



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Gwadar Port is a shining pearl of the region, says envoy

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Muhammad Bin Salman unveils plan about Riyadh

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US nuclear demand 'will never happen'

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Briefs

PDM opposing transparent senate polls

DNA

KARACHI: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz says the government wants to make senate elections transparent but PDM is opposing it only for the sake of personal interests. Talking to newsmen in Karachi this evening, he said the federal government gave a development package for Karachi but Sindh government instead of facilitating and cooperating, is creating obstacles in carrying out development of the city.

PM is the 'corruption king' himself

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz on Friday lashed out at the Prime Minister Imran Khan over Transparency International's report on corruption in Pakistan. The PML-N vice president took to the twitter and said that Transparency International's latest report has proved that the man who was targeting others over the corruption turned out to be the "corruption king" himself.

Asad presents 7 years agri strategy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser on Friday presented an integrated structural reforms oriented agricultural growth strategy for the next seven years. During the meeting of the National Assembly Special Committee on Agricultural Products chaired by him, the presentation was made to a committee of the cabinet working on the new agriculture package.

Holiday Notice

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

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'Pak not bound to observe any Nuclear Treaty'

"Pak stresses that this Treaty neither forms a part of, nor contributes to the development of customary international law in any manner," the statement says

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday said it did not consider itself bound by any of the obligations enshrined in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted in July 2017, and was negotiated outside the established United Nations disarmament negotiating forums. "None of the nuclear armed states, including Pakistan, took part in the negotiations of the Treaty which failed to take on board the legitimate interests of all the stakeholders. Many non-nuclear armed states have also refrained from becoming Parties to the Treaty," Foreign Office said in a statement issued here. According to the statement, the United Nations General Assembly, at its first special session devoted to nuclear disarmament in 1978, had agreed by consensus

that in the adoption of disarmament measures, the right of each State to security should be kept in mind, and at each stage of the disarmament process the objective would be undiminished security for all States at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces. "Pakistan believes that this cardinal objective can only be achieved as a cooperative and universally agreed undertaking, through a consensus-based process involving all the relevant stakeholders, which results in equal and undiminished security for all States. It is indispensable for any initiative on nuclear disarmament to take into account the vital security considerations of each and every State," it added. "Pakistan stresses that this Treaty neither forms a part of, nor contributes to the development of customary international law in any manner," the statement concluded.



ISLAMABAD: Newly arrived Ambassador of Uzbekistan Aybek Osmanov meeting with Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada. This is Ambassador Osmanov's second term as Uzbek ambassador, in Pakistan. - DNA

Omar Sheikh's Acquittal irks United States

A statement by US state department said that the court's decision is an affront to terrorism victims everywhere, including in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States is deeply concerned by the Pakistani Supreme Court's decision to acquit those involved in Daniel Pearl's kidnapping and murder and any proposed action to release them, an official statement from US State Department said. It further added that Ahmad Omar Saeed Sheikh was indicted in the United States in 2002 for hostage-taking and conspiracy to commit hostage-taking, resulting in the murder of Pearl.

Sindh Govt files review petition

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh government has announced that it will file a review petition against the Supreme Court's decision. The provincial government had approached the top court against an order of the Sindh High Court (SHC) overturning the conviction of Sheikh in the 2002 incident that occurred in Karachi. A three-member bench of the SC headed by Justice Mushir Alam announced the verdict with a 2-1 majority. In a statement following the verdict, Sindh information minister Nasir Hussain Shah said that the provincial government "has decided to go for a review on the orders of the Supreme Court". "Omar Sheikh has admitted his involvement in the Daniel Pearl murder case," he added.

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UN chief urges India, Pak to resolve dispute

"It is clear when seeing Pakistan and India, any military confrontation between the two would be a disaster of unmitigated proportions for both countries and for the whole world"

MONITORING REPORT / DNA

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Thursday called on nuclear-armed India and Pakistan to "come together and seriously discuss their problems" stemming from the unresolved Kashmir dispute, saying his good offices are always available for mediation. Replying to a question from APP correspondent Iftekhar Ali at his first press conference in 2021, the UN chief warned that there was no "military solution" to the decades-old conflict. "It is clear when seeing Pakistan and India, any military confrontation between the two would be a disaster of unmitigated proportions for both countries and for the whole world," he warned. "I do believe that is absolutely essential to have

Pakistan, Indian delegates clash over Kashmir

NEW YORK: Delegates of India and Pakistan got into a fresh verbal duel in the UN General Assembly on Thursday, after Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram exposed New Delhi's human rights abuses in the occupied Kashmir as well as the design of the BJP-RSS extremists against Pakistan. Indian delegate Vidisha Maitra reacted to Ambassador Akram's pointed words, claiming that Kashmir was an integral part of India. Exercising his right of reply, Pakistan's delegate Jawad Ali rejected India's claim that Jammu and Kashmir was its part. "As far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, India has no other claim than that of an occupier," the Pakistani delegate said in his hard-hitting reply. "Like all occupiers and colonizers of the past, India wants to physically, politically and psychologically crush the indigenous Kashmiri struggle. Today's India has become a nightmare for its minorities," Jawad Ali said. "Its current leadership has sacrificed every trapping of secularism." "From orchestrated pogroms against Muslims in Gujrat and Delhi to discriminatory citizenship laws, from demolishing Muslims shrines and monuments to erasing centuries of history of Muslim rule, from outlawing interfaith marriages to blaming Muslims for the spread of coronavirus, India's human rights record is replete with gross and systematic violations of rights of minorities," the Pakistani delegate said. - DNA

a de-escalation of the situation, namely in the Line of Control" in the disputed Kashmir region, Guterres said, adding, "I think it's absolutely essential for the two countries to be able to come together and seriously discuss their problems." "And," he added, "I think it's essential that human rights are fully respected in all territories that you mentioned," referring to the question in which the correspondent highlighted the continuing rights abuses in the Indian occupied Kashmir. He said he stood by his statement of Aug. 8, 2019, which called for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute based on UN resolutions and the UN Charter. "Now, things have not moved in the right direction, our good offices are always available, and we will insist within it on finding peaceful solutions for problems that have no military solution."



QATAR: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) calls on His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani - Emir of the State of Qatar, during his two days official visit. - DNA

Pakistan, Qatar vow to boost defence ties

Army Chief meets Qatar top leadership; reviews passing out parade at Ahmed Bin Muhammad Military College

DNA

DOHA: Qatari leadership has reiterated that Pakistan and Qatar share brotherly relations of strategic value. While expressing their satisfaction over level of defence relations between the two Armed Forces, both sides underscored the importance of further enhancing the cooperation.

It may be mentioned here that General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Qatar on two days official visit. During the visit, COAS witnessed passing out parade at Ahmed Bin Muhammad Military College. He appreciated high standards of institution and its efforts towards grooming of young cadets to take on challenges of future battlefield. The COAS called on His Highness

Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani - Emir of the State of Qatar, His Excellency Doctor Khalid Bin Muhammad Al-Attiya - Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Defence Affairs and Lieutenant General (Pilot) Ghanim Bin Shaheen Al-Ghanim - Chief of Staff Qatar Armed Forces. During the meetings, matters of mutual interest, defence & security cooperation and regional geo-political environment were discussed.

Qureshi, US top diplomat hold talks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken had a telephone conversation on Friday. The Foreign Minister congratulated Secretary Blinken on assuming his office. He underscored Pakistan's commitment to forge a comprehensive partnership with the United States based on convergence of interests on a whole range of issues. Highlighting the transformation in Pakistan, the Foreign Minister stressed that the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan had a new vision that placed premium on forging economic partnership, building a peaceful neighborhood, and enhancing regional connectivity. Foreign Minister Qureshi told Secretary Blinken that peace in Afghanistan through a negotiated political settlement was one of the fundamental convergences between the two countries. It was essential to have reduction in violence leading to ceasefire and to work towards securing an inclusive political solution in Afghanistan.

PDM was destined to fail, says PM

"We have submitted a record of 40,000 accounts to the ECP in a foreign funding case, he remarked

STAFF REPORT

SAHIWAL: Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday said that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) destined to fail. "All dacoits are trying to blackmail me to get National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO)", he said while speaking to journalists in Sahiwal at the launch of Kamyab Kisan Programme. PM Imran Khan said Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and PDM Chief Fazlur Rehman is a corrupt man and calling him maulana is the disgrace of the religious scholars. On upcoming Senate elections, he said that the PTI government is moving for a constitutional amendment to hold senate polls through a show of hands. "We are aware who is putting money on the senate polls, he said and added that he was too offered money in the Senate polls. The premier said that PTI expelled its elected members for selling out their votes in the last Senate elections. Those who become senators by spending Rs50mn,



how come they would not make money, the PM questioned. Imran Khan said government land cannot be occupied without political patronage and recent show of solidarity with the Khokhar brothers by PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz is proof of it. "Khokhar brothers were occupying govt land of Rs1.3bn." "We will not spare land mafia," the prime minister said. Expressing his views on the foreign funding case, he said those who wanted to trap PTI in the case have ended up in trapping themselves. "We have submitted a record of 40,000 accounts to the Election Commission of Pakistan in a foreign funding case, he remarked.

Blast near Israeli embassy in New Delhi

DNA

NEW DELHI: A low intensity blast occurred near by the Israeli embassy in New Delhi on Friday, police said, adding that there were no casualties. The explosion, caused by a "very low intensity improvised device" damaged the window panes of three nearby parked cars, a Delhi police spokesman said in a statement. "Initial impressions suggest a mischievous attempt to create a sensation," the statement said. "An explosion occurred recently near the Israeli embassy in India. There were no casualties in the blast, and no damage to the building," Israel's foreign ministry said in a statement. "The incident is under investigation by the authorities in India, who are in contact with the relevant Israeli authorities." The blast occurred shortly after 1700 IST (1130 GMT), while India's President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were participating in a military ceremony a kilometre away from the site.

Fuel prices likely to increase

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The prices of petroleum products in Pakistan are likely to go up yet again from February 1. The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has sent a summary of the prices of petroleum products in which it has proposed an increase of Rs12 per litre for petrol and Rs10 per litre for diesel, say sources in the petroleum division. The final decision would be taken by the Ministry of Finance headed by Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh after consultation with Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Briefs

Government approved case against Ali Wazir

DNA

KARACHI: An anti-terrorism court hearing case against Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) lawmaker Ali Wazir, booked on various counts including sedition, was told Friday the government of Sindh approved of the case against him.

The investigation officer dealing with the National Assembly legislator Wazir's case presented before the court hearing today the meeting minutes of Sindh Cabinet session held on Nov 21, 2019, along with the forensic laboratory report.

His report in ATC said in that session cabinet member of ruling Pakistan Peoples Party Saeed Ghani had recommended the counsel of Prosecutor General and his following Ghani's recommendations when the government sought PG's advice, he suggested lodging a case against PTM's Wazir as well. The investigation officer also appended in the exhibit forensic reports by Lahore Forensic Laboratory which recused itself from confirming whether the voice in the footages was original and that of Ali Wazir's. Lahore Forensic Laboratory did not have the relevant expertise and software to analyze the sound in the videos, report presented by prosecution said, adding that video content proved to be original nevertheless.

Uzair Baloch acquitted in 2 more cases

DNA

KARACHI: A sessions court on Friday acquitted Lyari gang war kingpin Uzair Baloch in two murder cases for want of evidence. The Additional District and Sessions judge ordered that the accused be set free immediately, if he is not required to be detained in connection with other cases. He was accused of murdering two unknown persons. Both cases were registered at Lyari's Baghdadi and Kalakot police stations. It is pertinent to mention here that Uzair Baloch has been acquitted in six cases for lack of evidence till recently. On Jan 12, the sessions court acquitted him in a kidnapping and murder case of a citizen. Defence lawyer said that no eyewitness appeared before the court, while the prosecution was silent over the culprits involved in the murder. "The police found the dead body and didn't identify the slain person," the counsel said.

Pak earns \$763m from IT services' export

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$763.060 million by providing different information technology (IT) services in various countries during the first five months of financial year 2020-21. This shows growth of 39.03 percent as compared to US \$548.830 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year 2019-20, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the period under review, the computer services grew by 39.75 percent as it surged from US \$423.910 million last year to US \$592.430 million during July-November (2020-21). Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed increase of 25.73 percent, from US \$159.330 million to US \$200.332 million while the export and import of computer software related services also rose by 10.32 percent, from US \$128.682 million to US \$141.967 million. The exports of hardware consultancy services decreased by 47.23 percent from, US \$0.523 million to US \$0.276 million whereas the exports of repair and maintenance services also decline by 81.55 percent from \$1.073 million to \$0.198 million. — APP



SAHIWAL: Prime Minister Imran Khan giving away Cheque to a beneficiary of Ehsaas Program. — DNA

CDA starts action against illegal sewerage lines

According to detail, the department of City Sewerage of CDA has started the process of challans and notices against the illegal sewerage connections for the betterment of sewerage system in the city. In the first phase the work has been started on repairing and restoration of city sewerage trunk line

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) began taking action against illegal sewerage connections and direct opening of sewerage lines in natural nullahs here on Monday. In the first phase notices and challans have been handed over to the owners. Illegal sewerage lines will be removed later on. The work on cleaning of 30 trunk sewerage lines is also underway. According to detail, the department of City Sewerage of CDA has started the process of challans and notices against the illegal sewerage connections for the betterment of sewerage system in the city. In the first phase the work has been started on repairing and restoration of city sewerage trunk line. In this regard, the work on 30 trunk lines out of total 42 in 19 has been started. In this phase, the trunk lines were repaired from 8 different points to make the di-



rection of water towards STPI. Repairing and restoration of other main lines is also underway. 10-12 million gallons of sewerage water will start being purified in next 03 months through STPI. This puri-

fied water will be used for gardening. More quantity of water will be shifted forward when further lines would be restored. This process will also help in controlling the smell of sewerage nullahs. Work

of cleaning and repairing of all the trunk sewerage lines will be completed in six months and they all will be linked with the main system. Strict action is being taken against illegal sewerage connec-

tions. Earlier enforcement Directorate of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), while conducting operations in different parts of the city, demolished several illegal structures and constructions established illegally on state land. Enforcement Directorate is being assisted by Islamabad Capital Administration, Islamabad Police and other concerned formations of the authority, said a press release. During operations that was conducted on Friday, teams of the Enforcement Directorate demolished three buffalo's Sheds, one house comprising one room and one boundary wall illegally constructed in Village Narrel near Quaid-e-Azam University. During another action, Enforcement Directorate demolished an illegal under construction structure of a house in Mouza Jaba Teli on state land. Similarly, staff of Enforcement Directorate demolished two rooms, nine buffaloes Sheds, four huts and three wash rooms in the area of Sector H-9.

