



Islamabad POST

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

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FM arrives in Cairo on 2-day visit of Egypt

Detailed News On Page-08

NAB establishes "Anti-Corruption Academy Pak"

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Opponents of open ballot want corrupt system

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Briefs

EU envoy visits HR department

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan Androulla Kaminara, along with the first secretary EU Dilarde, visited Human Rights & Minorities Affairs Department, here on Tuesday. HR&MA Secretary Nadeem-u-Rehman welcomed the ambassador and briefed him about the departmental activities. He briefed about the services of the department in protection of human rights, said that human rights policy 2018 being implemented while formation of district committees in final stage to protect rights of common man.

Maryam not allowed to go abroad

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Tuesday said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz hinted at going abroad. Talking to media in Lahore on Tuesday, he asked why do they suffer from diseases which are not treated in Pakistan. The minister said the government will not allow Maryam Nawaz to go abroad at any cost as her father Nawaz Sharif went abroad for treatment and started politics from the Britain.

Pak stresses UN role for conflicts

DNA

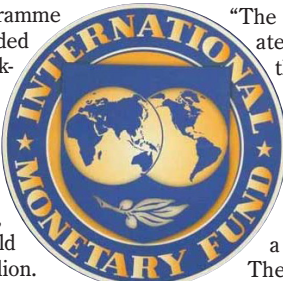
NEW YORK: Pakistan's ambassador to the UN has said that the UN peace-keeping has emerged as a vital instrument to give life to the Charter's vision of collective security and to build a bridge from conflict to durable political solutions. However, the international community is confronting security challenges in several regions, especially in parts of Africa, which are "very different from those we addressed in the earlier days of peace-keeping," said Munir Akram during a General Debate and Opening Plenary Meeting in New York on Monday.

Pak, IMF reach agreement on \$500m package

Pending approval of the Executive Board, the reviews' completion would release around US \$ 500 million

I.P.REPORT

WASHINGTON: IMF and Pakistan have reached an agreement on a package of measures to complete second to fifth reviews of the authorities' reform programme supported by the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The package strikes an appropriate balance between supporting the economy, ensuring debt sustainability, and advancing structural reform. Pending approval of the Executive Board, the reviews' completion would release around US\$500 million. The team, led by Mission Chief to Pakistan Ernesto Ramirez Rigo, visited Islamabad during February 3-13, to initiate discussions on the second review of the economic reform programme.



reviews of the authorities' economic reform programme supported by the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF). According to the statement: "Pending approval of the Executive Board, the reviews' completion would release around US\$500 million." "The package strikes an appropriate balance between supporting the economy, ensuring debt sustainability, and advancing structural reform," the statement added. The statement said that an IMF team held virtual discussions with Pakistani authorities and reached a staff-level agreement today. The team, led by Mission Chief to Pakistan Ernesto Ramirez Rigo, visited Islamabad during February 3-13, to initiate discussions on the second review of the economic reform programme.

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Ensuring fair elections ECP's duty, says SC

"The election commissioner should tell us how he plans to stop corrupt practices in the Senate elections," asked the chief justice

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan cross-questioned the chief election commissioner on Tuesday, telling him categorically that it is the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) constitutional duty to ensure transparent Senate polls are held. A five-member bench

Shibli slams open ballot's opponents

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz Tuesday said those who oppose open ballot in the country wanted continuation of the corrupt system against which Imran Khan had waged a war. In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said, "We are standing at an important turning point of our parliamentary history where we have to decide whether our public representatives will come in the Parliament due to their ability and merit or through buying and selling of votes."

Continued on Page 06

NA panel calls out twitter over 'double standards'

ISLAMABAD: The Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir on Tuesday questioned Twitter's regional head, George Salama, over its policies related to tweets on Kashmir by Pakistani and Kashmiri activists with committee chairman Shehryar Afridi calling out the social media platform for its "double standards". According to a statement released by the NA Secretariat, the panel "grilled" Salama over "silencing voices of thousands of Kashmiri and Pakistani activists projecting the plight of people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)" on Twitter. In a special hearing at the Parliament House in Islamabad, Afridi asked Salama about Twitter's policy on human rights and freedom of speech and whether they also conformed to the United Nation's charter on the freedom of speech and freedom of expression. The regional head, who attended the meeting virtually, informed the parliamentary panel that Twitter "discourages hate speech and upholds freedom of expression", assuring it that "voices of minorities would never be silenced." - DNA



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi, CM Sindh, CJSC and Services Chiefs witnessing International Fleet Review on final day of Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN-21. - DNA

Vaccination in Malaysia from next week

DNA

KUALALUMPUR: The Malaysian prime minister on Tuesday said the first shipment of coronavirus vaccines produced by Pfizer-BioNTech will arrive in the country on Feb. 21, and the inoculation drive will begin five days later. "The vaccination program will be rolled out on Feb. 26," Muhyiddin Yassin said during the launch of a handbook on the national immunization plan. A web portal has also been created for the public to better understand how the vaccine will be distributed. Muhyiddin said he will be the first to receive the job to boost public confidence over its safety, and the campaign will be implemented in three phases over a period of 12 months.

Multinational exercise AMAN-21 concludes

The President congratulated Pakistan Navy for successfully hosting AMAN-21

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN-21 culminated in the North Arabian Sea with a graceful conduct of International Fleet Review (IFR) followed by spectacular formation of AMAN-21 Formation comprising Pakistan Navy and foreign warships. President Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Upon arrival on board Pakistan Navy Ship MOAWIN, the Honorable President was received by Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi. Federal Minister for Maritime

Affairs, Federal Minister of Defence Production, Chief Minister Sindh, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Air Staff were also present on the occasion. In addition, ambassadors, high commissioners, senior military officers, Defence & Naval Attaches from various countries also witnessed the event. The Chief Guest observed various operational maneuvers and drills during the IFR. The Fleet Review also featured an impressive Fly Past by Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force and participating foreign aircraft followed by Man and Cheership by participating ships. The Exercise culminated with

the participating ships forming up in traditional 'AMAN Formation' to signify unity and collective resolve. The President congratulated Pakistan Navy for successfully hosting AMAN-21 and reaffirming Pakistan's resolve for promoting peace and security in the region. The Chief Guest thanked the participating regional and extra-regional navies for displaying their commitment to collaborative maritime security despite COVID-19 pandemic. The President emphasized that AMAN-21 will pave the way to make the region more peaceful and secure with combined efforts by all stakeholders.

