



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

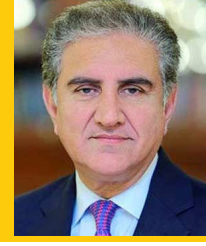
Price Rs. 20

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Shibli Faraz pays respects to martyrs

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Briefs

Aman-21 shows Pak vision

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Friday said that Pakistan was again showing its commitment to global cooperation as Pakistan Navy organizes multinational AMAN Exercise 2021. On Twitter, the president said the naval exercise, being participated by over 42 naval forces, was line with the Government of Pakistan's vision for regional peace and stability. "Congrats all participants on being part of this flagship event," the president said.

Shibli pays respects to martyrs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz has expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of four soldiers in South Waziristan. In a tweet on Friday, he said they are proud sons of this brave nation, who sacrificed their lives for the great cause of defence of the homeland and peace in the country. The Minister presented salute to the courage and patience of the families of the martyrs. He said we are committed to eliminate the remnants of the terrorists.

Usman Dar quits as SAPM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader Usman Dar stepped down as SAPM on Youth Affairs on Friday. The Cabinet Division subsequently de-notified him as the prime minister's aide at his wish. Usman Dar has sought Prime Minister Imran Khan's nod to run campaign for the upcoming by-election in a NA constituency in Sialkot (NA-75) slated for February 19.

Holiday Notice

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

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Another China vaccine okayed for use in Pak

A request for the approval of the vaccine for emergency use was submitted by AJM Pharma (Pvt) Limited

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) on Friday has approved the emergency use of Chinese COVID-19 vaccine from CanSino Biologics, media reported. According to the report, the registration board of the regulatory authority has green-lighted the manufacturer's coronavirus vaccine which comprises a single dose. A request for the approval of the vaccine for emergency use was submitted to DRAP's registration board by AJM Pharma (Pvt) Limited, the report said, adding that the decision to approve it was taken during the third meeting of the authority's registration board. Pakistan is the second country to approve CanSinoBio's vaccine, the report said, adding that a day ago, Mexico had also approved it. Taking to Twitter, the special assistant had said that according to the vaccine's phase-three trials data, it has turned out to be 74.8% effective against the virus, while it also showed 100% effectiveness in preventing severe disease. Further citing the Independent Data Monitoring Committee's report, he said that in multiple countries, the vaccine was 65.7% and 90.98% effective in preventing symptomatic cases and severe diseases, respectively. The SAPM said that the IDMC did not re-

1270 new virus cases reported

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported 33 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 560,363. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 12,218 on Friday. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), 1,270 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Sindh remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic in terms of cases followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Most numbers of casualties have been reported in Punjab. Till now 252,719 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Sindh, 162,875 in Punjab, 69,164 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 18,916 in Balochistan, 42,401 in Islamabad, 9,359 in Azad Kashmir and 4,929 in Gilgit-Baltistan.

port any "serious safety concerns" and that the data included as many as 30,000 participants and 101 people who had tested positive for coronavirus.

4 soldiers martyred in S.Waziristan

ANSAR BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: At least four soldiers embraced martyrdom as terrorists opened fire last night at a security post in South Waziristan, the Pakistan Army's media wing said in a statement Friday. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), terrorists had raided a security forces post in Makeen, South Waziristan late night, with the troops responding promptly and killing four of the assailants. "During exchange of fire 4 soldiers embraced shahadat," the ISPR added, noting that the martyred officers included Lance Naik Imran Ali, as well as Sepoys Atif Jahangir, Anees ur Rehman, Aziz. "Area sanitisation in progress," the statement added. President Dr Arif Alvi condemned the terrorist attack and expressed grief over the martyrdom of army personnel. He also sympathised with the bereaved families and prayed for their strength so they can bear the loss with fortitude. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari offered condolences for the martyred officials and expressed solidarity with their families. "The sacrifices of our martyrs will not be forgotten," he said, adding that implementation of the National Action Plan was essential for rooting out terrorists and their facilitators. Earlier this month, four terrorists were killed during an exchange of fire with security forces in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan tribal district. According to the ISPR, security forces observed presence of terrorists in a compound in Mir Ali. As soon as the troops cordoned off the area, terrorists opened fire. During the intense exchange of fire, four terrorists were killed. The ISPR said that these terrorists were involved in kidnapping for ransom, extortion, raids on security forces and IED explosions.



RAWALPINDI: Dr. Christian Turner, British High Commissioner called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. - DNA

COAS lauds UK's support against Covid19

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Dr. Christian Turner, British High Commissioner in Islamabad called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ, on Friday. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, overall regional security situation and Afghan Peace Process were discussed during the meeting. According to a ISPR statement, Chief Of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa thanked the dignitary for UKs contribution towards fight against COVID-19 in Pakistan.

Massive earthquake jolts across Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An earthquake jolted across Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar and as far as Lahore - reportedly measuring 6.4 on the richter scale. The earthquake was also reportedly felt in Western India and Central Asia including Tajikistan. As noted by the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the earthquake originated from Tajikistan and was recorded at 10:02 (Pakistan Standard Time), with a magnitude of 6.4 on the richter scale. No report of any casualty or property damage was received. People left their homes and rushed towards open spaces to avoid any incident.

Parties announce Senate candidates

PTI, PML N and PPP have mostly announced die-hard party workers

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) has finalised the names of most of its nominees for the upcoming Senate election, Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry said on Friday. The list of candidates also includes Finance Minister Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh - who will contest for a seat from Islamabad - and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar, one of the nominees from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Shaikh, who is not a member of Parliament, was previously an adviser to the premier on finance and was appointed as finance minister in December last year. However, as per Article 91 (9) of the Constitution, he cannot

NAB to check candidates' details

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The NAB on Friday said that anyone who has been convicted by the accountability watchdog will not be able to contest the Senate elections, sources have revealed. Sources said that the NAB has set up a special cell related to the Senate elections which will be supervised by the bureau's Director of Operations Ghulam Safdar Shah. NAB will check the record of Senate candidates after which the cell will issue clearance and send it to the ECP, sources added. It may be recalled that the Senate elections in the country will be held on March 3 for which a schedule has also been issued by the Election Commission.

Continued on Page 06

Biden may close down Guantanamo Bay prison

I.P.REPORT

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration has launched a formal review of the future of the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba with the goal of reviving efforts to close the controversial facility, a White House official said on Friday. Aides involved in internal discussions are

considering an executive action to be signed by President Joe Biden in coming weeks or months, two people familiar with the matter told Reuters, signaling a new effort to remove what human rights advocates have called a stain on America's global image. "We are undertaking an NSC process to assess the current state of play that the

Continued on Page 06

European Union hosts webinar on digitalization initiatives

The Ambassador of the EU to Pakistan, Androulla Kaminara, stressed the importance of making technology work for people to create a fair and competitive economy, as well as an open, democratic and sustainable society

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan convened a webinar to showcase European policy initiatives on Digitalisation and to discuss the challenges and potential of the digital economy in Pakistan. With the Covid19 pandemic accelerating the digital transformation, but also exposing its challenges, the webinar was a timely opportunity to share experiences and expertise. Policy experts from the European Union, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Telecommunications Union (ITU) introduced a wide range of areas concerning the digital transformation in both the EU and Pakistan.



The webinar was attended by over 30 representatives and experts from federal and provincial government and agencies, foreign missions, IT and telecommunication companies and civil society. The speakers shared the EU's experiences in developing the European Digital Strategy, Data Strategy, Digital Services Act, as well as ensuring data protection and security.

competitive economy, as well as an open, democratic and sustainable society. She added that digital transformation for economic growth and recovery requires close collaboration, shared learning and exploring opportunities to work together on areas such as health, governance and satellite mapping. In the discussion, the need was underlined for regulation of the digital space to ensure respect for human rights, including the right to privacy and freedom of speech and safety of vulnerable groups such as women and children. This event is intended to start a continuous process of sharing best practices and legislative approaches between the EU and Pakistan, which can create opportunities for dialogue, partnerships and investments promoting regional and global connectivity.

MONAL

WHERE AMBANCE SETS THE STAGE

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Briefs

'Pak Navy plying part in regional peace'

DNA

KARACHI: The seventh edition of the multinational maritime exercise Aman-2021 that commenced in Karachi on Thursday had its official and impressive flag hoisting ceremony performed in the city on Friday. The Commander Pakistan Fleet Rear Admiral Naveed Ashraf was the chief guest of the ceremony while guests from seven allied countries also attended the ceremony as guests of honour. During the main ceremony flags of all 45 participating countries were hoisted in the air with Pakistan's flag in the middle and Navy band playing the National Anthem of Pakistan. The Commander of 25th Destroyer Squadron Commodore Imtiaz Ali read the message of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Mohammad Amjad Khan Niazi. As per the message, the Naval Chief welcomed the participating countries of the exercise and said participation from so many countries really describes the motto of the exercise which is 'Together for Peace'. He said that Pakistan Navy is ever ready to play a positive role for the peace in the region. The Naval Chief in his message said Pakistan Navy has taken several initiatives for maritime security and promote peace in the waters of the region. He said one such initiative is Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP) to make the waters safe for maritime activities and keep a check at all the illegal activities.

Admiral Mohammad Amjad Khan Niazi said these exercises are clear message to all the peace loving countries to come together for peace. He hoped that camaraderie expressed here will continue in the future.

Over 1.375 mln children vaccinated against typhoid

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: As many as 1,375,582 children of nine months to 15 years of age were administered anti-typhoid vaccine during the ongoing typhoid vaccination campaign in urban areas of the district.

This was told in a daily review meeting of typhoid vaccination campaign held with Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali in the chair on Friday. ADCG Khurram Pervaiz, CEO Health Dr Mushtaq Sipra, District Health Officer Dr Bilal Ahmed, UNICEF Representative Habib Leghari and other officials of the health department were present. Dr Bilal said that 999 teams were participating in the drive to complete the task of vaccination. He said that on the first day of the campaign 147,446 children were inoculated, on second day 163,987, on third day 166,789, on fourth day 159,826, on fifth day 149,062, on sixth day 153,072, on seventh day 149,351, on eighth day 143,076 and on ninth day 142,873 children were vaccinated against typhoid.

P3A, NHA collaborate on development of SKMP

ISLAMABAD: Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the road sector are an established mode of service delivery worldwide. Pakistan also has been successful in attracting significant private sector participation in building and operating road infrastructure on PPP basis. Public Private Partnership Authority (P3A) has the mandate to facilitate federal Implementing Agencies (IA) in developing, structuring and procuring their infrastructure projects on PPP basis, and under the P3A (Amendment) Ordinance 2020, the Board of P3A is empowered to approve such 'Qualified' PPP projects which can demonstrate value for money to the public sector while retaining bankable financial structure for the private sector. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador-designate to Vietnam, Ms. Samina Mehtab called on Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. - DNA

CDA prepares for mega operation against agro farms

According to detail, CDA allotted the agro farms for providing citizens fresh vegetables, fruits, and poultry. In the allotment letters of the said agro farms the authority gave permission of covered areas for constructed building in the farms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) has completed preparations for a mega operation against agro farms. In the first phase more than 80 owners of agro farms have been served the notices for violating the allotment. The said owners have been directed

either to demolish the illegal constructions or regularize them within the time period of 15 days. CDA has completed the survey of all the agro farms. According to detail, CDA allotted the agro farms for providing citizens fresh vegetables, fruits, and poultry. In the allotment letters of the said agro farms the authority gave permission of covered areas for constructed building in the farms.

Agrofarmers were given to grow fresh fruits and vegetables but farmers are not using the land for this purpose. Many agro farmers have violated the covered area and have not demolished illegal structures. Nor has it been regularized by the institution. Orders were issued to demolish the crude area against the law. But, a number of owners of agro farms are still violating the set limit for covered

areas. They neither demolished their illegal constructions nor regularized them. The department of building control of CDA has completed the survey of agro farms and notices have been served to the owners of agro farms who are found doing violations. According to survey, more than 80 owners are currently doing violations. CDA has given them notice to demolish or regularize their build-

ings within 15 days. After the said period CDA will demolish their buildings and strict action will be taken against them. Allotments of said owners will also be dismissed. Farmhouses will provide fresh and affordable vegetables and fruits to the citizens of Islamabad by operating in accordance with the CDA's bylaws. The CDA is taking steps for the betterment of the citizens in this regard

Dream of new Pakistan being transformed into reality: CM

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that the dream of a new and prosperous Pakistan is being transformed into reality under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, as the country is fast moving forward.

In a statement issued here on Friday, he said political opponents would be left behind as their conspiracies had been thwarted. The past rulers devastated the country and wreaked havoc on the economy. The CM regretted that the institutions were weakened in the past for the sake of personal interest, while national interests and public needs were neglected in policies formulation. Every child was under debt today due to the wrong policies of the past governments, as nothing was done for the welfare of the indigent strata, he said and added that the incumbent government had to make difficult decisions to rectify institutional discrepancies. He said it was sanguine that decisions were being taken in the larger interest of the country and to attend to public needs.