Ufone marks two decades of being all about U

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani telecom brand, Ufone celebrated its 20 years of excellence and glory on Friday, January 29. A virtual event was held for employees all over the country to reveal the special occasion. Children of Pakistan Sweet Homes were invited to share their memorable occasion with Ufone and a cake cutting ceremony was held for them. A heartfelt tribute was paid to all those who passed away during last year including Ufone's former CEO and a visionary leader, Mr Rashid Khan. Employees were also lauded for their resilience during these tough times and their commitment to provide the best possible services despite all odds. Throughout these years, customers have been at the forefront for the Pakistani telecom brand and have played an important role in Ufone's massive success. On successful completion of its 20 years, customers expressed their heartfelt gratitude and felicitations to Ufone. These messages were compiled in a special video

which gives us a glimpse of the strength of company's relationship with its people.

Over the past two decades, Ufone has introduced many innovative products and services for the first time in the market including the flagship product "SuperCard". Thus it has not only become a game changer in the telecom industry but has also helped empower the customers with access to information, affordable services and freedom of choice. The network, since its inception, has followed the vision to provide quality services for Pakistanis. Ufone has successfully demonstrated how technology can be leveraged to improve user experience and increase accessibility. The brand has achieved remarkable feats in business development and customer service. It has always strived towards creating better opportunities for its people. Whether it is partnering with social organizations to steer a wave of change or providing an improved digital experience to customers, the people of Pakistan remained the central focus throughout their 20 years long journey.

Bilquis Edhi declared 'Person of the Decade'

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan's towering philanthropist and humanitarian Bilquis Edhi has been declared the 'Person of the Decade', along with human rights rapporteur of the UN Prof. Yanghee Lee and the US ethicist Stephen Soldz. A spokesperson for the Edhi Foundation told APP that as per the domino effect verdict, announced on Friday by the Impact Hallmarks© [IH], Bilquis Edhi was declared the most impactful person of the first two decades of the 21st century. Bilquis Bano Edhi is a professional nurse and she heads the Bilquis Edhi Foundation. She has spent more than six decades of her life in serving the humanity in need. Her charity has saved over 42,000 unwanted babies so far by placing 'jhoalas' [cradles] at the Edhi Homes and centres across the country. Called the Mother of Pakistan, Bilquis Edhi has already been given various national and foreign awards including Lal-e-Intiaz, the Lenin Peace Prize, Mother Teresa Memorial International Award for Social Justice (2015), and the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service, she received along with her husband Abdul Sattar Edhi in 1986.

Bakhtawar ties the knot with Mahmood

The women-only gathering was attended by the aunts of Bakhtawar Bhutto, Faryal Talpur and Dr Azra Pechuho and other party members of the PPP, according to a statement

DNA

KARACHI: Former president and Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari's daughter Bakhtawar Bhutto Zardari on Friday tied the knot with her fiancé Mahmood Chaudhry. Bakhtawar Bhutto's nikah was solemnized by Maulana Ghulam Muhammad Soho of Thatta. The nikah ceremony was attended by close members of the Bhutto and Zardari families and close relatives of the groom. Prominent figures including politicians and businessperson also attended the ceremony as the guest count was kept limited due to the ongoing pandemic. Former President Asif Ali Zardari welcomed the guests. Stringent security arrangements had been put in place at the Bilawal House for the ceremony. On Sunday, a Milad function was held on Sunday at the Bilawal



House Karachi marking the beginning of the series of events of Bakhtawar Bhutto's wedding. The women-only gathering was attended by the aunts of Bakhtawar Bhutto, Faryal Talpur and Dr Azra Pechuho and other party members of the PPP, according to a statement.

Parties urged to support govt offensive on Kashmir

The world needs to hold India's Hindutva regime accountable for genocide of Kashmiris," he said. Afridi said that Kashmir Committee was working to evolve strategy to counter Indian bids to silence and sensor pro-Kashmiri voices on digital arena

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Committee Chairman Shehryar Khan Afridi Friday urged all political parties to join hands with Kashmir Committee to supplement the government's offensive on Kashmir dispute. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of a seminar titled 'Kashmir back to the international spotlight: What next' here under the auspices of Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR). The event was presided by Azad Jammu Kashmir President Sardar Masood Khan. Chairman of KIIR Altaf Wani was also present on the occasion. "We need to emphasise on present and future strategies to raise Kashmir dispute at all the international forums. The world needs to hold India's Hindutva regime accountable for genocide of Kashmiris," he said. Afridi said that Kashmir Committee was working to evolve strategy to counter Indian bids to

silence and sensor pro-Kashmiri voices on digital arena and the political parties should join forces to develop a holistic strategy to

expose the Kashmiri genocide agenda of Modi regime in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).



"We need to ensure that all irritants are removed so as access to information on Kashmir must be accessible to every youth of Pakistan and Kashmir on digital space," he said. Moreover, Shehryar Afridi said the academia role needs to be showcased for effective narrative building on Kashmir through better research and protection of archives. He underlined the need to raise and expose the violations of human rights, child and women rights being committed by occupational forces in IIOJK. Afridi said that since India under its genocide plan was trying to damage and destroy Kashmiri culture and heritage, we are working on securing, safeguarding and projecting the culture and heritage of Kashmir. He said that Pakistan was working to use modern media tools to expose Indian atrocities being committed by colonial regime in IIOJK. — APP

Punjab govt issues dress code for officers

LAHORE: Four days after the apex court judge had expressed displeasure over the informal dressing of Lahore deputy commissioner, the Punjab government on Friday notified a dress code to be observed by the officers during the office hours and while appearing before the courts of law.

According to a notification issued by the Punjab government, all the male officers were instructed to observe a proper dress code i.e. lounge suit/smart casual with closed collar shirt and tie or shalwar kameez with waistcoat along with appropriate footwear.

"In case of female officers, the dress code should be in line with office decorum and norms while being reflective of the formal nature of official duties," read the notification. It is pertinent to mention here that the DC judge Justice Mansoor Ahmad Malik had admonished Lahore Deputy Commissioner Mudassar Riaz Malik for not properly dressing up during his appearance before the court on Monday (January 25). The apex court had summoned Punjab Chief Secretary Jawad Rafiq Malik and asked him about the dress code of the officer. — APP

KPCTA

organizes moot on virus impacts on tourism

PESHAWAR: The experts and speakers at a conference scheduled to be held in Islamabad on Saturday would discuss the COVID-19 impacts on tourism and the steps being taken for boosting the sector in current scenario. The conference titled 'Texte' arranged by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) in collaboration with the KP Information Technology Board, AJK Tourism and Archaeology Department, Pakistan International Airlines, would debate on coronavirus pandemic ramifications and the steps to tackle the situation. Stakeholders affiliated to the tourism sector, experts from Gilgit-Balistan and hospitality sector, Special Assistant to Prime Minister and Chairman National Tourism Coordination Board Zulfi Bukhari, KP Chief Minister Mahmood Khan, GB Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid, Pakistan International Airlines Chief Executive Officer Arshad Malik, World Bank's Kiran Afzal, KP Tourism Secretary Abid Majid, secretary tourism Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gloria Guevara of World Travel and Tourism Council and others would attend the conference.

The conference is aimed at boosting an online network of stakeholders to tackle the bad impacts on the tourism, devising a strategy for promoting the sector and applying the modern day trends in tourism industry. The organizers said that the conference would also help raise awareness among the tourists about the industry as how to proceed toward the better future. — APP

JI's Salman Butt Laid To Rest

LAHORE: Central leader of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Pakistan and former member National and Punjab assemblies Hafiz Salman Butt was laid to rest in Miani Sahab graveyard, here on Friday. Earlier, funeral prayer of Hafiz Salman Butt was offered after Juma prayer at JI headquarters Mansoorah while JI leader Hafiz Muhammad Idrees led the prayer. JI Ameer Senator Sirajul Haq, Secretary General Ameerul Azeem, Vice President Liaqat Baloch, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf's Ijaz Ahmed Chaudhry, party workers, students and labour unions leaders and a large number of people from various walks of life attended the prayer. Addressing the gathering, JI Chief Sirajul Haq paid rich tributes to Hafiz Salman Butt for his remarkable contribution towards democracy and ensuring rights to labour and students community. The speakers vowed to continue mission of Hafiz Salman for the welfare of less privileged communities of the country. Hafiz Salman Butt passed away after protracted illness at the age of 65 in a local hospital last night. He was elected member National Assembly first time in 1985. — APP

Briefs**Committees reports presented in Senate**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The chairmen of various committees and members have presented reports of their respective committees in the Upper House of the Parliament on Friday. During proceedings of the upper house, Senator Muhammad Usman Khan Kakar, chairman, Functional committee on Problems of Less Developed Areas presented report of the committee for the Parliamentary years 2018-2021.

Senator Fida Muhammad, chairman Standing Committee on Power presented report of the committee on Bi-annual (July-December, 2020) examination of the budgetary allocation and its utilization by the power division as required by provision to sub-rule (4) of Rule 166 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012.

Senator Muhammad Javed Abbasi, chairman Standing Committee on Law and Justice presented report of the committee on the Bill further to amend the Enforcement of Women Property Rights Act, 2020 (The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2020) introduced by Senator Muhammad Javed Abbasi on 26th October, 2020.

PFA seals 3 food outlets

DNA

RAWALPINDI, Jan 29 (AP- P): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) enforcement teams on the directives of Director General (DG) PFA Rafaqat Ali Naswana has accelerated its ongoing operation and sealed three food outlets here besides imposing fines on 11 food points in different areas of the division. According to a PFA spokesman, the Food Safety Teams conducted raids in Rawal Town and sealed three food outlets over violations of the provincial food regulations and selling poor quality products. He informed that a team conducted raid at a vinegar production unit and recovered 3500 liters substandard vinegar with fake labeling. A spices production unit was also sealed as the team recovered open spices stored in poor condition, he added.

Anti-typhoid drive from February 1

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Around 226 area Incharges have been trained with the coordinated efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to monitor the two-week long anti-typhoid vaccination campaign that would be launched in urban areas of the district from February 1 to 15.

Incharge District vaccination programme, Chief Executive Officer of District Health Authority Dr Faiza Kanwal told APP that over 1,876,539 children from nine months to 15 years of age would be vaccinated under the Typhoid Prevention Campaign in the 123 union councils of the district. She said that children in the cantonment areas of Rawalpindi, Rawal Town, Pothohar Town, Gujar Khan, Kotli Satyan, Kahuta and Murree urban areas will be given injections to protect them from typhoid. The CEO informed that Principal Allied Hospital's of the city Dr Muhammad Umer has ensured the representatives of UNICEF in a meeting that qualified staff of the allied hospitals would be provided to make the drive a success.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of various countries posing for a picture with Punjab Governor Ch. Muhammad Sarwar on the occasion of RCCI reception hosted for the Presidents of chambers of commerce and industry from all over Pakistan. - DNA

IPI for strong policies and difficult decisions

Pakistan, the former foreign secretary suggested, will have to spell out its own geo-economic perspective to the Biden Administration and seek avenues for private sector cooperation in all sectors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Policy Institute (IPI) called on the government to put in place strong policies and take difficult decisions for the country's long-term gain. The think tank said this while launching its annual report 'Pakistan Outlook 2021 - Politics, Economy & Security', which provides an in-depth analysis and forecast of the political, foreign policy, security, and economic trends in the country. The report also takes an exclusive look at energy security.

IPI noted that policymaking in the country has for long been reigned by a reactionary approach that

panders to short-term solutions. Such an approach, it cautioned, subdues symptoms while leaving the root causes untouched.

Without an effective policymaking and implementation framework in place, IPI Executive Director Prof. Sajjad Bokhari said, "it would be difficult for the country to unshackle itself from the chains of frequent boom-bust economic cycles and problems like food inflation and circular debt would continue to hinder sustainable growth."

Policy Analyst and Member of IPI Advisory Board Raza Rumi emphasized on the need for a consensus among the political elites on reforming public owned enterprises, restoring parliamentary oversight

over the executive, legal and judicial reform, strengthening federalism, and transferring powers and resources to local governments.

During 2021, he believed the challenges to governance would intensify unless a political settlement is reached among the opposition, the government, and the establishment. Former Defense Secretary Lt Gen (R) Asif Yasin Malik, while deliberating on the emerging security environment in the current year, also stressed on improved governance and restoring the public's confidence in the government's ability of deliver. "Serious measures have to be taken to improve the governance standards in the country so as to

bring socio-economic justice to the doorstep of every Pakistani. This is most requirement for the national security," he maintained.

