religious groups in the country. Talking to IRNA on Friday, Iran's Cultural Attaché in Pakistan Ehsan Khazaei said literary and art program about the martyrs of the Islamic Resistance with the title "General of skies" has started by the cultural consulate of the Islamic Republic today. He said the cultural programs on the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani aim to introduce and explain various aspects of the great personalities of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Commander and Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi Al-Mohandes. He added that in this cultural program exquisite prizes will be awarded to the best works in various fields. "Participants and enthusiasts from different cities of Pakistan can submit their literary works in the field of storytelling, poetry, memoirs, articles, photo, painting and calligraphy by 13th January at the email address iran.council@gmail.com," he further said. It is worth mentioning that on the occasion of the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani, various programs by Iranian culture consulates in the cities of Karachi, Peshawar, Lahore, Quetta and Rawalpindi will also be held. On the occasion a book launching of "My Happy Friend" in Urdu will be held by the Iranian Culture consulate in Karachi while a conference of "Martyrs of Islamic Unity" will be held in Peshawar. At the same time, some political and religious parties in Pakistan, especially the supporters of Resistance movement, will hold programs aimed at strengthening the Resistance Front on the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Lieutenant General Qasem Soleimani. – DNA

### PML-N in favor of contesting by-elections

LAHORE: The by-elections announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has become a test of strength for the PDM, with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaving the final decision to Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Party sources said that PML-N itself is keen to contest the by-elections as it does not want to leave an open field for the government. However, the party has to abide by the decisions taken by PDM. Sources further said that both PPP and PML-N are in favor of contesting by-elections while Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and ANP are not. The remaining PDM parties are ready to accept the decision taken by PDM as a whole. – DNA

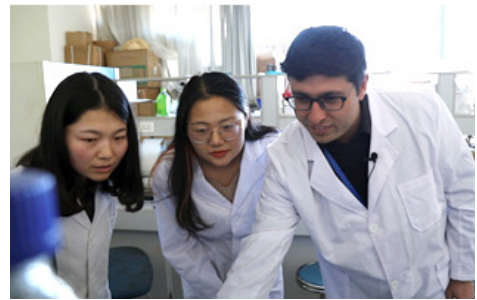
## Pakistani researcher to help citrus farmers

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistani researcher Shahzad Munir who won Chinese national funding wants to help Pakistan citrus farmers, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday. "Pakistan is my home country, it is my priority to transfer our technology there," said Shahzad who is a senior researcher at Yunnan Agriculture University. He and his team are working on fighting against the citrus yellow shoot and helped a lot of citrus farmers in China enhance their production. Shahzad came to China in the year 2015. After getting a Ph.D. degree last year at Yunnan Agriculture University, Shahzad stayed in the university as a staff. "This year I am the project head and I won three funding. One is from the Yunnan government, one is from the Chinese Science Foundation and the last one is from the Chinese government, which is the national funding."

"To get the national fund is really difficult. There are only 100 candidates in China who got it this year. Your idea will be reviewed by the top scientists in China and a small mistake may get you rejected." He said. "Environment is really important," Shahzad stressed. "The lab here opens all the time and the students are very hard working. At midnight, there are still a lot of students experimenting in the lab. My boss who is also my supervisor is


strict with me. He motivated me a lot. During my stay here, I published more than 30 papers." "Our team studies citrus endophytes and citrus yellow shoot, we are the first one who does it around the world and it is a really interesting field." According to Shahzad, the research result has been used in many places in China. The citrus yellow shoot is also a very serious problem for countries all around the world. Shahzad Gwadar Pro that he has already talked with some big people from the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council. "We want to launch the program in Pakistan to control the disease. This year we had planned to go to Pakistan to visit farms there to see how severe the disease there. But due to the COVID-19, our plan was canceled. We are also interested in setting a lab in Pakistan where students and teachers will work there. We will teach Pakistan farmers to control the disease on large scale and help them boost production," he added.




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