The CM said that the needs and requirements of every district had been identified and a separate development package was being devised for every city in consultation with the parliamentarians concerned. He reiterated that every citizen will be provided free medical facilities in the province under universal health coverage by Dec 2021. It was the flagship initiative as the PTI government was committed to serving every citizen while fulfilling every decision made with the people, he continued. Alongside, the CM added that

an agreement had been signed with NESPAK for a feasible study of dams over 13 hilly areas to store the hill-torrents' gushing water in tribal areas of Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan. The government has provided Rs 1.25 billion for the purpose, he added. Giving details, he said four intermediate dams would be constructed in Koh-e-Suleman area to irrigate more than 2 lakh acres of land. The pilot project would be started in the month of June as water reservoirs would be constructed in the areas of Hathi Morr, Jalebi Morr, Khar Munroe and Thalangi in the first phase, he added. The CM said that the network of shelter homes and almshouses has been established to facilitate the hoi polloi, while the scope of almshouses was being expanded in remote areas as the impecunious stratum deserved special attention of society. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government was the strong supporter of the disfranchised segments and the responsibility of the welfare of the homeless persons would be fulfilled, concluded the CM.

Regulation of G-B tourism on cards

GILGIT: A rapid growth in the number of tourists in Gilgit-Baltistan has sparked concern about the conservation of natural resources and the environment. The government of Gilgit-Baltistan has kicked off preparations to regulate tourism and turn it sustainable in an effort to support local communities which rely on tourists for earnings. The Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Department has launched initial plans that will be followed by the registration of tour operators and guides in order to facilitate tourists that will be visiting the region over the next one year. The department intends to promote high-end tourism in places that attract a large

number of visitors. At the same time, it is also making efforts to divert attention of visitors to places other than Gilgit, Skardu and Hunza to conserve the environment and natural resources. Gilgit-Baltistan Tourism Department Director Saifullah told Daily Express that the region had emerged as a lucrative tourist destination. "In some districts, the number of visitors is increasing at a rapid pace," he said. Citing figures, he said that the region attracted 23,000 visitors in 2005-06 and the number soared past one million last year. Similarly, the number of hotels has skyrocketed from 200 in 2005-06 to 4,000 at present. - APP

NEPRA inaugurates its office in Gwadar

DNA

GWADAR: Protection of electricity consumers' interests is one of the mandates of National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). For this purpose, NEPRA has established its Regional Offices at the Distribution Companies (DISCOs) Headquarters level, i.e. Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Multan, Hyderabad and Sukkur. 02. Presently, the Government of Pakistan is focusing on development of Gwadar and various mega projects are in full swing. Accordingly, the load demand of the

region is also expected to increase further. The Authority realized that the electricity consumers of Gwadar and Makran region should have an easily accessible judicial forum to file their complaints for redressal. Therefore, the Authority decided to establish its regional office at Gwadar to facilitate the electricity consumers of Gwadar and Makran region. The inauguration ceremony of NEPRA Regional Office, Gwadar was held today i.e. February 12, 2021 which was attended by NEPRA Authority, top officials of various Government Departments, QESCO and representatives of business and local communities.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to Libya, Maj. General (r) Rashad Javeed, called on foreign minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at ministry of foreign affairs. - DNA

'Germany wants better trade ties with Pakistan'

Nasser Hyat Maggo gave a briefed overview of the activities of FPCCI and its importance not only in the Pakistan's economy but also in the international economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Germany is the largest trading partner of Pakistan and the healthiest economy in the European Union have long ties with Pakistan. Pakistani people love the quality products and perceive that Made in Germany means quality and reliability. The automotive sector of Germany is the symbol of status. This was stated by Nasser Hyat Maggo, President FPCCI in a meeting with the Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany Excellency Bernhard Schlagheck who visited FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad. The meeting was attended by a large number of business people from different sectors prominently Anjum Nisar, Immediate Past President FPCCI, Shahzeb Akram, Sr. Vice President and Vice Presidents of FPCCI,

Zahid Shah, Hanif Lakhani, Athar Chawla, Head of Capital Office Qurban Ali and coordinator Mirza Abdul Rehman, Qaiser Khan Daudzai, Ex-

Vice President of FPCCI. Nasser Hyat Maggo gave a briefed overview of the activities of FPCCI and its importance not only in the Pakistan's

economy but also in the international economy. While talking about the bilateral trade of Pakistan with Germany, he said that Germany is

the biggest trading partner of Pakistan in EU with a trade balance in favour of Pakistan which reflects good economic relation between both the countries. He further said that Current volume of bilateral trade is nearly US \$ 3 billion. Pakistan's Exports to Germany has increased to US \$ 2 billion, while imports of Pakistan from Germany are US \$ 1.2 billion. However, the trade statistics are still far beyond the existing potential between both the countries. The President FPCCI further said that in the scenario of CPEC, Pakistan has become emerging market and favourable investment destination in the world. Many German companies are already operating in Pakistan but still there is a room for further investment in various sectors which should be jointly explored.



LHC allows growers to sell sugarcane

DNA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday allowed sugarcane growers to sell their crops to other provinces. The sugar mills have challenged the decision of the Punjab cane commissioner to lift an inter-provincial ban from sugarcane export to other provinces in the Lahore High Court (LHC). The judgment was pronounced by Justice Jawad Hassan. Declaring the act of selling sugarcane to other provinces by the growers as a right move, the LHC said in its decision that sugar mills have no right to weaken the farmer financially. The rights of the farmers are protected in the constitution of Pakistan and there is no law that stops them from selling their sugarcane to other provinces, the judgment read. Earlier, the cane commissioner Punjab had directed the deputy commissioners of all the districts to inspect the sugarcane procurement being carried out by the sugar mills in their respective localities to snub the practice of 'off the book' purchase.

QCB to maintain seal of 12 medical stores

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The District Quality Control Board has decided to maintain the seal of 12 medical stores running without drug license, warranty and no record of sale and purchase, while 15 medical stores and clinics have been de-sealed after submission of warning and affidavit. A meeting of the Board was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali in the Committee Room of DC Office in which Additional Deputy Commissioner General Khurram Pervez, Secretary Quality Control Dr. Sehrish Murtaza, DHO Dr. Adnan, members of the committee Capt. Dr. Muhammad Siddique, Ghulam Sabir, Drug Controller Saqib Bhatti and Drug Inspectors attended. During the meeting, the inspection reports of drug inspectors of the medical stores were reviewed and heard the sealed medical store owners and doctors and upheld the decision to seal 12 medical stores and clinics for serious violations. 27 cases, violations of the Drug Act have been reviewed a total. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali has directed that crackdown on sale of counterfeit and substandard and unregistered drugs in the district be effectively and also make it effective so that this illegal act of those who play with the lives of patients can be completely eradicated. He said that cases should be registered against those who broke the seal themselves and they should be brought to book.

Balochistan to plant 4.2 million saplings this year

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan has kicked off tree plantation drive to plant 4.2 million trees in the current year under the Prime Minister Imran Khan's initiative of 10 Billion Tree Tsunami (10BTT) programme to promote greenery and reduce challenges and impacts of global warming in the country. According to a provincial forest department official, around 0.2 million trees would be planted across the province in the spring plantation drive which was started from Friday (Today). He said that Balochistan government would plant 0.2 saplings to ensure the plantation of maximum number of trees. Some 10,000 trees would be planted in Gwadar district during the current plantation drive, he added. The department would distribute saplings among the citizens to achieve the target, the official said. "The government will achieve the target of planting 4.2 million trees this year to make the environment clean and green in the province," he said adding trees played major role in improving urban landscape and helping to protect the environment. - APP

Briefs

'Indus Heritage Exhibition' starts today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Two-day long "Indus Heritage Exhibition" will be held to celebrate and display handcrafted apparels by the women artisans of Punjab, Sindh and Afghan refugees on February 13 and 14 at Table Talk, F-6/3. Arranged by Indus Heritage Trust, the event is meant to connect and to identify Pakistani women artisans to global market. An organizer said that well known fashion designers were invited to introduce and encourage women artisans work. He said the purpose of the exhibition was to promote their work besides creating more opportunities for rural women. He said that by commercializing the work of skilled rural women could get recognition of their work.

Live musical concert at Lok Virsa today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The great concert with live music, dance and comedy will be held on February 13 at National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa). The event was arranged by Dolphin's Communication and Red N Black Outfit. They will featuring well-known singers including, Ahrar Ul Haq, Sahir Ali Bagga and Muskan Jay. According to an official, leading singers will perform on the stage with their melodious voices and spell bound performances. The event will also include more activities including food stalls, color war, Unlimited dance, live singing, live DJ's performance and games. The night will be arranged to mesmerize the citizens of twin cities with heart-felt music, he added. He said that the event will provide healthy entertainment to the citizens.

PAL to hold Seminar on Faiz Ahmed Faiz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) will hold Faiz Ahmad Faiz National Literary Seminar on the occasion of 110th birthday anniversary of Legendary Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz on February 15. Shafiqat Mehmood, Minister for Federal Education & Professional Training will be the Chief guest on the occasion, an official informed media on Friday. He said that Prof. Fateh Muhammad Malik and Iftikhar Arif will be in the presidium while Muneeza Hashmi will be the guest of honor. Various writers and intellectuals including Ahmed Saleem, Naem Bukhari, Khawaja Najam ul Hassan, Harris Khaleeq, Dr. Sofia Yousof, Hassan Abbas Raza and Dr. Humaira Ishaq will pour light on his poetic vision. The mystical words of Faiz Ahmad Faiz will be presented through soulful tunes and voices.

Police held six kite sellers, flyers

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in their crackdown against kite sellers and flyers conducted raids in different areas and arrested six besides recovering 250 kites and two kite flying string rolls from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Waris Khan and Bani police conducted raids in different areas and managed to arrest Shah Zaib, Abdul Moiz, Aryan Ameen, Syed Ali, Yasir and Bilal, six kite sellers and flyers and recovered 250 kites with two string rolls from their possession. He said separate cases have been registered against the accused adding Police on the directives of CPO Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas were conducting raids. - APP

NAHE holds capacity enhancement session

Dr. Sana Waheed assured fellows that the NFDP has provided them with the tools they need to deliver student-centered learnings in their work; she further advised them to take a look, consult their network of IPFP fellows and adapt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) on Thursday held a capacity enhancement session "Reflective Practice in Teaching and Learning" for Fellows of the Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs Programme (IPFP). Over 200 IPFP Fellows from higher education institutions across Pakistan attended the virtual workshop. As the IPFP Fellows go through their placements at universities and institutions across Pakistan, NAHE intends to touch base with them, refresh parts of their learning through the National Faculty Development Programme and assess effectiveness of this

Programme. To this end, NAHE collaborated with members of NFDP 2020 instructional team to conduct this session and draw reflections on the NFDP with successfully placed IPFP fellows. The session was attended by Rector NAHE Dr. Shaheen Sardar Ali, Lead Consultant Fellowship and Academic Leadership Programme, NAHE, Dr. Shazia Awan, and Assistant Professor Dr. Sana Waheed. Sessions like this are part of the continuing professional development approach adopted by NAHE. Fellows were given mini-workshops on reflective practice, teaching, student-centered learning, and learner-engagement in online classes. During the event, fellows shared their unique experiences of working through a pandemic and navigating courses online. They also participated in learning activities and reflective sessions with Dr. Shazia Awan (NAHE/Dalhousie University) and Dr. Sana Waheed (NFDP). One of the NFDP graduates reflected on how she relied on WhatsApp to conduct classes and learning activities and keep her students engaged. Fellows shared their stories of creativity and dedication. Dr. Sana Waheed assured fellows that the NFDP has provided them with the tools they need to deliver student-centered learnings in their work; she further advised them to take a look, consult their network of IPFP fellows and adapt. Dr. Shazia Awan took the participants through what it meant to be

a reflective practitioner and how being one can help them think through the wider impact of their teaching practice. In 2020, NAHE conducted a rigorous academic teaching course, the National Faculty Development Programme (NFDP), for almost 500 freshly graduated PhDs. The month-long course was designed to prepare NFDP Fellows for teaching and research duties required by their places of work under the Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) programme. The IPFP was launched in 2009 with the objective of providing opportunities for employment to selected fresh PhDs for one year as Assistant Professors against vacant TTS (Tenure Track System) positions in public or private uni-

versities. During the placement, the host universities are expected to advertise these positions and give equal opportunity to the IPFP faculty for securing permanent positions in BPS/TTS pay scales. The program also supports universities in attracting emerging scholars, reducing search costs and providing necessary experience to potential candidates. NAHE is established as a standalone, autonomous institution operating under the auspices of HEC to improve the quality of teaching, research, and governance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Pakistan. This series of workshops is one of multiple ongoing NAHE endeavors to facilitate capacity building of faculty in HEIs.

11 police officers promoted

DNA

RAWALPINDI: As many as 11 Sub-Inspectors have been promoted into the next rank of Inspector. The promoted SIs were pinned badges by City Police Officer (CPO), Muhammad Ahsan Younis and greeted all the promoted officers. CPO said that the policemen would serve their professional duties with honesty in next ranks and would facilitate the general public through their professional attitude as well as hard work. The promoted SIs included Tasawar Hussain, Nazeer Anhed, Muhammad Ayub, Muhammad Rafiq, Pehalwan Khan, Ghulam Asghar, Muhammad Khan, Shabbir Hussain, Muhammad Saeed, Nasir Hussain and Azhar Hussain.

