



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

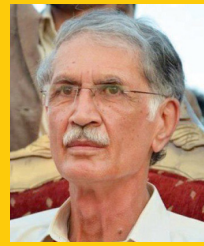
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**PM Imran satisfied with efforts to curb inflation**

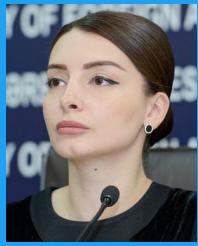
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**Govt won't last a day if I don't want it to: Khattak**

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**Baku slams Armenian hate campaign**

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## Briefs

**PDM fighting for survival, says Qureshi**

DNA

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) had claimed to overthrow the government but is now fighting for its survival. Talking to media in Multan on Sunday, he said that the PDM's artificial and unnatural alliance has been exposed, adding that there is great unrest within the opposition and it is about to disintegrate very soon. He said that there was no consensus among all the parties in the Pakistan Democratic Movement, adding that there were contradictions within the ranks of the opposition alliance.

**'Imposed group' is destroying country**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday has said that the historical corruption of 'imposed group' is destroying the country. In a statement, the PML-N leader said that Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan's government is doing corruption at every level. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) ministers have told a lie that the data compiled by the Transparency International was from previous government, she added.

**PM Imran combating mafias bravely**

DNA

SIALKOT: Punjab Chief Minister's Special Assistant, Dr. Firdous Ashiq has said that Prime Minister Imran Khan is combating mafias bravely. Addressing a news conference at Sialkot on Sunday, she said that the Punjab Government is taking efforts to eliminate the looter mafia. She said that the Jails Department has taken initiative to provide facilities to prisoners in the province.

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## PM satisfied with efforts to curb inflation

"I have told my economic team to stay vigilant and ensure that inflation stays under control", says the premier

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD, Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Sunday the incumbent government's efforts to reduce inflation are now showing results. Taking to his official Twitter handle, the Prime Minister said: "More good news on the economic front. Our efforts to reduce inflation are now showing results. Consumer price index and core inflation are both now lower than when our government was formed." Imran Khan said he had instructed his economic team to stay vigilant and ensure that inflation stayed under control. "I have told my economic team to stay vigilant and ensure that inflation stays under control." Earlier, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar tweeted that inflation is on the decline due to "success" of Prime Minister Imran Khan's economic policy.

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## Happy to help our iron brother: Amb. Nong Rong

"Proud to be the first country to contribute to the vaccination plan of Pakistan", the ambassador wrote

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, Nong Rong has reiterated his country's vision of considering Pakistan an iron brother. In a tweet reply to federal minister Asad Umar, the ambassador wrote, "We are ready for our iron brother! Happy to learn that the Chinese Government donated vaccines have been loaded to the special plane sent by Pakistan. Proud to be the first country to contribute to the vaccination plan of Pakistan." It is worth mentioning here that a plane carrying first tranche of vaccine has arrived from China.

## First batch of vaccine arrives

ISLAMABAD: The first batch of Covid-19 vaccines has reached Islamabad from China in a special Pakistan Air Force (PAF) plane. Earlier on Sunday, National Command Operation Centre (NCOC) chief and federal minister Asad Umar had announced that a special plane to bring the first tranche of the coronavirus vaccine to the country has landed in Beijing and the loading of the vaccine containers in to the plane is currently underway. As per details from NCOC, all necessary measures have been put in place for vaccine storage at Islamabad and the move of vaccines to various federating units particularly to Sindh and Balochistan through the air. A Vaccine nerve centre has been established at NCOC with provincial and district Level vaccine administration.

## Pakistan extends SOPs for inbound flights till Feb 28

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has extended the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), introduced for all inbound flights to prevent the spread of fatal coronavirus (COVID-19) in the country, till February 28. According to two separate notifications shared by the Aviation Division here on

Sunday, the negative PCR test requirement for the category B&C country passengers had been reduced from 96 to 72 hours. From February 1, the PCAA further clarified that only the air passengers holding Pakistani Passport, National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis and Pakistan Origin Card, besides diplomatic passport holders and their families from the

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**JAKARTA:** Pakistani ambassador to Indonesia Muhammad Hassan received Dr. Yasmi Adriansyah, and Fadhilah Wiriadma, in his office. Dr. Yasmi is a well known researcher, academic, an expert of multilateral negotiations and author of various books and research journals. Fadhilah has also co-authored various research papers and journals. Both of them are faculty members of the Al-Azhar University Jakarta. — DNA

## Pak Navy to hold 'Aman 2021'

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy is holding the seventh Multinational Maritime Exercise 'Aman 2021' next month in which maritime forces of many countries will participate. Spokesperson of Pakistan Navy said, this year, naval forces from 45 countries along with their assets and delegations will participate in the Multinational Maritime Exercise "Aman" being held under the theme of "Together for Peace." The spokesman said, the aim of organizing the Aman maritime exercise is to maintain peace and sustainability in the region and improve the retaliation capabilities.

## Petrol price goes up by Rs2.70

ISLAMABAD: The government on Sunday announced that the price of petrol for February will go up by Rs2.70 per litre. According to a notification by the Prime Minister Office, light diesel oil will also see a rise in price by Rs3 per litre, while high speed diesel will cost dearer by Rs2.88 per litre. The new prices will take effect at midnight and as has become recent practice, may undergo revision before February 15. — DNA

## 'State land worth Rs210b recovered'

The Advisor said unfortunately, Ex-PM Nawaz Sharif laid the foundations of the politics of corruption

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser on Accountability Shahzad Akbar said on Sunday the government had recovered 210 billion rupees and retrieved 8,085 acres of illegally occupied state land from 36 politicians belonging to the opposition parties. Talking to the media in Islamabad, he said these recoveries have been made in

Continued on Page 06

## PML-N slams govt for demolishing houses

LAHORE: PML-N leaders on Sunday lashed out at PTI government for demolishing the site office of a housing society in Sialkot. Addressing a joint press conference with Ayaz Sadiq and Ata Tarar in Model Town, PML-N leader Saad Rafique said that the PML-N workers were being intimidated, and the houses of Khokhar brothers had been demolished unlawfully. He said that the names of PML-N leaders are being selectively included in the corruption lists. The narrative of corruption will no longer be sold. Khawaja Saad Rafique said that PML-N would take legal action against the DSP who demolished the houses of Khokhar brothers. The office of the approved scheme was demolished in Sialkot. — DNA

## PIA air host mysteriously goes missing in Canada

KARACHI, A Pakistan International Airline (PIA) male air host named Ramzan Gul 'mysteriously' went missing in Canada. Ramzan Gul had reached Toronto on PIA flight PK-798 from Islamabad on January 29. The Canadian station manager informed the Toronto Airport Authority and later PIA about the disappearance of a PIA employee after which the PIA officials were contacted. The national airline also took notice of the incident. It is pertinent to note that this is not the first time that a PIA airhostess has gone missing. Around, two years ago, a PIA airhostess named Fareeha Mukhtar had also gone missing in Canada and later sought political asylum there. Another similar incident took place in 2019 when an airhostess named Shazia went missing after arriving in Paris on a PIA flight. — DNA

## Pakistan reports 1599 more cases

ISLAMABAD: On Sunday, Pakistan reported 34 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 544,813. As per details provided by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), 1,599 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Sindh remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic in terms of cases followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad. — DNA

# Once upon a time there was a PDM !!

The major thrust of the Opposition turns out to be getting better deals for their leaders either in jails or abroad

## COMMENT



Ansar M Bhatti

THE Chief of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) Maulana Fazlur Rehman on January 30, 2021 announced that their struggle was not against the establishment rather they wanted to make the men in khaki realize that their backing of the incumbent government had encouraged it to let the hell loose on the poor people of Pakistan. According to him, it was because of this 'backing' that people were forced to lead a miserable life as prices of daily use items had sky rocketed and that too in a very short span of time. The otherwise composed and confidence maulan looked

quite dejected and demoralized during the entire presser. His body language suggested as if all were not well within the ranks of the PDM and the maulan after sensing the gravity of the situation now wanted to mend fences with the forces he has been criticizing with full force.

I had mentioned in one of my earlier pieces that the Opposition neither wants to dislodge government nor launch a fully fledged anti-govt drive for the sake of its own ulterior political motives. And that is the point where its close ally Maulana Fazlur Rehman had serious problems. He wanted the Opposition parties to take a clear cut stand when it comes to giving tough time to the government. But as things are unfolding gradually, it seems as if the maulan shall again be left in the lurch. The problem of Pakistan People's Party as mentioned before is that it cannot go beyond a certain point in its criticism of the government or when it comes to sending the federal govt packing. The reason is obvious that if it happens, PPP will surely lose its government in Sindh also. And losing the Sindh govt means losing Sindh in fact. It was the PPP

who first decided to take part in the upcoming Senate elections for it is likely to get more seats as compared with its allied parties in the PDM. The PPP decision, though appears to be logical and a well-calculated political move, nevertheless it caused ripples among the alliance as nobody was expecting this move. Even at that time when PPP announced this decision, analysts had concluded that a major dent has been caused to the PDM. PPP, from the outset, has been playing its cards quite smartly. And it is likely to continue doing so till the time its political objectives are met.

PML-N, on the other hand, is still not ready to work with the establishment or vice versa. The Shah-

baz Sharif group however is maintaining a mysterious silence thus triggering controversies within the party as to who actually is the man in charge. The PDM Lahore rally was indeed a poor show as majority of PMLN stalwarts mainly those aligned with the Shahbaz group stayed away. Making and breaking process within the PMLN continues unabated and it continues to deepen with the same speed, it is very much likely that one day Maryam Nawaz also had to announce that their struggle is not against the establishment!!

Edifice of PDM movement appears to have been erected on fragile structure. The major thrust of the Opposition turns out to be getting better

deals for their leaders either in jails or abroad. Ordinary folks have been bearing the brunt of price hike, social injustices; nepotism; jobbery and corruption wanted the Opposition parties to become their voice and help them get rid of difficult times. The PDM was able to draw huge crowds in the beginning primarily because people thought the alliance had girded up loins for their sake but gradually they realized it was all a farce. On the other hand, it is quite painful to see the opposition in disarray. To keep a watch on the government a strong and united opposition has to be there. It is because of the opposition fear that the government of the day delivers and makes all efforts

to keep masses happy. But since the opposition is disjointed, fragmented and ill-focused, the govt continues to taking heavy toll on hapless masses. As regards the long march, it is likely to take place however it may not be able to achieve the desired results — i.e. to send the govt packing. The opposition leaders tend to cite long march against the Benazir Bhutto government back in 1989, which failed to dislodge the sitting government but the government was sent packing soon after the march. Similarly, while Benazir Bhutto's first long march in November 1992 against Nawaz Sharif govt failed to achieve her desired purpose, her second attempt reaped rewards as both Nawaz Sharif and the then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan were shown the door by Army Chief General Waheed Kakar. Today situation is absolutely different from that of 1989 and 1992. At that time the factors that are responsible for making and breaking of governments wanted the then governments to go while the same factors do not want so when it comes to dislodging the PTI government!!





## Briefs

## 'Govt. taking steps for IT industry growth'

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director, Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) Osman Nasir has said that the government was taking all possible steps to ensure long term IT industry growth trajectory and to facilitate IT industry exports which are already tax exempt. In a statement, he said, that Pakistan's IT industry has reached important milestone in its journey. "Measures are being undertaken to develop IT industry eco system in secondary and tertiary cities of Pakistan" he added. In this context, PSEB registration fee for IT and ITeS companies, including call centers and IT start-ups, that are based in the underserved areas, has been waived off for one year and would include all areas other than Islamabad, Lahore, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Karachi. This is expected to expand Pakistan's IT Industry eco system and therefore create a vibrant tech culture across Pakistan, he said. He said Software Technology Parks are being prioritized by the present government to achieve this objective. A Software Technology Park was inaugurated in Gilgit recently which is fully occupied by IT companies.

## Balochistan starts Hunarmand programme

ISLAMABAD: The Balochistan government has started 'Hunarmand' programme in 13 districts to impart technical and vocational training to the youth of the province. Talking to APP, an official of Balochistan government said that the government was taking steps to expand the 'Hunarmand' programme across the province on modern lines to fulfill the current day's requirements. He said the government had setting up vocational institutes in the province to provide technical skilled to the youth for getting better jobs opportunities. The people having technical educational qualification have more opportunities to secure good jobs under this initiative across the province", he said.