Gen Malik underscored that the biggest hazard to national security on the internal front is the loss of trust by the populace in the ability of the state to safeguard their interests against foreign and domestic threats, and provide a balanced social structure for one and all. This may be the year of 'make or break' significance, he said. Former Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir, while evaluating the foreign policy challenges, observed that in an unsettled global and regional environment, the outlook for Pakistan in 2021 will remain uncertain.

On the issue of engaging the new Biden administration in the United States, Amb. Bashir was of the opinion that ties with the US are longstanding and new areas of common interests will have to be identified.

Pakistan, the former foreign secretary suggested, will have to spell out its own geo-economic perspective to the Biden Administration and seek avenues for private sector cooperation in all sectors. Academician Dr Adnan Arshad in his take on COVID-19 said that while pandemic was ill-fated, but its occurrence provides an opportunity to set up a different kind of world where health care can be delivered to all in a cost-effective manner.

PMAS-AAUR signs MoU for Solar Power Plant

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) and Netline Pvt. Ltd. Karachi have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), under which the company will install solar power plant 1.2 MW (Phase-I) up to 2.5 MW grid-tied solar energy generation at University main Campus. Almost 30-40% electricity will be saved and the project will also be helpful to provide renewable energy based cost-effective solutions to PMAS-AAUR through solar energy for sustainable growth.

Solarization is the initiative of the Government of the Punjab for saving ample energy and also the part of Clean & Green Pakistan movement under the direction of the Prime Minister Imran Khan.

M/S Netline Pvt. Ltd. was the lowest bidder.

The contract under the bid rate, Rs 13.91 per kWh for the debt period of ten (10) years and Rs 12.00 per kWh for the post debt period of fifteen (15) years for installation of 1.2 MW solar set-



up by using the rooftop of university under the power purchase agreement for 25 years has been signed. Under the MoU, not a single penny will be incurred by the University for Installation of solar energy generation setup. The repair and maintenance of the solar setup for 25 year will be the sheer responsibility of the M/S Netline PVT. Ltd. PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof. Dr. Qamar uz Zaman, on the occasion, said Pakistan is facing a demand and supply gap in the electricity sector and there is dire need to promote a culture of solarization for alternative energy. The VC appreciated efforts of faculty, administration particularly Director Planning & Development Shahid Ali Khan and team regarding the solarization of

the main campus. The VC said that the University has taken an initiative to completely shift over the solar energy source by the end of year 2021 and hoped that PMAS-AAUR will get benefits by shifting to the solar power system. Aqeel Sultan Registrar PMAS-AAUR and Engr Iqbal Zavary CEO Netline Pvt. Ltd signed the MoU on behalf of their respective organizations. The tender for Grid-tied Solar System of up to 2.5 MWp on rooftops, through private investment on an ESCO Model was advertised in the National Press to invite the technically sound solar companies. The Punjab Energy Efficiency Conservation Agency (PEECA) provided standard documents for pre-qualification and RFP to proceed further.

Crackdown on criminals continues

DNA

ATTOCK: Police crackdown on criminals continues, 16 accused arrested, drug dealers seized 3957 grams of hashish, 10 liters of liquor, gamblers seized a total amount of Rs 50,700, weapons seized. According to the details, a 30-bore pistol, a 32-bore pistol, a 9mm pistol and a 32-bore revolver were seized from the illegal occupants. Attock police on the special instructions of District Police Officer Attock Syed Khalid Hamdani. The team of President Hassan Abdal Police Station recovered 1240 grams of cannabis from accused Ibrahim Khan son of Fazal Hayat resident of Nazir Banda Tehsil Lahore District and arrested the accused and registered a case against him. Ejaz son of Muhammad Nawaz resident of Pandighib seized 1260 grams of cannabis and arrested the accused and registered a case. City Hassan Abdal Police Station team recovered 400 grams of cannabis from accused Shafaqat Ali son of Muhammad Amin resident of Hassan Abdal Police seized 420 grams of cannabis from Abdal and arrested the accused Separate drug cases were registered against him.

AIOU students, tutors to get Telenor data bundle

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University(AIOU) and Telenor Pakistan on Friday signed two MoUs to provide data bundles and Easypaisa facility to its millions of students and thousands of tutors around the country. The aim of this collaboration is to facilitate the students and tutors in their online academic activities and payments of all sorts. MoUs signing ceremony was presided over by Prof Dr Nasir Mahmood, Dean, Faculty of Education. Senior academic and administrative staff of the university as well as top management of Telenor participated in the ceremony. MoU of data bundle was signed by the Registrar, AIOU, Sohail Rana and Mr Ghulam Nasir, Chief Business Officer of Telenor while MoU of Easypaisa was signed by the Registrar, AIOU, Sohail Rana and Umar Moheen Malik, Head, Digital Payment Easypaisa, Telenor. According to the agreement around 20 and 50 GB bundle package would be provided to AIOU community on the rates of 500 and 900 rupees respectively on monthly basis. Prof Dr Nasir addressing the ceremony said that the top priority of the Vice Chancellor, AIOU is to provide standard online educational facilities at the doorsteps of the students as well as switching to automation of all university processes. He, further, said that these MoUs will provide latest facilities to our students who are dispersed throughout the country. He thanked Telenor management for this joint collaboration. Umar Bin Tariq, Chief Business Officer of Telenor also addressed the ceremony. He appreciated AIOU for its national education services and assured maximum cooperation of his respective organization in this noble cause.

Director ICT also addressed the gathering and shed light on university's automation processes including online admissions and other online educational facilities. He said that currently 1.4 million students are enrolled in various programs of the university who would be provided these online facilities. He appreciated Telenor management for their cooperation. He said this cooperation would not only bring ease and efficiency in university processes but would also be enabling in complaint management system. - DNA

ICCI calls for new policy measures

ICCI President Pakistan was confronted with many economic challenges including rising debt burden, fiscal deficit, low tax revenue collection and the best way to overcome these challenges was to focus on promoting documentation of the economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry has called upon the government to take new policy measures aimed at promoting the documented economy that would help in improving the tax revenue collection and achieving sustainable growth. He said that the IMF has projected Pakistan's GDP growth rate at 1.5 percent for the current fiscal year 2020-21, but this forecast was based on the formal economy, which was almost half of the total economy.

He said that according to various surveys and reports, the informal economy in Pakistan

accounted for 35-50 percent of the total economy, therefore, the real GDP growth of the country could be enhanced significantly by bringing informal sectors in the formal economy. He said that IMF's World Economic Outlook 2021 has projected the global economy to grow at 5.5 percent, emerging economies 8.3 percent, India 11.5 percent, China 8.1 percent, Malaysia 7 percent, Turkey 6 percent, France 5.5 percent, USA 5.1 percent, Mexico 4.3 percent. However, Pakistan's growth projection was quite low than its actual potential and its main reason was that undocumented economy was not being considered. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that if the government wanted to bring

more people into the tax filing system, it should take confidence building measures for taxpayers. He said that lack of education about the tax system was holding back many potential taxpayers from coming into the tax system and urged that FBR should organize awareness sessions at chambers of commerce & industry in major cities to educate maximum traders about the benefits of tax filing. He said that FBR was withdrawing cash from bank accounts of the business community through scrutiny and it should stop this practice as it will promote trust deficit and encourage people to remain in the informal economy in order to save themselves from unnecessary troubles. He said that a friendly tax system

would restore the confidence of taxpayers and bring more people into the tax system, therefore, the government should give top priority to developing a business friendly tax regime. ICCI President Pakistan was confronted with many economic challenges including rising debt burden, fiscal deficit, low tax revenue collection and the best way to overcome these challenges was to focus on promoting documentation of the economy. He said that the government was under obligation to ensure that the benefits of development and other steps aimed at public welfare were judiciously and equitably accessible to all its citizens. However, this objective could not be achieved without getting rid of foreign loans and

generating enough indigenous resources for which proper documentation of the economy and increasing the size of the formal economy was very important. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President and Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI said that the construction package announced by the Prime Minister Imran Khan was a step in the right direction to bring hidden assets in the documented economy and encourage more businesses and investors to participate in the legal economy. He emphasized that the government should announce such packages for other sectors of the economy that would be helpful in promoting the documented economy and accelerating the pace of industrialization across the country.

'Children suffer in poor housing'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A new nationally representative study led by researchers at Nationwide Children's Hospital in US has found poor-quality housing is independently associated with poorer pediatric health and suggests ways health care providers and housing programs may address the findings.

As per the findings published in the Journal of Child Health Care, Holes in floors, cracks in walls, plumbing issues and/or problems with pests are linked with overall poorer pediatric health and higher health care use in a nationally representative study.

Housing instability and homelessness are widely understood to have an impact on health, and certain housing problems have been linked to specific childhood health conditions, such as mould with asthma. But it has not been clear how overall housing quality may affect children-especially those who are at risk from other social determinants of health such as food insecurity or poverty, Medical Daily reported.

"We are really trying to pick apart the social determinants of health. What happens to a child's health if the child is hungry? What happens if a parent can't pay rent?" said Kelly Kelleher, MD, senior author of the study and vice president of Community Health at Nationwide Children's.

HEC awards 4032 foreign scholarships to students

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Wajaha Akram Friday informed the National Assembly that Higher Education Commission (HEC) has awarded 4032 foreign scholarships to Pakistani students since 2009. Responding to question during question hour she said, out of total 4032, 3703 scholarships for Ph.D programs, and 329 scholarships for Post-Doctorate programs were awarded. Responding to another question she said, institutions working under the ambit of Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) are bound to teach content developed by National Curriculum Council (NCC) where all subject experts are taken on board to develop textbooks based on contemporary trend.

She said, national anthem is already a regular feature of morning assemblies held at the start of the day in educational institutions under the ambit of Federal Directorate of Education. However, holding of assembly has been suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to another question she said, her Ministry has already taken a number of initiatives to minimize the educational loss caused due to outbreak of COVID-19. - APP

IESCO issues power schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule:-

On 30th January from 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM, Jahangir Road, MSF, National Park, Khanna Road, CNC, SPD-2, Gulistan Colony, Topi Pump-2, Rehmatabad-2, Dina-1, Capt. Nisar, Rohtas, Dina-4, Madu Class, Col. Muhammad Akram, Mangla Cantt, Major Riaz Shaheed, Mumtaz Shaheed Feeders, Furthermore Chakwal, Bhagwal, Talagang, Danda Shah Bilawal, Pak Lafage Cement, DG Khan Cement Factory, New 40 MW load management has been done at Chakri, F-16, Raniyal, Adiala and Chakri grid stations as per requirement. From 09:00 a.m. to 02:00 p.m. Tamir and surrounding areas will be remain without power.

Briefs

Police held kite sellers, fliers; recover kites

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in their crackdown against kite sellers and kite-flying conducted raids in different areas and arrested 10 besides recovering 3700 kites and 131 kite flying string rolls from their possession. According to a police spokesman, R.A.Bazaar, Bani, Sadiqabad, Race Course and Taxila police arrested 10 kite sellers and fliers namely Muhammad Ishaq, Amir Raza, Hassan Nabi, Muhammad Saim, Muhammad Latif, Muhammad Riaz, Fida Muhammad, Muhammad Mushtaq, Sadam Hussain and Jahanzaib and recovered 3700 kites with 131 string rolls from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against the accused. He said, Police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas were conducting raids against the kite flying ban violators and taking action in accordance with the law. — APP

Hoarders held, fine of Rs126,500 imposed

RAWALPINDI: District administration in its crackdowns against 85 profiteers, hoarders on Friday imposed around fine amounting to Rs. 126, 500 in various areas of the district. According to the city administration's spokesman, the teams including special price magistrates, Assistant Commissioners (ACS), Tehsildars and concerned authorities conducted 1075 raid in various markets and imposed fine worth Rs 126,500 on 85 violators involved in adulteration, hoarding and profiteering. In a statement, Deputy Commissioner, Capt Anwar Ul Haq said that if any of the shopkeepers was found selling commodities on high rates would be dealt with iron hands, adding every effort would be made to provide maximum relief to the consumers. — APP

Police crackdown on criminals continues

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ISLAMABAD: RCCI President Mohammad Nasir Mirza addressing media at the closing ceremony of Interational Chambers Summit (ICS 2021) at a local hotel in Islamabad. — DNA

RCCI International Chambers summit ends on a high note

Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shakraiz Malik, Chairman Conference Fahad Barlas, Vice Chairman Usman Ayub, former presidents, members of the executive committee and a large number of presidents of various chambers from across Pakistan were also present.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Three-day International Chambers Summit (ICS 2021) organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) ends on a high note. Addressing a joint press conference at the end of the ICS 2021 at a local hotel in Islamabad, RCCI President Mohammad Nasir Mirza demanded that the government should provide construction

industry style package to all industries. The work and progress on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) should be accelerated with a focus on Gwadar port. Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shakraiz Malik, Chairman Conference Fahad Barlas, Vice Chairman Usman Ayub, former presidents, members of the executive committee and a large number of presidents of various chambers from across Paki-

stan were also present. A joint declaration was also issued at the end of the 13th All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference, which is part of ICS 2021, where more than 75 Presidents of different Chambers across Pakistan and outside Pakistan attended the conference. The business community demanded that the point of sales system be extended till June 30. Exports data shows growth however, it is the matter of concern that the

Government has increased the electricity prices. This will increase the cost of doing business and Pakistan may lose the competitive edge here, he added. The declaration also stated that the Tax targets should not be based on revenue collection. Bring new taxpayers into the tax net. He said that the government should talk to Iran to stop smuggling on the Pak-Iran border. He demanded that industrial estates be set up in

different areas, restrictions on imports imposed by the government boost local industry, the statement said, adding that women's chambers were facing problems and government agencies should adopt an investor-friendly environment. The government should give Rs 1 million annually to each women's chamber and provide protection to the CNG sector. On this occasion, group leader RCCI Sohail Altaf said that the sales

tax rate should be reduced to single digit. Stakeholders should be consulted in policy making. On the third day of the conference, International Chambers of Commerce from Bangladesh, Tanzania, Cairo Chamber, Minarah Chamber South Africa, UK Pakistan Chamber and Oman Chamber participated through video link. More than 17 MoUs were also signed at the Chamber of Commerce level to enhance networking.