Rajab moon not sighted

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee (RHC) Chairman Maulana Abdul Kabir Azad on Friday announced that the crescent moon for the month of Rajab has not been sighted. Talking to media, he said the month of Rajab would commence from Sunday February 14. The meeting of Zonal Committee Islamabad was presided over by Maulana Abdul Kabir Azad and attended by Allama Sajid Naqvi, Pir Muhammad Mumtaz Ahmed Zia Nizami, Maulana Muhammad Iqbal Naeemi, Mufti Abdul Salam Jalali, Maulana Haroon-ul-Rashid and Maulana Abu Bakar.

Police Khidmat Markaz inaugurated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Aviation Ghulam Sarwar Khan Friday inaugurated a 'Punjab Police Khidmat Markaz' in Taxila city of Rawalpindi district where a number of facilities would be provided to the public especially the issuance of driving licences. The minister said the centre would issue all kinds of driving licences to motorists and now the public would not need to visit the downtown Sadar for the purpose. According to a news release, Chief Traffic Officer Rai Mazhar and City Police Officer Ahsan Younas briefed the minister about the working of the newly established Punjab Police Khidmat Markaz. "A latest system of driving licences has been provided at the doorstep of the Taxila public," the minister said. Ghulam Sarwar said efforts were also being made to start the process of arms licences' renewal and issuance at the NADRA centre, which was already operating in Taxila locality. "Now the people of Taxila will not need to visit Rawalpindi," he remarked.

Pak scholar develops virus response tracker

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Scholar, Zile Huma has made a history by developing world first 'Oxford Covid-19 Government Response Tracker' that would help measuring state response towards tackling the pandemic. The British high Commission in a Twitter message acknowledged her efforts to develop world first Oxford Covid-19 'Governor Response Tracker'. The tracker systematically collect the information on several different common Policy response that government have taken to respond to the Pandemic on 18 indicators such as school closures and travel restrictions. It now has data from more than 180 countries. According to statement "Fantastic to see her contribution to develop the first Oxford # Covid-19 Government Response Tracker that helps to compare policy response around the world volunteer". - APP



ISLAMABAD: Senator Shibli Faraz, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting addressing an event in connection with the celebration of Chinese New Year 2021. - APP

Wide-life Protection Bill approved

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change gave final nod to "The Islamabad Wildlife (Protection, Preservation, Conservation and Management) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 in its meeting Friday at the Ministry of Climate Change, Islamabad. Meeting of the Committee was chaired by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed. Committee had a comprehensive discussion on the Bill proposed by Senator Muhammad Javed Abbasi which focuses on four key amendments to the existing legislation, namely, 1979 ordinance. Senator Javed Abbasi's bill whose spirit is guided by the consideration to bring about fundamental change to institutionalize Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) as a focal institution in preserving and promoting Margalla Hills National Park, Environment and Climate Change. - DNA

Pak-Saudi govts to hold talks on hajj conditions

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Noor-UL-Haq Qadri on Friday said that government will discuss the conditions and flexibilities for Pakistani pilgrims to perform hajj 2021 with the Saudi Arabian government. Talking to a private news channel, he said Saudi Arabia asked Islamic countries to wait before making any further plans to attend the annual hajj pilgrimage until there was more clarity over the deadly coronavirus pandemic, adding, a hopefully within next two months the situation of Covid-19 would be further improved as vaccine is available. He said we are aware of people's concerns regarding Hajj, adding that he is "constantly in touch with the Saudi Arabian authorities in this regard". Noor-UL-Haq Qadri said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Pakistan regarding Hajj yet. It should be noted that Saudi Arabia allowed a limited number of pilgrims (10,000 people) to perform Hajj last year in view of the coronavirus pandemic, he added. He said Saudi government was closely monitoring the coronavirus situation and collecting data from all countries. However, Saudi government will inform Pakistan as soon as the situation gets better, he said. Pakistan will have a meeting with the Saudi Arabian government and they will explain the situation and conditions. God willing, when everything is clear, we will plan accordingly, he mentioned. For now, we are unable to inform public about the number of pilgrims who will attend the annual Hajj 2021 from Pakistan but we will have to wait for the final decision of Saudi government in this regard, he added. - DNA

Inter-provincial dacoit gang busted

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Civil Line police on Friday busted an inter-provincial gang of dacoits and arrested its two members besides recovering cash, weapons and other items. According to a police spokesman, a police team under the supervision of SHO Civil Line was constituted which after hectic efforts managed to net two dacoits namely Akram and Amir who were dacoit gang members and allegedly involved in a number of dacoities in different areas. They confessed to have committed dacoities and other crimes in different areas of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The police recovered cash, weapons and other items from their possession, he added. CPO Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas appreciated performance of Superintendent Police Pothohar, SHO Civil Line.

Telehealth kiosks get good response

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Focal Person on Shelter Homes, Naseem ur Rehman Friday said telehealth kiosks, set up at the federal capital's 'Panahgahs', were getting tremendous response as it provided free treatment to a large number of dwellers with underlying conditions. So far, around 300 to 400 residents of the capital's shelter homes had availed access to medical care and consultation with online doctors, who were part of EZ Shifa network in Canada, the United States of America and Pakistan, the focal person told the media after visiting the 'Panahgah', located at Tarnol, Islamabad. He said the initiative was taken by the shelter homes' management in collaboration with EZ Shifa, which was a private company, virtually connecting volunteer teams of doctors, from Pakistan and abroad with marginalized segments of the society. He said telehealth kiosks were fully functional at multiple 'Panahgahs' located in various areas of Islamabad including G-9, Tarlai and Tarnol. The focal person expressed the hope that 50 'Panahgahs', operational across the country, would get the facility by the end of February. Explaining the way, Kiosks operated, he said the healthcare staff deputed at the 'Panahgahs' helped the residents feed their main vital signs (body temperature, blood pressure etc) in the kiosks after connecting them with the online available medical professionals. "Once connected, the patient gets an opportunity to have face to face inter-

action with the doctor so that he could fully explain his condition and avail prescription in printed form from the printing system attached with the kiosk," he remarked. To a query, he said the kiosks were designed by keeping the coronavirus standard operating procedures under the consideration to reduce the risk of virus outbreak at the facility. It had thermogun and sanitizer facilities as well. He said the initiative was part of the 'Promoting Healthy Lifestyle' campaign, launched at the shelter homes in the wake of first wave of coronavirus pandemic. The drive was meant to transform the shelter homes in neat and clean facilities, where the daily wage earners could enjoy healthy lifestyle apart from food and shelter.

COMSTECH holds panel discussion on Women's Day

Prof. Unwin suggested that we should have women champions. We need to change the men's attitude and behavior to help women excel in Tech and STEM, if they are going to benefit the maximum they can

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH organized a panel discussion session on women's day. The session was addressed by Dr. Khadija Yusoff, Prof. Dr. Tim Unwin, Dr. Rana Dajani, Dr. Sumbal Sheikh, and Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary from Malaysia, UK, Jordan, Germany and Pakistan respectively. During this COVID19 period science emerged as savior of the humanity. Over last 11 months we have seen over 170 vaccines in different phases of development. This was only science that responded with speed and fulfilled the purpose, said Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, in his introductory remarks to the panel discussion session. He said that women had played dual role to save the world by serving in the field and to save the humanity by serving their families. But at the end of the day they



suffered. Women are the one who lost jobs, and also suffered in their professional career and growth. Dr. Choudhary said that we have to remain in COVID world for long. He lamented that in the developing world, when parents have choice to educate child, it would always be the male child, if they have choice to feed child properly, the girl child would be malnourished. He stressed the need to know the impact of COVID era on women, on their contribution to the scientific world, on their education, and on their future. Dr. Khadija Yusoff, Universiti Putra, Malaysia, said in her lecture that COVID caused loss of lives and livelihood, disrupted all spheres of life including research teaching and learning. She suggested to have strategies for career development, good leadership, investment in advanced online teaching technologies by universities, time management and rethinking of promotion key performance indicators. Prof. Dr. Tim Unwin, University of London, UK said that across the Muslim world there are a large number of women scientists, eager to contribute. He said that digital tech has a key role to play but will increase gender inequalities unless mitigating actions are taken. He said that cultural context remains critically important. Prof. Unwin suggested that we

should have women champions. We need to change the men's attitude and behavior to help women excel in Tech and STEM, if they are going to benefit the maximum they can. He said that the most important things to change are the attitudes and approaches of SME CEOs who want to employ women. He mentioned that we must have tips for brothers who wish to support their sisters in STEM. Prof. Unwin also shared tips for brothers to support their sisters in STEM. He highlighted that the tech is very male dominated therefore men have responsibility to do something about it. We need policies at national and strategic level. We also need practical tips and advice. Every man should think about what he can do as an individual for every woman in his life to help her in developing her expertise and liberate her in the world of STEM. We have responsibility, we cannot leave it to our sisters to empower themselves, concluded Prof. Unwin. Dr. Rana Dajani, Hashemite University, Jordan informed that we survived COVID because of curiosity - seeking beyond the frontier. All brains are equal, there is just lack of opportunities that are out there. She said that the reasons of less women at workplace are not just lack of opportunities it is also the framework of the workplace which was designed by men for men when the industrial revolution happened. When women try to enter the framework they have to mold them to fit this frame without acknowledging the differences between men and women.

Briefs

Govt to set up Tax Policy Unit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The PTI government has approved the establishment of an independent Tax Policy Unit (TPU) with the objective of improving taxation governance, as it would point out revenue leakages in the system, recommend rationalising rate of taxes and suggest measures to mobilise higher revenue in tax collections. The creation of TPU would partially withdraw the powers of policy making for taxation from the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), but improve its function to collect revenue in taxes in the country. It would work under the Ministry of Finance (Finance Division) and report to finance minister unlike FBR, which operates under the domain of the Revenue Division. The government was working on creation of TPU for over two years now; since November 2018. The board would have members from different sectors, including businessmen from the private sector, FBR officials, academics, think tanks, fiscal and economic experts, and government officials. "The rationale of establishment of the diversified tax policy unit (having almost all the stakeholders on board) is that it would give balanced recommendations to improve taxation governance...and revenue collection," an official at the ministry told The Express Tribune. The finance ministry and the FBR's Policy Board have, in principle, approved establishment of Tax Policy Unit at a meeting held in Islamabad on Thursday. "Final decision for its (TPU) formation lies with the federal cabinet," the official said, adding now a summary, which would seek the cabinet nod on establishment of the unit, would soon be sent to the cabinet.

Justice Kayani recuses himself from Durrani's case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) director general Lt Gen (ret'd) Asad Durrani's case took a new turn on Friday after Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) recused himself from further hearing the case. Justice Kayani remarked that he had all the information regarding the case's background and was also close to penning the verdict, but was forwarding the case to IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah. "It is unfortunate, but there are reasons for that I cannot tell," he said while explaining his withdrawal from the case. He said, "the [IHC] chief justice will form a new bench to hear the case." In its written reply submitted with the IHC, the Ministry of Defence (MoD), at the last hearing, stated that former ISI chief Durrani had been interacting with "hostile elements specially Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) since 2008". His name was added to the Exit Control List (ECL) for anti-state activities.

TME, OGDCL join hands

ISLAMABAD: The Millennium Education (TME) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) in a ceremony held here today for promoting academia-industry linkages. The meeting was chaired on behalf of OGDCL by Jamal Nasir, Manager In-charge (HR) OGDCL and Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq, CEO The Millennium Education, and their colleagues. The main objective of this MoU was to promote academia-industry linkages, corporate outreach and collaborations, and professional development. Both organisations mutually agreed to enhance cooperation in many areas including privileged education benefits for OGDCL employees nationwide and community support initiatives. The Millennium Education offered customised "privileged" charges for the employees of OGDCL across the spectrum of institutions of Roots Millennium Schools, Millennium Colleges, Future World Schools, The Little Millennium and The Millennium Universal Colleges TMUC, Pakistan. — APP



Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry presenting memento to Mansoor Ahmed Khan, Deputy Director General (Admin), Pakistan Sports Board during his visit to ICCI. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI and members of business community are also in picture. — DNA

ICCI highlights importance of promoting sports activities

He identified lack of coordination among various sports stakeholders, lack of qualified coaches, high cost of sports gears, lack of financial resources, lack of job opportunities for players and coaches, neglect of rural areas for sports, lack of sports facilities in educational institutions & local level

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mansoor Ahmed Khan, Deputy Director General (Admin), Pakistan Sports Board said that Pakistan has tremendous talent for excelling in all fields of sports, but lack of financial resources was a major barrier in harnessing the talent of youth in the sports field and emphasized that the business community should come forward and contribute towards promoting various sports activities in the country. He said that sports activities were instrumental in strengthening national unity. He said that sportsmen were the ambassadors of the country to promote the image of Pakistan and co-operation of the business community in organizing various sporting events would help in removing misperceptions about Pakistan and making it an attractive country for foreign investment. He said this while addressing the business community at

Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Giving a comparison of annual sports budget of regional countries, Mansoor Ahmed Khan said that India allocated USD 382.21 million, Iran USD 80 million, Bangladesh USD 70.78 million, Nepal USD 33.69 million, Sri Lanka USD 22.59 million, but Pakistan allocated annual sports budget of USD 6.09 million, which showed that sports was at a low national priority of the country. He identified lack of coordination among various sports stakeholders, lack of qualified coaches, lack of incentives to the players and coaches, high cost of sports gears, lack of financial resources, lack of job opportunities for players and coaches, neglect of rural areas for sports, lack of sports facilities in educational institutions & local level, non-existence of system for talent hunt from grass root level, lack of system for grooming players on modern scientific lines, lack of

sports academies in the country, lack of interest of parents/community towards health standards and lack of interest in local bodies and Union Councils for sports as major hurdles for promoting sports activities in the country. He urged that the business community has the financial strength and their cooperation was important in promoting all sorts of sports in the country. He assured that Pakistan Sports Board would fully cooperate with ICCI in promoting various sports in the region. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the global sports industry was valued at over USD 500 billion and sports has emerged as an important component of socio-economic development, therefore, government should accord greater focus to promoting sports for achieving beneficial results for the economy.