## 'KP govt to promote video gaming industry'

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister on Science and Technology and Information Technology Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zia Ullah Bangash on Sunday said that the department was taking steps to reap real economic benefits from the gaming industry. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has been launching projects in IT sector to improve the economy through technology. There was not shortage of talent in the province and we will give best opportunities to the youth to make money, he added. Bangash said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KIPITB) was considering allocating a budget for promotion of gaming industry, which will train children for gaming industry and in development and introduce the best games to the world by working on new ideas. IT Advisor said that gaming industry was one of the fastest growing industries in the world. KP ST&IT Department was taking practical steps to promote gaming industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



SIALKOT: Office of Kent Housing Society being demolished. SOCIETY belongs to Khawaja Asif family. – DNA

# Illegal structures in Asif's housing society demolished

The authorities said the said land was reserved for a graveyard and parking but the housing society illegally built its four-storey offices on it necessitating an action from the government

DNA

SIALKOT: Taking action against alleged housing colony of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) lawmaker Khawaja Asif, the local administration on Sunday demolished its offices in Sialkot to retrieve the occupied land. A heavy contingent of police along with the local administration reached the area to demolish the booking offices of the housing colony. On the occasion, the enraged PML-N workers exchanged hot words with the police. The authorities said the said land was reserved for a graveyard and parking but the housing society illegally built its four-storey offices on it

necessitating an action from the government. The operation against the housing society involved officers and staff of the district administration along with dozens of government vehicles and heavy machinery. The authorities concerned said the operation was launched to recover the land reserved for graveyard and parking but occupied by the Kent View Housing Society. The management of the society illegally built a four-storey building on the site, necessitating action from the government, reports said. Sialkot Chief Corporation Officer Faisal said the offices of the housing society were built illegally deviating from the approved plans and the maps. An official of the Sialkot

Municipal Corporation said the structures were built in violation of the approved plans and the maps. The district administration and municipal corporation officials backed by the police demolished the structures of the housing society claiming that they were illegally built. Sources said an inquiry into the matter is also underway at an anti-corruption establishment and National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Former Mayor Sialkot, Tauheed Akhtar alleged that they are being politically victimized and added that they were even not allowed to take out Rs63mn in their offices before the demolition. This is the second time in the last seven days that a high-profile anti-encroachment operation against

the so-called 'land mafia' has been launched and at both occasions the 'properties' belonged to the PML-N leaders. First, the Punjab government had demolished the structures at Lahore's famous Khokhar Palace belonging to the Khokhar brothers and now Khawaja's housing scheme has been targeted. After Prime Minister Imran Khan has been over the moon and has patted on Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar's back over the operation at the Khokhar Palace. A furious Nawaz League termed the operation political victimization and PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz herself visited the Khokhar brothers and extended her support by expressed solidarity with them.

Later, Afzal Khokhar (MNA) presented a privilege motion in the National Assembly and pleaded he was innocent and the government breached the sanctity of his house. It is pertinent to note that, an accountability court in Lahore last week rejected a NAB request seeking a 15-day extension in PML-N leader Khawaja Asif's physical remand and issued orders for 14-day judicial remand instead. Khawaja Asif had been arrested by the anti-graft watchdog on December 30, 2020 from outside Ahsan Iqbal's residence in Islamabad where he had come to attend a party meeting. Former Mayor Sialkot Toheed Akhtar termed the Sialkot operation 'worst political victimization'.

## 'Women inheritance campaigns launched'

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for National History and Literary Heritage and Member National Assembly (MNA) Ghazala Saifi has said government has launched various awareness campaigns in different rural areas to provide knowledge to rural women of their due share in inheritance. Talking to APP, she said the initiative would help in unraveling common practice in rural areas where daughters were still being denied their due share in the inheritance. Adding she said, the efforts were driven from the notion that nations cannot prosper without including women in nation building process as their role is vital for progress of the country and to make women economically empowered. She said inheritance was the right of an heir to succeed to property on the death of an ancestor that may legally be transmitted to an heir. There cannot be women empowerment without economic independence and giving them their due right to inheritance, she added. – APP

## IGP orders filling vacancies through promotions

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab Inam Ghani has said that the process of departmental promotions should be completed as soon as possible in all districts and field formations according to merit and seniority so that professional duties may be fulfilled effectively. He issued these instructions in a wireless message to all command officers including RPOs, unit heads, CPOs, DPOs of the province on Sunday. At the same time, departmental promotions should be given to the dutiful and capable officers and personnel. The IG Punjab said that steps should be taken on priority basis to fill all the vacancies from constable to SP rank through promotions within the next 15 days and new appointments would be made after departmental promotions by holding promotion board meetings in all districts and field formation. – APP

## AJK PM for implementation of relevant UN resolutions

MIRPUR (AJK): Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan on Sunday appealed to the United Nations to take practical steps for implementation of the UN Security Council's resolutions for settlement of Kashmir issue without further delay for emergence of durable and ever lasting peace in the region. In a statement, he also urged upon the international community to fulfill its obligations to help secure the Kashmiri people's right to self determination in accordance with the United Nations relevant resolutions. He said Kashmiri people were under military siege

for the last 545 days but they were determined to continue their struggle till the objective of Kashmir liberation was achieved. He said Kashmiri had been facing Indian repressions for the last over seven decades and demanding to implement the United Nations agreed resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir but their fundamental right had been denied by India. He said India had intensified the reign of terror in the occupied Kashmir which had no example in freedom history. The prime minister said that India had failed to suppress the indigenous freedom movement with the use of brute force and had given an open license

to Indian forces for the mass genocide of innocent Kashmiri people to crush the freedom movement. He said apart from killings of Kashmiri the Indian government was also engaged to change the demography of the state and settling the non state actors, RSS extremists and retired soldiers in occupied Kashmir to turn the Muslims majority areas in to minority. Raja Farooq Haider drew the attention of the international human rights organization towards flagrant human rights violations by the Indian forces in occupied Kashmir and urged them to take notice of Indian atrocities and mass killings of Kashmiri at the hands of brute Indian forces. – APP



LAHORE: PML N leaders Khawaja Saad Rafique, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and others addressing a press conference. They refuted allegations levelled by Mirza Shahzad Akbar. – DNA

## Chairman FPCCI urges to enhance Sino-Pak economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Capital Office, Qurban Ali urged on Sunday for enhancing the China and Pakistan economic and trade connectivity through the nearer region of Gilgit Baltistan (GB). The senior business leader said that the GB region is a gateway for CPEC to provide opportunities to the Chinese business community and investors to connect with China as well as other regional countries including Central Asian Republics (CARs) to get benefits from their economies said a press release issued by FPCCI here. The Chairman FPCCI said this in meeting of

a delegation of the FPCCI led by him to Ambassador of China in Islamabad, Nong Rong was held at Chinese embassy along with senior business leaders Immediate Past Vice President FPCCI, Muhammad Ali Quaid, Coordinator FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad Mirza Abdul Rehman. The President Hunza Chamber of Commerce Industry (CCI) Mehboob Rabani and Former President Gilgit CCI, Mushtaq Hussain also attended the meeting. He said that China Pakistan Economic (CPEC) related Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Special economic Zone (SEZ) and others would increase the business and industrial cooperation between

China and Pakistan. Qurban said that Chinese investors and businessmen can invest and start Joint Ventures (JVs) with local industrialists in Gilgit Baltistan, SEZ in value addition on agriculture, livestock, mines and minerals and milk products. While he said that in Gilgit Baltistan, there is huge potential of hydro power, which also supports any Chinese investor for available cheap energy to the industrial sector and provides secure business opportunity. Qurban Ali also said that GB region has a huge potential of tourism and livestock as the region owns the 8 biggest mountains of the world including any raw material for the Industrial

sector and agro-industries. Due to close proximity with China the local business community of Gilgit Baltistan has been facing certain issues and having some benefits as well, he said. Qurban Ali said that during the COVID-19 because of closure of Khunjerab Pass bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and China through Khunjerab was decreasing. He informed that because of expensive freight charges of Chinese trucks/containers bilateral trade was in halt. In briefing he informed that for instance, the freight charges from Urumqi to Sust which was 1889 KM, for 30 feet containers is 20000 RMB in November 2017. – APP

## وزیراعظم آپ کے ساتھ

# وزیراعظم عمران خان سے فون پر ڈائریکٹ بات کریں

کیم فروری بروز پیر شام 4 بجے

## آپ کے سوالات اور وزیراعظم کے جواب

رابطے کے لیے

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حکومت

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## Briefs

### Security to be on 'high alert' for test match

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Security will be on 'high alert' during the cricket Test match between Pakistan and South Africa to be played at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium next week. According to a Police spokesman, Rawalpindi district police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younus have finalized a plan to ensure security during cricket test match, scheduled to be played here from Feb 4 to Feb 8. He informed under the security plan over 2200 cops would be deployed. He said, all out efforts would be made to make security arrangements foolproof during practice session and cricket test match. Security agencies have conducted intensive checking in and around the stadium. There would also be a layered security plan around the stadium that includes the Special Branch, Elite Force, women police and the Quick Response Force. As part of the security measures, sharpshooters would be deployed on the rooftops of buildings around the stadium and extra police check points would also be established in the surrounding areas. Every vehicle would be searched before being allowed to move towards the stadium, he added.

### DG PNCA condoles death of Nelo Begum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Director General Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) Dr Fouzia Saeed Sunday expressed her deep sorrow and grief over the sad demise of the leading Pakistani actress of the past Shaun's mother Nelo Begum. "On behalf of myself and staff of PNCA we pay our highest homages to the great leading actress of Pakistani screen who enriched our films with her unforgettable performances in various movies such as 'Beti', 'Lado', 'Banjaran' and 'Payal ki Jhankar ", Director said in a message received by this scribe here. She said that her career in films started with 'Bhawani junction' and 'Dulla Bhatti' in 1956 and very soon reached to the heights of popularity in 'Nagin' in 1959. She said that she played a challenging role in her late husband Riaz Shahid's film 'Zerqa' released in 1969 and soon became part of our remarkable film history. She said that "We truly join Shan Shahid and family in these moments of grief and loss".

### Police recover over 51,000 kites, net 107

RAWALPINDI: In order to implement the ban of kite flying imposed by the Punjab government, Rawalpindi Police were cautiously conducting raids against kite dealers and flyers across the district and rounded up 107 persons during January. Following the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas, Police launched crackdown on the people involved in kite selling and flying and recovered over 51,000 kites and 741 string rolls while Sadder Division police rounded up 15 besides seizing 4,000 kites and 400 string rolls. Similarly, Rawal Division police conducted raids in different areas and arrested 38 kite sellers for possessing 20,000 kites and 2000 string rolls. – APP

# AIOU digitalizes operations for quality education

In the first phase of this project, e-registration of the tutors and online admission objectives have been achieved

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Sunday digitalized all of its key academic and administrative operations to enhance quality standards of education. AIOU will also improve efficiency and transparency of its basic processes to strengthen prestigious image of the university at both national and international levels. According to the university, the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof Dr Zia Ul Qayyum has decided to visit regional offices of the university

across the country to further improve overall dynamics of the university and its performance. In this regard, he has been visited the Punjab province last week. He was accompanied by Director Regional Services, Inam Ullah Sheikh and Major(Retd) Muhammad Umar, Director, Coordination and Follow Up. While addressing the inaugural ceremonies of computer laboratories established at Sargodha and Sahiwal regional offices, Prof Dr Zia Ul Qayyum said that in order to complete automation of university processes and



to provide computer and internet facilities to the students of underdeveloped areas, university is

establishing computer laboratories in all 54 regional offices across the country. He, further, added that university will soon establish its own television channel and its approval has already been sought by the relevant authorities. The television channel will help in reaching out to those students who are deprived of internet facilities. He also added that in order to enhance credibility and effectiveness of distance education system, it was deemed inevitable to incorporate the use of technology in its operational systems, therefore

he initiated digitisation project in May 2019. It is expected that automation of all key processes including admissions, examinations mailing of books and other academic procedures would be completed by July 2021 through state of the art latest information and communication technology. In the first phase of this project, e-registration of the tutors and online admission objectives have been achieved. Students are informed about any of their academic activities through SMS and relevant information is also uploaded on the university website.