SDPI ranked 90th among top 100 global think tanks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With 11 points improvement, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) ranked 90th among 100 non-U.S. global think tanks, retained its 1st position in Pakistan for the last many years, and with improvement of four points it ranked 11th among the South East Asia and the Pacific region, according to the 15th edition of University of Pennsylvania Global Go To Think Tank Index (GGTTI) released across the world. The 2020 GGTTI is based on the ranking done for over 8500 think tanks (TT) registered with GGTTI from across the globe, selected through a rigorous criterion. The University of Pennsylvania under GGTTI initiative organized a global webinar on the eve of the global launch of the GGTTI 2020 report and invited representatives of 20 world-renowned think tanks including SDPI whose case studies were presented at the webinar on 'Best Policy and Institutional Response to COVID-19' while working with their respective policy makers. The Executive Director of SDPI presented the Institute's case study of developing 'Food Security Dashboard' under the office of the prime minister to monitor the food security situation amid pandemic and in general situation. Launching the 2020 Global Go To Think Tank Index report, the Executive Director of the Sustainable Development

Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said: "Despite all hardships amid impacts of COVID19 and much of the work done by SDPI on virtual platforms and difficulties faced by civil society and think tanks, SDPI has improved its ranking in the index and continued to be figured as a prominent global think tank since 2017. This year, SDPI has increased its positioning in 6 key categories and retained its position in 5 categories". He said that selection of SDPI to present its best policy and institutional response to COVID19 case study at the webinar organized by the University of Pennsylvania is a great recognition of the Institute. The global audience was told that the prime minister has approved the Food Security Dashboard developed by SDPI. The categories where SDPI improved its ranking include: 1) top think tanks (non-U.S.) with 90th position as compared to 101 position last year; 2) top think tank (SEA and the Pacific) with 11th position with 4 points' improvement from 15th position last year; 3) economic policy with 140th position, one point improvement from 141st position last year; 4) advocacy and outreach with 60th position, one point improvement from 61st position last year; 5) think tank to watch with 49th position, two points improvement from 51st position last year and 6) public engagement with 76th position, one point improvement from 77th position last year.

RWP: Traffic plan issued for second Test match

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi City Traffic Police (CTP) on Friday issued traffic plan for the 2nd test cricket match between Pakistan and South Africa and advised the citizens to use alternative routes to avoid inconvenience as Double Road would remain closed during practice session next week and test cricket match in Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. CTP would make all out efforts to regulate traffic in adjacent areas of the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium where the test cricket match between Pakistan and South Africa cricket teams scheduled to be played from Feb 4 to Feb 8, said Senior Traffic Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Abid Abbas Shah. The CTP have issued a traffic plan for the

cricket match to facilitate the citizens, he said. The Double Road would remain closed for all kind of vehicular traffic from start to conclusion of the practice session and the match. He urged the road users to cooperate with the police performing duties during the cricket match. The traffic coming from Rawal Dam, Islamabad towards Rawalpindi would be diverted to Expressway. The traffic would be allowed to enter Rawalpindi via Dhoke Kala Khan, Khanna and Koral. The traffic from Rawalpindi to Islamabad would take U-turn in front of the Kidney Centre and use opposite side to enter Islamabad. The traffic coming from IJP Road and 9th Avenue Chowk towards Rawalpindi would take Pindora

Chungi, Katarian, Carriage Factory, Pir Wadhai route to enter Rawalpindi instead of the Double Road. Abid Abbas said that heavy traffic would be strictly banned in the area around the stadium during cricket match days. He further informed that 303 CTP personnel including seven DSPs, 15 Inspectors, 215 traffic wardens and 65 traffic assistants under the supervision of SSP would be deployed to regulate traffic in the city. He said, the CTP officials have also been directed to keep an eye on suspected vehicles, motorcycles and tinted glass vehicles besides taking a strict action in accordance with the law against vehicles running on city roads without number plates. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Afghan ambassador to Pakistan Najibullah Alikhil met with Belgian ambassador to Pakistan Bronchain. Both envoys talked about peace process and security, the role of the EU, NATO and the international community in ending violence and achieving a durable peace in Afghanistan. — DNA

CNS reaffirms to thwart any misadventure

The Chief of the Naval Staff during interaction with officers and men appreciated their morale, level of preparedness and resolve to defend maritime frontiers of the country. He emphasized that Pakistan was a peace-loving nation and believed in regional prosperity and stability

KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on Friday emphasized on the perpetual readiness of Pakistan Navy fighting units and underscored the importance of joint operational exercises to afford desired level of training. Addressing the debrief session of Pakistan Navy's Operational Exercise RIBAT-21 held here, as chief guest, the Admiral expressed his satisfaction on the conduct of joint operations with Pakistan Air Force to achieve highest level of synergy between the Services, said a Pakistan Navy press release. The Chief of the Naval Staff during interaction with



officers and men appreciated their morale, level of preparedness and resolve to defend maritime frontiers of the country. He emphasized that Pakistan was a peace-loving nation and believed in regional prosperity and stability. Naval Chief reaffirmed the resolve to thwart any misadventure by the adversary. Exercise RIBAT focuses on validating Pakistan Navy's war fighting concepts under evolving multi-faceted threats, ranging from conventional to asymmetric warfare. The hallmark of the exercise remained joint PN and PAF operations which were undertaken at extended ranges in the North Arabian Sea. — APP

Online facility inaugurated at RDA's OWOC

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Chairman Tariq Mehmood Murtaza Friday inaugurated online facility at One Window Operations Center of the authority. Speaking on the occasion, the RDA chairman said the facility was launched with the collaboration of Punjab Information and Technology Board. He said in line with Prime Minister's policy, the authority was creating ease for doing business which will boost the investment besides generating new opportunities for employment. The services at center include approval of maps, transfer of plot or any other work related to RDA. The people would be able to get information about their work from the One Window Center, he expressed. The RDA chairman said the center was established with an aim to facilitate the people so that they do not have to go around every office for their work but only submit their applications at single point and get a copy of the decision on their application from the same office. He said 30 days have been fixed in this regime for the approval of map and construction completion certificates, 45 days for the NOC of change in land use and 60 to 75 days have been fixed for the permits of the residential societies. The chairman said that he was trying to make this online facility process better to overcome the people's inconvenience and save their time. E-Khidmat Centre Rawalpindi Manager Jan Sher, RDA Finance Deputy Director Junaid Taj Bhatti, IT Assistant Director Dawood Khalid and other officials were present on the occasion. — APP

Capital police launches crackdown against beggars

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police on Friday launched a crackdown against beggars and its facilitators along with nabbing 376 from various areas in the city. The campaign was started following the directives of IGP Islamabad Qazi Jamil-ur-Rehman to purge the federal capital from this menace, said a news release. DIG Operations Afzaal Ahmad kausar had asked all zonal SPs to form special squads for the purpose. The alms seeker and their handlers were shifted to the relevant police stations. All out efforts would be made to eliminate beggary from the federal capital who creates nuisance for the masses, the news release added. — APP

DIG Hazara to facilitate both masses, police

ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Police of Hazara division Mirvais Niaz Friday said that the measures would be taken to facilitate masses and police force as well. While chairing a meeting of District Police Officers (DPO) of the division, he directed the police officers to eradicate the crimes from society by utilizing all their resources and abilities, opt for a good strategy to exterminate drugs and protect the youth and society, take strict action against drug dealers and smugglers indiscriminately. Mirvais Niaz also directed the DPOs to provide protection to the children against sexual crimes and to control child sexual crimes also get the support of media, local elders, notables, members of the public liaison council, Ulema, parents and civil society members. An awareness campaign should also be launched for the general public in this regard. Take stringent action against people involved in aerial firing, encroachers, land grabbers according to the law, bring improvement in police station culture, the DIG said. The meeting was attended by DPOs of all 8 districts of the region, SP investigations, SP traffic warden Abbottabad, SP Special branch Hazara, SP FRP Hazara, SSP CTD Hazara and SP Elite Force. Earlier, the DPOs and SSPs also briefed the DIG about their respective units and discussed police establishment, police performance, the security of various developmental projects in the region, the ratio of crimes and issues being faced by Hazara police. — APP

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Human rights portal

The Ministry of Human Rights (MOHR), in collaboration with the European Union (EU) has launched a human rights information repository. The database is a one-window access point to all the material that makes the human rights regime of Pakistan. This makes the information portal a great resource for the students, academics and human rights advocates. However, the government must still traverse a long road for the promotion and protection of human rights. Provision of legal aid to the victims could be a good starting point for the state. The government must allot funds for establishing such a facility. The government needs to establish a public defender system to protect the rights of the citizens. This mechanism will prove more fruitful in protecting human rights and providing remedies to those abused. The MOHR believes that the portal will enable the public to truly understand their rights. Undoubtedly, awareness is the first step in upholding inalienable freedoms. However, it is something that civil society organisations can do as well. Efforts on this front are being made in large numbers. Going a step further from education, the ministry needs to put pressure on the government to take practical steps to ensure that people's rights are not abused. In many cases, authorities turn out to be the biggest violators of people's rights. There are numerous legal lacunae in the federal and provincial legislation on human rights. For instance, violence against women remains a serious problem. The situation worsened for women during the pandemic, as witnessed by increased domestic abuse complaints in the past year. Similarly, despite the increased legislation in recent times to protect children, six children face abuse of one kind or another every day in Pakistan. The biggest reason why these violations do not go down is the lack of implementation of the laws. The ministry must establish better channels of inter-provincial coordination to implement the laws to better protect the rights of these groups.



System failure

The woes of the Pakistan Railways (PR) never seem to end. A few days back, the Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati announced that the PR has suffered a huge loss of Rs1.2 trillion, and now another conundrum has befallen the institution. Its electronic system of e-ticketing and financial and human resources collapsed, leaving 60 online reservation offices disconnected from the main servers. According to the PR administration, the online seat reservation system has been set up again by using the host server of the National Telecom Corporation. However, even with this backup for a reservation system, the severity of this crash should not be understated. Whether it was hacking or a glitch, the crash of its servers could result in major data loss—if it was a hack, then sensitive data could have been compromised. Either way, this means data on pensions, salaries and finances, tracing back to 2016, could be lost. In an already malfunctioning and inefficient system, this upheaval of key information in the PR database could mean further losses. Though the system is now trying to slowly recover the lost data, the lag of more than 24 hours is too great, and some have feared that this system failure might just cost the PR losses of millions of rupees. What is worse is that this comes right as the government promised a complete change in the basic structure of the PR to change its loss-making status. The crash, while a devastating blow, is not surprising considering the PR has been suffering similar technical troubles for quite some time, eroding public trust in its efficiency. What is done is done, but this serves as a timely alarm to the government as it pledges to transform the PR, that the security of its IT systems should be one of the first priorities.

Uzbekistan: Alea Jacta Est

Abror Yusupov



Significantly, there have been dramatic changes in the minds of Uzbek people. The people who have lived under “internal censorship” for several years, have warmly welcomed the transparency put forward by the President and expressed their readiness for changes

The analysis of the reforms and changes undertaken in Uzbekistan demonstrate that a new model of society and state relations is being shaped. This model's objective is to ensure the well-being of the people on the basis of mutually trustful and beneficial collaboration between society and the state, raising the sense of involvement of each person in the development of the country. The barometer for the effectiveness of such cooperation is a positive change in the quality of life of the citizens of the country. In addition, it forms a strong foundation for the unification and mobilization of the huge potential and resources of society, as well as state institutions for the development of the country. Of course, the road Uzbekistan chose is a complex one, but at the same time the most effective.

It can now be stated with confidence that new Uzbekistan under the leadership of Shavkat Mirziyoyev has successfully passed an important stage of development. It involves directing the activities of government agencies to serve the people and the society becoming an active initiator and participant in the reforms. Another important aspect, is that political system considers the setting up mutual strategic communication with the society as an important factor of the development. The president of Uzbekistan pays special attention to the active, educated and independent position of citizens in the affairs of

society and the state.

Now, the task before us is to move forward without slowing down the pace against the backdrop of the results and achievements. It can be similar to a process of striving forward with new vigour to retain the title after winning a championship in sports. Or, as one of the founders of modern physics, A.Einstein said, “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must move”.

The analysis indicates that the words spoken by Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of Uzbekistan are not a pre-arranged text or attractive set of words, but a kind of challenge to society that reflects the realities and strategic goals. It can be observed in the initiatives of the President of Uzbekistan, which he put forward with great precision and determination in his speeches at home and abroad. It is noteworthy that Shavkat Mirziyoyev, when making any proposal, clearly indicates its implementer and deadline. In my opinion, the historical changes observed in the socio-political life of Uzbekistan over the past period are as follows. First, freedom of speech has been ensured in the society. Citizens started to speak openly about their problems and their attitudes towards government agencies. This, in turn, has steeply reduced the “distance” which has been formed over many years between citizens and officials. This can be seen in all means of mass media like television, radio, press and social networks. At the same time, through objective observation of the information space of Uzbekistan, one can conclude that there are still a lot of problems in the country. In fact, the people are proposing to sort out existing problems together. Significantly, there have been dramatic changes in the minds of Uzbek people. The people who have lived under “internal censorship” for several years, have warmly welcomed the transparency put forward by the President and expressed their readiness for changes. This is the historical achievement of Uzbekistan in a short period of time. As it happens, positive changes in human thinking directly contribute to changes in the society.

