

Samana

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A sister publication of **CENTRELINE & DNA News Agency**

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February 5 to be observed in befitting manner

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Briefs

Shehbaz Sharif in hospital

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and Paki stan Muslim

League Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif has on Thursday been hospitalized after feeling unwell. According to details, the opposition leader has been moved to Lahore's Inmol Hospital from the Kot Lakhpat Jail for Positron Emission To-mography (PET) scan in strict security. A special medical board - under the executive director of the Punjab Institute of Neurosciences (PINS) - is treating Shehbaz Sharif.

Govt bill to bring transparency

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House Senate Shahzad Waseem Thursday said the

government presented bill in the Parlia ment to bring transparency in the Senate elections and end the unfair practices of the past regimes. Speaking in the Senate, he said it was a reality that elections in the Senate in the past were not transparent and there were incidents of horse trading and buy ing of votes. The government and the opposition had to decide to end these unfair practices, he said adding after the previous election of Chairman Senate, the opposition should have identified those who changed their loyalties.

Foreigners taking decisions

NAZIR SIYAL



lim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former Prime Min-

ister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said that foreigners are taking decisions of the country as one third of the federal cabinet consists of foreign nationals. Talking to media persons, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that if Senate elections are to be held with show of hand, than elections of National and provincial elections should also be held in a similar way.

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Kashmir Solidarity Day to be marked in befitting manner

Rowdy scenes in lower house as MPs scuffle

The opposition members raised slogans against govt; a few MPs scuffled; house adjourned sans any headway on the Senate election bill

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: A rumpus on Thursday has erupted in National Assembly (NA) after opposition parties staged protest during the speech of Federal Minister for Power, Petroleum and Natural Resources Omar Ayub Khan. According to details, the opposition parties gathered around the rostrum of deputy speaker Qasim Suri and chanted slogans. The reaction came after Omar Ayub alleged previous governments of spreading landmines in power sector. He said that the action against those responsible for electricity theft in Sindh was halted.

The opposition members raised slogans like "Saaray Lotay, Haaye Niazi", "Roti, Mehangayi, Haaye Niazi" and "Unemployment, Haaye Niazi" in front of the speaker's dais. The members were also carrying placards inscribed with anti-government slogans.

Several opposition legislators were also carrying placards with "chor" (thief) written on them while some had slogans urging the speaker to allow them to speak. The opposition staged a protest during the speech of Federal Minister for Power, Petroleum and Natural Resources Omar Ayub Khan. Taking the floor, Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry said opposition

Continued on Page 06

FM slams opposition

Ansar Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has regretted Opposition's behavior in the National Assembly for not supporting 26th Constitution Amendment to hold Senate Election through open ballot and allowing dual Nationals to contest polls.

Speaking on the floor of the House, he said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf brought this amendment to end corrupt practices and orse-trading in the Senate Election. He said Pakistan Peoples' Party and Pakistan Muslim League-N have jointly promised in the Charter of Democracy to hold Senate Election through show of hands to

ensure transparency in the polling process and end sale and purchase of votes but surprisingly now these parties are faltering rom their commitment. Shah Mahmood said that to ensure transparency in Upper House polls, PTI had filed a reference in the Supreme Court of Pakistan requesting the apex court for interpretation of law that whether or not Senate Elections can be held through open vote.

People of Kashmir

deserve peace: COAS

STAFF REPORT

Army Staff General Qamar region deserve peace.

Garrison, on Thursday.

stan and the region. preparedness amid new chal-

lenges of hybrid war.

'Army chief's statement RAWALPINDI: Chief of reflects desire for peace'

Javed Bajwa has said that ISLAMABAD: The statement of Army Chief General Qa-People of Kashmir and this mar Javed Bajwa on 'extending hand of peace in all directions' is reflective of Pakistan's desire for peace and He stated this while ad- security in the region, besides resolution of core issues dressing officers of Lahore including Kashmir, the Foreign Office said Thursday. "The statement is a reiteration of the importance of

According to a statement peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes, including issued here. COAS address the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir." the Foreign Office was focused on professional Spokesperson said at a weekly press briefing. Spokespermatters, internal and exter- son Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri in response to a question renal security situation of the garding the recent statement of General Bajwa made at country and his vision of an graduation ceremony at PAF Academy termed it "a manenduring peace within Paki- ifestation of Pakistan's firm commitment to the ideals of mutual respect and peaceful co-existence.

The army chief also apprised On the contrary, he said, the Indian military officials the officers with the latest had been making careers out of issuing irresponsible developments on Eastern and provocative statements against Pakistan, which Border, situation in II0J&K he said ,clearly showed the "difference of approach and our firm commitment and mindset". The Spokesperson said the belligerent for a just resolution of Kash-rhetoric of the Indian military leadership was an exmir issue in line with the as- ample of RSS-BJP mindset, which had permeated all pirations of people of Kash- state institutions of India. "India's defence limitations mir. COAS also reiterated have been embarrassingly exposed to the world, first greater vigilance and state of in Balakot and then in Ladakh," he said, stressing that

Continued on Page 06



JAKARTA: Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia, Muhammad Hassan presenting his letter of credence to President Joko widodo (Jokowi) of Indonesia. – DNA

PDM marches towards Capital on March 26

The PDM chief said that the parties have decided to contest the Senate elections together and will not go against each other

have decided to contest the Ameer Haider Hoti, Me-

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Movement Democratic (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that the opposition alliance has decided on a "long march" towards Islamabad on March 26. According to sources, the long march will be termed "mehengai (march against inflation)". He was addressing a press conference after a 6-hour long PDM meeting. He also said that the parties

other's candidates. The PDM chief said that the movement opposes the

open ballot method of Senate polls. PPP's delegation included Bilawal Bhutto, Yousaf Raza Gilani, Raja Pervez Ashraf, Sherry Rehman, Qamar Zaman Kaira, and Farhatullah Babar. Moreover, from PML-N, the party's vice-president Maryam Nawaz, Ahsan Iqbal, Marriyum Aurangzeb, and

Rana Sanaullah are present.

Senate elections together

and will not go against each

ter Nawaz Sharif had reportedly spoken over the phone. Sources said the two leaders had consultations over the anti-government movement. Nawaz is said to have agreed with the proposals put for-

hmood Khan Ackahzai,

Aftab Sherpao, Akram

Durrani, Owais Shah Noo-

rani, Professor Sajid Mir,

and Dr Malik are also in

attendance. Earlier, Fazl

and former prime minis-

ward by Fazl, giving assurances to the PDM chief of

whatever PDM decides. It was reported that Nawaz told Fazl that the PML-N is ready to use full force in the anti-government movement. News of the phone call between Nawaz and Fazl comes after a meeting at Fazl's house of JUI-F's Central Working Committee which lasted for six hours. After the meeting, PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz reached Fazl's house with PML-N veteran leader Rana Sanaullah and party spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb.

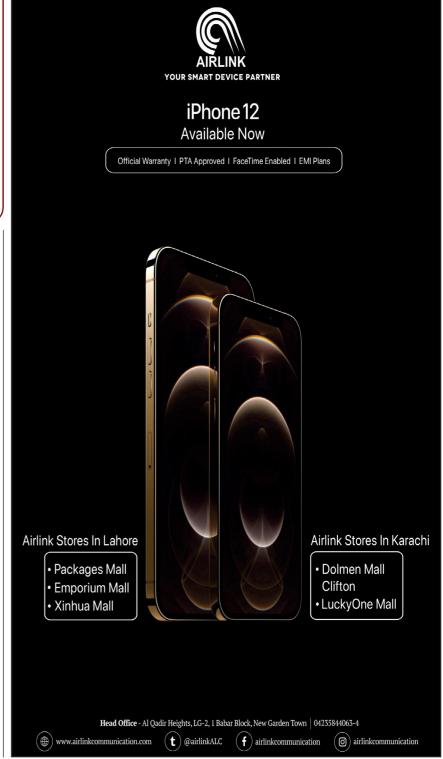
Spectators allowed for **PSL** matches

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Thursday after detailed deliberations with health officials decided to allow 20 percent spectators in Pakistan Super League (PSL) group matches. The NCOC morning session was held here while the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) officials attended the session for finalising number of participants to be allowed for the matches. The decision was made after detailed deliberations with health of ficials that under the strict guidelines already issued by the Forum as 20 percent spectators were to be permitted to watch group matches in the cricket stadium.

candidates for Senate election

ISLAMABAD: As the Senate elections loom near, the PTI is currently finalising the list of candidates who it thinks should be given the ticket to contest the polls. Sources informed media that the ruling party's parliamentary board has finalised the names of the candidates and sent its recommendations to PM Imran Khan. The parliamentary board has suggested that Shahzad Akbar, Zulfi Bokhari, Sania Nishtar, Abdul Razzak Dawood, Babar Awan, Saifullah Niazi, Dr Zarqa and Nilofar Bakhtiar be awarded the tickets for the Senate elections. From Khyber Pakhtukhwa, the party has decided to nominate Shibli Faraz again. The names of advisor to the prime minister on Finance, Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh and Kamil Ali Agha from the coalition parties have been recommended, said sources. - DNA



Justice Qazi Isa questions media freedom in Pakistan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Justice Qazi Faez Isa said on Thursday he won't shy away from saying that the media is not free and that it is being controlled, with real journalists being thrown out of the country. During a Supreme Court hearing on local government elections the senior judge said that the country is being destroyed in a systematic manner,. The apex court judge said local body elections are a constitutional requirement.

Yet, when it comes to holding local body polls, the provinces start counting off their problems instead of fulfilling their constitutional duty, the senior judge remarked. He went so far as to say that Puniab had "killed" democracy by dissolving the local government before the expiry of its term. Justice Isa inquired why that was done. "Local governments were

Political, social circles hail remarks

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Various political parties and social circles have welcomed the remarks of the judge of the apex court regarding press freedom in Pakistan. They believed the honorable judge had rightly observed that there was no press freedom in the country. The TV talks show on Thursday also focused on this statement. There was a consensus among the presenters and the guests that remarks of Justice Faez were correct.

era, but it is unheard of in a democracy," the judge said. He asked if Punjab was in the mood to abolish the LG system altogether. To this, the Punjab additional advocate-general said a new law had been made for local governments in the province. By dissolving the local government, the Punjab government has clearly violated the Constitution, Justice Isad said, adding that, like this,

Punjab can continue dissolv-

dissolved in the martial law

ing local governments till a government of its choice comes along. If democracy is lost, half the country will be gone, he warned. "ECP says there will be huge

cost of Rs18 billion on local bodies elections," Justice Isa remarked. "Yet huge development funds are being released for politicians. The senior judge also made strong statements over the state of media freedom in Pakistan. Pakistan, he said, is being destroyed in a system-

atic manner. He said when media is destroyed, a country is destroyed. "Tell me. Is media free in Pakistan?" Justice Isa asked Attorney-General Khalid Javed Khan.

The attorney-general requested the judge to give an option of answering other than a yes or no, to which Justice Isa offered that a referendum should be held with the media persons present in the court room. He said the media in the court should raise their hands if they think the me-

dia is free. When no journalist raised their hand, the judge asked the journalists to raise their hand if they think there was freedom of press in the country. Yet again, no journalist raised their hand.

The senior judge gave the analogy of a plant, asking if a seed planted in the morning ought to be uprooted in the evening just to see how strong its roots have become.

Friday, Fabruary 05, 2021

Briefs

'Projected circular debt accumulation declining'

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCoE) Thursday noted that the projected circular debt accumulation was decreasing as a result of the circular debt management plan being implemented by the government. The committee also appreciated the efforts of the Power Division for regular monitoring of circular debt situation and directed them to timely issue the monthly data for the committee to review. The meeting of the CCoE was held here under the chairmanship of Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar. The Power Division presented the latest circular debt status and the projections. The CCoE was briefed about the situation of circular debt from July 2020 to December 2020.

The CCoE in its meeting considered the report of the sub-committee constituted by the CCoE vide its decision dated January 18, 2021 regarding allocation of pipeline capacity to new liquified natural gas (LNG) terminals.

LHC orders concrete steps to curb drug abuse

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed relevant authorities to take concrete steps on an urgent basis to curb drug abuse in educational institutions and sought an implementation report. The Lahore High Court (LHC) issued the directives while hearing a petition filed by the Judicial Activism Panel for seeking a ban on smoking and narcotics consumption in educational institutions.