Continued on Page 06

Pak reports less than 1000 cases

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported less than 1,000 coronavirus cases for a second day in a row. According to the data, the country reported 837 and 958 infections on Feb 14 and Feb 15, respectively. This is the first time since October that Pakistan has reported less than 1,000 coronavirus cases. So far, Pakistan has reported 564,824 cases and 12,380 deaths. In the country, 527,061 people have recovered from Coronavirus and the number of patients undergoing treatment is 25,383. - DNA

PTI will win Senate elections, says PM

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday hoped that his party would easily win Senate elections. The prime minister, while chairing a meeting of government spokespersons, said that despite the reservations, the members of the parliament standing by the government, adding that neither we took pressure first nor will take. Prime Minister Imran Khan said that the long march of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM),



an alliance of 11-opposition parties, would also fail like its public rallies. He said that the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) will easily win Senate elections, adding that we have given tickets to

best candidates. "We have broken the tradition of giving Senate tickets to billionaires," he added. The premier went on to say that the expenditure of the Prime Minister's Office was reduced from Rs 506 million to Rs 243 million during the PTI government's tenure, adding that the people should know that the government is with them in difficult situation. PM Imran further said that the economic indicators are improving today and it is becoming clear in large scale manufacturing after a long time.

Govt. not to renew Nawaz's passport

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed Tuesday formally announced that the passport of PML-N's absconder leader Nawaz Sharif would expire at 12 p.m. on February 16, following which the government could issue an Emergency Travel Document (ETD) on his request for travel to Pakistan. Addressing a news conference here, he said as per the legal obligations, the passport of those who were on the Exit Control List (ECL) could not be renewed. "Today the passport of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will be expired. From August 20, 2018, names of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz are on the ECL on the request of NAB. The cabinet had also included the name of Maryam on ECL, the passport of a

No one can cancel Nawaz passport

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Tuesday said that the so-called accountability holders will themselves be held accountable one day. Talking to media persons in Islamabad, the former premier said the Senate votes were bought in 2018 and its video is also available. Those MPs who received money belonged to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), he said. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said PTI MPs revealed that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister gave money at the speaker's house, and that speaker is the National Assembly's speaker today.

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MEVLUT CAVUSOGLU
TURKEY, PAKISTAN HAVE EVERY REASON TO SOLIDIFY TIES

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Briefs

Virtual book launch of a sci-fi novel set

KARACHI: "Reading science fiction novels always fascinated my imagination. I wondered why extraterrestrial beings from outer space never visited Karachi", said Muhammad Omar Itikhar while speaking at the virtual book launch of his novel, *Divided Species*. This event was hosted by Awais Khan, author of "In the Company of Strangers". It was streamed live on Facebook on Monday, February 15, 2021. *Divided Species* is published by Araq Publications. The story of this science fiction novel revolves around extraterrestrial beings landing in Karachi. They want to find and secure a mineral resource, capable of destroying human life, that was buried beneath the city many years ago. They must act swiftly before it is too late. These beings, the Taleykens - from the fictional Planet Arplon in the Cygnus Constellation (present in actuality) - engage in an intergalactic battle with the humans. This happens when their undisclosed century-old relationship turns sour. Editorial Consultant of the novel, Safwa Mir - a seasoned content developer - believes that Omar used the full capacity of a sci-fi genre to be creative. Omair Alavi, an entertainment journalist, endorsed the book by saying, "Divided Species is an interesting read, especially for the fans of the sci-fi genre in Pakistan." Host, Awais Khan, said it is refreshing to read a sci-fi novel set in Karachi. He added that sci-fi is a genre not pursued by many writers in Pakistan and it is a rarity for a Pakistani author to choose Karachi as a primary setting when writing science fiction.

Typhoid vaccination target achieved in Faisalabad

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The Typhoid Vaccination target has been achieved in the district by vaccinated 1825852 children of 9 month to 15 years age, however the catch up day would be continue today for vaccinated any refusal and not available cases. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, while reviewing the daily targets of campaign and said that the on last day of the campaign search out the remaining children for some reason and vaccinated them besides the case of refusal should be covered 100%, in this regard, the teams should perform their duties with missionary spirit and go from house to house and schools to confirm that the children have been vaccinated. He also directed to check the door and finger marking. He thanked the UNICEF and WHO for co-ordinated and said that efforts should be continued to save the young generation from fatal diseases. ADCG Khurram Pervaiz, CEO Health Dr. Mushtaq Sipra, UNICEF representative Habib Laghari and others were present.

Naat academy students bagged first position

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Two students of Naat Academy Faisalabad have bagged the first position in the national competition of Pakistan Naat Council Rawalpindi Naat Khawani while the girl student has secured the first position in the junior competition. Appreciation Ceremony was held in the Committee Room of DC Office. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali while distributing certificates among the promising students praised the outstanding success of Naat Khawani belonging to Faisalabad in national level competitions, congratulations to the teachers and parents. He said that deep love for the Prophet (PBUH) is our faith and we should make Sirat e Mubarakah the covering of our lives so that we may be prosperous in this world and in the hereafter.



LAHORE: EU ambassador Androulla Kaminara calls on Chief minister Punjab, Sardar Usman Buzdar. – DNA

Philippines envoy stresses boosting bilateral trade

He mentioned that there was lot of need for construction material in Philippines because of its infrastructure development programme. He also underlined the need for joint ventures in textile sector

LAHORE: Ambassador of Philippines Daniel Ramos said on Tuesday that both the countries should make collective efforts to boost mutual trade that did not match the existing potential. He was talking to the business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) where the Chamber's President Mian Tariq Misbah presented the address of welcome while Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry and Executive Committee Members also spoke

on the occasion. The ambassador said, "It is time to resume normal business activities as Philippines and Pakistan had huge untapped potential in oil, pharmaceutical, citrus fruits, rice, medical and surgical instruments, construction materials and various other sectors of economy." He mentioned that there was lot of need for construction material in Philippines because of its infrastructure development programme. He also underlined the need for joint ventures in textile

sector. The Ambassador said that Philippine's export electronics, machinery, motor parts, fresh tropical fruits and processed food to Pakistan. He said that renowned brands of Philippines were keen to get place in Pakistani market. LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah said that strengthening of the trade relations between Pakistan and Philippines would result in bringing both the countries close to each other. He said that private sectors of the two countries together needed to make some

concerted efforts to succeed in exploiting the untapped potential of bilateral trade. He said that the volume of bilateral trade was 205 million dollars in 2010 and after almost a decade, it stood at around 170 million dollars in 2019. "Traditionally, the balance of trade has been in favour of Pakistan but we can only succeed in benefiting each other when we will become bigger partners of trade," he observed. Mian Tariq Misbah said that Philippines was ranked at 34th place among the

top exporting countries and came at 50th place for the top importing countries for Pakistan. He said that Pakistan's exports to Philippines were constantly ranging in between 115 to 140 million dollars for the last three years. Similarly, Pakistan's imports from Philippines averaged at around 65 million dollars. "We need to give required boost to our trade relations especially taking it to a reasonable level. For that matter we should work on identifying new products for mutual trade," he maintained. – APP