Second, through his reforms, the President has managed to transform people from the “traditional spectator role” into the initiators and active participants in changes in society. This is one of the important positive changes. After all, progress can only be achieved if everyone is equally responsible for the development of society and the state. It is noteworthy that Shavkat Mirziyoyev sets an example for real leaders. There is no segment of the population in Uzbekistan with whom he has not met and communicated (teachers, constructors, engineers, entrepreneurs, farmers, youth, etc.). The famous phrase of 26th President of the USA T.Roosevelt says: “A leader works openly, a boss works behind closed doors. Leader guides, but boss controls”. Third, a critical spirit has emerged in Uzbek society. Public control over the activities of government agencies is being established. Of course, this process is now being carried out more by media representatives, including bloggers. As a result, government organizations are forced to consider public opinion. This ensures one of the main constitutional norms in public administration - the principle of accountability of government to the people. Along with this, there has been formed institutionalization of the relationship

between the people and government agencies.

Uzbekistan took 44th place in the Open Data Monitoring International Index, rising to 125 positions. A significant factor was the introduction of the practice of disclosure of indicators in 20 areas of public administration.

Fourth, Mr. Sh.Mirziyoyev trusts the youth. There is not only the factor that more than 60% of the population of Uzbekistan consists of young people, but also the factor that in today's rapidly developing world, only young people can withstand various challenges and create a new society. This approach is also based on strategic goals such as the rational use of the intelligence and potential of young people, its proper direction in the development of society and the state. Definitely, a number of pertinent questions arise in this regard. In particular: how can the potential of young people be realized in the modern world? What position does Uzbek leader hold in this regard? In this respect, it should be noted that a new system - “continuous knowledge chain” has been created in the country. This can be observed in the process of preschool-secondary school-professional and higher education”. In particular, in modern Uzbekistan, kindergarten is treated not only as an educational institution, but also as the foundation of education. In this regard, it should be noted that a separate system, which has no analogues in the world, has been established - the Ministry of Preschool Education. As a result, the coverage of young children with preschool education has doubled within 4 years to 60%, and the number of kindergartens has tripled. In turn, school education is being specialized in certain disciplines based on the requirements of modern development. In particular, schools with focus on chemistry, biology, mathematics, IT, physics, in-depth teaching of foreign languages are being established. It is noteworthy that a systematic approach is being taken to demonstrate the talent of students not only domestically but also internationally. In his address to the Oliy Majlis President put forward the initiative to organize the International Science Olympiad in Physics named after Akhmad Fergani. In the short term, the level of higher education coverage in the country has almost tripled to 25% (four years ago this figure was only 9%). This was achieved through the opening of new universities, including branches of leading foreign universities, and the organization of part-time and evening education. Another important historic decision in the higher education system of Uzbekistan is the granting of academic freedom to 30 leading universities of the country this year. Thus, the strategic goal of the leader of Uzbekistan in this regard is to encourage young people to acquire in-depth knowledge, to form the country's youth, first of all, as educated, high-potential and mature people who can meet modern requirements and increase the attractiveness of science. Fifth, there have been major changes in the field of external migration. This is directly related to the management and liberalization of migration processes. It should be noted that migration processes are transnational and specific to all countries. It is known that Uzbekistan is a country with a high labour force due to the fact that the majority of the population is young. Until recently, however, the country did not establish cooperation with recip-

ient countries on the safe, orderly organization of migration processes. In the past period, 12 normative and legal acts directly or indirectly regulating the industry were adopted. Work experience will be considered if citizens participating in labour migration pay social taxes on time. Most importantly, Uzbekistan protects the rights of its citizens working in other countries. This is a proof that

Shavkat Mirziyoyev guarantees the rights and freedoms of the citizens of Uzbekistan, wherever they are.

Despite the closure of borders between the two countries due to the pandemic, more than 600,000 of our compatriots have been brought to our country. Necessary assistance has been provided to about 100,000 of our citizens in difficult situations abroad

Sixth, it is well known that foreign policy is an integral continuation of domestic policy. This approach can be seen as a strategic direction of the foreign policy of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who has been the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan for many years. In this respect, it can be said that the priority of Tashkent's foreign policy is to establish equal relations with foreign countries and directly ensure the interests of the population.

This can be seen in the systematic implementation of tasks such as attracting investment in the socio-economic sphere, creating favourable conditions for investors, providing assistance to citizens of Uzbekistan in difficult situations in foreign countries. In general, this can be interpreted as a contour of domestic policy in foreign policy activity.

At the same time, one of the most important results of the effective foreign policy of the President of Uzbekistan in the past period is the creation of an atmosphere of dialogue, practical cooperation and good neighbourhood relations around Uzbekistan. In this way, Uzbekistan has created a common “point of attraction” in the Central Asian region. Another important aspect is that Uzbekistan does not claim individual leadership in the region, but seeks the harmonious development of the whole region. Such an approach of the Uzbek leader towards the region can be considered as a model of “mutual benefit and common success”. The initiatives put forward by Uzbekistan at international events at various levels in practice set the agenda for such events. In the international arena, the proposals put forward by Uzbekistan are supported and put into practice.

Based on the analysis, we can say that the formula of Uzbekistan's foreign policy is clear, official Tashkent has a strong position, which is in the interests of the people of Uzbekistan. To conclude, the people of Uzbekistan and the system of government in a short period of time have come a long way, which is the basis for complex and at the same time positive changes. In this regard, as noted above, relying on the interests of ordinary people in government, creating a “bridge” of constant communication with them, in my opinion, is an important factor in the changes taking place in the new Uzbekistan. This is an important basis for the next big strategic leap. Uzbekistan has enough potential and resources for this, because, as President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said, there is no way back, all the bridges have been burned down.

The writer is an expert and PhD in political science (Uzbekistan), specializes in public administration, improving the efficiency and openness of government bodies

Pakistan hosting seventh multinational Navy Drill

Dr Hasan Yaser Malik

Pakistan being a conscientious nation is committed to its resolve of peace co-existence and is determined for superior regional harmony and cooperation thus Pakistan is contributing as part of UN Peace Enforcing and Peace Keeping Missions. Proudly: Pakistan Navy has been entrusted with command of Maritime Task Force 150 and 151 and has participated in various bilateral and multilateral exercises. Pakistan took initiative by conducting Multilateral Biennial Exercise AMAN 2007 with a view to reveal its obligations to peace, contribute towards regional Maritime Security

Predominantly, the prominent civilizations like Circa, Indus Valley and Egypt have emerged and developed along the seas and rivers. Presently 2.4 billion people are living within 60 miles of the coast as ports and sea have always provided prudent prospects for explorers and admirals like Ibn Battuta, Zheng He and Khair-Udin Barbarossa who dominated the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean in 15th and 16th century respectively. Consequently, the domination led to enhancement of sea trade as seas were considered as a common human heritage however, during and after Second World War countries like U.S, UK, France, Spain and Italy started to build stronger navies with a view to not only consolidate on colonization but also to dominate the sea trade routes across the globe and established overseas naval bases since 1970s to control the vital choke points along sea lines of communication (SLOCs). Such extra regional emergence led to expansion of navies such as China, Japan, Australia, South Korea, India, Iran and Pakistan to strengthen the domain of Maritime Security not only by securing their lands and SLOCs but also to explore marine sources. In case of Pakistan due to its neighbouring environments Maritime Security is more pivotal for protection of its SLOCs and economy. Following the trends of enhancing global interdependence world navies have adopted the approach to conduct joint naval drills with a view to share new professional techniques of Maritime domain and to enhance diplomatic understanding. Pakistan being a conscientious nation is committed to its resolve of peace co-existence and is determined for superior regional harmony and cooperation thus Pakistan is contributing as part of UN Peace Enforcing and Peace Keeping Missions. Proudly: Pakistan Navy has been entrusted with command of Maritime Task Force 150 and 151 and has participated in various bilateral and multilateral exercises. Pakistan took initiative by conducting Multilateral Biennial Exercise AMAN 2007 with a view to reveal its obligations to

peace, contribute towards regional Maritime Security and enhance interoperability between regional and extra regional navies, particularly against asymmetric threats. Ever increasing numbers of participants have made AMAN International Naval Event with its seventh episode planned in February 2021. Considering the geo-political manoeuvre place Of Pakistan, significance of Gwadar Port. CPEC and the professional credentials of Pakistan Navy even Blue Water navies are keen for regular participation. During first AMAN Exercise in 2007: 28 countries and 29 observers participated and in 2019: 46 countries and 115 observers along with 2 Japanese P3C aircrafts, 15 Special Operation Forces, Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Maritime Teams participated. It is accepted that this time more than 40 countries as well as international observers and warships will participate. Exercise is designed to provide firstly to provision of common forum for information sharing, mutual understanding and identifying areas of common interests. Secondly, developing and practicing in response tactics, techniques and procedures against asymmetric and traditional threats during sea phase of the exercise and finally interaction with other nationals to share multicultural opportunities including Cultural Display and Food Gala. Exercise focuses on objectives to enhance interoperability with regional and extra regional navies thereby acting as a bridge between the regions and display untried resolve against terrorism and crimes in the Maritime Domain. The AMAN, unlike the contemporary Malabar Exercise, is based on principles of cooperation and support instead of domination hence it includes more cooperative activities like Replenishment At Sea, Counter Piracy Demonstration, Firing of Rocket Depth Charges, Surface Firing on Killer Tomato, Fly Pasts, Counter Terrorism Demonstrations, International Maritime Conference, Special Operation Forces activities. Cultural shows and Food Galas. Considering the prudence of AMAN, the Russian Navy's Black

Sea Fleet despite the presence of NATO Navies has also planned to participate in multinational AMAN-2021 naval drills as it considers Pakistan as a Global Pivot State and these biennial drills aim to improve joint coordination in maritime rescue missions and combating piracy, among other issues of common concern and it will be the first time since the “Bold Monarch-2011” exercises off the Spanish coast that Russian forces will join NATO Navies anywhere in the world. AMAN; as its title indicates is conducted on the cardinals of peace, joint coordination in Maritime rescue missions and combating issues of common concern, however on the contrary, the annual Malabar Exercise is based on aggressive and dominating approach including diverse activities, ranging from fighter combat operations from aircraft carriers, Maritime interdiction operations, anti-submarine warfare, amphibious operations, anti-air warfare operations and counter-piracy operations with a view to dominate the SLOCs. Recently, the Quad Navies consisting India, U.S, Japan and Australia have conducted 24th Malabar Exercise from 3 November to 20 November in the Arabian Sea. It is imperative to understand that although Quad Navies are against the Chinese naval expansion and are flexing muscled against China in South China Sea but still all the Quad Navies less India are participating with China in AMAN since 2009. The emerging relations between Russia and Pakistan and Russian entry in AMAN despite NATO presence will add to regional diplo-economic balance. It is appreciated that the ever increasing trust and participation of regional and extra regional countries is surely enhancing the geo-political significance of Pakistan even beyond region.

The writer holds Masters Degrees in English, Warfare Studies, Special Education, and International Relations. He did Ph.D. in International Relations

Briefs

De Kock opens up after defeat Pakistan Test

KARACHI: South Africa's captain Quinton de Kock thinks that the bowlers were right on the mark, however, batsmen cost them the game. Pakistan defeated South Africa by seven wickets at National Stadium, Karachi. It was Pakistan's first win over Proteas since 2013. "I think our first innings cost us the game. That was a big reason for our loss. I don't think we took too long to adjust. We practiced enough here but I think we were a bit soft. We saw Markram and Rassie in the second innings play well. Just a few soft dismissals," De Kock said in post-match presser. "I think going into Rawalpindi, we learned about these kinds of surfaces. Our bowlers bowled well, with great aggression and accuracy. Just that Pakistan team batted really well against us," he added. With this win, Pakistan have improved their rankings in World Test Championship (WTC) and are at fifth spot. If the home side manages to win Rawalpindi Test, they will be placed at fifth spot in ICC Test rankings. — APP

'Nauman showed his experience'

Karachi: Pakistan captain Babar Azam was in awe of debutant Nauman Ali, who picked a fiver in his debut Test match. The Khipro-born Nauman picked seven wickets overall (2/38, 5/35) and was economical too in both the innings. "Credit goes to the players. Bowling start was outstanding. The wicket was slow, and we had planned to bat first," Babar said in post-match ceremony. "Debutants have pressure but he showed his experience. When partnerships were forming, him and Yasir broke them," he added. Note, Pakistan beat South Africa after seven years in Test cricket and they are now 1-0 up in two-match series.