# CDA's sanitation services extended to rural areas



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to extend the jurisdiction of its Sanitation department to rural areas and suburbs of city. In the first phase, the sanitation work has been started in Sohan, Pindorian, Zia Masjid, Khanna Pull, Tramari, and Lehrtar road. 200 ton of garbage was removed from the said areas, said a press release issued here the other day. According to detail, the current administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) was taking great interest in the projects of

## CDA chairman directs to ensure cleanliness

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Aamir Ali Ahmed visited the Sector H-11 graveyard and directed the relevant authorities to ensure cleanliness, restoration of lights, carpeting of roads and the cutting of herbs. The sanitation director, the environment director, the street lights director and others accompanied him during the visit, said a press release issued here. The CDA chairman made this visit in response to the complaints being submitted by the citizens to the development authority. He directed the relevant departments to complete their work immediately. All issues should be resolved so the complaints of the citizens may be addressed on a priority basis, the chairman said. – DNA

development, sanitation, infrastructure, and beautification in the city. Capital Development Authority (CDA) has been receiving the applications of citizens for increasing the jurisdiction of sanitation department to rural areas of the city. While considering the applications of masses Capital Development Authority

(CDA) has begun work accordingly. More than 100 sanitary workers, three excavators, 10 dumpers, and other machinery took part in the cleanliness operation conducted by Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Tuesday. The sanitation operation is underway under the supervision of Director Sanitation.

## PAL, Turkish Director to hold Children Seminar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakaistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Chairman Dr Yousuf Khushk in a meeting held other day with Director of Pak-Turkish Maarif International Schools and Colleges Foundation Harun Kucukaladagli agreed to hold International Children Literature Seminar in March this year. They discussed matters of mutual interest and further strengthening of literary ties between the two countries, an official informed media. Harun Kucukaladagli said the International Seminar on Children's Literature would be useful for the new generation of both the countries. He said such seminars would help bring the two countries more closer together in the field of literature. Dr. Yousuf Khushk said that holding of an international seminar on children's literature was a matter of urgency. He said that this seminar would be a milestone in the promotion of children's literature. Harun Kucukaladagli and Dr. Yousuf Khushk agreed to work together to make the International Seminar on Children's Literature effective and purposeful.

# PAS celebrates Science Day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS) celebrated "National Science Day (NSD)" for the first time on January 29, 2021. Prof. Dr. Tasawar Hayat, Secretary General PAS, started the event and welcomed all the guests. Prof. Khalid Mahmood Khan, President PAS, welcomed all the distinguished guests and speakers. He appreciated all the scientists, fellows, and students for attending the event physically or virtually. He informed that the first NSD was dedicated to the achievements and contributions of Dr. Abdus Salam, the first Nobel Laureate of the Islamic World. PAS will continue withholding these high-level conferences in the coming years and would invite a larger number of participants. Each event will be dedicated to a distinguished scientist of Pakistan. Major (Retd.) Dr. Malik QaiserMajeed, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, was the Chief Guest of this event. In his remarks, he expressed gratitude for having been invited as Chief Guest. He threw a brief light on the contributions of the Ministry for the promotion of Science, Technology, Innovation, policy formulation, capacity building, and popularization of science in Pakistan. – DNA

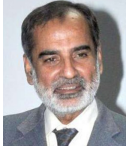
## Efforts underway to ensure proper parking

ISLAMABAD: Special squads of Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) are endeavoring their best to ensure right parking by the motorists in busy areas of Capital including markets and shopping malls. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman, Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rashed said that campaign of ITP s in full swing against those involved in parking their vehicles wrongly causing traffic jams on roads and markets as well. He said that prompt action against such violators is being taken as they disrupt the smooth flow of traffic and cause inconvenience for the road users. The SSP (Traffic) has said this action will be extended to other areas and important shopping centers, malls and business zones of the city. – DNA

## Khalid Rahman elected IPS chairman

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Governors of Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad has unanimously elected Khalid Rahman, former executive president and director general of the Institute, as the new chairman of IPS. Rahman has replaced Professor Khurshid Ahmad, former senator and founding chairman of the Institute, in the position, who himself has been elevated to the rank of the Institute's patron-in-chief. It is worth mentioning here that the Institute was established in 1979 as the first non-government policy research institution of Pakistan. The Institute has been playing an active role in the country's policy arena since then, reviewing and recommending viable policy alternatives over different issues pertaining to the national interest.



## Primary balance remains surplus of Rs216bn

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The country's primary balance remained in surplus of Rs216 billion that is 0.5 percent of GDP during the first five months of the current fiscal year (July-November FY2021) as against the surplus of 0.3 percent of GDP or Rs117 billion last year. However, the fiscal deficit during the period under review was recorded at 1.8 percent of GDP against the deficit of 1.6 percent of GDP last year, according to official data. The net federal revenues have witnessed a noticeable increase of 22.2 percent (1391 billion) for July-November against Rs1138 billion last year, while within revenues, nontax posted a healthy growth of 17.7 percent, the data revealed. Total federal expenditures grew by 14.5 percent to Rs 2383 billion during July-November against Rs 2081 billion last year. Within total, current expenditures grew by 15.7 percent mainly due to higher mark-up payments and COVID related spending. It is worth to mention that expenditures other than mark-up payments and COVID have decreased, reflecting government adherence of maintaining fiscal discipline. On development side, rupee component of Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) increased by 11.3 percent to Rs 128 billion against Rs 115 billion last year) in utilization during the period. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Tax collection achieved 99.8 percent of its half-yearly target while the provisional net tax collection grew by 5 percent to Rs 2206 billion against Rs2101 billion last year.

## DOAM to hold photo exhibition on Feb 5

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Museum, Department of Archaeology & Museums (DOAM) will hold photographic exhibition on February 5 to highlight Indian atrocities in Kashmir to express solidarity with Kashmiris. In the wake of marking Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5, exhibition of paintings, photographs and Kashmiri crafts would be displayed to show their struggle for self-determination and freedom. The exhibition was aimed at portraying unanimity with the Kashmiri people and highlight the miseries and catastrophic life being lived by Kashmiris, an official told APP the other day. He said that the exhibition was also intended to mobilize the international community to play its due role to provide future to the Kashmiri people. Through photographs they will show the stories of Kashmiri youth and Indian brutalities in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK),he stated. – APP

## IRSA opens most canals after month long closure

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has opened canals of Sindh, Balochistan except few of Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa after over month closures under annual de-silting programme. Sharing the details, the IRSA spokesperson told APP that all canals in Sindh including Sukkur and Kotri have been opened. In Punjab, Thal, Rasul, Marala, Trimmu, Panjnad, Balloki, Sidhna and Sulemanki have been opened while Der Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Khanki and Islam canals would remain closed. He said all canals of Balochistan have also been opened while CRBC of KPK would remain closed. Meanwhile, IRSA released 58,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 37,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1466.63 feet, which was 74.63 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. – APP

# Police to start community engagement program

The IGP Islamabad and DIG (Operations) Afzaal Kausar has emphasized the need to enhance coordination with people and ensure community engagement as the essence of modern policing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have decided to start a Community Engagement Program (Raabta) to enhance liaison with people from various walks of life and effectively resolve their issues after approaching them. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, a comprehensive program has been chalked out to approach public, understand their issues related to police and resolve them on immediate basis. As per plan, all police officials

would conduct meetings with general public, religious scholars, traders, minority members, administrators of while interactions would be made with students of educational institutions, seminars and members of Public Conciliatory Committees (PCCs). The feedback on police related matters would be noted and issues would be resolved through mutual cooperation, police said. Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations), Zonal Superintendent of Police, Sub-Divisional Police Officers would regularly conduct these meetings while media and representatives of Bar Association

would be also engaged by these police officials. Police officials would visit mosques at prayers timings especially of Friday prayers for productive and useful interactions with people. The visiting officers would articulate their views succinctly but comprehensively before the audience and ensure people to resolve police related issues through their cooperation. To make all these interactions result oriented, all the meetings would be recorded and comprehensive minutes to be issued. Police said the purpose of all such meetings is to engage the public,

understand their problems and resolve them. AIG (Operations) will follow up on all the decisions made in these meetings and to ensure compliance by all subordinate offices. A detailed report of all such meetings will be submitted to the Central Police Office, Islamabad on 5th of every month. These meetings would provide an opportunity to cultivate partnership with law abiding and peaceful citizens. All out efforts would be made to engage people from all walks of life and serious efforts to be ensured to resolve their issues as promptly as possible. The IGP Islamabad and DIG (Op-

erations) Afzaal Kausar has emphasized the need to enhance coordination with people and ensure community engagement as the essence of modern policing. Such interactions identify and solve community problems, helps crime control and bridges the gap between community and police. Community policing also breaks down the barriers of apathy and distrust between police and community. Reinvigorating general public and different segments of society helps Police to achieve its primary objectives; i.e. crime prevention, detection and maintenance of law & order



## Briefs

## Professional beggars and their handler arrested

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Loi Bher police have busted a gang of professional beggars and also arrested their handlers on Saturday, police said. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman directed to launch special crackdown against professional beggars and their handlers with the purpose to curb this menace. Following his directions, DIG (Operations) Afzaal Kausar directed all SPs to constitute special teams to ensure arrest of beggars' handler and professional alm-seekers. He also ordered to initiate legal process after registering FIRs against the professional beggars. As per orders, Loi Bher police also made efforts and succeeded to bust a professional gang of beggars and their handler who used to shift beggars from Mandra to Islamabad and used to receive cash Rs.100 from each beggar. SSP (Operations) Dr. Tanveer has said that this social evil would be curbed and those backing the professional beggars would be dealt with an iron hand. DIG (Operations) Afzaal Kausar has said this crackdown against the professional alm-seekers should remain continue and strict action to be taken against those who force children and women and others to adopt the ugly business.

## Pak Customs seizes smuggled liquor, narcotics

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Customs Saturday seized a boat loaded with smuggled liquor on on coastal belt near Dam/Somiani, according to a statement issued by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) here. "In continuation of Pakistan Customs drive against smuggled items, Collectorate of Preventive Customs, Karachi has carried out a major operation on coastal belt near Dam/Somiani and seized a full loaded boat with smuggled liquor," the statement said. The strike boat of customs intercepted smugglers when they were unloading the smuggled liquor, it said adding 1500 to 2000 bags of smuggled bottles were caught. However a detailed inventory of smuggled item was being prepared, it added. In another operation, Customs staff posted at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi continued crackdown on illegal movement of narcotics and contraband goods. Consistent efforts resulted in seizure of 940 grams of Narcotics (Pure Cocaine) which was recovered from a passenger arriving from an African country via Qatar. Total value of narcotics seized is expected to be Rs15 million and criminal investigations were under process resulting in FIR against one individual under arrest.

## ITP's campaign in full swing

ISLAMABAD: The campaign of Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) to check display of unauthorized or non-pattern number plates at vehicles or bikes was in full swing and police teams were imposing heavy fines over this particular violation. This campaign has been underway following directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman and Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed was himself supervising it. The purpose of this campaign was to ensure high alert security, maintenance of law and order situation, ensure protection to the lives as well as property of citizens and avert any untoward incident. The SSP (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed has urged the motorists and motorcyclists to display the number plates issued by Excise and Taxation Office and also keep with them their driving licenses and vehicles' documents showing possession on their names or even authority letters. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in construction work of underpass and fly over at Rawal Dam Chowk during development work in Federal Capital. — DNA

## Experts urge responsible, inclusive winter sports strategy

Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said we see no baseline study for winter sports or even for summer tourism. Wildlife habitats are disturbed by some influential ones while mountaineering expeditions left their waste in our mountains and no one seems concerned about it

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaking at a webinar the experts urged for an inclusive and integrated winter sports strategy to attract tourism towards northern Pakistan. Environment and climate change shall remain the main concern while devising any sports events for the winter season. It is the hibernation and mating time for wildlife and biodiversity while mas-

sive human activities would disturb their lifecycle. Unplanned massive interventions are becoming hazards to the local environment and communities besides the biological diversity loss. A fistful influential ones are enjoying at the cost of millions of people while the poor communities are not only deprived of their local environment, heritage and natural resources, they are also not getting anything in return.

The experts also showed their concerns on the unwise decisions of the Gilgit-Baltistan government to open Deosai National Park for the winter sports from March this year. They said millions of dollars have been spent on the conservation and protection of the wildlife habitats and biological diversity in the Deosai National Park that are being put on risk. The participants urged the Supreme Court of Pakistan, national

and international development organizations to take notice of it. The webinar was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTN to brainstorm on "Winter Sports – Scope, Opportunities and Challenges" on Sunday. The panelists included National Tourism Coordination Board (NTCB) member and sustainable tourism expert Aftab ur Rehman Rana,

National Tourism Coordination Board convener on adventure sports Shahid Nadeem, WWF-Pakistan Senior Director Wildlife Rab Nawaz, another WWF-Pakistan Senior Director Tahir Rasheed, EvK2CR Environment Conservation Expert Arif Hussain, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed. Others who spoke on the occasion included RCCI travel and tourism expert Fouzia Qazi, The Adventure Club pres-

ident Tahir Imran Khan, journalist Zubair Ayub, development experts Umme Kulsoom and Sabeena Hena Iqbal, Baltistan Association of Tour Operators (BATO) chairman Muhammad Iqbal, and Lion Sarfaraz Malik. Aftab ur Rehman Rana said we have seen mushroom growth of winter sports in recent years without any planning and strategy. No one is really interested in taking care of nature, biodiversity and wildlife.