During the hearing, a consultant on anti-narcotics campaign submitted the health profile report regarding the educational institutions. The report stated that 17 educational institutions were visited and most of the centres failed to prepare health profile reports. The petitioner's lawyer apprised the court that drugs and cigarettes are being sold in the vicinity of

educational institutions. President, prime minister and concerned officials have been sent letters to take actions, however, concrete steps to curb the menace of drugs were not taken on government level so far, said the lawyer, the students are becoming drug addict due to selling of drugs and cigarettes

SC summons federal ministers

in the education centres.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan Thursday summoned federal ministers Asad Umar, Hammad Azhar and Muhammadmian Soomro in connection with Pakistan Steel Mills employees promotion case, on February 9. Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Gulzar Ahmed remarked that in practical terms the Steel Mills did not exist and the court will order for closure of the mills. The CJP remarked that the PSM administration was responsible for the poor state of affairs of the mills. The CJP said that no federal secretary is working as all of them are merely writing letters, which in fact is the job of the clerks. "I don't know why the government has appointed these secretaries," the CJP wondered. The Chief Justice strongly reprimanded the management of the Pakistan Steel Mills and said that if the mills was shut down then why the management is still work ing. "The closed mills does not need any MD or Chief Executive. The management and officers of the institution are a burden on the national exchequer. They should be removed from the mills before the employees," the CJP said. The CJP remarked the steel mills are profit-making entities in other parts of the world on which the PSM lawyer replied that daily expenditure has been reduced from Rs200 million to Rs100 million. The Chief Justice remarked that after so many loans what can be done other than closing down the steel mills. The CJP further said that he would take a decision on February 9 about the mills after hearing the federal ministers



ISLAMABAD: Saudi ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf Al Maliki in a meeting with deputy chairman senate, Salim Mandviwalla. - DNA

'Modi trying to engineer demographic change in IOJK'

Ambassador Imtiaz also briefed the participants about EU Disinfo Lab report which unearthed a 15-year long operation by the Indian government of targeting EU and UN bodies through fake websites with an aim of maligning Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Ambassador to Japan Imtiaz Ahmed Thursday said that the Modi administration is trying to engineer a demographic change in Indian Occupied Jammu Kashmir (IOJK) by issuing around 1 million domiciles certificates non-Kashmiris. "Issuing of domiciles to non-Kash-

miris was a grave violation of the UN Charter, UNSC resolutions and the 4th Geneva Convention, he said this while addressing a webinar on Kashmir issue held at the Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo to commemorate Kashmir Solidarity Day. "The present Indian government is treading a very dangerous path not only within India and IIO-IK but also with its relations with Pakistan, the human rights situation remains grave in the illegally occupied valley" he added. The event was chaired by Ambas-

sador Ahmad and was attended by representatives of Japanese media, Kashmiri activists in Iapan, and the spokesperson of Jammu and Kashmir Journalists



Association from Srinagar.

At the outset, the Ambassador briefed the participants regarding Pakistan's official position on the unfolding crisis in Indian illegally occupied valley.

Indian Forces, he said, have been continuously targeting the civilian population along the LOC and Working Boundary. During last year alone, India committed more than 2000 ceasefire violations. Ambassador Imtiaz also briefed the

participants about EU Disinfo Lab report which unearthed a 15-year long operation by the Indian government of targeting EU and UN bodies through fake websites with an aim of maligning Pakistan.

matic and political support to the just struggle for the right of self-determination of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) as enshrined in the relevant Resolutions of the UNSC. The spokesperson of Jammu & Kashmir Journalists Association and editor of Kashmir Media Watch Rameez Makhdoomi while joining the webinar from Srinagar said that Kashmir is becoming a human tragedy and freedoms have become non-existent.

He said that just because of the Internet shut down Kashmir Media Watch had to cut their staff by 75%. He said that Kashmiris have high hopes from Prime Minister Imran Khan that he will keep pressing the Indian government for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. War, however, is not a solution of the problem, he said. So Matsui, South Asia Bureau Chief of the Japanese newspaper the Mainichi, showed concern for the situation in Kashmir and emphasized the importance of

exists between the ruling BJP and Indian media was also recently exposed by leaked WhatsApp conversations of an Indian media personality. The leak showed that a famous anchor knew the details of the so-called Indian surgical strike on Pakistan in advance. Imtiaz Ahmad reaffirmed Paki-He said that the unholy nexus that stan's unwavering moral, diplospeaking out for Kashmiris. - APP RMATION DEPARTMENT

FGEI, PBSA inked MoU to promote management skills among students

A formal ceremony of signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pakistan Boys Scouts Association (PBSA) was held at PBSA headquarter Islamabad to promote ethical values and first aid management skills among students of FGEI

(C/G) all over Pakistan. DG FGEI Major General Muhammad Asghar, Sarfraz Qamar Daha Commissioner PBSA and senior officials were present on this special Commissioner occasion. PBSA appreciated the progressive role of DG FGEI in the promotion of healthy culture in FGEI (C/G) institutions. In the end DG FGEI

recognized the invaluable role of PBSA in promoting character building of students. FGEI welcomes the training of teachers and students in meeting the future challenges through attainments of interpersonal skills. By signing the MoU productive skills activities will bring a healthy change in FGEI (C/G) institutions.

CH Sarwar, US consul general discuss relations, Kashmir issue

LAHORE: US Consul General to Lahore Catherine Rodriguez met Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar and discussed Pak-US relations, Kashmir issue and the war on terror during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Thursday. Acknowledging the US government's role in economic development of Pakistan, the governor said the bilateral ties were getting stronger with each passing day.

He expressed the hope that US President Joe Biden would play his role in resolving the Kashmir issue, adding that India's war-mongering and atrocities on Kashmiris pose a serious threat to peace in the region. He said that regional peace was not possible unless the Kashmir issue was resolved as per the UN resolutions.

armed forces and people had rendered great sacrifices in the war against terrorism, adding that the world should acknowledge Pakistan's efforts for the es-

tablishment of peace in the region. Sarwar said that the government was also setting up new special economic zones for foreign investors in Punjab, adding that security of the foreign investors was the top-most priority of the government.

The consul general appreciated Pakistan's sacrifices in the war against terrorism and acknowledged efforts for peace in the region. The US diplomat said the United States was fully supporting Pakistan in different sectors including education and health, adding that the US government would continue to support Pakistan in future. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal minister for information and broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz, federal minister for Kashmir affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, Chairman Kashmir committee Shehryar Afridi and All arties Hurriyat Conference leadership addressing a joint press conference regarding Kashmir Solidarity Day. - DNA

'Pakistan stands with Kashmiris³

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Punjab Chief Minister on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Thursday said that Pakistanis were standing with people of (IIOJK) until they get their legitimate right self-determination. She said that in recent report of Human Rights Watch it had condemned the human rights violation in IIOJK, adding that world was stunned over discovery of thousands of unidentified graves in (IIOJK). – APP

The minister said Pakistan would continue its moral, diplomatic and political support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in their just struggle for independence and against increasing Indian brutalities and human rights violations. Gandapur said the solidarity day would be observed across the country including Azad Iammu and Kashmir and other parts of

Feb 5 to be observed with renewed spirit across country ISLAMABAD: Minister for the world with renewed spirit. He said India was trying to

Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Ali Amin Khan change the demographics of Gandapur Thursday said the IIOJK and international the entire nation would obcommunity should take its serve 'Kashmir Solidarity notice as around over 1.7 mil-Day' on Friday (tomorrow) lion non-Kashmiris had been in a befitting manner to given domiciles of Kashmir. express their wholehearted He said Prime Minister Imsupport to the just struggle ran Khan had internationalof Kashmiri people for their ized the Kashmir issue by beinalienable right to self-decoming the ambassador and termination enshrined unlawyer of Kashmiri people. der United Nations resolu-The British and European tions. Addressing a presser parliaments that were least here, he said the people bothered to talk on Kashmir should highlight plight of the issue in the past was now oppressed Kashmiris and raising voice for the plight remind the world communiof Kashmiris. ty of its obligations towards He called on the internathe longstanding dispute's tional community to urge resolution. He was flanked by India to respect the human Minister for Information and rights charter and put an Broadcasting Senator Shibli end to the human rights vio-Faraz, Kashmir Committee lations in Kashmir. Chairman Shehryar Khan Af-The world should ensure ridi and All Parties Hurriyat a speedy resolution of the Conference (APHC) leaders Hussain Khateeb and Syed Faiz Nagshbandi.

Kashmir dispute in line with the UN Security Council resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The APHC Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chapter leader Syed Faiz Nagshbandi expressed his gratitude to Pakistani people and the government for showing its full support to the people of IIOIK. Like Pakistan, he said, Kashmiris across the globe would observe the day in befitting manner to mitigate sufferings

of the people living in the oc-

cupied valley. - APP

'Sacrifices of **Kashmiris** will bring revolution'

DNA

PMLQ Deputy Secretary Information Khawaja Rameez Hassan said ,The sacrifices of Kashmiris will bring red revolution, the oppressive face of India is being exposed to the world. He said that people all over the world including Pakistan are celebrating this day with enthusiasm to show solidarity with Kashmiris. He said that the sanctity of national institutions was indispensable and their sacrifices needed to be paid homage. He said that the country is emerging as a secure state and political scoring is a major obstacle in the way of a stable state. He said that Pakistan's position on Israel and India is clear and until the Kashmir and Palestine issue is resolved in accordance with the aspirations of the people, it is necessary to maintain a hostile attitude towards these terrorist states.

ATC seeks arguments on acquittal pleas of

Khattak, Aleem ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) on Thursday sought arguments on acquittal pleas of Federal Minister for Defence Pervaiz Khattak, Aleem Khan, Raja Khurram Nawaz and others in cases pertaining to attacks on Pakistan Television and Parliament buildings during 2014's sit-in.

During this day, the defence lawyer Muhammad Ali Bukhari concluded his arguments in acquittal cases of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders including Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Jahangir Tareen, Shaukat Yousafzai, Federal Minister for Federal Education Shafqat Mehmood and Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Asad Umer in the same case. The lawyer contended that around 14 to 15 thousands activists of Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) moved towards the parliament and prime minister houses during the protest breaking the barriers and gates. The protest was against the then government, he said add ing the protests were even continuing these days which were not illegal.

The lawyer further said the unrest was created among the protesters due to the shelling and baton charge by the police. In this clash, the activists of two parties were killed instead of the police, he added.

The lawyer pleaded that another first information report was registered against the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on the complaint of Shah Mehmood Qureshi. The court said no one among the people who filed acquittal cases appeared before the court despite repeated summons. The lawyer said his clients would appear whenever the court summon them.

After the conclusion of the arguments, the court sought arguments on acquittal pleas of other petitioners on March 18.

Ashrafi, Al Maliki pledge strengthen relations

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and Saudi envoy to Pakistan Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Maliki Thursday reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen the longstanding relations between the two brotherly countries - Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Speaking on the occasion, Ashrafi said Pak-Saudi relations were everlasting and no power could weaken these ties which were set to grow further in different fields like economy, tourism and culture.

He said relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were based on faith, belief

and mutual respect.

The clear policy of the present government was to strengthen relations with all Arab countries in all fields. Saudi Arabia was the center of unity and solidarity of Muslim Ummah due to its pivotal role in the solution of the problems of Muslim Ummah.

Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Maliki said the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would be more stable and strong in future. - APP



ISLAMABAD: British high commissioner to Pakistan Christian Turnermet with Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee and Grand Imam Badshahi Mosque Maulana Khabir and discussed Pakistan cultural and religious diversity & British support for freedom of religious belief. - DNA

Briefs

Teenager shots his mother dead

MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: A teenager has shot his mother dead here on Thursday after exchange of harsh words in the limits of Hasanabdal Saddar police station Police have registered a case and are on the hunt to arrest the culprit. Abdul Ghani r/o Mohala Noor Abad Burhan told police that his 19 year old son Zahid who is also drug addict, exchanged harsh words with his mother and shot her dead with a pistol.

He said that his son shot his mother dead when he his son Muajhid and his daughter Saweli Bibi were present at home. Meanwhile Pindigheb police have arrested 11 gamblers including Tariq, Atif Zahoor, Mohsin, Saeed Mudassir, Irfan, Shahzad, Shafiq, Sher Afzal and Imran and recovered Rs 40240(bet money), 13 cell phones, 2 land cruiser jeeps and 17 cocks from their possession.

Similarly Hasanabdal police booked Ali Shan under D-25/telgraph act for allegedly making fake call on 15 (Police Emergency Service.

India continues to violate human rights: Col (r) Anwar

DNA

ATTOCK: Provincial Minister for Revenue Col. (r) Muhammad Anwar has said that India continues to violate human rights in Indian occupied Kashmir and use brutal force against unarmed Kashmiris.

Pakistan has always condemned these atrocities and human rights violations by Indian forces in occupied would never waive from its principled stance on Kashmir. He said. Kashmir issue can only be solved by holding a plebiscite in accordance with UN resolutions and vowed that Pakistan and its people will continue its diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiris in their struggle for freedom. He also said while talking to a newsman in Attock on the Kashmir Solidarity day, any change of government in Pakistan will never alter Pakistan's principled stance on Kashmir and it will continue to support the Kashmiris for their attainment of the right of self determination.

SSP for crackdown against burglars

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations) Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer on Thursday directed all zonal officers to intensify crackdown against burglars to provide relief to the masses.

He asked the officers to ensure the presence at crime scene to collect evidences by using scientific methods for better investigation to trace the culprits at earliest, said a news release.