CP thrashes Sindh in first semi-final of Pakistan Cup

KARACHI: Central Punjab outclassed Sindh in the first semi-final of the Pakistan Cup, defeating them by 127 runs at the State Bank Stadium on Friday. Sindh were bowled out for 212 in 36.5 overs as they were due to chasing a 340-run target. Central Punjab will now wait for yesterday's knockout fixture between Northern and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to confirm their opponent for the all-important final on February 1. Sindh started horrendously as they suffered two run-outs in the start and failed to gain momentum in the chase. Omair Bin Yousuf was the first to go while wicketkeeper Mohamad Hasan was another. Khuram Manzoor was involved in both run-outs, however, he finished as the top scorer with an impressive 88 off 73 balls with 12 fours while Saad Ali contributed 54 off 55 balls with five fours and six. Mohammad Ali was the pick of bowlers with three for 31, while Ahmed Bashir and Usman Qadir bagged two wickets apiece at 40 and 50 runs, respectively for Central Punjab. Earlier, Central Punjab started positively after they were put into bat by Sindh's captain Asad Shafiq. Openers Tayyab Tahir and Rizwan Husain post a solid 87-run first-wicket partnership, allowing CP to finish at 339 for nine. Tayyab scored 60 from 70 balls which included six fours and a six. Rizwan smacked 29-ball 56, powered by five sixes and four fours. All-rounder Zafar Gohar struck half-century later which included three sixes and three fours while captain Saad Nasim (39) and Raza Ali Dar (37) made useful contributions. For Sindh, Hassan Khan, Mohammad Hassan and Shahnawaz Dhani took two wickets apiece, conceding 42, 49 and 59 runs, respectively. CP's vice-captain Zafar was awarded player of the match for his fifty and economical seven-over spell, conceding 1/38. — APP



QATAR: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) calls on Lieutenant General (Pilot) Ghanim Bin Shaheen Al-Ghanim - Chief of Staff Qatar Armed Forces. — DNA

Nauman, Fawad star as Pak beat SA in 1st Test

Away from his personal landmark and his epic backstory, Pakistan's match situation turned on the second day through the course of three crucial stands. Alam and Azhar Ali were involved in the first. The pair added 94 for the fifth wicket but most importantly, went through the morning session undefeated

SPORTS DESK

Fawad credits fans for their constant support

KARACHI: Fawad Alam and Nauman Ali star as Pakistan register seven-wicket victory over South Africa in the first Test at National Stadium, Karachi. Chasing a target of 88, Pakistan openers, Abid Ali (10) and Imran Butt (12), were able to get to lunch unscathed, with Pakistan needing 66 runs more to win. However, right-arm pacer Anrich Nortje struck twice in the first over after lunch to remove the opening duo. South African pacers kept piling on the pressure, but veteran batsman Azhar Ali and captain Babar Azam weathered the storm as they stitched a 63-run partnership. After failing in the first innings, Babar played a 30-run knock, which included his trademark cover drives and back-foot punches. Left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj was once again able to trap Babar lbw, with Pakistan just two runs away from victory. Azhar played an unbeaten 31-run knock, while Fawad played the winning shot to take Pakistan to victory. The left-hander was adjudged player of the match for his magnificent century in the first innings. Earlier, South Africa were under the pump from the get go as Hasan Ali dismissed nightwatchman Keshav Maharaj on the first ball of day four. Maharaj was squared up and clean bowled by the right-arm pacer for 2, with the Proteas leading by only 29 runs. Yasir Shah started from where he

left off yesterday's evening, as he picked the important wicket of Quinton de Kock (2) in his second over of the day. South African captain edged the ball to Abid Ali at silly point, who grabbed his third catch of the innings. The tourists needed their last recognised batting pair, Temba Bavuma and George Linde, to step up and they responded with a 42-run partnership. Shaheen was unsuccessful in providing a breakthrough with the new ball after Pakistan opted for the new cherry in the 86th over. The hosts introduced left-arm spinner Nauman Ali and all-rounder Faheem Ashraf to slow down the proceedings as the aforementioned duo kept the scoreboard ticking. Nauman broke the brewing partnership as he induced an edge from Linde, with Imran Butt grabbing another low catch at leg slip to dismiss the all-rounder for 11. Kagiso Rabada had no plans to hang around as he tried to take on Nauman, but was dropped by Hasan Ali. However, the dropped catch didn't hurt Pakistan much as Nauman clean bowled Rabada on the next ball for one. The left-arm spinner was on a roll as he dismissed tailender Anrich Nortje (0) and Bavuma (40) in quick succession to complete his first fiver in Test cricket and wrap up South Africa's innings for 245. The win helps Pakistan take an unassailable one-nil lead in the two-match series, with the second Test set to begin from February 4 in Rawalpindi.

Crown prince MBS unveils plan about Riyadh

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Riyadh aims to more than double its population and become one of the 10 richest cities in the world under ambitious plans unveiled by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the Future Investment Initiative (FII) gathering in the Saudi capital. "All of Riyadh's features set the groundwork for job creation, economic growth, investment, and many more opportunities," the Crown Prince told Matteo Renzi, former prime minister of Italy, during a panel session on the future of Riyadh. "We are therefore aiming to make Riyadh one of the 10 largest city economies in the world. Today it stands at number 40, the fortieth largest city economy worldwide. We also aim to increase its residents from 7.5 million

today to around 15-20 million in 2030," he added. Cities represent 85 percent of global economic activity, he said. "True growth begins in the city, whether in terms of industry, innovation, education, services, or other sectors. I have no doubt that the world economies are not based on nations, but on cities." Riyadh represents about 50 percent of the non-oil economy in Saudi Arabia, and enjoys cost advantages over other urban centers. The cost of creating jobs in the city is 30 percent less than in other cities in the Kingdom, the Crown Prince said. "The cost of developing infrastructure and real estate is also 29 percent less than the other cities, while the infrastructure in Riyadh is already very well (established) because of the sound management and planning performed by His Highness King Salman over a period

of 55 years and more," he added. The Crown Prince also announced long-term plans for a greener and more-sustainable city. "This will entail planting millions of trees in the city to reduce temperatures and dust levels," he explained. The Crown Prince also announced long-term plans for a greener and more-sustainable city. "This will entail planting millions of trees in the city to reduce temperatures and dust levels," he explained. "There are also plans to improve the environmental condition of the city and the province, as well as supporting other environmental projects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be announced at a later date." Fahd Al-Rasheed, president of the Royal Commission for Riyadh City, told Arab News: "If you build those facilities, they will come."

KSA amends date of lifting travel suspension

The spokesperson said travel suspension for citizens would be lifted and land and sea

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has postponed reopening its land, sea and air ports for travel to May 17, the Kingdom's Ministry of Interior said on Friday. The ministry had previously said on Jan. 8 that it would end a ban on travel for its citizens and the reopening of its ports from March 31. The health minister has said that deliveries of COVID-19 vaccines are being delayed. Interior ministry spokesperson said the decision was taken "given the

importance of reaching high levels of community immunity in the Kingdom before travel is permitted, in light of a possible second wave of the pandemic in many countries, in the interest of public health in the Kingdom and to maintain low infection rates." The spokesperson said travel suspension for citizens would be lifted and land, sea and air ports completely opened from 1 a.m. on Monday, May 17, with the Ministry of Health continuing to follow developments related to the pandemic.

'Fawad has shown true meaning of patience'

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: The national men's team batting coach Younis Khan has lauded Fawad Alam's patience after he starred in Pakistan's win over South Africa at National Stadium. The 43-year-old Younis also appreciated the spin duo of Yasir Shah and Nauman Ali. "Alhamdulillah - a Test win after almost a year. Congrat-

ulations to everyone involved, especially our Flag of Pakistan fans. Very happy for you Fawad Alam as you've shown the true meaning of patience & determination." Younis tweeted. "Well done Yasir Shah and dream debutant Nauman Ali on spinning us to win," Younis added. Note, Fawad bagged the player of the match award as he smashed a century in Pakistan's first innings when they were struggling at 27/4.



KARACHI: Pakistani players celebrating after winning first test against South Africa. — DNA

UK bans UAE flights, closing world's busiest route

Dubai to London was the world's busiest international route in January with 190,365 scheduled seats over the month, according to airline data provider OAG

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Britain is banning direct passenger flights to and from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from Friday, shutting down the world's busiest international airline route from Dubai to London. Britain said it was adding the UAE, Burundi and Rwanda to its coronavirus travel ban list because of worries over the spread of a more contagious and potentially vaccine-resistant COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa. "This means people who have

been in or transited through these countries will be denied entry, except British, Irish and third country nationals with residence rights who must self-isolate for ten days at home," UK Transport Minister Grant Shapps said on social media on Thursday. Emirates and Etihad Airways said on their websites they would suspend all UK passenger flights from 13:00 GMT on Friday when the ban takes effect. The UK transport department advised British nationals currently in the UAE to make use of indirect commercial airline routes if they wished to return to Britain.

Dubai to London was the world's busiest international route in January with 190,365 scheduled seats over the month, according to airline data provider OAG. The UAE is home to thousands of British expatriates and has been a popular destination for social media influencers during the pandemic, who have created upset in the UK by claiming to have travelled for work and then posting holiday pictures online. The country is currently in lockdown with people told not to travel overseas. Dubai last week clamped down on its enter-

tainment scene and suspended non-essential surgery in hospitals after a spike in coronavirus cases. One of the seven emirates that make up the UAE, Dubai has branded itself this northern hemisphere winter as an open, sunny and quarantine-free escape. But COVID-19 infections have surged since the New Year. The UAE flag-carriers, Emirates and Etihad, also usually carry large numbers of passengers connecting from Britain to destinations such as Australia so the decision to cancel the flights will have far-reaching implications.

The Australian government said it will add more charter flights from Britain if needed as a result of the ban. Eran Ben-Avraham, an Australian stranded in Britain due to strict limits on the number of arrivals in Australia, said his options for getting home were continually shrinking. "At the moment it is only giving us three options of flying Qatar, ANA or Singapore Airlines," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "Every day it is making it more difficult to get home. The flights back are anywhere from like 4,000 pounds (\$5,487)."

Tennis players go wild as quarantine ends

ADELAIDE: Serena Williams took her daughter to the zoo and Novak Djokovic walked barefoot in a park as the stars of tennis emerged from a fortnight of quarantine ahead of the coronavirus-delayed Australian Open Friday. More than 1,000 players, coaches and officials jetted into largely virus-free Australia this month for 14 days' lockdown ahead of the opening Grand Slam of the year, with most allowed out for just five hours of daily supervised training.

Big guns Williams, Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Naomi Osaka were among a select group that served their time in Adelaide rather than Melbourne ahead of an exhibition in the southern city on Friday. Seven-time Australian Open winner Williams, who is gunning for one more Slam title to equal Margaret Court's record of 24 at next month's tournament, spent her two weeks holed up with three-year-old daughter Olympia.

Omar Sheikh's Acquittal irks United States

From Page 01
the South Asia Bureau Chief for the Wall Street Journal, as well as the 1994 kidnapping of another United States citizen in India. A statement stated that the court's decision is an affront to terrorism victims everywhere, including in Pakistan. The United States recognizes past Pakistani actions to hold Omar Sheikh accountable and notes that Sheikh currently remains detained under Pakistani law. We expect the Pakistani government to expeditiously review its legal options to ensure justice is served. We take note of the Attorney General's statement that he intends to seek review and recall of the decision. We are also prepared to prosecute Sheikh in the United States for his horrific crimes against an American citizen. We are committed to securing justice for Daniel Pearl's family and holding terrorists accountable. Earlier, the administration of President Joe Biden Thursday was "outraged" over the acquittal of prime accused in Daniel Pearl murder by the Supreme of Pakistan. The White House is "outraged by the Pakistani Supreme Court's decision," chief spokeswoman Jen Psaki told reporters, calling the ruling "an affront to terrorism victims everywhere" and demanded the Pakistani government "review its legal options." The authorities in Pakistan have already announced that they will file the review petition in the apex court against the verdict. The White House statement came after Supreme Court upheld the acquittal of Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, who had been convicted of masterminding the brutal murder of Pearl, the South Asia bureau chief for the Wall Street Journal, by religious extremists in 2002. Pearl's family on Thursday called the decision to free him "a travesty of justice" and pleaded for US intervention in the case. "The release of these killers puts in danger journalists everywhere and the people of Pakistan. We urge the US government to take all necessary actions under the law to correct this injustice," the family said in a statement.

SA beat Pakistan by eight wickets in first T20I

DURBAN: South Africa women's team has outclassed Pakistan women's team by eight wickets in the first T20I of the three-match series. Opener Tazmin Brits smacked an unbeaten 52 off 54, powered by three fours. She partnered with Lizelle Lee for the opening wicket and posted 39 while she and Marizanne Kapp posted a 69-run stand. Kapp and Lee scored 28 and 22 respectively while Laura Wolvaardt remained not out at 15. The home team chased down the target of 125 in 19 overs. For Pakistan, Aimen Anwar took two wickets and gave away 29 runs. Earlier, stand-in skipper Aliya Rizwani won the toss and opted to bat first. The 16-year-old Ayesha Naseem in her second T20I fixture scored 31 off 25 balls which included two fours. — APP

Briefs

EU, AZ agrees to publish contract

Following repeated requests from the EU Commission, drug company AstraZeneca has agreed to publish the redacted contract signed with the EU, including details of invoices. "Transparency and accountability are important to help build the trust of European citizens and to make sure that they can rely on the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines purchased at the EU level," read a statement from the EU body. The news comes amid a bitter dispute between the two parties triggered last week by the drug company's announcement that it would cut supplies to the EU in the first quarter of this year, citing production issues. The commission now hopes to prove that the company had breached a commitment on vaccine deliveries.

Bitcoin surges above \$38,000

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Bitcoin surged above \$38,000 after Tesla Inc. founder Elon Musk mentioned the cryptocurrency on his Twitter profile. Musk's page on Twitter simply said #bitcoin with no further explanation, but speculation that the world's richest man might be a Bitcoin investor was enough to set off a dramatic rally. Prices spiked as much as 15% in a matter of minutes, the biggest intraday move in almost a year. Iran crypto miners cry foul over electricity backlash. Global chip shortage chokes China's bitcoin mining sector. First female veeep, corporate America gets 'woke' and MLK at 92. Bitcoin bites: Cryptocurrency closes at three-week low. Bitcoin later pared its gains. The cryptocurrency was up 14% to \$37,957 as of 8 a.m. New York time, after jumping as high as \$38,089. It reached a record of almost \$42,000 on Jan. 8. "Obviously this huge melt-up is due to Elon's tweet," said Antoni Trenchev, managing partner and co-founder of Nexo in London, which bills itself as the world's biggest crypto lender. Musk's support for Bitcoin "creates a safe zone for some of the smaller companies and possibly everyone in the S&P 500 to allocate into Bitcoin," he said. Musk also tweeted an image of a "Dogue" magazine cover featuring a whippet in a red sweater - a play on the fashion magazine "Vogue." He also sent posts calling Cyberpunk a great video game and said, "In retrospect, it was inevitable."

Export trains depart from Turkey to China, Russia

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Freight trains carrying exports to Russia and China departed on Friday from Turkey's capital Ankara. Though trains had traveled this route to China before, this is the first time that exports are being hauled from Turkey to Russia via rail, Turkish Transport and Infrastructure Minister Adil Karaismailoglu stressed during an event at the train station. The train en route to Russia is carrying major appliances on 15 wagons and 15 containers for the 4,650-kilometer (2,889 miles) distance, Karaismailoglu said. The other is carrying 1,000 tons of the mineral boron in 42 containers to China via the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, he added. Turkey sent its first export train to China on Dec. 19, 2020. Karaismailoglu underlined the importance for Turkey of China's Belt and Road initiative, which aims to create a network of transportation infrastructure between China, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. He said Turkey has become the most strategic point of this project, also known as the "Iron Silk Road." With the project, the transit time between Turkey and China decreased to 12 days from 30 days, he added. Karaismailoglu also noted that the transit time between China and Europe had also fallen to around 18 days via Turkey's sub-sea tunnel Marmaray.

FM Zarif: US nuclear demand from Iran 'will never happen'

"The United States unilaterally withdrew from this comprehensive course of action," Zarif told journalists, speaking through an interpreter. "It is the duty of the United States to return to this agreement and to fulfill its obligations"

FOREIGN DESK

ISTANBUL: Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says Iran will not accept the US demand that it resume full nuclear compliance before Washington lifts sanctions on Tehran. "The demand 'is not logical and will never happen', he said at a joint news conference in Istanbul with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu Friday. Former US President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Iran's nuclear deal in 2018. Under the deal, Tehran had agreed to limit its uranium enrichment in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. After the US then ramped up sanctions, Iran gradually and publicly abandoned the deal's limits on its nuclear development. New President Joe Biden, who was vice president when the deal was signed during the Obama administration, has said he hopes to return the US to the deal. But new US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday the US will only return to the nuclear deal once Tehran honors its nuclear commitments. "The United States unilaterally withdrew from this comprehensive course of action," Zarif told journalists, speaking through an interpreter. "It is the duty of the United States to return to this agreement and to fulfill its obligations. 'The moment the United States fulfills its commitments, we would be prepared to fulfill ours,'" he added. Zarif said the US withdrawal from the nuclear pact, officially referred to as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is a blatant example of Washington's "law-breaking".



"Unfortunately, the US is used to imposing sanctions," Zarif added, Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency reported. Zarif denounced a US decision last month to slap sanctions on Turkey over the country's purchase of the S-400 Russian air defense system. "We condemn the US CAATSA sanctions imposed on Turkey, these sanctions have no significance," he emphasized. Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif hailed relations with Turkey, noting that ties will deepen when the US

adopts more reasonable attitudes. "Iran-Turkey relations are very important for us and filled with mutual benefits," he remarked. For his part, Cavusoglu said Turkey has always supported the nuclear deal, expressing the hope that the Biden administration would return to the JCPOA and lift sanctions on "brotherly Iran". Zarif was in Turkey as part of a tour of countries of the south Caucasus aimed at building support for the creation of a regional platform that would include Armenia,

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia and Turkey, and encourage cooperation between the countries. The initiative was proposed following a cease-fire agreement in November that halted weeks of conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. "The existing cease-fire must be rendered more lasting and trade and economic cooperation must be invigorated," Zarif said. Zarif was in Turkey as part of a tour of countries of the south Cau-

casus aimed at building support for the creation of a regional platform that would include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia and Turkey, and encourage cooperation between the countries. The initiative was proposed following a ceasefire agreement in November that halted weeks of conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh. "The existing ceasefire must be rendered more lasting and trade and economic cooperation must be invigorated," Zarif said.

WHO team visits hospital in Wuhan

A WHO-led team of experts investigating the origins of COVID-19 visited a hospital in the Chinese city of Wuhan that was one of the first to treat patients in the early days of the outbreak. The team went to the Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine where Zhang Jixian, director of the hospital's department of respiratory and critical care, has been cited by state media as the first to report the novel coronavirus, after treating an elderly couple in late 2019 whose CT scans showed differences from typical pneumonia. "Extremely important 1st site visit. We are in the hospital that treated some of the first known cases of COVID-19, meeting with the actual clinicians & staff who did this work, having open discussion about the details of their work," Peter Daszak, a member of the WHO-led team, wrote on Twitter. The team was released from two weeks of quarantine on Thursday. It plans to visit labs, markets and hospitals during its remaining two weeks in Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first identified in late 2019.

EU hopes to continue co-op with Baku

BAKU: EU hopes to continue cooperation with Azerbaijan on new investment projects, Head of EU Delegation in Azerbaijan Kestutis Jankauskas said, Trend reports. Talking investments, Jankauskas noted that the most important bilateral cooperation project - the EU-Azerbaijan Business forum had to be postponed last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Still we have conducted regular business climate survey in Azerbaijan the results of which will be shared with the public soon," he said. He expressed hope that this year there will be an opportunity to arrange an in-person meeting welcoming a lot of EU companies that already work and are interested to work in Azerbaijan. "This will be an opportunity to see where Azerbaijan wants these companies to work and what these companies are interested in. Right now there are new opportunities opening for both Azerbaijan and the region, and we will continue working with Azerbaijan to look into these opportunities," he said. Jankauskas added that the EU is among the biggest trading partners of Azerbaijan and expressed hope that this trend will continue to expand.

Turkey 'hopes' US returns to Iran nuclear deal

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Friday that he hopes the Biden administration would return to the nuclear deal and lift sanctions on Iran. Speaking at a joint news conference with his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif in Istanbul, Cavusoglu said that Turkey has always supported the nuclear deal that was reached by the US, EU, and Iran. "I hope the Biden administration will return to the agreement and so the sanctions on brotherly Iran will be lifted." Touching on the Karabakh deal, he said that they want a permanent ceasefire. In this regard, we are planning to establish a mechanism with Azerbaijan, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, and Iran, he said. "Peace and stability in the South Caucasus are for the benefit of everyone, for the countries of the region, but most of all, Armenia will benefit," Cavusoglu noted, adding that they expect Armenia to take constructive steps in this regard. In response to a question on crew members who were abducted from a Turkish cargo ship off Nigeria on Saturday, he said that they are in good health. He went on to say that three more crew members will return to Turkey by Turkish Airlines on Friday.

Moroccan king kicks off virus vaccine campaign



DNA

RABAT: Morocco's King Mohammed VI has launched the country's nationwide coronavirus vaccine campaign, getting his injection at the royal palace in the city of Fez. The palace released pictures showing the monarch, wearing a face mask, being jabbed in the arm on Thursday. Vaccines will be free for all Moroccan citizens and foreigners living in the North

Africa kingdom, according to a government statement. The campaign will take place gradually and target people aged between 17 and 75 years. "This will make it possible to achieve the expected levels of collective immunization and protect the population against this pandemic," the statement said. Morocco has one of the highest coronavirus infection rates in African and has confirmed 469,139 cases with 8,224 deaths since the pandemic began.

European and US stock markets rebound

NEW YORK: European and US stocks rebounded Thursday following sharp falls the previous day thanks to encouraging economic data, while unusual lurches in a handful of stocks continued. "Stocks have largely recouped earlier losses as the fear that previously ran through the markets has dissipated," said market analyst David Madden at CMC Markets UK. Both Frankfurt and Paris ended the day in positive territory, while London finished in the red as the pound rose against the dollar. Wall Street stocks also won solid gains, recovering some of the losses from the prior day's rout. "This morning the mood was fearful due to concerns that some hedge funds were frantically closing out positions in a bid to free up cash to meet margin calls requirements on short positions that have gone horribly wrong for them," he added. - APP

New clashes heighten tensions at farmer protests

Tens of thousands of farmers have been at the camps since late November and despite this week's violence, their leaders have signalled they are digging in for a prolonged new showdown

NEW DELHI: Clashes erupted Friday between hundreds of opponents and supporters of a major farmers protest that has disrupted the Indian capital for more than eight weeks. At least one farmer was seen brandishing a sword during the latest unrest to overshadow two months of protests against the liberalisation of farm produce markets. Police fired tear gas and baton charged rival groups to separate them. Tensions have been building around the farmers' camps since Republic Day on Tuesday, when a tractor rally turned into a citywide rampage which left one farmer dead and nearly 400 police injured. The government has deployed thousands of extra police and paramilitaries in Delhi and around the camps since then. One small camp has been closed, as have many roads around the protest sites. Some local groups have said the farmers should leave. Farmer leaders have insisted their action will go on. "When we don't have any land left, when we are unable to

cultivate any crops, we are going to die anyway," said Bhagwant Singh, a 53-year-old farmer at Singhu. "At least if we die here protesting, we will be martyrs. We will fight and die for the rights of the people of this country." On Friday, one police officer was wounded in the hand during a scuffle with a sword-wielding farmer, an AFP reporter at the scene said. And masked men, shouting "shoot the traitors", charged the farmers, breaching police cordons and steel barricades.

Authorities cut power and water to one protest camp at Ghazipur, but hundreds more farmers arrived overnight on tractors to reinforce what has become the biggest challenge to Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi since he took power in 2014. Tens of thousands of farmers have been at the camps since late November and despite this week's violence, their leaders have signalled they are digging in for a prolonged new showdown. They are opposing

Opp boycotts Parliament in solidarity with farmers

NEW DELHI: Main Indian opposition parties have boycotted the opening day of Parliament's budget session in solidarity with farmers engaged in a two-month standoff over new agricultural laws the government refuses to repeal. A statement by the Congress party on Friday said 16 opposition parties boycotted the president's address to Parliament "in full solidarity with the agitating farmers, whom the Modi government is trying to defame". The address to Parliament by India's President Ram Nath Kovind listing the government's priorities for the budget was boycotted by several opposition parties. The budget is to be presented on Monday. Sanjay Singh, an Aam Aadmi Party member of parliament, told India's ANI news agency his party "protested against the president's address and raised slogans in support of farmers".

reforms which aim to deregulate farm produce markets that have for decades been organised by state bodies with minimum prices guaranteed. Those protesting say the changes will let Indian conglomerates take over the farming industry. Farming provides jobs for two thirds of India's 1.3 billion population, but the government says the industry

is inefficient and the reforms will boost rural incomes. President Ram Nath Kovind told the opening of a budget session of parliament that the storming of the landmark Red Fort by protesters on Tuesday had been an "insult" to the national flag. But in a sign of the growing political divisions caused by the dispute, opposition parties boycotted his speech. While farmers have called off a plan to march on parliament on Monday - when the government outlines its annual spending plan - they reaffirmed their determination to stay at the camps. Leaders brought in generators to provide power, while the Delhi regional government, run by an opposition party, organised water tankers. Some of the newly arrived protesters said they had been inspired by a tearful video issued by Rakesh Tikait, one of the dozens of farmer leaders who now face a police inquiry over the unrest and the assault on the Red Fort. Farmers banged ladders on pots through the night, urging each other to stay awake because of worries of police action. "The government is trying to derail our protest through lies and mischief," said Sukhdev Singh, a farmer in his 30s. He said their families in Punjab state were worried but did not want them to return. "We won't budge from here till the laws are taken back - even if that takes a day, a month or a year or 10 years." - APP

PIAF Chairman wants consistent policies for revival of industry

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Association Front Chairman Mian Nauman Kabir said the government has to formulate long-term and consistent policies for the revival of industry and considerable improvement in exports, as contrary to regional countries, Pakistan's exports have remained stagnant for a long time, and unless attention was paid to all factors that hamper industrial and exports growth, the country might not be able to achieve desired results. He expressed the hope

that present trend of positive growth in large-scale manufacturing (LSM) will help achieve the annual economic growth target, besides creating jobs for skilled and unskilled workers. PIAF Chairman, in a joint statement with vice chairman Javed Siddiqi, observed that the output of Pakistan's large industries increased 7.4% in the first five months of current fiscal year on the back of a sustained growth momentum for the third successive month, which is a ray of hope for economic revival. Mian Nauman Kabir said that the Large-Scale Manufacturing sector registered a cumulative growth of 7.4% in July-Nov of

current fiscal year, but industry has not yet achieved the production levels seen before the first wave of the coronavirus hit the country in late Feb last year. He said that industrial production after suffering months of damage inflicted by the corona pandemic mainly in the construction, sugar, automobile, and pharmaceutical sectors is now clearly reflecting a revival in economic activities in the country. For the current fiscal year the government had set the economic growth target at 2 percent, which will be better in the current economic situation but is not enough to create jobs for a growing population.



ISLAMABAD: Palestinian ambassador to Islamabad meets with the Tunisian ambassador to Pakistan at the Tunisian embassy in Islamabad. The conditions in Tunisia were reassured, and Ambassador Ahmed Rabei wished stability, security and prosperity to Tunisia and the Tunisian people. The situation in Palestine, the upcoming elections, the two ambassadors exchanged cordial conversations and the common relations between the two embassies. - DNA

Briefs

FIA completes inquiry into license case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Friday has completed inquiry into fake pilot license case and arrested six officers of Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). According to details, one private person, 40 pilots and eight government employees have also been nominated in three cases. The agency said that pilots had received license through fake examination. Earlier, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Gulzar Ahmed had taken notice of fake licenses awarded to pilots in Pakistan and sought reply from CAA, stating that fake licenses were issued to pilots for money.