Foreign Secretary briefs heads of diplomatic missions about IIOJK

The Foreign Secretary highlighted the gross and systematic violations of human rights in IIOJK, India's illegal attempts to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory

ISLAMABAD: With primary focus on the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood here on Tuesday briefed the Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Islamabad, in separate groups. The Foreign Secretary highlighted the gross and systematic violations of human rights in IIOJK, India's illegal attempts to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory, and threat posed to regional peace and security by these actions, a press release issued by the Ministry of For-

ign Affairs here said. He underscored that the international community must take cognizance of the serious situation in IIOJK, call upon India to stop violations of human rights and other illegal actions, and facilitate efforts for peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The Foreign Secretary's briefing was part of Pakistan's regular diplomatic outreach to keep the international community fully apprised of the developments relating to IIOJK and the region.

Earlier, The Forum for Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir, in its latest report, has highlighted how the people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) are suffering habeas corpus, illegal detentions and killings. In its second report, the Forum, which comprises an informal group of concerned citizens, has noted that denials of the right to bail and fair and speedy trial remain, coupled with misuse of draconian legislation, such as the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), to stifle dissent. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Indonesian ambassador to Pakistan Adam M. Tugio met Executive Director of the Center for Global Strategic Studies (CGSS) Khalid Taimur Akram. – DNA

CPEC to uplift economic, trade activities in entire region'

DNA

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Amanullah Khan Yasinzai on Tuesday said the completion of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project would not only end economic stagnation in the world but also make the entire region a hub of economic and trade activities. He stressed for speeding up the work in the Bostan Industrial Zone (BIZ) so that local traders and industrialists could take full advantage of the investment opportunities available here. Governor expressed these views while talking to a delegation led by Vice President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Akhtar Kakar at Governor House Quetta here. During the meeting, they discussed

economic developments in the region, new possibilities for cross-border trade with neighboring countries and making full use of the facilities provided by the government. The Governor of Balochistan said that in view of mega CPEC project, we have to focus on teaching our new generation modern artistic and technical skills saying that in this regard, it is imperative that the government, taking into account the present and future needs, take all necessary steps for the full functioning of all technical institutes in the province and formulate a comprehensive strategy for the establishment of new centers for teaching modern skills. He said traders and industrialists have a key role to play their responsibilities for promoting economic activities in the country and the province adding

the purpose of taking practical measures was to provide vast employment opportunities to the people and stabilizing the national economic system. The delegation apprised the Governor of Balochistan of the problems faced by the traders of the province in terms of import and export, early completion of Bostan Industrial Zone, Agriculture Income Tax, bank loans and border trade. Assuring his full support, Governor Yasinzai said that we are aware of the problems and difficulties faced by traders across the province. The closure of business and commercial centers due to the deadly coronavirus has severely affected all walks of life, especially the business community, but the government is taking serious steps to revive all trade and business activities and economic stability, he added.

Vawda still a PTI candidate for Senate

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The PTI's parliamentary board has decided to stick with its earlier decision of nominating MNA Faisal Vawda as its candidate for the upcoming Senate elections from Sindh, rejecting protests by the party's provincial leadership. Sources informed Geo News that the decision was taken during a meeting of the parliamentary board chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan. Protests by workers who had earlier taken a stand against Vawda's candidacy were rejected, according to sources. The prime minister said during the meeting that Vawda has rendered services for the party. During the meeting, the ruling party's board discussed the reservations raised against the PTI members who were nominated as candidates by the party.

ANF destroys drugs worth millions

KARACHI: Illicit drugs worth USD 1.65 million and 1452 bottles of liquor were destroyed in a Drug Burning Ceremony of Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Sindh held at Pakistan Rangers Sindh Shooting Club on Tuesday. Chief Guest of the ceremony Major General Muhammad Arif Malik Director General of ANF briefed the participants about the measures taken by the Force to eliminate the menace of drug abuse from the society. He apprised about the campaign launched by the ANF in educational institutions to raise awareness among the youth about drug abuse and its hazards. The participants were also briefed regarding the rehabilitation centers of the Force providing free of charge treatment to drug addicts in different parts of the country. – APP

CPEC Authority to undertake more projects in Faisalabad

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: CPEC Authority will undertake more uplift projects in Faisalabad after successful launch of Allama Iqbal Special Economic Zone, said Lieutenant General (Retired) Asim Saleem Bajwa, Chairman China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority. After attending a briefing of the Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) in M3 Industrial City, he said that Allama Iqbal Industrial City is a flagship project of CPEC Authority which will facilitate Chinese investors to shift their high tech industrial units under the second phase of CPEC. About the industrial, commercial and business

importance of Faisalabad, he said it is more suitable for local as well as foreign investors. He said that the authority will try its optimum best to improve basic infrastructure in it to facilitate investors. Responding to a question of President FCCI, Engineer Ehtisham Javed, he said that more projects would be launched under CPEC Authority in Faisalabad. In this connection, up-gradation of Faisalabad International Airport is under active consideration while a new expressway connecting both motorways passing from Western and Eastern sides of the Faisalabad city will also be completed as a CPEC project. He said that in order to provide skilled manpower a technical institute will also be established under CPEC Authority.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Landscape Division
(Directorate of Parks (East) Environment Wing)

TENDER NOTICE

Scaled tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis from contractor having valid license by PEC in relevant category for the under mentioned works on the date and time mentioned below:-

S.No.	Name of Work	NIT Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date & Time of Receiving Tender	Date & Time of Opening Tender
1	Installation of Moveable Traditional Floats of all Provinces in Different Location of Islamabad.	Rs-11,300,000/-	Rs-276,000/-	08.03.2021 11.30 A.M	08.03.2021 12.00 Noon

Conditions:

