



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Central Europe as community of shared aspirations

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## Briefs

### PDM has been exposed

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Senator Shibli Faraz has said that the deadline of resignation drama has been over and PDM has been exposed before the nation. In a tweet on Monday, he said general public of the country has come to know that their resignation threat was based on self-interests and lust for power. He said the nefarious designs and conspiracies of the opposition have completely failed. He said the general people rejected their narrative and supported the democratically elected government.

### Cannot support in-house change

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Senior Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri said Monday that his party cannot support an in-house change of government unless there were 100% changes of victory. "If Bilawal has come up with an estimate [of number needed to bring about an in-house change in government] then he should put it forth in the next PDM meeting," said Haideri. "If Bilawal Bhutto can convince other parties on the matter, then we have no reservations."

### Hammad Azhar tests positive for Covid-19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Hammad Azhar, announced on Monday that he has tested positive for the novel coronavirus. Taking to Twitter, Azhar revealed that he has been self-isolating at home after testing positive for the infection. "I have tested positive for Covid-19 and self-isolating at home. Requesting everyone for prayers. JazakAllah Khair," he tweeted. Politician Raza Haroon and federal minister Zartaj Gul Wazir prayed for Azhar's swift recovery.

## PM connects with masses via telephone

Pakistani citizens called the prime minister and asked questions related to different issues



ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister Imran Khan has said people should wait a little bit more as the country was about to be out of crisis. The prime minister further said his government was making all out efforts to provide maximum relief to ordinary people. Prime Minister Imran Khan said this on Monday while speaking to the masses via telephone and answered different questions. The calls were broadcast live on television and were moderated by Sen-

ator Faisal Javed Khan, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting. Pakistani citizens called the prime minister and asked questions related to different issues, including the coronavirus vaccine, issues of Balochistan, and the concept of Riyasat-e-Madina, among others. Responding to a question regarding the coronavirus vaccine and the first consignment of the vaccine which has arrived from China, the premier clarified that frontline healthcare workers will be the first to receive the jabs. He also assured the masses that the government will not consider a person's socioeconomic status or the difference between the rich and poor when vaccinating them but will only stick to the set criteria for vaccination. Earlier, Prime Minister Imran Khan said that the Pakistani Democratic Movement (PDM), an alliance of eleven Opposition parties, "poses no threat to the ruling PTI government" and that its "bubble has burst."

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ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa and DG ISI, Lt. Gen. Faiz Hamid call on Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

## Pakistan-Uzbekistan show resolve to enter into PTA

Abdul Razak Dawood, leading a delegation held bilateral trade negotiation with Uzbekistan to enhance the trade volume between both sides

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Uzbekistan on Monday resolved to enter into Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) for increasing the bilateral trade and promote trade liberalization on both sides. The two sides also discussed to revive the Joint Business Council, and assured that bilateral engagements like Inter Governmental Commission will be held more frequently, said a press release issued here.

The Advisor to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood, leading a delegation to the Republic of Uzbekistan and held bilateral trade negotiation with Uzbekistan to enhance the trade volume between both sides. The visit is a follow-up to the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Dr. Sardor Umurzakov in last September 2020. Apart from Razak Dawood, the delegation includes officials of Ministry of Com-

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ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong handing over the first batch of Covid-19 vaccines to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. - DNA

## COAS, DG ISI call on PM Imran

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad on Monday. According to a statement from Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), matters pertaining to internal and external security were discussed during the meeting. Director General ISI Lt. Gen. Faiz Hamid was also present during the meeting. It was the first meeting of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa after the Biden administration came into power in the United States. Last week, Chief of Army Staff visited Qatar and called on the Qatari leadership.

## Vaccine gift a proof of "China-Pak friendship"

FM Qureshi says that Beijing has stood "shoulder-to-shoulder with Islamabad in the fight against the coronavirus

NAVEED MIRA

### Dr Faisal Sultan thanks China

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday thanked Chinese President Xi Jinping for gifting it the Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine which reached the country on Monday. A ceremony was held at Nur Khan Base in Islamabad where 0.5 million doses were given to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. While talking to media, the foreign minister said the "gift is a practical proof of friendship between the two countries," adding that "China once again demonstrated its everlasting friendship with Pakistan," by helping it in times of need. "This is even more important as we are completing seven decades of diplomatic ties this year," he added.

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Health Services, Dr Faisal Sultan has thanked China for provision of the first batch of the COVID-19 vaccine to Pakistan. Taking to Twitter, Dr Faisal Sultan said that Allahmudlillah first batch of the Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine has reached Pakistan and thanked China and others concerned for making it possible. Dr Sultan lauded the role of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) and the provinces for controlling the spread of coronavirus. He also paid tribute to the frontline health workers. - DNA

Continued on Page 06

## 3 terrorists killed in IBO

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces conducted an Intelligence Based Operation to thwart an infiltration attempt by terrorists, close to Pak-Afghan border in Lower Dir. During exchange of fire, three terrorists got killed. Terrorists have been identified as Abid & Yousaf Khan, both residents of Swat, Abdul Sattar, resident of Mardan. According to an ISPR statement, large quantity of weapons, ammunition and grenades were also recovered. These terrorists remained involved in several target killing incidents at Swat in 2019. These terrorists had planned to infiltrate and target several notables inside Pakistan, however they were timely engaged and killed. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and vowed their full support to defeat menace of terrorism from the area, the statement added. - DNA

## Melania may 'move fast' to divorce Trump

WASHINGTON: Former first lady of the United States Melania Trump may act upon advice being given to her by her aides and "move fast" to divorce Donald Trump, according to a report. Eric Schiffer, a brand and relationship management expert, thinks Melania Trump may be considering divorcing the former US president, who had to relinquish office after losing to Democrat Joe Biden in the recently-held US election 2020. Rumours have been doing the rounds on social media and the internet from well-placed sources that Melania has been anxiously waiting to divorce Trump. In the final days of his presidency it also emerged

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## Sindh to begin vaccination from Feb 3

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh government announced on Monday that will begin the first phase of the coronavirus vaccination drive in the province from February 3, hours after the first batch of the vaccine arrived in Pakistan from China. Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho said that in the first phase frontline workers, from private and public medical facilities, would be inoculated. Sinopharm's coronavirus vaccine is 90% effective against the virus, Dr Pechuho said, adding that the convenience of all Karachi districts has been considered. In the second phase, people over the age of 60 will be vaccinated and in the last phase, the general public will be inoculated, the health minister said.

## No pre-condition for PEMRA Ord.

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in the Senate Dr. Shahzad Waseem on Monday said that pre-condition would not be accepted regarding Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2020. Speaking on Media walk-out from the House in protest on rejection of Bill by majority vote after the opposition parties opposed it last week. He said that the Bill was brought to provide protection to the media workers but opposed by opposition. Leader of the House said that now opposition was not speaking for the rights and protection of the media workers.

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## Friendship cities to strengthen Pak-China ties

China is ready to share development experience with Pakistan and push for the fruits of bilateral cooperation to benefit more people in the two countries

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan, China agreed to strengthen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in multi-field, especially through friendship cities, young talents and think tanks. According Gwadar Pro on Monday, Pakistani ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque visited China People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and met its President, Lin Songtian. This was the first meeting last week between the two sides after Haque takes office. They mainly discussed China-Pakistan cooperation

in developing friendship cities and training young talents. It was noted that 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Pakistan and China, which is worthy of grand celebration and commemoration. Ambassador and CPAFFC agreed that in the milestone year, the two sides will strengthen friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation in multi-field, especially in friendship cities, young talents and think tanks. Earlier, Pakistan took part in the 9th China-South Asia International Cultural Forum held by CPAFFC, and



actively sought for communication in the Think Tank Dialogue on People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges and the City Charms Forum. On March 28th 2019, CPAFFC and the Pakistani Embassy to China jointly initiated Forum on Cooperation between China and Pakistan Friendship Provinces and Cities, and reached consensus on developing bilateral friendship through constructing friendship provinces and cities. Two agreements of friendship cities, Xi'an and Multan, Puyang and Gwadar, were signed on the event. After nearly two years of construction, Lin said

to Haque that Pak-China friendship cities have been developing in a positive way and will contribute more to people-to-people relations between the two countries. In addition, Lin said that Pak-China friendly relations are unique and can be regarded as a model of state-to-state relations. China is ready to share development experience with Pakistan and push for the fruits of bilateral cooperation to benefit more people in the two countries. Haque also spoke highly of Pak-China people-to-people friendship and appreciated China's achievements in fighting COVID-19 epidemic and poverty alleviation.

## Briefs

## PDM has died itself, says Haleem Adil Shaikh

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Vice President and Opposition Leader in Sindh Assembly Haleem Adil Shaikh on Monday said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) had died itself by giving deadlines. He said that every action of the PDM had failed whether it was resignations, boycott of Senate elections, sit-ins or public gatherings. He stated this in a message on his twitter account here on Monday. Haleem said, 'Papa, Daddy, Maulana (PDM) Bachao Movement has died itself.' He said that the nation had rejected their (PDM) agenda. He alleged that they (PDM) leaders were not worried of the nation and the country but were doing politics for their personal interests.

## Police continue action against land mafia : IGP

LAHORE: Inspector General of Punjab (IGP) Police Inam Ghani on Monday said that maintaining law and order in the province and ensure protection of life and property of citizens as well as establishing writ of the state were top priorities of the Police force.

The police force would continue to take steps on priority basis whenever any government agency would need help in any government matter.

He said that land mafia and 'qabza' groups, which deprived the citizens of their valuable capital invested in illegal housing schemes, did not deserve any concession and Punjab Police in collaboration with other government agencies would do its utmost to curb such oppressive elements.

The IGP Punjab said that clear instructions were given to the police teams in all the districts for immediate action as per law on references of government agencies under which Punjab police would provide all possible support and co-operation in dealing with such references. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting on operations against illegal housing schemes and land mafia groups at the Central Police Office here. During the meeting, IG Punjab was apprised of the actions taking place in the last two days, said official spokesperson.

Additional IG Operations Sahibzada Shehzad Sultan briefed that during the last two days, 856 FIRs were registered on the references of development authorities, municipal corporations and other government agencies. He further said that FIRs were registered on one reference of 2009, eight reference of 2012, three reference of 2013, two reference of 2014, 28 reference of 2015, 63 reference of 2016 and 126 reference of 2017. The IG Punjab directed that operations should be continued on a regular basis against the occupiers of government/ private properties and illegal housing schemes and a weekly progress report of these operations should also be sent to the Central Police Office.

## SG APNS condoles death of Brig Rehan's brothers

"Hameed Haroon, President and Sarmad Ali, Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society have expressed profound grief on behalf of APNS Office Bearers and members of the Executive Committee over the sad and sudden demise of Mr. Mohammad Tahir and Mr. Mohammad Tariq, elder brothers of Brig. Rehan Zubair, CEO M/s. Creative Junction (Pvt.) Ltd. and Senior Vice Chairman, Pakistan Advertising Association. The APNS Office Bearers have offered condolence to the bereaved family and have prayed that Almighty Allah rest the departed souls in eternal peace and give them courage and patience to bear the loss.



KHYBER: SAPM Dr. Sania Nishtar with high-level delegation comprising of Christian Turner, British High Commissioner, Najy Benhassine, Country Director World Bank, Xiaohony Yang, Country Director Asian Development, Julien Harnais, UN Resident Coordinator, Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan and Lire Ersado from the World Bank. – DNA

## Stipend for Ehsas' beneficiaries children increased: Dr Sania

Dr Sania Nishtar expressed the hope that beneficiaries under Ehsas Kifalat Program would increase from existing four million to seven million on completion of the survey that was major step forward to bring poor segment of the society under social safety net

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar on Monday said network of Ehsas Nashonoma Programme (ENP) were expanded in the country and stipends for beneficiaries increased to prevent stunted growth in poor children.

Briefing representatives and heads of foreign missions, international monetary institutions and UN organizations about PTI Government flagship Ehsas Nashonoma Programme in its Jamrud centre in Khyber tribal district, Dr Sania Nishtar said it was pro-poor programme that was also extended to merged areas including Khyber tribal district to combat stunted growth in poor children.

Under Ehsas Nashonoma Program, she said stipend has been increased to Rs1,500 for boys and Rs2,000 for girl for provision of healthy diet to them for two years. She said free healthy food services are being provided to beneficiaries children under this ambitious programme in the country including in Khyber tribal district. She said the stipend and packets of health diets was being provided to pregnant and lactating mothers after every three months. Under an inclusive digital system, she said data of all beneficiaries and services was properly maintained and assistance was being provided on merit. "It was apolitical programme under which poor children irrespective of their parents' political

affiliation, caste and colour is being benefited," she maintained. Dr Sania said prevention of stunted growth in poor children was the top most priority of the government and that fund for Ehsas Nashonoma Program was directly being provided by Ministry of Finance, Govt of Pakistan. She clarified that this programme was being run purely through Govt of Pakistan's budget and no funding was being received from any foreign donor agency. She said today's visit to Jamrud Khyber was arranged on the request of representatives and heads of foreign missions besides representatives of monetary institutions and UN agencies to personally oversee this key programme on ground.