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Teacher suspended for corporal punishment

DNA

ATTOCK: A school teacher of Government Primary School in Pindigheab was suspended from service on Friday for subjecting a minor student of inhuman torture for not learning his lesson. According to sources, 8 years old, Ahsan Ali - a student of Government Primary School Dhoke Inayat Pindigheab, went to school where his teacher named Sadaqat Ali has subject him serve punishment for not learning his lesson. Due to torture, the minor child right hand got fractured. Meanwhile, student father, Mohammad Nazeer lodged a complain in local police station. Assistant Sub Inspector, Mohammad Ayub said that police as per SoP (standing order procedure) took the student for medical examination soon after the victim father has approached police and as medico-legal report has confirmed torture on minor. Police registered a criminal case against the accused teacher under section 328-A.

MoU signed to rejuvenate CPEC projects

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the National Assembly of Pakistan and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Pakistan Office at the Parliament House on Thursday for cooperation and supporting the Parliamentary Committee on CPEC. The MoU was signed by Secretary National Assembly Tahir Hussain and Country Director FES Dr Jochen Hippler. While witnessing the MoU signing ceremony, Chairman Parliamentary Committee on CPEC Arbab Shair Ali said that the CPEC would prove a vital factor for the socio-economic development of the country. He said the CPEC would amplify employment opportunities and would bring regional prosperity. He also mentioned that this MoU would be for the inclusion of all stakeholders to expedite the CPEC-related projects in the best interest of the country. He remarked that the Parliamentary Committee on CPEC would take all stakeholders on board to enhance the efficacy of the CPEC-related projects across the country. Dr Jochen Hippler, Country Director FES, appreciated the importance of CPEC. He also expressed his gratitude to the Chairman Parliamentary Committee on CPEC for signing this MoU.

Rupee gains 26 paises against US dollar

ISLAMABAD: The exchange rate of Pakistani rupee strengthened by 26 paises against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Friday and closed at Rs158.81 as compared to the previous day's closing of Rs159.07. Meanwhile, according to Forex Association of Pakistan, the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs158.6 and Rs159.3 respectively. In interbank trading, the price of euro depreciated by 44 paises and closed at Rs192.26 against the last day's trading of Rs 192.82, State Bank of Pakistan reported. The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs1.51, whereas a decrease of 44 paises was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound which was traded at Rs218.91 as compared to its last closing of Rs219.92. The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 07 paises each to close at Rs 43.23 and Rs 42.34 respectively.

'Indian rulers poised to eliminate Muslim culture'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan has said that India under a well thought out strategy is erasing everything related to the history of Muslims or the religion of Islam in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. "The BJP-RSS regime has hinted at building 100,000 Hindu temples and pulling down dozens of mosques which, they falsely claim, had been built after demolishing Hindu temples," he said. Addressing the participants of Photographic and Cultural Exhibition, titled Tribute to "Kashmiris Resilience in Their Just Struggle for Right to Self Determination" organized at Foreign Office; the state president said that the Indian fanatic rulers were eliminating everything which depicts the religion, culture and the languages of the Muslims in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The ceremony was also addressed by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Information Minister Shibli Fraz and others.

Terming Kashmir as the land of Sufis and Saints, the President said that because of Sufis and mystic's teachings, Hindus and followers of other religions embraced Islam in Kashmir. "Islam spread in Kashmir not through conquests but by words and deeds of mystics and saints, whose piety, righteousness, spirituality and care for humanity inspired local population to convert to Islam. No forced conversions," he asserted. He said a rich heritage and architecture was brought and developed in Kashmir, with a legacy of matchless and unique arts, crafts and industries, including carpet, shawl and textile weaving, paper-mache, wood carving, calligraphy and embroidery. AJK President said that the Urdu language, which has been spoken and written for centuries in the region, is being replaced with Hindi language so that the new generation of Kashmiris are cut off from their past. He lamented that the Indian rulers have become so blind in Islamophobia that they are talking about wiping out the history of the whole subcontinent to write a new history.

CDA collaborates PNCA for cultural activities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) in collaboration with Pakistan National Council of Arts has decided to begin cultural activities for citizens in various markets on Saturday. Preparations have been completed in this regard. Different cultural and musical events will be organized in the markets for providing the entertainment oppor-

tunities to the citizens. The citizens of Islamabad will be able to enjoy these events with their families. Besides this, CDA is also doing preparations for organizing spring festival in March of current year. CDA will also cooperate with other government and private institutions in this regard. During this festival citizens will enjoy music events, theater, poetry, and other programs. Singers, musicians, and poets of national and international level will participate in

these events. The main aim of organizing spring festival is to provide entertainment to the citizens side by side telling them about the culture of different areas of the country. It has been decided to add Spring Festival in the calendar of CDA and the authority will organize this festival every year. The department of environment and others are finalizing the programs for the spring festival of this year. Teams of CDA are working day and night in this regard.



TAXILA: Federal Minister for Aviation Division Ghulam Sarwar Khan inaugurating the Facilitation Center at Taxila. — DNA

'Public responsibly vital to tackling plastic pollution'

He elaborated that plastic bags are a key source of plastic pollution, which is also a serious environmental problem. "As they are non-biodegradable, they take years to decompose. They contribute to a lot of waste which keeps collecting over the years. Plastic takes thousands of years to break down and decompose

ISLAMABAD: Role of social responsibility, enhanced sensitization and awareness are vital to elimination of the use of polythene bag, which has emerged to be a grave environmental nuisance, say government officials and environmental experts. "However unless people show responsibility towards environmental protection from degradation through various means, no efforts aimed for tackling environmental degradation in our society," said Syed Mujtaba Hussain, Joint Secretary of the Climate Change Ministry. While addressing a public awareness rally attended by students and academia held here on Friday at the International Islamic University, he highlighted that widespread use of polythene bags has deepened the country's burden of the environmental degradation, which has worsened state of the public health.

He elaborated that plastic bags are a key source of plastic pollution, which is also a serious environmental problem. "As they are non-biodegradable, they take years to decompose. They contribute to a lot of waste which keeps collecting over the years. Plastic takes thousands of years to break down and decompose. It remains in the land which contributes to the rising problem of land pollution," Mujtaba Hussain said. He said further that it also leads to water pollution. "As people throw away the bags carelessly on the roads, in the drains and rivers, they enter the water bodies. They are carried away by winds in them and sometimes dumped into water deliberately. This plastic bag goes deep in the water and also hampers the aquatic life," the climate change ministry official stated.

Now, the government was rolling up its sleeves to take a drastic first measures toward eliminating this public eyesore and environmental hazard. Beginning again this year from March 1, use of all single-use polyethylene bags at any level would be fined in the capital region of about 1.5 million people. "Anyone who uses, sells or manufactures them will face a fine," the climate change ministry official warned, who is leading the implementation of ban on polythene bag. He said that from the next month now one would be allowed to use, sell and manufacture single-use plastic bag at any level. Those who found using, selling and manufacturing of the plastic bags, would be liable to fines at the initial stage, the climate change ministry joint secretary Syed Mujtaba Hussain. The ban is very much a part of the

vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan for Clean Green Pakistan. He also appraised the rally participants that to motivate people to obey the law against use, sell and manufacturing of the single-use plastic bags, colorful cloth tote bags, The bags have been also introduced and promoted the bags on social media, accompanied by catchy slogans and images of trash heaps on fire and birds caught in plastic bags. The climate change ministry official said that, "We do not want to bring change regarding use of polythene bags through force. Instead we believe that our slight change in habits will do wonders for future generations as a part of achieving sustainable development goals," said the climate change ministry official. He pointed out that the shopkeepers and customers alike had been warned to avoid using

plastic bags before March 1, In case of violation, he said an individual would be fined Rs5,000, a manufacturer Rs1,00,000 and a shopkeeper Rs10,000. He also warned the rally participants that a polythene bag with D2W stamp was being sold in the market as a permissible one but it was actually a fraud and against the law. Chairman of the department of the Environmental Sciences at the University, Dr Muhammad Irfan Khan spoke on the role of students and teachers of the educational institutions. "You play a very important role and have the power to minimise plastic pollution. You can start today by reflecting on the plastic you use in your everyday life," He urged the students and teachers of the university while addressing the rally. — APP

Escalating conflict

THE US decision to back off from the Yemen conflict has already led to an opposite reaction from what the Biden Administration probably expected. In a bid to reportedly de-escalate and shift from the traditional leanings of US foreign policy in the Middle East, President Biden has announced the removal of all US support for operations in Yemen for allies such as Saudi Arabia.

Instead of stemming the violence, this has fueled hostilities even further. The brazen attack on a commercial aircraft in the Saudi Arabian Abha airport shows that a simple attempt to take a backseat will not work. The Houthi rebels undoubtedly saw this as the perfect opportunity to strike. At a time when the Kingdom had lost one of its key allies in this conflict, the rebels probably saw their enemy at its weakest. However, the fact that the target of this incident were civilians indicates that the rebels have no qualms in making an innocent party to this conflict. There is no plainer way to state it; looking to harm civilians in an attack such as nothing is nothing short of a war crime.

Less than a day after this attack, the Houthi rebels tried to strike again, but this time the drone was intercepted by Saudi forces. President Biden's new envoy to Yemen, Tim Lenderking, has a tough job to look forward to, as the hostilities continue to escalate. He had his maiden meeting with the Kingdom's Foreign Minister on Wednesday, in which finding a political solution to the Yemen question was discussed. But it is clear that conveying this message to the rebels will not be easy. It is clear that even with a reduced role, the US will continue to remain a partner of Saudi Arabia and will not ease up the pressure on the Houthi rebels. In the interest of peace, if the US does not want to take part in the conflict, it must still extend all political and logistical support to the Kingdom to ensure that its intentions are not misunderstood in Yemen. This would help in preserving the integrity of the coalition and safeguarding its aims.

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Poor safety standards

IN yet another fire in an industrial unit in Baldia Town Karachi, three workers died. While the factory management and fire brigade blame each other for the deaths, initial assessments indicate that the factory layout was a significant cause for the deaths. Unfortunately, many businesses in the country operate without adhering to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) guidelines. In the present case, the accounts of police officials and the chief fire officer corroborate that the factory compromised on the installation of adequate safety equipment or viable emergency exits. Sadly, neither the government nor private-run businesses take the concept of fire safety as seriously as it should be. Resultantly, Pakistan is prone to industrial disasters. As if that is not enough, poor construction and modifications to construction designs make matters worse. This incident highlights the sad reality that businesses across the country pay little or no attention to occupational safety and health. This latest tragedy shows that there is a lack of state attention on such issues as well. Despite the persistent efforts of the ILO office in Pakistan to raise awareness on the importance of safe work at many forums, the government's response leaves a lot to be desired. According to the ILO, 70 percent of workers in the country work in the informal sector in Pakistan. If working conditions in the formal sectors are so inadequate, one can well imagine the status of the labourers in the informal sector.

Continuous incidents of worker deaths suggest that Pakistan direly needs to establish a rigorous labour inspection regime that protects the workers. However, establishing such a setup may take some time, as it will demand joint efforts of the provinces and the centre. Before anything else, officials need to take the factory owners to court. Initiation of legal action against the management should prompt other businesses to take safety measures, provided the government makes it legally obligatory.

Biden's Afghanistan withdrawal conundrum

Ellen Laipson



The USIP, which has long been active in Afghanistan, assisting in governance reform and conflict prevention, this past week released a bipartisan report with some recommendations for the new administration. The report calls for a pause on the May deadline for the withdrawal of US forces and advocates a return to a "conditions-based" approach, rather than fixed deadlines, to determine how the US brings this longest war in its history to a close

US President Joe Biden's maiden speech on foreign policy last week did not mention Afghanistan, but it is well understood that the long war there will demand the attention of the president and his new team. The situation is simply not stable and the agreement negotiated by the Trump administration a year ago that would permit the withdrawal of all US forces by May could well unravel.