- Detail of Tender Notice can be seen on CDA website www.cda.gov.pk and PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk
- Tender application should accompany with earnest money in shape of deposit at call in favor of Dy. Director Landscape Division, CDA issued from any scheduled local bank against firm's account. Name of firm should be clearly mentioned on instrument (Deposit at call). Tender documents shall not be issued without earnest money.
- In case of total bid amount is less than 10 % below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit additional call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10 % of NIT amount. The additional performance guarantee (Call Deposit) shall be submitted along with bid. Bids having rates below 10 % of NIT without additional call deposit will be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of project.
- Tender documents can be obtained from the office of Dy. Director Landscape Division, Environment Wing CDA located at Mehran Gate No.01, Fatima Jinnah Park, Directorate of Parks (East), CDA, Islamabad on cash payment of Rs. 2000/- (Rupees Two thousand) Per Each Set (Non-Refundable) during working hours on any working day before date of opening against written request which should be on letter head pad having Name, Address, Telephone (Land line) Numbers and signature of the contractor along with attested copies of NTN Certificate, valid Professional Tax Certificate, Sole proprietorship/partnership deed, Valid PEC license in relevant category and along with 05 years relevant experience. Moreover General/Special Power of attorney may be attested through respective court, The attorney holder may not be the employee of any Government, semi Government institute/That Only legitimate attorney holder may be allowed to get tender documents. No tender will be sold on the date of opening of the tender. Tenders will be sold upto 12:00 Noon on last working day before the date of opening.
- The bid security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank account and same may be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder. The eligibility criteria of the firm with the relevant experience / work order in last three financial years may be observed / fulfilled before issuance of tender documents.
- No tender will be issued without showing the required documents in "ORIGINAL".
- Tender bids will be received and opened on above date and time in the office of Director Parks (East), Environment Wing, CDA located at Mehran Gate No.01, Fatima Jinnah Park, Islamabad.
- Tender rate on percentage basis should be filled in figures as well as in words.
- The tender documents must be accompanied with non-relationship certificate, NTN Certificate, Non-Judicial Stamp Paper worth of Rs.50/- or above and. No tender will be entertained without these documents.
- CDA reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tenders as per PPRA Rules. No conditional tender will be entertained.

PID (I) No. 4390/20

Dy. Director Landscape Division
Directorate of Parks (East), Env Wing, CDA

Briefs

CTP provides services to 18,356 citizens

DNA

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi provided licensing services to as many as 18,356 citizens during January. According to Incharge Licensing, Saqib Rizwan, CTP issued over 14,716 learner permits during the period besides 540 new driving licenses. He informed that 2,666 old licenses were renewed in January besides issuing 72 duplicate licenses. The licensing branch also issued 61 international licenses to the applicants. The CTP licensing branch renewed 245 licenses of other districts. He said, computerized driving licenses are issued under a transparent procedure. The CTO said that the citizens should directly contact licensing branch of the traffic police and get all required information in this regard so that they could not face any difficulty regarding issuance of driving license. He informed that CTP launched one window operation system to facilitate the applicants. He said that the citizens can use helpline 1915 of city traffic police to get any information and guidance.

PMAS-AAUR, PCSIR join hands in research

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) and Pakistan Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (PCSIR) on Tuesday agreed for future collaborations to enhance research and development activities particularly in the field of agriculture. This was decided in a meeting held here at University Research Farm between PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Qamar uz Zaman and Chairman PCSIR Dr. Syed Hussain Abidi. Both the heads of the institutes highlighted the significance of close collaboration among the organizations and said it would not only help them to resolve common issues but also enhance the mutual understanding. They urged the scientists to develop innovative solutions for the betterment of small farmers and added that it would not only create linkages with organizations but also be helpful for assuring the quality of research. Earlier, Dr. Qamar uz Zaman briefed the Chairman PCSIR not only activities & achievements but also about the ongoing educational, research & development activities at the University Research Farm in addition to the steps being taken for the welfare of the farmers and food security. He emphasized that it was dire need of the hour that the universities might collaborate with Research Institutions, Corporate Sector and Industry to resolve the problems of the industry & farming community to uplift Pakistan's Economy. Chairman PCSIR on the occasion also visited establishment of Digital Agriculture & National Animal Genome Unit, Pakistan's only Chinese solar tunnel on the research farm and observed the tomato crop, medicinal block for lemongrass & other plants, modern animal sheds, rainwater harvested fish farms.

Dry weather likely to persist

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PMD Tuesday forecast cold and dry weather likely to persist in most parts of the country during next 24 hours. Continental air is prevailing over most parts of the country while, fog is likely to prevail over few plain areas of Punjab, the MET office reported. Minimum temperature's recorded in (°C): Leh -09, Ziarat, Astore -05, Gupis, Skardu -04, Parachinar, Kalam, Kalat and Anantnag -03.

CDA to install 1500 trash containers in Islamabad

These dust bins for garbage will be installed in commercial areas and markets of the city within a week

DNA / APP

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has started placing 100 large trash containers and 500 small containers for maintaining cleanliness in Islamabad while one thousand dust bins were also being prepared for the purpose. These dust bins for garbage will be installed in commercial areas and markets of the city within a week. Tenders have also been issued for cleanliness in rural areas which will be opened on March 1. Citizens can

CDA to start mega scale plantation drive

ISLAMABAD: The administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) has completed its preparations for a mega scale plantation to restore the green character of the city to enhance its beauty. In the first phase 2,50,000 saplings will be planted. In the next phase flower plants will be planted at green belts, chowks, roads, and parks for the beautification of the city. According to detail, CDA will begin plantation at mega scale prior to spring season. 100000 saplings will be planted in the forest area of the city and other 150000 will be planted various places across the city. Besides this, flowers plants will be planted at various roads including Constitutional avenue, Margala road, 9th avenue, Jinnah avenue, 7th avenue, Faisal avenue, Srinagar Highway, and others. Citizens of Islamabad will see city decorated with different flowers at the mid of March. - DNA

lodge grievances on 1334 while WhatsApp number 0335, 5001213 will also be available for addressal of grievances. Talking to media on Tuesday, Director Sanitation

Sardar Khan Zmarai said that on the special directives of Chairman CDA Amir Ali Ahmed, 100 large containers and 500 small containers have been installed in

the federal capital for maintaining cleanliness. He said that one thousand dust bins are also being installed in commercial areas and markets in Islamabad for garbage

collection which will be installed within a week. He said that a dozen damaged vehicles have been made operational. Similarly, several steps are being taken for improved sanitation situation in capital and CDA has also started cleaning in rural areas. On the other hand, CDA spokesman Syed Asif Raza Shah told APP on Tuesday that keeping Islamabad clean is the top priority of CDA, Islamabad is one of the most beautiful city and its beauty would be maintained. He appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the CDA to keep the federal capital clean.

PEIRA asks to commence new session from August 2021

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA), on Tuesday has asked the private sector schools and colleges of federal capital to commence the new academic session 2021/22 from 1st week of August, 2021. According to a notification issued by the PEIRA, a regulatory body of Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the private sector educational institutions in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), are asked to conduct annual exams up to class eight from mid of May to mid of June, 2021, in line with the decision made by the federal government. The private schools have also been instructed to announce their result in the last week of June 2021, it added. However, the whole month of July 2021 will be observed as summer vacations, the notification available with media mentioned. It further said the schedule is subject to review of health report in the context of COVID-19 cases/decision of federal government. Whereas, Islamic, Gazette/National Holidays shall be observed as per moon sighting/notification by the federal government.

Mother Language Festival on February 21

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) will hold 6th edition of Pakistan Mother Language Literature Festival on February 21 to promote Pakistan's linguistic and cultural diversity as an instrument of social harmony and peace. In collaboration with Punjabi Adabi Parchar, special literary programmes including poetic symposium, Folk colors, Kahani Darbar, Gal Bat and Mukabla Dhola will be held. An official of PAL said that Festival is meant to inspire the culture lovers with linguistic and cultural diversity of Pakistan. He said that this unique festival has become essential part of cultural scene of the federal capital. Well known writers, scholars and intellectual including Farhad Iqbal, Tariq Bhatti, Muhammad Ilyas, Rave Altaf Hussain, Dr Waheed Ahmed, Jafir Anjum, Zegum Abbas and Muhammad Imran will participate in the festival, he added. He said that the speakers and moderators will discuss why it is important to retain and nurture our mother languages, which are dwindling in many cases, notwithstanding the social pressures and the significance of drama, prose, poetry, storytelling, television, promoting folk culture and other aspects in mother language.

FJWU to hold 2-day intl media conference

RAWALPINDI: Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) in collaboration with Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and the Association of Media and Communication Professionals (AMCAP) will organize a two-day International Media Conference 2021, titled "Digital Media Ecologies in the New Normal: Challenges and Opportunities" at main Campus on February 17 and 18. According to a FJWU spokesperson, the primary focus of this conference is to understand the role of the Digital Media in shaping our contemporary world. International and National eminent academicians, civil society activists, members of Media organizations will attend the conference which will have sessions on Political Communication, Media and Gender, Media Literacy, Development Communication, Digital Media, Media, Culture and Society, Film Studies and Media Ethics among several others. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar, Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdulrehman Bin Faisal Al-Thani called on Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid. - DNA

IGP directs capital police to facilitate overseas Pakistanis

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil-ur-Rehman Tuesday directed capital police to ensure maximum facilities to overseas Pakistanis. The IG expressed these views during his visit to various parts of citizen service Center F-6 established to serve the citizen under one roof. Along with Director IT Sal-

im Raza Sheikh, Additional SP City Zone Umer Khan, he visited various sections of Citizen Service Center and inquired the citizens about one-window operation and behavior of policemen with them. The IGP said that the facilitation centre has so far facilitated a total of 124,047 citizens which included 24313 character certificates, 17886 General Police Verification, 37852 lost reports, 26226 vehicle regis-

trations, 1550 tenants registration, 16029 foreigner registrations, 216 overseas cases and 324 servant verification cases. The citizens expressed their satisfaction over the facilities being provided by the center and appreciated the attitude and cooperation of policemen with them. They thanked IGP for initiating the one-window operation which helped to save their time. The IGP directed all police officials

performing duties at the center to ensure maximum cooperation with citizens as all of them are respectful. He asked for special care to the elderly citizens as well as women and ensures best services to them. The IGP also visited the under-construction overseas block, traffic and other areas. The IGP directed to complete construction work as soon as possible so that more facilities may be extended to citizens.

More shelter homes to get telehealth kiosks

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Efforts are afoot to set up telehealth kiosks at more shelter homes (Panahgahs) to provide medical care to its residents, in addition to two-time meals a day and night stay, Prime Minister's Focal Person on Shelter Homes Naseem ur Rehman told the media during his visit to the Panahgah, located at Tarlai-an area situated in outskirts of the federal capital. He said so far, the facility was fully operational at four shelter homes and "It is our target to establish telehealth kiosks at our 25 Panahgahs by the end of February," he added.

"We are striving to transform the Panahgahs in the welfare center, where daily wage earners do not only get food and shelter but also healthcare facilities under a conducive environment," he remarked. He said as many as 130 shelter homes were fully functional and serving the poor and shelterless people across the country. To a query, Naseem said the kiosks were being installed by in collaboration with EZ Shifa, which was a private company, virtually connecting volunteer teams of doctors, from Pakistan and abroad with marginalized segments of the society. He said telehealth kiosks, set up at the federal capital's 'Panahgahs', were

getting tremendous response as so far 500 dwellers had availed access to medical care and consultation with online doctors, who were part of EZ Shifa network in Canada, the United States of America and Pakistan. Earlier, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishat Monday released a series of 40 beneficiaries centered instructional videos on twitter to provide guidance to the public about Ehsaas Kafaalat program. The payments to new Ehsaas Kafaalat beneficiaries who are being enrolled through the ongoing Ehsaas survey commenced last week.

CE/OD IESCO to hold E-katchary

ISLAMABAD: IESCO Spokesman said that our maximum efforts are to provide best and speedy services to our valued customers. Continuing the same line, online Katcharies are being conducted regularly and successfully. Chief Engineer/Operation Director IESCO Muhammad Zubair Khan will hold online katchary on Wednesday dated 17th February 2021 at 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM on Telephone Number 051-9253105. IESCO requested valued customers to participate in open katchary for immediate solution of their complaints and for submission of their valuable suggestions. - DNA

Online certificate course on BPTCT begins

He said that this technology is although over 100 years old but in last 30 years plant tissue culture has played a vital role

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Two-day online certificate course on "Basic Plant Tissue Culture Techniques" organized by COMSTECH in collaboration with International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, and Pakistan Biotechnology Information Center (PABIC Karachi - Chapter), was inaugurated by Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General, COMSTECH. In his inaugural address Dr. Choudhary said that the field of plant tissue culture is extremely important with a broad range of applications. He said that this technology is although over 100 years old but in the last 30 years plant tissue culture has played an extremely important role in various fields of agriculture. He said that this technol-

ogy helps in improving crop varieties, and to produce disease free plants. In fact, fundamental techniques/technologies used in plant tissue culture form the basis of many other disciplines including molecular biology, and regenerative medicine, he highlighted. The founder of the modern agricultural biotechnology in Iran, Prof. Dr. Behzad Ghareyazie will train the participants of this course along with the Egyptian geneticist, Prof. Dr. Naagla Abdalla, head department of genetics, Cairo University, Cairo, and Pakistani agriculturalist, Prof. Dr. Saifullah Khan, department of agriculture and agribusiness management, University of Karachi, Pakistan. Over 200 researchers in the field of plant sciences are attending this training course from 20 countries online. The course will conclude on Feb. 27.

1,378 govt houses vacated from illegal occupants

ISLAMABAD: The Estate Office has vacated some 1,378 houses from illegal and unauthorised occupants in the federal capital with the help of local administration during the last two and half years. To streamlining the allotment process, official sources in the Estate Office said that as many as 2,245 houses were allotted to the government employees on merit basis. After the judgement of Supreme Court, they said the allotment of government houses and quarters were being made strictly on merit on maturity of turn on respective general waiting list of the federal government servants under rule 6 & 7 of Accommodation Allocation Rules, 2002. They said that general waiting list was being maintained and updated by Estate Office regularly which has been established by the information technology department of Estate Office. The sources said the federal government employees may apply online or through mail for registration on general waiting list and list was also available in the Estate Office website www.estate-office.gov.pk. To a question about Bara Kahu Housing Scheme, they said the shortcomings as pointed out by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) had been incorporated in the layout plan by expanding width of roads to 40 feet and increase in green areas. They said the CDA has conditionally approved the layout plan subject to fulfillment of some shortcomings in 2013 and after removal of shortcomings, the FGEHA itself approved the layout plan under FGEHA Act, 2020. To another question, they said it was a fact that the sewerage system of Block No. 54, Category-V, Sector I-9/4, Islamabad was in extremely dilapidated condition. The flats of I-9/4 were constructed in 1980's and extensive repair work is required to be carried out but due to paucity of funds maintenance work is due since long, they added. - DNA

"AIU removes barriers curbing teachers' progress"

Professor Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum while explaining about the Portal said, "it is basically a learning management system which includes content, quality videos, learning activities, assessment and feedback policy"

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Virtual Teachers Training Academy Portal established at the Lahore Regional Centre of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) will be available to teachers across Pakistan and will go a long way in eliminating physical barriers hindering the professional development of teachers, said Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor AIU at the inaugural ceremony of the Portal on Tuesday. Raja Rashid Hafeez, Provincial Minister for Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education was chief guest at while amongst others Secretary Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department, Punjab, Waqas Ali Mahmood, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Dean, Faculty of Education AIU, Senior Education Advisor JICA-AQAL II Abid Gill,

Dr. Shafiq Ali of National Commission for Human Development, Deputy Chief of Party of ALIGHT Pakistan, Kamran Iftikhar Lone, Raja Umer Younis, Director Coordination and Follow-up, AIU, and Dr. Zahid Majeed were also present on this occasion. The Virtual Teachers Training Academy Portal has been jointly envisaged and established by AIU, JICA, and ALIGHT, Pakistan. Speaking at the ceremony the Provincial Minister, Raja Rasheed hoped that the Virtual Teachers Training Academy will go a long way in equipping teachers in far flung areas with the latest pedagogical skills and content knowledge leading to quality blended education of the pupils in non-formal schools

and literacy. He lauded the services of AIU in promotion of education in the country, and commended the efforts of Prof. Dr Zia for digitalization of the AIU. He viewed that this the age of technology and every institution has to adopt the latest technology otherwise it will lag behind its competitors. Professor Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum while explaining about the Portal said that, "it is basically a learning management system which includes content, quality videos, learning activities, assessment and feedback policy to achieve standard training performances of the teachers living across the country, especially the far flung areas. He said that AIU soon all

operations of the AIU will be transferred to automated mode, and the university will be fully digitalized by July 2021, he hoped. The teachers residing in far off areas with no internet facilities will be able to avail the offline facility and manuals will be delivered to them via post or email to enhance their professional development and create a holistic teaching experience to engage students in activity based teaching, he added. Deputy Chief of Party of ALIGHT Pakistan Kamran Iftikhar Lone appreciated AIU for support in the development of the portal and training content/modules, which will help ensure that our educators and learners are primed for success. He said that this training portal will cater to the training needs of Non-Formal Education (NFE) teachers following formal or Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) curriculum and teachers of adult literacy programme.



Briefs

Faysal Islami launches 'Noor' Card

ISLAMABAD: Faysal Bank Limited Tuesday launched "Noor" Card – a Shariah compliant alternative to conventional credit cards, facilitating its Islamic banking consumers with a range of benefits and Halal offers across various categories of spend – powered by Mastercard.

Taking the different needs of its customers into account, the Faysal Islami Noor card is available across several variants, from Platinum to Titanium, with each providing different levels of added benefits and features to cardholders for exclusive shopping, dining and traveling experiences, said a press release issued here. Inching closer on its journey to complete Islamic conversion, Faysal Islami Noor is Pakistan's first Islamic card based on Shariah principle of Tawarruq with 3D Secure, contactless payment and transaction services, leading its consumers to a hallway of premium Islamic lifestyle while also keeping their convenience of everyday life in check. Commenting on this achievement of another milestone, Mr. Tahir Yaqoob Bhatti, Faysal Bank's Head of Retail Banking, said, "The launch of Faysal Islami Noor card reaffirms our commitment to achieving leadership in providing Shariah-compliant financial and payment services to our customers. The launch of 'Noor' sets sail to a trailblazing initiative to the Bank's credit, transforming the experience of Islamic banking customers. Now, Noor Card customers can use this Shariah compliant card with complete satisfaction and peace of mind, availing a range of distinct reward systems and premium benefits within the strict umbrella of Shariah compliant banking practices and principles."

Faysal Bank's footprint now spreads over more than 200 cities with a network of over 575 (including more than 500 Islamic) branches. Faysal Bank is a significant player in Pakistan's banking industry and recognized as the Best Emerging Bank 2020 of the country.

Two drug peddlers arrested

RAWALPINDI: The police in ongoing drive against drug peddlers on Tuesday conducted raids in different areas and arrested two accused besides recovering over four kg charras from their possession. According to a police spokesman, in a raid, Pirwahai police arrested a drug peddler namely Faisal Khan besides recovering 2200 grams charras from his possession. In another raid, Saddar Baroni police held Amjadullah and seized 2670 grams charras. Separate cases had been registered against the accused under Narcotics Control Act while further investigations were underway, he added. – APP

RDA continues crackdown

RAWALPINDI: Taking action against illegal housing schemes on the directives of the Prime Minister Imran Khan and Government of the Punjab, Rawalpindi Development Authority Tuesday continued crackdown against illegal housing schemes. Director General RDA Chaudhry Maqbool Ahmed along with Metropolitan Planning and Traffic Engineering (MP&TE) Directorate's staff including Director MP&TE Shahzad Haider and others visited Adyala Road Rawalpindi and inspected Six illegal Housing Schemes namely French Housing Scheme, Akbar Villas, Maryam Green City, Khayaban Millat, Jinnah Town and Gulshan Farzand Ali. The RDA has registered First Information Reports (FIRs) against owners of these illegal housing schemes namely Chaudhry Akbar Aurangzeb, Amir Shehzad, Sheikh Mukhtar Ahmed, Tariq Mahmood Toor, Raja Muhammad Ashfaq and Shamsh-ur-Rehman. Legal action has been initiated against the illegal advertisements and sale of plots by such illegal housing schemes. The authority has appealed to the public to refrain from buying and selling plots in the said housing schemes which declared illegal by RDA.



ISLAMABAD: Federal minister for education and professional training, Shafqat Mahmood presenting a memento to his Kyrgyz counterpart, Almazbek Beishenaliev. – DNA

ICCI calls for withdrawal of power tariff hike to save businesses

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

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to withdraw the recent hike of Rs.1.95 per unit in electricity across the board as it would put additional burden of around Rs.200 billion on consumers, further escalate the cost of production and push up inflation leading to more harmful consequences for the overall

economy. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan needed to boost exports to get rid of foreign debt burden and attain sustainable economic growth, however, the repeated increase in power tariffs would increase cost of doing business and make Pakistani products more uncompetitive in the international market leading to further decline in business activities and exports. He said that electricity was a major input

for many SMEs and large scale manufacturing units, therefore, the hike in power tariff would hurt their business significantly that would damage our economy. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that electricity cost in Pakistan was already considered highest in the region due to which it was difficult for our industry to compete effectively with regional competitors. He said that the business community of the entire country had been urging the government since long to focus on cheap en-

ergy sources to bring down the cost of doing business, but their calls have not been given due consideration as yet. He said that already the people including the public sector employees were agitating against high inflation and it has badly squeezed their purchasing power and made their lives miserable, therefore, further increase in electricity prices will further raise inflation, which could result into massive social unrest. He said that the recent hike would also affect lifeline consumers as

they have not been spared from this unwise decision. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President and Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI said that the businesses were still struggling for survival due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and in these difficult circumstances, they needed more relief measures from the government for revival and growth. However, instead of providing them any relief, the government was taking measures that would create more problems for them.

They said that the Prime Minister had announced a package of discounted tariffs for SMEs in November 2020 till June 2021, however, the repeated increase in electricity & gas tariffs and oil prices would thwart the government's efforts for reducing the production cost for SMEs and the industrial sector. He urged that the government should reconsider its decision and withdraw the hike in electricity tariff to save businesses and the general public from further difficulties.

DG FIA Wajid Zia catches coronavirus

ISLAMABAD: Director-General of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Wajid Zia has contracted coronavirus. According to a private television channel, the Director General's Covid-19 test came back positive yesterday, after which he went into self-quarantine. The staff at the FIA have also been undergoing tests after the development. Meanwhile, the coronavirus spread in Pakistan is appearing to be slowing down as the country after several months reported single-day infections below 1,000. At least 47 people lost their lives due to the novel coronavirus pandemic whereas 958 fresh cases were reported during the last 24 hours (Monday), showed the statistics released by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO) on Tuesday morning. As per the latest NCO data, the death toll has soared to 12,333 while the number of total confirmed infections stood at 564,077. During the past 24 hours (Monday), 910 patients have recovered from the virus while the total recoveries stood at 525,997. The total count of active cases was 25,383 and the national positivity rate stood at nearly four percent. – DNA

NUMS to provide healthcare services to twin cities residents

ISLAMABAD: National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) would provide efficient, accessible and affordable home healthcare services for the people of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad at their doorsteps. The pilot project is expected to begin this year, initially in selected areas and in later phase to be scaled up to cover majority areas of the twin cities, a news release said. Through the project, the communities would have access to tele-medicine to consult doctors on dedicated phone lines and through a video-link facility. NUMS Healthcare would 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 cli-

ents will be provided at lower rates than the market. Many specialists would also be on-call for consultation services to the patients requiring specialist attention. An E-App (mobile Apps) would be available to patients for online appointments, notification of abnormal reports and health education. NUMS has taken the decision after a year of planning as its Healthcare team conducted surveys in different parts of the twin cities to assess the health needs of the people, especially in the backdrop of current COVID-19 pandemic. According to a NUMS survey report, in the wake of the pandemic, patients faced difficulties in palliative care and management of chronic diseases like cardiovascular diseases, dia-

betes and cancer. The supply of essential medicine was also disrupted. At least 97 percent of people responded that the community was in need of such healthcare services particularly the elderly and single mothers or those not able to physically go to the doctor. An Electronic Medical Record (EMR) of interaction between the doctor and patient would be kept under this service. The health needs of about 7.4 million souls of the twin cities metropolitan region are being currently catered through public-private health facilities which remained under-utilized due to poor referral linkages and quality of service, putting tremendous pressure on the tertiary level public health care system. – APP

'Economic indicators show positive signs'

HARIPUR: Federal Minister for Power Omer Ayub Khan on Tuesday said fruits of prudent policies of the incumbent government started producing their impacts as economic indicators moving towards positive sign. Addressing a public gathering here after the inauguration of Choi Mora Ghazan Sui Gas provision project worth Rs. 65.8 million, he said the government has introduced public friendly policies like Sehat Insaf Card which ensures the provision of treatment facilities to every citizen of Khayber Pakhtunkhwa. The minister said they initiated developmental projects including provision of Sui gas, electricity, water supply schemes, construction of schools, hospitals, basic health units, roads for upbrining living standards of people. Speaking on the occasion member provincial assembly Arshad Ayub said these areas remained ignored in past but focus of this government was to facilitate masses at their doorstep. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Gulzar Ahmed addressing inauguration ceremony of case registration desk at Supreme court Islamabad. – DNA

Australia hails Pak's efforts to strengthen women

The project helped open discourse on issues that limit women and girls to participate in public life and achieve their full potential. Using art and edutainment as an engaging medium, Oxfam took numerous initiatives to draw attention towards gender-based violence as a serious human rights violation