She said 65 percent work on Ehsas Survey has been completed and remaining work would be completed by June this year, adding more poor beneficiaries would also be included in Ehsas Kifalat Program on basis of this inclusive survey. Dr Sania Nishtar expressed the hope that beneficiaries under Ehsas Kifalat Program would increase from existing four million to seven million on completion of the survey that was major step forward to bring poor segment of the society under social safety net. She said the programme was digitalized and all information was available in a single click besides transparency is its hallmark. She said services in all Ehsas Nashonoma Centres were strengthened

besides provision of necessary training to staff for quick service delivery. To a question about provision of a job to a disabled FA passed girl student, she said all recruitment in her ministry was made on merit and any one full fill Govt. recruitment criteria would be provided jobs. She said the said girl has been asked to apply for undergraduate stipend program. Earlier, she inaugurated Ehsas Nashonoma Center at Jamrud. Dr Sania Nishtar briefed the representatives of foreign missions, monetary institutions and UN organizations about different services being offered to the beneficiaries under Ehsas Nashonoma Program in its Jamrud centre. – APP

## NA passes 3 bills including CPEC Authority Bill 2020

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Monday passed three bills. These include, "The China Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority Bill, 2020", "The Public Private Partnership Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2020" and "The Pakistan Single Window Bill, 2020". "The national Metrology Institute of Pakistan Bill, 2021" and the Pakistan Ordinance Factories Board (Amendment) Bill, 2020 were also introduced in the House today. Besides, "The Federal Medical Teaching Institutes, Ordinances, 2020 and the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Ordinance, 2020 were laid before the House today.

According to details, the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Bill 2020 has been approved by the National Assembly on Monday. According to the bill, the CPEC authority will comprise of a chairperson, executive director operations, and six other members. The chairperson would be appointed for a period of four years and the time duration of the job could be extended for another four-year term. The CPEC Authority Bill 2020 was tabled in the National Assembly in October 2020 by Adviser to PM on Parliamentary Affairs Babar Awan. The bill was referred to the relevant standing committees of the lower house of Parliament.

It is pertinent to mention here that in October 2019, President Dr. Arif Alvi promulgated an ordinance for the establishment of the China Pakistan Econom-

ic Corridor (CPEC) Authority, which later expired after completing its three-month tenure. It aimed at accelerating the pace of CPEC related activities, finding new drivers of growth, unlocking the potential of the interlinked production network and global value chains through regional and global connectivity. The government decided to issue an ordinance as both the houses of the Parliament, the National Assembly and the Senate, were not in session. According to the text of the ordinance, the Prime Minister will appoint the chairperson, executive directors and members of the CPEC authority for a tenure of four years. The authority will comprise 10 members. The chief executive of the authority will be a Grade-20 government officer.

## Pakistan exports keep \$2b mark in four months'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: For the first time in 8 years the exports have crossed the 2-billion mark in four consecutive months, said premier's commerce advisor Abdul Razak Dawood announcing an eight per cent jump in January exports on year-on-year. Last year January, Pakistani exports stood at US\$1.98 billion which, he said, have grown 8 pc to US\$2.14 billion this passing month.

"I am happy to share that our exports have maintained growth," Dawood said in a tweet earlier today, adding another achievement that Jul-Jan 2020-21 exports have increased by 5.5 pc as well, to US\$14.2 billion on YoY. For the last year's corresponding period, the exports were US\$13.507 billion during, he noted. He congratulated export industry's resolve who "achieved this feat despite difficulties created by COVID pandemic, regional export situation, and contraction in major markets". "Our cumulative exports for seven

months of FY 2020-21 are showing a rising trend," Abdul Razak Dawood said. Concluding his announcement and message to masses, the commerce advisor also wished and reassured exporter community to "please go full speed ahead in exporting your products & in case of any hurdle, inform MOC [ministry of commerce]". Separately earlier today, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) notified a Rs10.37 per kilogramme increase in price of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for the month of February.

According to a notification issued by the regulatory body, the price of an 11.8 kg LPG cylinder for domestic consumers has been jacked up by Rs122.36 to Rs1863.14. The previous price of the cylinder was Rs1,741. Whereas, the price of a commercial cylinder has been increased by Rs471 to Rs7,168 from Rs6,697. On Jan 31, the federal government increased the price of petrol by up to Rs2.70 per litre for the next 15 days of February, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Finance.

## PCJCCI inks MoU with Chengdu Association

LAHORE: The Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Chengdu Association for Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAFTEC) for the appealing and overt mode of trade and development of both countries. The meeting was attended by PCJCCI President S.M Naveed, Senior Vice President Daud

Ahmed, Vice President Moazzam Ghurki, Ali Reza Rizvi, Farooq Khan Sherwani, the executive committee members of PCJCCI, the joint chamber's spokesperson told media here on Monday. On this occasion, PCJCCI President S.M Naveed said that CAFTEC was a non-profit organization engaged in the trade and economic promotion in order to provide a variety of services which included information

consultation for enterprises, project matching, trade fairs, and other similar activities related to Chengdu. He added that PCJCCI always stressed upon the regional connectivity and win-win cooperation for economic integration of two brotherly nations to sustain economic growth and sustain prosperity. Senior Vice President Daud Ahmed said, "Our aim is to introduce contemporary techniques and

technological advancement of China in Pakistan. Both countries share a strong bond of friendship which will definitely play a pivotal role in trade and development." He said that this collaboration would lead to fruitful endeavors which included joint exhibitions, workshops, B2B (business to business) meetings, trade fairs and online portal for effective Pak-China trade. –APP

## Omar briefs US official on energy sector reforms

The minister gave an overview of Pakistan's energy sector and the present government's earnest endeavors in reforming it, a Petroleum Division news release said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Pakistan Affairs Lesslie C Viguier Monday called on Federal Minister for Energy Omar Ayub Khan and discussed matters related to the energy sector. The minister gave an overview of Pakistan's energy sector and the present government's earnest endeavors in reforming it, a Petroleum Division news release said. He said the incumbent government had finalized an Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP)-2047 which emphasized on increasing the share of indigenous sources while reducing the reliance on imported fuel. Omar Ayub said the IGCEP would forge massive addition of renewable capacity of 60 per cent power generation from biomass, solar and wind; 30 per cent from hydel and 10 per cent each from thermal and nuclear power plants.



The minister also highlighted that the government would induce renewable energy-based power plants through open and competitive bidding in a transparent manner. He said the government would also encourage the transfer of technology in these projects, as it was focusing on manufacturing and assembly of wind turbines and solar panels in Pakistan.

He also apprised the US official about the efforts of current government to liberalize the energy market and said with introduction of the Competitive Trading Bilateral Contract Market (CTBM), the competition in power distribution and buying market would increase. "As well as the IGCEP will aim at power generation plan at longer term," he said hoping that combining both strategies would bring improvement in the power sector. Omar Ayub called for greater US investments in energy sector such as power generation, transmission and distribution, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, hydel energy and training opportunities. US Deputy Assistant Secretary Viguier amiably appreciated the Pakistan government efforts being taken to revolutionize the energy sector. He also believed that economic links between both the countries would strengthen Pak-US relationship. "At conclusion, the both sides agreed to step up cooperation in the energy sector," the press release said.

## 'Silence over Indian atrocities worrisome'

KARACHI: Former Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Yaqoob Khan Monday said the silence of global powers over Indian atrocities on the Kashmiris was worrisome. Addressing a news conference here at a local cricket ground, he said the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) should be revived. The Kashmiri people must be given the right of plebiscite as per the resolutions of the United Nations.

Sardar Yaqoob said by changing domicile laws, India wanted to turn the Kashmiris into minority. This conspiracy would be foiled at every cost. The former AJK president said that the hearts of Pakistanis beat with the hearts of their Kashmiri brethren. Sardar Yaqoob said every year Pakistanis observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day to express their commitment and affection with Kashmiri brethren. On the occasion, Sardar Maqbool Zaman, Sardar Zulfiqar, Sardar Nazakat and others were also present. Later, the trophy of the cricket tournament, being organised in connection with the Kashmir Solidarity Day, was unveiled.

## Hameed condemns Indian brutality

ISLAMABAD: Senior Leader, All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), Abdul Hameed Lone on Tuesday strongly condemned India for martyring 308 innocent Kashmiris during 18 months siege in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), a report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service revealed. He added that most of the victims were killed by the troops in fake encounters or in custody. Abdul Hameed said that unrelenting military siege was imposed in IIOJK by Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian government on August 05, 2019, continues to take a heavy toll on daily life of the Kashmiri people in the territory. A report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service on the completion of 18 months to the military siege, today, revealed that the Indian troops martyred 308 Kashmiris including 7 women during the period. The report maintained that at least 1,701 people were critically injured due to the use of brute force, bullets, pellets and tear-gas shelling by the Indian troops on peaceful demonstrators in the territory. The troops also damaged over 993 houses and structures and molested or disgraced 103 women and arrested 14,489 people during the period. Youth are picked up from their homes during so-called cordon and search operations and are eliminated after being labeled as mujahideen or over-ground workers. The killing by the troops during the past 18 months rendered 16 women widowed and 38 children orphaned. During the last month of January, the troops martyred three Kashmiri youth including a B. Tech Degree holder in a fake encounter. Talking to APP here on Monday Hameed Lone has said that during the period, at least 16 people were injured due to the use of brute force including firing of bullets and tear-gas shells by the troops and police personnel. As many as 46 people were arrested and two residential houses were damaged during two hundred eighty one 289 cordon and search operations in different areas of the territory in the month. – APP

## Security forces foil terrorism bid

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Security Forces on Monday foiled a terrorism bid in district Bajaur and recovered huge quantity of arms and ammunition concealed for the purpose. According to the district administration, Bajaur Scout acting on a tip-off raided in Kalgha area of Tehsil Warmamond, district Bajaur recovered 19 hand-grenades, One RPG gun, 11 rocket launchers, two remote control bombs, 19 fuses of hand grenades and other explosive material which was to use in an act of terrorism. The security forces cordoned off the area and started search operation.

## Briefs

CDA recovers  
350 kanal  
land in  
sector I-15

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) during anti encroachment operations against mafia in Sector I-15 has recovered 350 kanals of government land. The authority has taken possession of the said sub-sector after 16 years. According to details, the current administration of the CDA is conducting a large-scale operation against the occupation mafia and encroachments without any discrimination. Three hundred and fifty kanals of government land has been handed over in a major operation in sub-sector I-15. The land has been occupied by the influential mafia for many years. The mafia had built strong houses, walls, mansions, animal sheds and other constructions on the government lands.

Prof Ayaz  
assumes  
duties as VP  
Academics

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prof Dr Ayaz Afsar assumed his duties on Monday as Vice President Academics at the International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI). According to IIUI, earlier, Prof Afsar was serving as Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Literature. He has also served as Chairman Department of English for 3 years. He also is the founder and Editor of Journal of Contemporary Poetics of the Department of English. Prof Afsar did his M.Phil in Applied Linguistics (2000) and PhD in English Literature (2004) from the University of Manchester in the UK. He did post-doc from the University of Manchester (2012) and another post-doc from the University of Birmingham in the UK (2014). He has also taught in those universities during his stay in the UK and did his BA (Hons) and MA English from the University of Karachi. He is internationally recognized for interdisciplinary research in Biblical and Quranic literary narrative discourse. Prof Afsar written widely in interdisciplinary areas combining classics, theory, cultural identity, language, linguistics, stylistics and narrative studies. He has got a long series of journal articles to his credit published in peer-reviewed journals internationally.

IESCO  
issues power  
schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM Bani Gala, CDA Flats, Mahfooz Shaheed, Shakarparian, Simli Dam, Tramri, Lohi Bhai, Ayub Market, G-10/4, FHS, New United, G-11/1, Dargah, Shahpur, Kaldana, Barian, Upper Topa, Treat, Katarian, Holy Family, Sadiqabad, Khurram Colony, Khanna Road, Muslim Town, Tamasmabad, City, Gulshanabad, Jinnah Road, Dhok Hasso, Khayaban Sir Syed, Abu Bakar, Officer Colony, Amir Hamza Colony, Chakra, Peshawar Road, EME Complex, Siham, Rata, Dhok Farman Ali, Rehmatabad-1, River Garden, Model Town, Jhanda, Lalazar, Adiala, Chakri, Quaid-e-Azam Colony, Cantt. Sagri, Ghazan Khan, Abrar Shaheed, Major Hanif, Ping Jatla, Mandira-2, Bengali, Gagan, Jalala, Nawababad, Behlot, Dherik, AWC Housing Society, Rashid Minhas, Shahia, Aminabad, Akhori, Nad Topa, Hazro, Sirka, Qaziabad, Pindi Gheep City, Mathial, Sajjad Shaheed, Fateh Jang-2, Madhu Class feeders and surrounding areas will be remain without power.

NAHE holds roundtable on  
developing linkages for faculty

Representatives of 17 faculty development units and departments of higher education institutions from all provinces, ICT and Gilgit-Baltistan attended the workshop

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) has organized the first of a series of workshops entitled, "Collaboration for Excellence - A Roundtable on Developing Linkages for Faculty Development in Higher Education". The series of these workshops is one of multiple ongoing NAHE endeavours to facilitate capacity building of faculty in HEIs. Representatives of 17 faculty development units and departments of higher education insti-

tutions from all provinces, ICT and Gilgit-Baltistan attended the workshop. In view of the necessary COVID-19 safety measures, some participants joined the workshop in person, while the majority joined it virtually.

During the event, participants were able to debate and discuss urgent faculty development needs in Pakistan, as well as avenues for collaboration and support with NAHE in the future.

Welcoming the participants, Rector NAHE, Dr. Shaheen Sardar Ali shed light on the importance of collaboration for excellence in teach-

ing and learning in the higher education sector. She said that it was very important to seek the views of NAHE stakeholders, the academia overall, in order to make the Academy's work more effective.

She asserted that NAHE would help provide a platform for faculty development units across the country in addition to working together with them to bridge gaps. "The pandemic has its costs but also provides an opportunity to improve and innovate."

