



Islamabad POST

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Detailed News On Page-08

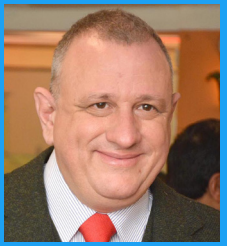
Morocco committed to supporting Libyan parties

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Italian envoy for VISA ease to businessmen

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Briefs

Country is in 'grave danger'

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Former president and PPP Co-Chairman Asif Zardari on Sunday warned that the PTI-led regime is likely to "make a huge blunder", putting Pakistan "in grave danger". Speaking to the secretary-general of the PPP's Punjab chapter, Chaudhry Manzoor, during a phone call, Asif Zardari said the Opposition parties' coalition under the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) banner "is united and will strike the government from all directions".

'Opp. will fail in its designs'

ZUBAIR AHMAD

RAWALPINDI: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad has said the opposition parties will fail in their designs to destabilize the country. Addressing a ceremony in Rawalpindi on Sunday, Pakistan will move towards development under the supervision of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He expressed hope that due to its prudent policies, the Government will overcome inflation and unemployment during current year. He said Imran Khan fought cases of Kashmir, Islam and Khatm-e-Nabuwat in international forums effectively.

'World must take action against India'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony, Maulana Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi has called upon the world leaders to take immediate action against India for targeting religious places of minorities. In a statement issued in Islamabad, he said adoption of the UN resolution following the accepting another unanimous resolution at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Foreign Ministers' level meeting is a testimony to Pakistan's strong ties with Islamic countries and the success of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Forces kill high profile terrorists

Terrorist commander Syed Raheem a.k.a Abid remained involved in 17 terrorist activities against Security Forces from 2007

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army conducted two successful two intelligence based operations (IBO) in Mir Ali and Khaisur areas of North Waziristan. According to a statement by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), security forces conducted an IBO during which five terrorists, including two terrorist commanders Syed Raheem a.k.a Abid and Saufullah Noor of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were killed. Terrorist commander Syed Raheem a.k.a Abid remained involved in seventeen terrorist activities against the security forces from 2007, said ISPR. The statement further added that he was in charge of two suicide bombing centers in Wana and Mir Ali areas. He was tasked by hostile agencies for target killing, recruiting new terrorists and organizing them.

The terrorist commander Syed Rahim @ Abid was also involved in further terrorist activities during November 2020 till January 2021. He was involved in killing of four Maliks in Mir Ali area, three engineers working in a company in North Waziristan

Biden policy on Afghanistan

DNA

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration says it will review last year's US-Taliban agreement under which American forces are to leave Afghanistan by May 2021 in exchange for counter-terrorism guarantees. Pakistan played a key role in facilitating the start of reconciliation talks between warring Afghan parties that led to the peace agreement.

According to a White House statement, Biden's newly appointed National Security Advisor, Jake Sullivan, informed his Afghan counterpart Hamdullah Mohib about the "United States' intention to review" the deal in a phone call on Friday.

and many IEDs attacks. Whereas, Commander Saifullah Noor was directly involved in different IED attacks on Security Forces in Khaisur, added ISPR.

Pak approves Russian vaccine

The authority hopes the first batch of the vaccine would reach Pakistan by the end of January

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan has granted approval for emergency use of the Russian anti-coronavirus vaccine Gam-COVID-Vac, commonly known as Sputnik V. According to sources, the authority hopes the first batch of the vaccine would reach Pakistan by the end of January. The registration board of DRAGP in its Friday meeting authorised emergency use of the Russia-made COVID-19 vaccine Gam-COVID-Vac, a DRAP official said. Last week, the authority had approved Oxford-AstraZeneca and China's Sinopharm vaccines for emergency use. However, the country is yet to receive any vaccine. "A local pharmaceutical firm, AGP Limited, had applied for registration, marketing and distribution of the vaccine in Pakistan," the DRAP official said.

The health authority said the approval was granted on the recommendation of a committee of experts comprising top infectious diseases experts and pathologists. "In all likelihood, a double dose of the Sputnik V in Pakistan would cost

Pak yet to place order for Oxford vaccine

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Although the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has granted approval for the emergency use of Oxford-Astrazeneca's coronavirus vaccine, it is unclear when the inoculations will be available in Pakistan as the pharmaceutical company's authorised agents are yet to place orders. Last week, the Sindh Medical Stores (SMS) was allowed to import the vaccine. Talking to The News, SMS official Usman Ghani said at the moment the British-Swedish company was supply the vaccine to countries that had already booked vaccine doses and paid in advance.

double the rate at which it is available in India," the official added. Developed by M/s Gamaleya National Center of Epidemiology and Microbiology, the vaccine has been approved in 11 countries.

UAE cabinet approves embassy in Israel

DNA

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates cabinet on Sunday approved the establishment of an embassy in the city of Tel Aviv in Israel, state media said. The UAE and Israel agreed to normalise relations in August, a deal forged largely over shared fears of Iran. Since then, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco have all agreed to establish ties with Israel in deals brokered in 2020 by the administration of former US president Donald Trump. No further details about the embassy were given in UAE media.

Kuwaiti emir reappoints PM

FOREIGN DESK

Kuwait City: Kuwait's Emir Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Sunday reappointed the nation's caretaker prime minister to form a new government. The reappointment came six days after Sabah Al-Khaled al-Sabah tendered his government's resignation on Jan. 18 after a dispute with parliament. Several ministers in the previous government tendered their resignations en masse two weeks ago, after lawmakers sought to grill the premier over what they described as "constitutional violations."

No Israel recognition on cards, says Qureshi

ABID RAZA

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has questioned the Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) anti-Israel rallies and said that since Islamabad has made it clear it would not recognise Tel Aviv until the Palestine conflict is resolved, there is no point in holding those demonstrations. "They are misleading the nation," he said. Foreign Minister said that PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has recognised Prime Minister Imran Khan



as 'elected' premier by proposing a no-confidence motion against him. "He should now start calling Imran Khan an elected prime minister and not selected," he said while talking to media in Multan. Talking about a new administration in the White House,

Qureshi said Islamabad is looking to establish good relations with Joe Biden's government. "The world and region have changed in these four years and a lot of changes have occurred in Pakistan as well." There is a harmony between Biden administration and Pakistan government's policies as they are similar to each other, he said. "Biden wants reduced violence in Afghanistan and Islamabad also supports democracy in the neighbouring country." He said the new US leadership would soon realise that India has changed under Narendra Modi and is "no more a democratic country."



ISTANBUL: President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan during welding ceremony of 3rd MILGEM class corvette for Pakistan Navy. - DNA

Pakistan mulls oil import from Iran

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan government is mulling legalizing oil import from Iran. According to sources, talks in this regard are already under way. The purpose of this move is to check illegal oil import from Iran thus avoiding huge loss incurred due to illegal import. It may be mentioned here that on the directions of Prime Minister Imran Khan, operation against the sale of smuggled petroleum products in the country has been accelerated

as this costs Rs 100 billion to Rs 150 billion loss to national kitty. Official sources told this correspondent a comprehensive and well thought out action plan has been prepared to nab the oil smuggling racket without any discrimination. "According to this plan, the crackdown against illegal outlets has been divided into two phase," the sources said, adding, "In the first phase, action against illegal POL retail outlets will simultaneously be taken in Punjab, Sindh and KPK which have already been geo mapped by customs besides choking off supply routes of smuggled POL products from Balochistan to the rest of the country." These sources maintained that the operation in Balochistan will be launched in the second phase after the establishment of new legal POL outlets by the oil marketing companies in all the district of the province. "The option of legalizing import of petroleum products from Iran through land route is also being considered by the relevant quarters to bring an end to smuggling," the sources said.

Continued on Page 06



The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS)

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COMSATS congratulates Hon. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for his re-election as the President of Republic of Ghana. We hope that under his continued Chairmanship, COMSATS would further thrive and achieve its mission of sustainable development in the South.



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Briefs

'Government to ensure medical facilities'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communication Murad Saeed has said that provision of free medical and treatment facilities is the prime responsibility of the state and the government will ensure this facility across the country without any discrimination.

Addressing a ceremony in Islamabad today (Sunday), he said that distribution of Sehat Insaaf Cards to the 100 percent population of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been completed while it is under progress in Punjab, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

He said that the Prime Minister has directed Baluchistan government to start the cards distribution process while the Sindh government should also take initiative in this regard.

The Minister said hundred percent population of Punjab will be enabling to enjoy universal health insurance till December this year. He said this facility is available only in some developed countries of the world.

Appreciating the announcement of medical policy for officers and officials of NHMP, he said that the government is working to bring further improvement in NHA system. Murad Saeed said that initiatives based on modern technology are being taken to ensure transparency in different departments. He said the government will start further development initiatives in backward and deprived areas of the country. He said mega projects are being constructed in these areas to make the local population prosperous.

'Tabdili express chugging towards Sindh'

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice President Haleem Adil has said that our 'Tabdili Express' is now chugging towards Sindh with full speed.

He was addressing a press conference in Gulshan-e-Umar society flanked by PTI Karachi President Khuram Sherzaman, PTI parliamentary leader Bilawal Ghaffar and PTI candidate on PS-88 Jansher Junejo, said a statement on Sunday. Haleem Adil said that Syed Ali Haider Zaidi is son of Karachi and elected representative of the people. We are in the arena of PS-88 to defeat the corrupt mafia, he added.

He said corrupt people have gathered on the stage of PDM but the people of Pakistan have already rejected the stance of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). All parties of PDM are rejected parties, he added. Speaking on the occasion, PTI candidate for the PS-88 bye-election, Jansher Junejo said that the PTI would win from Malir and give the people of Malir rid of the corrupt people. He said we have got the support of the people of Malir who are fed up with the corrupt elements.

Speeding truck crushes 3 youngsters to death

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Three youngsters were crushed to death by a truck in Lahore on Sunday.

According to rescue officials, the accident took place near Gora Qabristan. The truck ran a motorcycle over, killing the three young men. The police said the accident occurred due to speeding. The truck driver fled the scene after the accident. The victims were identified as Umar, Zahid and Ali, aged between 18 and 21 years. Their bodies were shifted to a hospital.

Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar expressed sorrow over the death of the three men in the accident and summoned a report in this regard from the police. He ordered strict action against the negligent driver.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati addressing a press conference on the occasion of a brunch hosted by leading businessman and President UK-Pakistan Business Council (Pakistan Chapter) Khurshid Barlas. Group Leader RCCI Sohail Altaf is also seen. – DNA

Clear Covid-19 vaccination policy and rational distribution urged

Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed urged the donors to directly monitor and control the donated free vaccine doses to avoid misuse and its selling in the private hospitals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The stakeholders speaking at a webinar have suggested the Covid-19 vaccine donors to strictly monitor the distribution and administration of free doses being donated to the Pakistan government. They feared that free vaccine doses might be grabbed by the sides of those in power and sold on high prices as it was done in the case of Covid-19 free testing-kits. The trust deficit between the people and the Pakistan government

has widened. So, it is necessary to have external monitoring and control mechanisms for the Covid-19 vaccine to be in place to benefit the genuinely needy ones and the frontline workers and aged people.

They also urged the government to first develop an inclusive and integrated Covid-19 vaccination policy, followed by a strategic action plan. We are far behind in developing any inclusive and integrated framework for Covid-19 vaccination. Just firefighting would not serve the purpose to take care of the peoples' health-

care and preventive needs. The federal government and the provinces have to be on the same page in this regard.

The participants urged the Chinese government to administer the free-doses of vaccination under their own supervision and by their own teams to ensure the rational use of the donated vaccine. Very well-attended by the stakeholders and experts the webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTN. The key experts in-

cluded chief of the Prime Ministers Shelter Programme Naseem ur Rehman, Dr Masood Ghani, Dr Muhammad Ali, Dr Amena Hasan, Dr Arshad Mahmood, HRDN CEO Robeela Bangash, Zataasha Niazi, Dr Khushboo Ejaz, local leader from Gilgit-Baltistan Iqbal Hussain, Azhar Qureshi, president Islamabad Crescent Lions Club Bashir Ahmed. Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed hosted and moderated the webinar. Speaking on the occasion the Chief of the Pnanaghah (Shelters) Programme Na-

seem ur Rehman said the government would take care of the marginalized communities during the Covid-19 vaccination phase after the free-doses administered to the frontline workers including the medical professionals and aged persons. He hoped the leadership of Dr. Faisal Sultan and his team would rationalize and expedite the process. He said the institutional gaps have widened and trust building is essential for such a type of national crisis impacting human security. Dr Masood Ghani, a well-known health practitioner

and Vice District Governor Association of Lions Clubs International, said the Centre and provinces are not on the same page in handling the Covid-19 pandemic and its vaccination. We don't see any clear and steadfast government policy and engagement of its institutions accordingly. That is why the public is also not taking the pandemic seriously. Despite all lousy handling, we are grateful to Allah for saving us from any major disaster. He asked the government to have an inclusive vaccination policy before going to buy anything.

