



Islamabad POST

Friday, February 05, 2021

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Detailed News On Page-07

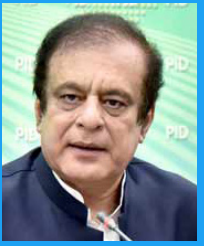
Justice Faez questions media freedom in Pak

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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 Pakistan 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 Tomography (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 in Senate Shahzad Waseem Thursday said the government presented bill in the Parliament 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 buying 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

KARACHI: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and former Prime Minister 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.

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

People of Kashmir deserve peace: COAS

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said that People of Kashmir and this region deserve peace. He stated this while addressing officers of Lahore Garrison, on Thursday. According to a statement issued here, COAS address was focused on professional matters, internal and external security situation of the country and his vision of an enduring peace within Pakistan and the region. The army chief also apprised the officers with the latest developments on Eastern Border, situation in IIOJ&K and our firm commitment for a just resolution of Kashmir issue in line with the aspirations of people of Kashmir. COAS also reiterated greater vigilance and state of preparedness amid new challenges of hybrid war.

'Army chief's statement reflects desire for peace'

ISLAMABAD: The statement of Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa on "extending hand of peace in all directions" is reflective of Pakistan's desire for peace and security in the region, besides resolution of core issues including Kashmir, the Foreign Office said Thursday. "The statement is a reiteration of the importance of peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said at a weekly press briefing. Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri in response to a question regarding the recent statement of General Bajwa made at graduation ceremony at PAF Academy termed it "a manifestation of Pakistan's firm commitment to the ideals of mutual respect and peaceful co-existence." On the contrary, he said, the Indian military officials had been making careers out of issuing irresponsible and provocative statements against Pakistan, which he said clearly showed the "difference of approach and mindset". The Spokesperson said the belligerent rhetoric of the Indian military leadership was an example of RSS-BJP mindset, which had permeated all state institutions of India. "India's defence limitations have been embarrassingly exposed to the world, first in Balakot and then in Ladakh," he said, stressing that

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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 Punjab 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.

dissolved in the martial law 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-



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

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Democratic Movement (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 "mehngai march (march against inflation)". He was addressing a press conference after a 6-hour long PDM meeting. He also said that the parties

have decided to contest the Senate elections together and will not go against each 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 Pervaiz 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 Sanaulah are present.

Ameer Haider Hoti, Mehmood Khan Ackahzai, Aftab Sherpao, Akram Durrani, Owais Shah Noorani, Professor Sajid Mir, and Dr Malik are also in attendance. Earlier, Fazl and former prime minister 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 forward by Fazl, giving assurances to the PDM chief of

PML-N's full support on 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 JUIF'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 Sanaulah 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 officials 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.

PTI 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 Zaqqa 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

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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 liquefied 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 in the education centres.

SC summons federal ministers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan Thursday summoned federal ministers Asad Umar, Hammad Azhar and Muhammadian 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 working. "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-Kashmiris 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 IOJK 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 Ambassador Ahmad and was attended by representatives of Japanese media, Kashmiri activists in Japan, 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. He said that the unholy nexus that

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 Pakistan's unwavering moral, diplomatic and political support to the just struggle for the right of self-determination of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) 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 speaking out for Kashmiris. - APP

FGEI, PBSA inked MoU to promote management skills among students

DNA

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 Dahi Commissioner PBSA and senior officials were present on this special occasion. Commissioner 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.



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 parties Hurriyat Conference leadership addressing a joint press conference regarding Kashmir Solidarity Day. - DNA

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. Ch Mohammad Sarwar said Pakistan's

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

'Pakistan stands with Kashmiris'

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

Feb 5 to be observed with renewed spirit across country

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Amin Khan Gandapur Thursday said the entire nation would observe 'Kashmir Solidarity Day' on Friday (tomorrow) in a befitting manner to express their wholehearted support to the just struggle of Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination enshrined under United Nations resolutions. Addressing a presser here, he said the people should highlight plight of the oppressed Kashmiris and remind the world community of its obligations towards the longstanding dispute's resolution. He was flanked by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz, Kashmir Committee Chairman Shehryar Khan Afridi and All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders Hussain Khatibi and Syed Faiz Naqshbandi. The minister said Pakistan would continue its moral, diplomatic and political support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) 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 Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of

the world with renewed spirit. He said India was trying to change the demographics of the IOJK and international community should take its notice as around 1.7 million non-Kashmiris had been given domiciles of Kashmir. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan had internationalized the Kashmir issue by becoming the ambassador and lawyer of Kashmiri people. The British and European parliaments that were least bothered to talk on Kashmir issue in the past was now raising voice for the plight of Kashmiris. He called on the international community to urge India to respect the human rights charter and put an end to the human rights violations in Kashmir. The world should ensure a speedy resolution of the 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 Naqshbandi expressed his gratitude to Pakistani people and the government for showing its full support to the people of IOJK. Like Pakistan, he said, Kashmiris across the globe would observe the day in befitting manner to mitigate sufferings of the people living in the occupied valley. - APP

'Sacrifices of Kashmiris will bring revolution'

DNA

PMHQ 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 acquittal pleas of Khattak, Aleem

ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) on Thursday sought arguments on acquittal pleas of Federal Minister for Defence Perwaiz 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 Shafiqat Mehmood and Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Asad Umar 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 adding 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 Turner met with Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee and Grand Imam Badshahi Mosque Maulana Khair and discussed Pakistan cultural and religious diversity & British support for freedom of religious belief. - DNA

Briefs

Teenager shoots 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 Kashmir. He said, Pakistan 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 as Muhammad Asif s/o Mumtaz resident of sector F-8/4 Islamabad and Waqas Messih s/o Anwar Messih resident of Zia Masjid New Shakrill 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 were members of the committee in 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 and security, infrastructure, diet, education, counselling, staff performance and facilities.