Meanwhile, Islamabad Margalla police has nabbed two members of a burglar gang and recovered stolen cash Rs 2 million and valuables from them. SP (Saddar) Muhammad Sarfraz Virk constituted special teams under supervision of DSP Abid Ikram, Station House Officer (SHO) Police station Margalla Sub-Inspector Asim Ali Zahdi, ASI Hakim

and others officials The team successfully held two suspects identified Muhammad Asif s/o Mumtaz resident of sector F-8/4 Islamabad and Waqas Messih s/o Anwar Messih resident of Zia Masjad New Shakrail Islamabad

A case has been registered against the nabbed person and further investigation is

underway from him. SSP (Operations) has appreciated the performance of Margalla police team and announced cash prizes and commendation certificates for team members



ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking interest in paintings during an exhibition at Tanzara Art Gallery, on Thursday. - DNA

Ehsaas approves standards for private sector orphanages

A sub-committee will also be notified next week to build further on this work so that a regulatory framework is developed

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Ehsaas has approved first-ever standards for private sector orphanages and child care in a special meeting held here Thursday under the chairmanship of Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar. The meeting was held at the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD). Pakistan has a very vibrant philanthropy sector and there are a number of orphanages in the private sector which have mushroomed all over the country. Many of these are run by NGOs and are supported by private philanthropy

However, there is no consistency in services provided in these orphanages and the care provided is of varying quality. Taking cognizance of this, Ehsaas strategy had stipulated under its policy no. 37 that standards would be developed for orphanages. For this purpose, a committee was established in 2019. The committee was headed by Nadeem Ahmed Khan, Chairperson Khubaib Foundation and all major NGOs hosting orphanages addition to Parliamentarians.

The committee held 17 formal meetings and 70 side sessions. The standards that were developed had several iterations and UNICEF has endorsed those standards. UNICEF is also formally part of the committee.



Today, the standards were formally approved, and it was decided that these standards will be notified for all orphanages in the federal area and

will be shared with provinces asking them to implement. A sub-committee will also be notified next week to build further on this work so that a regulatory framework is developed. Approving the standards, Dr. Nishtar remarked, "Drawing on strengths of all stakeholders, these standards have been devised to set a new precedent by improving the quality of orphan care, as this aspect was neglected in the past with regard to public service delivery." She then continued, 'The implementation of orphanages' standards will ensure that the quality of care provided, when a child enters alternative care is consistent with the rights and specific needs of various categories of children particularly orphans and lost children. To track progress in

implementation of these orphanages' standards, a comprehensive monitoring mechanism and observatory would also be developed." In our country, alternative care to orphans is largely provided by the government and the NGOs. These operating guidelines have

been specifically chalked out to run orphanages and children homes, keeping in view the national and international standards of care. They would provide guidance and direction to orphanage management for quality service and control, catering to the minimum possible requirement of an orphanage from eligibility, accommodation, safety security, infrastructure, education, counselling, staff performance and facilities.



lamp to mark the 73RD Independence day of Sri Lanka. – DNA

Role of Microfinance crucial for economy

ISLAMABAD: In recent reports, Pakistan has imported \$1.5bn worth of Cotton, Food items during the last six months. This import bill is quite hefty for an agrarian based economy in which the agriculture sector accounts for about 21% of the country's GDP and employs about 44% of the labor force. Over the Years, our Economy has not only failed to move from agricultural to industrial economy but also losing its ground. The main reason behind this decline is lack of financial resources for Farmer. They are deprived of basic agricultural inputs and raw material needed to increase crop production both in terms of quantity and quality.

In Pakistan, Microfinancing culture is quite new to rural communities that are still struggling to absorb its complete benefits and utilize its potential. some leading Microfinance banks like FINCA Microfinance Bank Limited, Khushhali Microfinance Bank Limited, Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited., NRSP Microfinance Bank Limited, Tameer Microfinance bank and many more are making immense social impact by uplifting the farmers community. They are offering a wide range of Financial solutions supported by technical training to raise the bar of the farmer community through various periodic interventions. The role of Microfinance institutions is crucial in this regard to help farmers gain access to required finances on easy terms to well-equipped themselves with Modern tools. These programs have brought revolutionary results in reducing poverty and increasing Agricultural productivity across developing countries of the world. - DNA

Gold price decreases by Rs 650 per tola

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs 650 on Thursday as it was sold at Rs 112,000 against its sale at Rs112,650 the previous day, Karachi Sarafa Association reported.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 558 as it was traded at Rs 96,022 against its sale at Rs 96,750 last day. Similarly, the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold decreased to Rs 88,020 against Rs 88,531 previous day.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs 30 as it was sold at Rs 1350 against its sale at Rs1,380 last day whereas that of ten gram silver decreased by Rs 25.72 to Rs1,157.40 from Rs1,183.12 previous day. The gold price in the in international market witnessed decrease of US\$33 as it was sold at US\$1,801 against \$1,834 last day,

NDMA displeased over delay in DAC

the association added.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Thursday examined audit paras of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for the year 2019-20. Rana Tanveer Hussain, chairing the meeting, expressed displeasure over delay in constituting Departmental Audit Committee (DAC) despite correspondence many a time.

He said the absence of Departmental Audit Committee (DAC) had added additional burden on PAC as it had to examine 24,000 pending audit paras.

The committee d ed the National Disaster Authority Management (NDMA) to commence Departmental Committee (DAC) meeting and settle audit paras within a month.

The meeting was attended by MNAs Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar, Noor Alam Khan, Riaz Fatyana, Aamer Mehmood Kiani, Khawaia Shehraz Mehmood, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Syed Naveed Qamar, Hina Rabbani Khar and Muhammad Ibrahim Khan.

The meeting was also attended by senior officials of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Plantation afoot to revive Srinagar Highway

Khayam Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority Thursday said efforts were afoot to carry out massive plantation along the 25-km Srinagar Highway to revive its beauty under the clean and green

Pakistan programme. According to an official of Environment Directorate, the civic agency would plant 20,000 saplings of juniper, 15,000 of marwa, 10,000 Melaleuca, 2,000 pine, 100 Washingtonia palm, 62 of queen palm and many of other species like Kechnar and jacaranda under the ongoing landscaping project of Srinagar Highway.

He said ground work at its various interchanges, maiden strip and side slopes had almost completed to carry out plantation and horticulture work from G-13 to Muree Road.

The official said the landscaping work would soon initiate at Golra Interchange as its ground work was fully done.

Half of light poles were fully functional in the area and rest of them would be lit soon, he added.

He said earth work at Peshawar Morr Interchange and the maiden strip was near completion, whereas the ground work at its side slopes was fully completed. Steps were being taken to make all the street lights of Highway functional at the earliest, he added.

Begum Alvi inaugurates PAFWA primary school

RAJA PERVAIZ

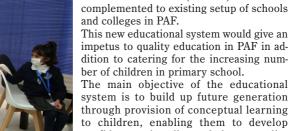
ISLAMABAD: Begum Samina Alvi, 1ST Lady of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, inaugurated PAFWA Educational System Primary School at PAF Complex, Islamabad today. Begum Tazeen Mujahid, President PAFWA, high ranking PAF officers and lady wives also attended the ceremony.

Addressing at the occasion, the Chief Guest said that Pakistan Air Force has focused on the importance of education in our society in lines with the government's vision of providing quality education in learning institutions.

She further emphasized that provision of high standard education at primary level is the need of the hour as to lay solid foundation for the ever inquisitive young minds. She extended her heartfelt wishes for the success of this monumental project and asserted that the PAF would continue to contribute towards the progress of our country by providing state-of-the-art learning facilities to the children from every strata of the society. Later on, Begum Samina Alvi visited various facilities of the school where she was briefed about the salient features of the system. PAWFA Educational System (PES) is







This new educational system would give an impetus to quality education in PAF in addition to catering for the increasing number of children in primary school. The main objective of the educational

flagship project of Pakistan Air Force

system is to build up future generation through provision of conceptual learning to children, enabling them to develop confident and well-rounded personality with progressive and futuristic approach.

Govt offering

soft loans to

GB youth:

Usman Dar

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar

Thursday said the federal

government was offering

soft loans to the youth of

Gilgit Baltistan (GB) under Kamyab Jawan Programme

to promote tourism related

In a meeting with GB Minis-

ter for Tourism and Culture

Raja Nasir Ali Khan, he said

the federal and GB govern-

ments would work jointly

to ensure development of

the youth under the Prime

Minister's Kamyab Jawan

Programme. Usman Dar

said the government had set

a target to disburse conces-

sionary loans amounting to

Rs 100 billion among the tal-

'Skill for All' programme,

initiated with Rs 10 billion

seed money, was underway

to impart vocational and

technical trainings to youth

in traditional and modern

Minister for Tourism Nasir

Khan said the GB youth

would take maximum ben-

efits from the programme,

adding Investment in tour-

ism sector would eventually

bring prosperity and eco-

PNCA

to mark

Kashmir

Solidarity day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Na-

tional Council of the Arts

(PNCA) in collaboration

with Ministry of Kashmir

Affairs and GB has sched-

uled various programmes in

accordance with the Kash-

mir Solidarity Day at PNCA

auditorium Islamabad on

highlight the sacrifices of in-

Performance

Tableau and

nomic growth in the area.

trades, he added.

ented youth of country.

businesses in the region.

Briefs

'Eight million Kashmiri under siege

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi on Thursday said that eight million Kashmiris were under siege in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIO-JK) since 5th August, 2019. In a video message in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day to be observed on Friday, he said that Indian forces had turned occupied Kashmir into biggest iail of the world.

"We feel lot of pain for our Kashmiri mothers and sisters facing atrocities and brutalities of Indian forces,' he said, adding that similarly Kashmiri youth were also facing illegal detentions and tortures. The minister said that India had also closed all the educational opportunities for the Kashmir children. Ali Haider Zaidi said that Pakistani nation understood the pain of Kashmiri brethren. "Prime Minister Imran Khan had been highlighting the Kashmir issue at all international forums including United Nations and OIC from day one", he said. The minister said Pakistani nation would never leave our Kashmiri brethern alone, adding that "we are with Kashmir people and will remain with them till last". He shared the famous sayings of -Albert Einstein - "The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything". The minister said that Kashmir Solidarity Day rally would be organized in Karachi on February 5. He invited all the citizens of the Karachi to participate in the rally. He said the rally would commence from Insaf House No 3 pm and would culminate at Mazar-e-Quaid aiming give message to the world that we all Pakistani and particularly people Karachi were standing with Kashmiri brethren.

Pak's exports to Japan decreases

ISLAMABAD, Feb 4 (AP P):Pakistan's exports of goods and services to Japan witnessed a decrease of 10.66 percent during the first half of current financial vear (2020-21) compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Paki-

stan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to Japan were recorded at \$89.022 million during July-De-(2020-21) against exports of \$99.646 million during July-December (2019-20), showing negative growth of 10.66 percent,

SBP data revealed. On year-to-year basis, the exports to Japan during December 2020 also decreased by 4.72 percent, from \$15.532 million last year to \$14.798 million.

On month-on-month basis, the exports to Japan also witnessed declined of 19.10 percent during December 2020 when compared to the exports of \$18.293 million

in November 2020. Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed decline of 4.75 percent in first half, from \$12.392 billion to \$11.803 billion, the SBP data revealed.

11,729 COVID-19 patients recovered

RAWALPINDI: More than 11, 729 COVID-19 patients have been recovered so far while 769 reportedly lost their lives in the district.

According to data shared by the district administration here Thursday,89,677 C virus suspects have been brought to the quarantine facilities of the district, out of which 12,568 cases were tested positive who were provided the required treatment and 11,729 discharged after recovery. The administration informed that results of 600 people were awaited while 77, 050 were tested negative. resently 41 C virus confirmed patients were admitted in different hospitals of the district including 11 belonged to Rawal Town,11 Potahar town,7 Rawalpindi cantt., 7 Guiar Khan, 2 Murree and one from Taxila, Khutta and Kalar Syedan each, e said. He said that 204 patients were quarantined in isolation at homes while two died during last 24 hours. - APP

Breast Cancer

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, president ICCI presenting souvenir to First Lady Begum Samina Alvi chief guest of awareness seminar on breast cancer at ICCI. Others officials of ICCI are also present at the occasion. - DNA

'Early screening for breast cancer to help in saving lives'

Begum SaminaAlvi said that Pakistan has one of the highest rates of breast cancer in Asia due to which thousands of women lost their lives every year cancer from the platform of

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The First Lady of Pakistan Begum SaminaAlvi said that early screening for breast cancer would help in saving thousands of lives as diagnosis of this disease at an early stage was quite effective in its treatment and control. She said that most of the breast cancer cases in Pakistan were reported at later stages when the chances of survival were nominal. However, the death

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The admin-

istration of Capital Devel-

opment Authority (CDA)

conducted a mega oper-

ation against encroach-

ments, land grabbers, and

illegal constructions from

Tramri Chowk to Panjgran

at Lehtrar road on Thurs-

day. Land of Right of Way

was retrieved during the

According to detail, the

enforcement department

of CDA under its anti-en-

croachment campaign

conducted a mega opera-

tion at Lehtrar road and

demolished the illegal

operation.

rate from this disease could be reduced by creating better awareness in women about the early symptoms of the disease. She was speaking as chief guest at an awareness seminar on breast cancer organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Pink Ribbon Pakistan to mark the World Cancer Day. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI. MianAkramFarid Chairman Founder Group, Omar Aftab

buildings retrieved the

occupied land. Heavy machinery of MPO was

used in the operation.