## CDA to install lids of drain holes in Capital

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) has directed the concerned authorities to promptly install the lids of drain holes, main holes, gutters, and sewerage across the city. Opened holes are dangerous for the lives of the citizens. People have also been asked to take great care. According to detail, lids of main holes and gutters in the city could not be installed for decades. These opened holes have caused a number of accidents. However, the current administration of CDA has directed to cover all the opened holes as soon as possible. The departments of environment, city sewerage, road and markets have been directed



to cover opened holes of all the departments including IESCO, SNGPL, PTCL, NTC and others without showing any difference. The said departments will also be asked to themselves take action to cover their opened holes in the city. CDA's department of services and engineering has started

work on preparation of lids on a mega scale after getting directions from the administration. The work on covering all the main holes, drainage holes, and gutter holes will be started next week. The administration of CDA has also directed the citizens to protect the main holes of their streets.

## Afridi warns oppressed Kashmir to erupt anytime

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmiri Shehryar Khan Afridi Sunday urged the world community to break its silence and help Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) as it was brewing with anger and it may erupt anytime due to uninterrupted and prolonged atrocities being committed on the Kashmiris by fascist Indian prime minister Narendra Modi. Talking to APP here in an exclusive interview with regard to the Kashmir Solidarity Day to be observed on February 5, Shehryar Afridi categorically pointed out that the perpetual Indian

state oppression had played havoc with the lives of Kashmiris in IIOJK. "If the world doesn't intervene now, Kashmir will explode and lives of over eight million Kashmiris will be at the mercy of brutal occupational Indian forces who have inflicted numerous massacres, mass rapes and destroyed properties of the Kashmiris. "For all these crimes against the Kashmiris, the Indian regime should be tried for criminally misleading World opinion as EU Disinfo Lab had fully exposed a network of fake media and NGOs created by India to mislead the world opinion," said Shehryar Afridi. — APP

## Bibliophile President Alvi shares best reads of 2020

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday while sharing his best 10 reads of 2020, called for promotion of book reading culture in the country. The president, in a video message, advised the people particularly the youth to develop the habit of book reading to enhance their exposure and help suppress the biases. He said he studied books on current affairs and computer sciences and tried to disseminate his knowledge to the masses through his speeches. The president shared a list of 10 books he studied last year en-

compassing the subjects including Islamic history, capitalism, history of sub-continent, upheaval and exploitation in nations, human psychology, riots in India, metric society, physics and artificial intelligence. He said besides the books suggested by him, the people should also read the useful material of their choice. The president said when it comes to obtaining huge knowledge published in form of books, he considered his life too short to comprehend it all. He also showed the notes of various books he took during the reading which he hoped would compile at a later stage.



ISLAMABAD: Mirza Shahzad Akbar, Adviser to PM on Interior and Accountability addressing a press conference at PID Media Centre. — DNA

## Capital's water issue worsening

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

ISLAMABAD: Dwellers of other cities may compare and idealize life in the federal capital, but it's the other way around for a vast majority here. From dawn to dusk, people living in series of F, G, I and some other sectors, rural areas and various colonies have a major problem to cope with and that is water scarcity, which becomes a nightmare in the hot months of summer. Some describe the worsening issue of water supply as the incompetence of the water directorate, while the other think it never remained a priority on the city managers' list in the past. But unfortunately, it is the amalgam of many problems ranging from decades-old water supply infrastructure to

lowering groundwater table. Lack of initiative to build more water reservoirs and mismanagement on the part of the officials concerned are major reasons to make this basic necessity of life ordeal. "I have been living in the federal capital for the last couple of decades, but unfortunately, never heard of replacement of rusty pipelines, laid in the city in the late 60s to provide water to the residential area," said a retired government employee Mustafa Aziz living in a residential Sector I-10. He said reliance on outdated pipeline infrastructure was beyond his belief as the population in the capital city had been increased manifold, crossing two million figure in the

last couple of decades. Water, he said was the basic need of people and "Wastage from pipeline due to rotten lines was equivalent to the amount of water, produced from Simly dam alone," he claimed. He said it also led to increase in water-boring trend that eventually lowered the ground water table. Another citizen from Tarali, a suburban area of Islamabad, said people in his area were forced to avail the facility through water tankers for which they had to pay hefty amount. He said the cost of water boring was too high for a common man as in some areas water level had gone down to over 400 feet. "And it can cost up to five hundred thousand rupees if you are lucky to find the water," he

regretted. A citizen from Sector G-7, Ishfaq Ahmed said he was living in this area for the last many years and never faced such water shortage, but now the situation was same here as in other water-scarce sectors. He said people had to stand in long queues for almost a day to book a tanker. When contacted, a senior officer in the Capital Development Authority said a comprehensive programme with cost of over 400 million was underway to rehabilitate supply lines, water works and treatment plants in the city. He said over Rs 200 million had been given to the water directorate for execution of plan and currently rehabilitation work at 71 points were being carried out to fix the issue effectively. — APP

## PTA to conduct QoS survey

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is planning to conduct quality of service (QoS) survey during first quarter of 2021, using automated tool, with an objective to push cellular mobile operators (CMOs) to provide quality voice and data services as per license standards. This survey is the first of a series of surveys to be conducted throughout the year in order to measure the quality of voice and data service of CMOs. The survey will be carried out independently using the newly procured automated QoS monitoring and benchmarking tool "SmartBenchmark" for measuring parameters for voice, short message service and data services. The surveys will cover more than 30 areas including cities, towns, highways/motorways and roads across Pakistan including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Keeping in view, the enhanced capabilities of "SmartBenchmark", the survey shall also include measurement of key performance indicators, in addition to the license QoS parameters, based upon new international standards developed for benchmarking of mobile services.

## Railways set to outsource 8 more passenger trains

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways is all set to outsource the commercial management of its eight passenger trains to transform the department into a profitable entity. The passenger trains included Sir Syed Express, Hazara Express, Shalimar Express, Mianwali Express, Narowal Passenger Train, Mehran Express, Moenjodaro Express and Badr Express, an official in the Ministry told APP. He said Pakistan Railways had already outsourced the commercial management of six passenger trains including Lasani Express, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Attock Passenger Train, Jand Passenger Train, Freed Express and Mehr Express. The official said Pakistan Railways was earning Rs 1539 million from the already outsourced trains while the bids amounting to Rs. 1718 million were received against them. He said that the recent decisions had resulted in a benefit of Rs 179 million per annum for Pakistan Railways. About the steps taken by the government to decrease the deficit of the department, he said in the passenger sector, commercial management of luggage vans and break vans with different trains were being outsourced. The official said the online e-ticketing had been introduced to facilitate passengers and attract them towards rail travel.

## Up gradation work on Buddhist sites completed

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Directorate of Archaeology and Museums has stepped up its efforts to refurbish all the 22 religious sites, encircling by the Buddhist trail, to attract followers of Buddhism and monks from across the world. "20 per cent rehabilitation work has been completed on the trail, which starts from Khanpur and culminated at Swat, covering several Buddhist sites, including Julian, Bhamala, Jinnah Wali Dheri, Hund Museum, Rani Ghat, Peshawar Museum, Gor Khatri, Takhti Bahi and others," a senior officer told. He said the provincial government was spending over Rs2 billion to carry out rehabilitation work on the trails which included sites' fencing, establishment of information centers and many other initiatives. "This includes Rs1 billion each from the World Bank and annual budget of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government," he added. The official expressed hope that the upgradation work would be completed within next two years. He said the Gandhara Civilization was the major source of attraction for the tourists and the followers of Buddhism that was why all-out efforts were being made to upgrade such sites in the province.



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## Proactive action

AFTER the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) launched an operation against miscreants in Karachi in 2013, many went underground. But normalcy in the city does not mean that the gangs and their leaders are finished or have stopped engaging in crimes. The LEAs understand this. Hence, the police and other security forces are still active against the sleeper cells of gangsters. In one such raid, they arrested one of the most-wanted Lyari gangsters, Ismail from Orangi Town. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the police, the days of Karachi witnessing a daily bloodbath are long gone. However, the return of hardened criminals to the city to reignite gang wars suggests that these perpetrators of violence are not seeing law enforcement as a substantial threat any longer. What is reassuring is that both the police and Rangers are in close contact in attempts to keep Karachi safe. The joint action of these security forces means that the state is in no mood to show any leniency to these gangs to resurrect again. A zero-tolerance policy towards gangs' existence is the only way forward to maintain peace. While the government's firm determination to eliminate the miscreants is encouraging, the ground reality is shifting subtly. Street crimes are on the rise once again. Not surprisingly, most of the criminals who have resorted to street crimes belong to the gangs of Lyari. Increasing incidents of petty crime is an alarming sign. The question worth asking in such a situation is this: Are the police officials cognisant of the deteriorating law and order situation in the city? Karachi police need to be on their toes; rising criminal activities demand effective policing from the department. The government must nip this spate of crime and violence in the bud before Karachi finds itself in another spree of violence and blood.

## Rising inflation

THE life of the average citizen continues to become tougher as the government struggles to control inflation. The price of staple items like rice, wheat, lentils, and vegetables have risen again, some by as much as 15 percent according to authorities like the National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC). This prompted them to issue a directive to the Ministry of Industry according to which products should be made cheaper for end consumers. There is no denying that there is a need for greater government oversight and regulation, at least in major cities if not the entire country. According to the data compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, prices of basic commodities like chicken, oil, wheat, sugar, lentils and various vegetables have increased enough for the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) to be amplified by 0.56 percent within one week. If the status quo is not subjected to major change, it will be the people who will suffer the most. We are moving towards an era where basic sustenance will become a luxury. To prevent such dire circumstances from becoming the norm in Pakistan, the government needs to undertake extensive campaigns of price monitoring and stock homogenisation so that inflation cannot be artificially induced as well. Given that inflation is a recurring issue in Pakistan, one that is proving to be impossible to eradicate completely, it would bode well for the authorities to focus on small-scale initiatives. For instance, regulating the market locally, before going national with the scheme, would be a way to ensure that the problem is minimised. Taking it step by step is a sure way to ensure that government oversight improves gradually and that the situation is brought under control.