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Sri Lanka Mohan Wijewickrama lighting traditional 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 international market witnessed decrease of US\$33 as it was sold at US\$1,801 against \$1,834 last day, the association added.

NDMA displeased over delay in DAC

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 directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to commence Departmental Audit 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 Mahmood Kiani, Khawaja 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. 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. PAFWA Educational System (PES) is a



flagship project of Pakistan Air Force Women Association (PAFWA) which has complemented to existing setup of schools and colleges in PAF. 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 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.

Briefs

'Eight million Kashmiri under siege in IIOJK'

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 (IIOJK) 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 jail 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 brethren 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 Mazare-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 year (2020-21) compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to Japan were recorded at \$89.022 million during July-December (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 decline 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. Recently 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 Gujar 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



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 Samina Alvi 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

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The First Lady of Pakistan Begum Samina Alvi 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

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, Mian Akram Farid Chairman Founder Group, Omar Aftab

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 Samina Alvi 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

cancer from the platform of 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, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, 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 breast cancer.

CDA conducts mega operation against illegal strictures

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) conducted a mega operation against encroachments, land grabbers, and illegal constructions from Tramri Chowk to Panjgran at Lehtrar road on Thursday. Land of Right of Way was retrieved during the operation.

According to detail, the enforcement department of CDA under its anti-encroachment campaign conducted a mega operation at Lehtrar road and demolished the illegal

buildings retrieved the occupied land. Heavy machinery of MPO was used in the operation. The authority demolished encroachments 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 container, and 05 cattle markets were demolished during the operation. The captured goods have been submitted to CDA's store. Operation against encroachments and illegal constructions will be continued.

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 connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day. The rally was led 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 innocent 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 organization to notice of Indian atrocities in Kashmir. - DNA

CCP conducts inspection of poultry feed mills

DNA

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

over the required information.

The CCP initiated the enquiry of the suspected collusive activities in the 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 that the prices of Chicken Farm Broiler 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.



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

Kashmir Solidarity Day, also known as 'Yom-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 IIOJK. 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 demography 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-India 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**

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 businesses in the region. In a meeting with GB Minister for Tourism and Culture Raja Nasir Ali Khan, he said the federal and GB governments 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 concessional loans amounting to Rs 100 billion among the talented youth of country.

'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 trades, he added.

Minister for Tourism Nasir Khan said the GB youth would take maximum benefits from the programme, adding Investment in tourism sector would eventually bring prosperity and economic growth in the area.

PNCA to mark Kashmir Solidarity day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and GB has scheduled various programmes in accordance with the Kashmir Solidarity Day at PNCA auditorium Islamabad on Friday. PNCA will be featuring events including Stage play Zindaan, Musical Show by Bano Rehmat, Imran Khan and other Artists.

Children Performance Speeches, Tableau and Kashmiri Songs competitions would also be held to highlight the sacrifices of innocent 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 Kashmiri 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.

AC adjourns Lok Virsa corruption reference

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability 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 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

Probing BRT

THE 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.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

ABC CERTIFIED

Vol: 01 Issue: 268

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Trilingual education

THE 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

WHILE 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. 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 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 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 unwavering 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

Wajeaha 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

THE 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.

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

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 three 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 with quality.

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 start-

ed 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 of a brilliant catch by Aiden Markram at short-leg 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 led the two-match series 1-0 after winning the first Test in Karachi by seven wickets.

First US warship under Biden sails through Taiwan Strait



WASHINGTON: An American warship has passed through the strategically-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 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

the Taiwan Strait. 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. China would "continue to be 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



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

'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 2018 after he pulled Washington out of a nuclear deal with Tehran 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 2018 after he pulled Washington out of a nuclear deal with Tehran 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 in-

augurating 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 United 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 honor [the ruling,]" he added.

Rowdy scenes in lower house

From Page 01

parties are only worried about cases against them. Prime Minister Imran Khan went 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 mercy on the country.

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 (NCO) 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 NCO once again to increase the capacity after fall in COVID-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 warm-up 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

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 Khan 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 democracy. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal (JULF) 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 resignations. "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 derail democracy."

COVID-19 claims 31 more lives

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 NCO.

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 Legisla-

tive 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 Kashmir 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 IIOJ&K had

One-minute silence to be 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 mark "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

been under siege and lockdown for the last one and 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 implemented, he stressed.

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

our Kashmiri brethren."

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 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 security 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 Khawaja 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 Aiwana-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

CJCS Gen Nadeem Raza calls on President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Nadeem Raza called on President Dr Arif Alvi here at the Aiwana-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

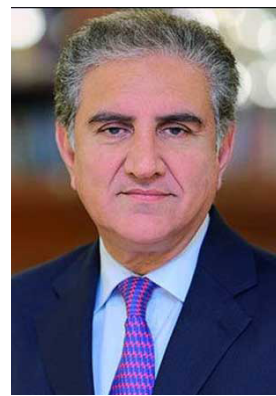
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communication and Postal Services Murad Saeed on Thursday informed the NA that NHA was planning to establish Emergency Response Centre for emergency relief to accident victims and needy locals. Replying to questions in the house during question hour, the minister said the Emergency 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

Pakistan, Sri Lanka reaffirm support for each other

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom 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 Qureshi felicitated Foreign Minister Gunawardena on the occasion of the 73rd National



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 expanding bilateral

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

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 Coronavi-

rus 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 (Drac) had approved Sinopharm's vaccine for emergency

use in mid-January this year. Vaccine was only approved after its trials satisfied Pakistani authorities to great extent. "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 state-owned drug company, also known as the China National Pharmaceutical Group had announced on December 30, 2020 promising phase 3 clinical results for its coronavirus 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."