Miftah demands withdrawal of power tariff hike

"Losses in power transmission and distribution are real reason behind hike in debt," PML-N leader said



DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Miftah Ismail on Sunday demanded withdrawal of recent hike in power tariff. In a statement, the former Minister of Finance said that expensive power generation by furnace oil, line losses and sliding recoveries have pressed the government to increase the power price. "The government could not overburden the people due to its ineligibil-

ity," he said. "We had left behind 1036 billion circularity debt, which has now crossed 2400 billion," the PML-N leader said. "Each month circularity debt in power sector being increased by 50 to 60 billion rupees," Ismail said. "Losses in power transmission and distribution are real reason behind hike in debt," PML-N leader said.

Miftah Ismail also criticized the government's decision of not providing gas to the export-oriented and other local industries and said it will create problems for textile and other industries. He demanded implementation on the merit order and withdrawal of the decision regarding not supplying the gas to industries.

NHA&MP organizes "Successful Completion of Recent Initiatives"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Highways and Motorway Police on Sunday organized a ceremony "Successful Completion of Recent Initiatives" at Drivers Licensing Authority Islamabad. The Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed honored the ceremony as chief guest. The Ceremony was attended by the Inspector General, National Highways & Motorway Police, Kaleem Imam, Addi-

tional IsG, DisG, SSSP and other senior officers of National Highways & Motorway Police. The Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed and Inspector General Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam pinned the badges to promoted Officers. The Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed appreciated the efforts of National Highways and Motorway Police and congratulated the newly promoted officers. The Minister for Communications Murad Saeed said "Motorway police is a

symbol of pride for the whole nation." Motorway police is giving better result even with limited resources. He added that I congratulate Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam Inspector General NHMP and his entire team for doing a great job. He further added that our priority is to build the neglected Motorways and Highways first. The western route to Gawadar will be completed soon. Recruitment and all work in NHMP department is based on merit, other institutions should also work on merit.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman ZLK Securities Zahid Latif Khan in a meeting with ambassador of Kazakhstan. – DNA

Ehsaas to establish a women empowerment Center

More than 20,000 families were likely to benefit from Ehsaas Kafaalat, more than 35,000 children from Waseela-e-Taleem Digital, 2,500 children and mothers from two Nashonuma Centers to be established in 2021

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The country's largest social protection program of Ehsaas will establish a Women Empowerment Center (WEC) in South Waziristan this year to impart livelihood skills training to 200 deserving women annually. According to an official source, the Ehsaas extensive social safety initiative was likely to benefit over 25 percent population of South Waziristan in the year 2021 through various schemes in a transparent manner. The Ehsaas National Socioeconomic survey based on which the Ehsaas Kafaalat and many other stipends were extended to deserving people in the district continued since January 9,

2021 under which Ehsaas enumerators were going house-to-house with tablets to collect district-wide information.

The official source revealed that the socioeconomic survey conducted in 2021 did not cover South Waziristan owing to the military operation. Once the survey was completed, the quantum of social protection support will be enhanced for deserving people in the district, benefiting more than 25 percent population of South Waziristan this year. More than 20,000 families were likely to benefit from Ehsaas Kafaalat, more than 35,000 children from Waseela-e-Taleem Digital, 2,500 children and mothers from two Nashonuma Centers to be established in 2021. An amount of Rs. 22.3 million has

been earmarked for providing individual financial assistance to the poorest families in need. Besides this, Ehsaas will provide 100 artificial limbs to special persons who lost their body parts in bomb/mine blasts in South Waziristan.

The student who can apply for Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarships this year will be benefited from the pool of 50,000 scholarships which are given out every year under this scheme. The currently fast-tracked and end to end digital survey in South Waziristan would build the foundation of wide-ranging social protection interventions in the area. The results of Ehsaas survey would determine which households in the district were eligible to benefit from monthly Kafaalat grants,

Waseela-e-Taleem Digital quarterly stipends, Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarships, Ehsaas Interest Free loans for small enterprises and Ehsaas Amdan assets for income generation. Ehsaas Registration desks would also be opened in the district after the survey to ensure that missed households could come forward and register themselves. Overall, under the umbrella of Ehsaas, there were many social protection and poverty graduation initiatives for the socio-economic transformation of South Waziristan.

During the last one year, the source informed, Ehsaas interest free loans have supported more than 3,706 borrowers through loans worth Rs 119 million to run small enterprises. Under Ehsaas Amdan,

small income-generating assets worth Rs. 240 million have been allocated for 4,000 deserving households to graduate them out of poverty. Through Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarship program, around 102 scholarships have been awarded to deserving and talented students of South Waziristan in the year 2019-20. Ehsaas Emergency Cash worth Rs. 177.85 million has been delivered to 14,821 families of South Waziristan in response to the COVID-19 crisis (April 2020 - October 2020). Individual financial assistance worth Rs. 8.83 million has also been extended to special persons and those in need of education, health and cash support under Ehsaas Bait ul Mal Maddad, the source added.

Sindh Rangers arrest four extortionists

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Rangers Pakistan have arrested four alleged wanted extortionists and drug dealers from Gulbahar area here.

The arrested were identified as Fahad, Sufyan, Osama and Ilyas, said a spokesperson of the Sindh Rangers on Sunday.

The arrested accused reportedly sent a slip demanding Rs 2.5million extortion and a bullet to a trader of Gulbahar Sanitary Market and threatened the trader to kill him and his son. The Rangers have also recovered the cellular phone and SIM Card used by the accused to threatened the trader.

The Rangers spokesperson has appealed to the masses to immediately inform the nearby check post of Rangers, Rangers helpline 1101 or Rangers Madadgar Whatsapp 03479001111 through call or sms about criminal elements.

LAHORE: Punjab govt retrieves state land

LAHORE: District Administration has launched action against Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader's Khokhar Palace in the provincial capital to retrieve state land. As per details, the authorities aim to recover 45 kanals of land and for this purpose 13 shops and several temporary huts have been demolished by the use of heavy machinery.

Officials claimed that out of 177 kanals, only 131 kanals are owned by Saiful-Malook Khokhar and remaining land is illegally occupied. On the other hand, PML-N MPA Saiful-Malook said that government action is politically motivated as Lahore High Court (LHC) has issued restraining order on the issue. Earlier in December last year, Lahore Development Authority (LDA) has postponed operation against illegal wall of Khokhar Palace after facing resistance to avoid outward incident.

According to details, government institutions faced resistance in demolishing the wall of Khokhar Palace, the residence of PML-N MPA Afzal Khokhar and Saiful-Malook Khokhar in Johar Town, Lahore. The protesters climbed on top of the machinery and the officials werestopped from taking action. The workers and protesters chanted slogans and the operation had to be postponed.

Safari Park's elephant being taken care of

KARACHI: A female elephant of the Safari Park in Karachi, Malka, whose video of being suffering from an injury to her leg owing to the negligence of the park's authorities, is said to be in a stable condition. Sharing the health update on the female elephant, the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) which is responsible for the take care of the Safari Park said that the Malka is in good health. Dry skin owing to the winter season led to cracking on her foot's derma, the municipal authority said adding that a veterinary doctor is constantly looking after the elephant.

The doctor after carrying out Malka's complete medical examination has termed her condition as stable, it said. It is pertinent to mention here that an Elephant, Kavaan, was transported to Cambodia more than two months back from Islamabad zoo after he was treated cruelly by the authorities concerned. Kaavan was brought to Pakistan back in 1985 as a gift from Sri Lanka when he was one-year-old and later his inappropriate living conditions in Marghazar Zoo had irked onlookers where he remained chained and that too in a tiny enclosure.

Back in May this year, the Islamabad High Court decreed relocation of Kaavan since he was treated cruelly by the authorities concerned. Kaavan's plight was given a boost over the years by American pop icon Cher, who publicly campaigned for the elephant's relocation. – DNA

Briefs

IRSA releases 29,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 29,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 39,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1470.73 feet, which was 78.73 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 15,700 cusecs each. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1173.10 feet, which was 133.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 10,400 cusecs and 1,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 35,200, 21,800 and 15,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 7,400 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 6,000 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. — APP

COVID-19 claims 48 lives

ISLAMABAD: The national tally of total active COVID-19 cases in the country on Sunday reached 34,628 with 1,594 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,981 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Forty eight corona patients, 39 were under treatment in hospital and nine in their respective homes or quarantines died on Saturday, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NOC). During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in the Punjab followed by Sindh. It added that out of the total 48 deaths during last 24 hours 23 patients died on ventilators. The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 38 percent, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 35 percent, Bahawalpur 32 percent and Lahore 37 percent. The maximum Oxygen beds (alternate oxygen providing facility other than ventilator administered as per medical requirement of COVID patient) was also occupied in Four major areas of Peshawar 45 percent, Multan 36 percent, Karachi 38 percent and Rawalpindi 27 percent. Around 304 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in the country while no COVID affected person was on ventilator in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Balochistan. Some 40,285 tests were conducted across the country on Saturday, including 6,207 in Sindh, 19,090 in Punjab, 6,513 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 7,102 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 596 in Balochistan, 358 in GB, and 419 in AJK. Around 486,489 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. — APP

President ICCI urges govt to solve business community's issues

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce (ICCI) said that the business community is the backbone of the country's economy, therefore, its role in economic stability is vital. He stressed that the government should solve the key issues of the business community to facilitate them in business promotion. He said this while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of a new branch of D-Watson Group Chain Store at Jinnah Supermarket Islamabad. Mian Akram Farid, Chairman ICCI Founder Group, Zafar Bakhtawari Chairman D Watson Group, Zubair



Ahmed Malik former President FPCCI, Ejaz Abbasi former President ICCI, Ahsan Bakhtawari, Waqar Bakhtawari, Arham Bakhtawari, Asad Aziz, Zahid Maqbool, Ajmal Baloch, Tahir Abbasi, Chaudhry Abdul Ghaffar, Sheikh Abdul Waheed, Ashfaq Chatha and others were present at the occasion. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that

D.Watson Group has provided employment to hundreds of people and was making useful contributions towards the economy. He paid tributes to D.Watson Group for opening a new branch and hoped that it would continue to achieve further growth. Mian Akram Farid Chairman Founder Group said that D-Watson Group's

manifesto is to provide quality service at low prices. He congratulated D.Watson Group for opening a new branch of its chain store and hoped that they will continue their high quality and service. Zafar Bakhtawari Chairman D.Watson Group said that his family has been involved in this business for many decades. He said that as a result of dedication and hardwork, D.Watson Group have achieved many new milestones. Zubair A. Malik said that D.Watson Group is another name for high standards and ethics. He said that with honesty and ethics, the Group has captured significant market share and a special place in the hearts of the people.

IESCO notifies power schedule

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Sunday issued a power suspension programme for Monday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm, CDA, FHS, I-8/4, KRL, Fazia, Jinnah Camp, Al Noor, Falcon, Shakrial, Noor Muhammad, Kurry Road, Service Road, Tariq Shaheed, Muslim Town, Chakri, Arsalan Poultry Farm, SPD, Padial, Kahuta City 1,2, Hanif Shaheed feeders and surrounding areas. — APP

CDA approves 41 building plans in last 20 days

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has approved building plans of 41 commercial and residential buildings during last 20 days. The authority also issued completion certificates to 10 buildings. According to the detail, the department of Building Control of CDA received 121 plans for approval from January 1 to January 20. Out of these, 107 were the residential plans and 35 were approved. There were objections on 33 plans while 29 plans were delayed. Similarly, 6 out of 14 commercial building plans were approved. There were objection on one plan and seven plans

CDA improving road infrastructure across city

ISLAMABAD: The construction work by Capital Development Authority (CDA) for improving, rehabilitating, repairing and rebuilding the road infrastructure across the city is underway. In this regard, during the last few days, the road maintenance department has done the work of fixing of curb stones, maintenance, repairing and lane marking of roads in sectors including G-6, G-7, G-8, G-9, G-10 and G-8, said a press release issued here on Sunday. The agency is doing lane marking on Saddar Road in Sector G-6 as well while stine printing work has been done in sectors F-6, F-8 and F-7. Road patch work and road carpeting is in progress in other sectors including G-9, I-8, I-9 and I-10, PR added. — DNA

are still in the final stages of their approval. The approvals of the said building plans were delayed due to non-payment of security fee, no-clearance from estate department, and for building violation. The current administration of CDA received applications for completion certificates of 76 residential buildings during the last 20 days and 10 of them have been given the certificates, according to the officials.