The authority demol-

and constructions on

both the sides of Lehtrar

road from Tramri Chowk

to Panjgran. 35 shades,

08 road side setups, 08

building material points,

03 bread centers, 01 con-

tainer, and 05 cattle mar-

kets were demolished

during the operation.

The captured goods have

been submitted to CDA's

store. Operation against

encroachments and ille-

gal constructions will be

encroachments

CDA conducts mega

opration against

illegal strictures

PUCAR arranges

rally to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Council of the Arts arranged a

rally to show solidarity with the people of Kashmir here

on Thursday for their right of self-determination in con-

nection with Kashmir Solidarity Day. The rally was lead

by Director Punjab Council of the Arts Waqar Ahmed.

The participants of the rally were carried banners and

play cards for right of self-determination and paid tribute

to the people of Kashmir for their untiring struggle for

liberation from India. They chanted slogans in favor of in-

nocent Kashmiris and against Indian aggression. People

from all walks of life participated in the Kashmir rally.

Addressing at the occasion, Director Punjab Council of

the Arts Waqar Ahmed said that India must give the right

of self-determination to the people of Kashmir. He said

that present government raised the Kashmir issue on

international level. He stressed on international organ-

ization to notice of Indian atrocities in Kashmir. - DNA

Khan CEO Pink Ribbon Pakistan, wives of naval officers, wives of former Presidents ICCI and a large number of females from various walks of lives attended the event.

Begum SaminaAlvi said that Pakistan has one of the highest rates of breast cancer in Asia due to which thousands of women lost their lives every year. She said that lack of awareness and social taboos were the main causes of death from breast cancer and emphasized that creating mass awareness in society

was so important to minimize deaths from this disease. She urged that females should focus on self-examining as recovery rate from early diagnosis was 40%. She further emphasized that hospitals should arrange dedicated rooms for breast cancer screening and treatment. She appreciated the role of armed forces, media and civil society for supporting the awareness campaigns about breast cancer. She also lauded the role of ICCI for organizing an awareness session on breast

the business community and desired that the business community should also help in arranging ramps for differently abled persons in markets and parks for their facilitation.

Speaking at the occasion, SardarYasirIlyas President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the government should set up a National Cancer Registry and focus on formulation of national cancer prevention policy to cope with all types of cancers effectively. He said that women were over half of the total population and educating them about techniques to remain safe from breast cancer was important to exploit their full potential for the economic development of the country. He said that most of the women in Pakistan were homemakers and they should adopt a healthy lifestyle to avoid diabetes, obesity and other issues that were giving rise to

Friday. PNCA will be featuring events including Stage play Zindaan, Musical Show by Bano Rehmat, Imran khan and other Artists. Children Speeches, Kashmiri Songs competitions would also be held to

nocent Kashmiri people in struggling for their right to self-determination in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Students of different schools and colleges will present children Show in which speeches, Tableau and Kasmiri songs will be presented to show solidarity with Kashmiris, an official in PNCA informed APP on Thursday. A photographic exhibition will also be organized in which books on Kashmir by National Library of Pakistan would be displayed, he added.

CCP conducts inspection of poultry feed mills

ISLAMABAD: Exercising its powers under Section 34 of the Competition Act 2010, the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) today carried out search and inspection of two major poultry feed mills based in Rawalpindi and Lahore to impound the proofs of their suspected involvement in collusive activities and collective fixing of poultry feed rates. Two authorized teams of CCP conduct-

ed the inspections and successfully impounded the relevant record including computer-stored information. During inspections, both companies fully cooperated with the CCP teams and handed

poultry feed sector after taking notice of a concurrent increase in feed prices. Data gathered from market sources showed that there was indeed a simultaneous increase in price by poultry feed mills and the average quantum of increase in prices also appeared to be similar, which raised suspicion of collusive decision making and a violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act.

The prices of broiler feed witnessed an increase of over Rs. 550 per 50kg bag during the last 18 months or so, whereas, the average increase in prices of layer feed was over Rs. 530 per 50kg bag

during the same period. It was observed The CCP initiated the enquiry of the that the prices of Chicken Farm Broiler suspected collusive activities in the increased by more than 100% (from Rs 103/kg to Rs 225/kg - figures obtained from PBS website) during the same period, which can be linked with the increase in prices of broiler feed.

The reason provided by the poultry feed mills that the increase in prices was due to a rise in the cost of production, i.e. input cost, currency devaluation, & general inflation, etc. could not be substantiated. Moreover, information was also received from multiple sources that some of the top poultry feed mills were involved in collectively fixing poultry feed rates through their meetings at various locations.

AC adjourns Lok Virsa corruption reference ISLAMABAD: An Accounta-

bility Court (AC) on Thursday adjourned hearing on Lok Virsa corruption reference till February 16, against Pakistan Peoples Party's Senator Robina Khalid and others. AC-I Judge Muhammad Bashir heard the reference, filed by National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Senator Robina Khalid appeared before the court. The court recorded the statement of witness Khalid Mehmood and summoned the witness again on the next hearing with the relevant documents. Meanwhile, An Anti Terrorism Court adjourned hearing on mega money laundering case against Muttahida Quomi Movement founder leader Altaf Hussain till March 18. – APP



RAWALPINDI: President RCCI Mohammad Nasir Mirza along with group leader Sohail Altaf, former presidents Saboor Malik and Asad Mashadi visited chairman RDA at his office. - DNA

Kashmir; Why India abrogated special status, What is changing?

The entire Pakistani nation and the people of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) are practically demonstrating unanimity today (Friday) with the people of IIOJK. The message to the Indian PM Modi is that the freedom of the Kashmiri people cannot be prevented through brutalizing millions of Kashmiris

By Rana Athar Javed

ashmir Solidarity Day, also 'Youm-e-Yakhjehti-e-Kashmir' is being observed since 1990. It was started in Pakistan but now it is a world phenomenon expressing the plight of Kashmir. The 5th February symbolizes a day of solidarity with the people of IIJOK. No country has the right to decide the fate of Kashmiri people' but with their own will. Pakistan has always stood firm by its demand for unconditional freedom for Kashmir, and that the dispute should be resolved through the legal right to self-determination that the UN has granted to Kashmiri people.

The entire Pakistani nation and the people of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) are practically demonstrating unanimity today (Friday) with the people of IIOJK. The message to the Indian PM Modi is that the freedom of the

Kashmiri people cannot be prevented through brutalizing millions of Kashmiris. Pakistan has always condemned the illegal and illegitimate Indian occupation and would continue to highlight the plight of the Kashmiris. The observance of the Solidarity day worldwide sends the strongest message against India's hegemonic design and occupation that the world 'Stands with the Kashmiris.' and no power on the earth can cease the legitimate right of the Kashmiris to self-determination. Justifiably, the UN has long ratified it. India's main agenda to change demog-

raphy is being enforced under the draconian laws and under the siege of 900,000 heavily armed Indian troops. The global community must take note of the fact that the innocent Kashmiris have been hostage to India's crimes against humanity. The biggest challenge that Kashmiris are facing is, illegal transplantation of Hindu



population in IIOJK. The worldwide demonstrations and pouring of millions of people on the streets of more than 190 countries clearly indicates an International uprising against India's brutalities in IIOJK. The international community has rejected India's illegal annexation of Kashmir through Article 370 and 35A. The question is why India abrogated the special status of IIOJK, and what exactly, is changing? Based

on India's hybrid warfare doctrine and offensive intelligence operations inside Pakistan and in wider region, it is evidently clear that India has significantly shifted strategic design toward Pakistan. The new approach aims at validating a limited-conventional war scenario under a nuclear threshold. One of the operational aspects is to engage in a short, sharp, but offensive air-and-ground assault inside AJK and on other international borders. The global appeal to Solidarity Day also reflects the need to prevent India from further fragmenting fragile peace in South Asia. The potential risks of war scenario should be researched and deserve serious attention. While the Indian rhetoric about the status of GB and AJK continues to undermine ground realities, and appears to be an old playbook comic, India seeks to alter the status quo and impose its long designed strategic hegemony in South Asia. This emerging phenomenon needs to be contextualized

in terms of Sino-India and Nepalese-Indian border disputes. The national and International media

must highlight the following aspects on Kashmir Solidarity Day. It is only logical to serve the cause of peace and humanity: To highlight the risks of a nuclear war if the issue of IIOJK is not resolved according to UN resolutions.

Expose atrocities against Kashmiri people in the hands of Indian forces and show complete solidarity with the Kashmiris in their struggle to self-determination. Project that human rights violations by Indian Security Forces, and continue to register at international foras. India exploits fault lines inside Pakistan and within the Kashmiri political groups, the solidarity day is the best example to nullify such impressions and efforts.

The writer is Director General of Islamabad based think tank Pakistan House and can be reached at ma_javed@ hotmail.com

Probing BRT

HE Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday set aside the order of Peshawar High Court (PHC) directing the National Accountability Bureau to probe different aspects of the Peshawar Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) project. The case in speculation had been petitioned by KPK Chief Secretary, Secretary Local Government and Rural Development and Secretary Transport Department, who had jointly filed an appeal under Article 185(3) of Constitution against Fazli Karim Khan and others, DG Peshawar Development Authority and Project Director Rapid Bus Transit (BRT). The Supreme Court remarked that the NAB would not be able to investigate the BRT project as the decision of the Peshawar High Court was based on speculation.

The order of the PHC may have been dismissed but the issues of the BRT and the very glaring financial errors that have accrued over its induction will not simply go away with the SC dismissal. The Asian Development Bank found several deadly flaws in the project, including the observation that the KP government significantly deviated from the original, agreed design and used inferior quality material in the Rs70 billion Peshawar metro bus project. These are flaws which not only require financial accountability but need to be immediately corrected so that lives and the environment are not put at further risk. According to the ADB, BRT buses could collide at stations number 10, 12, 15 and 26 during operations because the lane width is less than the minimum requirement of 6.5 metres.

The BRT has also amassed bad press because of its repeated failures to adhere to deadlines during construction, thus directly impacting the lives of Peshawar's residents. The extremely expensive cost of the BRT also makes it even more pertinent to further investigate the project.

Especially now that the government is considering building a BRT in Karachi as well, more insight into the mistakes of the past could help in avoiding repetition. The SC decision should be reviewed, if possible.

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Trilingual education

HE Senate of Pakistan on Monday passed a bill that made it compulsory to teach the Arabic language in educational institutions in the federal capital with a promise to spread this over the rest of the country eventually. The recently passed bill is related to educational institutions. However, ironically, it has nothing to do with improving the deteriorating quality of education. The approval of the bill shows that elected representatives are digressing from the real goal, i.e., provision of quality education.

The addition of yet another language to the curriculum of the already overburdened students will make the students underperform. Currently, our school systems produce a vast majority of students that are not always competent in one (or both) of the languages they study. Adding another would only set up members of the youth for failure. In any case, this move could even do more harm than good. The lack of qualified teachers who can teach Arabic in schools and colleges can cause serious problems in understanding the true meaning of Islam and its values and ethics.

If the parliament is keen on introducing Arabic in educational institutions, law-making bodies must do it the right way. It must first seek to build national consensus on the issue, following which, students should be given the option to add a language to their education, if they choose to do so. Additionally, it is better to introduce the language in university instead of an early age, when students have the option to forgo subjects that are not in line with their future prospects and they often pick up other subjects instead. This way only those who actually want to learn Arabic will opt for the language.

05 Feb: Support for the suppressed in IIOJ&K

Abdul Rashid Shakir



It is heart-rending to note that IIOJ&K is a potential flash point between Pakistan and India. Since independence in 1947, both the countries have fought wars in 1947-48, 1965, 1971 and 1999, besides many armed skirmishes along the LoC from time to time. Recent stand off between the two countries after the 2019 Pulwama attack makes it quite clear that even a minor misadventure by India along the LOC can potentially burst into a full scale war between the two nuclear armed neighbors

HILE dusting off annals of partition of the Subcontinent some seven decades ago, one comes across a classic case of cunning connivance between the proponents of 'the mother of all parliaments' and the champions of 'the biggest democracy in the world'. I mean the crafty engineering of the Radcliffe Award in August 1947 in the first place, and subsequently the willful rather criminal denial of right to self-determination to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) from 1948 onwards despite agreed upon by the United Nations in its resolutions on Kashmir. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, joint chairman of the two Boundary Commissions mandated to partition Punjab and Bengal provinces of the British India, was responsible to equitably divide some 450,000 square kilometers territory of these two regions inhabiting around 88 Million people.

However, nothing short of 'cunning connivance' comes to mind when history reveals that, despite its overwhelming Muslim majority, Gurdaspur in Punjab province was handed over to India by the Boundary Commission Award published on 17 August 1947. This move paved the way for subsequent Indian aggression and illegal annexation of IIOJ&K by sending its troops to the region.