Vice Provost Aga Khan University Dr. Anjum Halai said that NAHE could provide support in three key

areas, including individual-level capacity building, institution-level capacity enhancement and empowering higher education institutions to self-regulate and deliver quality learning for faculty.

Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Dr. Tayyaba Zarif emphasised the need to contextualise trainings to ensure that they fulfilled the needs of universities to address their specific needs.

Vice Chancellor, Karakoram International University Dr. Attullah Shah pointed out the urgent need for equipping faculty with

technological and teaching skills in this new context of online learning including the need to train faculty on effectively conducting assessments beyond final and midterm exams. Chief Executive, Advance HE in UK Alison Johns shared an international context of capacity building institutions which was debated by the participants. NAHE is established as a stand-alone, autonomous institution operating under the auspices of HEC to improve the quality of teaching, research, and governance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Pakistan.

Typhoid conjugate  
vaccine drive launched

He said that the government of Pakistan has engaged 6,975 skilled and trained vaccinators and 6,975 assistants to effectively and safely immunize children during this campaign

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government on Monday started Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) campaign in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and Punjab as part of reaching an overall target of 12.7 million children between the ages of nine months to 15 years. According to official sources, the country has reached another milestone by starting the second phase of vaccination against Typhoid from today in 12 districts of Punjab and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) areas. They added in November 2019, Pakistan became the first country in the world to introduce Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine into its routine immunization program to protect children against the highly infectious disease. The first campaign was launched and successfully conducted in all districts

of Sindh province reaching approximately 10 million children.

"Every child has the right to live a healthy life and therefore Pakistan has prioritized strengthening its immunization program", says Dr. Faisal Sultan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services.

"It is high time that we protect our children from typhoid and other contagious diseases to give them a healthy start in life and a secure future. The present government is proactive to protect children against this fatal disease through a phased strategy", he added. The TCV drive has been started due to the high number of typhoid cases in the country as more than 8000 cases were reported in the year 2020. The impact of Typhoid, especially on children under the age of 15 years, is having a negative impact on the overall health status of the popula-

tion. The disease is most commonly caused by contaminated drinking water, poor sanitation infrastructure, and lack of food safety preventive measures.

"Typhoid can be prevented through an aggressive vaccination drive in areas where high number of infections are recorded," says Dr Rana Safdar, Director General of Health. He said that the Government of Pakistan has launched this vaccination campaign aiming to immunize maximum number of children in Punjab and the ICT. "We urge parents to fully cooperate with health workers and vaccinators who are carrying out this door-to-door campaign."

He said that the Government of Pakistan has engaged 6,975 skilled and trained vaccinators and 6,975 assistants to effectively and safely immunize children during this campaign.

Five private  
members bills  
introduced  
in Senate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As many as five private members bills were introduced in the Senate on Monday which were referred by the chairman to the concerned standing committee for detailed deliberation.

The bills included the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2021, the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 2021, the Children (Pledging of Labour) (Amendment) Bill, 2020, the Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and the Service Tribunals (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

All bills were moved by Muhammad Javed Abbasi in the House. Meanwhile, Keshoo Bai on behalf of Chairman Functional Committee on Human Rights Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar presented the report of the committee on the bill to control and prevent torture and custodial death [The Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Bill, 2020] in the House.

Police held  
17 outlaws

DIG and SSP Operations appreciated the performance police teams

ISLAMABAD: The police on Monday arrested 17 outlaws including two members of a snatcher gang and recovered cash, mobile phone, narcotic and weapons from their possession. According to police statement, SSP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer had categorically directed all zonal officers to intensify their efforts to curb crimes in their areas. Following these directions, SHO Sabzi Mandi Malik Liaquat Ali along with police officials accelerated their efforts and arrested two dacoits identified as Hamza Khan and Muhammad Umar and recovered two pistols with ammunition, cash and two mobile phones which were snatched in different incidents. During preliminary investigation, the accused confessed numerous incidents of snatching in areas of IJP road and Sabzi Mandi. Cases have been registered against the suspects and further investigation is underway from them. Furthermore Bhara Kahu police arrested accused Zubair and recovered stolen valuable from him. Ramana police apprehended three accused Arslan, Sarwer and Azam Ali and recovered 1.450 kilogram hashish and one 9mm pistol and 100 cartridges from their possession. Golra police arrested two afghan national accused Muhammad Ali and Ikram. Secretariat police arrested three accused Arshad, Jaz and Muhammad Nawaz and recovered one 44 bore, one 12 bore gun and one 30 bore pistol along with ammunition from their possession. Tarnol police arrested two accused Asim and Umer Nawaz and recovered one 12 bore gun and one 30 bore pistol from their possession. Industrial -Area zone police apprehended accused Muhammad Umer and recovered one 30 bore pistol from him. Noon Police arrested accused Danish and recovered one 30 bore pistol from him. Sihala police arrested two accused Ehsan and Shahzaib and recovered 120 gram heroin and one 32 bore revolver from their possession. - DNA

DC holds  
open court  
in Taxila

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Anwarul Haq on Monday held an open court in Tehsil Taxila for instant resolving of the public issues. On this occasion, the DC listened to the problems being faced by the people and issued directions to the officials concerned for its mitigation. Talking on the occasion, the DC said that all out efforts would be made to resolve the problems of the masses. He said that all the government officials have been directed to solve the problems of the masses at their doorstep with full dedication and make public service as their motto. Later, the DC made a surprise visit to Tehsil Headquarter Hospital, checked the record of the patients and inquired from the patients about the facilities being provided at the Hospital during his visit to Indoor, General Surgery, OPD and Gynaec wards. The DC also visited Government Boys High School Taxila and checked social distancing and other precautionary measures in wake of COVID-19. He expressed satisfaction over the SOPs being observed during academic sessions.

IRSA releases  
59,300  
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 59,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 38,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1465.68 feet, which was 73.68 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 15,500 and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1173.80 feet, which was 133.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 8,700 and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kala-bagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 44,100, 40,900 and 7,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 7,800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and zero cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP

IESCO seizes  
over 5000  
suspicious  
meters

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to IESCO spokesman a very comprehensive campaign against power theft is in progress in whole IESCO region. According to details, during the month of Jan-2021, 91077 meters checked and 5031 meter were found suspicious. On account of power theft, direct supply and slow meters more than 2 million units charged and fine of more than 50 million imposed of culprits and applications for legal proceedings have also been given in police stations. Customers can report on IESCO help line No. 118 or on CCMC No. 051-9252933-6 if they found any power theft.

Attock police  
arrest 14  
anti social  
elements

ATTOCK: Police have arrested 14 anti social elements from different areas of the district. According to PRO Attock police Tahir Iqbal, Jand police arrested 12 gamblers namely Tariq Mehmood, Faqir Hussain, Haq Nawaz, Muhammad Hussain, Mukhtiar, Imran Khan, M. Imran, Ejaz, Zamurd, Mulazim, Bagh Hussain and Amir Afzal and recovered Rs 71180 (stack money), four vehicles, three motorbikes and 12 cell phones from their possession. Meanwhile, Hazro and Pindigheb police arrested Muhammad Fayyaz and Asad Abbas and recovered 3,380 kg chars from their possession. Cases have been registered against them. - APP



RAWALPINDI: Visitors taking interest in photographs displayed on the occasion of an exhibition organized in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day. - DNA

PUCAR  
arranges  
Kashmir  
exhibition

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Council of the Arts arranged a photographic exhibition in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day to highlight Indian atrocities on innocent people of Kashmir. President Pakistan Green Task Force and renowned social worker Dr Jamal Nasir inaugurated the exhibition flanked by Naheed Manzoor and Director Waqar Ahmed here on Monday. The exhibition having more than 100 photographs depicted current situation in Indian occupied Kashmir. Addressing at the inaugural ceremony, Dr Jamal Nasir said that people of Kashmir would achieve right of self-determination due to their long and unparalleled struggle for their separate homeland. He added that every children of Pakistan stood with people of Kashmir as solidarity for their legitimate demand.

## SAPM hails healthy ecosystem in MHNP

A female common leopard named "Shezadi" by the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) for her royal carriage has been found to be a permanent resident of territory between Trails 4 and 6 inside the Margallah Hills National Park

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam on Monday said the presence of Shezadi, a female leopard along with other leopards inside Margallah Hills National Park (MHNP) was an indicator of the good health of its ecosystem. "Leopards keep a control on the population of wild herbivores like wild boars, which is important to the health of the forest as herbivores can easily overgraze and that can affect forest regeneration and growth," the SAPM in a

press release said.

He added: "The common leopard is actually not so common anymore and Islamabad's citizens can feel a sense of pride in that these endangered animals have taken up permanent residence next to a busy city in the protected Margallah Hills".

Aslam said there was wide availability of natural prey for the leopards inside the Margallah Hills, which also provided a safe refuge for breeding purposes. He added that it was illegal to hunt the leopards or harm them in any way. "People visiting MHNP or living inside the park have to respect nature and live in

co-existence with the rich wildlife found there".

A female common leopard named "Shezadi" by the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) for her royal carriage has been found to be a permanent resident of territory between Trails 4 and



6 inside the Margallah Hills National Park. Shezadi has been caught on camera traps set up by the IWMB staff for several evenings in a row in late January.

"From the areas that we have sampled using camera traps since 2019, we have identified at least 5 individual common leopards living within the boundaries of the Margallah Hills National Park," says IWMB Chair, Rina Saeed Khan. "Shezadi is now familiar with the trails that humans take and avoids them during the day. Most attacks by leopards on humans are in self defense - intentional attacks are rare". The common leopard is a critical-

ly endangered species and the top predator of the park. Leopards are very territorial and a leopard that knows his or her territory (usually marked by him/her over 50 square km) is much safer than a new leopard that will move in to claim the dead leopard's territory, say wildlife experts. Shezadi has been living inside the park in the territory she has marked and now patrols, as a permanent resident since at least last year. She was last filmed on January 31st 2021. Her rosetta pattern has been identified to be the same one as of a leopard caught on a camera trap in June 2020.

## Briefs

## Bill making Arabic compulsory approved

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Monday passed the Compulsory Teaching of Arabic Language Bill, 2020 aimed at making the teaching of Arabic compulsory in all public and private educational institutions of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The bill was moved by PML-N Senator Muhammad Javed Abbasi in the upper house of the parliament. The bill states that Arabic will be taught in schools in Islamabad from grades 1 to 5, while Arabic grammar will be taught to grades 6 to 12. Javed Abbasi said Arabic has been included in the top five languages spoken in the world and was also an official language of 25 countries. He said Arabic should be taught as a compulsory language in all educational institutions. Terming the bill the best one, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan said govt "categorically supported" the bill. He said this step should be taken 70 years ago. Senators Mush-taq Ahmed, Maulana Ghafoor Haideri, Sirajul Haq and others also appreciated Javed Abbasi for bringing the bill in the upper house.

## Pakistan stops issuing manual visas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In line with the directions of the Interior Ministry, all the Pakistani missions and embassies across the globe have stopped issuing manual visas. According to the details, non-resident Pakistanis and others interested in traveling to the country were asked to apply through the online visa portal. In a statement, a spokesperson for the Pakistani embassy in Riyadh advised the visa applicants to submit their applications online. He said that the visa process will be completed within a week. In case of any objection, the applicant will be called for an interview, he added. Earlier on January 20, Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed had said that Pakistan has extended online visa facility to 192 countries. Addressing the media after visiting the Islamabad Airport, Rasheed had said that online visa service had been started on orders of PM Imran and the premier had directed for smooth issuance of visas through it.

## Police arrest 8 kite sellers, confiscate 2050 kites

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested eight kite sellers and confiscated about 2050 kites from their possession here on Monday, informed police spokesman. Taxila police arrested eight kite sellers identified as Muhammad Osama Tanveer, Malik Arif, Muhammad Alakma, Iqbal Ahmed, Muhammad Tauqeer, Zia Ur Rehman, Zunair and Umer Ihsan. Separate cases have been registered against the accused.

## Six arrested on cock fight gambling

RAWALPINDI: In a crackdown against the anti-social elements, police have arrested six gamblers besides recovering bet money Rs41,000 and other items from their possession, a police spokesman said here on Monday. Chontra Police got information that some people were gambling on the cock fight in the area. During the course of action, police arrested the gamblers identified as Waqar Hussain, Aftab Ahmed and Muhammad Ali. Police recovered Rs35,000 from their possession. Meanwhile, Murree Police also arrested three gamblers namely Shah Zaib Iqbal, Adnan Abbasi and Rehan Khan who were also involved in betting on cock fight. Police also recovered Rs 6000 and other items from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against all of the accused under the gambling act. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Temperature of students being checked at school entrance as all educational activities resume amid strict implementation of COVID SOPs. — DNA

## CDA to restore water supply system to address water woes

He said over Rs 200 million had been transferred to the water directorate for execution of plan, adding currently concerted efforts were being made to upgrade the water supply network of the capital city at 71 points

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority Monday asserted that a plan for rehabilitation of water supply system was being executed to resolve water woes of the federal capital's residents in an effective manner. Talking to APP, a senior official in CDA said the authority, soon after getting the charge of water directorate from the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), started executing a comprehensive program with cost of over Rs 400 million to upgrade supply lines, water works and treatment plants across

the city. He said over Rs 200 million had been transferred to the water directorate for execution of plan, adding currently concerted efforts were being made to upgrade the water supply network of the capital city at 71 points. To a query, he said feasibility work on Ghazi Barotha project had been initiated, adding water metering system was also on the cards to control the water pilferage and leakage. However, the claim of CDA official brings no let up in miseries of the residents, who are grappling with water scarcity issue for since long due to rapid increase in population, decades-old

water supply infrastructure, lowering groundwater table and slackness of the departments concerned in the past. 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. "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 in-

crease in water-boring trend that eventually lowered the ground water table. Another citizen from Tarlai, 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, Ishaq Ahmed said he was living in this area for the last many years and never faced

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. An officer of the MCI, who was part of the team that prepared the plan, currently carried out by the CDA, said the capital needed over 150 million gallons water per day but currently only half of it was being supplied to the people from four small water reservoirs, tube wells, Simli, Khanpur and Rawal dams. She said the issue could be resolved to maximum extent once the project was implemented completely by the CDA.