Investigation wing of Islamabad police revamped

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The investigation wing of Islamabad police has been revamped with the purpose to ensure speedy and quality investigation into the cases. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman, the revamping process of the investigation was initiated and Senior Superintendent of Police has been appointed to head this wing. SP Investigation (East) and SP Investigation (West) would report to SSP (Investigation) while forensic science team would also assist during investigation process in case of any crime incident. Two separate squads — Special Investigation and Anti-Proclaimed Offenders' squads — have been

constituted to ensure speedy investigation of criminal cases and arrest of criminals at large. Islamabad police chief said that such revamping would help to ensure quality investigation into cases and make the entire investigation process at par with international standard. IGP Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman said that citizens' complaints would be timely addressed through this revamping and imprisonment to the perpetrators of crimes would be ensured by timely submission of challans in courts. The police personnel of this wing would timely collect evidences of crime cases and to assist in fair and transparent investigation. The IGP Islamabad said that he had top priority to ensure speedy justice to people at their door steps and zero tolerance policy would be adopted in this regard.

Free camps set up to provide legal aid to Isltoities

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration in collaboration with a civil society organization has set up at least three free legal aid camps in various areas of Islamabad to help citizens get justice. The camps were set up in Sector G-7, F-7 and others to provide free assistance to the people in their legal matters, an ICT admin official told APP on Sunday. He said the initiative was taken with the help of Peace and Justice Network—a non-governmental organization. Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafaqat visited the free legal aid camp, established at sector G-7 katchi abadi the other day and said hopefully it would benefit people in getting justice. — DNA

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

One of the largest banks of the country is inviting applications against the following positions from professionals with proven track record and capacity to perform as a catalyst for transformation in a challenging environment in the area of **Human Resource**.

The individuals who fulfill the below-mentioned basic eligibility criteria may apply for the following positions:

01	Position/Job Title	Head of Talent Management
	Reporting to	Group Chief – HR Management Group
	Academic / Professional Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum Bachelor's Degree from a HEC recognized University/ Institute. Master's Degree would be preferred.
	Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 10 years of experience in Human Resource and/or Banking.
	Other Skills/ Expertise/ Knowledge Required	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment strategies Headcount Planning Talent management <p>Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent interpersonal, communication and influential skills Strong executor with determination and drive that is effective and pragmatic Strong analytical, problem solving and decision making skills Leadership skills/coaching and mentoring
	Outline of Main Duties / Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop and keep an updated plan for efficient supply of required Human resources via internal & external talent mapping, in line with Bank's overall recruitment requirement. To build strategy for quality recruitment and maintain talent pool as per the business requirement. To maintain relationships with business and support functions and partner with key stakeholders establishing a workable framework for HR best practice implementation. To ensure regular improvement and implementation of policies with respect to recruitment function and provide leadership to the talent team. To manage Career Management Wing and the promotion cycle across the Bank. To regularly update and ensure availability of recruitment materials / sources such as Job descriptions, Job specifications, testing tools, organized data bank of applicants and other recruitment channels. To provide recruitment counsel and guidance to hiring managers, Human Resource Business Partners and talent team. To be a strong partner to business leaders in developing functional structures and recruitment strategies to meet their needs and hiring challenges. To measure key recruitment metrics, like source of hire and time to hire. To oversee recruiting events nationally to increase company awareness to attract talent. To conduct manpower planning exercise in liaison with respective stakeholders and prepare annual Headcount budget to forecast hiring needs based on business growth and/or plans. To manage the deceased and disabled quotas and effectively integrate them into the annual recruitment plans. To expand candidate market presence and deliver candidate experiences that reflect candidate brand and employee value proposition. To adhere to all regulatory guidelines with respect to the recruitment function including submission of FPTs of Key Executive positions to SBP within stipulated frame of time. To supervise & execute structured Internships Program for the Bank.
02	Position/Job Title	Senior HR Business Partner
	Reporting to	Group Chief – HR Management Group
	Academic / Professional Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum Bachelor's Degree from a HEC recognized University/ Institute. Master's Degree would be preferred.
	Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 10 years of experience in Human Resource and/or Banking.
	Other Skills/ Expertise/ Knowledge Required	<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate success in all Human Resource and functional areas within a dynamic environment Must be hands-on and capable of planning, development and executing Human Resource projects <p>Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-developed relationship management and communication skill Detail oriented and committed to a high degree of accuracy Good understanding of business and financial acumen Leadership skills/coaching and mentoring
	Outline of Main Duties / Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To lead and monitor all Human Resource services on ground across functions and regions, supporting businesses in all Human Resource initiatives. To work closely with business heads to understand their requirements and ensure adherence to organizational policies by the Human Resource team. To develop and nurture partnerships through human resources to bridge gap between management and employees. To plan, lead and align Human Resource initiative with organizational objectives across the board. To communicate and lead nationwide special projects initiated by the Human Resource department. To provide input on workforce and succession planning as well as plan business unit restructuring. To maintain awareness of the culture, plans, financial positions, and competition of the business units under the Human Resource purview. To review and recommend improvement of the organization's policies procedure and practices. To collaborate with colleagues in the human resources department to develop policies, programs, and solutions. To communicate changes in the organization's policies and procedures and ensure proper compliance. To monitor and reengineer Human Resource processes to ensure maximum efficiency. To work closely with the business in the annual performance management cycle. To find ways to build morale, improve workplace relationships, boost productivity and retention. To lead the development of departmental goals and objectives. To oversee employee data analysis to stay abreast and create a better working environment and culture. To keep tabs on grievances across the network and implement disciplinary procedures in liaison with Employee Relations Division according to company policies and procedures. To perform periodic visits at station / branches level for the visibility and accessibility of Human Resource Department and creating awareness.
03	Position/Job Title	Assistant Manager Payroll
	Reporting to	Manager Payroll SAP HCM
	Academic / Professional Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum Bachelors from a HEC recognized University / Institution. Master's degree will be preferred.
	Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 3 years of experience in managing payroll related activities. Candidates having experience on SAP for a large scale organization and/or Banking would be preferred.
	Other Skills/ Expertise/ Knowledge Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In depth knowledge of payroll processing and reporting. Familiar with Microsoft Office applications.
	Outline of Main Duties / Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide support to Manager Payroll in disbursement of monthly payroll through SAP HCM. To support Manager Payroll in executing APA and other increases like NMTOs and Promotions. To manage Centralized Processing of Bank Contributions, Employee Provident Fund Contribution, Pension and other standard deductions on behalf of End of Services Benefits Operations Wing for conventional banking. To provide SAP technical support / guidance to Performance & Rewards Management Wing in bulk promotions, Basic Pay Fixation and other related tasks. To co-ordinate with SAP regional support staff on regular basis for data update in SAP and payroll related queries. To help Manager Payroll in processing and disbursement of Annual Bonuses and festivity payments. To manage centralized collection of contribution and employees' deduction of Islamic Banking offices for Financial Control Group and End of Services Benefits Operations Wing and prepare centralized vouchers / RBVs for all regions and its branches.
	Assessment Test / Interview(s)	Only shortlisted applicants strictly meeting the above-mentioned basic eligibility criteria will be invited for test and / or panel interview(s).
	Employment Type	The employment will be on contractual basis, for three years which may be renewed on discretion of the Management. Selected candidates will be offered compensation package and other benefits as per Bank's Policy / rules.
	Place of Posting	Karachi

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The candidates should clearly mention their **Name, Father's Name, Date of Birth, CNIC Number, Qualifications with percentage / CGPA / Division, Place of Domicile and complete Current Mailing / Residential Address with Telephone Numbers PTCL / Mobile** in their Resume / Application.

Applications received after due date will not be considered in any case. No TA/DA will be admissible for test / interview.

PID (K) 2021/2020

(We are an equal opportunity employer)

Women, minorities and differently-abled persons are encouraged to apply.



'Test centers loot poor expats with both hands'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Overseas Employment Promoters Association (POEPA) has made a startling revelation that the GCC-approved medical centres are involved in loot and plunder in the name of medical tests of poor overseas Pakistani workers. Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, POEPA senior vice chairman Capt (R) Naseem Akhtar, Vice Chairman Makail Bangush and Khalid Javed said that a Gulf-cooperation council, Approved Medical centres Association (GAMCA), is admin-

istratively managing 45 medical centres in Pakistan who are departing to Saudi Arabia. They have made compulsory for Pakistani workers to conduct the medical test from its approved centres before going to Saudi Arabia. The POEPA representatives said that these medical centres are just a source of loot and plunder of the poor workers as their certificates are not being accepted in the Gulf countries, this certificate is only for departure. The medical centres are charging Rs 9,000 for each test, while an additional amount of Rs 2,000 is being charged separately in the name of registration; whereas other laboratories are charging

half fee for these tests, they added. They further said that the Pakistani workers were not only passed through mental trauma but great financial loss due to these practices. Neither these medical centres submit the return nor pay the tax so they requested the Pakistani government to establish a Regulatory authority to check the GCC approved medical centres. They also requested Muhammad Bin Suleman, who is the Ambassador of Pakistan in KSA, to issue directions to the Saudi Embassy in Pakistan to manage the matters of medical test. They also requested the Prime Minister Imran Khan, who loved the expats, to take notice of the exploitation of the poor workers in the name of tests and stake urgent measures to stop the dirty practice forthwith. They demanded that the Pakistani government in league with the Saudi government should find out some mutually agreed solution to the serious problems so as these poor workers could be protected from the loot and plunder of these mafias. The Competitive Commission of Pakistan (CCP) had also imposed hefty fine on these medical centres back in 2012 however they got stay from court. The vice Chairman also requested the government especially the CCP to start investigations of these centers as medical centers are involved in cartelization.



Briefs

'Educated Pak promises peaceful Pakistan'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 'Pakistan has celebrated International Day of Education in line with the rest of the nations of the world. This day reminds us that without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in breaking the cycle of poverty and to advance sustainable development and providing life-long learning opportunities for all', said Prof Dr Zia ul Qayyum, VC, AIOU in a message released on celebration of International Day of Education today.

He stressed the youth of Pakistan to serve the nation after seeking education and play their due role in the progress and development of the country. He highlighted the role of AIOU in promoting education and enhancing rate of literacy by initiating various key projects targeting under privileged and marginalized segments of the society.

He, further, added that within the limited time period of two years, he has expanded the regional network of the university by establishing ten new regional centers.

He said that AIOU is providing free education to the people of Baluchistan, KPK, GB and former FATA. He concluded that AIOU will strive to promote learning to empower people, protect the planet, build shared prosperity and foster peace by providing quality educational services to the remotest and distant regions of the country and by focusing on education of every individual in the country.