That agreement was only between the US and the Taliban or, as the text of the agreement frequently and awkwardly states, "the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognized by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban." The agreement requires the Taliban to prevent any security threats to the US in exchange for the complete withdrawal of American forces. The US presence is already down to 2,500 troops. The second half of the agreement requires the Taliban and the government in Kabul to engage in peace talks, which are intended to lead to a cease-fire and a political road map for Afghanistan's future. The intra-Afghan talks began in Doha in September last year, with the government of President Ashraf Ghani a reluctant participant. So far, the parties, including civil society, have negotiated over procedures for substantive talks, but the process has reached an impasse. As is often the case in delicate transitions from civil war, the violence gets worse as each party seeks to strengthen its position before serious bargaining over power-sharing begins.

Taliban leaders insist that they are not solely responsible for the surge of violence against the government's assets and institutions, and the recent assassinations of prominent civil society figures. They blame Daesh or other groups. But, if true, that only reveals the failure of the Taliban to follow through on its commitment to the US to clamp down on its Islamist allies, especially Al-Qaeda. Nearly 20 years after the US struck Afghanistan to defeat Al-Qaeda and oust the Taliban from power, it feels like this war has come full circle. If this process of military drawdown and intra-Afghan peace talks fails, Afghanistan could return to civil war, with the Taliban well

positioned to return to power.

It is easy to blame the Taliban for the current state of affairs, but regional experts find equal blame with the corruption of political elites in Kabul, and the stubborn refusal of President Ghani to acknowledge that a political transition will mean a change at the top. He posits that he alone embodies the sovereignty of Afghanistan, yet the Taliban's fight against Kabul has been premised on questioning the legitimacy of Ghani's government, which, in the Taliban's view, was imposed by foreign powers.

The US Institute of Peace (USIP), which has long been active in Afghanistan, assisting in governance reform and conflict prevention, this past week released a bipartisan report with some recommendations for the new administration. The report calls for a pause on the May deadline for the withdrawal of US forces and advocates a return to a "conditions-based" approach, rather than fixed deadlines, to determine how the US brings this longest war in its history to a close.

The report reflects an establishment view in Washington that believes both that the US has a moral and security interest in continuing to help the country, and that the final withdrawal should be on terms that do not look like defeat. The report conveys a heart-felt belief that the decades of US involvement have improved conditions for many Afghans and have helped build a foundation for a more peaceful and modern country. It is understandable that US diplomatic and military leaders cannot face the prospect of withdrawing as a defeated great power, but that is the true pattern of Afghan history and it is the narrative already promoted by the Taliban. The conclusion of the agreement was, for them, a true victory and their commitment to making peace with the politicians of Kabul may not be as deep as the American negotiators intended. In fact, several of the advisers to the USIP project have signaled that there is no real rationale for delaying the withdrawal and that conditions could worsen if the parties believe the US is no longer complying with its own agreement.

One small indicator of the likely path for the Bid-

en administration was the decision to retain Zalmay Khalilzad as special envoy. It was he who negotiated the February 2020 agreement, and he has built a wary trust with the Taliban. Ghani, on the other hand, sees the American negotiations, and Khalilzad in particular, in adversarial terms. In a recent conversation organized by an American nongovernmental organization, Ghani took pleasure in referring to Khalilzad as an employee of the state who will be instructed by the Biden team, rather than the important player in US-Afghan relations that he has been since the 1980s. When Biden was vice president, he was ready to reduce the US entanglement in Afghanistan and cautioned against the surge of US forces that Barack Obama eventually approved in 2009. So one might imagine that his preference would be to stick to the military drawdown and scale back US involvement, while retaining important political and development activities in the country. But there are also signs that the new administration may agree to delay the May deadline for the final withdrawal. It may be persuaded by the argument that staying longer provides much-needed leverage on the Taliban to fulfill its obligations in the agreement.

It may also reflect some broader trends in Biden's foreign policy. The president's theme of "America is Back" would not be served by an abrupt and ignominious withdrawal, which may leave NATO allies in Afghanistan in an untenable position. It would be understandable for the new team to want to take time to consult with allies, in contrast to former President Donald Trump's unilateral decisions in 2020 about pulling troops out of Iraq, Afghanistan and Germany. In the end, Biden may reluctantly lean toward extending the US presence in Afghanistan, in the perhaps futile hope that conditions on the ground will improve. At the State Department, he pledged to "begin restoring American engagement internationally and earn back our leadership position, to catalyze global action on shared challenges." A slower exit from Afghanistan might serve that larger goal.

- Courtesy: Arab News

World paying heavy price for ignoring Rohingyas' plight

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim



The moral of the story is: It will never do you any good to look away from and fail to act to stop or prevent genocide. The world is now left with another genocide on its conscience. But also a sense that more will be on the way. The world is a much less safe place than it was even just five years ago for so many of the world's most vulnerable people

FOR more than three decades, the hopes for democracy in Myanmar have been inextricably tied to just one person: Aung San Suu Kyi. This was entirely appropriate for most of that time. She was, after all, the chosen democratic icon of the people of Myanmar. But only half a year after she was finally allowed to lead the civilian government of Myanmar by the military in 2016, she became complicit in the latter's "clearing operations" against the Rohingya people in the west of the country, which ultimately amounted to genocide. She not only defended their actions as necessary, but she wholly adopted the genocidal rhetoric of even denying the existence of the Rohingya as a separate ethnic group, indigenous to Myanmar. And then the international community was faced with a choice: Call her out as equally responsible for the genocide for her tacit endorsement and later support for what happened to the Rohingya, or gloss over her role in the genocide and the events that followed and continue to support her as the vehicle through which the transition to democracy in Myanmar would ultimately be achieved. Human rights organizations and international law bodies chose to tell the truth about her complicity. Most of the governments of the world, not so much. The

traditional champions of human rights on the international stage, the US and the Europeans, both looked away. Washington looked away because the Trump administration simply had no interest in human rights issues. The Europeans, meanwhile, chose to look the other way in the hope that, if the transition to democracy is eventually completed under the stewardship of Suu Kyi, similar actions against other marginalized groups in Myanmar would - hopefully - be less likely. But that was a strategy of many maybes. More likely, it was just more convenient to hope for a better future than to do anything about what was happening to the Rohingya.

In either case, that approach has now been exposed as the folly it always was. The military of Myanmar used the civilian government under Suu Kyi as a shield from international rebuke while they were carrying out the genocide. And, when it looked like Suu Kyi and her movement were becoming too powerful, they discarded the entire pretense of a transition to democracy entirely and reassumed full control of the governance of the country. They got everything they wanted. Meanwhile, the Rohingya will find it difficult getting justice out of the international community for decades, if ever. And the West is left weaponless in the

aftermath of what happened, not least because it forfeited the moral authority to intervene in any way today after failing to intervene against the genocide as it was happening.

The most that can be said about the situation is that the trial for genocide at the International Court of Justice will continue. But good luck enforcing its verdicts, not least since they might expect China to come to the defense of Naypyidaw.

The moral of the story is: It will never do you any good to look away from and fail to act to stop or prevent genocide. The world is now left with another genocide on its conscience. But also a sense that more will be on the way. The world is a much less safe place than it was even just five years ago for so many of the world's most vulnerable people. The premise of a rules-based world order and of international law has been further eroded. And, with that, we are looking at more refugee crises; more international conflict; more domestic political upheaval as to how to respond to the international situation; and the destabilization of political institutions and law and order everywhere across the world - not least in Europe and the US. This is the price we pay for looking the other way.

- Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Biden may close down Guantanamo Bay prison

From Page 01

Biden administration has inherited from the previous administration, in line with our broader goal of closing Guantanamo," National Security Council spokeswoman Emily Horne told Reuters. "The NSC will work closely with the Departments of Defense, State, and Justice to make progress toward closing the GTMO facility, and also in close consultation with Congress," she added. Such an initiative, however, is unlikely to bring down the curtain anytime soon on the high-security facility located at the Guantanamo Naval Station. Set up to house foreign suspects following the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington, the facility came to symbolise the excesses of the US "war on terror" because of harsh interrogation methods that critics say amounted to torture. The immediate impact, however, could be to reinstate, in some form, the Guantanamo closure policy of Biden's old boss, former President Barack Obama, which was reversed by Donald Trump as soon as he took office in 2017.

Serena Williams advances at Aus Open

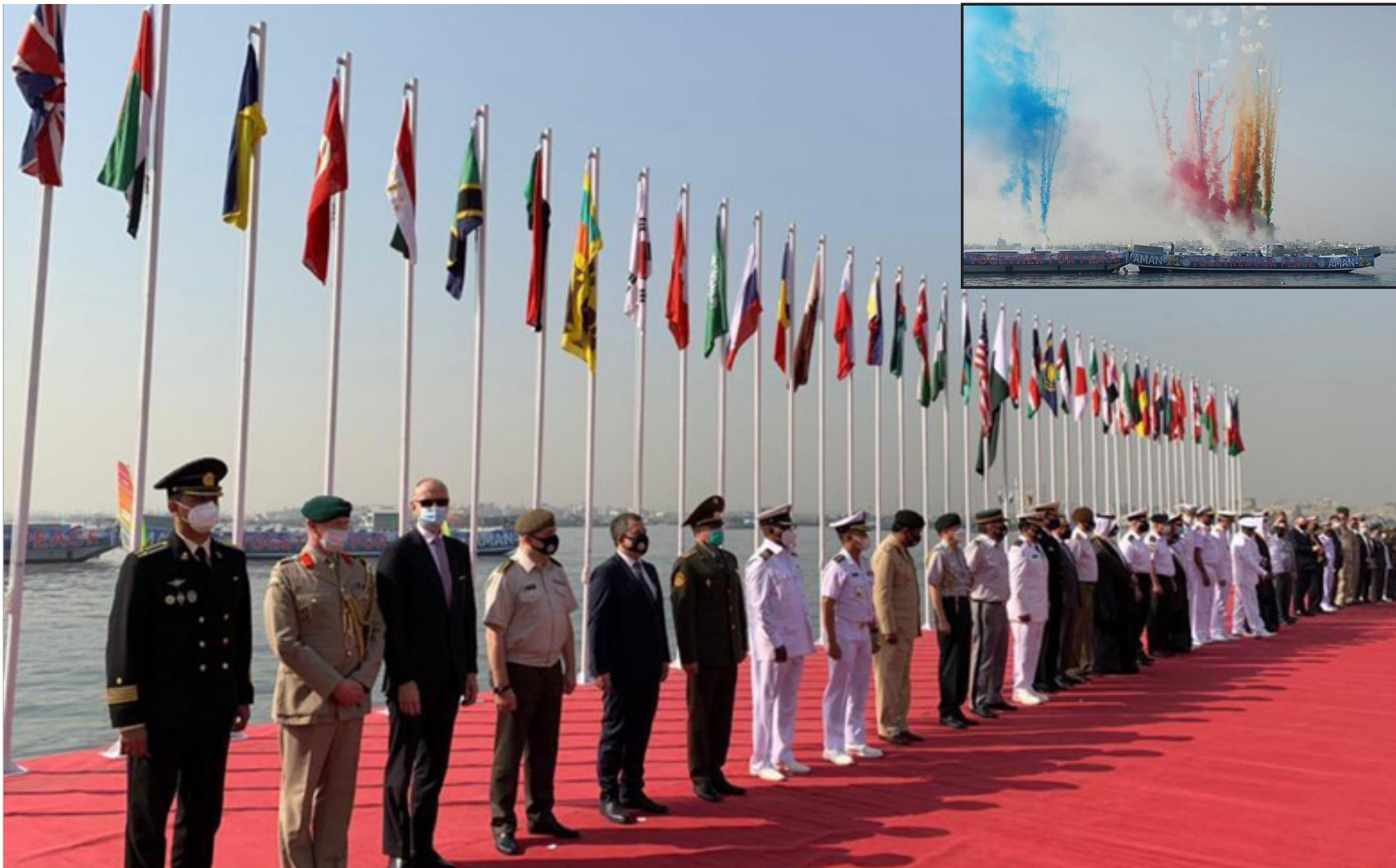
SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Seven-time Australia Open champion Serena Williams has defeated 19-year-old Anastasia Potapova in the third round of the 2021 tournament in Melbourne. "Respect. @serenawilliams toughs out a 7-6(5) 6-2 win over Potapova to keep her pursuit of a 24th Grand Slam title alive," said the Australian tournament's official Twitter account late Thursday. "Congratulations @serenawilliams on your 90th #AusOpen victory," it added. "It was the only thing that we can do [during] social distance for almost a whole year of COVID. So I was like I will never put my daughter in tennis and then it's the best socially distanced sport," Williams, 39, said after the match. On Friday Melbourne, the tournament's host and Australia's second-biggest city, placed a five-day lockdown to restrain a new COVID-19 outbreak. Due to the lockdown, this year's tournament is being held without fans.