Justice Gulzar expressed shock over the facts shared by Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar in NA session. The leader had blamed pilot and CAA behind the crash and told that there was no fault in 15-year-old plane, he remarked.

It is to be mentioned here that in total, licenses of 262 pilots were said to be fake, against which PIA CEO Air Marshal Arshad Malik had summoned his legal and flight operations teams to decide upon appropriate course of action. The government had also decided to take stern action against all pilots who have been flying aircrafts on fake licenses. CAA had sought a list of these pilots to immediately ground them till the completion of the inquiry.

Out of 400 PIA pilots, 150 captains were found to have obtained fake licenses. Later, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz said that 28 pilots of PIA with fake and dubious licenses were dismissed from the service. Briefing the media after cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan in the chair, he said that an action was started against officials of PIA and Civil Aviation Authority, responsible for issuing fake licenses.

NAB recovered over Rs 480b in 10 years

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Law and Justice on Friday submitted a written reply in the Senate in which the Upper House was told that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) recovered over Rs 480 billion in the past ten years. Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani chaired the session. The law ministry told that the anti-corruption watchdog recovered the amount as plea bargain and in cases of bank default from 2011 to October 2020. The anti-graft body directly recovered over Rs 46,38 billion and more than Rs 395 billion from other sources. Over Rs 248 billion were collected in 2020 – the most in the decade. NAB Lahore collected the maximum amount (over Rs 10.89 billion). Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan said the anti-corruption watchdog did historic recoveries in the past two years which is unprecedented.

Pakistan-China sign MoU for agri cooperation

BEIJING: China and Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance agricultural cooperation and establish intelligent agricultural systems in Pakistan. On behalf of Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Pakistan, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin Ul Haque signed a MOU with China Aerospace Construction Group Co., Ltd. (CACG). The signing of this MoU, as part of the celebration of 70 years of the establishment of China-Pakistan diplomatic ties, was a testament to the rapidly increasing Pakistan-China agriculture cooperation in the next stage of CPEC's higher-quality development. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Sri Lanka and Turkmenistan in a group picture on the occasion of RCCI reception for the Presidents of chambers of all Pakistan. CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani, former RCCI President Zahid Latif Khan, Khurshid Barlas and Fahad Barlas and Editor Daily Islamabad POST, CENTRELINE and DNA News Agency Ansar Mahmood Bhatti are also seen. – DNA

Gwadar Port a shining pearl of the region: Chinese envoy

The Ambassador asked the companies in Gwadar to expedite the projects and take strict prevention and protection measures for COVID-19 epidemic, and make greater contribution to China-Pakistan friendship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar seaport has become a shining pearl of the region said Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong during his visit to the Port during the last two days. According to the Gwadar Pro, he visited all major projects under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) including the New Gwadar International Airport Project, the China-Pak Friendship Hospital, China-Pak Technical and Vocational Institute in Gwadar, the Gwadar East-bay Expressway Project, Gwadar Free Zone and Gwadar Port. He met Chairman Gwadar Port Authority Naseer Kashani, DG

of Gwadar Development Authority Shahzeb Kakar, Maj Gen M.Aamer Najam, GOC SSD (South) and Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed, Commander Pakistan Navy Western Command. He also attended the Chinese Ambassador Green Employment Scheme Launching Ceremony and Scholarship Award Ceremony for excellent students of Middle School Faqeer Colony Gwadar. During the field visit, Ambassador Nong extended his festive greetings to the workers at the construction site, and said "the Spring Festival is coming, but you are sticking to your posts, with a common goal to speed up the project and make the Gwadar Port a better place.

We all know that the Spring Festival is a time for family reunions. You spend the Chinese New Year alone on the project site far from motherland, and make Gwadar your home. I'm so proud of you!" The Ambassador asked the companies in Gwadar to expedite the projects and take strict prevention and protection measures for COVID-19 epidemic, and make greater contribution to China-Pakistan friendship. While meeting Maj Gen M. Aamer Najam, GOC SSD (South) and Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed, Commander Pakistan Navy Western Command, Ambassador Nong appreciated the efforts made by the armed forces in safeguarding the CPEC projects and personnel.

He underscored that safety is the premise of everything. Gwadar Safe City is an inalienable part of Gwadar Smart Port City, which portrays a brilliant future for Gwadar. I believe all the local people and the people of Pakistan are looking forward to this day coming at an earlier date. No one will hesitate to take the first step with a bright road ahead. When attending the Launching Ceremony of Green Employment Scheme, Ambassador Nong said that the project was responding to the Prime Minister Imran Khan's initiative for Clean Green Gwadar Movement, and China would work together with Pakistan to turn CPEC into a model green Belt and

Road Initiative (the "BRI") to protect and preserve natural environment in the region. While awarding Scholarship to excellent students of Middle School Faqeer Colony Gwadar, Ambassador Nong said that 2021 marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations, and children were the future of the nation and the hope of China-Pakistan friendship. He encouraged the students to cherish the opportunity, study hard, and grow up to become talents of the country and builder of the CPEC, and carry on the time-tested friendship between China and Pakistan from generation to generation.

Pakistanis pin their hopes on CanSino Biologics' vaccine

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the world competes fiercely for the early acquisition of the Covid-19 vaccines, Pakistani officials, healthcare workers and common people have pinned their hope on Chinese CanSino Biologics anti-coronavirus vaccines, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday. Pakistani health experts say that the CanSino vaccine, with promising results during its clinical trials, would be the best option for Pakistanis, having been tested over the indigenous popula-

tion of the country. The CanSino vaccine is not the only Chinese vaccine Pakistanis would benefit from, as China announced last week 500,000 doses of the Sinopharm anti-coronavirus vaccine as a gift to Pakistan and according to Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, this life-saving gift will reach Pakistan by January 31, to be followed by 1.1 million more doses by the end of February. Pakistan's National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) announced the launch of phase-III clinical trials in the country for CanSino Vaccine in end-Sep-

tember 2020. Five different hospitals across the country, with the NIH as principal investigator, initiated the trials with a sample size of 18,000. Talking to China Economic Net (CEN), Dr. Ghazala Parveen, Chief of Biological Production Division NIH said, "So far, we have vaccinated 17,500 volunteers during a double-blind placebo control trial where 50% of people got the vaccine and 50% got a placebo". Placebo is a substance with no therapeutic value. According to her, the trial is moving towards successful completion; during the trial, no severe adverse events

have been reported so far. Around 50% of the samples have been sent to Dalhousie University in Canada for analysis. "We are hopeful to get the complete analysis by mid-February," she said. Dr Ghazala Parveen said that Pakistan and China have always enjoyed friendly relations and right at the beginning of the pandemic, China provided Pakistan with masks, sanitizers and testing kits etc. According to her, picking Pakistan for the vaccine trial is another friendly gesture from China; if the results of the trials are positive, it will help to select this vaccine for future use.

OGDCL tops in award of 11 new exploration blocks

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) maintained its position as the market leader in upstream petroleum sector by securing maximum acreage nationwide for drilling new wells. Director General of Petroleum Concession (PC) has communicated provisional award of new exploration blocks to OGDCL. The energy giant shall be working as an operator in ten blocks and as JV Partner with Mari Petroleum and PPL in one block. These blocks have been awarded after competitive bidding, on the basis of work units committed by different E&P companies in the block bidding round 2020 arranged by the Government of Pakistan. OGDCL is keen to explore new blocks in Baluchistan and has won three blocks in the province namely Killa Saifullah, Sharan & Suleiman. The company has taken aggressive initiatives regarding exploration & production activities despite security challenges. In addition to three blocks in Baluchistan, five blocks in Punjab, two in Sindh and one in KPK have also been awarded to the company. Further formalities for the award of these blocks will be completed in the near future. – DNA

75,000 Afghan refugee families received emergency cash

ISLAMABAD: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) completed the disbursement of emergency cash assistance for 75,000 vulnerable Afghan refugee families that have been the hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic. More than 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees are hosted in Pakistan. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their ability to work and earn a minimum livelihood, mainly as daily wage earners, has been severely affected. In response, UNHCR launched an emergency cash programme in May 2020. The programme mirrored the Government of Pakistan's Ehsaas social protection programme under which vulnerable Pakistani families receive a one-off cash grant of Rs. 12,000. UNHCR's support helped vulnerable refugee families meet their critical needs, such as food, health, education, as well as rent and transportation. UNHCR's cash assistance programme was established and rolled out in collaboration with the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON)/Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR), the Pakistan Post, some partner NGOs, and a network of refugee volunteers and community leaders. – DNA

3rd round of Pakistan-Kenya consultations held

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood and Principal Secretary of Kenyan Foreign Ministry Ambassador Kamau Macharia held the 3rd Round of BPC through video-conference. The consultations covered entire spectrum of bilateral relations, mutual cooperation in the multilateral fora, and issues of peace & security in the respective regions. The Foreign Secretary highlighted PM vision to forge multifaceted cooperation with the African Continent, as part of the "Engage Africa" initiative. He noted that, in this context, Pakistan was working simultaneously to enhance its diplomatic footprint in Africa and deepen economic engagement with African partners. Noting Pakistan's historic linkages with Kenya and the cordiality of bilateral political relations, the Foreign Secretary stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation in the fields of trade, investments. – APP

Pak, Kuwait discuss CPEC projects

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kuwait discussed possible investments in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) related projects in the country by Kuwait at the Third Round of Bilateral Political Consultations held during the four-day visit of Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister of Asian Affairs Ambassador Ali Suleiman Al-Saeed, concluded on Friday. The visit took place in the backdrop of the meeting of Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi with his Kuwaiti counterpart on the sidelines of the 47th session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers in Niamey, Niger, in November 2020.

The assistant foreign minister held the Third Round of Bilateral Political Consultations co-chaired by Ambassador Khalid H Memon, Special Secretary (Middle East) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

The political consultations centered on reviewing the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, collaboration on issues of mutual interest at regional and international forums, and possibilities for enhanced collaboration in other fields including food security, agriculture, poultry, livestock, tourism and oil exploration.

SDPI ranked 90th among top 100 think tanks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With 11 points improvement, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) ranked 90th among 100 non-U.S. global think tanks, retained its 1st position in Pakistan for the last many years, and with improvement of four points it ranked 11th among the South East Asia and the Pacific region, according to the 15th edition of University of Pennsylvania Global Go To Think Tank Index (GGTTI) released across the world.

The 2020 GGTTI is based on the ranking done for over 8500 think tanks (TT) registered with GGTTI from across the globe, selected through a rigorous criterion. The University of Pennsylvania under GGTTI initiative organized a global webinar on the eve of the global launch of the GGTTI 2020 report and invited representatives of 20 world-renowned think tanks including SDPI whose case studies were presented at the webinar on 'Best Policy and Institutional Response to COVID-19' while working with their respective policy makers. The Executive Director of SDPI presented the Institute's case study of developing 'Food Security Dashboard' under the office of the prime minister to monitor the food security situation amid pandemic and in general situation. Launching the 2020 Global Go To Think Tank Index report, the Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr Abid Qayyum Suleri said: "Despite all hardships amid impacts of COVID19 and much of the work done by SDPI on virtual platforms and difficulties faced by civil society and think tanks, SDPI has improved its ranking in the index and continued to be figured as a prominent global think tank since 2017.

Greek envoy calls on Ali Zaidi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Greek Ambassador to Pakistan Andreas Papastravou called on Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi. Greek Envoy emphasised on the importance of shipping and showed keen interest in furthering cooperation. Federal Minister laid out his vision and discussed various ideas to enhance trade and also spoke about possibilities to learn from Greece's experience and success in the maritime sector. Issue of seafarers and water pollution also came under discussion.

'US bombarding civilians, houses in deal violation'

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid added on Twitter that the allegations against the group were "unfounded" and that it was "fully committed" to the agreement

WEB DESK

DOHA: The Taliban has accused the United States of violating a landmark deal signed between the two sides, after the Pentagon said the group had failed to meet its side of the agreement. "The other side have violated the agreement, almost every day they are violating it," Mohammad Naeem, a Taliban spokesman in Qatar, told a news agency on Friday. "They are bombarding civilians, houses and villages, and we have informed them from time

to time, these are not just violations of the agreement but violations of human rights." The US military has in recent months carried out air strikes against the Taliban fighters in defence of Afghan forces in some provinces. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid added on Twitter that the allegations against the group were "unfounded" and that it was "fully committed" to the agreement. The Pentagon on Thursday said Taliban's refusal to meet commitments to reduce violence in Afghanistan is raising questions about whether all US troops will

be able to leave by May as required under the peace agreement signed in February 2020. The agreement, signed in Doha last year, required the Taliban to halt attacks on US forces, sharply decrease the level of violence in the country, and advance peace talks with the government in Kabul. In return, the US would steadily reduce its troop levels in the country, and remove all forces by May this year. Former President Donald Trump ordered US troops level in Afghanistan cut to 2,500 just days before he left office earlier this month, presenting successor Joe Biden

with difficult decisions about how to retain leverage against the Taliban in support of peace talks. Pentagon chief spokesman John Kirby said the US stands by its commitment for a full troops withdrawal, but the agreement also calls for the Taliban to cut ties with al-Qaeda and reduce violence. "Without them meeting their commitments to renounce terrorism and to stop the violent attacks against the Afghan National Security Forces, it's very hard to see a specific way forward for the negotiated settlement," Kirby said. "But we're still com-

mitted to that." White House and State Department officials have made it clear the Biden administration plans to take a new look at the peace agreement. The White House said Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, told his Afghan counterpart in a phone call last Friday that the new administration will "review" the deal. The newly installed Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday the administration wanted to take a detailed look to "understand exactly what is in the agreement" before deciding how to proceed.