DSWC Rwp constructs 1800 mini dams

RAWALPINDI: The Directorate of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC), Punjab, Rawalpindi Region, under water resources development program has constructed over 1800 mini dams in Potohar Region which are irrigating over 45,000 acres land with 2000 water ponds for 20,000 acres. According to Director Soil Conservation Muhammad Akram, the construction of the mini dams and water ponds has also developed positive environmental effects in the region. The underground water table is rising up with more employment opportunities for the people. Fish and cattle farming businesses are now flourishing in the region, he said. The mini dams and water ponds are used to divert water for irrigation and other purposes, he said adding, the water accumulated in mini dams can also be utilised for vegetable and fruit cultivation. Meanwhile, Director Water Management Rawalpindi Division Dr. Iqbal Chohan informed that the department under the soil conservation programme also completed a large number of projects and reclaimed areas, including inlets/outlets projects for 27,245 acres, retaining walls for 27,557 acres, gully plugging spillways for 85,782 acres, spurs for 24,016 acres and 32 earthen bunds. — APP

IPS delegation briefed on CPEC progress, challenges

Bajwa was of the view that underdeveloped areas, especially southern parts of Balochistan were being given importance in CPEC; a dam and desalination plant have been built in Gwadar in a bid to resolve chronic water shortages affecting the inhabitants



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan attaches great importance to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a national project, and is ready to pay any price for its success. The chairman of the newly created CPEC Authority Gen (r) Asim Saleem Bajwa stated this at an exclusive session with a delegation of senior officials and researchers of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) held at the CPEC Authority's Secretariat. The IPS delegation comprised its Executive President Khalid Rahman, GM Operations Naufil Shahrukh, senior associates Amanullah Khan, Mirza Hamid Hasan, Dr Malika Zeba Khan, Ambassador (r) Tajammul Altaf, Brigadier (r) Said Nazir Mohmand, and members of the Institute's research and outreach team including Shafaq Sarfaraz, Asim Ehsan, Kulsoom Belal, Wali Farooqi, Hafiz Inamullah

Khan, Shahid Afzal and Maimoona Mahmood. Briefing the delegation about the progress on CPEC, the chairman said that work on the eastern, western and central alignments is in full swing, and the second phase of the project is just beginning. He also rubbished the claims that work on phase one has slowed down, claiming nothing was on hold. Bajwa was of the view that underdeveloped areas, especially southern parts of

Balochistan were being given importance in CPEC; a dam and desalination plant have been built in Gwadar in a bid to resolve chronic water shortages affecting the inhabitants. An airport with the biggest runway of Pakistan worth \$230 million was also being built in Gwadar. Commenting on phase one of CPEC, Asim Bajwa said the first phase's success depends on the second phase, which involves business-to-business and people-to-people con-

tacts. He also said synergy among all stakeholders is required to make CPEC a success. In this regard, Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce & Industry was also being revived, he informed. He stressed the need for projecting CPEC as a regional connectivity initiative to make Pakistan emerge as an economically galvanizing state instead of a security or terror-fighting state on the global spectrum. Afghan trans-

it trade, he added, is also now being facilitated through Gwadar port. Khalid Rahman opined that China and Pakistan both need each other to implement CPEC as the initiative's success lies in further strengthening bilateral relations. He also underlined the importance of transparency and effective perception management for the success of CPEC to counter the nefarious designs of Pakistan and China's adversaries at all levels.

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly NA-52 Islamabad and Chairman Standing Committee for Interior Raja Khurram Nawaz on Sunday said government started historical development projects in rural areas of the federal capital. Talking to people of his constituency, he said on the directions of Prime Minister Imran Khan, they would ensure provision of all facility to residents of Islamabad phase wise. He conducted detailed discussion on various issues and development projects with residents. Khurram Nawaz said the incumbent government was committed to provide relief to poor segments of society. — APP

COMSTech International workshop begins today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTech International Workshop on "Fundamental Techniques in Viral Diseases Diagnostics" is going to kick off on Monday, January 25, 2021 at COMSTech. The three-day workshop consists upon four technical sessions. Experts from Germany, China, Sweden and Pakistan will give lectures on different aspects of viral diseases. Prof. Dr. S. M. Wasim Jafri, Professor of Medicine, Aga Khan University, Pakistan is the keynote speaker in the inaugural session. Viral diseases' global clinical impact, diagnosis, treatment, prevention; virus genomics and evolution; Introduction to coronaviruses and development of test system for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies; SARS-CoV-2 spike a major determinant of viral infectivity and spread; developing methods for rapid detection of emerging viruses and insights into SARS-CoV-2 polymerase catalysis and Remdesivir intervention are some of the topics of the lectures to be delivered during the workshop.

'Govt. starts historical development projects'

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47,982 vehicles, motorcycles registered

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Excise and Taxation (E&T) Rawalpindi Division registered as many as 47,982 vehicles and motorcycles during first six months of financial year 2020-21. According to an E&T spokesman, the department collected revenue amounting to Rs 84,778,366 from the registration of vehicles and motorcycles. He said, total 28,481 vehicles and motorcycles were registered in Rawalpindi district, 5,072 in Attock, 5,325 in Chakwal and 9,104 in Jhelum district. To a question he informed that in total 47,982 vehicles including Motorcycles, Motor Cars, Jeeps, St. Wagons, Pick-ups, Vans, Buses, Mini buses, Flying Coaches, Richshaws, Motorcars, Trucks, Tractors, Ambulances, Water Bowzers, Double Cabin and Cranes were registered during the period in the division.

Efforts afoot to launch 2nd phase of 'Hunarmand Pakistan'

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Efforts are afoot to launch second phase of 'Hunarmand Pakistan' (Skill for All) programme in the coming months with a target to impart professional trainings to more than 50 thousands youth in conventional and high-tech trades. The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) Executive Director, Dr. Nasir Khan disclosed this in an exclusive interview with APP. He said process for the launch of second phase had formally been initiated as quality technical and vocational training institutes were told to submit their applications till January 25 if they were interested to run the professional training programmes under the 'Skill for All'. Nasir Khan expressed the hope that enrollment of the students would begin by the next-month's end under the second phase. To a query, he said at least 37,000 young people were registered for traditional and high tech-trade courses from across the country under its first phase, which would conclude by the first

week of March. Adding further, he said over 20,000 were enrolled from under-developed areas for imparting conventional skills such as welding, plumbing, dress-making and cooking whereas around 17,000 youth for high tech trades like artificial intelligence, robotics and cloud computing from across the country. The executive director said the government launched 'Skill for All' project in the start of 2020 under the Kamyab Jawan Programme with Rs 10 billion seed money and set a target to train 50,000 each in high tech and traditional trades by end of the Fiscal Year 2020-21. The initiative was meant to increase number of country's skilled workforce by imparting six-month trainings to less developed areas youth in traditional trades besides training to people in high technologies from across the country, Nasir Khan noted. Calling the trainings one component of the programme, he said efforts were also underway to set up countrywide smart labs and skill centers in the religious seminaries under the 'Skill for All' programme.

CDA to plant saplings along Metro bus route

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to plant saplings in March on greenbelts on both sides of the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Metro Bus, which fall within the limits of the federal capital. The CDA's Director General (Environment) inspected the greenbelts on Metro Bus route along with the

Director National Highway Authority (NHA) and discussed the plan to plant trees in upcoming plantation drive. CDA official told that climate change ministry would also provide its financial and technical assistance in the plantation drive to ensure maximum survival rate. According to the CDA official, the buses plying on the metro route emit greenhouse gases but plantation on both sides would help mitigate their impacts

to a satisfactory level. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) has time and again warned against rising air pollution in Islamabad especially due to increasing vehicular traffic on roads. According to Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP), around 500,000 vehicles, including vans, trucks, buses and other heavy transport vehicles are presently plying on the roads of the capital.



RAWALPINDI: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid addressing a gathering in Saddiqabad. — DNA

'NAB gets evidence of stashed abroad money by big fish'

He said Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, father of the nation in his address to Constituent Assembly had identified bribery and nepotism as main cause of decay

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal on Sunday said the anti-graft watchdog has solid evidence of billion of rupees' money laundered by some big fish. In a statement here, he said billion of rupees were laundered by opening fake accounts in the names of "Faluda Wala," "Chabri Wala" and "Paupar Wala".

NAB investigated white collar mega corruption cases and time was required to probe such cases as some information needed to be collected from abroad. He said various corruption references filed by bureau were under trial in various accountability courts. He said Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, father of the nation in his address to Constituent Assembly had identified bribery and nepotism as main cause of decay. He said there was a difference be-



tween white collar crimes and street crimes. NAB was committed for logical conclusion of mega corruption cases. NAB was the focal institution of Pakistan under United Nations convention against corruption and was Chairman of SAARC Anti Corruption Forum. NAB is considered role model organization in SAARC countries. International Economic, Transparency International Pakistan, PILDAT, Mishal

Pakistan has lauded anti-graft watchdog's anti corruption endeavours. NAB has so far deposited Rs. 714 billion since its inception, which is being termed as a great achievement. Some 1,243 corruption cases, having accumulative corruption volume of Rs 943 billion, are under trial in various accountability courts. NAB has constituted Combined Investigation Team (CIT) to benefit from the collective wisdom of senior supervisory officers. The CIT has the services of director, additional director, investigation officer, legal counsel and experts of monetary and land revenue department. NAB officers are working with dedication and commitment as per law. NAB is on right track due to commitment of its officials. Chairman NAB vowed taking the ongoing flour and sugar scam investigations into logical conclusion as per law. — APP

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Child protection laws

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is planning to amend laws pertaining to child protection and welfare. The previous legislation, KP Child Protection and Welfare (Amendment) Act 2010 sentenced a person convicted of sexually abusing a child faces up to 14 years in imprisonment. The new legislation in the works, titled KP Child Protection and Welfare (Amendment) Act 2020, is harsher; it incorporates more severe punishments including life imprisonment and Rs5 million fine and also proposes the death penalty for organ traffickers. According to some sources, the bill even goes as far as to stipulate that the proceedings of the execution, in case of a sentence of death, shall be recorded by audio-visual means and such recordings would be made accessible to the public, as a way to once again highlight just how seriously the government takes crimes against children. These reforms are right in a sense; there was a need for harsher sentences against offenders. The debate about whether the death penalty should be resorted to in the worst of cases, like child sexual abuse, has been ongoing at the same time that more and more cases of rape and sexual assault against minors are reported. Yet the question here should not just be one of morality, but also of effectiveness. Harsher sentences and symbolic actions might bring vindication and justice, but they will not be enough for prevention. Rather, the KP government, before signing this bill into law, needs to pay more attention to the process of investigation and prosecution of sexual abuse. The current cases which rise to national attention are only the reported ones; thousands go by unreported because of the difficulty that victims are put through at the investigation and prosecution stage. The main culprit in the Motorway case had had two gang-rape cases registered against him previously but had been let out on bail, which indicates severe flaws in the prosecution process. Neither has the government yet been able to properly define what a child means—these are amendments which need to be introduced in the bill.

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Resurrecting IS

The twin suicide attack by the Islamic State (IS) in Baghdad, leaving 32 dead and more than 100 injured, shows that the group is re-organising in the region once more. The suicide blasts caution us that the threat of IS still looms large over Iraq. The attacks raise questions about the Iraqi forces' preparedness in the face of militant threat. The blasts are a reminder of one of the conflicts Biden administration has to make some quick decisions about. But the urgency to make a swift decision to save the region from chaos must not push it towards further instability. The deteriorating security situation in Iraq needs smart and intelligent moves from stakeholders. Otherwise, violence in the country—especially IS-induced in northern Iraq—that has not abated can shatter the sense of relative security that the people felt in recent times. While the world condemns the attack as a senseless act of brutality, IS continues to rely on violence as a bargaining tool. The Afghan government's gradual capitulation before the Taliban sets a negative precedent for IS. The militant's outfit strategy is similar to that of the Taliban. A careful look at the organisation's modus operandi suggests that it is gaining strength by attacking and weakening the peripheries, just like the Taliban did in Afghanistan. The Iraqi government and its allies need to bar the militant group from recruiting from the Sunni segment of the population. This can only happen if the Iraqi government reaches a political consensus with the Sunnis that feel discriminated against and excluded from the national ambit. Without agreeing on a power-sharing formula with the Sunni leaders, Iraqi leadership cannot stop the resurrection of IS. Lastly, the increasing violence in Iraq while the United States (US) is focusing on pulling out from Afghanistan indicates America's negligence from Iraq's affairs. The vacuum left behind in Iraq will allow IS and other terror outfits to make inroads in Iraq.

Leadership: Pivotal for Global S&T Cooperation

Farhana Saleem

The organization is a fraternity of 27 countries in 3 continents; Africa, Asia, and Latin America, with presentation of 12, 13 and 2 countries, respectively. While these continents are home to different histories, ethnicities, cultures, and religions, they are joined together on the platform of COMSATS based on their realization of the importance of resource-sharing for S&T-led development.