Later on, when Kashmiris were right on way to fight back their homeland from the clutches of Indian armed forces, United Nations Security Council brokered a ceasefire in 1948 to end the hostilities through its Resolution 47, and promised the people of Kashmir their just right to self-determination through an independent and fair plebiscite. But unfortunately, it has transpired into nothing else but

'unfulfilled dreams', despite the lapse of more than 70 fateful years.

It is saddening to note that India's Stubborn disregard for international commitments to give Kashmiris right to self-determination has not been able to awaken the conscience of world community yet, ostensibly out of a desire to tap India's huge market of more than 1.2 Billion. Very much cognisant of this Achilles' heel in the Western outlook, India is committing heinous crimes in IIOJ&K with impunity. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and all other leading human rights organisations in the world have voiced serious concerns over depriving innocent Kashmiris of their fundamental rights and liberties.

More than 95,000 innocent Kashmiris have been martyred, thousands of Kashmiri women have become widows, and lots of Kashmiri children have been rendered orphans by inhumane acts of brutal Indian occupied forces. Use of pellet guns, target killings, rape, murder, and enforced disappearances are common tools employed by the brutal Indian forces in IIOJ&K.

tional community must play a decisive role in getting the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir implemented. It would not only fulfill their long-standing promises made to the people of Kashmir but would also lend peace and stability to the whole region. Steadfast in its principled stance, Pakistan will continue its moral, political and diplomatic support for the oppressed Kashmiri

Quite recently, India committed a blatant constitutional aggression on 05 August 2019 when it annexed IIOJ&K as one of its union territories, and tried to change its demography by abrogating Articles 370 and 35-A of its constitution, which had granted IIOJ&K special status or limited autonomy as a disputed region.

It is heart-rending to note that IIOJ&K is a potential flash point between Pakistan and India. Since independence in 1947, both the countries have fought wars in 1947-48, 1965, 1971 and 1999, besides many armed skirmishes along the Line of Control (LoC) from time to time. Recent stand off between the two countries after the 2019 Pul-

wama attack makes it quite clear that even a minor misadventure by India along the Line of Control (LOC) can potentially burst into a full scale war between the two nuclear armed neighbors, capable of destabilizing rather destroying the whole region.

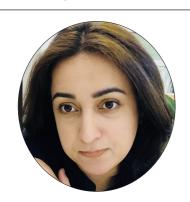
Therefore, it is high time that India must honour its pledge of granting right to self-determination to people of Kashmir through a free and fair plebiscite as promised to them in the UN Security Council's Resolution 47 of 1948. UN bodies and international human rights organisations must exert their full influence on Indian Government to stop extra judicial killings and enforced disappearances of innocent Kashmiris in IIOJ&K. Moreover, International community must play a decisive role in getting the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir implemented. It would not only the people of Kashmir but would also lend peace and stability to the whole region.

Steadfast in its principled stance, Pakistan will continue its moral, political and diplomatic support for the oppressed Kashmiri brethren. In this regard, we as a nation, observe 5th of February each year since 1990 as Kashmir Solidarity Day to ensure the people of Kashmir our unswerving support for their just right to self-determination in line with the UN resolutions on Kashmir. Moreover, Pakistan would continue to highlight the sufferings of Kashmiri people at all bilateral and multilateral international fora because Kashmiris and Pakistanis can not be separated. We salute their courage and perseverance and stand by them till the realisation of their dreams. God willing, they will snatch freedom from the clutches of brutal Indian forces very soon.

arshakir.pmo@gmail.com

Silence on Kashmir will be death of hope

Wajeeha Bilal



In the post-corona world, a new order may be in the making where humanity will be respected with compassion and empathy. Being silent over Kashmir is undeniably sinful only if we choose to do so. Whenever we stand against the wrong, we issue an indictment against the domination of silence, reminding us all of our

responsibility to voice

the rightful cause

HE other day while going through an article that brought the attention towards silence of most of the writers on the issue of Kashmir, I realized that it only raised the questions that it was too weak to answer. Using silence for people who aim to raise their voice, defies the precepts of logic. Are we really as convicted of this crime as claimed by some? Writers are definitely complex but not silent. Our service to the system of humanity is a creative challenge to capture the struggles of our fellow people in an accent that transcends common literature.

Children in Kashmir are being progressively exposed to brutality – a fact that has infested the region for decades. The lockdown that stripped off Kashmir's special status, and then restrictions on movement to prevent the coronavirus has taken a toll on Kashmir's society and people. Their life is molded by a sense of oppression and negativity. Severance in formal schooling, controlled opportunities to socialize and devious agendas are leading to a rise in miseries and mental problems among the Kashmiri children. It is not possible to witness these crimes with sinful silence.

It makes us guilty to sit silently in our living rooms while watching horrible news and atrocities committed against unarmed human beings. The daily news of our oppressed brothers and sisters triggers a haunting realization of helplessness. It instills an urge within ourselves to make a difference through our words or actions. Kashmir continues to bleed and witnessing its pain with a shameful silence can only mean the death of hope for humanity. Houses are being burnt, young men killed and innocent children tormented with painful memories for life. The excuse for silence and inaction lies in

the inability to be strong enough to raise a voice. For every Pharaoh there is a Moses (AS), for every Yazid there is Hussain (RA) and for every evil that rises in the society there is a mightier hope that must rise from within us, ourselves.

Only crying over the sufferings of fellow humans will not solve the problems, for they survive in the hope that the people watching their news will raise their voice for them. Our hearts bleed with sorrow and we want to make a difference for the oppressed, that goes beyond the limits of logic and words. News and media are filled with such brutal accounts but they cannot kill our spirits when there is bound to be resistance through our thoughts, words and actions. We appeal for peace in the region of Jammu and Kashmir, which has lived in conflict for as long as we can remember.

The main issues children are facing in the region currently are violence and lack of education. If there was no awareness and check by the people who stood with the right, this earth would have been an abode of mischief. Following the right requires that we stand unanimous in creating awareness and exposing any ideology that aims at breaking that thread.

A tyrant is a tyrant, a crime is a crime and abuse is an abuse whether physical or verbal, there is no how and why to it, and we stand against it.

In the post-corona world, a new order may be in the making where humanity will be respected with compassion and empathy. Being silent over Kashmir is undeniably sinful only if we choose to do so. Whenever we stand against the wrong, we issue an indictment against the domination of silence, reminding us all of our responsibility to voice the rightful cause. Witnessing crime in silence is a mute agreement

that is signed with oneself to jerk off any responsibility. We can always create a difference in this world through our thoughts, words, beliefs and actions. If only we would stand together in awareness against the felonious acts, then justice and human kindness would surely triumph over cruelty and crime.

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reported: The Messenger of Allah, Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him, said, "Whoever among you sees evil, let him change it with his hand. If he is unable to do so, then with his tongue. If he is unable to do so, then with his heart, and that is the weakest level of faith." Staying in shadows and crying in silence does not resonate with our true nature. Whether we are aware of it or not we are not without voices.

Then why think, reason, speak, write or even live, if not for some profound purpose. Our words have the power to trigger a movement of empathy that is contagious beyond its direct reader.

Silence is cheap, words speak louder and actions louder still. Writing is a sign of respect and homage that we pay to those whose pain we feel but cannot cope with. We think, write and speak in honor for those who endured unjustly. It's not silence in any form but shows the strength of words for our brothers and sisters whose lives we wish to change. Our purpose is fulfilled when our words have stirred reason and stood with the oppressed. Think, write, speak or work – we do what we can; we stand against oppression and in solidarity with the Kashmiris.

- Wajeeha is author of "The Conscious Ego", "The Beautiful Present" and runs a blog on "A PURPOSEFUL LIFE"

WORLD / SPORTS



Briefs

'Army chief's statement reflects

From Page 01

"Indian leadership, political and military, must realize that their overcompensating braggadocio only imperils regional peace and security". On situation in India Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), he said during the last week, in brazen manifestation of state terrorism, the Indian occupation forces martyred more Kashmiris, in "fake encounters" and staged "cordon-and-search" operations in Tral and Pulwama. He said during the same period, over half a dozen Kashmiri youth were arbitrarily arrested in south Kashmir districts.

The FO Spokesperson said the unabated cold-blooded murders and brutalization of innocent Kashmiris were a clear manifestation of state-terrorism to which unarmed Kashmiris had been subjected to for over seven decades. He mentioned that prominent Kashmiri leadership continued to remain incarcerated in Indian prisons under inhuman conditions on false and fabricated charges. Meanwhile, he said, the BJP-RSS regime continues its despicable efforts to change the demographic structure of IIOJK in clear violation of the UNSC resolutions and international law, including the 4th Geneva Convention. Zahid Chaudhri said according to the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs, 3,380,234 fake Domicile Certificates had already been issued till January 25. He called upon the international community to take immediate cognizance of this dire situation and take practical steps to stop India from such illegal and inhuman actions.

EU claims half of Afghans need humanitarian aid

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: A senior European Union (EU) official has claimed that half of the Afghan civilian population is in need of humanitarian aid amid rising violence in Afghanistan. Janez Lenarcic, the European commissioner for crisis management, made the claim as he visited the war-ravaged country's capital of Kabul on Wednesday. Lenarcic said the EU had planned to provide \$38.5 million for humanitarian projects in Afghanistan in 2021. "Increasing violence and conflict is the main cause for the humanitarian need in this country. Lenarcic said. "We very much hope and call for an immediate, unconditional and comprehensive ceasefire." The EU official also called on the Afghan warring sides "to understand that allowing for full and unimpeded humanitarian access is their obligation under humanitarian law.'

Since September last year, the Afghan government has been negotiating with the Taliban militant group to end fighting. Insecurity and violence, however, continue to take a heavy toll across Afghanistan. Even during the winter months, fighting has occurred around the country along with a wave of assassinations targeting government officials and civil society members.

Romania Church under fire as baby dies in baptism

BUCHAREST: The Orthodox Church was facing growing pressure on Thursday to change baptism rituals in Romania after a baby died following a ceremony, which involves immersing infants three times in holy water. The six-week-old suffered a cardiac arrest and was rushed to hospital on Monday but he died a few hours later, the autopsy revealing liquid in his lungs. Prosecutors have opened a manslaughter probe against the priest in the northeastern city of Suceava. An online petition calling for changes to the ritual had gathered more than 56,000 signatures by Thursday evening. "The death of a newborn baby because of this practice is a huge tragedy," said a message with the petition. "This risk must be ruled out for the joy of baptism to

triumph." – APP



RAWALPINDI: A view of cricket match between Pakistan and South African teams during first day of 2nd Test cricket match played at Pindi Cricket Stadium. - DNA

Demining of liberated lands priority: President Aliyev

The head of state urged the organization to strictly control checkpoints to stop illegal and unauthorized travels to the liberated lands. "These tragedies show again that after the occupation the enemy not only destroyed all our buildings and historical sites but also planted booby traps everywhere

DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has described the mine clearance operations on Azerbaijani territories recently liberated from Armenian occupation as one of the priority tasks before the country.

He made the remarks in a video format meeting with newly-appointed Chairman of the Board of the Azerbaijani Mine Action Agency Vugar Suleymanov on February 4. "The demining of liberated lands is a priority task. This should be done in such a way that no accidents occur after the work is completed," Aliyev said addressing Suleymanov. The president said that although he understands the IDPs' desire to return to their homes, they must withhold from visiting liberated lands

without permission and illegally. "Unfortunately, accidents have been taking place in the liberated lands in the past few days and in the immediate aftermath of the war. I want to appeal to the citizens of Azerbaijan and ask them not to travel to the liberated lands without permission and illegally. On the one hand, I can understand these steps of the people, they have longed for the homeland for many years and every former IDP wants to return to his homeland, to the native village, but I ask them to wait a little. Let them wait for the demining work to be completed. Because this is a great danger, a great danger to both pedestrians and cars. Since the war ended, several such accidents have occurred, killing and injuring people," he said. The head of state urged the or-



ganization to strictly control checkpoints to stop illegal and unauthorized travels to the liberated lands. "These tragedies show again that after the occupation the enemy not only destroyed all our buildings and historical sites but also planted booby traps everywhere. It has mined not only areas close to the line of contact, but also cities, roads, important strategic heights, and we do not have maps of these minefields. There-

fore, our sappers have a huge task. They must carry out this task in such a way that no mines are left in the liberated lands," Aliyev stressed. He noted that there can be no talk of development before the demining ends and urged acceleration in the process.

"Even now we can do the work on the construction of roads and railways only after the sappers have cleared those areas of mines. This is why any activity there, any development depends on demining. Therefore, we must speed up a little. At the same time, demining must be carried out in such a way that, I repeat, there is no danger after the completion of that work." President Aliyev briefed Suleymanov about the agency's tasks ahead. "First of all, you need to pay attention to the proper organization of work. Organizational work must be done properly. The new agency is a state agency. Of course, first of all, professional staff should be selected and involved in the work of the agency. Of course, the personnel of the former ANAMA organization should be used. At the same time, the composition of the agency should be determined because the agency must have a larger workforce to build and carry out work on the liberated lands quickly and efficiently, of course," he underlined. Aliyev described the acquisition of new equipment as one of the top priorities among the tasks. "Technological development in this area has become more pronounced in recent years. There is machinery, mechanisms and equipment now that can speed up the work and allow you the opportunity to do it

mercy on the country.