# Pakistan-China Strategic Naval partnership

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



The joint naval drill was in addition the “warrior” series of exercises between the two armies and the “eagle” series exercises between the two air forces. Islamabad and Beijing have had a decades-long strategic partnership, and they have conducted many military exercises. The commencement of CPEC has geared-up naval cooperation between the countries since 2015. Various meaningful MOUs have already been inked to extend military and naval cooperation in diverse fields of production, joint venture, training, exchange of professional

DIVERGENT and convergent forces have been “polluting” coasts, waters and shores of South East Asia Region for so many years. Integrative and disintegrative “posturing” and “signaling” have also been “posing” and “pausing” serious “Maritime Threats (MTs) and dangers to blue economy. Indian hegemonic policies in Indian Ocean, undue interference in Arabian Sea, formidable formation of the Asian NATO (USA, India, Australia and Japan) navies, resurgence of international power brokers naval bases in the Gulf region have been creating “conflicting realities” and deadly tensions in “Straits of Hormuz and Macala” and last but not least South China Sea (SCS) as new security “flash point” has forced Pakistan and China to extend their naval cooperation. Moreover, perpetuated China’s “containment policy” has also started “unending” tussle among the different main stakeholders to divert energies, resources, means and ways to mitigate its spillover repercussions. For the further strengthening of Pak-China maritime security mechanism, China has now launched a second advanced warship a Type-054 Class Frigate for Pakistan. The said warship is the state of the art “sailing” machine which is indeed the country’s most advanced frigate. The new version has a better defence capability and is equipped with an improved radar system and a larger amount of missiles with a longer range. It has also has world-class Stealth Capability (SC) which is in fact a valuation-addition to its overall maneuverability. Most probably, it has SR2410C radar which is a 3D multifunction ESA (electronically scanned array). According to manufacturer’s data, it has an air range of over 250 km and can track 150 surface and air targets simultaneously. According to official statement of the Pakistan Navy (January 30, 2021), the launching ceremony was held at the Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard in China’s Shanghai and was attended by Chief Naval Overseer (China) Commodore Azfar Humayun and senior Chinese officials. While addressing the ceremony, Commodore Humayun termed the addition of the new warships to the Pakistan Navy’s fleet “significant” for enhancing Pakistan’s maritime defence and deterrence capabilities. During his speech the senior navy official acknowledged the commitment, hard work and timely completion of this important milestone project by M/s CSTC and HZ Shipyard, Shanghai despite ongoing global pandemic”. According to the statement, the said warships will be one of the most technologically advanced surface platforms of Pakistan Navy’s fleet, equipped with the latest surface, subsurface and anti-air weapon systems. It will also be fitted with a range of electronic warfare, air and surface surveillance and acoustic sensors integrated through state of the art Combat Management System (CMS). The PLA Navy has about 30 of the Type 054A ships, each of which

has a loaded displacement of 4,000 metric tonnes and is equipped with advanced radars and missiles. The first-in-class frigate was launched in August 2020. Pakistan signed a first contract for the delivery two Type 054 A/P frigates in 2017. An additional contract for two more ships was announced in June 2018. The keel laying for the second vessel took place in March 2020. Steel cutting for the final two ships took place in November 2019. All four units are set to be built in China and delivered to the customer by 2021. According to Global Times (December 2020), the Type 054A is a multi-role frigate and is recognized as the backbone of the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) fleet of surface combatants with 30 vessels in commission. They have a length of 134 meters, a beam of 16 meters for a displacement of 4,000 tons. They have a crew complement of 165 sailors and are fitted with a H/PJ-26 76mm main gun, 8 C803 anti-ship missiles, 32x VLS cells for HQ-16 surface to air missiles, 2x Type 730 30mm CIWS and 2x Triple Torpedo launchers. In the PLAN, those frigates feature a Type 382 radar which shares a close resemblance with the Russian MR-710 Fregat radar. Unlike the Pakistan Navy variant, the Type 054A in Chinese Navy service does not feature a long range / metric wave radar. According to Pakistan Navy these warships will be the most technologically advanced platforms of Pakistan Navy which will strengthen its capability to meet future challenges and maintain peace, stability & power equilibrium in the Indian Ocean Region. The Pakistan Navy is rigorously pursuing its modernization drive and currently undertaking an important renewal of its fleet, with the procurement of several modern platforms. In addition to these frigates from China, Pakistan will also commission new corvettes from Turkey and OPV from the Netherlands. It is also modernizing its submarine force too. The navies of China and Pakistan conducted their sixth bilateral naval exercise, titled Sea Guardians-2020, in the northern Arabian Sea during 2020. Such military exercises further strengthened security cooperation between the two countries. According to Chinese media the naval drills are aimed at exploring new methods of conducting China-Pakistan joint naval drills while stepping up the capabilities to jointly address issues such as maritime terrorism and crime. It was held on India’s west coast, a critical security area from New Delhi’s perspective. Clearly, the exercise was very important for China because it increased the PLA Navy’s familiarity and understanding of the operational conditions in this part of the Arabian Sea. Moreover, gaining greater access to the Arabian Sea through Pakistan was also likely an attractive incentive for China. Successful holding of Sea Guardians-2020 opened an alternate route for China in the event of a naval blockade by an adversary that closes the Malacca Straits choke point.

Both states appeared enthusiastic about undertaking these naval exercises on a regular basis. During the joint naval drill Pakistan emphasized the importance of their joint collaboration. China continued to reiterate that the naval drills have nothing to do with the prevailing situation in the Middle East and that it was not aimed at any third country. The PLA reportedly stated that the joint exercise involved two sessions “joint training in Karachi and live-fire drills in northern parts of the Arabian Sea and included workshops, tactical simulation, joint patrol, air and missile defense, law enforcement inspection and anti-submarine operation. The PLA Navy deployed five major ships, including the guided-missile destroyer Yinchuan, the guided-missile frigate Yuncheng, the comprehensive supply ship Weishanhu, and the submarine rescue ship Liugongdao, whereas Pakistan represented by two Zulfikar-class F22P/F21 frigates, two fast attack craft, one fixed-wing anti-submarine patrol aircraft, two ship-borne helicopters and more than 60 special operations soldiers. The two navies had engaged in a number of training exercises including joint patrol, air-defense, joint anti-submarine, maritime live-firing, and joint marine training. The Pakistan Navy (PN) said that the overall aim of the exercise was to enhance the two navies’ technical and tactical capabilities, exchange of professional experiences against maritime threats, evolve a synergistic approach between the two sides and preserve regional maritime security. The joint naval drill was in addition the “warrior” series of exercises between the two armies and the “eagle” series exercises between the two air forces. Islamabad and Beijing have had a decades-long strategic partnership, and they have conducted many military exercises. The commencement of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has geared-up naval cooperation between the countries since 2015. Various meaningful MOUs have already been inked to extend military and naval cooperation in diverse fields of production, joint venture, training, exchange of professional and sharing of information on security matters between the two countries. Extended advancement of the CPEC towards Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan (black sea) has encouraged both states to deepen their naval cooperation to maintain regional peace. Development of Gwadar seaport has further strengthened and brightened bilateral naval cooperation. Being prominent regional expert of CPEC & BRI I, foresee that further strengthening of naval cooperation between Islamabad and Beijing is the “antidote” of western Chain’s containment policy. Thus increasing naval cooperation is the need of the hour between Pakistan and China.

— The writer is the Director: Geopolitics/Economics, Member Board of Experts, CGSS, Pakistan

## “A Lone Long Walk”

TAHIR Mehmood’s book A Lone Long Walk is a treat to all those readers who search the themes to read about Life, Love, Nature and Call of Duty. It is a collection of short stories written over a span of six years – from 2014 to 2010. Any avid reader will enjoy reading it till the last page in one-go. Tahir chooses majority of his plotlines that are built around soldiery, the call of duty, nature, mystery and union and separation. As such, the 23 tales (and five poems) are essentially a product of his 30 years of service in the military. The 116-pages-book published by Pakistan’s leading Ferozsons fully serves for the pleasurable-leisure-reading. Other than a product of his long service years in the military, these stories are also result of his strong reading of the human traits and interactions with fellow humans. He himself maintains reading habit religiously and there is an impact of the observant reading too. The title of his book will appeal to readers who believe in the adage, “life is nothing but a journey to walk all alone.” Most of the stories are written in the third-person account and, in almost all of them the author manages well to catch hold of the reader’s attention with engaging plots. Here, he uses the Gripping Narration—a famous genre of Literature well. Tahir has made some generous use of Literary Devices i.e. personification, metaphor and imagery to enhance his Imaginative Skill and two stories can be mentioned in particular, ‘A Cloud Above the Land’ and ‘A Town Beyond Sorrow.’ These two stories stand out as excellent examples of the powerful use of Imagination. In the first, the nomadic and vagabond Cloud professes his love for the immobile Land, and the author uses their conversation to depict the complexities of love in a long-term relationship. The Cloud is free with his love and bold in his assurances whereas the Land is more cautious and circumspect, symbolising a lover who seeks the comfort of stable companionship. In the second story ‘A Town Beyond Sorrow’, a puppeteer and his marionette takes readers through the process of human evolution. After first giving her ‘life’ as a simple finger puppet, over time the puppeteer modifies and improves upon her, adding a head and limbs that are controlled by strings. Gradually he transforms the basic little doll into a more elaborate creation that, one day it becomes able to think, voices her curiosity and demands answers. The story is a parable for the human existence, evolving as it has from simply surviving to questioning the meaning of life itself. One story ‘Love Across High Mountains’ is appropriate to be called an ode to the mountains. In this tale of a wandering traveller, the writer has shared an admiration of the high raised mountains as well for the love. Here, this traveller is found amazed by the awe-inspiring mountains in particular and life of inhabitants living there. For him, observing the mountains in solitude is enjoying a bliss to one’s heart and soul. His admiration of the mountains define them as metaphor of courage, survival-spirit and glory. Reading this story, one can’t avoid to be felt among the impressive ambience of those gigantic mountains of the Northern Areas of Pakistan. At one point he also praises people living among those mountains when he writes, “The people living amidst the high peaks know the actual meaning of life, loyalty, courage, survival and glory.” The colour of love is also spread in this tale. The traveller falls in love with a tourist-girl and then he shares some beautiful lines on love, “Love is more of giving than asking. Love only survives in trust and truth. Love is unconditional surrender to the goodness of human hearts and souls. Love breeds a deep rooted veneration that overcomes all evil germinating from human ego and vanity. Love is not an endowment on demand, it sprouts instinctively without spoken words in a language that needs no ornamentation. It often sows the seeds of all happiness in all the seasons of the year.” The pleasure of love as well the pain of separation both is also well narrated in ‘The Remains.’ A short story of an aspiring young soldier and a vivacious young girl

both got separated after some moments of love. In the later days, the writer has shown a powerful impact of the love when the young girl is found observing the same ritual of gazing the stars in lone nights with the thought that her soldier would be gazing them at the same moment. This—the both lovers consider their moment of union transcending any physical distance between the two. The majority of the stories in the collection — as explained by the author in the ‘Preface’ himself features soldiers as key characters. However, almost all are very much reminiscent of the Elizabethan Tragedy which mandates that the hero must die or meet an otherwise dreadful end. Tahir invariably requires the hero to sacrifice either his life or his love, oftentimes both, and this the hero does with a stoic salute to the call of duty, whether in ‘From Piccadilly to Gatwick’ or ‘The Remains’ or in ‘He Chose to Die.’ Nature is an embedded theme running through majority of the stories. One reads these stories and would easily believe that author is a devotee to the Nature who finds it transmitting a solace to the human soul. Reading these stories, one envisions the green lush trees, blue-clear-sky, deep night, bright morning and the magnificent mountains. Fiction is the most appealing form of Creative Writing. It becomes more attractive when the narration is compelling plus constructive. A Lone Long Walk steeped in reflections on life and, although the writer’s style is eloquent, it is fairly esoteric as well. It might not be incorrect to say that Tahir’s philosophical interpretation of life is similar to that of Khalil Gibran; he appears to touch upon all the realms of human existence, including romance, courage and morals, while at the same time bringing into discussion all the dilemmas and miseries we face, such as poverty, injustice and violence. Tahir shares a good range of wisdom and knowledge on life and love in the greater perspective. One will learn about life, love, call of duty and Nature from this thin book in one-sitting-read.

— The writer is a teacher

Asma Ishaq

Most of the stories are written in the third-person account and, in almost all of them the author manages well to catch hold of the reader’s attention with engaging plots. Here, he uses the Gripping Narration—a famous genre of Literature well. Tahir has made some generous use of Literary Devices i.e. personification, metaphor and imagery to enhance his Imaginative Skill and two stories can be mentioned in particular, ‘A Cloud Above the Land’ and ‘A Town Beyond Sorrow’



## Briefs

## Pakistan extends SOPs for inbound

From Page 01

Category-C countries would be allowed to enter Pakistan, "while in possession of a negative PCR Test Certification conducted within 72 hours prior to commencement of travel to Pakistan." The authority said any or all passengers arriving in Pakistan from Category-C countries or having stayed in a category-C country within the last ten days prior to travel to Pakistan could also be subjected to additional stipulations as specified by the relevant health authorities upon arrival in Pakistan. The PCAA also issued a revised list of category A, B&C countries pertaining to international inbound travel to Pakistan in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, which would be valid from February 2. As per the updated list, the passengers coming from Category-A countries including Australia, China, Cuba, Finland, Ghana, Iceland, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, and Vietnam, were not required to carry the COVID-19 PCR test before entry into Pakistan. Explaining category-B, the authority said the negative COVID-19 PCR test, maximum 72 hours old, was required from the international travelers coming from the countries not specified in the categories A&C. In category-C, the PCAA said six countries including South Africa, United Kingdom, Brazil, Ireland, Portugal and Netherlands had been enlisted from where only Pakistanis, diplomatic passport holders and their families would be allowed to enter Pakistan under the certain SOPs including the 72-hour old PCR test before boarding a flight to Pakistan.