The map of the Globe has long been shaded into different hues since as long as the geographical blueprints of the world have existed for a number of documentary reasons. A prominent reason to shade different parts of the world differently has been to indicate the level of socio-economic progress of these countries and regions. The concept of development may be evolutionary in nature depending on the resources, direction and circumstances, countries may move up and down the rungs of the constructs of development narrative, com-

monly known as 'developed', 'developing' and under-developed. Such movement would proverbially change the expanse of the hue attributed of each level of development on the map. Perhaps the two broadest categories the world has been divided in recent decades are the Global South and the Global North, implying low and high levels of development, respectively. While no country on the planet can be dubbed as free of development issues in some form, these categories in a simplistic manner elude to the intensity and depth of some fundamental development issues, the understanding being that the North has better adapted to or transcended many of those issues to secure for them better quality of life and a more stable place in the comity of nations. The development gap and divide between the two regional constructs have taken centre-stage in the discussions of global development for decades. A useful outcome of the evolutionary discussions has been the concept of South-South Cooperation, whereby the less fortunate nations of the world can come to their own rescue with pooled ideas and resources. This formed the premise of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) an apex forum to bring together developing countries to find shared S&T-based solutions for common problems.

The organization is a fraternity of 27 countries in 3 continents; Africa, Asia, and Latin America, with presentation of 12, 13 and 2 countries, respectively. While these continents are home to different histories, ethnicities, cultures, and religions, they are joined together on the platform of COMSATS based on their realization of the importance of resource-sharing for S&T-led development. The highest level leadership of these countries is cognizant of the importance of the organization's mandate and its crucial importance to their national development. The Heads-of-State level highest statutory body of COMSATS currently has the able leadership of the President of Ghana, H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo. President Akufo-Addo is

also a prominent figure in the region and is known for his vision and foresight on global issues and effective participation in international fora.

"The pivotal role science and technology play in development is well acknowledged. Together with innovation, they have become the new currency for development. Science and technology hold the key to finding sustainable economic, social and environmental solutions to the many problems that confront us. And these problems are shared - from Algeria to Zimbabwe, and from Benin to Tanzania, we face common problems", remarked President Akufo-Addo while hosting a breakfast meeting on the sidelines of the 2020 Summit of the African Union held in February a little before the COVID-19 pandemic took the world in its grips.

The President passed on his cognizance of the importance of COMSATS' mission to the leaders of the African world attending the Summit garnering their support towards the organization's mandate and sensitizing the role that the organization can play in their development. Among the prominent figures attending the meeting were the President of Nigeria H.E. Muhammad Buhari, Vice President of Gambia H.E. Isaton Touray, Ministers and high officials from Nigeria, Ghana, and other member states of COMSATS. The delegation of COMSATS was led by the Executive Director, Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi and included Prof. Ashraf Shaalan (Egypt), Chairperson COMSATS Coordinating Council, and Prof. Dr. Orkun Hasekioglu, Advisor to President of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK).

The President of Ghana in his capacity as the Chairman of the Commission apprised the participating leaders and officials about the previous and ongoing as well as future activities of the Organization. The Chairperson was well-aware and appreciative that COMSATS is conscious of its role in helping mitigate some of these challenges in its member states. Within its mandate and structural framework, programmes and various initiatives have been tailored to narrow the development gap

through different means. Substantial space has been provided in the Organization's bodies to the African member countries to play a meaningful role and a leading part in steering research and development as well as capacity building, education and training, while also working on addressing these needs for the member states in other regions.

In its 26 years of overarching initiatives based on creative approaches, COMSATS has promoted capacity building, sharing of knowledge, experience and good practices, technological research outcomes and education, know-how and scientific resources. The organizational structures of COMSATS integrate both the levels of decision and policy makers and generating scientific resources in the centres of COMSATS' Network. The Consultative Committee comprising ministers and senior officials work under the Commission represented by the top leadership of the member countries. Strategic and policy guidance is provided for COMSATS' future work and direction by these bodies. The Network of the scientific Centres of Excellence together with the thematic groups contributes more substantively in executing various programmes.

A major challenge in harnessing inter-governmental cooperation of any kind, especially in S&T, is developing consensus in the top tiers of the government systems. It is no small feat and calls for able leadership. Fortunately for COMSATS, it is available to COMSATS through continuous support of the President of Ghana who has been an ardent advocate and supporter of development causes and campaigns not only in Ghana but regionally. Since 2017 when he first assumed the office of the President of Ghana, Akufo-Addo has provided effective leadership to the organization. With his current re-election, COMSATS stands to benefit greatly from the momentum it has achieved over the last few years under the patronage of the President of Ghana and his office.

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Rising China And The Burgeoning Industrial Cooperation

Hassan Daud



According to World Bank's report, China's next transformation is well under way, and a "New Economy" is emerging, all set to make global impact through innovations and economic initiatives leveraging its demographic and economic diversity

China's strength as the factory of the world and the key driver of global economic growth is visible as the world enters 2021 with new hope to combat the pandemic challenge through vaccine and bring growth and prosperity. In a country where per capita income has considerably increased and the New Year speech of President Xi echoed these sentiments when he said "In 2020, China made the historic achievement of establishing a moderately prosperous society in all respects and

achieved decisive success in eradicating extreme poverty". In the post pandemic time, China has also taken the lead in achieving an economic regrowth with the World Bank and IMF forecasting GDP growth by 7.9 percent in 2021. According to the new 5 year plan starting in 2021, China will be able to eradicate extreme poverty, accelerate technology and high quality growth, invest sizable share of its GDP on culture and sports development and encourage Chinese companies to internationalize and pursue global expansion. Most interestingly, experts believe that by 2030 (the planned completion time of CPEC projects), China will have 6G around 1000 times the speed which is available today and with that level of connectivity and high speed transportation across all modes through which China will be able to replenish goods, works and services with far more sustainable speed and unprecedented scale. The main sectors and industries benefiting this economic transformation include high-speed railways, electric and hybrid cars, renewable energy generation, movie Production, online gaming, high-end Communication, quantum computing, 5G revolutions in agriculture, high-end logistics and transaction services, health care, traditional Chinese medicine, biomedical, telecommunications, energy, robotics, digitalization, Renewable Electricity Producers and several more avenues.

According to World Bank's report, China's next transformation is well under way, and a "New Economy" is emerging, all set to make global impact through innovations and economic initiatives leveraging its demographic and economic diversity. China's GDP is \$14.3 trillion and these numbers in them self gives us a reason to promote trade and Industrial linkages with China through CPEC or any opportunity that exists outside the great initiative as the important phase leading to 2030 is likely to be transformational for the industrial Growth, development of Gwadar, regional trade, industrial and investment landscape in Pakistan. Through CPEC development, it is also expected that by 2025 processing and manufacturing industries will be developed including setting up of the priority SEZs and by 2030, ML-1 close to being fully operational and the endogenous mechanism for sustainable economic growth will be in place.

While there is a high level of misunderstanding and lack of knowledge of China in the West there is some dearth in our understanding of how China is growing and will shape up by 2030 and why we need to attract Chinese FDI fast and increase level of business to business interaction especially in the areas of e-commerce, technology, real estate, hospitality, health care, low-cost housing, media & entertainment and telecommunications. For that to happen and for us to address the challenges and harnessing the opportunities and set the future directions to attract FDI, it requires a new industrial and investment development path that promotes complementarity, consistency and high level of coordination at all levels. This path is not going to be easy considering the hard work and dedication like China where the entire generation exhibited in their pursuit to prosperity. Therefore, we need to open our imagination and interact with Chinese business community, academia and Government officials and discuss possibilities for Pakistan's industrial development in the Chinese growth.

The recovery of global FDI will probably start to happen by end of 2021 opening opportunities for investment and development and giving us time to prepare suitable investment promotion strategy charting a sustainable path to attract multinationals which may look to diversify and relocate to mitigate. We therefore need to address the challenges and harnessing the opportunities that are likely to arise from the future directions of global FDI through novelty in our investment strategy to attract Chinese and other investment. As a stepping stone our standing of EODB has witnessed improvement and the Government including provincial governments is crafting policies favorable to market transactions, to attract foreign direct investment, protecting property rights to encourage entrepreneurship and promoting sustainable knowledge investment. Following the same, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has recently approved its "Industrial Policy 2020" and Trade & Commerce Strategy, which will pave the path for sustainable industrialization in Rashakai SEZ and other areas and will generate economic activity. These policies and strategies make an attempt to prioritize and incentivize trade and investment in industrial sectors and create a "Pull Factor" for investors to form

joint ventures with local investors, invest in utilizing indigenous natural resources, bring new technology, invest export oriented industries, and add value to local products.

In order to accrue desired outcome fast, the Industrial cooperation under CPEC needs to remain consistent and in line with national agenda of economic growth, employment generation, regional connectivity and rapid industry and trade development leading to more sustainable investment in the green and blue economy. The Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and its development activity corridors are essential elements of the logistics system. Therefore, in these crucial times, we also need to expedite the push for improving business environment in an effort to spur economic development and for this, we need to target specific sectors with improving efficiencies, establish one window (at Federal and Provincial Bobs) and promote market competition by crafting attractive policies that are flexible for any novel business venture through a government-industry dialogue as complicated institutional arrangement is often interpreted as commercial risk. Secondly, accelerate country's efforts to strengthen our human capital to prepare them for supporting the labour seeking investment by increasing annual per capita expenditure on education and vocational training to address the CPEC Project and its industrial cooperation. Empirical data shows that when China started its path to attract foreign direct investment under the leadership of visionary Deng Xiaoping the main factor was the low wage yet efficient labor. Thirdly, bring an unambiguous regulatory framework through investment law. Fourthly, start a 5 year agricultural cooperation action plan with China involving provinces. Fifthly, conduct joint road shows in China and at trade capitals and lastly, accelerate an innovation and research drive by developing China-Pak academia linkages and perhaps going the Deng's way when he said in his speech, "Emancipate the mind, seek truth from fact, and unite as one to face the future."

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Briefs

'Iran to begin vaccinations in coming weeks'

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that COVID-19 vaccinations will begin in the coming weeks in Iran. "Foreign vaccines are a necessity until local vaccines are available," Rouhani said in televised remarks, without giving details of what foreign vaccines would be used. His remarks came as daily COVID-19 deaths fell to a low of more than seven months and officials announced that there were no more high-risk "red cities" in the country. Earlier this month Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's highest authority, banned the government from importing vaccines from the United States and Britain, which he said were possibly seeking to spread the infection to other countries. Rouhani himself, in compliance with Khamenei's ban, said at the time that his government would purchase "safe foreign vaccines."

Syria's children deprived of education: UN

AMMAN: More than half of children in war-torn Syria are missing out on education, the UN children's agency UNICEF said Sunday, with a third of schools in ruins or commandeered by fighters. The figures are a sharp rise from previous estimates when UNICEF said a third of Syrian children were out of school. "After almost ten years of war in Syria, more than half of children continue to be deprived of education," UNICEF said in a statement, estimating there are over 2.4 million children out of school inside the country. "This number has likely increased in 2020 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which exacerbated the disruption to education in Syria," said Ted Chaiban, UNICEF's chief for the Middle East and North Africa, alongside Syria crisis boss Muhammad Hadi, in a joint statement. "The education system in Syria is overstretched, underfunded, fragmented and unable to provide safe, equitable and sustained services to millions of children," they added. Syria's civil war erupted in 2011 after the violent repression of protests, quickly spiralling into a complex conflict that pulled in numerous actors, including jihadist groups and foreign powers. Over 387,000 people have been killed, and more than half of Syria's pre-war population of 20 million have been forced to flee their homes. — AFP

Gold imports fall 52pc in 1st half of FY21

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The gold imports into the country decreased by 52.17 percent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The gold imports into the country during July-December (2020-21) were recorded at \$4.385 million as compared to the imports of \$9.168 million during July-December (2019-20), the data revealed. In terms of quantity, Pakistan imported just 72 kilograms of gold during the period under review compared to the imports of 226 kilograms last year, showing a decline of 68.14 percent. On year-on-year basis, the gold imports into the country witnessed sharp decline of 71.91 percent during the month of December 2020 as compared to the imports of December 2019. The gold imports during December 2020 were recorded at \$0.494 million against the imports of \$1.725 million in December 2019. In terms of quantity, the gold imports decreased by 81.40 percent from 43 kilograms during December 2019 to imports of just 8 kilograms in December 2020. On month-on-month basis, the gold imports during December 2020 decreased by 68 percent when compared to the imports of \$1.