Tokyo Olympics chief quits

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: Tokyo 2020 Olympics chief Yoshiro Mori resigned on Friday and apologised again for sexist remarks that sparked a global outcry, leaving the troubled Olympics searching for a chief five months from the opening ceremony. The resignation of the 83-year-old former prime minister further erodes confidence in organisers' ability to pull off the postponed Summer Games during a coronavirus pandemic. A selection committee made up of an equal number of men and women, and centred around athletes, would choose a new president for the Tokyo 2020 organizing committee, the group's chief executive Yoshiro Muto told a news conference. "We need to pick the next president urgently," Muto said, without saying when. The new president needed experience in the Olympics or Paralympics and a "really high-level understanding" of gender equality, diversity and inclusion, he said. The issue has focused global attention on gender disparity in the world's third-largest economy. Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe championed a policy of "Womenomics" but activists and many women say Japan still has a long way to go - especially in the workplace. Mori sparked a furore when he said during an Olympic committee meeting this month that women talk too much. He initially refused to step down. - APP



KARACHI: Representatives of different countries witnessing the opening ceremony of six day long Pakistan Navy's multinational Exercise Aman 2021. - DNA

Former ECB chief Draghi set to be Italy's new PM

The president emphasised the urgency of moving quickly to fill the political vacuum as Italy approaches the grim milestone of 100,000 deaths and battles the worst recession since World War II

FOREIGN DESK

ROME: With almost all the political parties behind him, Mario Draghi on Friday entered the final straight in his bid to form a new government to lead Italy through the coronavirus pandemic. The former European Central Bank chief, called in after the outgoing centre-left coalition collapsed, could visit President Sergio Mattarella as early as Friday to be officially named prime minister. Draghi has spent the last nine days assembling a government of national unity to manage the dead-

ly pandemic that hit Italy almost exactly one year ago, triggering a deep recession.

After securing the support late Thursday of the last key player, the populist Five Star Movement (M5S), Draghi has almost all the main parties on board, from leftists to the far-right League.

"The Draghi government is born," headlined Rome-based daily Il Messaggero, while the Corriere Della Sera added: "Draghi in the home stretch." However, the 73-year-old economist has shown he is willing to take his time, and could yet take a few more days to finalise his

cabinet. Italy has high hopes for Draghi, dubbed Super Mario after vowing to do "whatever it takes" to save the euro single currency in the 2010s debt crisis.

Mattarella asked him to step in on February 3 after outgoing premier Giuseppe Conte resigned following weeks of political turmoil in his M5S-led coalition.

The president emphasised the urgency of moving quickly to fill the political vacuum as Italy approaches the grim milestone of 100,000 deaths and battles the worst recession since World War II. Italy is hoping to receive more than 200 billion euros (\$243 bil-

lion) in grants and loans from the European Union's recovery fund to help it get back on its feet.

But Draghi will have to balance demands for immediate hand-outs against the need for long-term structural reforms in Italy - tensions that brought down the last government.

- Broad support - Leaders of M5S, the biggest party in parliament, had indicated early on that they would support Draghi's efforts to form a broad-based new government - but the membership was divided. An online vote on whether to take part was delayed earlier this week

when M5S founder Beppe Grillo asked Draghi for more details on action he would take on the environment.

The vote was rescheduled for Thursday after the party claimed it had been promised a beefed-up minister "for ecological transition" - and members voted by 59.3 percent to back Draghi.

The economist would have probably been able to form a government even without the M5S, but "it is important for him to set off with the broadest possible parliamentary majority", noted Federico Santi, an analyst at Eurasia Group.

Ufone and PTCL partner with United for PSL-6

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ufone and PTCL and twice Pakistan Super League champions, Islamabad United, have joined hands for the sixth edition of the Pakistan Super League, starting from February 20. Ufone and PTCL are part of PTCL Group, which is the leading telecommunication services provider in Pakistan. Both the brands serve millions of people across the country and provide services throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan including some of the remotest regions.

Islamabad United is the most successful team of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) and were the winners of the first and third seasons of the HBL PSL. The franchise believes in bringing change to Pakistani sports with the introduction of international standards of practice and a commitment to continuous progress. Speaking on this occasion Group Chief Marketing Office, PTCL Group, Adnan Anjum said, "Cricket is the heartbeat of the nation and being a people-centric company, it was natural for us to support the passion of cricket. Islamabad United,

a franchise who represent the spirit of united Pakistan is an ideal partner for us to express that support. With the rise of their young Pakistani core, we are confident that Islamabad United's success will be long lasting, as will this partnership." Reiterating the significance of the partnership, Ali Naqvi said, "We are pleased to partner with one of the leading telecommunication companies in Pakistan. Ufone and PTCL are brands known and loved throughout the country. Promoting Islamabad United and cricket is an effort to unite the nation and spread joy among the masses.

Bayern Munich win Club World Cup for sixth trophy in a year

DNA

Bayern Munich beat Tigres UANL 1-0 in the final of the FIFA Club World Cup in Qatar to lift their sixth title in less than nine months. Benjamin Pavard scored the only goal of Thursday's final in the 59th minute for the German side who were without midfielder Thomas Muller and defender Jerome Boateng for the match. Muller was forced to sit out the final after testing positive for the coronavirus while Boateng returned to Germany for personal reasons.

Muller has scored 10 goals in the German league this season. Bayern's win was witnessed by more than 10,000 people in the crowd, mostly fans of Al-Ahly, the Egyptian side that had won the third-place play-off, who

had stayed back after the earlier match.

The German side won all domestic and European titles they were part of last year. Hansi Flick's men won the Champions League, Bundesliga, German Cup, UEFA Super Cup and German Super Cup last season.

Tigres, the first North American club to reach the tournament's final, registered just a solitary shot on target compared to the German side's nine.

This is the eighth year in a row that the Champions League winners have gone on to win the Club World Cup, as Bayern follow in the footsteps of last year's champions Liverpool. Earlier on Thursday, Egypt's Al-Ahly beat Brazil's Palmeiras 3-2 on penalties to claim third position in the tournament.



MELBOURNE: Anna Kalinskaya Viktoria Kuzmova react during the women's doubles second round match between Yang Zhaoxuan/Xu Yifan of China and Anna Kalinskaya of Russia/Viktorija Kuzmova of Slovakia at the Australian Open in Melbourne Park. - Agencies

Biden says US faces 'national emergency'

Demand for the vaccine far outstrips supply and Americans are struggling to get appointments for inoculations, leaving Biden with an acute problem less than a month after taking over from former President

DNA

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden said that the United States is facing a "national emergency" in the coronavirus pandemic and his administration is working to supply enough COVID-19 vaccine to inoculate 300 million Americans. "We're in a national emergency," said Biden, wearing a mask during remarks to scientists at the National Institutes of Health just outside Washington, DC on Thursday. "This will be one of the most difficult operational challenges we have ever undertaken as a nation. It's going to take time," Biden said. The US is on pace to exceed

Biden's goal of administering 100 million vaccine doses in his first 100 days in office, with more than 26 million shots delivered in his first three weeks. The 300 million doses would be delivered by the end of the US summer, Biden said. "We're now on track to have enough supply for 300 million Americans by the end of July," he announced. Biden said the US coronavirus death toll is likely to reach 500,000 next month. He urged Americans to wear masks as a "patriotic duty" to prevent the spread.

Demand for the vaccine far outstrips supply and Americans are struggling to get appointments for inoculations, leaving Biden with an acute problem less than a



month after taking over from former President Donald Trump. Biden criticised Trump, saying the former president had "no plan to vaccinate most of the country". "My predecessor, let's be blunt about it, did not do his job in getting ready for the massive chal-

lenge of vaccinating hundreds of millions of Americans," Biden said. "He didn't order enough vaccines. He didn't mobilise enough people," Biden said.

A Trump representative did not immediately respond to a request for reaction to Biden's comments. Trump had expressed pride in the speed of the vaccine development on his watch, the Reuters news service reported. The Biden administration has deployed active-duty troops to help stand up mass vaccination sites in several states, laying the groundwork for increasing the rate of vaccinations when more supply is available.

Biden emphasised that his administration is doing everything possi-

ble to increase the vaccine supply and the nation's capacity to deliver injections into arms.

Biden had announced on Thursday that the US had secured contractual commitments from Moderna and Pfizer to deliver 600 million doses of vaccine by the end of July - more than a month earlier than initially anticipated. "We appreciate the confidence that the U.S. government has demonstrated in our COVID-19 Vaccine," Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel said in a news release. The pace of injections could increase further if a third coronavirus vaccine from drug maker Johnson & Johnson receives approval from the Food and Drug Administration.

Parties announce Senate candidates

From Page 01

remain a minister for more than six months until he is elected to one of the houses. Thus he must be elected to the Senate this time around in order to continue as the finance minister after June. Nishtar, who is part of the PM's cabinet as a special assistant, is also not a member of Parliament and therefore ineligible to hold the position of a minister.

Faisal Vawda, the federal minister for water resources, is also amongst the list of nominees. He will be contesting on a seat allocated for Sindh, Chaudhry said. Here is a complete list of the nominated candidates who have been announced so far, and the seats they will be contesting for: Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh: Islamabad, Fauzia Arshad: Islamabad, Faisal Vawda: Sindh, Saifullah Niazi: Punjab, Dr Zaqqa: Punjab, Barrister Ali Zafar: Punjab, Abdul Qadir: Balochistan, Shibli Faraz: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mohsin Azeez: KP, Dost Mohammad: KP, Sania Nishtar: KP, Farzana: KP, Saifullah Abro: technocrat.

PML-N, PPP final candidates, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Friday confirmed the names of five of its candidates for Senate seats from Punjab province, media reported.

PML-N spokesperson Mariyum Aurangzeb said that the parliamentary board of the PML-N approved the names of the Senate candidates. "The PML-N has finalized five names from Punjab," she said.

The spokesperson further said that Azam Nazeer Tarar was awarded a Senate ticket from the party on technocrat seat while Sadia Abbasi was selected for women seat from the Punjab province.

Three candidates have been finalized on general seats from Punjab province including Pervaiz Rashid, Mushahid Ullah Khan and Sajid Mir. Meanwhile, the PPP has issued tickets to 14 of its candidates, including Sherry Rehman and Senate Deputy Chairperson Saleem Mandviwalla, ahead of the upcoming Senate polls, sources informed media on Friday. According to the sources, the PPP issued tickets to Taj Haider, Shahad Awan, Jam Mehtab Hussain Dahar, Nawab Abdul Ghani Talpur, and Sadiq Ali Memon apart from Mandviwalla and Rehman for Sindh's general seats.

For the technocrat seat, however, tickets were issued to the Sindh-based party's Farooq H. Naek and Karim Ahmed Khawaja, whereas Palwasha Khan and Khairunissa Mughal for the women's seat.

In addition, sources said PPP has issued ticket to Azeem-ul-Haq Minhas in Punjab and Senator Farhatullah Babar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PCB announces schedule tour to SA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Friday announced the schedule of their April series against South Africa during which they will play three ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League matches.

In addition to the three ODIs, which will count towards automatic qualification for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, Pakistan will also play four T20Is. The Pakistan men's national cricket team will depart for Johannesburg on 26 March and will play the three Super League matches on 2, 4 and 7 April. Centurion will stage the first and third ODIs, while the second match will be played in Johannesburg.

Following the 50-over matches, Pakistan and South Africa will feature in four T20Is. Originally, three T20Is were scheduled, but on the request of Cricket South Africa, the PCB has agreed to play an additional match in the shortest format. Johannesburg will host the opening two matches on 10 and 12 April, while Pretoria will be the venue for the third and fourth T20Is.

This will be Pakistan's second series in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League. After defeating Zimbabwe 2-1 in November 2020, Pakistan are sitting fifth on the table. In contrast, this will be South Africa's first outing in the league. In the 13-side league, each side has to play eight series over a two-year period, including four at home and four away. - APP

Briefs

Turkey set for 1st export in space field'

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) will make the country's first export in the field of space, Turkey's Defense Industries Presidency (SSB) announced on Friday.

GSATCOM Space Technologies, a TAI subsidiary, will export high throughput satellites (HTS) to Argentina's national telecommunications company ARSAT, the SSB said in a statement.

GSATCOM, established by TAI and Argentina-based firm INVAP as a joint venture in the Turkish capital Ankara, launched a program for the production of new generation communication satellites in 2019, the statement said.

"With the GSATCOM license, the production of the ARSAT-SG1 communication satellite, which is aimed to be developed in three years by TAI, GSATCOM and INVAP engineers, will be completed in 2024," it added.

The satellite, which has a fully electric propulsion system and an output capacity exceeding 50 Gbps in Ka-Band, will be used for civilian data transfer and is expected to be among its top peers in the world, the SSB said.

Hailing the project, Ismail Demir, head of the SSB, said Turkey's defense industry is rapidly expanding its capabilities abroad.

"I would like to congratulate all our engineers who will contribute to the development of the satellite to be delivered to Argentina in 2024 under this project, which will be the first export of our country in the field of space," he said.

Shusha Castle to be restored

DNA

BAKU: Work on the restoration of Shusha Castle is underway in Azerbaijan's historic city. The initial work is expected to be completed by late March 2021. The larger-scale reconstruction works will begin on the next stage. Built in the mountains, the city of Shusha is known as Azerbaijan's historical and cultural center. Every corner to be visited in Shusha will meet you with another historical touch. Azerbaijan liberated the city after 28 years of the Armenian occupation on November 8. Shusha Castle is considered one of the city's most iconic monuments. The historical core was named "Panahabad fortress". In 1753, Panah Ali Khan enacted a decree on reconstruction of Shusha Castle amid unfavorable geographical position of Bayat and Shahbulag castles. So, the center of the Karabagh khanate was transferred to Shusha Castle.

The castle has a strategically favorable location. The monument is constructed in Arran style of architecture.

Turkey calls on US to end support for YPG

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey's presidential spokesman urged the US on Thursday to end its support for the PYD/YPG terrorist group.

"The US should end its support to the PYD/YPG. It should say 'stop' to FETO's activities there," said Ibrahim Kalin during an interview with TRT Haber, Turkey's state-run news channel.

Noting that the administration of US President Joe Biden came with many new promises and made statements that they would take new steps after the Donald Trump era, Kalin recalled a phone call with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan last week as the first contact with the new administration.

"We actually handled all the issues in detail there. So it was a phone call that lasted about one hour," Kalin said.

"We discussed in detail both the controversial issues and the issues with which we can act together."

Kalin said there were three main controversial issues in Turkish-US relations.



SAWABI: German ambassador to Pakistan Bernhard Schlagheck, visiting the inauguration ceremony of one of the several portable health clinics in Swabi. An excellent initiative to improve access to maternal & child health services in underserved areas. – DNA

Kim fires senior economic official

FOREIGN DESK

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ripped into the performance of his cabinet and fired a senior economic official he appointed a month ago, saying they had failed to come up with new ideas to salvage an economy in decay. The report by state media on Friday comes during the toughest period of Kim's nine-year rule. The diplomacy he had hoped would lift United States-led sanctions over his nuclear programme is at an impasse and COVID-19 pandemic border closures and crop-killing natural disasters last year deepened the damage to an economy broken by decades of policy failures, including a crippling famine in the 1990s. Some analysts say the current challenges may set up conditions for an economic perfect storm in the North that destabilises markets and triggers public panic and unrest. The current challenges have forced Kim to publicly admit that past economic plans had not succeeded. A new five-year plan to develop the economy was issued during the ruling Workers' Party congress in January but Kim's comments during the party's Central Committee meeting that ended on Thursday were rich with frustration over how the plans have been executed so far.

UK economy suffers record 9.9% slump

WEB DESK

LONDON: The United Kingdom's coronavirus-ravaged economy shrank 9.9 percent in 2020, the biggest annual fall in output since modern records began, but it avoided heading back towards recession at the end of last year, official figures showed on Friday.

This makes it unlikely the country will see two straight quarters of contraction – the standard definition of recession in Europe – even though the economy is set to shrink sharply in early 2021 due to the effects of a third COVID lockdown.

Andersen Global expands into Pakistan with tax, legal Firm

The firm enhanced its capabilities by integrating a tax practice, led by Rashid Ibrahim, and establishing an International Centre for Appropriate Dispute Resolution and Prevention, led by Dr. Nudrat E. Piracha

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Andersen Global enters Pakistan through a Collaboration Agreement with tax and legal firm Septentrio Global Consulting (SgC), adding coverage to the organization's global platform in South Asia.

"At the core of our business we are relationship driven and aim to set the standard for tax and legal services in Pakistan" Founded in 1985 by Managing Director Farrukh Karim Qureshi, SgC (formerly Samdani & Qureshi) began as

a full-service law firm, and recently, enhanced their capabilities by integrating a tax practice, led by Rashid Ibrahim, and establishing an International Centre for Appropriate Dispute Resolution and Prevention, led by Dr. Nudrat E. Piracha. The Islamabad-based firm offers a vast range of services in tax, legal, management and financial consultancy, human resource management, risk management and appropriate dispute resolution & prevention solutions, working with clients in the public, private and social sectors, both at a national and international level.

"At the core of our business we are relationship driven and aim to set the standard for tax and legal services in Pakistan," Farrukh said. "We are transparent and committed to providing best-class solutions to our clients, which aligns with Andersen Global's values and vision. This collaboration strengthens the quality of resources we offer and builds upon our ability to provide seamless service around the globe." Farrukh and his team have built a strong practice in Pakistan, and our shared vision provides a solid foundation for a synergistic, working relationship," Andersen Global Chairman and Andersen CEO Mark

Vorsatz said. "We are truly impressed with their dedication to stewardship and independence. Their comprehensive service offerings provide exceptional coverage and position us for further expansion in this region."

Andersen Global is an international association of legally separate, independent member firms comprised of tax and legal professionals around the world. Established in 2013 by U.S. member firm Andersen Tax LLC, Andersen Global now has more than 7,000 professionals worldwide and a presence in over 247 locations through its member firms and collaborating firms.

'Russia ready for breakup with EU if sanctions imposed'

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Moscow is ready to break ties with the European Union if it follows through on its plan to impose sanctions, Russia's foreign minister said on Friday.

In an interview on the Soloviev Live YouTube channel, Sergey Lavrov said Russia has no desire to be isolated from the world but needs to be prepared for any eventuality.

To a question on whether Russia is heading towards a breakup with the bloc, Lavrov said: "We believe that we are ready; if we see once again, as we already have more than once, that sanctions are being imposed in some areas that create risks for our economy, including the most sensitive areas." "We do not want to be isolated from global life, but we must be prepared for this. If you want peace, then prepare for war," he asserted.

Lavrov's remarks follow news reports on Thursday that the EU has started

EU recovery package signed

BRUSSELS: The European Union's 672.5 billion (\$814 billion) recovery package was signed on Friday. The largest stimulus package in the bloc's history aims at relaunching the European economy after the COVID-19 crisis by channeling EU funds to preserve jobs, to maintain social security systems and to invest in health care. The act was signed by Portuguese premier Antonio Costa on behalf of the EU member countries, as the chair of rotating presidency of the Council of European Union, and European Parliament President David Sassoli. The recovery package is "vaccine to save lives, vitamin to boost the economy", Costa said at a press conference following the signing ceremony. After a year-long deadlock in negotiations, EU leaders and the European Parliament reached in December an agreement on the bloc's budget of 1.8 trillion for the period of 2021-27, which includes a 750-billion temporary recovery instrument called Next Generation EU and the ordinary long-term budget. The act on Recovery and Resilience Facility signed on Friday is part of the Next Generation EU, but it needed special authorization because – unlike the rest of EU budget which is mostly based on contributions from member states – the European Commission will finance the 672.5 billion fund by raising money at the international financial markets. – Agencies

working on proposed sanctions against Russia over the conviction of opposition politician Alexey Navalny. According to the reports, representatives of EU member states discussed possible measures against Moscow at a closed meeting on Feb. 10, and no one opposed the plan.



BAKU: Pakistani ambassador to Azerbaijan, Bial Hayee called on minister of Health of Azerbaijan Ogtay Shiraliyev. Avenues for co-op in health Sector were discussed with particular focus on Pharma products, surgical instruments & medical education. – DNA

BBC barred in China

The private Hong Kong platforms Cable TV and Now TV were still carrying BBC World News as of Friday

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China barred Britain's BBC World News from its television networks on Friday and Hong Kong's public broadcaster said it would stop relaying BBC World Service radio, a week after Britain revoked Chinese state television's broadcast licence. BBC World News barred from airing in China. China's National Radio and Television Administration said BBC World News' reports on China had "seriously violated" a requirement to be "truthful and fair", harmed China's interests and undermined national unity.

Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), the publicly funded broadcaster in the former British territory, said it was suspending the relay of BBC radio news programming. The Foreign Cor-

respondents' Club of China (FCCC) said it appeared that China was trying to force foreign media to follow the Chinese party line.

RTHK's Radio 4 (R4) station had carried BBC World Service radio for eight hours each night and the R1 station had carried a one-hour BBC programme once a week. The private Hong Kong platforms Cable TV and Now TV were still carrying BBC World News as of Friday. Before the ban, BBC World News had not been included in most TV packages in mainland China, but had been available in some hotels and homes.

Two journalists in Beijing found that the channel had disappeared.

The BBC, which is a public corporation, said it was "the world's most trusted international news broadcaster and reports on stories from around the world fairly, impartially and without fear or fa-

vor". British foreign minister Dominic Raab called the ban "an unacceptable curtailment of media freedom", adding: "China has some of the most severe restrictions on media and internet freedoms across the globe, and this latest step will only damage China's reputation in the eyes of the world." RTHK's decision underlines how Beijing's tightening grip on Hong Kong extends to media. Last year, when Beijing expelled about a dozen journalists working for U.S. news outlets, it also barred them from relocating to Hong Kong. RTHK, founded in 1928 and sometimes compared with the BBC, is the only independent, publicly funded media outlet on Chinese soil and is guaranteed editorial independence by its charter. It had angered both the Hong Kong government and Beijing with its coverage of anti-government protests that shook the city in 2019.

Hungary to start using Russian vaccine

BUDAPEST: Hungary will on Friday become the first EU nation to start using Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against the coronavirus, the country's chief medical officer said. "Today we are beginning to vaccinate with the Sputnik V vaccine, this is taking place in the designated vaccination stations," Cecilia Muller told a daily press briefing.

Hungary broke ranks with

the EU last month by becoming the first bloc member to approve Sputnik V, ordering two million doses to be delivered over three months, enough to inoculate one million people.

Hungary has often clashed with Brussels, especially on migration, and repeatedly criticised what it says is the slow pace of vaccine approval and procurement by EU authorities. – APP

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
(Directorate of Sanitation)

TENDER NOTICE - INVITATION FOR BIDS

- 1) Directorate of Sanitation, CDA, Islamabad invites sealed bids for the following work, for a period of One (01) year as per PPRa Rules, from the interested Firms or Consortium / Joint Ventures, holding GST, Registration etc. with relevant Authorities and having experience in the relevant field of Municipal Solid Waste Management.

S #	Name of Work	NIT Cost per Annum	Earnest Money 3% of NIT Cost
1.	Privatization / Provision of Services for Secondary Collection & Transportation of Solid Waste / Garbage & Cleaning of All Major Roads of UC's in ICT Rural Area and Model Villages, Islamabad.	Rs.260,904,127/-	Rs.7,828,000/-

- 2) The bid shall comprise a single Stage two envelopes (containing two separate envelopes.) Each envelope shall contain separately the Financial proposal and the Technical proposal; the envelopes shall be marked as "TECHNICAL PROPOSAL" and "FINANCIAL PROPOSAL" in bold and legible letters to avoid confusion [PPRA- Rule 36(b)]; Initially, only the envelope marked "TECHNICAL PROPOSAL" shall be opened; the envelope marked as "FINANCIAL PROPOSAL" shall be retained in the custody of the procuring agency without being opened. Second envelope containing Financial Bids will be opened later, the date of which will be communicated to the successful bidders of Technical Bids and Financial Bids of non-qualified bidders will be returned unopened after evaluation of the Technical Bids.
- 3) The Earnest Money in shape of Pay Order or Bank Draft in favor of Deputy Director Sanitation shall be attached with the TECHNICAL PROPOSAL, in case of failure Bid Documents will not be considered.
- 4) Detail of Machinery (Functional / Operational) owned / leased by the firm, required for the subject work. The firm / contractor without following machinery will be technically disqualified without any clarification / justification:-

S #	Nomenclature	Qty	Model
1	Skip Lifting Vehicles (13 Tons lifting capacity)	7	2005 or Above
2	Garbage Compactors (13 M ³)	2	2005 or Above
3	Wheel Excavator (140 hp)	1	2005 or Above
4	Dump Trucks (GVW 18000 kg)	6	2005 or Above
5	Tractor Trolley (50 hp)	4	2015 or Above
6	Tractor Bucket (75 hp)	3	2015 or Above
7	Mechanical Sweeper (50hp)	3	2015 or Above
8	Tractor with Broomer (75hp)	2	2005 or Above
9	Motor Cycles	6	2019 or Above

- 6) Bidders having any dispute / litigation with CDA or have refused CDA to offer their services during the past one year are not eligible to apply. Subsequently, any service provider whose services have been discontinued due to poor performance will also not be eligible to participate in the bidding process.
- 7) The Contractors / Firms can obtain Tender Documents along with BOQ, Terms & Conditions etc from the office of the Deputy Director Sanitation, Directorate of Sanitation, CDA Street No. 49, Sector G-6/1-4, Islamabad on any working day during office hours up to 25-02-2021, upon payment of document fee of PKR.5,000/- (non-refundable) through Cash.
- 8) The proposal / bid will be received till 11:30 am on 01-03-2021 and Technical bids will be opened at 12:00 noon same day in the presence of bidders / authorized representatives of bidders to witness the Tender Opening in the office of The Director (Sanitation), Directorate of Sanitation, CDA, Street No. 49, Sector G-6/1-4, Islamabad.
- 9) Further clarification, if required, can be obtained from the Deputy Director Sanitation (Phone No.+92-051-9223171), Email cda_sanitation.dte@gmail.com or visit Directorate of Sanitation CDA on any working day during office hours.
- 10) The firms providing unsubstantiated and / or incorrect information are liable to legal action and or disqualification.
- 11) The same advertisement can also be seen at the PPRa's website www.ppra.org.pk or CDA website www.cda.gov.pk
- 12) The Sanitation Directorate / CDA reserve the right to reject all bids at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal [PPRA- Rule 33(1)].

PID (I) No. 4342/20

Deputy Director (Sanitation), CDA
Phone#: 051-9223171

Briefs

Attaullah Tarar faking arrest, says Firdous Ashiq

DNA

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Punjab Chief Minister Firdous Ashiq Awan has termed the alleged arrest of PML-N leader Attaullah Tarar a political stunt and said that he was never taken into custody by police. Talking to media in Lahore, Firdous Ashiq Awan said that PML-N is known for its showmanship and deceit. Police had information of illegal weapons in Abid Raza's car and seizing the opportunity, Atta Tarar sat in the police van by himself. The Special Assistant said that Atta Tarar and Abid Raza caused chaos at the scene. He can influence his party but no one else will be fazed by his antics, she added. She said that Atta Tarar probably wants to reach the Senate and is trying to gain attention through cheap tactics. The PML-N leader was 'arrested' from Wazirabad on Friday and released shortly after the news came to light. Earlier, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb has confirmed that Deputy Secretary General of PML-N Attaullah Tarar was released after being arrested for a brief period by police from Daska city of the Punjab province on Friday. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Attaullah Tarar was in Daska to run an election campaign of the party candidate Syeda Nosheen Zahray Shah for by-elections of NA-75 when he was arrested by the police.

PPP shows reservations on election schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) on Friday while expressing reservations over schedule for Senate elections said that it was difficult for the parties for screening of candidates, bank accounts and other matters within two days given by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). In a letter written to the Chief Election Commissioner by the Nayer Bukhari after consultation with the party leadership stated that it was difficult for a federal party like the PPP to finalize the list of candidates in such a short time, which includes candidates' interviews, scrutiny and other matters, for which the party's parliamentary board needs time. "Only two days have been given for filling the nomination papers on short notice. Is it possible to get done all the matters including bank accounts, scrutiny of the candidates and others within two days", he asked. The letter also stated that all the candidates wanted to file a case before the party leadership and the parliamentary board and the candidates cannot be interviewed before the schedule is released, which is not commendable.

Best health facilities basic right of citizens

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser said that access to the best health facilities is the fundamental right of every individual of the country. He said that the dream of making Pakistan a welfare state could be achieved by providing basic facilities to the people. He expressed these views while talking to Principal, Gajju Khan Medical College Dr. Fasseh-uz-Zaman, Medical Superintendent Bacha Khan Medical Complex Abdul Latif Khan, and DHO Swabi Dr. Kaleem Ullah today at Parliament House. Speaker Asad Qaiser said that the present government was taking steps on priority basis for the welfare of the people. He added that providing best health-care facilities to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially Swabi, was one of my top priorities.

Former CJP accused of backing protesting lawyers

Some of the senior lawyers categorically said the opposition parties, mainly PMLN, is behind this ransacking of CJ IHC Chamber

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The recent ransacking of the chamber of Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Athar Minallah by the lawyers protesting for the demolishing of their illegal chambers in F8 Markaz Lower Courts was engineered by the lawyers belonging to the opposition parties mainly PMLN. "Former Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary is also active in organising lawyers who not only were involved in this incident of IHC where Chief Justice Athar Minallah was attacked, but will also become a street power for the opposition parties forthcoming long march pitched to start from Kara-

chi on March 26th". Prominent and senior lawyers who were not happy on this action of the lawyers said the entire lawyers' community could not be blamed for the unfortunate incident. "Everyone has the right to protest but what the lawyers did inside the IHC is not at all acceptable," said a senior lawyer. Some of the senior lawyers categorically said the opposition parties, mainly PMLN, is behind this ransacking of CJ IHC Chamber. They were of the view that the opposition parties in order to build pressure on the government and to gain public support for their upcoming long march set for 26th March have used the lawyers. "The opposition parties want the law-

yers to be an active partner in their upcoming long march like the way they carried the CJ (Retd) Iftikhar Chaudhry restoration movement," the senior lawyers opined. Acknowledging the presence of black sheep in their profession, they said the whole incident at the IHC smacks of a foul play. They said a group of lawyers belonging to the opposition parties especially the PML (N) apparently used the pretext of demolition of their chambers to achieve their ulterior motives. They said the opposition parties are using different dirty tactics and have unleashed their stooges in different strata of the society including the lawyers to pressurize the government. "Apparently the storming of the IHC building was aimed at dest-

abilizing the government", they said but regretted that the incident also brought a bad name to the country. They noted such incidents also dent the image of the country at the international level. Hailing the government for prudently handling the situation, they were of the view that the lawyers' community may have their political affiliations but should not become part of any conspiracy. They said those engaged in evil plots are bringing bad name to the community and their licenses need to be revoked. They also demanded strict action against those who ransacked the IHC building. Police have registered a number of FIRs against the lawyers involved in the violence. Twenty one lawyers

have been booked and according to a hand out of Islamabad High Court, separate contempt of court proceedings will be initiated against those found guilty of the offence. It is pertinent to mention here that ever since the culmination of Pakistan Lawyers Movement to the restoration of former Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Chaudhary, the hooliganism of emboldened lawyers is on the rise. The practitioners of law now consider themselves above the law. Once hailed as the heroes are now seen as gangsters because of their never ending episodes of violent and irresponsible conduct. Drunk on power, these lawyers are not even afraid to curse the judicial officers.

'India has endangered regional peace'



SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said irresponsible attitude of India has endangered the peace and security of the region. During weekly briefing, the spokesperson said India's unwillingness to resolve the longstanding issue of Jammu and Kashmir is the main impediment to bring durable peace in the region. Responding to media queries on Friday, he said the entire world acknowledges Kashmir as a disputed region, which should be resolved in light of UN resolutions. Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said international media is exposing Indian atrocities and gross human rights in the occupied valley. Prime Minister Imran Khan will visit Sri Lanka by the end of this month on the invitation of his Sri Lankan counterpart. Earlier in his opening statement, the spokesperson said 7th edition of multinational maritime exercise 'Aman 2021' is underway and it aims at collectively working against human trafficking, smuggling, and terrorism in the region. The Spokesperson said ways and means will be discussed for the development of blue economy under secure and sustainable environment under the Aman exercise. He said significance of China Pakistan Economic Corridor and Gwadar port will also be highlighted during the course of exercise. This will help foster shared vision for maritime security in the Indian Ocean.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan planting a sapling during the inauguration of Miyawaki Urban Forest at Gilani Park. - APP

Pak Navy to play positive role for peace: Naval Chief

Naval Chief in his message said Pak Navy has taken several initiatives for maritime security and promote peace in the waters of the region

DNA

KARACHI: The seventh edition of the multinational maritime exercise Aman-2021 that commenced in Karachi on Thursday had its official and impressive flag hoisting ceremony performed in the city on Friday. During the main ceremony flags of all 45 participating countries were hoisted in the air with Pakistan's flag in the middle and Navy band playing the National Anthem of Pakistan. The Commander of 25th Destroyer Squadron Commodore Imtiaz Ali read the message of Chief of the Na-

val Staff Admiral Mohammad Amjad Khan Niazi. As per the message, the Naval Chief welcomed the participating countries of the exercise and said participation from so many countries really describes the motto of the exercise which is 'Together for Peace'. He said that Pakistan Navy is ever ready to play a positive role for the peace in the region. The Naval Chief in his message said Pakistan Navy has taken several initiatives for maritime security and promote peace in the waters of the region. He said one such initiative is Regional Maritime

Security Patrol (RMSP) to make the waters safe for maritime activities and keep a check at all the illegal activities. Admiral Mohammad Amjad Khan Niazi said these exercises are clear message to all the peace loving countries to come together for peace. He hoped that camaraderie expressed here will continue in the future. Addressing the ceremony, chief guest of the ceremony Commander Pakistan Fleet Admiral Naveed Ashraf said that the exercise aims at to promote the security and stability in the region and keep the maritime environment safe from threats.

He said the exercise has two phases, a harbor phase and a sea phase while an international level conference is also part of the event to explore the development of blue economy. It may be pointed out that the 6-days exercise is being carried out in the form of collaboration between the navies of various countries to maintain a safe and sustainable maritime realm and enhance interoperability between regional and extra-regional navies. The Exercise is conducted by the Pakistan Navy after every two years with a resolve against terrorism and piracy.

Turkey, Pakistan, Azerbaijan to sign space agreements

ANKARA: Turkey has expressed intentions to cooperate with Pakistan and Azerbaijan in the field of space technology. "Our contracts with Azerbaijan and Pakistan in the field of space activities are ready, we have reached the stage of signing," Turkish Minister of Industry and Technology Mustafa Varank was quoted as saying by APA. The minister said Turkey is at the signing stage of agreements with space agencies of Pakistan and Azerbaijan to improve collaboration in the use of space for civilian purposes which requires international cooperation. Meanwhile, on February 9, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the country's ambitious 10-year national space program which includes sending Turkish astronauts into space, developing a new generation of satellites, building a spaceport, and reaching the Moon by 2023 which is the primary and most important mission of the program. In January 2021, SpaceX launched a Turkish communications satellite into orbit. Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan recently entered into a new phase of a strategic partnership with the visits of Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov to Islamabad last month. The three friendly countries announced to improve collaboration in political, strategic, economic, security, science, and technology fields. The collaboration in space technology will take the partnership to a new level as the future of space will be marked by collaboration. Pakistan launched its first communications satellite PAKSAT-1R in August 2011 that marked the defining moment in the country's space program. In 2018, Pakistan launched a remote-sensing (PRSS-1) satellite and a technology evaluation satellite (PakTES-1A) after SUPARCO and the China Great Wall Industrial Cooperation signed a space cooperation agreement. - DNA

JUI-F awards party tickets

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl (JUI-F) on Friday issued party tickets to ten candidates for the upcoming Senate election. According to party spokesman, Aslam Ghouri, the tickets have been issued to Maulana Atta-ur-Rehman, Tariq Khattak, Zubair Ali, Naema Kishwar, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, Khalil Ahmed Buledi, Kamran Murtaza, Asiya Nasir, Ranjeet Singh and Heman Das to contest elections from Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On general seats of Balochistan, the tickets were issued to Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri and Khalil Ahmed Buledi. While Kamran Murtaza and Asiya Nasir would contest Senate elections for Technocrat and women seats respectively. Heman Das has been awarded ticket for minority seat. On general seat of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the tickets have been issued to Maulana Atta-ur-Rehman and Tariq Khattak. While Zubair Ali and Naema Kishwar have been issued tickets for technical and women seats respectively.

Nepra okays Rs1.95/unit hike in power tariff

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Friday approved an increase of Rs1.95 per unit in power tariff, putting an additional burden of Rs200 billion on consumers. According to the power regulator, the tariff hike will be applicable to all consumers including lifeline consumers using 50 units in a month. The approval came on a federal government request for application of uniform schedule of tariff for all distribution companies of ex-Wapda along with "targeted tariff differential subsidy of Rs185 billion" to ensure uniform tariff. Per unit average tariff has gone up to Rs16.33 from Rs16.33 following the increase. Nepra said K-Electric consumers are exempted from the tariff increase.

FM Qureshi welcomes US' clarification

"I want to be very clear there has been no change in US policy in the region", US had said

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday expressed his pleasure over the clarification by the United States that there had been no change in their policy on Kashmir as they still considered it a disputed territory. The foreign minister, in a statement, said that Pakistan immediately presented its stance following a State Department's tweet. He was referring to a State Department's tweet on February 10 about resumption of 4G service in which IIOJK was referred as "India's Jammu and Kashmir" what Pakistan viewed as "inconsistent" with the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir as recognized by numerous UNSC resolutions on the international community. However, State Department Spokesperson in his media briefing clarified, "I want to be very clear there has been no change in US policy in the region." Qureshi said like elsewhere in the world, the economy in the Gulf countries was also hit by COVID-19 which resulted into layoffs and consequent repatriation of many people. Likewise, the pandemic also adversely impacted aviation, hoteling and restaurant businesses as well as the construction industry. He said during his recent visit to the UAE, he had discussed the matter in detail with his counterpart. The UAE's reservations were not Pakistan-specific, though the latter was trying to address those, he explained. The foreign minister said the discussion was underway and hoped for a better outcome. Referring to Naval Exercise AMAN-21 being hosted by Pakistan Navy and participated by 40 international navies, the foreign minister termed it a great success of Pakistan. The exercises would also provide an opportunity for discussion on blue economy, Qureshi said and also hinted at visiting Karachi on the invitation of Naval chief. - DNA

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MEVLUT CAVUSOGLU
TURKEY, PAKISTAN HAVE EVERY REASON TO SOLIDIFY TIES

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