Pakistan vs S.Africa: Rain abandons day one play

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Heavy rain abandoned play on the opening day of the second Test between Pakistan and South Africa at Pindi Cricket Stadium. The rain started as players walked off the field at the tea break. Groundsmen quickly placed the covers on the pitch and adjoining area. The umpire decided to call-off the day while Day two will start early at 9.45 pm. Meanwhile, Skipper Babar Azam and in-form Fawad Alam led Pakistan's recovery, taking Pakistan to 145-3 from an uncertain situation of 22/3. Spinner Keshav Maharaj (2-51) and pacer Anrich Nortje (1-30) had left Pakistan struggling on 63-3 at lunch but Babar and Fawad put 123 for the fourth-wicket stand to steady the innings. Babar brought up his first fifty as Test captain. In his ongoing 77-run knock, he hit 12 fours while

Fawad is at 42 with five fours. Earlier, Imran Butt (15), Azhar Ali (0) and Abid Ali (6) were removed for one run in the space of 23 balls. Maharaj was brought into the attack in the seventh over and started to create chances. The left-arm spinner removed Imran as Proteas captain Quinton de Kock claimed a sharp catch behind the wicket.

Maharaj then trapped Azhar leg-before in his following over. Abid Ali went back courtesy off a brilliant catch by Aiden Markram at shortleg off Nortje. Note, Babar won the toss and decided to bat first. The home side is unchanged while South Africa replace Lungi Ngidi with Wiaan Mulder. Pakistan lead the two-match series 1-0 after winning the first Test in Karachi by seven wickets.



BANGKOK: Pakistan ambassador to Thailand, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad met Usana Berananda, Director General Department of ASEAN Affairs, ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and discussed Pakistan's future engagement with ASEAN.- DNA

First US warship under Biden sails through Taiwan Strait



WASHINGTON: An Amerthe Taiwan Strait. ican warship has passed through the strategicaly-sensitive Taiwan Strait, which separates self-ruled Taiwan from mainland China, the US navy says, the first such provocative voyage since US President Joe Biden assumed office last month. On Thursday, the US military's Seventh Fleet China would "continue to be said in a statement that "the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain (DDG 56)

'had sailed through the waterway earlier in the day in what it claimed was a "routine transit in accordance with international law." American warships periodically carry out such voyages through the strait, often drawing angry responses from China, which has sovereignty over self-ruled Taiwan. Under the "One China" policy, almost all world countries recognize that sovereignty. The US, too, recognizes Chinese sovereignty over the island, but in an attempted affront to China and in violation of its own official policy, America constantly sells weapons to the island, bypassing Beijing, and avidly backs its secessionist president Tsai Ing-wen, besides the deployment of military vessels to

Beijing, which has repeatedly warned the US against official ties with Taiwan, says the US contacts with Taiwan and the weapon sales to the island are a violation of China's sovereignty. The Chinese government said on Thursday that Beijing was "closely monitoring" the situation in the region.

on high alert at all times, respond to all threats and provocations at any moment, and will resolutely safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin. Early into his presidency, Biden has displayed his willingness to continue America's typically hostile posture toward China, including by challenging Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan and in areas in the South and East China Seas, where some regional countries dispute Chinese territorial claims. The White House has already underscored support for Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan through multiple calls and statements in just one week after the new president's inauguration, signaling Washington's rejection of China's territorial claims in the East and South China Seas. - APP

Rowdy scenes in

From Page 01

parties are only worried about cases against them. Prime Minister Imran Khan wont give National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) to any one at any cost, and the thieves will be caught, he clarified.

"The head of thieves is sitting in London and 40 thieves are moving here." Minister for Communication Murad Saeed said that opposition leaders only give new deadlines for resignations to PM Imran but they never act on them. These thieves will not get NRO from the premier, he stated. Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar said that opposition is misleading the people with its bogus stance. In past, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) used to hurl allegations against each other, he added. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader and former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said history would bear testimony to the fact that opposition was not allowed to speak on the constitutional amendment proposed by the government for holding Senate elections through the show of hands. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said yesterday he was barred from speaking on the proposed amendment several times. Ashraf accused the PTI government of ruining the country. He said that tabling of the constitutional amendment bill showed government's bad intentions. "It is an attempt to deceive people just like PTI's promises of building five million homes and providing 10 million jobs to the people after coming to power," he said, and asked the government to have

PCB wants 50% of crowd capacity

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has wished to increase crowd capacity to 50% for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season six group matches at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. The National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) have allowed only 20% for matches in Karachi and Lahore while the decision to increase crowd numbers for the three playoffs and the final will be made later.

Around 5,500 will be able to attend each match day at Gaddafi stadium, however, PCB will now request NCOC once again to increase the capacity after fall in COV-ID-19 cases in the country. Meanwhile, the meeting regarding tickets for PSL will be held tomorrow where the discussion will take place regarding stages of tickets sales and prices. – APP

Aus Open to go ahead despite **COVID** case

MELBOURNE: The Australian Open will begin as scheduled on Monday even though a worker at one of the Melbourne hotels used to quarantine players and their entourages tested positive for COVID-19, tournament director Craig Tiley said on Thursday.

The day's warm-up matches at Melbourne Park were called off after the case was announced late on Wednesday, and those who underwent quarantine at the Grand Hyatt hotel were instructed to get tested and isolate until they had a result. "We're absolutely confident the Australian Open will go ahead," Tiley told reporters. "We are starting on Monday." He said the 507 people affected, 160 of them players, would have their tests completed by late Thursday afternoon. If the results were negative, the players would be free to participate in the six warmup events at the Grand Slam venue to allow them to get match practice after 14 days in quarantine. "This does give us three days for the lead-in events to be completed," he said, adding that the draw for the Grand Slam tournament had been postponed from Thursday to Friday. Earlier, Victoria state health officials said the testing of the tennis cohort was precautionary, "We think the risk to other guests in the hotel - tennis players and their accompanying staff - is relatively low," Allen Cheng told reporters. - APP

'UN court's ruling shows Iranian nation's power'

Rouhani made the remarks on Thursday, one day after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that it can take on Iran's bid to overturn illegal US sanctions, which were re-imposed by former president Donald Trump in May 208 after he pulled Washington out of a nuclear deal with Tehran and and world powers.

Foreign Desk

TEHRAN: President Hassan Rouhani has congratulated Iranians on their "shining victory" against the United States at the UN's top court, saying the World Court's recent verdict on Tehran's case against US sanctions demonstrates the Iranian nation's grandeur in the face of the superpower. Rouhani made the remarks on Thursday, one day after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that it can take on Iran's bid

to overturn illegal US sanctions, which were re-imposed by former president Donald Trump in May 208 after he pulled Washington out of a nuclear deal with Tehran and and world powers.

"I congratulate dear Iranian people as the Administration of Prudence and Hope achieved a great success at The Hague-based court. This is one of the several victories that the government has secured at the International Court of Justice against the United States, and this is very important," he said during a video conference inaugurating five industrial projects in Zanjan Province. "This power and grandeur is for the great nation of Iran against a superpower. In the political war, hundreds of thousands of experts and specialists accompany them (the Americans), but we are going to the war with a limited number of diplomats,' said Rouhani, hailing the diplomatic achievement as "beautiful and very brilliant."

Iran brought the case in 2018 after Trump reinstated anti-Iran sanctions following his unilateral withdrawal from the

2015 nuclear deal, also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The United States tried to argue

that Iran could not base claims at the ICJ on the 1955 Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations, and Consular Rights between the two countries. However, a majority of a panel of 16 judges found the treaty could be used as a basis for the ICJ's jurisdiction. "The court unanimously rejects

the preliminary objections to its jurisdiction raised by the Unites States of America according to

which the subject matter of the dispute does not relate to the interpretation or application of the Treaty of Amity," presiding judge Abdulqawi Yusuf said on Wednesday. "At the International Court of Justice, we got a very successful verdict, despite the mobilization of thousands of great lawyers [on the side of the US]. The tribunal approved an interim order that the United States should immediately lift all sanctions on humanitarian goods, but America did not hon-

or [the ruling,]" he added.

Business / World



Briefs

Bangladesh jails 50 for 2002 attack on PM

WEB DESK

DHAKA: A Bangladesh court has jailed 50 opposition activists for up to 10 years for an attack on the current prime minister's motorcade nearly 20 years ago, a prosecutor said.

Among the defendants was a former member of Parlia ment for the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which was in power at the time of the attack. In 2002, a motor cade accompanying Sheikh Hasina, who was then the opposition leader for Awami League, was attacked with rocks, batons and machetes prosecutors said. Three men, including the

ex-MP, were given 10 years in jail and the rest got various jail terms from four and a half years," prosecutor Shaheen Mirdha told the AFP news agency on Thursday, after the sentences were delivered by a district court in the southern city of Satkhira. Twelve of the convicts are currently on the run. The prosecutor said the attack was one of many assassination attempts on Hasina, who was unhurt. Several of her Awami League followers and journalists were injured. The opposition BNP made no immediate comment. The BNP leader, Hasina's archrival Khaleda Zia, is serving a 17-year jail term for corruption imposed in 2018. Zia was prime minister at the time of the 2002 attack. The BNP has accused the government of detaining tens of thousands of its activists using trumped-up charges in the 12 years that Hasina has been in power.

COVAX sets out plan to distribute of 337m vaccines

WEB DESK

BEIIING: The COVAX initiative for equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines has published its first distribution list, planning enough doses for dozens of countries to immunise more than 3 percent of their pop ulations by mid-year.

The release of the "interim distribution forecast" on Wednesday came amid concerns over whether lower-income countries will be left out of the immunisation race dominated by rich nations - a problem COVAX, which is led by the United Nations-backed vaccine alliance Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organization (WHO), was set up to resolve. The list broke down for the first time how the programme's initial 337.2 million doses will be distributed, in line with a target "to protect the most vulnerable groups such as health care workers" in the first half of the year. First deliveries are expected in late February, with some 145 countries set to receive enough doses to immunise 3.3 percent of their population by mid-2021.

Sweden enters phase 2 of vaccination program

STOCKHOLM: health agency said on Thursday that it is preparing for the second phase of the country's vaccination program, as 2.2 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines are expected to be available this month and in March. Up to date, more than 264,000 people have been inoculated, and most of them are elderly, the authority told a press briefing. The Public Health Agency of Sweden has lowered the age threshold from 70 to 65 for those who can be prioritized for the phase 2 vac cination. Younger people with transplants or who need dialysis are also included. Planning for the third phase is also underway. In phase 3, individuals aged 60-64 are prioritized, as well as those aged 18-59 with preexisting medical conditions that could increase the risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms, such as those with chronic cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and Down syndrome. "In each phase especially in a deficiency situation, the elderly take precedence over the younger because we know that age is a clear risk factor for COVID-19, especially severe disease," said the agency's Director-General Johan Carlson. - APP



TASHKENT: Abdul Razak Dawood, PM advisor for commerce, and Investment in a meeting with Uzbek President, Shavkat Mirziyoyev during his visit to Uzbekistan. - DNA

Myanmar military blocks FB, social media as pressure grows

Facebook spokesman Andy Stone urged authorities to restore connectivity "so that people in Myanmar can communicate with their families and friends and access important information"

RANGOON: Myanmar's military government reportedly arrested at least three protesters on Thursday hours after it blocked Facebook and other social media platforms in a bid to quell dissent after detaining the country's elected leaders and seizing power in a coup that the United Nations chief said must fail. Facebook, used by about half

Myanmar's 53 million people, has emerged as a key platform for opposition to Monday's coup with photos of civil disobedience campaigns and nightly pot-and-pan protests widely shared. The Ministry of Communica-

tions and Transport said the restrictions would remain in place until February 7. "Currently the people who are

troubling the country's stability ... are spreading fake news and misinformation and causing misunderstanding among people by using Facebook," the ministry said in a letter.

The police action comes after street protest erupted in the second-biggest city Mandalay against the coup that ousted democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Video on Facebook showed around 20 people outside Mandalay Medical University, according to Reuters. One banner read "People protest against military coup". The move to silence online activity came after police filed charges against former leader Suu Kvi. who has not been seen since she was detained in the early hours of Monday morning, for illegally importing communications equipment, and as the United Nations said it was doing all it could to mobilise an international response to the military takeover.

NetBlocks, which monitors online services worldwide, said restrictions on Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp by the state-owned Internet provider MPT appeared to have spread to other providers.

People were using VPNs to get around the blocks, it said.

"Facebook products are now restricted on multiple internet providers in #Myanmar as operators comply with an apparent blocking order," Netblocks wrote on Twitter. Facebook, which also owns Insta-

gram and WhatsApp, confirmed the disruption.

Facebook spokesman Andy Stone urged authorities to restore connectivity "so that people in Myanmar can communicate with their families and friends and access important information". Most people in Myanmar access Facebook through their mobile phones and it is also a crucial means of communication for businesses and government, although it has been linked to hate speech and disinformation.