NALTAR: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with officials and team Gilgit-Baltistan Scouts after winning National Ski Championship at PAF Ski Resort Naltar. — DNA

Russia arrests thousands amid pro-Navalny protests

Prosecutors in St Petersburg said in a statement late Saturday they were probing violations including "on the part of law enforcement" and the use of force against an unidentified woman

FOREIGN DESK

MSOCOW: Security forces detained more than 3,000 people and violently broke up rallies across Russia as tens of thousands of protesters ignored extreme cold and police warnings to demand the release of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. Prosecutors in St Petersburg said in a statement late Saturday they were probing violations including "on the part of law enforcement" and the use of force against an unidentified woman. The statement was released after local media published a video showing a middle-aged woman falling to the ground after being kicked by riot police. In the video, a woman — identified as Margarita Yudina — is seen

asking three policemen in full riot gear why they were detaining a young unarmed protester. One of the policemen then kicks her in the stomach. A representative of Saint Petersburg's Dzhanelidze hospital said Yudina was hospitalized Saturday night with a head injury. "She is in a serious condition," the hospital representative told AFP news agency on Sunday. "She's in intensive care." Navalny had called on his supporters to protest on Saturday after being arrested last weekend as he returned to Russia from Germany for the first time since being poisoned with a nerve agent that he says was applied to his underpants by state security agents in August. Authorities had warned people to stay away from the protests, saying they risked catching COVID-19



as well as prosecution and possible jail time for attending an unauthorised event. But protesters defied the ban and bitter cold and turned out in force in more than 60 Russian cities. The OVD-Info protest monitor group said at least 3,060 people — including 1,099 in the capital, Moscow and 386 in St Petersburg — had been detained across Russia, a number likely to rise. In central Moscow, where an estimated tens of thousands of

people had gathered in one of the biggest unauthorised rallies for years, police were seen detaining people, bundling them into nearby vans. The authorities said just some 4,000 people had shown up. "There were violent clashes with the police using their batons to beat them down," Al Jazeera's Aleksandra Godfroid, reporting from Moscow, said. Navalny's wife, Yulia, said on social media she was detained at the rally and later released. Lyubov Sobol, a prominent aide of Navalny and lawyer, was also among those held. Video footage from Vladivostok showed riot police chasing a group of protesters down the street, while demonstrators in Khabarovsk, braving temperatures of about -14C (7F), chanted "Shame!" and "Bandits!"

Police in the Siberian city of Yakutsk, one of the coldest cities in the world and where the temperature was -52C (-61.6 Fahrenheit) on Saturday, grabbed a protester by his arms and legs and dragged him into a van, video footage from the scene showed. Speaking to Al Jazeera, Anna Matveeva, a researcher at King's College London, underlined the importance of the wide geographic reach of Saturday's protests. "The police [are] brutal; there is nothing new about it," Matveeva told Al Jazeera. "But the fact that the geography of protests has spread all the way from Moscow to western Russia and also in northern states ... we are seeing a consistent number of people coming out, knowing that they might be beaten, that they will have criminal records."

Pakistan announces squad for first Test

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: The selection committee has confirmed a 17-player squad for the first Test against South Africa, scheduled to take place at National Stadium, Karachi from January 26. The remaining three players (Salman Ali, Kamran Ghulam, Abdullah Shafique) will continue to

be part of the squad and will feature in warm-up and training sessions at the National Stadium. Pakistan squad: Abid Ali, Imran Butt, Azhar Ali, Babar Azam, Fawad Alam, Saud Shakeel, Faheem Ashraf, M Nawaz, M Rizwan, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Nauman Ali, Sajid Khan, Yasir Shah, Haris Rauf, Hassan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Tabish Khan

Not worrying about my future: Misbah

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistan men's team head coach Misbah-ul-Haq is not worrying about his future with the team as he is only focusing on the upcoming South Africa series. While talking to reporters in a virtual presser, the 46-year-old Misbah admitted that the national team's performance has not been up to the mark and the home series against South Africa provides a perfect opportunity to regain confidence. "Not satisfied with the performance and want to improve on that. Our sole focus is on the South Africa series and I'm not focusing on what will happen in the future," Misbah said. "I don't believe that (my future) has anything to do with the South Africa series. I have always

played cricket under pressure and you have to perform. Have always believed and learned to do well in the present rather than looking ahead," he added. On the other hand, he also revealed why National High-Performance Center (NHPC) coaches Saqlain Mushtaq and Mohammad Yousof are with the side. "I have listened to different speculations regarding them. The main goal of calling Saqlain Bhai was to work with the new spinners and Yousof Bhai was to see what batsmen are doing," he revealed. "People have made up impression that if three people (including Younis Khan) will tell them, they will get confused. There's no such thing as we are trying to work together as if these players go back to NHPC, they know what areas need to be addressed."

McGregor knocked out by Poirier in stunning UFC upset



SPORTS DESK

ABU DHABI: American underdog Dustin Poirier shook up the world of mixed martial arts Sunday, beating up the legs of Irish superstar Conor McGregor before knocking him out at UFC 257 in Abu Dhabi. "I'm happy but I'm not surprised. I put in the work," Poirier after the referee stepped in after 2min 32sec of the second round to save McGregor from further damage after he was dropped by a fierce combination of punches. The 32-year-old Poirier was ranked

second in the flyweight division going into the fight, but still rated a heavy underdog by bookmakers to beat his fourth-ranked opponent, arguably the most famous fighter the sport has seen. The controversial McGregor, known as "Notorious", was returning to the octagon for the first time in a year and hoping for a repeat of the pair's first contest in 2014 which he won by TKO after just 109 seconds. But Poirier, who now has a UFC record of 27-6, used low calf kicks in an effort to put McGregor (22-5) off his usual ferocious stand-up game — and it worked. "First off I want to say Conor

took this result professionally. We're 1-1 and maybe we're going to have to do it again," said Poirier, hinting at the prospect of a trilogy fight. "I'm happy with the place I am in. I'm happy with the face I see in the mirror. The goal was to be technical and to pick my shots, not brawl at all. I had him hurt and I went a little crazy." McGregor likes to call himself "Mystic Mac" and had spent the week leading into the fight predicting he would end it inside 60 seconds. But it was a different Poirier to the one who had looked overmatched when the pair previously met at UFC 178 at the lighter featherweight.

GB attracts 2 m tourists last year: President

DNA

NALTAR: President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday said after restoration of peace in the area, the picturesque Gilgit Baltistan attracted around two million local and foreign tourists last year. Addressing the concluding ceremony of Winter Sports Competitions held at Naltar Valley, the president said the government was taking measures to launch international flights from Gilgit Airport, rehabilitation of road infrastructure and improvement of telecommunication systems in the area. The sports competitions were held jointly by Winter Sports Federation of Pakistan and Pakistan Air Force (PAF). The president viewed that more the facilities would be extended to tourists, the more the area would make progress. He said terrorism had been eliminated owing to the co-operation between public and Pakistan Army which was now opening up tourism opportunities in the country. Lauding the PAF for holding the sports competitions, he said the steps taken by the organization for promotion of skiing in Naltar since 1950s were coming to fruition. Later, the president also distributed medals, trophies and prizes among players.

Root ton keeps England afloat in 2nd Test

GALLE: Skipper Joe Root scored his second successive Test century as England reached 181 for four at lunch after Sri Lanka struck early blows on day three of the second Test on Sunday. Root, who hit a match-winning 228 in the first Test and started the day on his overnight 67, completed his 19th Test century in his 99th Test. He was batting on 105 alongside wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler, on 30, with the tourists still trailing by 200 in response to Sri Lanka's 381. Left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya claimed all the four wickets and dismissed Jonny Bairstow early in the day to break a 111-run third-wicket stand in Galle. Bairstow, who added just four more to his overnight 24, was given not out by the umpire but Sri Lanka successfully reviewed the call as replays suggested the ball had grazed the bat before hitting the pad and being caught second slip. Dan Lawrence, who survived a missed stumping by wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwell, could not capitalise on the slip as he soon fell for three.

Pakistan mulls oil import from Iran

From Page 01

The officials of interior ministry, while talking to this correspondent said, "if the sealed pumps do not show valid documentation within seven days of sealing, these will be confiscated by the state under the customs act along with other properties of the owners as it would be deemed that these properties were acquired with smuggling proceeds." The official said enforcement teams comprising of officers from customs, district management, police, Rangers are jointly conducting the operation on all illegal retail outlets. According to an official statement earlier issued stated that the drive is showing positive results. Around 1192 petrol pumps sealed and 6.8 million litres of petroleum products including diesel and petrol worth approximately Rs 760 million seized since the launch of operation. Giving the break up, the official statement said 875 petrol pumps have been seized in Punjab, 172 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 145 in Sindh. As per the estimates, the highest numbers of 1317 illegal petroleum retail outlets are in Punjab, followed by 343 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 336 in Sindh and 98 in Islamabad Capital Territory and Rawalpindi division. It merits mentioning that the estimated loss due to the illegal selling of petroleum products to the national kitty is in the range of Rs 100 billion to Rs 150 billion per annum.

Pakistani products attract Chinese market

According to suppliers from Pakistan, such matchmaking webinar offers opportunity for them to reach out for a larger market, including China, during the COVID-19 pandemic

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistani handicraft products have attracted a large number of Chinese businessmen and traders, says a report published by China Economic Net (CEN). "May I know the price of that emerald?" questioned a Chinese businessman at the Matchmaking Webinar for Pakistani Handicraft Products in the Chinese Market in the recent week. The bustling webinar had seen a number of Pakistani handicraft companies shared their product information of the handicraft products tailored for the Chinese market, including pink salt, jewelry, leather products, wood products, copper products, jade products, silver ornaments, pottery, bags,

wallets, scarves, shawls, caps, shirts, jackets, footwear, Himalaya salt lamps, home decor, home linen, rugs, furniture, and other Pakistani handicraft products. The report stated that Muhammad Younus Khatri from HB International, showcased gems including emerald, ruby from Swat in the seminar to find suitable Chinese buyers. "Please write down your phone number or email so that we could contact you." "Could you show us your WeChat?" Many Chinese buyers were more than interested in these stunning, glamorous Pakistani handicraft products. According to suppliers from Pakistan, such matchmaking webinar offers opportunity for them to reach out for a larger market, including China, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On top of that, they attach great importance to online selling. "We have bases in China, so most of our handicraft products can be customized and delivered by express to Chinese buyers," one of the Pakistani businessmen mentioned. As for China's buyers, they welcome Pakistani friends to have their beautiful handicraft products exhibited in China when the pandemic was over. "Some of these products are never seen in China. Chinese people value civilization and history behind these products



over anything because China itself could manufacture a lot of things. They want something typically stands for Pakistan, so we are looking forward to importing them," said a Chinese buyer. As per event organizers TIC Beijing and TDAP Islamabad, it was the second webinar of its kind and the former was a very productive webinar on exploring market opportunities for Pakistan's handicraft sector in the Chinese market and the business community benefited greatly from the participants' pertinent insights and practical recommendations.

TIC Beijing may follow-up from the buyers present in China after one month regarding the outcome of the webinar. The same will be done by TDAP Islamabad with the suppliers of handicraft products.

Briefs

Protests continue against police brutality

WEB DESK

TUNIS: Hundreds of people marched in the Tunisian capital on Saturday to protest police repression, corruption and poverty, following several nights of unrest marked by clashes and arrests. Protesters in Tunis chanted "No more fear, the streets belong to the people" and "the people want the fall of the regime" – a slogan popularised during the Arab Spring a decade ago. They also held up banners calling for the release of hundreds of protesters detained since January 14. The police say more than 700 people have been arrested following last week's clashes, in which young people hurled rocks and petrol bombs at security forces, who responded with tear gas and water cannon. Human rights groups say at least 1,000 people had been detained. "We can't accept a police state in Tunisia 10 years after the revolution ... it is shameful," said Mahmoud, a young cafe worker who did not give his family name. Much of the unrest has been in disenfranchised and marginalised areas, where anger is boiling over soaring unemployment and a political class accused of having failed to deliver good governance, a decade after the 2011 revolution that toppled long-time President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Although the youths clashing with riot police after dark in poor districts of Tunisian cities have voiced few clear political aims, daytime protests have focused on the lack of jobs and on the police response to demonstrations.