## China remains top importer among other countries: SBP

ISLAMABAD: China topped the list of countries from where Pakistan imported different products during the first half of the current financial year (2020-21), followed by United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Singapore. The total imports from China during July-December (2020-21) were recorded at \$5730.084 million against the \$4878.751 million during July-December (2019-20), showing an increase of 17.44 percent during the period, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said. This was followed by UAE, where Pakistan imported goods worth \$3300.862 million against the imports of

\$3643.200 million last year, showing negative growth of 9.39 percent. Singapore was the at third top country from where Pakistan imported products worth \$1341.440 million against the imports of \$1081.356 million last year, showing growth of 24.05 percent, SBP data revealed. Among other countries, Pakistani imports from Saudi Arabia stood at \$1037.234 million against \$747.506 million during last year, showing growth of 38.75 percent while the imports from United State of America (USA) were recorded at \$993.583 million against \$977.529 million last year, showing increase of 1.64 percent, the data revealed. — APP



RAWALPINDI: RCCI President Nasir Mirza exchanging MoU document with CEO PIA Air Marshal (r) Arshad Malik at International Chambers Summit. — DNA

## US cattle shipments bolster dairy sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A shipment of 2,078 U.S. cattle arrived at the port of Karachi on January 27, 2021. As a result of the strong partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Pakistan dairy sector, cattle shipments from the United States continue to supply Pakistan with high-quality bovine stock for its dairy and beef herds. Roughly 95 percent of the cattle in this year's first shipment are U.S. Holstein dairy cattle, which, thanks to U.S. livestock genetics, produce milk yields that are substantially higher than Holsteins imported from

other countries. The remaining animals are Jersey dairy cattle, noted for their high milk fat content, and Brahma beef cattle, noted for their high-quality beef. All breeds have the genetic potential to adapt to Pakistan's climate. At least two more shipments of U.S. cattle are expected to arrive before the end of March 2021, when the cattle shipping season closes. Pakistan's demand for milk is increasing, and the introduction of U.S. dairy cows is helping Pakistan reduce the gap between milk demand and supply, thereby contributing significantly to ensuring sustainable food security in the country. Agriculture is Pakistan's second-largest economic sector, ac-

counting for nearly 20 percent of GDP in fiscal year 2019-2020. It remains by far the largest employer, accounting for nearly 40 percent of Pakistan's labor force. For the nearly 63 percent of the Pakistani population living in rural areas, agriculture is a vital part of their daily life. The U.S. government partners with Pakistani scientists and farmers to improve agricultural productivity. The U.S. government has also supported the development of a model dairy farm at the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Pattoki Campus, near Lahore, and to familiarize the Pakistani dairy sector about the unique characteristics of the U.S. cattle breeds that have been imported into Pakistan.

## Police arrest 14 anti social elements

DNA

ATTOCK: Police have arrested 14 anti social elements from different areas of the district. According to PRO Attock police Tahir Iqbal, Jand police arrested 12 gamblers namely Tariq Mehmood, Faqir Hussain, Haq Nawaz, Muhammad Hussain, Mukhtiar, Imran Khan, M. Imran, Ejaz, Zamurd, Mulazim, Bagh Hussain and Amir Afzal and recovered Rs 71180 (stack money), four vehicles, three motorbikes and 12 cell phones from their possession. Meanwhile, Hazro and Pindigheb police arrested Muhammad Fayyaz and Asad Abbas and recovered 3.380 kg charrs from their possession. Cases have been registered against them.

## Rupee sheds 12 paisas against US dollar

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of Pakistani rupee weakened by 12 paisas against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Monday and closed at Rs160.22 as compared to the previous day's closing of Rs160.10. Meanwhile, according to Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs160 and Rs160.8 respectively. In interbank trading, the price of euro appreciated by 17 paisas and closed at Rs194.06 against the last day's trading of Rs 193.89, State Bank of Pakistan reported. The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs1.53, whereas an increase of 91 paisas was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound which was traded at Rs220.01 as compared to its last closing of Rs219.10. The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paisas each to close at Rs 43.62 and Rs 42.71 respectively. — APP

## Cantt authorities directed to renovate footpaths

DNA

RAWALPINDI: President Cantonment Board, Brig. Ijaz Qamar Kiani on Monday directed the authorities concerned of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board to repair and renovate broken footpaths besides launching a grand operation against encroachments. He gave these instructions to the authorities during his visit to different cantt areas including Romi Lane, Raja Akram Road, Qasim Market, Peshawar Road, Golra Mor, EME College and directed them to renovate footpaths besides construction of new footpaths to facilitate the citizens. He also ordered for beautification of the existing green belts besides establishing new green areas at available spaces. Brig. Ijaz Qamar Kiani directed the cantt authorities to continue an indiscriminate grand operation against encroachments. He instructed to ensure quality development work and all possible efforts to facilitate the residents. He said, all available resources should be utilized to provide the citizens modern facilities. Strict action in accordance with the law should also be taken against negligent cantt officials, he added.

## Local LPG price increases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Monday issued a price-revision notification of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for the month of February. According to the notification, the authority increased the locally produced LPG price by Rs122.44 per cylinder of 11.8 kilogram. After the revised price, the cylinder would be sold in the open market at Rs1,863.14, which was available at Rs1,740.69 during the last month. Whereas, the per Metric Ton (MT) LPG rate has been fixed at Rs157,894.35 for the month of February. The commodity sale price per MT was Rs147,516.53 during the month of January. The new price will be effective from February 1.

## Speakers hail literary work of renowned

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at a seminar on Monday hailed the literary work of renowned writer, researcher Intezar Hussain, stating that he wanted to revive Muslim civilization. They were addressing the 'Intezar Hussain National Literary Seminar' organized by Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Intezar Hussain, a trend-setter, novelist, critic, writer, researcher and intellectual. The seminar was presided over by Prof. Fateh Mohammad Malik, while Kishwar Naheed was the special guest. Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman, PAL, gave the introductory speech. Dr. Inam-ul-Haq Javed, Mohammad Hameed Shahid, Prof. Dr. Sofia Yousaf, Dr. Salahuddin Darwish, Dr. Farid Hussaini and Dr. Saira Alvi and Farida Hafeez also spoke on the occasion. Mehboob Zafar was the moderator.

Dr Yousuf Khushk, Chairman, PAL, while delivering the welcome address said that Intezar Hussain did the fiction with realism like the rest of his contemporaries but choose a different approach to topics. He said that Intezar Hussain made the collapse of civilization and culture during and after the establishment of Pakistan and the resulting events and events a part of his creative experience in a very artistic way which is his specialty. Intezar Hussain's creative experience is radically different from other fiction writers on technical, stylistic and intellectual levels. Undoubtedly, he was a man of style and versatility. He proved his mettle in novels, fiction, travelogues, biographies, translations and columnists. His story begins with the giant Malay and magical atmosphere and unfolds in our modern human life. The last man, the yellow dog and the city of sadness are prominent in his

fiction, while Basti, Tazkira and Aage Samandar Hai are notable novels. Prof. Fateh Mohammad Malik said that Intezar Hussain was not a man of our time. They made dreams come true. He was lost in the dreams of his past and this is where his art comes from. He took advantage of the modern and progressive movement and withdrew from it. He wanted to revive Muslim civilization. He lived in our time and remembered the brightest era of Muslims. Establishment of Pakistan was his first dream. Kishwar Naheed said that there is a special kind of pleasure in the writings of Intezar Hussain. Understanding his fiction and novels required knowledge and research, she added. She said that the last word of good news had come in the Basti, it was very meaningful. She mentions his novels Tazkira and Aage Samandar Hai. Dr Inam-ul-Haq Javed said that

Intezar Hussain was a very elegant man. He was, of course, a great fiction writer. He knew the value of every word he wrote. Mohammad Hameed Shahid said that if Intezar Hussain is portrayed in the tradition of Urdu fiction, then Intezar Hussain's position is completely different and his stature seems to be high. The last man, the yellow dog and the city of sorrow, such as Shahkar's fiction, determine the value of his art. Prof. Dr. Sofia Yousaf said that Intezar Hussain used modern western techniques and khatta beautifully in his fiction. Dr. Salah-ud-Din Darwish said that Intezar Hussain spent his art and skill in the roots of civilization. He was a pioneer of civilization and a trustee of civilization. He wanted to live in the beauty of civilization. Dr. Farid Hussaini said that Intezar Hussain was an artist who created stories full of insight and wisdom. — APP

## Unnecessary conflict

**A** PROTEST against online examinations and the resulting heavy-handed treatment of demonstrators by the police is a regrettable incident that could have been avoided. This was a minor issue, one that could have been resolved amicably, and a knee-jerk reaction instead led to another, bigger protest in Lahore on Saturday.

Peaceful demonstration is the right of every citizen which should be encouraged, especially when students are involved. Growing political and social awareness and trying to engage with the government on issues that affect their lives is a good indicator of a progressive and potentially productive mindset. This is something that should be nurtured, and not beaten out through baton-charges and custody remands. An extended visit to the police station will only breed resentment and alienation from the system.

Protests have an easy answer; dialogue. The state should have engaged with students—Pakistan's future prosperity is inextricably linked to their prospects. The government has a valid concern in shifting exams online, but as ever, there are solutions that could be looked into.

Many universities in Europe engage in the practice of one-on-one verbal examinations for instance, with brief slots for each student. This makes for more complicated scheduling, but given the sort of year the students have had, all available options should be considered.

Even in the best of times, it is not easy for everyone to do well in education to build a better life for themselves. It is the duty of the government to try and ensure that each citizen reaches the best of their ability.

It is time for the state to extend an olive branch and release the apprehended students immediately. Negotiations should follow. The students have a valid argument in not wanting to take their exams on campus en masse—the pandemic is still raging. The government must find some middle ground.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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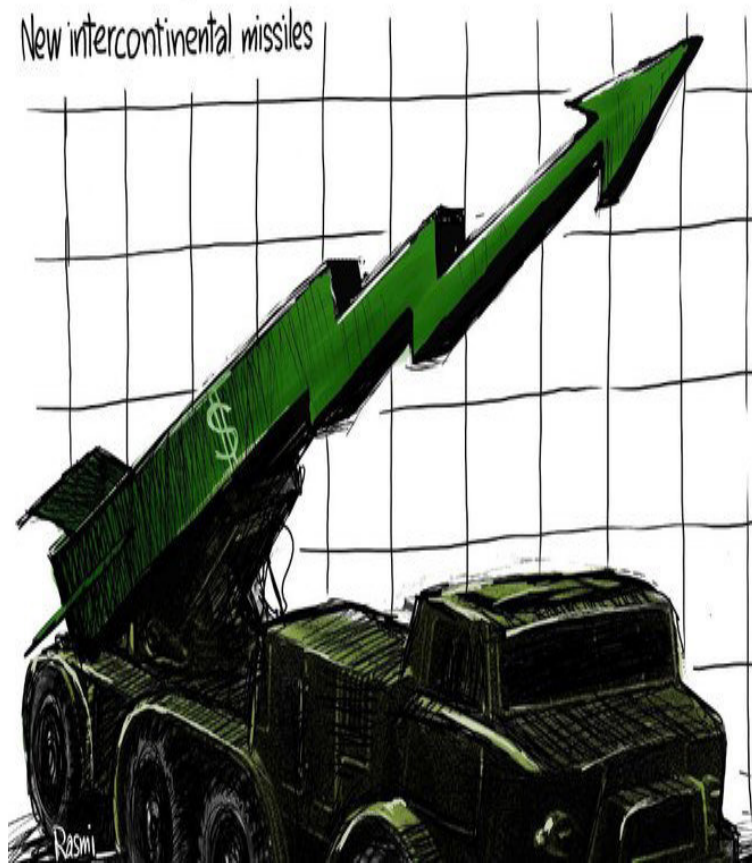
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## Ill-timed promotions

**O**N JANUARY 25, the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) released an order that the Chairman of the Authority would promote 240 employees, who were reportedly the top performers of NIS in the Promotion Board 2018 to the next grade. Those promoted would also be rewarded with salary fixation and two increments in recognition of their efforts. However, in a classic twist, only five days later, this order was reversed with NADRA cancelling the promotions.

There is no doubt that the order detailing the promotions could be perceived as unprofessional. The last-minute timing of the order naturally gives rise to the impression that the Chairman without adequate consideration. It was good for the government to reverse track and stop the order—yet these series of events show little diligence by the bureaucracy and reflect a lack of coordination between the government and its institutions. It shows structural inefficiency which could have been spotted even with the appointment of the Chairman. The initial appointment in 2018 had been mired in controversy as well—there were concerns that the appointed Chairman did not fulfil the eligibility requirements as provided in Section 3 (7) of the NADRA Ordinance.

The case had gone up to the Islamabad High Court and although the Court ruled that there were no mala fide intentions on part of the federal government in the appointment. The many difficulties that rose because of the appointment does reflect the tendency of governments to make decisions and appointments without thoroughly considering the legal technicalities that could arise. However, the government must now learn from its past and appoint a successor who is highly competent, qualified and most importantly, whose appointment is safe according to the NADRA Ordinance. The issue of promotions is a vital one and deserving candidates should not be denied their promotions just because of this ill-thought out move. Once a new Chairman has been appointed, this matter must be settled in a transparent and equitable fashion.

# Central Europe as community of shared aspirations

Andrzej Duda



This is the picture of today and the vision of the future of Central Europe as the community of shared activities, success, and ambitious aspirations. We have traveled a long and successful road – from being a region almost non-existent in the minds of the main actors on the world stage for a long time – to becoming a region which is one of the most dynamically developing parts of the globe and aspires to being listed in the category of centers of civilization

**A** NEW decade of the 20th century has just opened. A decade of uncertainty brought forth by the global pandemic and its consequences, but also a decade of hope. A decade of opportunities for the civilization's and economy's recovery, a chance to create a world that is better, more just, more green, and one that respects the principles of sustained development. As we look towards the future, we are looking for areas which will be the centers of dynamic and positive changes. I am certain that Central Europe will be one of them on the European and global scale.

Central Europe or Central and Eastern Europe (the terms are used interchangeably) is a significant regional entity, a community of shared fate in terms of geography, politics, and economy as well as in terms of ideas and cultures. As for a location on a map, it is perceived as an area between the Baltic, Adriatic, and the Black seas or (even though it is oversimplification) between Germany and Russia. But above all, we constitute a circle of common memory.

We have had our share of similar historical experiences, in the dramatic 20th century in particular. We have suffered from two totalitarianisms, the brown and red ones, that suppressed and oppressed us. But we also have great, glorious experiences from centuries ago. The 15th-17th centuries, the era called "the Europe of the Jagiellonian dynasty" to be later named the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, saw a flourishing of a voluntary political union in a substantial part of the territory, a precursor to the European Union of today, which was a friendly home to many cultures and faiths and which respected the rule of law, parliamentarism, and democracy. We are carrying lessons from those experiences – both good and bad – into the future as a universal warning as well as inspiration to work towards a common good, the prosperity of the region and all the integrated Europe.

A description of Central Europe in terms of values is important as well. Being part of Western civilization for more than a thousand years, we share its ideological foundations. Milan Kundera suggestively named Central Europe "a kidnapped West," that is the part of Western civilization that found itself against its will under the Soviet domination – imperial, authoritarian, and unable to manage rationally. It must be emphasized, though, that our commitment to values that have built the European culture is not without reflection. We know perhaps better than others the high price one must pay for defending them. We are aware that one must cultivate and reconcile freedom and responsibility, rights and duties, individualism and solidarity, the attitude of criticism, innovation, and modernization with one that cherishes heritage and traditions that describe our identity.

On the threshold of the historic breakthrough of 1989, Timothy Garton Ash wrote that the concept of

Central Europe has roused the Western world from thinking in Cold War terms, has challenged the common notions and priorities but also had something new to offer in return. This opinion seems to be valid today as well when the participation of Central European countries in the EU and NATO is a crucial and solidified part of the European and Atlantic order, and as our region with its solid economic growth has made a significant civilization leap.

Also today, the concept of Central Europe contains dynamism and positive content. If I were to concisely present the modern face of Central Europe, including Poland as the biggest country in the region, I would say as follows: it is the community of shared success and the community of shared aspirations at the same time. Central Europe constitutes a perfect example of how powerful and creative power freedom is. Freedom and its siblings – economic freedom, entrepreneurship, self-government, open up the space for fulfillment of bold ambitions and aspirations. Development accompanies the progress of freedom. The three decades that have passed since the fall of communism, the regional breakthrough initiated by the Polish "Solidarity" movement, are the story of the great economic success, of a social and civilization advancement that hardly ever happened over such a short time in the world history. Poland and the whole of Central Europe are a fascinating testimony to opportunities that come with freedom.

We can also serve as an inspiring example of how cooperation, joint initiatives and undertakings bring positive results. It was thanks to them that Central Europe ceased to be, as it was in adverse times, a peripheral area between the West and East, between imperial powers, and instead became a structure connected by multiple ties, one that is aware of its interests and has an influence on the course of European affairs. The emancipation of Central and Eastern Europe was a success, we are the crucial part of political and civilization processes.

Let me draw your attention to three important planes of Central European cooperation, which are not only of regional significance but are also crucial in the EU, Atlantic, and even global dimension. The first of them is the Visegrad Group, an entity of the longest existence which gathers Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. Initiated in 1991 as a platform for political dialogue and coordination of efforts to gain membership in NATO and the EU, the Visegrad Group has also proven useful once it has achieved these strategic goals. Today it is one of the most important agents in activating regional cooperation in Central Europe and seeking understanding on European affairs.

The second of the planes is the Bucharest Nine, a structure that groups countries of NATO's eastern flank:

Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Bulgaria.

It was established in 2015 in Bucharest, where we signed a joint statement which said the Bucharest Nine countries join efforts to secure, where it is necessary, a "robust, credible and sustainable Allied military presence" in the region. To a large degree, the B9 is a response to Russia's aggressive policy, to the violations of borders and territorial integrity of the neighboring Ukraine, which threaten a regional and Atlantic security. We are not going to watch it idly.

The third plane of cooperation is the Three Seas Initiative, which was initiated by the President of Croatia Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and myself in 2015. The group comprises countries located between the Baltic, Adriatic, and Black seas: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary. The goal is to make joint investments in infrastructure, transport, energy, and new technologies that will boost the development in our countries and contribute to the cohesion of the European Union. When we look at the map of economic connections within the EU, we will see a significant advantage of the horizontal flows along the West-East axis over vertical flows along the North-South axis.

This includes the flows of people, goods, services, and capital, but also infrastructure networks: expressways, railroads, hubs, pipelines, power and IT lines. The Three Seas Initiative, a project aimed at boosting the structural transformation of this part of Europe, is to fill in the missing elements of the "scaffold" which will help strengthen the integration of our region and the entire EU as well. The fact that aside from the capital from within the EU, also investors from the United States, China, and other parts of the world are involved in the Three Seas Initiative ensures a sound diversification of benefits and mutual interdependence.

This is the picture of today and the vision of the future of Central Europe as the community of shared activities, success, and ambitious aspirations. We have traveled a long and successful road – from being a region almost non-existent in the minds of the main actors on the world stage for a long time ("in Poland, that is to say Nowhere," as Alfred Jarry wrote in late 19th century) – to becoming a region which is one of the most dynamically developing parts of the globe and aspires to being listed in the category of centers of civilization. Central Europe – doesn't the name say it all? Feel invited to take part in this fascinating adventure.

– The writer is the President of the Republic of Poland.

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# Momentum in Khalistan movement

Dr. Tamoor Azam



Thousands of farmers carrying ceremonial swords, ropes, and sticks have stormed the historic Red Fort on India's Republic Day was just a demo of the Sikh community to show their power. History has witnessed the valor and bravery displayed by the Sikhs against their enemies

**T**HE facade of the Indian construct is beautified in such a way by both Indian and western media that apparently it touches the skyscrapers but the complexities in which India has entangled is a far way beyond the horizons of comprehension. In reality, Indian political top brass is busy in embezzlement of treasury accumulated with the taxes of poor populace. Poverty is pervasive and menace in the country; people conspicuously seen lying on the footpaths to slums homelessly in every nook and corner. The internal insurgencies occurring in Kashmir (freedom fighters), North East India (seven sister states), Red corridor (Naxalite-Maoist insurgency) and Khalistan movement in Punjab are raw aggressions which are potential threats for India.

In 2009, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Naxalism is the greatest threat to India's survival. With each passing day, minorities are suffering from insecurity. Instead of assuaging minorities' anger, the government's ignorance will cause big unimaginable trouble for the country. With no surprise, Modi's Hindutva government is adding fuel to the fire in this extremely fragile situation. But Indian media is a lapdog of government censors the real situation in India.

Three new bills introduced in September 2020 for farmers, the government calls it "watershed moment" and opposition calls it "Death Warrant". The government says that this law has given more autonomy to farmers, now farmers can sell their product at a market price directly to private companies, agriculture businesses, supermarkets, and even online grocers.

Apparently, this seems to be a good step and the government should be given an encouraging pat because "self-autonomy" has granted. But farmers believe that this will make it easier for private corporations and supermarkets to exploit agricultural workers. Private markets and buyers are still present, but if farmers are not satisfied with the price offered by private companies, they return to the wholesale market and bargain about the prices. These laws will lead to an end of wholesale markets and assured prices set by the government. Currently, Indian farmers sell their produce at government-controlled wholesale markets at assured floor prices. A farmer explained the issue more vividly that "First, farmers will feel attracted towards these private players, who will offer a better price for the produce. The government wholesale market will pack up meanwhile and after a few years, these players will start exploiting the farmers."

The reality of these bills is an "ill omen" for small and marginalized farmers. This wave of fear has swept over farmers and sawed from fear to anger. The government has held eight rounds of talks with leaders of more than 30 farmers' unions but all in vain. Both government and farmers are adamantly opposed to each other. US-based secessionist group "Sikh for Justice" has stated that the government's aim is to destroy Sikh's economically by handing over agriculture and market to the big corporations. If Hindu majority country deprives Sikh minority of their fundamental right, then "Khalistan" (a state that existed in Punjab from 1709 to

1849) is the only solution to this problem. Thousands of farmers carrying ceremonial swords, ropes, and sticks have stormed the historic Red Fort on India's Republic Day was just a demo of the Sikh community to show their power. History has witnessed the valor and bravery displayed by the Sikhs against their enemies. Sikh protesters have again planned to go to parliament on February 1st when the government is scheduled to present the annual budget. If the agriculture law doesn't repeal, then the slogans of "Indian held Punjab" or "Indian occupied Punjab" will be echoed across the country.

There are grim prospects that these protests could sow the new seeds of the "Khalistan Movement." This separatist movement is in a dormant state since the Sikh minority holding elevated positions in India. Minorities are the victim of grievous injustice and repression rather than atrocities with minorities has become the hallmark of India now. Moreover, there is growing public disenchantment in India against the Bharatiya Janata Party – the political arm of the Hindu militant RashtriyaSwayamsevakSangh, or RSS. Their aim is to revive purely Hindu "Gupta's Empire (mid-to-late 3rd century CE to 543 CE)" in India by jettisoning minorities. The plight of Indian people living in poverty, insurgency, disharmony, and religious intolerance will swallow India itself soon.

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## Briefs

## Pakistan-Uzbekistan show resolve

From Page 01

In this regard, the two sides discussed Streamlining Bilateral Phytosanitary Standards, enhancing Banking Cooperation, working on Rail and Road connectivity matters and establishment of off dock terminal.

Both side also discussed the possibility of establishment of Joint Cargo Company by private sector, which can mitigate connectivity issues. It was highlighted in the meeting that private sector is quintessential for bilateral trade, therefore the two sides resolved to have cooperation in shipping, textile, engineering and IT sectors.

The Uzbek side invited Pakistan Business Delegation to organize a Joint Exhibition in Tashkent in June, 2021.

The Advisor called on the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and discussed with him matters related to economic cooperation between the two countries. He also met the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan Adkham Ikramov and discussed cooperation in textile, leather and Engineering Sector with him. Pakistan has deep shared historic connections with Uzbekistan especially with regard to culture, art, crafts and traditions. Its cities like Samarkand and Bukhara have been the centers of Islamic civilization and learning. Diplomatic Relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan were established when it gained independence from Soviet Union in 1991. Both countries are members of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organisation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. (Picture on Page 7)

## PM connects with masses via telephone

From Page 01

According to media, the PM was chairing a meeting of his party's leaders and spokespersons in the federal capital during which he was briefed about various issues, including the foreign funding case, Senate elections, and action taken against the land-grabbing mafia. Addressing the meeting and responding to the foreign funding case against the PTT, PM Imran Khan said that the party has "submitted the details of more than 40,000 donors, adding that the Opposition failed to submit the details of donors during their tenure. He said that the PTT has a "clear record in the foreign funding case" and that it received "no money from any foreign source." Taking a jibe at the Opposition parties, he said that now is the time for PML-N, PPP and other parties to be accountable to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding the funds they received from abroad.

## Boxer dies after being hit on face

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: In an unfortunate incident, a 33-year-old boxer passed away after being punched on the face by a rival boxer during an event here on Saturday. Mohammad Aslam hails from Pishin and was known for his kickboxing. He was contesting against Mohammad Wali in cruise weight category bout during "Fight Night Series" organised by Pakistan Boxing Council at a local club in Karachi. The boxer, as one can see in videos viral on social media, fell unconscious after being hit below the chin during the bout. A proper medical response couldn't be seen in videos available.

According to eye-witnesses, Aslam was immediately taken to a private hospital at stadium road where he was shifted to ICU. However, he passed away on Sunday afternoon. The Pakistan Boxing Federation has condemned the event and has disassociated itself from the organisers and termed the event as illegal. "We have no connection with this so-called professional boxing council, nothing is being done with our approval. We cannot compromise on the safety of our boxers," Col Nasir Tung, secretary-general of the Pakistan Boxing Federation. "There are some pre-requisites for one to become a professional boxer, and the way these boxers are contesting in the name of professional boxing is questionable," he said.



KHIRDALAN: President Ilham Aliyev and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva viewed conditions created at school-lyceum No 3 in Khirdalan city. - DNA

## Turkish-Russian joint Karabakh center to maintain peace

Established in the Merzilli village of the Aghdam region, the center will monitor the implementation of the Russian-brokered agreement which was reached in November after six weeks of intense fighting

## WEB DESK

ANKARA: A joint Turkish and Russian center to monitor a cease-fire deal between Azerbaijan and Armenia will play a significant role in maintaining permanent peace in Upper Karabakh, Turkey's national defense minister said on Monday. "The joint center was opened and started to operate. We hope that the cease-fire will become permanent with the contribution of this center, together with all other efforts carried out to ensure stability, peace and tranquility in the region," Hulusi Akar said in a videoconference of top military officials.

Akar expressed hope that the countries in the region will respect each other's rights and interests in line with international law. The Turkish general working at the joint center also attended the meeting. Akar gave several instructions to the commander who briefed the meeting about the situation and activities in the field. The joint center to monitor a cease-fire deal between Azerbaijan and Armenia became operational on Saturday. Established in the Merzilli village of the Aghdam region, the center will monitor the implementation of the Russian-brokered agreement which was reached in November after six weeks of intense fighting. Following the Nov. 10 truce, Turkey and Russia signed a memorandum of understanding to set up a joint center to monitor the peace deal

on Azerbaijani territories liberated from Armenia's occupation. Relations between the former Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan had been tense since 1991, when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, internationally recognized as an Azerbaijani territory, and seven adjacent regions. When new clashes erupted on Sept. 27, 2020, the Armenian army launched attacks on civilians and Azerbaijani forces and violated several humanitarian cease-fire agreements. During the 44-day conflict, Azerbaijan liberated several cities and nearly 300 settlements and villages from the nearly three-decade-long occupation. Despite the Nov. 10 deal ending the conflict, the Armenian army several times vio-

lated the agreement and martyred several Azerbaijani soldiers and a civilian, according to the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry. The truce is seen as a victory for Azerbaijan and a defeat for Armenia. Earlier Azerbaijan's Defence Minister Zakir Hasanov has said that the newly-inaugurated joint Turkish-Russian monitoring centre in the country will contribute to the restoration of lasting peace and security in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region liberated from Armenian occupation in a 44-day war between September 27 and November 10, 2020. Hasanov made the remarks at a briefing held after the opening ceremony of the joint monitoring centre in Azerbaijan's Aghdam region on January 30. The opening of the

centre, which will control the ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, was also attended by Turkish Deputy Defence Minister Yunus Emre Karaosmanoglu and Russian Deputy Defence Minister Alexander Fomin. "The memorandum signed between the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation on the establishment of a Joint Ceasefire Control Centre signed on November 11, 2020, is of special importance. The activities of the centre will contribute to the establishment of long-term peace and security in the region," Hasanov said. The minister expressed confidence that friendly and working relations will be established between Turkish and Russian colleagues at the centre.

## Barcelona to sue newspaper for publishing Messi's contract

## SPORTS DESK

BARCELONA: Barcelona will take legal action against the Spanish newspaper El Mundo after it published details of Lionel Messi's current contract, which it says is worth up to 555 million euros (\$674m) over four years. The club also insisted on Sunday they were not responsible for the leak, which it defined as a "private document governed by the principle of confidentiality between the parties". The club, however, did not deny the details of the report. El Mundo says the deal signed by football star Messi in 2017 is the "largest in the history of sport" and that it had contributed to the club's recent financial troubles, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19

pandemic - calling it the "colossal contract that ruins Barcelona". The 33-year-old could end up collecting a maximum of 555,237,619 euros (\$673,919,104) before it expires on June 30 this year, if all conditions were met. Messi would have to pay about half of that amount in taxes in Spain. With six months left of the deal to run, "the player has already earned 511,290,052 euros (\$621m), almost 92 percent of the possible total", the report claimed. "In view of the information published today in the newspaper El Mundo, in relation to the professional contract signed between FC Barcelona and the player Lionel Messi, the club regrets its publication given that it is a private document governed by the principle of confidentiality between the parties," said Barcelona in a statement. "FC Barcelona categorically denies any

responsibility for the publication of this document and will take appropriate legal action against the newspaper El Mundo, for any damage that may be caused as a result of this publication. "FC Barcelona expresses its absolute support for Lionel Messi, especially in the face of any attempt to discredit his image, and to damage his relationship with the club where he has worked to become the best player in the world and in football history." According to the report, Messi earned 115 million euros (\$140m) just for signing the contract in 2017 and among his potential bonuses is a 3,548,644-euro (\$4.3m) reward for winning the Champions League and 2,365,766 euros (\$2.9m) for winning Spain's La Liga, El Mundo claimed.



RAWALPINDI: Pakistan team during training session at the Pindi Cricket Stadium. - DNA

## Limited number of fans likely to attend PSL 6

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Limited number of fans are likely to attend the upcoming Pakistan Super League (PSL) season six matches, in Karachi and Lahore, after approval by National Command Operation Center (NCOC). According to sources, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Wasim Khan meet the NCOC officials in Islamabad and briefed them about board's plans for allowing fans back into the stadiums amid Covid-19 pandemic. The PCB chief assured NCOC that Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be strictly followed for the safety of everyone involved.

## ICC praises Gwadar's cricket stadium

The Senator Muhammad Ishaq Baloch Cricket Stadium in Gwadar was inaugurated last year in November by Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan



## DNA

KARACHI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) tweeted pictures of the picturesque Gwadar cricket stadium, a debate triggered online with some Indians claiming their stadiums are more beautiful than the one in Gwadar. The Senator Muhammad Ishaq Baloch Cricket Stadium in Gwadar was inaugurated last year in November by Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan. The stadium received praise on social media after TV personality Fakhr-

e-Alam tweeted about it and the ICC shared breathtakingly beautiful images of the venue on social media. Apparently, some Indians were put off due to the praise garnered by the Pakistani cricket stadium. Some took to social media to argue that the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium (HPCAS) in Dharamshala is more picturesque. Cricket commentator Zainab Abbas's tweet was also flooded with comments of various Indians, who disagreed with her opinion on the Gwadar stadium being better than the Newlands one.

## Head coach Misbah ul Haq unfazed by 'sack talk'

"The Pakistan team performed in tough circumstances in the Karachi Test. The conditions in Rawalpindi will be different. We will try to not repeat the mistakes we have made in the past. South Africa is a great side and has the ability to fight back

## DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's head coach Misbahul Haq, who was recently replaced as the chief selector of the national side, claimed that he was not concerned by the talk about him being sacked after the Men in Green's recent series loss in New Zealand, while talking at a virtual press conference in Rawalpindi. The 46-year-old stated that he was focused on Pakistan's second Test against South Africa at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi. "I am not concerned by all the talk [about him being sacked] that

was happening after the New Zealand series. My complete focus is on the Rawalpindi Test," Misbah said. "The Pakistan team performed in tough circumstances in the Karachi Test. The conditions in Rawalpindi will be different. We will try to not repeat the mistakes we have made in the past. South Africa is a great side and has the ability to fight back. We will be trying to win the Rawalpindi Test and the series. We will make changes if required after looking at the pitch," he added. The head coach praised the improvements made by fast-bowler Haris Rauf while pointing out that South Africa's Tabraiz Shamsi could pose a big threat for Pakistan in

## Haris Rauf almost ready for Test debut against SA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan men's team head coach Misbah-ul-Haq revealed that the 27-year-old Haris Rauf is developing as a Test Bowler. Haris, who has played 11 T20Is and two ODIs for Pakistan, was named to the Test squad for the first time and chief selector Mohammad Wasim rated him as 'X-factor'. "Haris is bowling really well. He has been bowling 13-14 overs with the new and old ball. He is getting ready and almost there. If required, we will look to him," Misbah said in a virtual presser from Pindi Cricket Stadium. Meanwhile, Misbah is ready to make a bold decision if conditions allow them to choose one spinner from Yasir Shah and Nauman Ali, performers of first Karachi Test. - DNA

pitch in Rawalpindi was very green during first-class cricket. It seems that the pitch might be really dry when we eventually play though," he said. "Tabraiz Shamsi is a wrist spinner which could prove very effective in dry conditions. Our team played spin really well in Karachi and we will try to replicate that in our next match as well," he added. The Men in Green will take on South Africa in the second Test which will begin on February 4 at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi. Pakistan currently lead the two-match Test series at 1-0 and would be itching to come away with a series victory on home soil.

## Melania may 'move fast' to divorce Trump

From Page 01

the couple had reportedly been sleeping in separate bedrooms at the White House. Schiffer thinks any further indictment of Trump - who is the only US president to have been impeached twice - will be the last straw for the former first lady. "An indictment for Melania will be neither cool nor fashionable to her acquired tastes. "Charges against the former President of the United States of America will be the final act in her Trumpian saga that triggers a clear and present danger to their union," he said. According to the expert, Melania's advisors would be urging her to "move fast" to divorce Trump since it could cost the former American president a whopping \$150mn.

## Vaccine gift a proof of 'China-Pak friendship'

From Page 01

FM Qureshi said: "I want to thank the Chinese government, President Xi Jinping, and the people of China on behalf of the Pakistani government and Prime Minister Imran Khan." The minister also expressed his gratitude to his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, with whom he was in talks for the early delivery of the vaccine. Qureshi added that Beijing has stood "shoulder-to-shoulder with Islamabad in the fight against the coronavirus." Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong said Pakistan was the "first country in the world to receive vaccines donated by the Chinese government", calling it a "manifestation of brotherhood". Rong said that Pakistan is China's "closest friend" and is a "priority for cooperation." The envoy also mentioned Pakistan's approval of Sino-pharm vaccine and trials of another Chinese vaccine.

## Lifebuoy joins hands with PCB

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Lifebuoy Pakistan, the world's highest-selling hygiene and handwashing brand, announced that it was signing a partnership with Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for the year 2021 with an aim to enhance awareness around hygiene, on Tuesday 19th January at a signing ceremony held at the National Stadium in Karachi. The news garnered excitement all over social media with love pouring in from fans and celebrities countrywide who showed enthusiasm and interest over a much-needed collaboration. Lifebuoy is a brand we've gotten used to seeing on our digital screens, television screens and even on outdoor billboards more than any other brand since the pandemic hit. Hygiene messages from the brand have facilitated the need to stay protected in the time of Covid-19. The communication from the brand has reached rural areas as well as urban because of the many efforts put in. Similarly, the collaboration with the high profile cricket platform in Pakistan via the Pakistan Cricket Board is another effort by the brand to spread the message of hand hygiene even further by as the reach and expanse of Pakistan cricket can help take the handwashing message to all parts of the country. In this year-long agreement, Lifebuoy will provide hygiene products for all local tours as Pakistan will host teams from South Africa, England, New Zealand and the West Indies throughout the year. Cricket fans are thrilled by the news as if the pandemic situation improves, they could be watching cricket matches in their home country.

The signing ceremony was a tightly controlled event where PCB Director Commercial, Babar Hamid, was present along with Unilever Director Beauty and Personal Care, Asima Haq. This partnership is not the first between the brand and the cricket board. We have seen collaborations last year during the Pakistan cricket team's tour of England, that led to exciting content creation aimed at enhancing hygiene awareness and turned out to be so beneficial, both parties agreed to partner for 2021

## Briefs

Indonesia:  
Islamic  
banking  
grew faster

DNA

JAKARTA: President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) highlighted the performance of Indonesia's Islamic banking industry that grew at a faster rate than that of conventional banking despite the challenging times presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. "In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am pleased to be informed that the performance of the Indonesian Islamic banking continues to record stable growth, and that Islamic banking has managed to grow, even higher than conventional banking. We should be grateful," President Jokowi stated while inaugurating PT Bank Syariah Indonesia Tbk at the State Palace here on Monday. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Islamic banking industry marked a 10.9 percent (year-on-year/yoy) growth in assets or higher than conventional banking that recorded a 7.7-percent growth, according to the head of state. Moreover, from the collection of third-party funds (DPK), the Islamic banking industry was able to record a growth of 11.56 percent, while conventional banks grew up to 11.49 percent. Meanwhile, from the financing side, the Islamic banking industry in the country had grown about 9.42 percent, or much higher than conventional banks that recorded a 0.55-percent growth.

Somalia  
militants  
attack  
Afrik hotel

WEB DESK

MOGADISHU: A gun battle between militant Islamists and Somali security forces at a hotel in the capital, Mogadishu, is now over. At least five people were killed in the attack at the Afrik Hotel, which began with a car bomb on Sunday. Al-Shabab said it was responsible. The group, which is linked to al-Qaeda, regularly carries out attacks against the government. At least four attackers also died - according to media three were shot and one blew himself up. A car hit the hotel's front entrance and detonated before gunmen stormed the building, according to officials and others at the scene. "The blast made the hotel tremble as we sat inside and were talking. We were panicked, confused," eyewitness Ahmed Nur was quoted by Reuters as saying. "The operation is over now. Nine people, including four attackers, died and over 10 civilians were injured. There is no electricity," a police spokesman told reporters from the scene and via Facebook. Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble said in a statement that among those killed was a former military general, Mohamed Nur Galal.

EU still aims  
to vaccinate  
70% of adults

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen defended the EU's vaccination record on Sunday and doubled down on ambitious inoculation targets. "We want to have vaccinated 70% of adults in Europe by the end of summer. That would be the approximate time period that we would need to reach such a vaccination rate," she said in an interview with German public broadcaster ZDF. Her remarks echo a pledge she made earlier this month, with her second-in-command, EU Commission Vice President Margaritis Schinas, clarifying that "summer" was to mean the time between June and the end of August. Talking to ZDF on Tuesday, Von der Leyen sidestepped a question comparing the EU's somewhat sluggish vaccination rates to those in the United States and the United Kingdom. "I think the only race we are in is with the virus and against time," she said. So far, 18 million vaccine doses have been delivered to the EU and 12 million people out of the bloc's 446 million population have gotten at least a first dose.



GILGIT: High Commissioner of Canada Wendy Gilmour enjoying her stay at a ski resort during her recent visit to Gilgit. - DNA

Military coup in Myanmar as  
Aung San Suu Kyi detained

"The United States opposes any attempt to alter the outcome of recent elections or impede Myanmar's democratic transition, and will take action against those responsible if these steps are not reversed," spokeswoman Jen Psaki said

DNA

RANGOON: Myanmar's military seized power on Monday in a coup against the democratically elected government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who was detained along with other leaders of her National League for Democracy (NLD) party in early morning raids. The army said it had carried out the detentions in response to "election fraud", handing power to military chief Min Aung Hlaing and imposing a state of emergency for one year, according to a statement on a military-owned television station. A military spokesman did not answer phone

calls seeking further comment. Phone lines to the capital Naypyitaw and the main commercial centre of Yangon were not reachable, and state TV went off air hours before parliament had been due to sit for the first time since the NLD's landslide election win in November, viewed as a referendum on Suu Kyi's fledgling democratic government. Soldiers took up positions at city hall in Yangon and mobile internet data and phone services in the NLD strong hold were disrupted, residents said. Internet connectivity also had fallen dramatically, monitoring service NetBlocks said. Suu Kyi, Myanmar President Win Myint and other

Military coup condemned  
around the world

LONDON: Governments around the world are calling for the restoration of Myanmar's power-sharing government after the military staged a coup, arresting civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other politicians. ASEAN: Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed "grave concern about the latest situation in Myanmar," adding hopes that all parties would "exercise restraint." Indonesia's foreign minister likewise expressed "concern" while also urging "self-restraint." But Philippine presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the situation is an "internal matter." "Our primary concern is the safety of our people, he said. "Our armed forces are on standby in case we need to airlift them as well as navy ships to repatriate them if necessary." Bangladesh: "Bangladesh firmly adheres to and promotes democratic ethos. We hope that the democratic process and constitutional arrangements will be upheld in Myanmar." Bangladesh's foreign ministry said in a statement. Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden and Denmark condemned the military's seizure of power. - DNA

NLD leaders had been "taken" in the early hours of the morning. "I want to tell our people not to respond rashly and I want them to act according to the law," he said, adding that he expected to be arrested himself. The detentions came after days of escalating tension between the civilian government and the military that stirred fears of a coup in the aftermath of the election. The White House said President Joe Biden had been briefed on the arrest of Suu Kyi. "The United States opposes any attempt to alter the outcome of recent elections or impede Myanmar's democratic transition, and will take action against those responsible if these steps are

not reversed," spokeswoman Jen Psaki said in a statement. The Australian government said it was "deeply concerned at reports the Myanmar military is once again seeking to seize control of Myanmar" and called for the immediate release of the unlawfully detained leaders. Japan said it was watching the situation and currently had no plans to repatriate Japanese nationals from Myanmar. Nobel Peace Prize winner Suu Kyi, 75, came to power after a 2015 election win that followed decades of house arrest in a struggle for democracy with Myanmar's junta that turned her into an international icon.

One Covid-19 case puts 2M  
Australians under lockdown

FOREIGN DESK

PERTH: About 2 million Australians began their first full day of a strict lockdown following the discovery of one case in the community in Perth, capital of Western Australia state, but no new cases have since been found. Authorities ordered a five-day lockdown of Perth after a security guard at a hotel used to

quarantine people returning from overseas was found to have contracted the virus. The state government said 66 people have been deemed close contacts of the unidentified guard and none of those already tested were infected. Tests on the rest of the close contacts were expected to be completed on Monday, McGowan said. Australia has managed to largely contain its novel coronavirus epidemic, limiting

cases to nearly 29,000 and deaths to 909, with the sort of decisive action seen in Perth, and tight border controls. The British government has ordered 40 million further doses of Valneva's vaccine candidate for 2022, bringing its total orders to 100 million. The French drugmaker said. Britain could still order a further 90 million doses between 2023 and 2025, the

company said. The firm, which expects a read-out of its Phase I/II clinical trial within three months, said it had already started commercial production in Scotland. The Scottish site is ready to supply the vaccine as soon as it is proven to be safe, and effective and has been approved by the British healthcare watchdog, the interim chair of government's vaccines taskforce, Clive Dix, said in a statement.

Trump hires new  
lawyers to fight  
impeachment

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: Former US President Donald Trump hired two new lawyers to head his defence team for his historic second impeachment trial set to begin next week. Trump's announcement on Sunday follows reports he abruptly parted ways with several of his impeachment lawyers. Lawyers David Schoen and Bruce Castor will head the defence effort in the trial set to begin in the US Senate on February 9, Trump's office said in a statement. Schoen had already been helping Trump and advisers prepare for the proceedings, according to the former president's office. Both attorneys issued statements through Trump's office saying they were honoured to take the job. "The strength of our Constitution is about to be tested like never before in our history. It is strong and resilient. A document written for the ages, and it will triumph over partisanship yet again, and always," said Castor. Butch Bowers and Deborah Barberi, two South Carolina lawyers, are no longer on Trump's team, sources familiar with the situation told news agencies on Saturday, describing their departure as a "mutual decision". Castor has focused on criminal law throughout his career, while Schoen specialises in "civil rights litigation in Alabama and federal criminal defence work, including white collar and other complex cases, in New York", the statement said. Trump, who left office January 20, faces trial on a charge that he incited the mob that stormed the US Capitol building in an effort to block his re-election to President Joe Biden. He is due to file a response to the impeachment charges on Tuesday. The trial is historic on two fronts, marking the first time a president has been impeached twice and the first time a former United States president has faced such a trial. Schoen had already been working with the defence team, and he and Castor "agree that this impeachment is unconstitutional", the statement said.



TASHKENT: Adviser to PM on commerce and investment Abdul Razak Dawood meeting with Adkham Ikramov, president of Uzbekistan chamber of commerce and industry. - DNA

## Modi breaks silence on months-long protests

Modi told opposition party leaders on Saturday an offer to freeze the laws for 18 months still stands, according to a government summary of the meeting. Agriculture employs about half of India's labour force

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said the protesters that stormed New Delhi's Red Fort last week caused "insult" to the country and that his government will push on with sweeping agriculture reform, his first public comments on a months-long farmers' agitation. "The country was saddened by the insult to the Tricolour [Indian flag] on the 26th of January in Delhi," Modi said in a radio address on Sunday. "The government is committed to modernising agriculture and is also taking many steps in that direction."

Tens of thousands of farmers have camped on the outskirts of the capital for more than two months, protesting new agricultural laws they say benefit private buyers at the expense of growers. A tractor parade on Tuesday's Republic Day turned violent when some protesters deviated from predetermined routes, clashing with police and breaking into the historic Red Fort complex in the capital. The demonstrators swarmed the 400-year-old World Heritage-listed fort, raising religious and farm union flags, though they did not remove the national flag from the top of the monument. One protester died and hundreds, including policemen, were

Indian journalists  
accused of sedition

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Several senior Indian journalists have been charged with sedition over their reporting and online posts about a farmers' protest last week, sparking criticism from media associations. The cases have been filed with police in at least five states against the journalists, who include Rajdeep Sardesai, a prominent anchor on the India Today television channel, and Vinod Jose, executive editor of the English-language Caravan magazine. Filed by residents of the states, the cases allege that the journalists provoked violence during protests by farmers at New Delhi's Red Fort on January 26 through inaccurate posts on Twitter and reports that police had killed a protester. Tens of thousands of farmers have camped out on the outskirts of the capital for more than two months, demanding the withdrawal of new agricultural laws that they say benefit private buyers at the expense of farmers.

injured in the clashes. Farm leaders say they were not responsible for violence, that it was caused by a minority of those on the parade, and that they will resume their talks with the government. Modi told opposition party leaders on Saturday an offer to freeze the laws for 18 months still stands, according to a government summary of the meeting. Agriculture employs about half of India's labour force, and unrest among an estimated 150 million land-owning farmers is one of the biggest challenges to Modi's rule since he first came to power in 2014. Modi's comments came as police arrested at least one

journalist and filed complaints against others, stoking fears of a media crackdown over the reporting of the protests. Mandeep Punia, who writes for the English-language Caravan magazine, was detained on Saturday at Singhu, one of the main protest sites. He was photographed being taken to court on Sunday, where he is expected to be charged on unknown offences, local media reported. Since Tuesday, at least five complaints have been registered against Indian journalists and an opposition Congress member of parliament on several allegations, including sedition and criminal conspiracy.

Myanmar:  
Timeline  
of a fragile  
democracy

WEB DESK

RANGOON: Here is a timeline: 1947: Aung San, who fought against the Japanese and led the country to independence from Britain, is assassinated. 1948: Myanmar achieves formal independence under President U Nu. 1962: The military under General Ne Win takes power in a coup. 1988: Pro-democracy protests in August are met with a brutal military crackdown and as many as 5,000 people are killed. 1990: Under international pressure the military calls an election, which the NLD wins by a landslide. 1995: In July, Aung San Suu Kyi released from house arrest. 1997: Myanmar joins the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). 2000: Aung San Suu Kyi detained again as Europe tightens sanctions on Myanmar. 2002: Aung San Suu Kyi released again and allowed to travel around the country. 2003: Aung San Suu Kyi is arrested again - supposedly for her own protection - after an attack on her convoy. 2006: The military announces it has moved the capital to Naypyidaw, a new city. 2007: Thousands take to the streets of Yangon in protests led by Buddhist monks. 2008: The process of democratisation begins with a controversial constitutional referendum that took place only two days after Cyclone Nargis. 2019: Fighting begins in Rakhine between government troops and the Arakan Army (AA), an ethnic Rakhine group seeking greater regional autonomy. Suu Kyi urges the army to "crush" the rebels. 2020: The NLD claims a resounding victory in parliamentary elections taking more votes than it did in 2015. 2021: February 1: The military imposes a state of emergency and says power has been transferred to military chief Min Aung Hlaing, after Aung San Suu Kyi and other senior government officials were arrested in a series of early morning raids.

Pfizer pledges  
75m more  
EU vaccines

WEB DESK

BRUSSELS: BioNTech-Pfizer has promised to deliver up to 75 million more coronavirus vaccine doses to the EU in the second quarter of 2021, the company's head Sierk Poetting said in a statement on Monday. So far, the EU's vaccine rollout has been hampered by bloc-wide vaccine shortages. Two of the EU's vaccine suppliers, BioNTech-Pfizer and AstraZeneca, have run into production issues. This has caused vaccination rates in EU countries to be well behind those in other places around the world, including Israel, the United States and Britain. German firm BioNTech and US company Pfizer will increase production with a new facility set to open in the central German city of Marburg in February. It will have the capacity to produce 750 million vaccine doses each year.

Hezbollah  
claims  
downing  
Israeli drone

WEB DESK

BEIRUT: Lebanon's Hezbollah movement has said it shot down an Israeli drone that flew over the United Nations-demarcated Blue Line border. In a statement carried by the movement's Al Manar TV, Hezbollah said it "downed a drone belonging to the Israeli enemy that had entered Lebanese airspace outside Biida" in southern Lebanon on Monday. The Israeli army said, during an operational activity along the Blue Line, a drone had fallen in the Lebanese territory. "There is no risk of breach of information," it said. Hezbollah has in the past claimed downing Israeli drones. The incident comes 10 days after the Israeli army shot down an unmanned aircraft it said had entered its airspace from Lebanon. Israel and Lebanon are still technically at war, and UN forces UNIFIL patrols the border. Tensions in the region have been rising over the past months amid Israeli air attacks on Iran-backed fighters in neighbouring Syria.

**Briefs**

**South Africa receives first batch of vaccine**

DNA

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa on Monday took delivery of its first shipment of coronavirus vaccines, paving the way to the first phase of inoculation in Africa's worst-hit country. President Cyril Ramaphosa received one million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, produced by the Serum Institute of India, at Johannesburg's O.R. Tambo airport, footage from public broadcaster SABC showed. Another 500,000 doses of the vaccine are expected later this month. The jobs will be administered to some 1.2 million health workers, given top priority in the first phase of vaccination. First injections will be administered in around two weeks after the vaccines go through quarantine, regulatory and quality-control procedures. With almost 1.5 million detected infections and more than 44,000 fatalities, South Africa has the highest number of cases and deaths on the continent. Authorities plan to vaccinate at least 67 percent of the population, or 40 million people, by year's end.

**Senate panel rejects PRRM Bill**

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony on Monday rejected a (private Bill) the Protection of the Rights of Religious Minorities (PRRM) Bill, saying minorities were enjoying complete religious freedom in the country. The meeting of the committee chaired by JUI-F Senator Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri observed that existing laws were already providing unprecedented religious freedom to minorities. The Bill was presented by PML-N Senator Javed Abbasi. Chairman Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri said the incumbent government was constructing even temples for minorities. Minorities have the liberty to establish their religious educational institutes. Temple vandalising in Karak had wrongly been attributed to the Muslims. Senator Siraj-ul-Haq termed the Minority Protection Bill as part of the agenda of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), saying Nikah of juveniles can't be solemnised. Mover of the Bill Javed Abbasi said the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan guarantees minority rights. Eight million Hindus were living in Pakistan. Minorities should have the opportunities to go to their sacred religious places in a free environment. PPP Senator Krishna Kumari Kolhi (Kishoo Bai) walked out from the meeting in a protest over rejection of the Bill.