## PM satisfied with efforts

From Page 01

"January inflation (CPI) is down to 5.7%. Core inflation is at 5.4%," he wrote on his official Twitter handle. Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation was 5.8 per cent and core inflation 7.6pc before the PTI assumed power in 2018, he added. In July 2018, prior to the PTI government's formation, CPI was 5.8% and core inflation was 7.6%. Contrary to the government's claims, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) had said that inflation is still moving upwards. The Sensitive Price Indicator registered an increase of 0.52 percent over last week, mainly due to raise in rates of food items. Prices of 18, out of 51, essential items increased and rate of nine items decreased, the PBS said. The prices of chicken, cooking oil, ghee, mustard oil and washing soap surged while prices of potatoes, onions, LPG, sugar pulses and bananas went down, the bureau said. A couple of days ago, former finance minister Dr Hafiz Pasha warned that the inflation rate will reach 10 percent in six months if the surge in oil and electricity prices in the international market continue going up. He foresaw the next six months worst ever for the common persons of the country.

## Tenacious Pricemeter Polo Cup: Barry's win final

DNA

LAHORE: Barry's bagged the Tenacious Pricemeter Polo Cup after beating Pricemeter. pk by 6-4 in the enthralling final played here at the Jinnah Polo and Country Club (JP&CC) ground on Sunday. Ruelo Trotz and Hamza Mawaz Khan played key role in Barry's well-deserving triumph as both thrashed in three tremendous goals while from the losing side, Marcos Panelo converted a hat-trick and Mumtaz Abbas Niazi struck one goal. In the subsidiary final, Pricemeter. pk Black emerged as triumphant by beating Platinum Homes 8-6. Mariano Raigal emerged as hero of the day from the winning side as he fired in fabulous four goals while Ahmed Ali Tiwana hammered a hat-trick and Sufi Muhammad Haroon scored one goal.



KABUL: Pakistan ambassador to Afghanistan, Mansoor Ahmad Khan called on Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Mirwais Nab and discussed measures for strengthening engagement in all areas of bilateral interaction. – DNA

## Baku slams Armenian hate campaign against Azeri envoy

She stressed that such actions of radical Armenians in foreign countries demonstrate that "these people are not interested in the establishment of peace and security, as well as peaceful coexistence in our region. Their actions only serve to incite hatred and enmity between the nations"

DNA

BAKU: Baku has strongly condemned a campaign full of hatred and threats by radical Armenian groups targeting the Azerbaijani embassy in the USA and Ambassador Elin Suleymanov. "We strongly condemn such acts and expect the bodies responsible for preventing such provocations in the relevant countries to approach their duties with full responsibility. As it is known, in accordance with the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, it is the responsibility of the host country to prevent any attack on a diplomat, his identity, liberty and honor," Foreign Ministry

Spokeswoman Leyla Abdullayeva said on January 31. Abdullayeva added that "regrettably, this is not the first time that we have encountered hate crimes by Armenian radical groups against Azerbaijani diplomats, as well as members of Azerbaijani communities in foreign countries. I would like to remind that in July last year, radical Armenian groups carried out extremely aggressive provocative actions against peaceful Azerbaijani demonstrators in foreign countries, including the United States, as well as against our diplomatic missions". She stressed that such actions of radical Armenians in foreign countries demonstrate that "these people are not interested in the



establishment of peace and security, as well as peaceful coexistence in our region. Their actions only serve to incite hatred and enmity between the nations. This once again proves that such radical Armenian groups in foreign countries neither think about the future welfare of Armenia nor the

Armenian people".

On January 29, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry issued a statement urging Armenia to refrain from the policy of ethnic and religious hatred.

"Ethnic and religious hatred has no future, and these ideas can be a disaster for the state and the people who promote it. Armenia must refrain from these dangerous tendencies and make efforts to establish international peace, cooperation, and prosperity. Undoubtedly, this will benefit Armenia, the region, and the international community," the statement said.

The clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalated for the second time in 2020 after Armenia's forces deployed in the occu-

pled Azerbaijani lands targeted Azerbaijani civilian settlements and military positions, causing casualties among civilians and the military. In the early hours of September 27, Azerbaijan launched a counter-offensive operation which lasted six weeks. The operation resulted in the liberation of Azerbaijan's occupied lands.

A Russia-brokered ceasefire deal that Azerbaijan and Armenia signed on November 10, 2020, brought an end to the 44-day war between the two countries. The Azerbaijani army declared a victory against the Armenian troops. The signed agreement obliged Armenia to withdraw its troops from the Azerbaijani lands that it had occupied.

## Iran rejects new talks in nuclear deal

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign ministry has rejected any new negotiations or changes to the participants of Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers, after French President Emmanuel Macron said any new talks should include Saudi Arabia. "The nuclear accord is a multilateral international agreement ratified by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which is non-negotiable and parties to it are clear and unchangeable," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh was quoted by state media. Iran began breaching the deal's limits on uranium enrichment activity after Washington withdrew from the pact in 2018 under then-President Donald Trump and reimposed economic sanctions on Tehran.

President Joe Biden's new administration has said it will rejoin the deal but only after Tehran resumes full compliance with its terms. But Iran has rejected US demands to reverse its acceleration of the nuclear programme before Washington lifts sanctions on Tehran. Saudi Arabia and its ally the United Arab Emirates have said that Gulf Arab states should be involved this time in any talks, which they say should also address Iran's ballistic missile programme and its support for proxies around the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, which is locked in several proxy wars in the region with Tehran including in Yemen, supported Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran. In his comments on Friday, cited by Al Arabiya television, Macron stressed the need to avoid what he called the mistake of excluding oth-

er countries in the region when the 2015 deal was negotiated and should include Saudi Arabia. Macron said any new talks on the nuclear deal with Iran would be very "strict" and that a very short time remained to prevent Tehran from having a nuclear weapon. Khatibzadeh said Macron should "show self-restraint". "If French officials are worried about their huge arms sales to Persian Gulf Arab states, they better reconsider their policies," Khatibzadeh said. "French arms, along with other Western weapons, not only cause the massacre of thousands of Yemenis, but are also the main cause of regional instability," he added. Earlier this month, Iran resumed enriching uranium to 20 percent at its underground Fordow nuclear plant – a level it achieved before the accord.

## Pakistan team for T20I series against SA announced

DNA

LAHORE: The national selectors led by chief selector Muhammad Wasim today announced the Pakistan men's 20-member squad for the three-match T20I series against South Africa which will be played in Lahore. The three matches will be played on February 11, 13 and 14. The squad along with the officials will enter the bio-secure bubble from Wednesday, February 3, the players taking part in the Test series

will join the bubble at the end of the second Test that starts in Rawalpindi on Thursday, 4 February. Pakistan squad for T20I series against South Africa: Babar Azam (c), Aamer Yamin, Amad Butt, Asif Ali, Danish Aziz, Faheem Ashraf, Haider Ali, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Hussain Talat, Iftikhar Ahmed, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Usman Qadir, Zafar Gohar and Zahid Mehmood.

## Man Utd star Rashford racially abused

SPORTS DESK

MANCHESTER: Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford says the racial abuse he received online after the 0-0 draw at Arsenal was "humanity and social media at its worst".

The 23-year-old England international said he refused to take screenshots of the multiple messages he received as it would be "irresponsible" to do so. "Humanity and social media at its worst. Yes I'm a Black man and I live every day proud that I am. No one, or no one comment, is going to make me feel any different," Rashford wrote on Twitter late on Saturday.

"So sorry if you were looking for a strong reaction, you're just simply not going to get it here."

"I'm not sharing screenshots. It would be irresponsible to do so... There's nothing original in them. I have beautiful children of all colours following me and they don't need to read it. Beautiful colours that should only be celebrated." The Football Association (FA) earlier condemned the racial abuse of players after United duo Axel Tuanzebe and Anthony Martial, West Bromwich Albion's Romaine Sawyers, and Chelsea's Reece James were targeted last week.



LAHORE: January 31 - Players of Multan and Gujranwala struggling to get hold on the ball during 1st Quaid-e-Azam Inter-Division Hockey Championship at National Hockey Stadium. Multan Division won the match by 2-0. – APP

## ‘Pak achieved remarkable results on Kashmir issue’

On the same day, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Munir Akram said that "the process of de-colonization will be incomplete until the people of Jammu and Kashmir are enabled to exercise their right to self-determination through an UN-supervised plebiscite"

BEIJING: Pakistan's diplomatic efforts on the Kashmir issue have achieved remarkable results and the entire international community including the United Nations has realized that if the Kashmir issue is not resolved fairly, it will seriously affect the regional stability and world peace. These views were expressed by Cheng Xizhong, visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and former Defense Attaché in South Asian countries in an article issued here on Sunday. He pointed out that on January 28, Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres called on both 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. Antonio Guterres emphasized that there is no "military solution" to the decades-old conflict. "Any military confrontation between the two would be a disaster for both countries and for the whole world," he warned.

On the same day, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations Munir Akram said that "the process of de-colonization will be incomplete until the people of Jammu and Kashmir are enabled to exercise their

right to self-determination through an UN-supervised plebiscite as called for in several resolutions of the Security Council." Cheng Xizhong observed that with the unremitting efforts of the government and people of Pakistan over the years, the whole international community, including the United Nations, has been paying more and more attention to the Kashmir issue, and has realized that if the Kashmir issue is not resolved fairly and reasonably, it will seriously affect regional stability and world peace. At the same time, the entire international community, including the United Nations, has got a clear

er understanding of India's brutal suppression of the just struggle of the Kashmiri people. Now the whole world is aware of the crimes committed by India: massive violations of human rights with hundreds of Kashmiri political leaders in jail, thousands of young people disappeared, a hundred thousand Kashmiris martyred and 20,000 women raped in Kashmir, and is aware of India's intention to create regional unrest through the Kashmir issue. Therefore, Pakistan's diplomatic efforts on the Kashmir issue have achieved remarkable results, he added. He said, fairly and objectively speaking, Pakistan has been making

unremitting and selfless contributions to regional stability and world peace for decades. I clearly remember that at the beginning of his term of office, Prime Minister Imran Khan extended an olive branch to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the hope of comprehensively easing bilateral relations. However, Pakistan's goodwill did not receive a positive response from India. On the contrary, the Narendra Modi regime has adopted an extremist policy, making enemies on all sides and comprehensively deteriorating its relations with its neighbors. India's unilateral actions have seriously shaken the foundation for the settlement of the Kashmir issue. – APP

## ‘State land worth Rs210b recovered’

From Page 01

just two and half years in Punjab only and the retrieved land is now being utilized for public welfare. Giving details of the retrieved properties, Shahzad Akbar said 1,150 kanals of land worth over 4.57 million rupees was recovered from PML-N leader Muhammad Afzal Khokhar and brothers. He said millions of rupees in terms of penal rent have also been recovered from the land grabbers. He said PML-N leaders Mudassar Qayum Nagra, Khuram Dastgir Khan, Daniyal Aziz, Javed Latif, Mir Badshah Qaisrani, Abid Sher Ali and PPP leader Nayyar Bukhari are amongst those from whom illegally occupied state land has been recovered. The Advisor said unfortunately, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif laid the foundations of the politics of corruption the government is determined to continue anti-corruption drive with more vigor as gone are the days when politics of money sharing the success of the anti-corruption drive in Punjab, he said the authorities concerned went after a lot of bigwigs for their corrupt activities so that justice could be dispensed. The Advisor said that the sole purpose of this anti-corruption drive is not provide retrieve the looted money and spending it for the welfare of the people of Pakistan. He said the government will continue this drive with full vigour. Shahzad Akbar said former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif promoted the politics of corruption instead of nurturing a political ideology in the country. He said now this kind of politics have no room in Pakistan. Shahzad Akbar also termed land mafias' stance of taking political revenge by demolishing their properties as baseless.

## Osaka, Djokovic, Nadal keen to be at Olympics

MELBOURNE: Japanese sensation Naomi Osaka, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal said Sunday they remain keen to compete in the delayed Tokyo Olympics, and would be guided by what the health experts tell them. Organisers are still adamant the Olympics can be held safely even if the coronavirus is not under control by the time the flame is lit on July 23. Three-time Grand Slam champion Osaka admitted being worried by a recent poll that found 80 percent of the Japanese public were opposed to Tokyo hosting the event this year because of the pandemic. Large parts of Japan are currently under a state of emergency to tackle a spike in coronavirus cases, with borders closed to almost all foreigners. "My concern would be the general safety of everyone else because you're opening the country," Osaka said. "Everyone is flying in from different places. I would just want the public to feel safe." The 23-year-old has been the poster girl of the 2020 Olympics and still hopes to represent Japan at her home Games.

## KP lift Pakistan Cup

KARACHI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa bagged their third title of the 2020-21 season as they comprehensively defeated Central Punjab by seven wickets in the final of the Pakistan Cup at the State Bank Stadium. Opener Sahibzada Farhan continued his sublime form with yet another century. The right-handed batter scored an unbeaten 103 off 102 balls, powered by five fours and as many sixes. He added 69 runs for the first-wicket with Musadiq Ahmed (33) to provide his side a solid platform for their 240-run chase. For the second wicket, he and Aamer Azmat posted a 66-run stand. Azmat smacked 45 off 28 balls which included four boundaries and three sixes. Iftikhar Ahmed contributed 40 off 35 balls (three fours, two sixes) in a 69-run third-wicket stand with Farhan. Farhan reached his century with a six while Adil Amin played the winning shot as the jubilant Khyber Pakhtunkhwa side completed the chase in 36.1 overs. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa claimed the National T20 Cup in October under the leadership of Mohammad Rizwan while they were the joint winners of the Quaid-e-Azam (QeA) Trophy with Central Punjab. – APP



## Briefs

## UAE allows citizenship to foreigners

DNA

ABU DHABI: Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has announced that UAE govt will adopt new law amendments that allow granting the UAE citizenship to investors, specialized talents & professionals including scientists, doctors, engineers, artists, authors and their families. The new directives aim to attract talents that contribute to our development journey. The UAE cabinet, local Emiri courts & executive councils will nominate those eligible for the citizenship under clear criteria set for each category. The law allows receivers of the UAE passport to keep their existing citizenship.

## Libya: UN announces candidates for new Trans govt

WEB DESK

TRIPOLI: Participants at Libya's UN-sponsored peace talks have approved a list of candidates seeking to lead a transitional government, the United Nations said. The transitional government will oversee preparations for a national election at the end of 2021 that aims to end a decade of chaos and conflict that has left Libya split down the middle and hammered its vital oil exports on which the country's economy depends. The 75 participants at talks in Switzerland, ranging from regional and tribal figures to representatives of political factions, will vote next week to pick a three-person presidential council and a prime minister. They will pick from 24 candidates for the three presidential council posts, while 21 people are vying for the post of prime minister, according to the UN list released on Saturday.

While UN-backed talks have progressed, many Libyans fear competition for posts could yet trigger new fighting, unravelling a ceasefire that has largely held since October. Libya has been wracked by chaos since 2011 when a NATO-backed uprising overthrew and later killed longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi.

The country has been split since 2014 between rival administrations in Tripoli in the west and Benghazi in the east. The internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli is backed by Turkey, while renegade military commander Khalifa Haftar's eastern-based, self-styled Libyan National Army (LNA) is supported by the United Arab Emirates, Russia and Egypt.

## UK opens visa scheme for HK residents

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Residents of Hong Kong can apply, starting on Sunday, for a new visa offering them an opportunity to become British citizens as the United Kingdom opens its doors to those wanting to escape China's crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous city. From Sunday afternoon, anyone with a British National Overseas (BNO) passport and their dependents will be able to apply online for a visa allowing them to live and work in the UK. After five years, they can then apply for citizenship.

The visa scheme is a response to Beijing's decision last year to impose a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong, a former British colony, to snuff out huge and sometimes violent pro-democracy protests. The UK said the law – which punishes subversion, collusion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces – breaches the terms of agreements under which Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997. London has argued it has a moral duty to the people of Hong Kong. "We have honoured our profound ties of history and friendship with the people of Hong Kong, and we have stood up for freedom and autonomy," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said of the scheme this week.

## Iran calls for 'inclusive govt' in Taliban talks

"The war and Afghanistan's occupation have inflicted heavy damages to the good people of Afghanistan. I hope you'll work to end the people's problems and take away the occupiers' excuses out of their hands through achieving peace in Afghanistan as soon as possible," Zarif told Baradar



FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran will only support an "inclusive" government in neighbouring Afghanistan, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif told a top Taliban delegation. In a Sunday meeting with the group led by senior Taliban figure Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Iran's top diplomat emphasised a multilateral approach while offering to facilitate talks between the Taliban

and the Afghan government and cautioning reliance on the United States.

"Political decisions can't occur in a vacuum. Forming an all-inclusive government must be done in a participatory process that considers structures, entities and fundamental rules like the constitution," a foreign ministry statement said.

"The war and Afghanistan's occupation have inflicted heavy damages to the good people of Afghanistan. I hope you'll work to end the people's problems

and take away the occupiers' excuses out of their hands through achieving peace in Afghanistan as soon as possible," Zarif told Baradar.

The Taliban signed a peace deal with the United States in February 2020 that aimed to ensure the safety of American allies and interests in Afghanistan and the region in exchange for the pullout of troops from the country, which has been in turmoil since the US-led invasion in 2001. The agreement also set out the parameters for

intra-Afghan talks on the future of the country that the Taliban is participating in as they are held in rounds in Doha. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Afghan President Ashraf Ghani last week the administration of President Joe Biden is reviewing the peace deal and is committed to ensuring the US-Afghan partnership. Biden is expected to deliver his first major foreign policy address on Monday, which will include both the war in Afghanistan and his administration's ap-

proach to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal and regional influence. Kabul said the Iranian government had informed it of the Taliban visit beforehand, and that Tehran said it would emphasise to the Taliban that a pause in the violent attacks against civilians and government officials was essential and that a lasting peace should be pursued within the framework of Afghanistan's constitution. The Taliban's political chief, Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, is also leading a delegation to Russia for talks.

## China signs MoU to establish intelligent agri systems

DNA

BEIJING: China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance agricultural cooperation and establish intelligent agricultural systems in Pakistan. According to China Economic Net (CEN) on behalf of Ministry of National Food Security & Research, Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin Ul Haque signed the MOU with China Aerospace Construction Group. (CAGC).

The report says, 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 high-quality development. Under the MoU, both sides would design and implement model projects across Pakistan using modern technology to upgrade Pakistan's irrigation system for optimum use of water and fertilizer, and thereby increase production through quality.

## Xinjiang model to improve cotton production in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Xinjiang-agriculture development model could help to improve cotton production in Pakistan, said Iqar Ahmad Khan, former Vice Chancellor of Agriculture University.

According to Gwadar Pro, he was speaking at a live forum jointly organised by China Economic Net and Machinery Engineering Corporation of China to mark the launch of China-Pakistan Agricultural and Industrial Cooperation Information platform. Khan said that the Xinjiang model was a role model for Pakistan where cotton production is facing

serious challenges and annual yield in continuously declining. He said that Pakistan not only needed seeds from China but the whole package of Xinjiang model for enhancing cotton production.

The former VC also highlighted various areas of prospective cooperation between China and Pakistan in agricultural and industrial spheres. He emphasised the need of introducing technology in agriculture in rural areas, citing lack of technology as a reason behind the failure of drip irrigation in Pakistan.

Khan stressed that agricultural development should translate into development of rural areas. He also

stressed about expanding the scope of agricultural research with the help of Chinese experts, adding that the Pakistani climate had proved suitable for various foreign plants. Strawberry plantation has been a success story in Pakistan and the same will be the case with Chinese plant species if imported under CPEC cooperation, he said. Several experts and government officials from both China and Pakistan participated in the online event, including Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong and Pakistan ambassador to China Moen ul Haq, who reiterated commitments to further improving bilateral cooperation in several sectors.



MOROCCO: Ambassadors of various countries including Pakistan ambassador to Morocco Hamid Asghar Khan visited a fast developing region of Guelmim-Qued Noun with multiple people friendly projects including water, health and education. Visited an export oriented high value greenhouse/hydroponics farm, and had a spectacular lunch on a lovely beach. Tremendous courtesy and hospitality extended by Her Excellency Mme. Moubarka the first elected female Regional President and former Minister delegate of Foreign Affairs – DNA



## Pakistan-Belarus economic ties discussed

The Honorary Consul shared his recent interactions with Pakistani business community spread over several sectors including automobiles, agricultural implements, IT and education for promotion of trade and investment relations between the two countries

DNA

MINSK: -With a view to discussing possibilities of reinvigorating Economic ties between Pakistan and Belarus, Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan held a zoom meeting with Mr. Walid Mushtaq, Honorary Consul of Belarus in Lahore. The Honorary Consul shared his recent interactions with Pakistani business community spread over several sectors including automobiles, agricultural implements, IT and education for promotion of trade and investment relations between the two countries. Appreciating the efforts, the



Ambassador highlighted the importance of expanding commercial ties and educational ties. Referring to the Business Meeting scheduled at Belarusian Chambers of Commerce and Industry later this month and the proposed virtual Meeting of the Business Councils of the two countries in April/May, the Ambassador sought Mr. Walid's support in mobilising Pakistani business community for a win-win trade relations. The Ambassador also proposed enhancing educational collaboration and offered to facilitate holding summer school in Belarus, virtual youth conference of students and cooperation in higher education institutions.

## Facts and figures about Palestine population

RAMALLA: The Palestinian population in the world until the beginning of the year 2021 was 13.7 million 3.1 million in the West Bank.

2.1 million in the Gaza Strip 1.6 million in the 1948 territories 6.9 million abroad. Population numbers in the governorates of the West Bank and Gaza Strip:

- 1- Jerusalem 417 thousand people
- 2- Gaza, 713,000 people
- 3- Hebron: 782 thousand people
- 4- North Gaza: 416 thousand people
- 5- Nablus 415 thousand people
- 6- Khan Yunis: 413 thousand people
- 7- Ramallah, 355 thousand people
- 8- Jenin, 339 thousand people
- 9- Deir Al-Balah, 302 thousand people
- 10 - Rafah, 260 thousand people
- 11- Bethlehem: 235 thousand people
- 12- Tulkarm, 198 thousand people
- 13- Qalqilya - 121 thousand people
- 14- Salfit 82 thousand people
- 15- Tubas 66 thousand people
- 16- Jericho: 53 thousand people. – APP

## WHO team visits Wuhan market

WEB DESK

WUHAN: A World Health Organization-led team of experts investigating the origins of COVID-19 have visited Huanan market, the now-shuttered wholesale seafood market in the Chinese city of Wuhan where the novel coronavirus was initially detected.

The team arrived at Huanan on Sunday amid heavy security, with additional barricades set up outside a high blue fence surrounding the market, and left in a convoy after about one hour.

"Very important site visits today – a wholesale market first & Huanan Seafood Market just now," Peter Daszak, a zoologist with the US group EcoHealth Alliance and a member of the WHO team, said in a tweet.

"Very informative & critical for our joint teams to understand the epidemiology of COVID as it started to spread at the end of 2019."

The experts did not take questions from journalists. One flashed a thumbs-up sign when reporters asked how the trip was going.

Since being released from a two-week quarantine on Thursday, the team has visited hospitals and markets, as well as an exhibition commemorating Wuhan's COVID battle, which included a 76-day lockdown of the city of 11 million. A single visit by scientists is unlikely to confirm the virus's origins. Pinning down an outbreak's animal reservoir is typically an exhaustive endeavour that takes years of research, including taking animal samples, genetic analysis and epidemiological studies.

## Proud Boys members charged with conspiracy

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The US Justice Department has charged two men identified as members of the far-right Proud Boys group with conspiracy over the January 6 storming of the United States Capitol, as authorities continue to probe the riot. In a statement late on Friday, the department accused Dominic Pezzola, 43, and William Pepe, 31, both of New York state, of engaging in a conspiracy "to obstruct, influence, impede, and interfere with law enforcement officers" who were protecting the US Capitol and its grounds. The men were arrested on January 12 and 15, respectively, in relation to the riot, which took place as Congress met on January 6 to certify the election victory of President Joe Biden. The men also face other charges, including civil disorder, unlawfully entering restricted buildings or grounds, and disorderly and disruptive conduct in restricted buildings or grounds. The Justice Department said Pezzola and Pepe are members of the self-proclaimed "Western chauvinist" Proud Boys movement, a far-right group that featured prominently in the riot and has attracted increased attention during the probe of the incident.



## Briefs

## Hajj dues to be received in three installments

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony would receive government scheme Hajj dues from intending pilgrims in three easy installments. According to official source, the aspirants would have to deposit all Hajj dues before balloting of government Hajj scheme. The road to Makkah project might be initiated from Karachi, Lahore and Quetta in Hajj 2021. Only government scheme pilgrims would be benefited from the project, he said. Ministry would ensure more and more facilities for the pilgrims going for the pilgrimage this year. "We will also arrange vaccine for the pilgrims," he said adding that the government would provide maximum facilities. Saudi Arabia allowed a limited number of pilgrims for Hajj in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. Thus, only 10,000 people already residing in Saudi Arabia were allowed to perform Hajj under strict COVID-19 (SOPs) standard operating procedures.

## 'Govt thriving to restore sanctity of vote'

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs, Usman Dar Sunday said the government was giving sanctity to vote in the upcoming Senate elections through show of hands or open balloting. It was a great chance for all the political parties to conduct the Senate polls through open voting to wipe out horse trading incidents from it, he said talking to a private news channel. He said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government would move a constitutional amendment bill in the Parliament soon to make open voting in the senate elections. Usman Dar said it was mentioned in the Charter of Democracy (CoD) that the senate polls should be conducted through open balloting. The Pakistan Peoples' Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz had introduced the horse-trading politics in the senate elections in the past, he added.

## KP cabinet to discuss local bodies election

DNA

PESHAWAR: A meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet has been summoned on February 02 with local government elections in the province on top of the agenda. The province will hold the local government elections on September 15, according to provincial officials. The chief minister will be given a briefing on the new local bodies system and elections in the province in the cabinet meeting, according to officials. The local councils polls will be held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in different phases. The new local government system will be comprised of the district, tehsil, village and neighborhood councils. The officials have compiled recommendations to keep the number of councillors lesser than the previous local bodies system. "It has also been recommended for direct election for the tehsil Nazim", sources said. "Under the new system seven tehsil councils have been established in Peshawar," according to officials. The provincial cabinet session would also deliberate over the agenda of sugar import. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has recently announced the date for holding local bodies elections in the province after approval from the cabinet. The provincial cabinet has decided to hold local bodies elections in the province on 15 September 2021. The meeting also approved Local Councils Conduct of Election Rules 2020.

## Afghanistan: Foreign troops to stay beyond deadline

Plans on what will happen after April are now being considered and likely to be a top issue at a key NATO meeting in February, the NATO sources said

ISLAMABAD: International troops plan to stay in Afghanistan beyond the May deadline envisaged by the insurgent Taliban's deal with the United States, four senior NATO officials said, a move that could escalate tensions with the Taliban demanding full withdrawal. "There will be no full withdrawal by allies by April-end," one of the officials told Reuters. "Conditions have not been met," he said on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter. "And with the new U.S. administration, there will

be tweaks in the policy, the sense of hasty withdrawal which was prevalent will be addressed and we could see a much more calculated exit strategy." The administration of then-President Donald Trump signed an agreement with the Taliban early last year calling for the withdrawal of all foreign troops by May in return for the insurgents fulfilling certain security guarantees. Plans on what will happen after April are now being considered and likely to be a top issue at a key NATO meeting in February, the NATO sources said.

The positions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are becoming increasingly important after the alliance was sidelined by Trump, diplomats and experts say. Peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban began in September in Doha, but violence has remained high. "No NATO ally wants to stay in Afghanistan longer than necessary, but we have been clear that our presence remains conditions-based," said NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu. "Allies continue to assess the overall

situation and to consult on the way forward." She said about 10,000 troops, including Americans, are in Afghanistan. Those levels are expected to stay roughly the same until after May, but the plan beyond that is not clear, the NATO source said. Kabul and some foreign governments and agencies say the Taliban has failed to meet conditions due to escalated violence and a failure to cut ties with militant groups such as Al Qaeda, which the Taliban denies. The administration of Joe Biden, who replaced Trump on Jan. 20,

has launched a review of his predecessor's peace agreement. A Pentagon spokesman said the Taliban have not met their commitments, but Washington remained committed to the process and had not decided on future troop levels. A State Department representative said Biden was committed to bringing a "responsible end to the 'forever wars'... while also protecting Americans from terrorist and other threats." Afghanistan's presidential palace did not respond to a request for comment. — Agencies

## Rashid felicitates Russian counterpart

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said that Pakistan wants to further enhance its relations with Russia. He expressed these views in a letter written to his Russian Counterpart, Vladimir Kolokoltsev thanking him on his felicitation message and good wishes to him. Earlier, in a special letter via Russian embassy, the Russian Interior Minister congratulated Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on assuming office as Interior Minister of Pakistan.

## Fish die as India releases poisonous water in Satluj

DNA

ARIFWALA: India has released poisonous water into the Satluj River killing fish and other riverine mammals in large numbers in Arifwala. According to a private television channel report toxic water killed large numbers of fish, livestock and aquatic mammals in the Satluj River. Make hay when the sun shines on the other hand, the locals have started to supply the dead fish in the market fuelling fears of spread of diseases. The outbreak of skin diseases is being feared in the area due to the supply of dead fish in the market. Meanwhile, the officials have informed high-ups about the losses being caused by the untreated water. The local administration and the PFA have not yet been mobilized to stop the supply and sale of dead fish. River Satluj is the longest of the five rivers that flow through the historic crossroads region of Punjab from India to Pakistan and it is the easternmost tributary of the Indus River.

## President Alvi shares best reads of 2020

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday while sharing his best 10 reads of 2020, called for promotion of book reading culture in the country. The president, in a video message, advised the people particularly the youth to develop the habit of book reading to enhance their exposure and help suppress the biases. He said he studied books on current affairs and computer sciences and tried to disseminate his knowledge to the masses through his speeches. The president shared a list of 10 books he studied last year encompassing the subjects including Islamic history, capitalism, history of subcontinent, upheaval and exploitation in nations, human psychology, riots in India, metric society, physics and artificial intelligence.

He said besides the books suggested by him, the people should also read the useful material of their choice. The president said when it comes to obtaining huge knowledge published in form of books, he considered his life too short to comprehend it all. He also showed the notes of various books he took during the reading which he hoped would compile at a later stage. "I do nothing else but read books during travel, be it by car or air. I study book as I go home. Though I get a little chance to read books in office, I do it when there is some gap," he remarked. The president, who had also shared his best reads of 2019, put at top a book "Revelations" by Meraj Mohiuddin presenting a wide variety of scholarly viewpoints on the story of Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) and Quranic revelation. He also

strongly recommended "Art of Thinking Clearly" by Rolf Dobelli on human psychology and reasoning. The book points out around 100 biases found in humans, meant for self-examination and methods to avoid them. Other books recommended by the president included "Capital and Ideology" by Thomas Piketty (on economic inequalities and suggesting outlines for fairer economic system), "Anarchy" by William Dalrymple (on rise of East India Company and economic prosperity in subcontinent), "Upheaval: Turning Points for Nations in Crisis" by Jared Diamond (history of different nations like Japan, Soviet Union and their efforts to overcome crises), "Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty" by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (exploitative society which begets change and leads to revolution).

## Pak exports to China up 41pc last Dec

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan's exports to China crossed \$312.33 million in December 2020, shows the official data from the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC). Exports increased by 41% on a year-on-year basis last December, according to GACC figures received by Pakistan. Despite the epidemic of COVID-19, bilateral trade has increased significantly. Pakistan's exports stood at \$312.33 million in December 2020, up 41 percent from \$221 million in the same month of the previous year, which grew for six consecutive months, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. Last month Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood announced via Twitter that Pakistan's export to China registered an increase of 30% in November 2020.

## CPEC western route to benefit Zhob-Quetta belt

ISLAMABAD: CPEC western route will bring multiple benefits for Zhob-Quetta belt of Balochistan, says a report published by Gwadar Pro. The report says, N-50 Highway being upgraded as part of the CPEC western route has become a beacon of hope for people of Zhob-Quetta, from where it leads to Gwadar via Khuzdar district. The local people are extremely happy and hopeful with the CPEC route passing through their areas. The N-50 starts from Yarak in D.I. Khan district of KP and enters Zhob district of Balochistan. The highway goes through Qilla Saifullah, Muslim Bagh, Quetta and Khuzdar, where from a section of it leads to the port city of Karachi while the other culminates at Gwadar port. This Highway is being upgraded to a 4-lane dual carriage way under CPEC. The N-50 can benefit people of the areas in multiple ways, said Nasim Mandokhel, a social activist from Zhob district. He said that Zhob, Muslim Bagh and Khanzai areas of Balochistan are rich in chromite ore, where it is transported to Karachi for enrichment to be exported to China. If the chromite enrichment industry is established in source areas, it will not only provide jobs to local people but its transportation to China will also become more cost-effective, he said. Mandokhel said that the mountains of the Suleman and Ras Koh ranges are rich in precious minerals but still the people of these areas are extremely poor due to unorganised mining. Engineer Ziarat Khan, an expert in mining and mineral resources, said that initially, mini mills could be established in source areas to extract chromium from chromite. Chromium is used in various industries, including stainless steel manufacturing, electroplating and metallurgy. — DNA

## Govt won't last a day if I don't want it to: Pervaiz Khattak

NEWSHERA: Prime Minister Imran Khan's government will not survive a single day if I don't want it to, said Defence Minister Pervaiz Khattak on Sunday. The former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister was speaking to PTI workers in Nowshera where he spoke about the incumbent government. Khattak spoke about the Opposition, saying that they respected him which is why he also had regard for parliamentarians. "No one can cheat me when it comes to politics," he said, adding that Imran Khan's government would not last a single day if he didn't want it to. However, Khattak clarified that the prime minister had bestowed a lot of favours on him and that he was with the premier all the way. The former KP chief minister turned his guns towards the PDM, accusing it of trying to pressurise the government to hide their corruption. "There are internal rifts within the PDM. Very soon, their artificial alliance will meet its fate," he said. Khattak blamed Opposition parties for having a hand in the inflationary situation that Pakistan was currently struggling with, saying that it was the predecessor governments' policies that had brought Pakistan to its current state of affairs. A few hours after the Khattak's above-mentioned statement started doing the rounds on social media, the defence minister took to Twitter to issue a clarification. In the tweet, Khattak clarified that he was "sincere and indebted" to Imran Khan. "Clearly mentioned in my speech for the locals of my village in Nowshera that I'm sincere and indebted to Imran Khan. We are successful in our constituency due to our efforts and the support of IK. We will defeat all opp. parties ganged up against the candidate we are supporting for the by-election," he tweeted. — DNA

## Brand Pak to be unveiled soon

ISLAMABAD: Digital marketing holds promise for tourism promotion and that's what exactly the present government is doing by rolling out an inclusive project "Brand Pakistan" in coming days to transform the country's image by projecting its breath-taking tourist resorts at international level through online means. "The competent authority has given approval for Brand Pakistan and now our focus is on its launch as bids from event management firms have been invited to formally roll out the mega tourism project at the earliest," a senior officer of PTDC said in a media interview Sunday. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government, soon after coming into the power, tasked the PTDC with transforming the local tourism industry by developing a brand for local tourism industry at global level. — DNA

## 'Italy's Renzi wants ex-ECB's Draghi to head government'

DNA

ROME: Matteo Renzi, who triggered Italy's political crisis this month by pulling his Italia Viva party out of the ruling coalition, would like to see former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi become prime minister, a party source said on Sunday. The former coalition allies are holding talks to try and overcome their differences and revive their government, which formally collapsed last week when Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resigned. Renzi has repeatedly criticised Conte's handling of the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent economic crisis, and a party source confirmed a report in La Stampa newspaper that Italia Viva would like Draghi to become the next prime minister. "I would say that is one of our proposals," said the source, who declined to be named. La Stampa newspaper reported on Sunday that President Sergio Mattarella had already sounded out Draghi. The head of state's office swiftly denied

this, saying there had been no contact between the two men during the political crisis. There was no immediate comment from Draghi, who has largely vanished from the public eye since his ECB term ended in 2019. After three days of talks with party leaders, Mattarella on Friday asked lower house speaker Roberto Fico to mediate between the coalition parties, including Italia Viva, the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) and anti-establishment 5-Star Movement. Fico opened the discussions on Saturday. Mattarella asked him to report back on Tuesday. Renzi, a former prime minister, has said he does not want to talk about who should lead the next government at this stage, arguing that the



parties need to agree on a policy pact first. "Any effort today to fuel a discussion about Draghi is offensive to Draghi and above all to the president of the republic," Renzi said in an interview published on Sunday with Corriere della Sera. But behind the scenes, his parliamentarians are anonymously pushing an eventual Draghi premiership in a broad-based government, although it was not clear if they preferred this scenario to a revival of the current coalition. "If the president gives a mandate to Draghi, we would certainly support this," said a senior Italia Viva lawmaker. Renzi, whose party has barely 2% of voter support, quit the coalition over Conte's handling of COVID-19, in particular his plans for spending more than 200 billion euros (\$243 billion) from a European Union fund to help Italy's battered economy. The PD and 5-Star have both accused Renzi of being irresponsible, saying he triggered the crisis to try and raise his profile and halt his party's rout in the polls.

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