Johnson, Biden discuss climate change, COVID-19

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Saturday he looked forward to working with US President Joe Biden on their shared goals, including tackling climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. Johnson used his first phone call with the US president to welcome Biden's announcements that the United States would rejoin the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate and the World Health Organization, and they discussed the prospects of a free trade deal. "Great to speak to President Joe Biden this evening," Johnson said on Twitter. "I look forward to deepening the longstanding alliance between our two countries as we drive a green and sustainable recovery from COVID-19." The White House said Biden and Johnson talked about cooperation, including through multilateral organisations, on curbing climate change and fighting COVID-19. Biden also conveyed his intention to "strengthen the special relationship between our countries and revitalize transatlantic ties, underscoring the critical role of NATO to our collective defense and shared values," the White House said in a release. A spokeswoman for Johnson said the leaders "also discussed the benefits of a potential free trade deal between our two countries".



ISLAMABAD: Atif Bokhari, Chairman Board of Investment in a meeting with Lis Rosenholm, ambassador of Denmark on strengthening bilateral cooperation in various sectors of the economy. – DNA

Turkey hopes Mediterranean talks can calm choppy waters with EU

Expressing guarded optimism, EU foreign policy Chief Josep Borrell told sources he saw a "window of opportunity" but that Ankara needed to "abandon this line of confrontation" and seek dialogue

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: After a five-year hiatus marked by grievances over their rival claims to Mediterranean waters, Turkey resumes talks with Greece on Monday in the first test of its hopes to reverse deteriorating relations with the European Union. While diplomats say that rebuilding trust

will be a hard slog, the talks follow Turkey's decision to stop its search for gas in disputed waters which angered Greece and Cyprus and a cooling of rhetoric around Ankara's wider disputes with the EU. They could also pave the way for an imminent visit to Turkey by EU leaders. Both sides say there is political will to improve relations, but after years of rancor

over refugees, human rights, maritime claims, Turkey's military interventions and the divided island of Cyprus, rapprochement appears a distant prospect. Expressing guarded optimism, EU foreign policy Chief Josep Borrell told sources he saw a "window of opportunity" but that Ankara needed to "abandon this line of confrontation" and seek

dialogue. President Tayyip Erdogan, who has accused the bloc of "strategic blindness" towards Turkey, told EU ambassadors in Ankara this month he was ready to improve ties. Diplomats say it will need more than a shift in tone and the withdrawal of Turkey's survey vessel from disputed waters to silence calls from some EU states for sanctions on Ankara, which

EU leaders will discuss in March. "I don't see any great reconciliation to move us off the trajectory we are on. It is going to take a significant gesture from Turkey," one diplomat in Brussels said, adding there was no reason to be optimistic. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, in Brussels this week on a mission to maintain what he called the "positive atmos-

phere" between Ankara and the EU, said on Friday talks on Cyprus would be held in New York in the next two months. Erdogan's effort to build bridges with Turkey's main trading partner comes as his government struggles with an economic slowdown. While the COVID-19 pandemic has been the main brake on growth, international tensions have also weighed on the economy.

Germany to use corona meds that helped Trump

DNA

Berlin: Germany will become the first European Union country to start using the same experimental antibodies treatment credited with helping Donald Trump recover from Covid-19, health minister Jens Spahn said Sunday. "The government has bought 200,000 doses for 400 million euros (\$486 million)," Spahn told the Bild am Sonntag newspaper, working out at 2,000 euros per dose. The so-called monoclonal antibody cocktails will be deployed to university hospitals in the coming week, he said, adding that Germany was "the first country in the EU" to use them in the fight against the pandemic. Spahn did not name the manufacturer that will be supplying the drugs but confirmed it was the same medicine given to then-US president Trump when he fell ill with Covid last October. "They work like a passive vaccination. Administering these antibodies in the early stages can help high-risk patients avoid a more serious progression," Spahn said. Trump, who was briefly hospitalised with the

coronavirus, was given the antibody therapy developed by US firm Regeneron, known as REGN-COV2, even before the treatment had won regulatory approval. He later said the medicine did "a fantastic job". US company Eli Lilly has developed a similar therapy. The novel treatment is a combination or "cocktail" of two lab-made antibodies: infection-fighting proteins that were developed to bind to the part of the new coronavirus that it uses to invade human cells. The antibodies attach themselves to different parts of the virus's spike protein, distorting its structure – similar in a way to knocking a key out of shape so it no longer fits its lock. Germany's order comes at a time of growing frustration in the EU over a slower-than-expected rollout of vaccines. Vaccine makers Pfizer/BioNTech and AstraZeneca have both said they would be delivering fewer doses to Europe than anticipated in the short term because of production problems. The German government has said it nonetheless expects to be able to offer all Germans a jab by the end of August.

Sino-Pak Co-op center on traditional Chinese medicine launched

BEIJING: Sino-Pakistan Cooperation Center on Traditional Chinese Medicine (SPCCTCM) was launched respectively in Hunan University of Medicine in Huaihua China and the University of Karachi in Pakistan. The center will further strengthen cooperation between the iron brothers on the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and benefit the people of the two nations, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Sunday. SPCCTCM will carry out various cooperation, including the R&D of medicines and healthy and nutritious foods, education, medical treatment, academic and cultural exchange, and industrial cooperation. As TCM played an irreplaceable role in the fight against COVID-19, China has

shared efficient TCM prescriptions and clinical experiences with over 80 countries and regions including Pakistan. Chinese government and enterprises also donated TCM products to foreign countries, for example, an enterprise from Hunan Province, China has donated medicines to University of Karachi in 2020. "We hope that SPCCTCM will promote TCM in Pakistan and bring tangible benefits to Pakistanis," said Wang Qiong, the vice director of SPCCTCM, professor of Institute of Food Science and Technology, Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, who has been engaged in China-Pakistan cooperation and exchanges on TCM for many years. According to Wang, SPCCTCM will integrate a team of experts in the fields of traditional medicine from China and

Pakistan, to carry out R&D of herbal medicines, including cultivation of medicinal plants, botanical identification, phytochemistry, quality control, efficacy and safety evaluation and clinical trial. They will also promote the registration of herbal plants and herbal products in China and Pakistan. Wang told CEN, long before the launch of SPCCTCM, Liu Xinmin, Co-Director of SPCCTCM, a professor of Institute of Medicinal Plant Development, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and a member of Expert Advisory Panel on Traditional Medicine, WHO, had cooperated with Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman, a scientist and the Chairman of the Pakistani PM's Taskforce on Science and Technology on TCM, and Prof. Iqbal, Director of IC-CBS, University of Karachi. – APP

NZ detects 1st COVID case in 2 months

WELLINGTON: New Zealand health officials have confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in the community in more than two months, sparking urgent contract-tracing efforts north of Auckland. A 56-year-old woman who recently returned from Europe tested positive 10 days after completing a compulsory two weeks in managed quarantine. She had noticed symptoms several days before getting tested. Contact tracing was under way after it was revealed the woman and her husband spent several days travelling around the Northland region while she was potentially infectious, visiting about 30 different locations. Health Minister Chris Hipkins said it was too soon to decide whether a full or partial lockdown would be reintroduced. "We don't know the origin or the strain of the infection," he told a press conference on Sunday. The woman returned to New Zealand on December 30 after spending four months in Europe – mainly in Spain and the Netherlands – and was released from an Auckland quarantine hotel on January 13. New Zealand Director-General of Health Ashley Bloomfield said the woman returned two negative tests while in isolation, and her husband had not shown any symptoms. This marks the first known case of community transmission in New Zealand since November 18. – DNA

11 Chinese miners saved

BEIJING: Rescuers in east China on Sunday pulled 11 miners from hundreds of metres underground where they had been trapped for two weeks, state media reported, as the race to locate the remaining 10 intensified. The miners were brought to the surface starting from around 11 am Sunday, state broadcaster CCTV reported – a major breakthrough for a rescue operation that has captivated the nation. One miner was in "extremely weak physical condition" and rushed to hospital, CCTV said. The 11 miners were rescued after the air ventilator shaft was cleared, the official state news agency Xinhua reported, citing the operation's command centre. A further ten remain unaccounted for. Specialist teams have been battling difficult conditions since an explosion at the Hushan mine in Shandong province trapped the miners underground amid rising waters on January 10. The explosion occurred in a ventilator shaft, causing a blockage that damaged the cable car. On Sunday morning the huge obstacles suddenly fell to the bottom of the shaft, allowing the operation to take a big step forward, rescue expert Du Bingjian said. – APP

Portugal chooses president amid virus

WEB DESK

Portugal held its presidential election on Sunday with the moderate incumbent candidate strongly favoured to win a second five-year term while COVID-19 cases reached record levels. Voters queued up as polls opened in the Lisbon parish of Santo Antonio, guided by red stickers on the ground marking the two-metre (six-foot) gap. "I'm here among the first to avoid groups and queues," Cristina Quada, 58, said as she waited. "Since the date of the elections wasn't changed, I decided to come early to avoid that situation." The head of state in Portugal has no legislative powers, which lie with parliament and the government, but is an influential voice in the running of the country. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, 72, is regarded as the clear front-runner among seven candidates. He is an affable, approachable law professor and former television personality who as president has consistently had an approval rating of 60 per cent or more.

Conference explores economic co-op between Pak, Xinjiang

"The Pakistani government has set up a separate joint working group under the framework of CPEC agreement to promote agricultural development, and cooperation among leading enterprises has made great progress

DNA

BEIJING: speakers at the online conference for the Promotion of Economic and Trade Cooperation of Xinjiang, China – Pakistan Session underlined that Pakistan and Xinjiang have achieved fruitful cooperation results, and it is believed that it's time for both sides to make joint efforts to further strengthen the depth of development in the fields of mechanized agriculture, food processing, agricultural tourism, textile technology transfer and skills upgrading. The conference was held by the Commerce Department of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China the other day. Khashih ur Rehman, Additional Secretary/Executive Director, Board of In-

vestment, Pakistan said on the occasion that textiles and agriculture are two high priority areas for the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in mutual cooperation. "The Pakistani government has set up a separate joint working group under the framework of CPEC agreement to promote agricultural development, and cooperation among leading enterprises has made great progress. The textile and clothing industry is the largest manufacturing industry in Pakistan. Pakistan has a complete textile value chain in which Chinese enterprises are quite welcome to invest." Xie Guoxiang, Minister Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan underlined that Xinjiang Autonomous region is located at the forefront of China and Pakistan and

has great geographical advantages in bilateral cooperation. He said that in recent years, Xinjiang has actively developed modern industrial systems such as deep processing of agricultural products, textile and clothing equipment manufacturing, energy and tourism, made significant progress in related industries, and created more cooperation opportunities with Pakistani partners. Because of Xinjiang's special geographical location and diversified industrial layout, the prospect of cooperation between Xinjiang and Pakistan will be amazing and bright. Badar uz Zaman, Commercial Counsellor of the Pakistani Embassy in China stated that urban development and cooperation is the fulcrum and support of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the core project of connectivity.

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CONDOLENCE

ALL PAKISTAN NEWSPAPERS SOCIETY

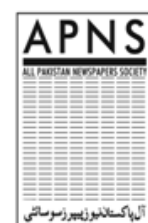
expresses profound grief over the sad demise of

Imran Ahmed Qureshi

S/o Mushtaq Ahmed Qureshi
Member Executive Committee, APNSMay Allah the Almighty rest his soul in
eternal peace and grant courage to

Mushtaq sahib and his family

to bear this loss.



All Pakistan Newspapers Society

Briefs

Sharif family supporting land mafias: Dr Firdous

DNA

SIALKOT: Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM) Punjab on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that the Sharif family was supporting the land mafia saying that the 50 top PML-N leaders are involved in land grabbing, she added. Dr Firdous said the corrupt Sharif family had occupied 446 acres of valuable land in Raiwind after 2013, which is being investigated by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). She said that an impartial operation is being conducted against land mafia without any political pressure, on the direction of Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar. Talking to the media at here on Sunday, she said the operation against illegal occupants of the state land would continue with full force. She said that the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) recovered thousands of acres of land worth Rs 181 billion during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government so far. She said the land recovered in 10 years of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) government was worth of only Rs 2.6 billion. The SACM said the past rulers looted the national wealth ruthlessly and ever done politics of their personal gains, putting aside the national interests. The SAC said that a province with a prosperous agricultural economy like Punjab was looted in the name of making it an industrial province during the past regime. As a result, the province neither remained agricultural nor could be turned into an industrial one.