"The Internet only really became available to most of the population following 2011," Herve Lemahieu, director of the Power and Diplomacy Programme at Australia's Lowy Institute told Al Jazeera. "(The block) will be terrible in terms of its consequences not only in terms of organising a response to this coup but also in terms of conducting day to day business and economic activity. These platforms are absolutely critical and have become so over the past 10 years."

Aung San Suu Kyi, the founder of the National League for Democracy (NLD) is under house arrest in the capital, Naypyidaw, according to her party, but the generals have not commented on her whereabouts.

The NLD won about 80 percent of the vote in polls on November 8, according to the election commission but the military has refused to accept the result, making unsubstantiated allegations of fraud. The United Nations said it would increase international pressure to ensure the will of the people is respected.

"We will do everything we can to mobilise all the key actors and international community to put enough pressure on Myanmar to make sure that this coup fails," United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said during an interview broadcast by The Washington Post newspaper on Wednesday. "It is absolutely unacceptable after elections - elections that I believe took place normally - and after a large period of transition." Reports emerged on Thursday of the first street protest against the coup in the city of Mandalay, Myanmar's second biggest city. Riot police broke up a small demonstration and people fled in all directions, according to news website Myanmar Now. Police said six walkie-talkie radios had been found in a search of Aung San Suu Kyi's home in Naypyidaw, claiming they had been imported illegally and used without permission. - APP

Belgian court jails Iranian diplomat for 20 years

Foreign Desk

A Belgian court has convicted an Iranian diplomat for plotting a thwarted 2018 bombing of an exiled opposition group outside the French capital, Paris, and ordered him jailed for 20 years. Belgian prosecution lawyers and civil parties to the prosecution on Thursday said the Vienna-based diplomat, Assadolah Assadi, was guilty of attempted "terrorism" after a plot to bomb a rally of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) in June 2018 was foiled by German, French and Belgian police.

"The ruling shows two things: A diplomat doesn't have immunity for criminal acts ... and the responsibility of the Iranian state in what could have been carnage," Belgian prosecution lawyer Georges-Henri Beauthier told reporters outside the court in Antwerp.

The ruling marked the first trial of an Iranian official for suspected "terrorism" in the European Union since Iran's revolution in 1979. Assadi, now 49, was attached to the Iranian mission in Austria when he supplied explosives for the planned attack. He was arrested in Germany, where he did not have diplomatic immunity. Three accom-

plices were given jail terms and were stripped of their Belgian citizenship. Belgian-Iranian couple Nasimeh Naami, 36, and Amir Saadouni, 40, accepted from Assadi half a kilogramme (one pound) of TATP explo-

Kuwait bans non-citizen entry for two weeks

sives and a detonator.

Foreign Desk

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait will impose a new round of swift restrictions from Sunday, including a two-week entry ban on non-citizens, as part of its latest attempt to curb the spread of the coronavirus. The decision was announced on Wednesday following an extraordinary cabinet meeting as the country is witnessing an uptick in the number of COVID-19 infections and hospitalisations, according to a statement from the Kuwait Council Ministers. Immediate relatives, such as parents and children, and accompanying domestic workers would be exempt from the entry ban and all those arriving in the country would have to quarantine, read a cabinet's statement. It also ordered the closure of gyms and salons and asked other commercial businesses to cease operating at 8:00pm local time (17:00 GMT), with the exception of pharmacies, supermarkets and other food stores. The country has witnessed an increase in infections since January. On Wednesday, it reported 756 new cases in the previous 24 hours. The previous month, the country succeeded in keeping the spread at bay with daily cases falling below 300.

Korea strategy



WEB DESK

NEW YORK: US President Joe Biden and his South Korean counterpart, Moon Jae-in have pledged to upgrade their two nations' alliance and pursue a "comprehensive" strategy on North Korea in a phone call. It was their first phone call since Biden took his oath as president on January 20. Moon has previously offered to mediate

between the United States

and North Korea, and get denuclearisation talks back on track. Moon's spokesman, Kang Min-seok was quoted by Yonhap news agency as saying that the two leaders agreed to work together for the shared goal of denuclearising the Korean Peninsula and bringing lasting peace to the region. Kang said Moon proposed that the two sides make joint efforts to advance

the denuclearisation and peace-building process. Biden also pledged close cooperation to achieve the goal, saying it was important for the two countries to maintain the same position on the matter, Kang added. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Biden's predecessor, former President Donald Trump had agreed to work towards the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula at their first summit in 2018, but a second summit and subsequent working-level talks fell apart. "We will always stand together as we work for peace on the Korean Peninsula and tackle global challenges," Moon said in a separate statement after his call with Biden. Moon also welcomed what

he described as "America's return" in the midst of mounting global challenges - the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and economic polarisation.

Biden, Moon pledge 'comprehensive' N amid tensions over Navalny

Foreign Desk

BRUSSELS: EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell was set to head to Moscow on Thursday to hold talks with the Kremlin as riot police continue to make mass arrests of Alexei Navalny's supporters. The visit by the former Spanish foreign minister is the first by a top EU envoy since 2017. Relations between the two sides grew cold after Moscow's military conquest of Crimea and support for opposition fighters in Ukraine in 2014. Borrell declared that he would deliver a "clear message" to Moscow over issues of human rights and the arrest of Navalny, a high-profile critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The trip drew criticism from some members of the EU who argued that



the Kremlin would play it off as evidence of Brussel's intention to return to business-as-usual. Moscow has ignored calls from the EU to release Navalny who was sentenced to almost three years imprisonment on Tuesday. Borrell was hopeful to garner cooperation with his Russian counterpart, Sergev Lavrov, over issues such as climate change and reviving the Iran nuclear deal. Borrell had already called for Naval-

ny's "immediate release," but Moscow warned the diplomat against trying to use the meeting to further attempts to secure his freedom. 'We hope that such nonsense as

linking the prospects of Russia-EU relations with the resident of a detention center will not happen," Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Moscow stands "ready to do everything" to develop ties with Brussels, but the Kremlin is "not ready to listen to advice" on the issue of Navalny, he said.

Borrell was planning to meet with civil society leaders after the Kremlin rejected his attempt to meet with the detained activist.

Foreign ministers from around the EU had agreed to meet again on February 22 to discuss "possible further action" if Navalny is not released.

Syria says it responded to 'Israeli aggression'

FOREIGN DESK

DAMASCUS: Syrian forces

responded late on Wednesday to "Israeli aggression" in the south of the country, the state news agency said. Israel launched missiles from the occupied Golan Heights approximately 11pm (21:00 GMT) and caused material damage, the SANA state news agency reported, citing a military source. "Our anti-air defences responded

. and intercepted most of

the enemy missiles," the

source added. The UK-based

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said the Israeli bombing hit a position belonging to "the regime forces and where pro-Iranian militias are also present" in the southern Quneitra province. Witnesses in the capital, Damascus, told the Reuters news agency they heard sounds of explosions. Israel routinely carries out raids in Syria, mostly against targets linked to Iran in what it says is a bid to prevent its arch-foe from consolidating a foothold along its northern border. But the Israeli army rarely acknowledges individual raids and did not comment on the latest reports. However, the army has said it hit about 50 targets in the war-torn country during 2020, without providing details. According to the Observatory, which relies on sources on the ground in Syria, Israeli attacks on eastern Syria killed 57 government and allied fighters on January 13, in the deadliest raids since Israel began its assaults. On January 22, four civilians, including two children, were killed by Israeli raids in the Syrian province of Hama, SANA reported. At least three pro-Iran fighters were killed after Israel carried out air raids at positions in southern Syria and south of the capital Damascus on January 7. Iran has members of its own military as well as fighters from a variety of nationalities, including Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, fighting in support of President Bashar al-Assad. Israeli jets have also been accused of violating Lebanese airspace and crisscrossing skies over Beirut in daily, low-altitude flights that have added to jitters in the Lebanese capital

Georgia mulll military co-op

Azerbaijan,

DNA BAKU: Azerbaijani ambassa-

dor Faig Guliyev and Georgian Defence Minister rakli Garibashvili have discussed strategic partnership ties and prospects of cooperation in a range of important spheres. The meeting focused on the positive dynamics of cooperation between the Azerbaijani and Georgian defence ministries. The two men discussed the signing of a cooperation accord in the defence sphere and the importance of cooperation in the military education field. They stressed the significance of mutual visits by delegations of the two countries' relevant agencies. Garibashvili expressed the hope that his Azerbaijani counterpart Zakir Hasanov will visit Tbilisi. Garibashvili, who visited

Azerbaijan in March 2020, then described the visit as a clear example of the high level of cooperation between the two countries and stressed the significance of such meetings in terms of expanding cooperation. Back then, at the meeting with his Georgian counterpart, Hasanov said that the strategic partnership between the two countries is at a high level and plays an important role not only in the development of both countries but also in ensuring security in the entire region.

US urges India to hold 'dialogue' with farmers

Farmer leaders condemned the violence but said they would not call off the protest. Since then, authorities have heavily increased security at protest sites outside New Delhi's border, adding iron spikes and steel barricades to stop demonstrating farmers from entering the capital

Foreign Desk

WASHINGTON: The United States has urged the Indian government to resolve its differences with the farmers over agriculture laws through dialogue, saying that peaceful protests and unhindered access to internet are a "hallmark of any thriving democracy". Tens of thousands of farmers have been hunkering down at the Indian capital's fringes to demand the repeal of laws they say will leave them poorer and at the mercy of corporations. The protests that began in late November pose a considerable challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has billed the laws as nec-

essary to modernise Indian farming. The largely peaceful protests turned violent on January 26, India's Republic Day, when a section of the tens of thousands of farmers riding tractors veered from the protest route earlier decided with police and stormed the historic Red Fort in a dramatic escalation. Hundreds of police officers were injured and a protester died. Dozens of farmers were also injured but officials have not given their numbers. Farmer leaders condemned the vio-

lence but said they would not call off the protest. Since then, authorities have heavily increased security at protest sites outside New Delhi's border, adding iron spikes and steel barricades to stop demonstrating farmers

from entering the capital. The government also restricted access to mobile internet at protest sites. "We recognise that unhindered access to information, including the internet, is fundamental to the freedom of expression and a hallmark of a thriving democracy," a US State Department spokesperson said late on Wednesday, according to Indian media reports. "In general, the United States welcomes steps that would improve the efficiency of India's markets and attract greater private sector investment," the spokesperson said, adding that the US "encourages that any differences between the parties be resolved through dialogue' "We recognise that peaceful pro-

tests are a hallmark of any thriving democracy and note that the Indian rare statement.

Supreme Court has stated the same. Earlier this week, a tweet by pop superstar Rihanna put a global spotlight on Indian farmer protests, angering the Indian government which was forced to issue a 'Why aren't we talking about this?!" Rihanna tweeted to her

more than 101 million Twitter followers, referring to the internet outage at protest sites. Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg and the niece of US Vice President Kamala Harris, Meena Harris, also tweeted their support and a social media storm followed.

Soon, senior Indian government ministers, celebrities and even the foreign ministry urged people to come together and denounce outsiders who try to break the country. "It is unfortunate to see vested interest groups trying to enforce their agenda on these protests, and derail them," the foreign ministry said, without naming Rihanna and others who followed her suit.

The ministry statement accused "foreign individuals" and celebrities of "sensationalism".

Bollywood entertainers and sports stars, many of whom have long been silent on the farmer protests and are known to toe the government's line, tweeted in one voice.







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Briefs

Posters with PM Imran's pictures in IIOJ&K

DNA

SRINAGAR: In Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), posters reading Thank You Pakistan and Thank You Imran Khan for effectively raising Kashmir case at all global platforms appeared in Srinagar and other areas of the territory to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day tomorrow.

The posters pasted by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Alliance as a gesture of thanks by people of Kashmir to Pakistan also show pictures of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The posters reiterate that Kashmiri people will continue their struggle till achievement of freedom from Indian oppression.

Rashid urges PDM to participate in open voting

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has on Thursday urged Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) to participate in open voting during the Senate elections and said chances like these do not come often.

The federal minister talked to media and said Prime Minister Imran wants to end the process of horse-trading, and that the parliamentarians should have the courage to openly vote for their candidate.

Sheikh Rashid said, "The Senate polls will be held in March which will further strengthen democ-Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JUI-F) President Fazal-ur-Rehman has calmed down relatively and he should participate in the Senate elections.

"PDM anti-government drive's last option will either be long march or no-confidence motion. Nothing will happen even of the opposition parties tender resigna tions. "Governments are not toppled by political movements. We staged sit-in for 126 days but dialogues are last option in politics. Democracy is strengthened by negotiations and those who keep the doors of talks shut

COVID-19 claims 31 more lives

derail democracy."

Raja Pervaiz

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Thursday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 32,889 with 1,508 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,772 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Around 31 corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 30 were under treatment in hospital and one in their respective homes or quarantines died on Wednesday, 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. It said that out of the total 31 deaths during last 24 hours 13 patients died on ventilators.