**Ashrafi slams attempted thrashing of headmaster**

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi Monday condemned the attempted thrashing of a minority community school headmaster in Layyah and assured conducting impartial investigations of the incident. In a tweet, he assured making public the outcome of investigations. He said the headmaster was safe and the culprits have been arrested. He appreciated the Muslim teachers, who protected the headmaster from attackers by risking their lives. He said the state of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan must work together to fight against those trying to pollute innocent minds. Pakistan has a law for protection of 'Namoos-e-Risalat' and for the belief in the finality of prophethood. Those who take the law into their own hands are in fact attacking the law of 'Namoos-e-Risalat' and belief in the finality of prophethood.

**President for promotion of IT, digital communication**

The president appreciated the HEC and other collaborating partners for holding the event attended by around 500 global participants and said the introduction and absorption of IT was inevitable for Pakistan as well as the world

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Monday while citing huge potential of young population, called for promotion of information technology and digital communication to meet country's needs as well as strengthen the economy. Addressing a virtually held inaugural session of 51st Asia Pacific Advanced Network (APAN) organized by Higher Education Commission, the president said digital communication had always been vital but its importance had been multiplied during the COVID-19 era. He said Pakistan had adopted two-pronged approach by investing in human capital and technology as the country formulated a comprehensive liberalization policy in 2003 for telecommunication sector. The president said Pakistan had

more than 300,000 English speaking IT professionals having no language barrier. There are 13 software technology parks for encouragement of IT investment with the government giving incentives in the sector. He said around 20,000 IT graduates and engineers entered the market every year and mentioned his initiative of artificial intelligence to train the youth in network area, blockchain technology, cyber security and other modern fields. He said under the initiative, the government wanted to train the graduates and undergraduates in this field. He said the developed countries like Japan were willing to even absorb 100,000 well-trained IT experts. The president appreciated the HEC and other collaborating partners for holding the event attended by around 500 global

participants and said the introduction and absorption of IT was inevitable for Pakistan as well as the world. He said the HEC had also done a tremendous work for being responsible to give directions to the universities and colleges. He said effective communication and effective disbursement of knowledge to all repositories of knowledge had always been important but it had become more important today. The president recalled that even back in 2006, in his address in China, he had called for promotion of distance learning for being an easier and less expensive method of teaching. He said as the need for IT graduates was growing tremendously, the HEC was striving to ensure availability of open-source knowledge to all graduates in IT and other sectors. He said Pakistan was

moving towards a digital economy and enabling the people to communicate and exchange knowledge would improve economy in many ways. He said Pakistan had already achieved tele-density with around 176 million cell phone users in its total 220 million population. He said though the COVID had hurt the education sector it gave a boost to IT sector. President Alvi said Pakistan was looking towards e-commerce, e-health, e-finance. He said Pakistan had been able to manage the COVID pandemic situation by ensuring a balance between the lives and livelihood. President Alvi said unlike other countries in the region, Pakistan allowed business activity to avert the hunger related deaths. He said the ICT exports were growing by 30 percent annually since last five years and freelancing also wit-

nessed 47pc growth. He said Pakistan stood at fourth in freelancing. He said the government has a plan to launch 5G technology in 2022 that would set a new chapter in ICT-based socio-economic transformation of Pakistan. Regarding the freelancing revenue, Pakistan stood at 47 pc this year and fourth in freelance development, he added. This shows Pakistan was ready to service the world needing the freelancing software, he added. The president said Pakistan had 60 percent of its 220 population between 15 to 29 age group and if trained in IT, they could serve the countries and companies in the world. He said HEC was doing tremendous work for promotion of IT education and digital communication by making 60,000 books and journals available online and establishing smart classrooms.

**Hamza falls ill in Kot Lakhpat Jail**

DNA

LAHORE: Leader of the Opposition in Punjab Assembly Hamza Shehbaz's health has deteriorated, media reported on Monday. The PML-N leader is currently incarcerated in Kot Lakhpat Jail, Lahore. PML-N sources said that Hamza Shehbaz would not attend the Punjab Assembly session due to his ailing health. It may be recalled that his health had deteriorated a few days back as well. The senior PML-N leader is in the custody of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a money laundering case. On November 11, 2020, Opposition Leader in National Assembly and PML-N president Mian Shehbaz Sharif and son Hamza Shehbaz were indicted in money laundering reference by accountability court. All the accused in the case pleaded not guilty. Shehbaz Sharif, while rejecting allegations of the anti-graft watchdog, said that he was being politically victimized.

**SC extends detention of accused in Pearl case**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) on Monday extended the detention order of the accused in the US journalist Daniel Pearl's murder case by one day. The apex court, while hearing the plea against the detention of the accused, summoned complete record of the case from Sindh High Court (SHC) and adjourned the hearing till Tuesday. Earlier, Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) on last Thursday ordered to release accused in case of murder of journalist Daniel Pearl. Supreme Court bench headed by Justice Mueen-ud-Din Ahmad dismissed the petition of the Sindh government against Sindh High Court (SHC) decision to overturn the conviction of accused. Sindh High Court had commuted the death sentence of prime suspect Ahmed Omer Sheikh to seven years in prison in abduction and murder case of Daniel Pearl - an American journalist. Justice KK Agha and Justice Zulfiqar Ali Sangi issued verdict on appeals, lodged by the suspects against their sentences, after 18 years and acquitted the other three accused in the case who had been handed over life terms earlier. Fahad Naseem, Salman Saqib and Sheikh Adil were the co-accused. Ahmed Omer Sheikh, the main accused, is a British national. The SHC remarked that the kidnapping case is proven against Ahmed Omer Sheikh while the murder accusations have not been proven against any of the suspects. The Sindh government on last Friday has filed a review petition in the Supreme Court against the acquittal of the men accused of murdering American journalist Daniel Pearl. The petition was filed against the January 28 decision of the apex court. The federal government has decided to become a party in Sindh government's review appeal against the acquittal of the accused in the Daniel Pearl case.

**Missing Persons Commission disposes of 4,822 cases**

ISLAMABAD: The Missing Persons Commission has disposed of 4,822 cases upto January 31, 2020, says the latest progress report released by Secretary (Co-ED) on cases of alleged enforced disappearances. A total number of 6,921 cases were received by the Missing Persons Commission upto December 2020. During January 2021, 23 more cases were received by the commission and total numbers of cases reached to 6,944. The Missing Persons Commission disposed of 24 cases in January 2021 and thus total disposal of Missing Persons reached to 4822 till January 31 and balance as on January 31, 2021 is 2,122. - APP



ISLAMABAD: First batch of Covid-19 vaccines being unloaded from special plane. The vaccines arrived from China early Monday morning. - DNA

**PM Imran to head PTI senate polls committee**

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan will head the PTI's parliamentary committee for senate elections. According to a notification, the eleven member committee will be supervised by Prime Minister Imran Khan, while the members of the committee are: Sindh governor Imran Ismail, KP governor Shah Farman, Punjab governor Chaudhry Sarwar, Minister of Defense Pervaiz Khattak, Federal planning minister Asad Umar, Federal minister for education Shafiqat Mehmood, Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar, Chief Minister KP Mehmood Khan, Amir Kiyan and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

**PIA to confiscate passports of crew after steward missing**

*PIA GM Flight Services Aamir Bashir issued the new guidelines and said "the steps have been taken in view of the incidents of cabin staff slipping [away in other countries]"*

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) issued new directives on Monday for its cabin crew that include confiscation of passports on arrival abroad in a bid to control recent incidents of staff "slipping away" in other countries. Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) General Manager Flight Services Aamir Bashir issued the new guidelines and said "the steps have been taken in view of the incidents of cabin staff slipping [away in other countries]." A Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) spokesperson acknowledged that there had been two recent incidents of cabin crew going missing in Canada, adding that the matter was reported to Canadian immigration authorities. According to an email about the new rules, seen by media, passports of the cabin crew would be kept in the custody of the station manager after they clear immigration and customs checks post arrival in other countries. The passports would be returned at the time of check-in on departing flights, Bashir said. The second directive issued concerns cabin crew mobility and security. It says hotel security would be activated to ensure that every member of the cabin crew checks in on arrival and any discrepancy in staff can be reported by hotel staff. The new rules also say that due to the prevailing pandemic situation, mobility of cabin crew would be restricted and they would not be allowed to stay out of hotel premises at night. - DNA

**Pak calls for restraint after Myanmar's military coup**

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has called for restraint in Myanmar after Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President U Win Myint and other senior officials were detained by the military early on Monday. The Myanmar military TV declared on Monday a state of emergency in the country for one year after the government leaders were detained. Responding to media queries, the spokesperson of the Pakistani Foreign Ministry said, "We are closely following the developments in Myanmar. "We hope that all parties involved will exercise restraint, uphold the rule of law, engage constructively, and work towards a peaceful outcome," the spokesman said. Myo Nyunt, spokesperson of the ruling NLD in Myanmar, told the media that he had received internal reports about their state counsellor and the president being taken by the military.

**Indonesia likely to get millions of COVID-19 doses**

DNA

JAKARTA: The Indonesian government is likely to receive tens of millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccine from AstraZeneca through the COVAX facility, co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the World Health Organization and the vaccine alliance, Gavi. This scheme allows participating countries to get vaccines up to 20% of their total population once they are available, said the Health Ministry in Jakarta on Monday. Siti Nadia Tarmizi, the ministry's spokesperson for vaccination, said in a statement that based on the latest letter from Gavi, there are indications of an allocation between 13.7 million and 23.1 million doses of vaccine to the country. Tarmizi said the allocation will be sent in two batches, 25-35% in the first quarter and 65-75% in the second quarter of this year.

"The distribution will be carried out after the AstraZeneca vaccine receives an emergency use listing from WHO," she said, adding that it is also awaiting validation by the Independent Allocation of Vaccines Task Force and availability of supplies from manufacturers. Tarmizi said the vaccine developed by the UK-based company and researchers at Oxford University will also need emergency use authorization from the Indonesian Food and Drug Administration prior to its use.

**Over 0.5m patients recover**

ISLAMABAD: The country on Monday surpassed half a million mark of recovered Coronavirus patients with national tally of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 33,493 with 1,615 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,278 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Twenty Six corona patients died during past 24 hours, 24 were under treatment in hospital and two in their respective homes or quarantines died on Sunday, according to the latest update issued by the NCOC. During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in the Punjab followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Some 34,785 tests were conducted across the country during last 24 hours including 11,031 in Sindh, 11,431 in Punjab, 6,077 in KP, 5,059 in ICT, 438 in Balochistan, 400 in GB, and 349 in AJK. Around 501,252 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. Since the pandemic outbreak, a total of 546,428 cases were detected that also included the perished, recovered and under treatment COVID-19 patients so far, including AJK 9,019, Balochistan 18,823, GB 4,909, ICT 41,418, KP 67,214, Punjab 157,796 and Sindh 247,249. - DNA

**Sindh govt politicizing vaccine procurement: Umar**

The minister said when the injustices against the people of Sindh are discussed with the Sindh government then they "remember the 18th amendment"

DNA

SHIKARPUR: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar on Monday said that the Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) Sindh government was lying about coronavirus vaccine procurement, the federal government is providing the vaccine to the provinces. Addressing in a ceremony in Shikarpur, Umar said that the PPP should be "ashamed" for politicising an "issue related to people's health". Asad Umar said the federal government will provide vaccines to the Sindh government because the people of Sindh are as precious to us as people of other areas and Sindh is ours just like Pakistan is ours. The minister said when the injustices against the people of Sindh are discussed with the Sindh government then they "remember the 18th amendment". He said he will request Prime Minister Imran Khan to "take responsibility" for the people

**Punjab CM to launch corona vaccination from Wednesday**

LAHORE: Chief Minister of Punjab will launch coronavirus vaccination drive in the province from Wednesday. Provincial Health Minister Yasmeen Rashid here on Monday said that the vaccination drive will begin simultaneously across Pakistan. "China has gifted vaccine to Pakistan and the government has discussed the matter with all provinces," Punjab's health minister said. "It is misinformation that Sindh has imported coronavirus vaccine and vaccination being started in the province," Rashid said. The vaccination drive will begin simultaneously across the country with the vaccine consignment came to Pakistan from China, she said. "No VIP will be preferred for vaccine as front-line healthcare workers would have foremost priority in the vaccination drive," health minister reiterated. "China is an all-weather friend, we are grateful for its gift of 0.5 million vaccine doses," Yasmeen Rashid said. All Chief Ministers will launch COVID-19 vaccination for the front-line health workers from Wednesday, minister said. Pakistan has also secured 17 million vaccine doses with Covax vaccine alliance for its population and more vaccine shots will reach the country by the end of February, the minister said. It is to be mentioned here that a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) plane with the first batch of COVID-19 vaccine doses reached Islamabad this morning. The plane carrying 500,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine, gifted from China to Pakistan landed at the Noor Khan Airbase. According to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), all arrangements for storage, transportation and administration of the vaccine have been finalized. - DNA

of Sindh and protection of their lives and livelihood. The minister said he would be discussing development projects later in the day with the elected representatives and leaders of the region, a report of which would be submitted to the prime minister. He recalled that when PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari called out for lockdowns "and when Sindh Chief Minister said no one dies from hunger, the prime minister knew what poverty could do and the Centre announced the biggest welfare project for the help of the people in Pakistan's history". Umar said in just two months after the onset of the pandemic, Rs200 billion were distributed among the people of Pakistan, out of which Rs65bn were spent on the people of Sindh. Commenting on the broadsheet investigation, Asad Umar said that a former judge of the Supreme Court has been appointed as head of the committee and added that the decision was taken by the federal government. We do not want to take direct action on the issue, he said.