Opposition leaders meet today

ISLAMABAD: An important session of the parliamentary leaders of the opposition parties has been summoned Monday, sources said Sunday. According to sources, the opposition parties will consult over moving a no-trust motion against the prime minister and the Speaker of the National Assembly in the session for an in-house change. "The government and the opposition have also been in contact over the working of the parliament," according to sources. "The opposition leaders have been in touch with Defence Minister Pervez Khattak, however, the two sides have failed to iron out differences over the parliamentary proceedings," sources said. "The opposition parties have demanded written guarantee over their demands, which also including equal time to opposition in the National Assembly," according to sources. The opposition parties have also demanded running the lower house according to the decisions made by the advisory committee. "They have warned to boycott the assembly's session in case of non-compliance of the agreement."

IT ministry to notify 'Right of Way' policy

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication would soon notify 'Right of Way' (RoW) policy, making a significant development towards fulfilling the vision of Digital Pakistan. Under the policy, a fee structure has been introduced to operate in the required areas to prevent overcharging, as well as telecom installations to be classified as "critical infrastructure". Under this, no one would be allowed to obstruct or create unnecessary problems. Other important issues, including "Common Services Corridor", security of telecom infrastructure have been included in the RoW policy and all concerned agencies and administrations would be bound to follow it. Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque has said that the Right of Way Policy will play important role for the completion of Digital Pakistan Vision. - AFP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati posing for a picture along with Ambassadors and diplomats of Yemen, France, Nigeria, Nepal on the occasion of a brunch hosted by leading businessman and President UK-Pakistan Business Council (Pakistan Chapter) Khurshid Barlas. - DNA

Morocco committed to supporting Libyan parties

Speaking to the members of the delegations of the Libyan High Council of State and House of Representatives at the end of a new round of the Libyan Dialogue, Bourita affirmed that Morocco's commitment stems from solid, sincere and human ties binding the two peoples

DNA

RABAT: Bouznika - Following clear instructions from His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Morocco is committed, on a permanent basis, to accompany and support the Libyan parties to resolve the current crisis which has lasted too long, underlined, Saturday in Bouznika, the Moroccan minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Moroccans Abroad, Nasser Bourita. Speaking to the members of the delegations of the Liby-

an High Council of State and House of Representatives at the end of a new round of the Libyan Dialogue, Bourita affirmed that Morocco's commitment stems from solid, sincere and human ties binding the two peoples, as well as its deep conviction that the stability of Libya with strong institutions is in the interest of the stability of North Africa and the achievement of economic integration in the Arab Maghreb region. The Kingdom's commitment to efforts aimed at putting an end to the Libyan crisis is based on four

determinants: supporting the Libyans and accompanying them without replacing them in their decisions, and remaining attached to the institutional legitimacy in Libya and to the legitimate institutions resulting from the Skhirat agreement, noted the minister. It is also a matter of working within a clear framework alongside the United Nations as a contributor to the Libyan Dialogue and facilitator and of coordinating with all regional and international stakeholders without, however, engaging in agreements or partici-

pate in meetings on Libya without the presence of Libyans, he continued. Contrary to pessimistic voices, Morocco remains optimistic about the future of Libya, said Bourita, noting that this optimism is based on several elements namely confidence in the ability of Libyans to overcome differences and notable progress achieved over the past few months through political dialogue while moving beyond the situation of chaos and non-dialogue. He stressed in this regard that the continuation of meetings between the Liby-

an stakeholders is rightly a source of optimism. Bourita also observed that the agreements reached by the two parties represent a "positive element" in the political process, noting that Morocco supports dialogue between Libyans on the issue they choose. The minister also congratulated the delegations on their agreement regarding the final measures concerning the posts of sovereignty, while reiterating the particular support of HM the King at all stages aimed at putting an end to the Libyan crisis, as well as Moroc-

co's continued readiness to host any meeting between the Libyan parties. At the end of this new round, the delegations of the High Council of State and the House of Representatives of Libya agreed on the formation and appointment of small work teams to take practical measures concerning the holders of sovereignty posts. These teams will ensure in particular the development of application forms and invite candidates to present their files which must meet the agreed criteria and conditions.

Pak-China enterprises reach consensus on medical trade

DNA

BEIJING: The Yangtze River Delta International Trade Promotion Committee and China-Europe Association for Technical and Economic Cooperation (CEATEC) initiated an online Pak-China matchmaking meeting in the medical supplies sector. According to Gwadar Pro, a total of six government agencies and enterprises related to the medical and health industry took part in the event and shown high interest in hypochlorous acid disinfectant, an efficient advanced disinfectant recommended by the Centre for Disease Control, Shanghai (Shanghai CDC). A couple of months back, CEATEC visited the Consulate General of Pakistan in Shanghai and met the Consul General, Hussain Haidar. On the occasion, Zhao Haofang, the Secretary-general of CEATEC told Gwadar Pro that CEATEC previously focused on the cooperation between China and Europe and did not have much contact with the Pakistani government and enterprises. But through this meeting,

they really felt the good friendship between Pakistan and China, and the two sides reached a consensus on organizing urban environment promotion activities and the business connection between enterprises of the two areas." According to Tammie Xu, the Secretary of vice president, CEATEC, considering COVID-19 epidemic situation has become increasingly tense recently worldwide, CEATEC finally chose this disinfectant as the first product of its Pak-China matchmaking meeting. "The disinfectant, with affordable price and good quality, was developed and researched by a PhD team from Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) who were involved in the whole process including designing equipment and researching products," Tammie said, "in addition, the disinfectant is alcohol-free, safe and non-toxic, so it can be sprayed directly into the mouth." "Under the context of COVID-19, we hope to provide our Pakistani brothers with Chinese technologies and products through the online matchmaking meetings, to jointly conquer the epidemic.

PM promises special package for farmers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that South Punjab was badly neglected by the previous governments. He was talking to the members of the National Assembly hailing from South Punjab who called on PM Imran Khan in Islamabad and discussed various matters. During the meeting, the delegation

of lawmakers including, Malik Amir Dogar, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi and Noor Muhammad Khan also held talks on South Punjab Secretariat and special package for farmers. "South Punjab was denied basic facilities including education and health in the past", the premier said and added that recommendations are being finalized for the special package for the farmers. Meanwhile, the premier assured not to leave the people

of South Punjab alone. Last year in the month of August, Prime Minister Imran Khan had decided to provide the maximum benefit of crops to the farmers by increasing support prices for wheat producers. A meeting of the Price Control Committee, presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan had decided to extend the maximum benefit of crops to the farmers by hiking support prices for wheat producers for the coming year.



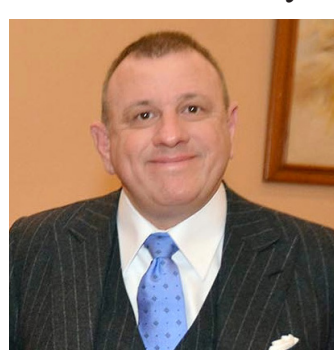
ISLAMABAD: President US Pak International Chamber, Muhammad Ahmad and Secretary General Malik Sohail Hussain called on Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Maliki at Royal Saudi Embassy. - DNA

Italian envoy for VISA ease to businessmen

The Ambassador said that dairy and Agriculture and livestock, olive and olive products, plastics, processed food and the construction sector were the areas where Italy could extend its cooperation with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese on Sunday vowed to simplify the process of VISA issuance to Pakistani businessmen and traders to further promote business to business ties between Pakistan and Italy. "Simplification of the VISA process and procedure is the top priority of the Italian embassy in Islamabad" he told APP. This would help business communities the both the countries to enhance mutual interaction for exploring new avenues of mutual businesses and investment to increase the bilateral trade between both sides, Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese told APP here at the sidelines of meeting with local business leader

in Capital office of Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). The Ambassador said that dairy and Agriculture and livestock, olive and olive products, plastics, processed food and the construction sector were the areas where Italy could extend its cooperation with Pakistan. The senior diplomat said Italy wanted to start a new era of economic and trade cooperation with Pakistan through transfer of technology for upgradation of Pakistan's agro and textiles industry. He said that both of the countries were inter-reliant to each other as Pakistan has around 60 percent of its young people in total of its population which need to be trained in modern skills and technology,



while Italy has 35 percent of the old age population and the country is more advanced in technology and modern skills. He was of the view that Italy can extend its cooperation to equip and train the local youth with

modern skills and technology for enhance their contribution in the local economy. Andreas Ferrarese said that "We are living the era of economic diplomacy and economic trade relations are the assurance for peace, harmony and stability between the countries." He said that both sides want to achieve their economic and trading integration through the cooperation and exchange of culture and art for cement bilateral relations. The envoy said that Italian embassy in Islamabad has initiated the series of cultural and economic derives in three different cities of Pakistan including Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore to provide opportunity to the cultural and business leaders for mutual interaction.

While replying to another question on cooperation in the green economy, he said that Italy is committed to extend collaboration with Pakistan to promote the green economy for sustainable development in Pakistan. He said green economy, transfer of technology for industrial sector including textiles and agro industry; construction sector, education and health are major areas of focus to extend the bilateral cooperation. The ambassador said that through the green economy, Italy wanted to cooperate with Pakistan for environment protection, circular economy, resource saving and management, ecosystem protection and recovery, water conservation and natural disaster prevention. - APP

Modi heading towards political quagmire

ISLAMABAD: The Narendra Modi regime is heading towards legal and political quagmire with Indian opposition leaders likely to seek joint parliamentary probe and once his close aides pressuring him to resign over leak of military secrets to a TV anchor.

Indian Congress President Sonia Gandhi said that the center's silence on the purported WhatsApp chats of Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami about the Balakot airstrike was deafening. "There have been very disturbing reports on how national security has been so thoroughly compromised," Gandhi said, according to Indian news agency Press Trust of India. According to Indian media reports, in the upcoming stormy budget session, the opposition parties are likely to demand a time-bound probe by a joint parliamentary commission into the scam. Former Defence Minister AK Antony said the leaking of the official secret was treason and those involved must be punished and the prime minister must come clean. Former Gujarat Chief Minister Shankersinh Vaghela also hit out at Narendra Modi for his alleged role in leaking information of the Balakot strike and demanded his resignation on Republic Day. Vaghela, also once a close associate of Modi, said Arnab Goswami and Partho Dasgupta of BARC should be subjected to NARCO truth serum test to reveal more. Andy Vermaut, member of the International Alliance for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms (AIDL) and President of PostVersa Fundamental Rights chapter said revelations proved that Modi had sacrificed lives of his own soldiers for political purposes. "I will therefore call for the resignation of Narendra Modi at all international forums. It is shameful for India and especially for Arnab Goswami... and we on the international level strongly condemn his actions."

Nepalese mountaineers all praise for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The Nepalese mountaineers, who recently scaled the world's second highest peak -Pakistan's K2- in winter, have felt deep attraction for the hospitality of Pakistani people, reaffirming the world's stance that the country had a potential to become tourism hub of the world.

"What really attracts all of us at the moment is you people. Honestly the people of Pakistan are so nice. Once we summited K2, we got such a really warm welcome and receipts from you guys, and honestly without [that] if we even get that to our country or not," leader of the 10-member Nepalese team, Nirmal Pujra said in a video posted by the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) on its twitter. 'Bauhat Bauhat Shukria' (Thank you very much), Nirmal Pujra said while extending his gratitude to the Pakistanis in Urdu language for looking after all of them during their stay. "We are very happy and we will come here again and again and again," he added. The Nepalese climbers were called on Special Assistant to the Prime Minister OP&HRD Sayed Zulfikar Abbas Bukhari to discuss their mountain tourism experience in Pakistan.

US passes 25 million Covid-19 cases

WASHINGTON: More than 25 million Covid-19 cases have been recorded in the United States since the pandemic began, Johns Hopkins University said Sunday, just days after President Joe Biden's inauguration. The milestone was reached only five days after the US, the world's wealthiest and hardest-hit nation, recorded 400,000 deaths from the disease. - APP