Some 44,173 tests were conducted across the country on Wednesday, including 12,035 in Sindh, 18,235 in Punjab, 6,718 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 5,895 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 458 in Balochistan, 394 in GB, and 438 in AJK. Around 505,818 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 550,540 cases were detected that also included the perished, recovered and under treatment COVID-19 patients so far, including AJK 9,100, Balochistan 18,840, GB 4,912, ICT 41,655, KP 67,803, Punjab 159,311 and Sindh 248,919. About 11,833 deaths were recorded in country since the eruption of the contagion.

Kashmir Solidarity Day to be marked in befitting manner

Pakistan would continue to expose India's brutal face at every international forum and before international human rights organizations, he affirmed

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz Thursday said the people of Pakistan and Kashmir would mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day in a befitting manner across the country and the globe on Friday. Addressing a news conference here along with Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Amin Gandapur, he said President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan would visit Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) to express solidarity with the Kashmiri brethren.

"President Arif Alvi will address the AJK Legislative Assembly while Prime Minister Imran Khan will address a public gathering in Kotli," he added.

The minister said on August 5, 2019, India illegally changed the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said marking the Kash-

mir Solidarity Day in a befitting manner would infuse a new spirit in the people of Kashmir and give new life to their freedom movement. Shibli Faraz said Prime Minister Imran Khan was promoting the Kashmir issue at all the international forums and urging the international community to take notice of Indian aggression, atrocities and barbarism. The people of IIOJK had

One-minute silence to be been under siege and lock-down for the last one and observed across country

ISLAMABAD: In order to show solidarity with the people of India-held Kashmir (IHK), a one-minute silence will be observed across Pakistan at 10 am on Friday. According to the details, one-minute silence will be observed at 10:00 am across the country to marks "Kashmir Solidarity Day". The day will be observed tomorrow to express wholehearted support of the Pakistani nation to the just struggle of Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination under the UN resolutions. The day will also be marked to expose the worst ever oppression perpetrated by India against Kashmiris in IIOJ&K.

On the occasion, Prime Minister Imran Khan will address a public gathering at Kotli in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Solidarity walks will be arranged in Islamabad, Muzaffarabad, Gilgit and four provincial headquarters. Human chains will also be formed at Kohala and other important points linking Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. In Punjab, several government departments will hold Kashmir rallies and gatherings at divisional, district, and tehsil level. - DNA

a half years facing a lot of hardships, he said, urging the world of taking notice of the Indian atrocities in held Kashmir. The international community, he said, should put political and diplomatic pressure on India for resolving the Kashmir issue. The United Nations resolutions on Kashmir should be imple-

mented, he stressed. The minister said Pakistan would continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris Shibli Faraz praised the media for playing a positive role in highlighting the Kashmir cause, "We stand shoulder to shoulder with

Shibli Faraz reiterated that Prime Minister Imran Khan had given a new life to the Kashmir freedom movement. The Kashmir issue had been effectively highlighted internationally during the last two years. No concrete steps were taken for highlighting the Kashmir issue in the past, however Prime Minister

our Kashmiri brethren."

Imran Khan raised the voice for Kashmiris effectively at all world fora, he added. The minister said Pakistan was a peace loving country and believed in the rule of law. It would strive for peace in the region, which could only be possible with the resolution of Kashmir issue.

Kh. Asif's judicial remand extended

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: An accountability court in Lahore on Thursday extended Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Khawaja Asif's judicial remand until February 18 in assets beyond income case. The accountability court's judge Jawadul Hassan heard the case pertains to the assets beyond income against PML-N senior leader Khawaja Asif. The accused was produced before the court amid strict securi-

ty arrangements. The NAB prosecutor presented the report about reference against PML-N stalwart before the court. The court later adjourned the hearing after extending judicial remand of Khawja Asif According to the latest progress made in assets beyond income case against Khawaja Asif, four witnesses have recorded their statements to the anti-corruption watchdog.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Nadeem Raza, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. -DNA

Mandviwalla appears in NAB court

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Senate chairman Saleem Mandviwalla has appeared before an accountability court in Islamabad during the hearing of a reference pertains to the illegal land allotment for Kidney Hills plots. An accountability court in Islamabad heard a corruption reference filed by the NAB against the illegal allotment of government land for plots in Overseas Cooperative Housing Society, Kidney Hills, Karachi. Barrister Qasim Abbasi submitted power of attorney in the court to represent Senate deputy chairman Saleem Mandviwalla and former managing director of PIA Aijaz Haroon. Barrister Abbasi apprised the court that the accused Aijaz Haroon had been granted bail by the high court in the case. The judge questioned NAB prosecutor whether it was a full reference or a supplementary reference would also be filed. To this, the prosecutor responded that it is the central reference, however, a supplementary reference will be filed if needed in the future. The judge remarked that the court will provide a timeframe of two weeks for concluding the investigation and filing the supplementary reference in the next hearing. The accountability court also directed the provision of the copies of the corruption reference among the accused. Later, the hearing was adjourned till February 18.

While talking to media outside the court building, Mandviwalla said that he was appeared before the accountability court after being summoned. He claimed that it was a private transaction with the agreement of both parties. Such references would affect businesses in the country, he added. Mandviwalla said that the high court had also declared it a private transaction in its ruling for granting bail to Aijaz Haroon. To a question, he answered that the final decision for the upcoming Senate elections through open ballot will be made in the Parliament. - DNA

Pakistan, Sri Lanka reaffirm support for each other

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Makhdoom Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had a telephone conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Dinesh Gunawardena, on Thursday. The two Foreign Ministers exchanged views on bilateral matters and cooperation in multilateral fora. Foreign Minister

felicitated Foreign Minister Gunawardena on the occasion of the 73rd Nation-



al Day of Sri Lanka and conveyed best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the brotherly people of



Sri Lanka. Both sides underscored the importance of further strengthening and

cooperation in all areas including political, trade and economic, and combating Covid-19

pandemic. importance of high-level exchanges, which are the hallmark of the bilateral relationship, was underscored. The two Foreign Ministers also reaffirmed mutual support for each other in the regional and multilateral fora including SAARC and the UN. Pakistan and Sri Lanka have excellent bilateral relations based on trust, mutual respect and close cooperation.

CJCSC Gen Nadeem **Raza calls** on President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Ioint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Nadeem Raza called on President Dr Arif Alvi here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday. According to official sources, security situation in the country as well as in the region were discussed during the meeting.

NHA to set up Response Centre

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communication and Postal Services Murad Saeed on Thursday informed the NA that NHA was planning to establish Emergency Response Centre for emergency relief to accident victims and needy locals. Replying to questions in the house during question hour, the minister said the Emergency Response Centre would be established in a phased programme for provision of first aid medical services to accident victims. In order to determine the magnitude of accidents on Motorways and Highways and identify reasons behind increasing trend of accidents. - APP

Narendra Modi govt postpones census in IIOJ

ISLAMABAD: Narendra Modi's government has postponed this year's census in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) till 2026 to change popula tion ratio of the Muslim-majority region.

According to the statistics of the last census that was held in 2011, 68 percent of the population was Muslim while Hindus were 28 percent and four percent were Sikhs and Buddhists. Indian has issued Kashmir's domicile to over 1.8 million people under its new Domicile Law including 6,600 retired army officers of Gorkha community.

Over 10,000 laborers from Bihar will be settled in Kashmir. Separate Israel-style colonies are being built for four to five hundred thousand Kashmiri Pandits. The Control of Building and Operation Act, 1988 and Jammu and Kash mir Development Act, 1970 have been changed to allow construction to army and cantonment boards.

The Modi regime has allotted 20,000 kanals of land to Hindu investors, over two hundred thousand acres to foreigr investors and 129 kanals in Baramulla to security forces at ter removing the condition of special certificate. The Indian forces have already occupied 53,353 hectares in Kashmir. Indian has started to alter delimitations. To gain simple majority, seven seats of the legislative assembly will be given to Jammu instead of Kashmir according to the new plan de spite Kashmir having more population. A new division is be ing constituted comprising districts of Ramban, Kishtwar, Doda, Shopian, Anantnag and Kulgam. It is pertinent here to mention that the economy of Kashmir has suffered a loss of \$5.3 billion since August 2019 when New Delhi illegally revoked the valley's autonomy. - DNA

Pakistan, Uzbekistan working together for a strong relations

ISLAMABAD: Visit of Adviser for Commerce and Investment H.E. Abdul Razak Dawood to Uzbekistan for the 1st Meeting of Pakistan- Uzbekistan Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Affairs on 31 January-03 February 2021. Adviser for Commerce and Investment H.E. Abdul Razak Dawood visited Republic of Uzbekistan on 31 January-03 February 2021. The Adviser was accompanied by senior government officers from different Ministries.

During his visit, Adviser called on President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev on 01 February 2021. During the meeting, the Adviser conveyed warm greetings from our leadership and exchanged views on bilateral economic relations and connectivity projects including the Pakistan-Afghanistan- Uzbekistan railway line project. Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood and Deputy Prime Minister Sardor Umurzakov jointly co-chaired the 1st Meeting of Pakistan- Uzbekistan Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Affairs on 01 February 2021. During the meeting, the sides reviewed the entire gamut of trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

In order to give further impetus to bilateral relations, it was agreed to hold the 6th session of Joint Ministerial Commission at Tashkent during first half of 2021 and constitute the Joint Business Council, at the earliest possible. The Adviser also led Pakistan delegation at High-Level Tripartite Working Group on the implementation of "Mazar-i-Sharif – Kabul - Peshawar" Trans-Afghan Railway Construction Project. Deputy Prime Minister Umurzakov and Afghan Foreign Minister Mr. Hanif Atmar represented Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, respectively. While highlighting the importance of connectivity and Pakistan's resolve to forge closer ties with Uzbekistan and wider Central Asian region. - DNA

Sinopharm's vaccine safe and dependable: Dr. Faisal

"We are grateful to China for gifting 500,000 vaccine doses to Pakistan which enabled the government to inoculate the national immunization drive," Asad Umar added

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The efficacy of Sinopharm's Covid-19 vaccine is between 79-86 per cent. We are planning to buy it in sufficient quantity as 110 million out of 220 million of total Pakistan's population need Coronavirus vaccine." said Special Assistant to Prime Minister Dr. Faisal Sultan.

According to the statistical analysis of Sinopharm China Biotech, the results of the interim analysis of the new coronavirus inactivated vaccine phase III clinical trial showed that the safety of the new coronavirus inactivated vaccine of Sinopharm China Bio Beijing Company is good after inoculation. A report published by Gwadar

Pro on Thursday says, all patients produced high-titer antibodies,

the neutralizing antibody positive conversion rate was 99.52%, and the vaccine's protective efficacy against the disease caused by the new coronavirus infection (Covid-19) was 79.34%. Speaking to Gwadar Pro, Asad

Umar, federal Minister for planning appreciated government of China for donating 500,000 doses of vaccines. "We are grateful to China for gifting 500,000 vaccine doses to Pakistan which enabled the government to inoculate the national immunization drive," Asad Umar added. According to Sinopharm's press release, its vaccine was 79.34% effective at preventing new cases of Covid-19. The data results reached the relevant technical standards of the World Health Organization and the country. The "Guiding Principles for Clinical Evaluation of New Coronavirus Preventive Vaccines (Trial)" issued by the Food and Drug Administration is required by relevant standards. "At present, Sinopharm China Biotech Beijing has formally submitted a conditional listing application to the State Food and Drug Administration," a press note issued from Sinopharm had stated earlier. Pakistani authorities endorsed the results and requested Chinese authorities for provision of its vaccine.



Dr. Faisal Sultan launched countrywide vaccine and spoke highly of Sinopharm's Coronavirus vaccine. "It's highly effective and ultra-safe. Pakistan also conducted its trial that was found satisfactory," he told journalists on Wednesday.

Endorsing Faisal Sultan, the executive Director of Pakistan's National Institute of Health Major General Aamer Ikram also spoke highly of Sinopharm's vaccine saying it worked well during trials. "It's heavy work. We will overcome the Pandemic of Covid-19 with this [Sinopharm's Coronavirus vaccine] Insha'Allah (God willing),"Major General Aamer Ikram told this correspondent. The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drap) had approved Sin-

opharm's vaccine for emergency

use in mid-January this year. Vaccine was only approved after its trials satisfied Pakistani authorities to great extant. "In a meeting conducted by [the] Registration Board of Drap, another vaccine manufactured by China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) has also been given EUA (emergency use authorization)," a spokesperson for the regulatory body said earlier in a statement. The Sinopharm's Covid-19 vaccine was evaluated for its safety and quality and granted EUA "with certain conditions", the statement added. It is worth noting that Sinopharm-China's stateowned drug company, also known as the China National Pharmaceutical Group had announced on December 30, 2020 promising phase 3 clinical results for its coronavi-

rus vaccine candidate.

Delhi police files case against Greta Thunberg

DNA

NEW DELHI: After Swedish climate activist and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Greta Thunberg showed solidarity with farmers protesting in India for their rights, Delhi police have reportedly filed a case against her for "spreading misinformation.

According to a report by NDTV, Delhi police have accused the teenage climate campaigner of "promoting conspiracy and enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language... and acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony."