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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Briefs

Biden says democracy is 'fragile'

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Following Donald Trump's senate acquittal, US President Joe Biden has said that it is a reminder that democracy is fragile, and every American had a duty to defend the truth. "This sad chapter in our history has reminded us that democracy is fragile," Biden said in a statement issued hours after the Senate failed to muster the two-thirds majority needed to convict Trump. Biden noted that 57 senators - including a record seven Republicans - voted to find Trump guilty, following a bipartisan vote by the House of Representatives to impeach the Republican former president.

Blue economy vital: Moeed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security Dr. Moeed said Pakistan has the potential of billion dollars blue economy but we are earning only 200 million dollars from sea. Speaking at an international maritime conference in Karachi on Sunday, he said 45 countries are participating in the ongoing Aman Exercise 2021 hosted by Pakistan Navy and it is aimed at promotion of peace in the region.

Long march of PDM to be welcomed

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister on Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed said that the government will not create any hurdle in Pakistan Democratic Movement's long march towards Islamabad. The minister said they would be 'welcomed' if they followed the law and the Constitution.

Addressing a function held in Islamabad here on Sunday. The minister said, "I tell the PDM that there will be no obstacle for them if they march here within the ambit of law."

Non-resolution of public woes irks PM Imran

Complaints of ordinary nature are immediately resolved when one resorts to the Citizen Portal however complaints that involve big-wig are hardly resolved

ANSAR M. BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: - Prime Minister Imran Khan took stern notice of the inefficiency of the government officers which was also complained by the federal ministers over unresolved public complaints. The government has initiated action against officers by issuing them show-cause notices and warning letters over their non-seriousness and inaction on public complaints registered at the Citizen Portal. The action has been initiated after Prime Minister Imran Khan, during a cabinet meeting, took notice of the inefficiency of the government officers. According to the details issued by the PM Office, the Punjab Chief Secretary had completed the scrutiny of 1,586 officers' dashboards and a report of PM's Delivery Unit was also submitted to the prime minister. As per report, 263 officers were issued warning letters and show-cause notices to

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'Provision of health facilities top priority'

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that provision of standard and cheap health facilities to the people and social protection are foremost priorities of the government. The premier said that the health cards system will not only protect the common man in respect of health but also revolutionise the health system. Earlier on Friday, PM Imran had said that provision of quality and affordable healthcare and social security to the people, especially the lower class, is the top priority of the government. He was presiding over a high-level meeting which reviewed the progress on the programme of Universal Health Insurance.

French Ambassador Marc Barety leaving

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France Marc Barety is leaving Pakistan after completing his term of office. He is expected to leave in July this year. According to diplomatic sources the ambassador is set to leave in this summer. The French ambassador will be completing his term. Sources say, Ambassador is not leaving Pakistan because the Tehreek-e-Laibaik Pakistan (TLP) has demanded so, rather he is leaving after



completing his tenure. Ambassador Barety during his tenure contributed significantly towards promotion and further strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries. During his tenure, both countries achieved a number of milestones. The French

embassy under his leadership also arranged many cultural events and as sources claim a number of events were still in the pipeline when coronavirus pandemic suddenly appeared on the scene and all such activities were discontinued. It was during his tenure that the French Club was also closed down and the venue turned into a cultural centre. Many an event including the exhibition by the French speaking countries took place in the French Club after its turning into a cultural center.

UK to support Pakistan in vaccination campaign

ISLAMABAD: The UK's world-leading support to the global COVID-19 vaccines facility Covax will help millions of Pakistanis protect themselves against Coronavirus. Through the Covax facility, Pakistan will take delivery of 17m doses of the UK-developed Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine shortly, with the first 7m expected before April. The next 10m doses will come later, likely before June. This will help protect 8.5m people from the virus, which has already claimed over 12,000

lives in Pakistan. So far, the UK has committed £548m to the global Covax initiative, making the UK the largest single donor. The Covax initiative is the key way that more than 180 countries will have fair, early access to COVID-19 vaccines. The UK has also encouraged other countries to contribute over \$1bn to Covax. Overall, Covax - which stands for Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility - has

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KARACHI: A paratrooper demonstrating his skills during multi-national AMAN-2021 Navy exercises. - DNA

Pakistan condemns killing of Turkish people

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan condemns in strongest terms the heinous act of terrorism in which 13 Turkish nationals were martyred in Gara, Iraq. The Government and the people of Pakistan extend their heartfelt condolences to the Government and the brotherly people of Turkey, as well as to the families of innocent victims. Pakistan stands in strong solidarity with the people of Turkey in their fight against the scourge of terrorism. Pakistan reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all forms and manifestations.

'PTI awards tickets to candidates of all provinces'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz Sunday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had awarded the Senate tickets to the candidates belonging to all the provinces to have majority seats in the upcoming elections. Prime Minister Imran Khan being a party chairman had given Senate tickets to the candidates on recommendations of Parliamentary committee, he said talking to a private news channel. - DNA

Aman-21 to promote regional cooperation

The CJCSC witnessed conduct of Maritime Counter Terrorism demonstration as part of Naval Exercise AMAN-21

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJSC) has said the Aman-2021 exercise would promote regional cooperation & stability, greater interoperability, and a united resolve against terrorism and crimes in maritime domain. The CJSC also witnessed conduct of Maritime Counter Terrorism demonstration as part of Naval Exercise AMAN-21. According to an ISPR press statement, more than 40 countries are participating with Ships, Aircraft, Special Operations Forces/ Maritime Teams and observers in 7th edition of exercise being held in Pakistan (North Arabian Sea) from 11 to 16 February 2021. AMAN is a major multinational exercise, organised by

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EU Envoy for exploring potential of digitization

ISLAMABAD: European Union Ambassador to Pakistan, Androulla Kaminara Sunday

said that the world needed to explore economic potential of digitization as it had changed the working of the global system due to its multi-dimensional impacts, including time efficiency and accuracy.

She said digitization and Artificial Intelligence (AI) had changed the world pattern of working and it was more importance of using technology for people to create a fair and competitive economy, as well as an open, democratic and sustainable society. She expressed these views with APP's journalist after

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CNS meets participants

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: Different foreign delegates called on Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi during the seventh Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN-2021. Those who held meetings with the Naval Chief included Russian Deputy Naval Chief, Deputy Commander of US New Cent, Naval Chief of Jordan, Deputy Commander of East Fleet of Saudi Navy, Commander Surface Fleet of Brazil, Flag Officer Commanding of Sri Lanka Navy and

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Pakistan win T-20 series

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan won the third and final Twenty20 international against South Africa on Sunday with four wickets remaining, emerging victorious in the three-match series by 2-1. Captain Babar Azam and opener Mohammad Rizwan picked up runs for Pakistan, scoring 44 and 42, respectively while Tabraiz Shamsi was the pick of the South African bowlers, taking four wickets. Earlier, Pakistan won the toss and opted to bowl.

Pak-Indonesia trade ties on right path, says Ambassador

The outbreak of coronavirus disease indeed has severely affected the global economy, including Indonesia and Pakistan. In this kind of pandemic situation Indonesia and Pakistan must work together for the sustainable trade relations between both countries

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio has said trade and economic relations between the two countries are moving in the right direction. Talking to Daily Islamabad POST Ambassador Tugio said he believed that in the area of bilateral trade, they are now moving in the right direction by advancing our bilateral trade partnership through providing access and opportunities to our corporate sectors for a sustained economic growth. The real trade potential of our corporate sector is far above than the trade figures and what we need is more concerted efforts to materialize this potential, he added. The ambassador said, following the implementation of the Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement in 2013, bi-

lateral trade figures have reached to historic high. Since then, the relations of the two countries in the economic sector are becoming stronger and stronger while the bilateral trade is also increasing on a year-on-year basis. It is also a very encouraging sign that there is a new wave of interest in the business community of both the countries to establish long-term trade relations. For further increase of bilateral trade volume, we need more promotions and interactions between the business community through the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, participation in trade Expo, market survey to explore the trade opportunities, exchange of trade data and country information with facts and figures to support the momentum of growth. The outbreak of coronavirus disease indeed has severely affected the global economy,



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio and Editor Daily Islamabad POST Ansar Mahmood Bhatti. - DNA Photo

including Indonesia and Pakistan. In this kind of pandemic situation Indonesia and Pakistan must work together for the sustainable trade relations between both countries. Ambassador Tugio said one of the efforts that can be done is by intensifying communications and consultations between stakeholders of both countries. In addition, business activities such as exhibitions and business forums, etc. also can still be done in a virtual way to further explore potential economic cooperation between both sides. Those strategies are believed could uplift business, economic and other aspects of the bilateral ties in the time of pandemic, like today. The volume of bilateral trade between the two countries in 2019 was USD 2.3 billion. Despite the pandemic, the whole 2020's bilateral trade volume from January - November 2020 re-

mained US\$2.2b with a slight correction. With a large population and demographic bonus, both Indonesia and Pakistan have acknowledged that there is considerable untapped potential to expand trade, and to improve the trade imbalance under the mechanism of the trade agreement between the two countries. This constitutes priority of my assignment in Pakistan. In order to meet those objectives, we are currently in the process of the negotiation on upgrading the PTA to a Trade-in-Goods Agreement (TIGA). The first negotiation was conducted in 2019 in Islamabad. Further negotiations are scheduled to be carried out soon, the ambassador added. (Full text of the interview shall be published in the March issue of CENTRELINE magazine).

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Briefs

'Govt wants to ensure transparency'

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Chaudhry Sarwar has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government wants to ensure transparency in the Senate elections to strengthen democracy. Talking to a delegation in Lahore on Sunday, he said opposing open ballot is actually the support to vote for sale. The Governor said that people who are doing politics of disruption will achieve nothing and urged Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) stop trying to remove the incumbent government. He further said that all Senate candidates of PTI will win and the party will emerge as largest party in upper house of the parliament.

'PTI has no trust in its own members'

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Information and Local Government has said that PTI had no trust in its members of parliament and added federal government was afraid of its own people, that's why ordinance has been promulgated. The Minister said that even if open voting held, many of their own members would not vote them due to the selection of Senate candidates. The Provincial Minister expressed these views while talking to reporters after the inauguration of a welfare organization's Dastar Khawa in Guru Mandir area on Sunday. He said that everyone witnessed that they have awarded senate ticket in Balochistan and later withdrawn. Critising the ordinance on Senate elections, he stated that dual nationals were allowed to contest Senate elections and after winning, they can renounce their citizenship. Sindh Information Minister said that PTI's intentions are flawed and the cat has come out of the bag.

'I am sure that by taking such steps, even if there is an open vote, many of their own people would not cast vote in favor of their candidates. In response to a question, he said that due to the incompetence of the federal government, the lives of the people have become impossible. On the one hand, inflation is sky rocketed while electricity, oil and gas prices are increasing day by day.

AIDS claims 6,800 lives in Pakistan

HYDERABAD: The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has claimed some 6,800 lives in Pakistan since 1986 while the number of people infected with HIV positive reached to 190,000 with an increase of 25,000 patients annually. According to the data of the UNAIDS, National AIDS Control Programme and other relevant forums shared at a workshop, no province in Pakistan was immune from Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) as it had spread to every nook and cranny of the country. Speakers, in the two-day interactive session concluded here other day, said HIV and AIDS were two different immunity disorders but often reported in the media as the same. Dr Saqib Ali Shaikh, the Additional Director, Sindh AIDS Control Program said the objective of organizing such workshop was to sensitize media persons, specially health reporters to reduce stigma and discrimination while reporting HIV and AIDS related news stories and articles. He emphasized the need of using the right words while reporting HIV and AIDS stories so that people living with HIV and AIDS could be saved from any harm and hate. The media should follow ethical principles by respecting the privacy of people living with HIV, who were experiencing trauma as a result of an outbreak, Dr. Shaikh said while participating in the workshop via video link from Karachi. UNAIDS Country officer for Pakistan and Afghanistan Dr. Maria Alena Borromeo said the objective of organizing the workshop was to sensitize media persons for using right words while writing news stories and articles with regard to HIV and AIDS incidences. — APP

CDA chairman gives a new look to 'Islamabad the Beautiful'

Ever since Mr. Ali has taken over charge of the Chairman CDA, he is continuously engaged in various development activities. His main thrust has been on further beautifying the city and improving facilities for general public

CITY DIARY

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad seems to have been given a new look under the dynamic leadership of its Chairman Aamir Ahmed Ali, who also happens to be the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad. Ever since Mr. Ali has taken over charge of the Chairman CDA, he is continuously engaged in various development activities. His main thrust has been on further beautifying the city and improving facilities for general public. Recently the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in collaboration with Pakistan National Council of Arts decided to begin cultural activities for citizens in various markets. Preparations have been completed in this regard. Different cultural and musical events will be organized in the markets for providing entertainment op-

portunities to the citizens. The citizens of Islamabad will be able to enjoy these events with their families. These festivities are part of the Jashn-e-Baharan festival of the CDA. Renowned musicians will perform in various markets of Islamabad on Friday, Saturday and Sunday in the evening. This arrangement is first of its kind and credit for which goes to Chairman, who has taken personal interest in this initiative. Chairman CDA Aamir Ahmed Ali is keen in retrieving the land occupied illegally by various individuals and organizations. In this regard he ordered crackdown against the illegal housing societies which are looting the citizens. In the first phase showcase notices were served to these housing societies. CDA had issued the list of illegal housing societies at its website to guide the citizens. However the process of taking action against Ghauri town, Rawal Enclave, Ideal Residencia, and other illegal hous-



ing societies has begun. On the financial side, the civic body has done wonders. It collected Rs 32.27 million during the month of January through the completion certificates of commercial and residential buildings, building plans, and NOCs, which is again an important milestone achieved by CDA. Due to the remarkable policies of the administration of CDA the department of Building Control collected the revenue of more than Rs 32 million during the last month. The BCS department of CDA received total

09 cases of the completion certificates of residential buildings during the month of January. Likewise, the people of Islamabad had demanded of the Chairman to install lids on the manholes as open manholes were causing problems especially in the night time. The Chairman immediately ordered the Administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) to promptly install the lids of drain holes, main holes, gutters, and sewerage across the city. Opened holes are dangerous for the lives of the citizens. Lids of main holes and gutters in the city could not be installed for decades. These opened holes have caused a number of accidents. However, the current administration of CDA has directed to cover all the opened holes as soon as possible. The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to plant saplings in March on greenbelts on both sides of the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Metro Bus, which

fall within the limits of the federal capital. The CDA's Director General (Environment) inspected the greenbelts on Metro Bus route along with the Director National Highway Authority (NHA) and discussed the plan to plant trees in upcoming plantation drive. CDA official told that climate change ministry would also provide its financial and technical assistance in the plantation drive to ensure maximum survival rate. Planting saplings is yet another step that has been spearheaded by the Chairman. The govt led by Prime Minister Imran Khan has also set a target of planting billions of saplings by August 2021. The CDA under the directions of the Prime Minister has launched a vigorous drive in this regard. So much so, painting of sidewalks and footpaths is also in progress. The Capital roads are giving a dashingly look as most of the painting work has already been completed.

52 modern fire tenders handed over to KMC

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Imran Ismail Sunday gifted 50 fire tenders, two water bowsters to Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and said that these fire tenders were the gift from Prime Minister Imran Khan for citizens and these were equipped with latest technology which could work more efficiently and effectively to extinguish fires. He expressed such views while addressing a ceremony at Governor House in Karachi for handing over the fire tenders and water bowsters to KMC. Addition of these fire tenders would make Fire-brigade department in commercial hub city more efficient, Governor Sindh said, adding it was proved that Prime Minister Imran Khan believed in servicing the nation without any discrimination in the country. I am thankful to God that today, this project had been completed because keeping in view issues related city, the steps taken by federal government were appreciable, he recounted. These fire tenders were being given under Private-Public Partnership (PPP) and it was unique agreement under which maintenance of fire tenders, goods protection, presence of staff, water supply would be ensured. In addition to Industrial Associations of city, Sindh Rangers would be included. Apart from this, Seelani Welfare Trust had been included which was already busy in welfare work, Imran Ismail further told. Governor Sindh said that as many as Rs 24 billion had been allocated to Sindh Infrastructure Development CO. Ltd (SIDCL) and of total, Rs 11 billion was being spent on Green-line project. While, under this organization, six flyovers and Nish-tar road had been inaugurated on March 07 and the work on Mangopir road was in progress. Similarly, one billion rupees was allocated to KMC and this all became possible because Imran Khan was personally taking interest in the city.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of European Union Androulla Kaminara making victory sign on the occasion of Women Day. — DNA

Another suspect arrested in college student gang-rape case

DNA

KARACHI: Police arrested on Sunday another suspect in a case pertaining to the kidnapping-cum-gang rape of a college student in Karachi. The police said Sameer was arrested during a raid near Gulshan-e-Hadeed area. Three suspects, are already in police custody. Investigators said they are probing the case with the help of DNA profiling and mobile phone data of the suspects. On Saturday, a judicial magistrate remanded the three suspects in police custody for interrogation

till February 22 and sought a progress report from the investigation officer. An FIR was registered on the complaint of a government schoolteacher. He said his 16-year-old daughter, a student of first year at a government college in Gulshan-e-Hadeed, had left home on February 9 for the college but she did not return home. When she did not come back after the college timings, her family started looking for her, he said, adding the next day, he received a phone call from a police officer who told him that they had found a young girl in an unconscious condition.

Over 141 acres land retrieved

FAISALABAD: The district administration has retrieved more than 141 acres of land under Pakistan Housing Scheme in Kharanwala from the occupation group. The land worth Rs. 708 million was occupied by the occupants. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali and CPO Sohail Ch. supervised the operation against land grabbers in 193 RB and 226 RB. During the briefing, Niab Tehsildar Jaranwala Rana Abid said that the land grabbing groups were occupying the land allotted for Pakistan Housing Scheme which has been retrieved. He also briefed about the latest situation of land. Deputy Commissioner said that on the orders of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, the government lands were being retrieved from the occupiers by a few occupation groups which have been made clear and the protection of precious land would also made. — Ishfaq Mughal

Fog causes Abrar's car crash in Gujranwala, nephew injured

The nephew of the singer was shifted to hospital for medical attendance where he has been declared to be out of danger. Fog prevailed in plain areas of Punjab this morning

DNA

GUJRANWALA: PTI leader and singer Abrar ul Haq's nephew got injured on Sunday morning after the family's car met a traffic mishap owing to dense fog causing poor visibility. Abrar ul Haq, his nephew and other family members were in the vehicle when it crashed into concrete blocks placed on road near

Gujranwala's Gakhar Mandi. The singer and other family members reported safe with no fatalities in the mishap, according to the rescue officials. The nephew of the singer was shifted to hospital for medical attendance where he has been declared to be out of danger. Fog prevailed in plain areas of Punjab this morning. Motorway section M3 and M4 were closed for vehicular traffic due to poor caused by the fog. In another fog-re-

lated incident, two buses collided head on near Wahindo leaving 18 passengers injured. Moreover, a Coaster overturned in Narowal leaving eight people including women and children injured. It is to be mentioned here that the winter brings with it foggy mornings and poor visibility on roads in Punjab, Sindh and other parts of the country resulting in traffic accidents and disruption in flight and train schedules.



KARACHI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee along with Chief of the Naval Staff witnessing Maritime Counter Terrorism Demo held at PNS QASIM Manora in tandem with Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN-21. — DNA

CPEC shrugs off all odds, moving forward

The US magazine said "Chinese banks are willing to restructure the terms of existing loans and have never actually seized an asset from any country, much less the port of Hambantota, Sri Lanka"

ISLAMABAD: Despite the international propaganda move, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project is moving forward by shrugging off all odds with lot of successes and new investments. Although the year 2020 proved to be yet another period of misunderstanding about the CPEC, all such negative campaigns are gradually proving wrong. The campaigners utilize "debt trap", "slow pace of CPEC projects" and "withdrawal of Chinese investment" as their main weapons to misguide the people specially those living in Pakistan. A US based Magazine "The It-lantic" in its research article has termed the slogan of "debt trap" by China, a myth.

The debt trap slogan is definitely aimed at halting the flow of Chinese investment to Pakistan and it was first used in Sri Lanka. Although the country is in debt crisis but China has nothing to do with the crisis. Dushni Weerakoon of Sri Lanka's Institute of Policy Studies and Sisira Jayasuriya, a professor of economics at Monash University, highlighted that China's share in the national debt was only 10%. Furthermore, over 60% of this 10% loan is at the concessional rate of 2%. It is only a myth that Sri Lanka has to cede Hambantota Port to China. The same strategy has been adopted to malign CPEC without paying any heed to data or analysis on CPEC investment.

Such disinformation starts with reports of debt crisis in Pakistan and its weak foreign currency reserves. It is used to stir fear among people. The US magazine said "Chinese banks are willing to restructure the terms of existing loans and have never actually seized an asset from any country, much less the port of Hambantota, Sri Lanka". It added the Sri Lanka never defaulted and it was only a myth that the Chinese firms had taken over the Sri Lankan port due to non-payment of dues. Meanwhile another article published in a local daily newspaper, said Pakistan was indebted to a number of international financial institutions including World Bank,

International Monetary Fund, Paris Club, but the focus of international propaganda campaign was only on Chinese investment and debts. The article added that they manipulate data in such a way that puts all the blame on CPEC, though the contribution of CPEC-related investment is only 5.6%, which they intentionally ignore. The same reports are highlighted and propagated through different media channels. Innocent minds of Pakistanis are trapped through these reports. Common people cannot understand the economic terminologies and the complicated debt data. Talking about another false slogan- the rolling back of Chinese investment, the article added that

the disinformation campaign has accelerated following the Covid-19 outbreak. The pandemic and its impact on the global economy and investment have provided a greater opportunity to manipulate data. Thus, it is necessary to understand the global dynamics before discussing CPEC. Despite all odds and challenges amid the pandemic, China is not sitting back. While first half of 2020 saw some turbulence, later China recovered and accelerated its investment. Pakistan being the host to CPEC, the flagship project of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), got special focus. China started enhancing investment in APEC and non-CPEC projects. — APP

Telemedicine Clinic launched in Loralai

DNA

KARACHI: SehatKahani is a telemedicine organization that connects female doctors from their homes to patients in underserved segments of the country using a telemedicine-based solution of e-health clinics and a mobile application that serves masses. Sehat Kahani has served 340,000 patients till date through the network of its 33 e-health clinics across Pakistan, and the mobile application. Sehat Kahani has launched its 34th e-health clinic in Loralai, Baluchistan in collaboration with World Health Organization. The occasion was graced by the presence of Honorable Divisional Director Health Department Zhub Division, Dr. Shah Jahan Panezai. Dr. Babar Alam (Head of Sub Office Baluchistan - World Health Organization), Dr. Isfandyar Shirani (The National Population Officer), Dr. Shabir (DHO Loralai), Syed Atif Ali (Lead Sales & Technical - Sehat Kahani), and Amir Ahmed (Regional Manager Clinical Operations - Sehat Kahani) were amongst the other key participants of the event. Honorable Dr. Shah Jahan Panezai expressed; "The government of Baluchistan appreciates the effort of Sehat Kahani in bringing this much needed innovation to our region; this will help many patients from underserved areas to be able to access quality healthcare. We extend our full support to Sehat Kahani and WHO and all their future endeavors". Dr. Babar Alam said, "WHO is very excited for this opportunity of providing access to quality healthcare in the province of Baluchistan". Dr. Isfandyar Shirani said, "For a province like Baluchistan where healthcare has vast areas of improvement; the ability to be able to connect to an online doctor anytime anywhere would be a game changer". Dr. Shabir said; "We are happy that Sehat Kahani has chosen Loralai for the launch of its first clinic in Baluchistan and we are optimistic that this shall greatly help in improving the healthcare scenario of the area".

Briefs

'New shipping policy perfect for investors'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Ali Haider Zaidi on Sunday said that new shipping policy is perfect for investors under which incentives have been provided to private shipping companies. He was delivering the keynote address at the International Maritime Conference, said a press release. "We've made changes in the shipping policy to make it easier for everyone" he said. He said that fishing policy proposal was finalized and sent for further approval, adding that soon there will be good news in this regard. The minister said that there was a lot of potential in the maritime sector. Ali Zaidi said that Technology plays an important role in the development of any country. He said that explaining Blue economy to the people was a big challenge. He said that Islands are used for development all over the world, including Dubai and Malaysia, adding that this time big challenge was to formulate a policy. He said that Gwadar is considered ideal for transshipment. "Our biggest challenge is sea blindness which covers all maritime issues but unfortunately, we have not used our potential properly" he added.

IIUI organizes seminar on polythene bags

ISLAMABAD: Department of Environmental Sciences (DES) of International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) and Pak-EPA has organized an awareness seminar and rally on banning Polythene bags. It was led by the Dean Faculty of Basic and Applied Sciences Dr. Muhammad Irfan, while faculty members of the various departments, officials of MoCC and Pak-EPA also joined the activity, a press release on Sunday said. The speakers noted that Plastic pollution and subsequent environmental damage is a major challenge to Pakistan. Plastic can persist in the environment for several hundred years and the waste poses serious environmental hazards and health problems in humans as well as in animals. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Irfan said that the aim of the campaign is to create awareness against plastic pollution and to urge for eco-friendly solutions for long-term use. The participants were holding placards inscribed with slogans such as "Lets join hands to clean Pakistan".

Phase-III of Fellowship Programme announced

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced Phase-III of Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme for Pakistani and Azad Jammu and Kashmir nationals. According to HEC on Sunday, the applications had been invited from PhD degree holders of HEC recognised local or international universities. The candidate must be a regular employee of public/private sector HEC recognised university /DAI or public sector Research & Development organisation recognised by Pakistani Council of Science & Technology, it mentioned. The candidates are directed to submit online applications through research.hec.gov.pk. For further information the applicants may visit www.hec.gov.pk/site/postdoc. HEC also announced 15th April 2021 as deadline for the submission of applications.

WALID MUHSTAQ'S DINNER FOR LORD AAMER

DNA



ISLAMABAD: CEO Roots International Walid Mushtaq hosted dinner for Lord Aamer Sarfraz, Member of the Upper House of British Parliament. Others who attended the dinner included Mr. Ali DHM Embassy of Somalia, Kanwal Shuzad MNA and Parliamentary Secretary, Gen Tariq Rashid Khan, Amir Ramzan, Country Director British Council, Fazli Hanan, Habib Malik Orakzai, Shuzab Ali, Editor Islamabad Post Ansar M Bhatti, Salim Ahmed Ranjha, Sohail Altaf, diplomats from British embassy and others. (Full coverage in the March issue of CENTRELNE magazine) - DNA

FGEHA hands over 1,003 plots to allottees of G-14/2, 3

The official said that only four allottees have started construction of houses in Sector G-14/2 and G-14/3

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) has provisionally handed over as many as 1,003 plots of different categories to the allottees of the sectors G-14/2 and 3. The FGEHA had given around 354 plots in G-14/2

and 649 plots in G-14/3 of different categories, an official in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP. He said about 57 allottees have taken final possession letters and 12 allottees have applied for issuance of No Objection Certificate (NOC) for approval of building plans. The official said that only four allottees have started construction of

houses in Sector G-14/2 and G-14/3. He said the Housing Scheme Phase-IV of the FGEHA was launched in 2004 in sector G-14/1, 2 and 3 Islamabad. About 4,820 kanals of land was acquired through Land Acquisition Collection (LAC) under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 in March, 2004, he added. He said the consent award for sub-sector G-14/1, 2 and

3 was announced in 2005 at the rate of Rs5,90,000 per kanal for total land 4,820 kanals and the infrastructure development work was taken up by the authority. The official said the development of sub-sector G-14/4 has been completed, while 70 percent rehabilitation work has been completed and infrastructure development work of G-14/2, 3

was in progress. The official said that overall 60 percent infrastructure development was completed and the remaining work would be completed once the issue of Built Up Properties (BUPs) was resolved for which FGEHA was striving hard. He said that consultant was hired for sub-sector G-14/1 where the topographic survey has been completed. The award

of BUPs in G-14/1, 2 was yet to be made for which survey of the BUPs was underway. Around Rs1.889 billion has been awarded as compensation for 529 BUPs in G-14/3 by the LAC Office. The official said that due to resistance shown by locals of G-14/1, the assessment of BUPs has been completed through Geographic Information System (GIS) technology.

CDA Chief expresses satisfaction over work at I-15, I-16

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Amir Ali Ahmed has shown satisfaction over development work in Sectors I-14, 15 and 16 and issued instructions to expedite the development work. During a surprise visit to I-14, 15 and 16 sectors, he said that the infrastructure of the sectors should be

completed immediately and street lights should be installed as soon as possible. Briefing the Chairman CDA on the occasion, the officers informed that 35% development of Sector I-15/3 had been completed, while the remaining development works in the said sector were also in progress. The said sub-sector is to be developed with Rs 866.2 million, while work is also underway on road infrastructure.

The chairman was assured that the work would be completed in the next few months and services in the sector would be launched soon. At the same time, construction of underground and overhead tanks has also been started. Tender for Sector I-15/4 has also been awarded with a bid price of Rs 58 crore. I-15/1 tender has been opened, while I-15/2 tender will be issued in next few days.

Acting classes to commence from Tuesday

ISLAMABAD: Actor's Laboratory, an art school has planned to start four-month-long acting course, aiming to train Pakistani youth in film and theatre acting from February 16. The course was meant to educate basic students and amateur actors regarding the art of acting and the sensibilities of theater and film. An official said that they have invited some of the most renowned theater names in the country to conduct the training and workshops. He said that the enrolled participants will learn how to approach, analyze and incorporate new text into their specific characters. He said that classes would be held on every Saturday and Sunday. Difference between stage, TV and screen acting will

also be underlined with theoretical and practical assignments, he said. He said that everyone should attend these basic level acting classes even if they are not planning to adopt acting as career. He told that the training would also focus on many following aspects including, Physical Preparations/Exercises including breathing, and warm-up, Inhibition Breaking - Getting rid of self-consciousness, Voice Exercises, Stage Awareness, Understanding the Script, Scene analysis, Dialogue Delivery, Character Analysis and Development and Team Work, and Roles of various team members. "We are intensely committed to preparing actors for the real world, and therefore we are honest and practical, he stated". - APP

Lok Virsa to establish heritage museums

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) has planned to establish heritage Museum in every major city of the country to preserve local and regional history of cultural heritage. In an exclusive interview with APP Executive Director Lok Virsa, Talha Ali Khan Khushvaha on Sunday said Lok Virsa was planning to establish heritage Museum in every major city of the country to preserve local and regional history of cultural heritage.

He said these museums would preserve research and exhibit the tangible and intangible evidence of society. Moreover, it would also provide visitors an opportunity to foster deeper understanding and sharing of authentic cultural and natural heritage alongwith enjoyment. The ED said, "Museums are the custodian of history as much as they offer connections to history so Lok Virsa would soon start working on this project." He said that he was making

all out efforts to modernise all ranks and cohorts of Lok Virsa by bringing developments in its system. He informed that the first step taken was to merge Monument Library and Lok Virsa library into one enormous hall at Lok Virsa and would be opened for public to educate them of the great cultural history and heritage of Pakistan rather than providing access only to scholars. He explained that they have started two separate entry and exit points with strict standard operating

procedures (SOPs) and safety precautions. Talha said Melas and Festives were the main agenda of Lok Virsa and one of the biggest festivities of cultural heritage so Lok Virsa would continue his past legacy in Corona Pandemic with strict SOPs. He went on to mention that they were working on their two open air theaters to merge them in music equipment hall to assist the youth and the masses at large to provide them a platform in the field of arts and music. - APP

COMSATS to explore avenues with Chinese govt

DNA

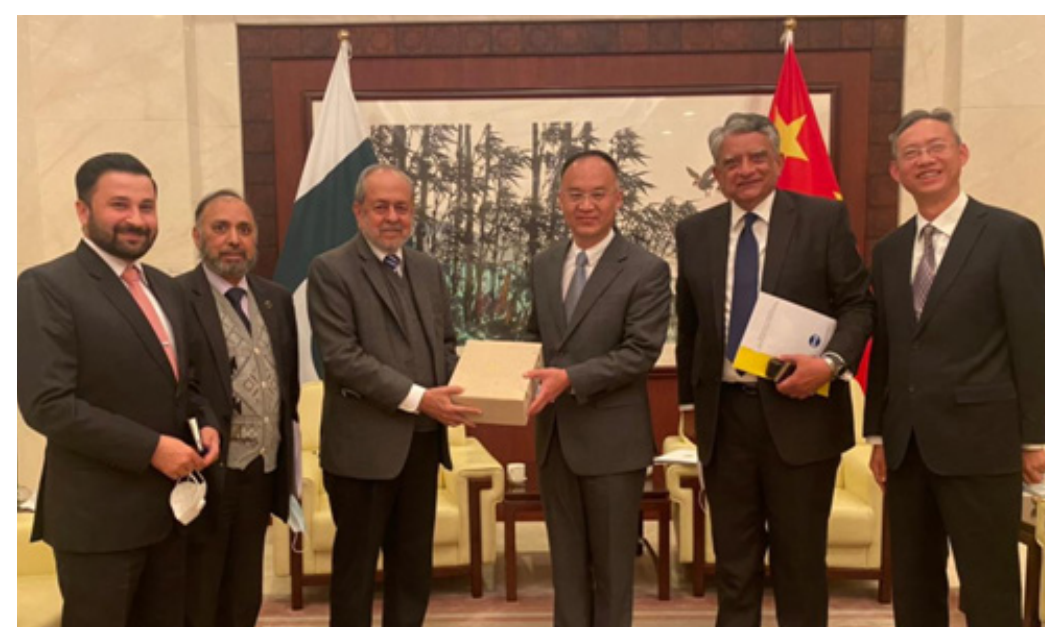
ISLAMABAD: The Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) has further explored the prospects of launching multilateral projects under the umbrella of Belt and Road Initiative, with the Ambassador of China to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Nong Rong. A Founding Member of COMSATS, China, has representation at all statutory bodies of COMSATS through its Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST); and Centres of Excellence - the International Center for Climate and Environment Sciences (ICES) and the Tianjin Institute of Industrial Biotechnology (TIB). During a meeting the Chinese Ambassador held in the Embassy, a four-member delegation of COMSATS, led by Dr. S.M. Junaid Zaidi, Executive Director COMSATS met the newly appointed ambassador of China. COMSATS' delegation included Maj. Gen. (R) Muhammad Tahir, Advisor (China Desk);

Mr. Tajammul Hussain, Advisor (Programmes); and Engr. Qaiser Nawab, Assistant Director (Programmes). Held at the Embassy of China in Islamabad, the meeting was also attended by Mr. Jia Wei, First Secretary on Science

and Technology, and Ms. Bao Zhong, Director Political and Press Section at the Embassy. Felicitating H.E. Mr. Nong Rong on assuming charge of Ambassador of China to Pakistan, Dr. Zaidi apprised him of COMSATS - Chi-

na collaboration. The Ambassador was apprised that COMSATS and Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology have also signed an agreement on 'Cooperation Initiative on Silk Road of Innovation' for ST&I cooperation for sustainable

development. The Ambassador was also acquainted with COMSATS' programmes and activities in 27 COMSATS Member States and 24 Centers of Excellence. COMSATS' recent collaboration with the Torch Hi-tech Industry Development Centre of the Chinese Science and Technology ministry, and the Chinese Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO) were also noted. H.E. Mr. Rong thanked Dr. Zaidi for apprising him on the role COMSATS is playing for the promotion of Science and Technology and pledged full support of his office for the realization of various matters discussed during the meeting. The meeting with the Ambassador resulted in acquainting him about COMSATS' programmes and activities as well as in exploring new avenues of cooperation with China Embassy. It was assured that Chinese government will play a catalytic role for institution-building (research and academic institutions as well as S&T parks) in COMSATS' Member States as well as initiating joint programmes with Ministry of S&T China and ANSO.



PAL to hold literary seminar on Faiz today

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 today (February 15). Shafiqat Mehmood, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training would be the chief guest on the occasion, an official informed APP. He said renowned literary figures Prof. Fateh Muhammad Malik and Ifikhar Arif would be in the presidium while Muneeza Hashmi would be the guest of honor. Various writers and intellectuals including Ahmed Saleem, Naem Bukhari, Khawaja Najam ul Hassan, Harris Khaleeq, Dr. Sofia Yousuf, Hassan Abbas Raza and Dr. Humaira Ishfaq would pour light on his poetic vision. The mystical words of Faiz Ahmad Faiz would be presented through soulful tunes and voices.

PNCA to hold "Mother Languages Festival"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) will hold 6th edition of Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival to highlight the potential of Pakistan's linguistic and cultural diversity on February 21. In collaboration with Indus Cultural Forum (ICF), the event is meant to pay tribute to living legends who have dedicated their lives to the promotion and protection of Pakistan's mother languages. An official of PNCA told APP that various writers, intellectuals, artists and activists of almost 20 Pakistani languages would take part in this year's festival. "This festival offers a platform for celebrating all 70 plus languages of Pakistan and encourages language communities to take action for saving these languages from extinction," he said. He further added that this festival provides a platform to intellectuals, writers and thinkers representing different languages to come together and present their work on various genres of art, literature, culture and education in mother languages of Pakistan. He said all participants and visitors would be required to strictly comply with the COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Wider audience across the country would be allowed to observe festival proceedings via online platforms, he stated.

NUMS to provide health services

ISLAMABAD: National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) will provide efficient, accessible and affordable home healthcare services for the people of twin cities at their doorsteps. The pilot project is expected to begin this year, initially in selected areas and in later phase scaled up to cover majority areas of the twin cities. Through the project, the communities will have access to tele-medicine to consult doctors on dedicated phone lines and through a video-link facility. NUMS Healthcare will also provide home visits of doctors, home delivery of medicines and collection of laboratory samples. With the spirit of "NUMS for the Nation", all services and tests of clients will be provided at lower rates than the market, Director of Primary Health Care NUMS Brig Shazia Sarwar Alvi (Retd) said on Sunday. Many specialists will also be on-call for consultation services to the patients requiring specialist attention. She said E-App (mobile Apps) will be available to patients for online appointments, notification of abnormal reports, health education and promotion. - APP

Briefs

IESCO clears 6734 hazard points so far

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has secured 6734 out of total identified 7,874 hazard points so far by shifting dangerous electric wires to safe location across the all five circles of the company. The spokesman told that an amount of Rs 1,098.267 million has been spent on clearing the said hazard points. The hazard points were identified by the field formations and customers in the entire region.

A comprehensive campaign regarding shifting of electricity wires crossing over or close to the houses and removal of tilted poles was being carried out in all five operation circles of IESCO on departmental expenditures, the spokesman said. Meanwhile, IESCO Chief Ch. Abdul Razzaq said that they would take every step to protect the lives of customers and line staff.

The Chief passed instructions to field formation to create awareness in general public to avoid construction near or under the power installations. If anyone took such steps, for legal proceedings applications should be submitted to the concerned police stations. The IESCO Chief also requested valued customers to inform the concern SDO office about such dangerous wires in their areas. They could also register their complaints on 051-9252933-6. - APP

Over 3.1 mln citizens registered at PCP: PMDU

ISLAMABAD: The number of registered citizens belonging to different provinces, professions and overseas, including foreigners on the Pakistan Citizen Portal (PCP) has reached 3.1 million. Deputy Secretary of Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) Adil Saeed Safi on Saturday expressed his satisfaction over the performance of Pakistan Citizen Portal. He shared that out of 3.1 million (31 lakh) complaints made on the Pakistan Citizen Portal by people, over 2.9 million (29 lakh) have been redressed. He said roughly 1.7 million (17 lakh) citizens have remarked complaint cell an effective way of addressing grievances of the people, a private news channel reported. He said PMDU has encouraged the people particularly in Punjab and Sindh to report complaints against hoarders or profiteers seeking bribe, assuring that the government would make them accountable. "This is a system in which all public problems are being addressed," Safi said, adding "there is no inconvenience, no need for a reference and no need to go somewhere to get things done." Responding to a query about working and role of Pakistan Citizen's Portal, he said, portal is a government-owned mobile application, which is being used as a tool to promote citizen-centric participatory governance. - APP

Traffic wardens directed to take action against violators

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Rai Mazhar Iqbal has directed the Traffic Wardens to take strict action against parking rules violators and encroachers. According to a City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi spokesman, the operation against wrong and double parking had been accelerated. In order to ensure smooth flow of traffic on city roads issued as many as 10,670 challan slips during January to the drivers of vehicles and motorcycles, parked in a wrong way. He informed that CTO had directed Incharge Lifter squad to take action without any discrimination against parking rules violators and encroachers. A grand operation was launched against wrong parking, double parking and parking in no-parking areas. Special squads with lifters were formed to control wrong parking problem in the city, he said adding, awareness banners had also been displayed in this regard at important city roads. - APP



ISLAMABAD: SARDAR Yasir Ilyas Khan, president Islamabad chamber of commerce and industry presenting souvenir to Bernhard Stephan Schlagheck, German ambassador to Pakistan during his visit to ICCI. - DNA

Envoy terms Pakistan a viable option for German investors

Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Germany was an important trading partner of Pakistan with bilateral trade of over USD 3 billion, however, there was much more potential to increase trade volume given the size of both economies

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The investors of Germany were looking with interest at Pakistan, which was a viable option for them for JVs and investment. German company GIZ was working in Pakistan to promote technical training and skills development of its youth and Pakistani private sector should engage such trainees to improve its productivity. This was stated by H.E. Bernhard Stephan Schlagheck, Ambassador of Germany while interacting with the

business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Christian Böttcher, Economic Counsellor of German Embassy also accompanied him at the occasion.

Responding to a proposal for potential opportunities of JVs and investment for German investors in CPEC, the German Envoy said that investment by local investors in CPEC will give more confidence to foreign investors. He said that the economy of Pakistan was improving, however, Pakistan needed to focus on

cohesive economic policies, improve tax regime to widen tax base and streamline lengthy litigation procedures to promote ease of doing business and attract more investment. He said that SMEs were the backbone of German economy and there was a need to develop close cooperation between the SMEs of both countries to strengthen bilateral business relations. He highlighted water and waste management, health-care, industry, agro manufacturing and food security as potential areas of cooperation between Germany and

Pakistan. He assured that he was working in tandem with the Pakistan Ambassador in Germany to encourage more German investors towards Pakistan. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Germany was an important trading partner of Pakistan with bilateral trade of over USD 3 billion, however, there was much more potential to increase trade volume given the size of both economies. He said that the automobile was a growing sector in

Pakistan and German auto companies should transfer technology and set up manufacturing plants in Pakistan. Pakistan has abundant human talent with cheap labour cost, which provided great advantage to German investors to explore JVs and investment in Pakistan. He said that some German companies were already doing successful business in Pakistan and more should come to take advantage of growth opportunities in Pakistani market. He also briefed the Ambassador about the future plans of ICCI to organize various

trade festivals & industrial exhibitions and said that German investors should explore them. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Mian Shaukat Masud, Muhammad Shakir, Javed Iqbal, Omair Khattack, Shaikat Hayat Khan, Aslam Khokhar, Shakeel Munir, Saeed Khan, Ch. Ashraf Farzand, Khalid Chaudhry, Nasira Ali and others also spoke at the occasion and offered useful proposals for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Germany.

NAB chairman stresses early disposal of mega cases

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal Sunday stressed early disposal of mega corruption cases against big fish. The chairman directed the director general's of regional bureaus to strive hard to recover the looted money from the corrupt elements involved in mega corruption cases, said a press release. He said that inquiries, complaints and investigations should be completed after collecting solid evidence and documentary proofs. "We should strictly follow the policy of merit, transparency and necessary measures would be taken against all those who are involved in corruption through pursuing policy of Zero Tolerance, transparency and merit." The chairman directed the officers to work with due diligence and honesty. He directed the concerned DGs to submit the latest report of all mega corrupt corruption cases as well as cases of illegal housing societies so that progress on ongoing cases would be reviewed accordingly. The chairman said that NAB was absolutely committed to eradicate corruption through effective National Anti-Corruption Strategy.

He said that comparative figures for the last three years are indicative of NAB's excellent performance. Some 59 percent people have shown confidence in NAB as per the report of Gillani and Gallup Survey. He said that NAB has established a state of the art Forensic Science LAB in NAB Rawalpindi Bureau which has facilities of Digital Forensics, Questioned Documents and Fingerprint analysis which was being utilized for further improvements in the quality of inquiries and investigations in all respects. NAB has introduced a new concept of Combine Investigation Team (CIT) in order to benefit from the experience and collective wisdom of senior supervisory officers, a system of CIT consisting of Director, Additional Director, Investigation Officer and a Senior Legal Counsel has been put in place. This is not only lending quality to the work but also ensuring that no single individual can influence the official proceedings of NAB. He said that youth is our future; NAB has signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Higher Education Commission in order to aware youth about the ill effects of corruption at an early age. - APP

CDA begins preparations to celebrate spring festival

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The management of Capital Development Authority (CDA) has started preparations to celebrate the Spring Festival. In order to provide affordable and quality entertainment facilities to the people of the city, traditional music including Santoor, Flute, Tabla, Dholki, Violin have also been introduced in the important markets of the city. The musical show will be performed on Friday, Saturday and Sunday

from 6 to 8 pm. According to details, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to organize large-scale celebrations in collaboration with other government and non-government agencies, including the Environment Department, to provide recreational facilities to the citizens of the federal capital on the occasion of Spring Festival. In this regard, in first phase, provide affordable and quality entertainment facilities to the citizens, the company has invited traditional musical instruments and musicians in the major markets of the city. Violins are being

placed in Jinnah Supermarket and Santoor in Kohsar Market. The authority will also hold a large-scale flower show in March to further enhance the colors of the Spring Festival, while instrumental music, theater, poetry and other events will be organized on the occasion, for which local, national and international artists and poets will be invited. CDA administration says that the purpose of holding such events is to highlight the culture and traditions of the citizens by providing affordable, quality and positive recreational facilities to the citizens.



ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has arranged various music sessions for the people of Islamabad. Musicians will perform in various markets in Islamabad on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 6 pm to 8 pm. The music arrangements have been made in connection with the Jashn e Baharan festival. - DNA

Pro-women legislation needs implementation

I Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed said this is ironic that Pakistan is ranked 151 out of the total 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index report of 2020. It is because the women rights are compromised despite assurance in the religion and the constitution of Pakistan

ZUBAIR AHMED

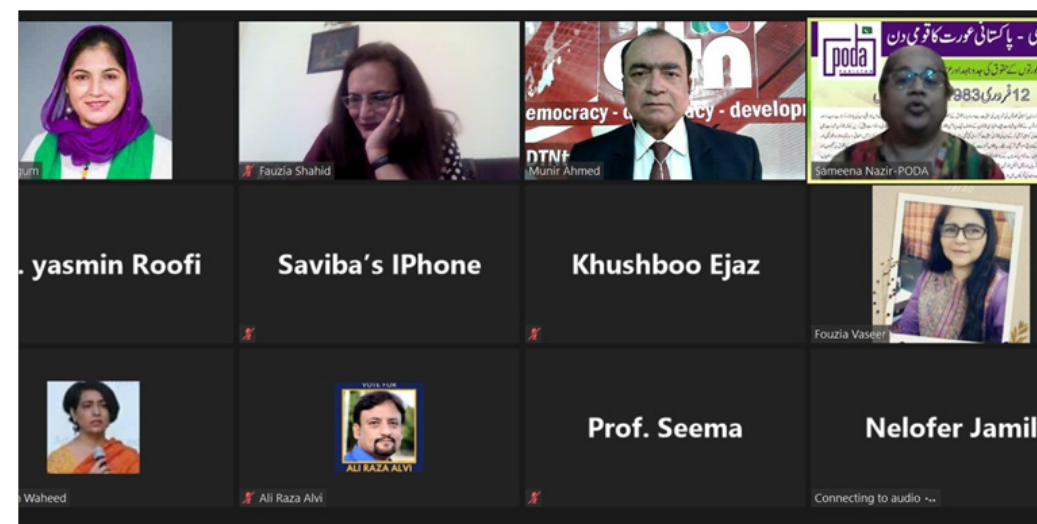
ISLAMABAD: The panel of experts speaking at a webinar said that Pakistani women's struggle for equal rights has continued over the decades despite all odds and dictatorship. The democratic governments have done ample legislation but the implementation lacks that deprive women of their lawful rights. Gender inequality underpins many problems which disproportionately affect women and girls, such as domestic and sexual violence, lower pay, lack of access to education, and inadequate healthcare. The speakers said women suffer from pervasive gender-based violence, from domestic abuse, honour killings, and sexual violence to institutional discrimination. There is a widespread lack of consistent access to quality family planning services in Pakistan, resulting in one of the

highest unmet needs in Asia. Still women are denied the right to vote, inheritance, choice of spouse and economic engagement. The national webinar was organized by the Development Communica-

tions Network (Devcom-Pakistan) on Saturday. The guest speakers included senior journalist Fauzia Shahid, president PODA Sameena Nazir, Head of Women Development department of Islamic

University Bahawalpur Dr Yasmin Roofi, Kinnaird College Lahore Professor Dr Kushboo Ejaz, Shad Development Foundation Executive Director Shad Begum from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, National

Press Club senior vice president Sadia Kamal, Dr. Nilofer Jamil from Quetta, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed and senior journalists CR Shamsi, Anwar Iqbal (Washington) and Ali Raza Alvi. Senior journalist Fauzi Shahid said February 12 is commemorated to remember the brave struggle of the women for their rights launched in 1983 when the dictatorial regime promulgated legislation contrary to the women's democratic and lawful rights. Unfortunately the patriarchal thinking has continued over the years despite continuous struggle. Now women have found some space but the destination of equal rights is still far sighted. PODA president Sameena Nazir said legislation is done but did not communicate to the bottom where it is to be implemented. There is no adequate mechanism to educate the implementing agencies about the enforcement of law.



Murree likely to receive snowfall from Feb 21

ISLAMABAD: Spokesman Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Dr Khalid Malik Sunday said the new spell of snowfall would start in Murree including Nathiagali, Ayubia, thandiani and it's adjoining areas from February 21. Talking to APP, he said the intermittent snowfall spell would continue till February 28. During the span the cold waves would persist in different parts of the country. He said the tourists should make aware of the weather situation as PMD has issued it's weather advisory for the ease of public. - APP

PTA conducts QoS survey in SW to improve internet

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has started quarterly Quality of Service (QoS) survey in South Waziristan (SW) to further improve the internet and voice services in the area. According to news release of PTA, pursuant to Prime Minister's visit to South Waziristan, instructions for restoration of data services of Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs) in the district were issued on January 20, 2021. Subsequently, a joint QoS survey has been carried out by PTA along with CMOs, from January, 25, 29, 2021 in Wana, Azam Warsak, Kanni Kurram, Makin, Shakai, Srarogha, Tanaie and Tiarza areas of South Waziristan. According to the details, Jazz (2G & 3G) and Ufone (2G) services are currently available in these areas. As per the survey results, data services of Jazz were found in compliance with minimum license threshold whereas few of the voice and SMS KPIs of both licensees were found below the license standards in some of the surveyed areas. CMOs have been directed to rectify the identified deficiencies within 15 days. Survey has also identified the requirement of expansion of telecom infrastructure in the area. Accordingly, operators are being asked not only to upgrade their services (i.e. 2G sites to 3G and 3G sites to 4G) but to also consider addition of more sites so that better voice and data services can be extended to the subscribers in line with the directions of the PM of Pakistan. - APP

PHA to turn Rwp city into a green town

RAWALPINDI: The Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi would make all out efforts to turn the city into a green town, said Vice Chairman, PHA Malik Abid Hussain. He said, the authority has kicked off the Plantation Campaign, under Clean and Green Pakistan Program by planting saplings at Rashid Minhas Road near Kutchery. The program was organized in collaboration with Punjab Group of Colleges (PGC) here the other day. He informed that to encourage the citizens and different organizations and to turn the city into a green town, the authority has prepared a plan. The students, traders, social and political leaders and civil society members would also be encouraged to participate in the campaign. Maximum saplings would be planted in different areas of the city, he added. The students and civil society members would be requested to plant saplings and seeds in different areas of the city and ensure their care as well, he said adding, they have started planting saplings to make the city parks natural green areas under Rawalpindi green city project. Efforts would also be made during the campaign to sensitize the people to come forward and participate in the plantation campaign, he said. A tree plantation awareness walk was also organized which was participated by Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Rawalpindi Zaheer Anwar Jappa, Director Punjab. - APP

Vaccine rollout

Pakistan has moved a few steps closer to dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic that it seemed had been almost forgotten. The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan on Friday approved the Convidecia vaccine manufactured by CanSinoBio in China. This is a positive step as the vaccine underwent trials at five centres in Pakistan and as per universal protocol should be more easily available to people in the country, as doses are handed out. In addition, it is a vaccine which requires only one shot as compared to two which are the standard requirement for most of the other vaccines in the market so far. In Pakistan, these include China's Sinopharm vaccine, the Sputnik-5 vaccine developed by Russia, the AstraZeneca vaccine from Oxford University and a Swedish firm. And now the latest vaccine from China. It is far from certain yet how many vaccines Pakistan will be able to put together to vaccinate its enormous population. But even more significant than this is the question of how many people will allow themselves to be vaccinated. So far rollout has been slow, because of administrative difficulties reported by doctors and other medical professionals.

In addition, we have the issue of certain influential persons able to jump the queue and get vaccinated. The vaccine till now is available only to frontline medical workers. And from here on will be permitted to persons older than 65. There has also been an element of confusion regarding age and whether those above 60 would be vaccinated. This seems to stem from concern in some countries over the efficacy of the Sinopharm vaccine for this age group. However, since then the age issue seems to have been resolved – though we are not clear on the details. And in the same kind of confusion, the government which had earlier said prices for the vaccine in the private sector would be regulated has now said that there would be no regulation and companies would themselves determine the price of the vaccine. There is also some element of a lack of uniformity in what key officials are saying with some health officials even – irresponsibly – saying that people should take the vaccine at their own risk, and that the vaccine could even lead to death. This is obviously not encouraging. This can only happen if a uniform government campaign is run and senior medical professionals persuaded to get the vaccine in public as we have seen happen in other countries. Around 1.1 million vials of the Sinopharm vaccine are understood to have been delivered by China. But more information is needed in the public sphere so that the vaccine rollout can begin in earnest and the pandemic is brought under some control at least.

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

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Algerian auto industry corruption

Shattered assembly plants, jailed bosses, laid-off workers. Algeria's once ambitious plans to create a flagship auto industry have turned into a fiasco. The country's recent years of political turmoil have also seen its foreign joint venture factories close and cronies of its ousted president Abdelaziz Bouteflika end up behind bars. Algeria's dream of creating thousands of jobs has collapsed and the country is in dire need of new vehicles. The government is putting on a brave face. Industry Minister Ferhat-Ait Ali pledged last month that it is "preparing the revival of this industry on solid foundations, which break with the practices of the past". Algeria's auto industry was born in 2012 when French maker Renault partnered with the government in Algiers to build the first plant two years later near Oran, the country's second biggest city. Other companies followed suit. South Korea's Hyundai opened its assembly plant in 2016 in Taret, and Germany's Volkswagen started operations the next year in Relizane. The sector became a priority as the North African country sought to reduce imports, compete in the sector with regional rival Morocco, and diversify its economy in the face of falling oil revenues, which had been the source of over 90 percent of its export earnings. Morocco's own bet on the automobile industry has paid off. It is now the country's top export sector after the Renault-Nissan group opened two factories in the kingdom in 2012 and 2019, followed by its rival PSA, which opened one in 2019, attracted by incentivising fiscal and customs policies. But Algeria's industry became embroiled in controversy from early 2017, when authorities started to denounce as "disguised imports" the practice of foreign carmakers bringing in "semi knocked-down" (SKD) units. SKD units are partially stripped down at the origin and reassembled on arrival, requiring minimal labour input. The government investigated Hyundai after images spread on social media showed almost completely-built imported models that required little more work than putting on the wheels. In July 2017, former industry minister Mahdjoub Bedda, who is now in prison on graft charges related to the wider scandal, suspended all new car assembly projects. After Bouteflika, under pressure from mass demonstrations, was ousted by the army in April 2019, several assembly plant bosses were convicted of corruption. His successor, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, pledged to review the entire auto sector as soon as he came to power in December that year. Algeria then banned the import of spare parts for assembly plants, sounding the death knell for the young industry already struggling after the incarceration of its key executives. Volkswagen suspended production indefinitely in December 2019 and put 700 employees on technical unemployment.

Saudi Rumah Al-Nasr

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



The armed forces of Saudi Arabia demonstrated high levels of readiness in planning, preparation and implementation. It showcased a paradigm shift in ways and means of joint air, sea and land diversified but integrated operations among various branches of the armed forces

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has initiated many meaningful policy measures for the further strengthening of its national defense. In this context, most recently Saudi Arabia has held a joint military exercise named "The Rumah Al-Nasr", or "Spears of Victory" at the Air Warfare Center at King Abdul Aziz Air Base in the Eastern Province. It was concluded in the presence of Maj. Gen. Turki bin Bandar bin Abdul Aziz, commander of the Royal Saudi Air Force on February 12, 2021. It was "multitasked" as well as "multi-purposed"

joint military exercise which had certain regional as well as global "posturing" and "signaling". It successfully disseminated clear message of befitting responses to "arch rival Iran" to "fugitive Yemeni Houthis" and trouble makers in shape of "non-state actors" to schemers of hidden agenda of political Islam that Saudi Arabia is politically united, socially harmonized and militarily capable of defending its soil, resources, waters, shores and territorial integrity in case of any external aggression. It further enhanced Saudi Arabian armed forces professional combat and tactical preparedness. During the "The Rumah Al-Nasr" several aviation drills were carried out in coordination with the Royal Saudi Land Forces, the Royal Saudi Naval Forces and the Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces. The armed forces of Saudi Arabia demonstrated high levels of readiness in planning, preparation and implementation. It showcased a paradigm shift in ways and means of joint air, sea and land diversified but integrated operations among various branches of the armed forces. All the participating units outperformed and demonstrated high levels of quality in their personal capabilities, professionalism and efficiency in facing the challenges. It was indeed vivid reflection of the Saudi Arabia's visionary leadership policies towards achieving an immaculate defense system. It also enhanced its electronic warfare. It hopes that ill deigns of enemies of regional peace and drone spoilers may be handled properly in the days to come. While attending the closing ceremony Maj. Gen. Turki bin Bandar bin Abdul Aziz said he was delighted with what he witnessed during the exercise, which is planned to be the first of many such drills. He observed that it included three phases and the core objectives of all of them had been achieved. They included conventional and unconventional operations, and the use of systems and weapons recently acquired by the Air Force. The Spears of Victory military drills, known as Rumah Al-Nasr, were launched on January 31 at the Air Warfare Center at King Abdul Aziz Air Base in the Eastern Province. It was the first exercise held in the Air Warfare Center since its inauguration by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in 2019. The exercise raised the level of combat readiness in all air, technical and support crews by applying cutting-edge skills, tactics and procedures in a real work environment. It enabled all the participating

units of Saudi Arabian armed forces to plan and implement joint military operations with branches of the armed forces in a harmonious and integrated manner at the operational and tactical levels. Electronic warfare systems and scenarios that simulate real warfare environments were also used in the exercises. It included the Royal Saudi Land Forces, the Royal Saudi Navy and the Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces which enabled the decision makers of the country to devise a grand joint defense strategy to fight against all odds to protect the pace, stability and development in the country as well as in the region. The Air Warfare Center contributed to the development and modernization of combat plans against potential threats, the evaluation of air force capabilities, and the testing of military hardware. The Ministry of Defense, represented by the Royal Saudi Air Force, with the participation of the Royal Saudi Land Forces, the Royal Saudi Navy and the Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces, rigorously launched the 'Rumah Al-Nasr' exercise held at the Air War Center in the eastern sector of the Kingdom from 31 January to 11 February 2021. In preparation for the start of the exercise, all participating air systems arrived at King Abdulaziz Air Base. The 'Rumah Al-Nasr' exercise was considered one of the important joint exercises, where the Air Force participates with other branches of the Saudi Armed Forces participated which further increased its preparedness level, enhance joint action, raise combat efficiency and exchange experiences. The Air War Center at King Abdulaziz Air Base is one of the most advanced air centers which provided a very real combat environment, and an advanced ability to train air crew, technical and support services as in reality similar to modern warfare during the just concluded joint military exercise. The Air Base also contributed to the development and modernization of combat plans against potential threats. Moreover, it also contributed to the development of and assessment of the capabilities of the air force, and tests and evaluates systems and weapons in terms of their effectiveness and impact. The military maneuvers symmetrically carried out till February 12, 2021 with the participation of the defense forces, represented by the Royal Saudi Land Forces, the Royal Saudi Navy and the Royal

Saudi Air Defense Forces. The exercise aimed to raise combat readiness, enhance joint action, and exchange diverse experiences. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia started their joint counterterrorism exercise in Hafar Al-Batin in the kingdom's Eastern Province. It was two week Al-Samsam VII training between the Royal Saudi Land Forces (RSLF) and Pakistan Army. The exercise was conducted as a part of the preparations to develop and raise the level of competence of military forces. The drills focused on counterterrorism techniques such as cordon and search operations, combat patrols and dealing with improvised explosive devices (IED). Al-Samsam VII was part of a series of joint military exercises between the armed forces of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Riyadh has described the Rumah Al-Nasr, or "Spears of Victory" as clear message that its armed forces is "stand united" in confronting all challenges and preserving peace and stability in the region. Being prominent regional expert of Saudi Arabia & GCC I believe that "The Rumah Al-Nasr" exercise has developed the capabilities of the Kingdom's forces through standardizing concepts and increasing the level of coordination and joint action in the war theater. Moreover, it also contributed to raising the level of combat readiness for all air, technical and support crews, by applying the best skills, tactics and procedures appropriate to various scenarios in a real work environment. Critical analysis of various military strategies and defense doctrines reveal that weakness is a curse which has serious repercussions which has to be handled with suitable, sensible and systematic military build-up in terms of electronic warfare, modernization, innovations and last but not least, motivated human capital to defend ones country. Saudi Arabia has been striving hard to defend its national, regional and trans-regional geopolitical and geostrategic interests. Discarding of arms supplies by the USA and various EU countries is an eye-opener for Saudi Arabia. It hopes that Crown prince Muhammad bin Salman will revisit his military policies, alliances and preferences and make a most appropriate step to defend his country. Pakistan being the only nuclear Muslim country may be an ideal choice.

Sustainable Development Goals - A way forward for Pakistan!

Muntaha Talat

This 2030 agenda for sustainable development opens the door for the countries to take steps towards a better future. It accounts for the integrated and interconnected efforts that unleash positive outcomes for all the aspects as a result of work done on any one aspect. Out of all the member states, Pakistan was the first country to make the SDGs as part of their national development agenda in February 2016. Is Pakistan on the right track or it has more to do is the point of concern here

Driving on the roads of Pakistan, you might have observed the spark in the eyes of a child selling flowers on the road to earn money, or a hungry boy picking up food from the leftovers, or a



homeless family living on a footpath. This might have caught your attention forcing you to think about the striking difference that exists in the lifestyle of the people residing in this country and across the globe. Although mankind has this instinct to strive and struggle throughout their life but the difference that divides the people between the rich and poor and the problems that accompany it are necessary to be dealt with on priority. Do you know that there are 689 million people, (9.2%) of the world population living under extreme poverty, with the situation worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this brings forward the numerous challenges they have to face that most of us are unaware of. Sustainable Development Goals or the SDGs are a global effort to curb poverty, hunger, injustice, climate change, and other major challenges faced by the world. Adopted by all the member states of the United Nations in 2015, these 17 goals were a way forward for both the developed and developing countries. They aimed to opt for strategies that bring peace and pros-

perity in the world, along with the provision of better facilities to the people and to protect the environment. This 2030 agenda for sustainable development opens the door for the countries to take steps towards a better future. It accounts for the integrated and interconnected efforts that unleash positive outcomes for all the aspects as a result of work done on any one aspect. Out of all the member states, Pakistan was the first country to make the SDGs as part of their national development agenda in February 2016. Is Pakistan on the right track or it has more to do is the point of concern here. The global pledge for a better future in the form of SDGs is a ray of hope for many. However, the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be a major hurdle, as it affected millions of people, claimed 2.3 Million deaths, and pushed 20 million people back into poverty. With the lost income and inflation being the main reason for the increased ratio of people falling below the poverty line, Pakistan's response in tackling the pandemic was considerably better.

With effective strategies, the PTI government was somehow successful in containing the spread of pandemic and reducing its after-effects to a great extent. Pakistan stood at 115 position out of 149 countries in 2016, while in 2019, it ranked 130th out of 167 countries. However, in 2020 its position slipped to 134 according to a sustainable development report. Pakistan was ranked lowest in South Asia, as Bangladesh and India took lead with 107th and 116th rank respectively. Currently, our SDGs score is 56.17/100 which is significantly low as compared to the other South Asian states. One of the prime reasons for this is the absence of a national assessment report for the year 2020, and the unavailability of the latest data that had to be collected through the surveys. Government officials say that the report is in draft form and data collection got delayed due to the pandemic. Pakistan however showed a committed stance towards working on SDGs and formulated SDG units on federal and provincial levels. Moreover, a framework designed to achieve the desired goals was approved by the National Economic Council, which is chaired by the Prime Minister and is the country's highest platform for approval of plans to implement policies. A number of policies have been planned and implemented since 2016 and most of the work has been done on SDG-4 (Quality Education), SDG - 8 (Decent work and economic growth), and SDG-16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Apart from this under the current tenure of the PTI government, various projects including the Sehat Sahulat Program and The Lady Health Workers Program have proved to be a great initiative in the provision of better health facilities. Prime Minister Imran Khan had his focus on the environment and climate change as well and his initiative of the Billion Tree Tsunami Project received worldwide appreciation. Despite all the challenges, Pakistan's current leadership is showing commitment towards the achievement of SDGs. Steps taken for the betterment of citizens of Pakistan are going to yield magnificent results in the times coming up. With continued dedication towards the cause, it is hoped that in 2030, the terminal year of SDGs Pakistan will be celebrating prosperity and progress InshaAllah!

The Writer is the Research Associate - IICR

Briefs

UK to support Pak in vaccination campaign

From Page 01

committed to supply Pakistan with vaccines for 45m people this year alone. Covax is an international initiative to support the discovery, manufacture and fair distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for one billion people by the end of 2021. British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner CMG said: "The people of the UK and Pakistan have come together to fight COVID-19. "The Covax facility has been the main way the world has united to make sure all countries get the vaccines they need as quickly as possible, including Pakistan. The UK has been a world leader in supporting Covax, and Covax has committed to supplying Pakistan with COVID-19 vaccines for 45m people this year."

The UK has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Pakistan in pandemic, pivoting around £20m of UK aid to help Pakistan fight the pandemic. This includes funding the World Health Organization (WHO) since April 2020 to build laboratory testing capacity through training and provision of equipment across Pakistan.

The UK has so far pledged up to £1.3 billion of UK aid overall to end the coronavirus pandemic as quickly as possible. This includes up to £829 million for the development and distribution of new vaccines, treatments and tests, and £5 million for other critical COVID-19 research and development.

The UK is also at the forefront of efforts to drive unprecedented global collaboration and resourcing for the development and delivery of new vaccines, treatments and tests at the speed and scale required. The UK-hosted Global Vaccines Summit on 4 June 2020 raised US\$8.8 billion from 32 donor governments and 12 foundations, corporations and organisations to replenish Global Vaccine Alliance (GAVI) funding over the coming five years. This will help support the delivery of life-saving vaccinations in 68 countries and will be integral to the distribution of a coronavirus vaccine once it is developed.

EU Envoy for exploring potential of digitization

From Page 01

a webinar convened by the Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan aimed at to showcase European policy initiatives on Digitization and to discuss the challenges and potential of the digital economy in Pakistan. She said that digital transformation for economic growth and recovery required close collaboration, shared learning and exploring opportunities to work together on areas such as health, governance and satellite mapping. Androulla Kaminara underlined the need 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. Sharing details of the webinar, she said it was an attempt to start a continuous process of sharing best practices and legislative approaches between the EU and Pakistan, which could create opportunities for dialogue, partnerships and investments promoting regional and global connectivity.

Replied to a question, she said the Covid-19 pandemic was accelerating the digital transformation and also exposing its challenges, the webinar was a timely opportunity to share experiences and expertise. She also highlighted how digitalisation had impacted infrastructure, education and social systems in EU Member States and its partner countries and offered examples of potential venues for co-operation.

Pakistan down South Africa to claim T20I series win

Babar stroked five fours and a six in his 30-ball innings while Rizwan hit five fours and two sixes. Shamsi was brought back to complete his quota of four overs and he removed Asif Ali (7) in the process. Faheem Ashraf (10) was the last man to dismiss in the 17th over



SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan have defeated South Africa by four wickets in a series decider and claimed the T20I series 2-1 here at Gaddafi Stadium. All-rounder Mohammad Nawaz and pacer Hasan Ali's seventh-wicket partnership of unbeaten 32 led Pakistan to win with eight balls to spare. Pakistan in 165 chase, start-

ed strongly with openers Mohammad Rizwan and Haider Ali provided a reliable 51-run stand. The home side started to feel jitters as left-arm chinaman Tabraiz Shamsi removed Haider (15) on his first ball of the spell. He didn't stop as he dismissed Mohammad Rizwan and Hussain Talat in the following overs. Skipper Babar Azam from the other end continued to find gaps,

however, his 44-run came to an end as last match hero Dwaine Pretorius clean bowled him.

Babar stroked five fours and a six in his 30-ball innings while Rizwan hit five fours and two sixes. Shamsi was brought back to complete his quota of four overs and he removed Asif Ali (7) in the process. Faheem Ashraf (10) was the last man to dismiss in the 17th over. Meanwhile, Nawaz (18*)

remained calm and hit two fours off the 18th over while Hasan Ali (20*) smacked two massive sixes to chase down the target of 165.

It is Pakistan's 100th win in T20I cricket, becoming first men's team to reach this landmark in the short format of the game. Earlier, South Africa's veteran batsman David Miller smashed an unbeaten 85 to lead South Africa to 164/8 in 20 overs. The 31-year-old

Miller took Proteas to 164 after they were struggling at 65/7. In his 45-ball innings, he smacked five fours and seven towering sixes.

Pakistan opted to bowl first and controlled the proceedings (41/3) in the powerplay overs. Mohammad Nawaz took two wickets of Reeza Hendricks (2) and JJ Smuts (1) while Hasan Ali removed Pite van Bijlon (16). Skipper Babar Azam in-

roduced debutant Zahid Mehmood in the seventh over who took two wickets in first over of the T20I career while Usman Qadir removed Andile Phehlukwayo from the other end. The visitors were teetering on 48/6.

Proteas were hoping for a saviour to bring them back in the match and veteran Miller provided them with stability, scoring third fifty of his T20I career.

Azeri parliament responds to US Senators in its statement

DNA

BAKU: The working group of the Azerbaijani parliament on Azerbaijan-US inter-parliamentary relations made a statement, Trend reports referring to the Azerbaijani parliament. The statement was made in connection with a letter that some members of the US Senate addressed to US President Joseph Biden on February 9, 2021. The senators who signed the letter criticized Turkey for supporting Azerbaijan, as the country ensured its territorial integrity and resolved the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on the prin-

ciples and norms of international law. In this regard, the statement of the Working Group of the Azerbaijani parliament on the Azerbaijan-US inter-parliamentary relations says: "The letter addressed to President Biden by some members of the US Senate on February 9, 2021, caused our great surprise and regret. In this regard, as members of the Working Group on the Azerbaijan-US inter-parliamentary relations, we state the following: Most of the US senators who signed this letter have never called on Armenia to end the occupation of the internationally recognized territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan which lasted for 30 years.

Atif to feature in PSL 6 opening ceremony

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: One of the most popular singers among youth Atif Aslam is part of the star-studded Pakistan Super League's (PSL) season six opening ceremony line-up. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and bio-secure bubble, there will be no opening ceremony at the National Stadium, Karachi. The virtual show is being filmed in Turkey currently which will go live before the opening

fixture between Karachi Kings and Quetta Gladiators on February 20. According to reports, rockstar Atif has recorded his performance. PSL 6 anthem's artists including Aima Baig, Naseebo Lal, and Young Stunners have already arrived in Turkey for the shoot. Remember, the government had allowed only 20 percent crowd at both PSL 6 venues. 7500 ticketed people in Karachi and 5500 ticketed people in Lahore will be able to watch each PSL 6 match live at the stadium.

NZ orders Auckland into lockdown after virus found

FOREIGN DESK

AUCKLAND: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern ordered the city of Auckland into a three-day lockdown on Sunday after three unexplained Covid-19 cases emerged in the community. The 1.7 million residents of New Zealand's largest city were told to stay at home from midnight, when the level-three Covid-19 lockdown begins, with schools and businesses to close except for essential services. Ardern said the lockdown is "just in case it could be one of the more transmissible strains of Covid that we need to act with a high degree of

caution around". The prime minister announced the move after an urgent meeting with other top lawmakers in the Cabinet. She said they decided to take a cautious approach until they find out more about the outbreak.

The lockdown is the first in New Zealand in six months and represents a significant setback in the nation's largely successful efforts to control the virus. New Zealand had successfully stamped out community spread, and many people elsewhere in the world looked on in envy as New Zealanders went back to work and began attending concerts and sporting events without the need to wear masks or take other precautions. Indeed, Ardern on

Sunday had planned to attend the Big Gay Out, an Auckland festival that celebrates the rainbow community and attracts tens of thousands of people. She ended up canceling those plans and returning to Wellington to manage the outbreak. "I'm asking New Zealanders to continue to be strong and to be kind," Ardern said at a hastily arranged press conference on Sunday evening. "I know we all feel the same way when this happens. We all get that sense of 'Not again.' But remember, we have been here before and that means we know how to get out of this again, and that is together."

New Zealand's greatest vulnerability has been at the border.



MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic reacts during the men's singles 4th round match between Novak Djokovic of Serbia and Milos Raonic of Canada at the Australian Open 2021 tennis tournament. - Agencies

'Our movement has only just begun', says Trump

They were Richard Burr of North Carolina, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah, Ben Sasse of Nebraska and Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump, the former president of the United States, has welcomed his acquittal in a second impeachment trial, saying his political movement "to Make America Great Again has only just begun". The US Senate voted 57-43 in favour of convicting the former president on Saturday, falling short of the two-thirds majority needed to convict him on a charge of inciting the mob that attacked the US Capitol on January 6, during the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election win. In a statement shortly after the acquittal, Trump called the trial

"yet another phase of the greatest witch hunt in the history of our nation". "Our historic, patriotic and beautiful movement to Make America Great Again has only just begun," he said. "In the months ahead, I have much to share with you, and I look forward to continuing our incredible journey together to achieve American greatness for all of our people," he added. Trump left office on January 20, so impeachment could not be used to remove him from power. But Democrats had hoped to secure a conviction to hold the 74-year-old responsible for the Capitol siege and set the stage for a vote to bar him from serving in public office again. Though Trump was acquitted of

the sole charge of incitement of insurrection, seven Republicans joined all Democrats to convict the former president. The figure marked the largest number of Senators to ever vote to find a president of their own party guilty of an impeachment count of high crimes and misdemeanours. They were Richard Burr of North Carolina, Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, Susan Collins of Maine, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah, Ben Sasse of Nebraska and Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania.

"There is no question now that Donald Trump has political plans going forward. But what are they? Is he going to run in 2024 as many people believe? Or is he going to

seek revenge on those seven Republicans who voted against him?" Trump is only the third president ever to be impeached by the House of Representatives - a step akin to a criminal indictment - as well as the first to be impeached twice and the first to face an impeachment trial after leaving office. But the Senate still has never convicted an impeached president. After Saturday's verdict, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, who voted "not guilty," in the trial, offered scathing remarks about Trump.

"There is no question that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day," he said. "The people who stormed this building

believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president."

McConnell suggested that Trump could still face criminal prosecution for his acts, however. "President Trump is still liable for everything he did while he was in office as an ordinary citizen," McConnell said. "He didn't get away with anything. Yet."

The minority leader was not the only Republican to castigate Trump for his behaviour after voting for acquittal. "The question I must answer is not whether President Trump said and did things that were reckless and encouraged the mob. I believe that happened," Senator Rob Portman in a statement.

CNS meets participants

From Page 01

Naval Chief of Jaboti Coast Guard. During the meetings, matters of mutual interests and the steps for joint maritime security were discussed. On the occasion, the Naval Chief appreciated the participation of naval forces in the AMAN-2021 exercise despite Coronavirus.

Aman-21 to promote regional cooperation

From Page 01

Pakistan Navy, every two years since 2007 aimed at practicing operational drills and manoeuvres countering non traditional threats and improving upon joint operations at sea through effective Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) with focus on enhancing operational skills & interoperability in a diverse maritime environment.

CJCS lauded the professionalism of participants and appreciated efforts of Pakistan Navy in conducting the multinational exercise in a befitting manner.

CJCS also emphasised that Pakistan is demonstrating its commitment to forge peaceful co existence & shared global cooperation. AMAN 2021 successfully exhibits efforts made by Pakistan in line with our vision for regional peace and stability. CJCS concluded. Earlier, Chairman CJCS also witnessed the International Band Display by Navies from different countries. CNS Admiral M Amjad Khan Niazi was also present on the occasion.

Non-resolution of public

From Page 01

seven others. Around 833 officers were directed to be careful in future and explanation was sought from 111 others. However, the performance of 403 officers was appreciated in the report. The secretaries of information, agriculture, excise and irrigation in Punjab had been written to improve their performance.

While directing the officers to improve their performance for public relief, the PM Office said the purpose of issuing warning letters was to caution the officers concerned. All out steps were being taken to extend facilities to the people as per the prime minister's vision, the PM Office added. It has been observed that complaints of ordinary nature are immediately resolved when one resorts to the Citizen Portal however complaints that involve bigwig are hardly resolved. The Prime Minister office has been requested by the Citizens to direct relevant authorities to also address all such complaints on priority.

Upsets US Open champion Thiem at Aus Open

MELBOURNE: A tired-looking Dominic Thiem became the highest seed to fall at this year's Australian Open when the US Open champion was sent tumbling out in straight sets by Grigor Dimitrov in the fourth round Sunday. The Austrian third seed, last year's losing finalist, appeared to lack energy after rallying to beat Nick Kyrgios over five grueling sets on Friday in front of a raucous crowd. He struggled to match the intensity of the 18th-seeded Bulgarian on a silent, fan-free Rod Laver Arena and slumped out 6-4, 6-4, 6-0 in 2hr 1min. Former world number three Dimitrov will now play giant-killing Russian qualifier Aslan Karatsev in the quarter-finals after he stunned 20th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime over five sets. "I feel great. Throughout every season you have one of those matches where you just keep the ball rolling and today was just one of these days," Dimitrov said. "I was entirely just trying to focus on what I was doing... I had to very composed against him. Dominic is an extraordinary player." Dimitrov, who has yet to drop a set, has now reached the quarter-finals or better in Melbourne four times, with his best showing in 2017 when he lost an epic five-set semifinal to Rafael Nadal. Thiem looked to be in charge when he raced into a 3-1 lead, but Dimitrov came storming back in an energy-sapping 14-minute game to break back with a backhand passing shot. - APP

Briefs

Bitcoin nears \$50,000 as it reaches record

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Bitcoin reached a new record on Sunday rising above \$49,000 for the first time. The world's largest cryptocurrency reached about \$49,344 earlier in the day, and was around \$49,202 as of 10:20am in London.

It is now up about 70% so far this year. Rival cryptocurrency Ether hit a record on Saturday and is up about 150% year-to-date.

Bitcoin has been buoyed in recent months by endorsements from the likes of Paul Tudor Jones and Stan Druckenmiller. Bloomberg reported earlier that Morgan Stanley may bet on Bitcoin in its \$150 billion investment arm, following news late last week that BNY Mellon plans to service cryptocurrencies for its clients. And that is after Tesla Inc put about \$1.5 billion into Bitcoin. Sceptics warn the asset class could be in a bubble, however.

"With each major announcement like the one BNY Mellon made, other institutions are spurred to more rapid adoption and deployment of digital assets," said Patrick Campos, chief strategy officer at Securency, a developer of blockchain-based financial and regulatory technology, on Friday. "Tesla's recent announcement will embolden other large corporates and institutions to accept crypto as not just a worthy asset class, but perhaps even an essential one. More important is the corresponding build-out of institutional services to support these developments will trigger other digital assets-related developments within those institutions and in the larger ecosystem."

UK strain of the corona spreads in Iran

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: It can be said that the "British" strain of coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has already spread in Iran, Iranian Minister of Health and Medical Education Saeed Namaki said, Trend reports.

He made the remark at a meeting of rectors of medical universities held in a video-conference format.

The minister said that the recent death of a 71-year-old woman who did not go anywhere in Tehran as a result of a mutated virus, and similar incidents in the cities of Abeyk in Qazvin Province and Hashtgerd in Alborz Province prove that a new strain of the virus has spread in Iran. Namaki added that the mutated version of the coronavirus is a serious alarm for Iran that calls for additional measures to prevent the spread of the virus. "The mutated coronavirus has already destroyed the most powerful health care system in Europe. The difficult days are beginning for Iran. Therefore, Iran must be ready to fight this virus," he noted. According to the minister, the incidence and mortality of mutated coronavirus cases are many times higher than that of the previous version.

Saudi Arabia extends entertainment restrictions

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has extended by 20 days restrictions on entertainment activities, gatherings, and dine-in restaurant services to curb the spread of coronavirus, state news agency SPA said, citing an interior ministry statement.

The announcement extends a set of measures brought in 10 days ago and includes cinema and indoor sports centre closures. The restrictions, which come into effect from 10pm local time on Sunday evening, could be extended again, the ministry statement said.

Two weeks ago Saudi suspended entry to the kingdom from 20 countries, with the exception of Saudi citizens, diplomats and medical practitioners and their families.



KABUL: Former Afghan ambassador to Pakistan met Stefano Pontecorvo NATO senior civilian representative for Afghanistan. – DNA

Huge rallies in Myanmar as army steps up arrests

"While the international community is condemning the coup, Min Aung Hlaing is using every tool he has to instigate fears and instabilities," activist Wai Hnin Pwint Thon from the UK-based rights group Burma Campaign UK said on Twitter, referring to the army chief

FOREIGN DESK

YANGON: Tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets in Myanmar's big cities for a ninth day of anti-coup demonstrations, as the country's new military rulers rolled back laws protecting freedom and stepped up the arrests of politicians and activists. Engineering students marched through downtown Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city, on Sunday, wearing white and carrying placards demanding the release of former leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been in detention since the military overthrew her elected government on February 1.

A convoy of motorbikes and cars drove through the capital, Naypyidaw.

In the southeastern coastal town of Dawei, a band played the drums in shadows cast by awnings as crowds marched under the hot sun. At least six policemen joined that protest, according to the Myanmar Now website.

And in the central town of Myingyan, huge crowds rallied on the streets, carrying placards that called for Aung San Suu Kyi's release and denouncing "propaganda" by the state-run MRTV and MWD television stations. In Waimaw, in the far northern Kachin state on the banks of the Irrawaddy River, crowds carried flags and sang revolutionary songs. Many of the protesters nationwide held up images of Aung San Suu Kyi's face. Her detention, on charges of importing walkie-talkies, is due to expire on Monday. More than 384 people have been arrested since the coup, the monitoring group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said, in a wave of mostly nightly arrests. "While the international community is condemning the coup, Min Aung Hlaing is using every tool he has to instigate fears and instabilities," activist Wai Hnin Pwint Thon from the UK-based rights group Burma Campaign UK said on Twitter, referring to the army chief. Many protesters

in Yangon carried signs calling on authorities to "stop kidnapping people at night". Residents banded together late on Saturday to patrol streets in Yangon and the country's second-largest city Mandalay, fearing arrest raids as well as common crimes after the military ordered the release of thousands of prisoners. In different neighbourhoods, groups of mostly young men banged on pots and pans to sound the alarm as they chased down who they believed to be suspicious characters. Worries about criminal activity have soared since Friday, when the military government announced it would free 23,000 prisoners, saying

the move was consistent with "establishing a new democratic state with peace, development and discipline" and would "please the public". Unverified pictures on social media have fuelled rumours that criminals are trying to stir unrest by setting fires or poisoning water supplies. Tin Myint, a resident of Sanchaung township in Yangon, was among the crowds who detained a group of four people suspected of carrying out an attack in the neighbourhood. "We think the military intends to cause violence with these criminals by infiltrating them into peaceful protests," he said. He cited pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988,

when the military was widely accused of releasing criminals into the population to stage attacks, later citing the unrest as a justification for extending their own power. The government and army could not be reached for comment. Also late on Saturday, the army reinstated a law requiring people to report overnight visitors to their homes, allowed security forces to detain suspects and search private property without court approval. It also issued arrest warrants for seven high profile critics of military rule over their comments on social media and threatened action against members of the public who shelter the fugitives.

Japan: Over 100 injured in powerful earthquake

FOREIGN DESK

TOKYO: Over 100 injuries were reported after a magnitude 7.3 earthquake hit northeastern Japan on Saturday, according to local media Sunday. "Injuries were reported in Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures and six others, including Chiba, Kanagawa and Saitama, all neighboring Tokyo. The quake was felt in several other areas including the capital," the Kyodo News Agency said, adding that there have been no deaths attributed to the earthquake. It also said there was no tsunami following the disaster. The Japan Meteorological Agency said the powerful tremor off Fukushima occurred at 11.07 p.m. local time (1407GMT) 60 kilometers (37 miles) below the surface. The agency noted that the initial information of 7.1 magnitude and 11.08 p.m. occurrence time were later updated.

Thirteen Turkish civilians killed by PKK

FOREIGN DESK

ISTANBUL: Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq killed 13 Turkish civilians as military operations against the group began last week, Turkey's military chief said.

Turkish forces completed a military operation in the area with 48 Kurdish fighters and three Turkish soldiers killed during three days of clashes, according to Minister of National Defense Hulusi Akar.

In a news conference on Sunday, Akar said those from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) who were killed included three senior members of the armed group, adding two fighters were captured alive. Three Turkish soldiers were also wounded in the operation.

Turkey on Wednesday launched the mission dubbed Claw-Eagle 2 against PKK fighters holed up in the northern Iraqi region of Gara. Akar said Turkish civilians recently abducted by the PKK were found dead in one of the group's hideouts, which was captured by Turkish troops during the offensive.

"In a search of a cave taken under control, the bodies of 13 of our abducted citizens were found. In a first inspection it was determined that 12 of our innocent and unarmed citizens were shot in the head and martyred and one shot in the shoulder and martyred," Akar said.

"According to initial information given by two terrorists captured alive, our citizens were martyred at the start of the operation by the terrorist responsible for the case," he said at the operation's control centre near the Iraq border, which he was visiting with military officials. In 2017, Turkey's foreign ministry said Ankara was working to bring back citizens kidnapped by the PKK, after Turkish media reported two Turkish intelligence officers had been captured in Iraq.

Pakistan permits China's Anhui Zhifei for clinical trials

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's drug regulator has granted permission to a Chinese company for third phase clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate in the country. "The regulatory committee of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has granted permission to China's Anhui Zhifei longcom for clinical trials of its vaccine," sources said. China's bio-pharmaceutical company, Anhui Zhifei had

sought permission for clinical trials in Pakistan in December 2020, sources said. The Chinese pharmaceutical company initially will conduct third phase clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate in Karachi and Lahore. Anhui Zhifei longcom will conduct its vaccine's clinical trials in Karachi at a private hospital, while in Lahore at the University of Health Sciences and another private health facility, according to sources. "In Pakistan 9,000 volunteers will participate in clinical trials of the Anhui Zhifei vaccine," sources said. According to

sources, Anhui Zhifei had prepared its Covid vaccine in May 2020 under the aegis of the Chinese Company of Sciences. The company had conducted the phase I and phase II trials in June 2020, in which the vaccine was found safe and effective against the disease. Around 29,000 volunteers are participating in third phase of the clinical trials of the vaccine in different countries. Anhui Zhifei has been second Chinese company holding trials of its vaccine in Pakistan. Earlier, CanSino Bio has completed clinical trials of its vaccine in Pakistan.



MOLDOVA: Pakistan Ambassador to Moldova Zafar Iqbal posing for picture with the president of moldova Madam Maia Sandu after presenting his credentials. – DNA

'Moldova keen to expand ties with Pakistan'

DNA

MOLDOVA: The Ambassador of Pakistan to Romania Dr. Zafar Iqbal, who is also concurrently accredited Ambassador to Moldova, presented his Letter of Credence to the President of the Republic of Moldova, Her Excellency Madam Maia Sandu at a ceremony held at the Presidency in Chisinau. During the discussion after the ceremony, President Maia Sandu underscored the

importance that Moldova attached to its relationship with Pakistan. Dr. Zafar Iqbal, in turn, expressed that he would strive to strengthen bilateral ties and explore ways of furthering trade, investment and economic cooperation as well as people-to-people links between Pakistan and Moldova. Diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Moldova were formally established soon after Moldova's independence and since then both countries have enjoyed warm friendly relations.

'E-com accelerating economic recovery in Pak'

This is also closely related to the cooperation between Chinese e-commerce enterprises and local partners in Pakistan, and one of the main reasons why Pakistan's economy had recovered so quickly, he added

BEIJING: The expansion of Pakistan's e-commerce market and the substantial growth of its turnover are the result of the correct policies adopted by the Pakistani government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cheng Xizhong, Visiting Professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law, Senior Fellow of the Charhar Institute said on Sunday. "In my point of view, the expansion of Pakistan's e-commerce market and the substantial growth of its turnover are the result of the correct policies adopted by the Pakistani government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic," he said in an article published by China Economic Net (CEN).

This is also closely related to the cooperation between Chinese e-commerce enterprises and local partners in Pakistan, and one of the main reasons why Pakistan's economy had recovered so quickly, he added.

Prof Cheng said, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers had all shifted from offline to online purchases. As consumers continue to avoid making in-store purchases, the e-commerce market will see additional growth in the years ahead. It is predicted by some international authoritative institutions that the e-commerce market will grow by 11% per annum. In the field of e-commerce, China has been playing a leading role in the world. Due to the great

role of e-commerce, China became the only country among the world's major economies to grow positively last year despite the severe novel coronavirus pneumonia. China has the most mobile users in the world and more e-commerce activities than any other country. In 2020, Chinese consumers spent more than RMB 35 trillion online – more than the UK and US combined. In the past few years, China's e-commerce has developed rapidly, and the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the expansion of e-commerce. China's retail e-commerce business in 2019 increased 27.3% to \$1.935 trillion – making up 36.6% of total retail sales, according to Digital Data

and Research Company eMarketer. The company also predicted that Chinese retail e-commerce sales would maintain its strong growth in the next few years. With the rapid growth of the number of Internet users, the continuous progress of information technology, and the rapid development of logistics industry, e-commerce is showing a blowout. As I see, Pakistan has only made a good start in developing e-commerce market. Pakistan is an emerging economy with huge potential for e-commerce. Vigorously developing e-commerce can not only create a lot of employment opportunities, but also accelerate the development of the whole national economy. As for how to adapt to the

increasingly strong trend of e-commerce, he suggested that first, the government should timely study the new trend of e-commerce, and take targeted measures to create a fair and open online shopping environment. Second, the government should formulate a series of new policies to help e-commerce enterprises develop in the fields of taxation, employment, financing, venture capital and entrepreneurship guidance, etc. Third, we should speed up talent cultivation so as to build a solid foundation for the fast development of e-commerce. The government, enterprises and educational institutions should jointly train talents needed for e-commerce development. – APP

Briefs

'PPP can only win 10 seats from Sindh'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry has said that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) can only win ten Senate seats from Sindh if they buy other party members Fawad Chaudhry, in a tweet, said that the PPP has been opposing open balloting for the coming Senate elections to keep up its vote-purchase tradition. The minister asked the Supreme Court to make the chief minister's statement part of its proceedings on the presidential reference on Senate open vote.

'National economy gradually stabilizing'

DNA

SWABI: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser said the national economy is gradually stabilizing due to prudent policies of the incumbent government. Addressing a workers' convention in district Swabi on Sunday, he said the hard times are over and now the journey of development and prosperity has started. Asad Qaiser said the government has launched a number of development projects across the country to improve connectivity, boost trade activities besides ensuring employment opportunities. About Pak-Afghan relations, he said the people of both countries have same culture and religion and the government is trying hard to enhance trade activities with Central Asian states through Afghanistan. He said Afghan President Ashraf Ghani will soon visit Pakistan for extension of bilateral trade relations between the two countries. About PDM strikes, Asad Qaiser said they have no public welfare agenda and the government cannot be removed through marches.

Over 100 submit papers for Senate

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Sunday said that at least 100 candidates submitted their nomination papers so far with Returning Officers (ROs) for contesting election on Senate vacant seats to be held on March 3. According to officials, 17 candidates have filed their nomination papers from Punjab, 22 from Sindh, 30 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 25 from Balochistan and six from Islamabad. As many as 23 nomination papers have been submitted for Women seats while eight for Non-Muslim and 18 nomination papers have been submitted for Technocrats and Ulama seats besides 51 for General seats. He said that the commission had already extended the date for filing nomination papers for senate election from February 13 to February 15 on written and verbal requests from various forums to facilitate the candidates. He said that the ECP had appointed five Returning Officers for Islamabad and four provinces while the candidates could file their nomination papers on Saturday also with ROs. He said that the polling will be held on March 3 on 48 seats, two in Islamabad, 11 each in Punjab and Sindh, and 12 each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan that will fall vacant on the expiration of the term of the members. He said that the polling would be held from 0900 hours to 1700 hours simultaneously in Parliament House, Islamabad, and provincial assembly buildings in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. A public notice has already been issued by returning officers for inviting nomination papers. The nominated candidates will be announced on February 16, while the date for scrutiny of nomination papers will be February 17 to February 18.

Serena Hotels host "Embroidering Dreams" exhibition at Bazaar Court

ANSAR M. BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Behbud Association in collaboration with Serena Hotels arranged Crafts Bazaar at Serena Hotel Court Bazaar. A number of business concerns participated in the Crafts bazaar and showcased their products. Various stalls were established where traditional items from these areas were displayed. The diplomatic community particularly evinced interest in handcrafts and hand-made traditional dresses. CEO Serena Hotels Central and East Asia Aziz Boolani inaugurated the Crafts bazaar. General Manager Islamabad Serena Hotel Michel A Galopin was also present during the inauguration. The visitors and exhibitors praised Serena hotels for facilitating such an impressive event and providing the people with an opportunity of buying traditional handcrafts and other stuff. The visitors said crafts festival was nothing less than a treasure hunt and a chance to enlarge people's collections without



burning a hole in their pocket. CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani assured that his organization would continue to hold such events with a view



to promoting cultural and traditional heritage of Pakistan. (Full Coverage of the event in the March issue of CENTRELINE magazine)

Mushahid lauds Pakistan Navy's maritime diplomacy

First, since 50,000 square kilometres has been added to Pakistan's seabed territory, from 200 nautical miles to 350 nautical miles, thanks to a UN ruling of the Conference of the Law of the Sea, the Government must initiate and implement a comprehensive Maritime commercial policy, with the Continental Shelf in the Indian Ocean as the core, Pak Navy in the lead role

DNA

ISLAMABAD: February: Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, has lauded Pakistan Navy's Maritime Diplomacy as an example of Pakistan's soft power outreach and ability to bring 45 diverse countries and navies on a common platform of peace in the Indian Ocean Region. He was delivering the Keynote Address at the International Maritime Conference organised by National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA), as part of the Pakistan Navy's AMAN exercises. Senator Mushahid quoted senior former Indian Ambassador MK Bhadrakumar as terming AMAN 2021 'a spectacular display of Pakistan's uniqueness as a regional power' while he also criticised India for 'a failed Pakistan policy'. Sen Mushahid appreciated the Pakistan Navy's positive regional role in peacetime, particularly anti-piracy operations and humanitarian help to victims of conflicts and natural disasters in the Indian Ocean Region. Referring to the geopolitical context, he talked about about the resurgence of the 'Asian Century' with an inexorable shift in the global balance of economic & political power from the West to the East. Senator Mushahid Hussain also analysed two contrasting visions for the future of Asia. There is China's Belt & Road Initiative (BRI),



of which CPEC is the flagship, which focuses on connectivity and cooperation, with over 100 countries signed on to BRI. Conversely, there is talk of a 'New Cold War' through policies that seek 'containment' of China, led by the Quad of 4 countries: US, India, Japan and Australia. Talking of Pakistan's foreign relations, he referred to Quaid eAzam's vision of 'peace within and peace without', hence, Pakistan's expanding role in regional connectivity. He said today Pakistan has 'strategic space' with CPEC, Pakistan's pivotal role on peace in Afghanistan, India increasingly mired in its own problems due to Modi's shortsighted policies and a less interventionist, more inward-looking USA under President Biden. Given this context, Senator Mushahid Hussain proposed a 3-point plan of policy doables to promote 'Maritime Diplomacy'.

First, since 50,000 square kilometres has been added to Pakistan's seabed territory, from 200 nautical miles to

350 nautical miles, thanks to a UN ruling of the Conference of the Law of the Sea, the Government must initiate and implement a comprehensive Maritime commercial policy, with the Continental Shelf in the Indian Ocean as the core, and Pakistan Navy in the lead role. Second, Pakistan should be the bridge between CAREC, the 11 country Cooperation forum for Central Asian countries, and RCEP, the 15 country free trade agreement in Southeast Asia. China is member of both CAREC and RCEP, while India is member of neither. That will open up huge economic opportunities. Third, in the wake of this successful 'Maritime Diplomacy', Pakistan needs to take a regional initiative on related issues of Climate Change and Cultural Tourism, which can provide a basis for regional cooperation on areas of common interest. Pakistan is among the 5 top vulnerable countries to the vagaries of Climate Change, with South Asia's 500 million people living along the coastline facing the challenge of global warming. On Cultural Tourism, he referred to opening up of Kartarpur Corridor for the Sikh Community, the Buddhist historical sites in Taxila and Takhtbai as well as Hindu holy sites. Other speakers in the session included Naval leaders from Indonesia & Nigeria, as well as academic, Professor Huma Baqi. There was an animated question/answer session at the end of the Seminar.

China's 3rd Covid-19 vaccine enters Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has become the 1st country in the whole world as a recipient of the third Chinese vaccine "ZF2001" to boost up its COVID-19 vaccination drive, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. Before, Pakistan has already welcomed CanSino and Sinopharm. The third Chinese Vaccine is being co-developed by Anhui Zhifei Longcom Biologic Pharmacy Co. Ltd, and the Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has approved ZF2001's last stage trails usually called Phase III Clinical Trials in order to pave its way for emergency use authentication shortly. University of Health Sciences (UHS) spokesperson Dr Shehnoor Azhar said, "With its reliability and performance against new COVID-19 variants, it seems to be very effective in triggering immunity response." "Given the third phase trial, approximately around 10000 trial participants will be allowed to join the trials to be conducted in UHS, National Defense Hospital and Agha Khan Hospital. - DNA

Pakistan extends TTA with Afghanistan for three months

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan decided to extend the existing Transit Trade Agreement (TTA) for another three months with Afghanistan. In a tweet uploaded on Sunday, Pakistan Special Envoy to Afghanistan Muhammad Sadiq said the extension has been awarded at the request of the government in Kabul. He further said: "We hope that negotiations on the new transit trade agreement will be concluded during these three months." The envoy said economic diplomacy should lead bilateral relations between the two states. In an earlier tweet posted on Saturday, Ambassador Sadiq extended congratulations after the first transit consignment to Central Asia passed through the Ghulam Khan crossing. He said: "This route is the shortest between Pakistan's coast and Afghanistan and beyond. Residents of Khost province celebrated this development which will create jobs in Khost and North Waziristan." - DNA

'Govt provides assistance to 15 mln laborers'

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Dr Sania Nishtar expressed her satisfaction over successful efforts of government to cope with COVID19 situation and reaching out to the homes of 15 million labor class people affected by the pandemic. In her visit to Provincial Election Commission Office Peshawar for submitting her documents for forthcoming Senate Election, Dr. Sania Nishtar said the situation created due to COVID19 was extraordinary which affected people of the globe including Pakistan. "We approached 15 million daily wagers and others in need through Ehsaas Kafalat Program, delivered cash money to run their household affairs and feed their families. Most of the laborers and daily wagers stuck far from their homes in other cities because of the closure of inter-city transport," she said. "We are thankful to Almighty and the team working under the leadership of Prime Minister Inran Khan to access these people timely and addressing their problem through Ehsaas Kafalat Program," she said. Under the umbrella of the Ehsaas Program, the Prime Minister formed a labor expert group at the international labor day last year, to prepare recommendations for addressing income, health and social security issues of workers in the informal sector. - DNA

COVID-19 claims 31 more lives

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The vaccination of front line health-care workers was underway across the country where national tally on Sunday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 25,635 with 1,404 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,387 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in Sindh followed by the Punjab. Maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 37 percent, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 30 percent, Peshawar 25 percent and Lahore 37 percent. Around 525,087 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. Since the pandemic outbreak, a total of 563,029 cases were detected that also included the perished, recovered and under treatment COVID-19 patients so far, including AJK 9,448, Balochistan 18,929, GB 4,940, ICT 42,590, KP 69,778, Punjab 163,833 and Sindh 253,511. About 12,307 deaths were recorded in country since the eruption of the contagion. Around 4,212 perished in Sindh among 13 of them died during past 24 hours.

'PPP can only win 10 seats from Sindh'

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MEVLUT CAVUSOGLU
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