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: It is imperative that we create safe spaces for everyone, especially for women and girls, to report incidents of harassment or abuse, without any fear of retaliation or retribution, and this can only happen if we inculcate the seeds of awareness in the future leaders of Pakistan towards a just world free from violence with equal opportunities for all regardless of their gender identity, said Syed Shahnawaz Ali, Country Director of Oxfam in Pakistan. Speaking at the closing ceremony of

Oxfam in Pakistan's project, Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) through Art and Edutainment, supported by the Australian High Commission, he talked about how the project relied on art and edutainment to engage youth from colleges and universities, drawing attention towards gender-based violence as a serious human rights violation. The project helped open discourse on issues that limit women and girls to participate in public life and achieve their full potential. Using art and edutainment as an engaging medium, Oxfam took numerous initiatives to draw attention towards gender-based violence as a serious

human rights violation. 'Australia commends the strides taken in Pakistan to strengthen the protections for women against harassment in educational institutions. The safe and equal participation of women in all spheres of life benefits the economy and society. Australia is proud to partner with Oxfam in Pakistan to promote the message that harassment is not inevitable, it is not acceptable, and it is preventable. This digital campaign reached more than 5 million people across the country. It also catalysed collaboration between Oxfam and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to implement anti-harassment strate-

gies at universities. We must work with all members of society, including men, educators, employers and community influencers to drive change', said the Australian Deputy High Commissioner, Ms Joanne Frederiksen while addressing the audience. Under the project, Oxfam has also signed MoUs with twenty universities in Karachi, under which they have conducted sensitisation/training sessions and seminars, supported the creation of anti-harassment committees, built the capacity of anti-harassment committee members, set up complaint boxes and established a helpline for reporting cases of abuse and harassment in

compliance with the HEC Anti-Sexual Harassment policy. During 16 Days of Activism, Oxfam produced and disseminated animated videos on addressing and changing negative social norms under the campaign tagline, "Janay Na Du". The videos highlighted the menace of the cyber, workplace and public harassment and the abuse women and girls face along with raising the issue of early child marriages. The videos shared how individuals can take preventive measures and report such crimes. The campaign accumulated a reach of 120 million on national and cable television channels, social media and radio.

IHC asks FIA to continue inquiry against Shifa hosp

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday ordered Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to conclude its inquiry against illegal constructions of Shifa International Hospital Islamabad under the law and dismissed a case of hospital's administration against it.

The court also instructed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to strictly ensure implementation on its conditions and procedure for plot allotment.

The court stated that the CDA was authorised to take actions against violation of its by laws and CDA Ordinance. It also directed the civic body to take decision early on hospital's application for approval of layout plan.

The court said that the CDA had pointed out irregularities and violation of its by laws in constructions by Shifa Hospital.

The CDA had stated in its report that the hospital had made new constructions including its medical college without the approval of building plan.

Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case.

SECP launches portal for expeditious bank account

ISLAMABAD: In pursuit of its agenda to promote ease of doing business and digitalization, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), has launched a portal for expeditious bank account opening of newly registered companies. The online portal provides banks real time access to statutory records of companies, thus enabling them to open corporate accounts without seeking physically certified copies of statutory documents, said a press release issued here. Through this portal, the banks can access and verify company information directly from SECP's records. The online availability of statutory records will reduce the turn-around-time for opening of corporate bank account or for availing other banking services.

On the other hand, it will facilitate banks in carrying out due diligence of their corporate customers, for account opening and other services. Any bank can access the portal by applying to the SECP for creating their user accounts. Initially, this facility is being launched for private limited, public limited and companies formed for not-for-profit objects. In due course, data of foreign companies and limited liability partnerships will also be linked and made available. The SECP is planning to discontinue issuance of certified true copies in physical form and consequently, banks will only be able to access SECP's records through this portal. – APP

NUML to enhance research culture

ISLAMABAD: National University of Modern Languages (NUML) here on Tuesday in its 19th meeting of Academic Council, deliberated the issues pertaining to examination and curriculum. The Academic Council meeting was chaired by the Rector NUML Major General Muhammad Jaffar HI (M) (Retd) while Director General NUML/Pro-Rector Resources and Planning Brig Muhammad Badr Malik, Pro-Rector Academics Dr. Safer Awan, Pro-Rector Research Dr. M. Zubair Iqbal, Registrar, Directors, Deans, Heads of Departments and Regional Directors attended the meeting. In the inaugural session, Rector NUML briefed the members of council about the ongoing academic activities and infrastructure development projects in NUML and emphasized to enhance research culture in the University. He reiterated that NUML is striving hard to promote the quality education and every individual member has to put in best efforts to make it a success. – APP

Indian oppression

WITH every passing day, more stakeholders are raising their voices against the Modi government's repressive military siege of Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir (IIOK). Now, even concerned citizens and experts from India have joined their voices to the protests ringing across unbiased international circles. The latest in this is the report released by The Forum for Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir, a group of civilians and activists from India. The report does not mention anything new if juxtaposed with Pakistan's narrative. The Modi government's actions in IIOK, in its bid to fight the "counter insurgency", are punctuated with gross human rights violations, rights infringements, with displacement and economic disasters as permanent features. IIOK has double the employment compared to the rest of India, education has stalled and businesses have lost more money than they have made in many cases. The lack of internet for over 18 months all but ensured that the students missing out on schooling during the curfew times had no way to make up for the loss either.

The report stops just short of truly holding the Indian government responsible and asking for a permanent solution to the Kashmir dispute. Admittedly, this is hard to do for citizens of India when a fascist government is determined to stifle any and all opposition to the curfew in IIOK. But what this does prove as that saner voices in the neighbouring country do realise that the Delhi government will stop at nothing to change the demography or repression in Kashmir.

This is a cold, calculated strategy to ensure that even if a plebiscite takes place, there are not enough indigenous Kashmiris left to rise against India's brutal regime. Having said that, Pakistan has the opportunity to strengthen its arguments and case for the international community each time, another neutral or internal observation is publicised. The people of Kashmir are protesting this oppression, Pakistan has joined our voice to theirs and now, even clear-headed Indians are doing the same. It is time for the world to take notice.

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Gaining ground

THINGS look a little more positive as the Pakistan government has decided to open up state vaccination for people aged 65 or above in the coming weeks. Additionally, private sector vaccinations may also become possible since the commercial import of Sputnik V has officially been allowed. However, with private sales, the hardest responsibility the government must fulfil is that the vaccines are accessible to the majority of the population and not just the rich. Rigorous price control is needed if it is being dispensed by the private sector.

With the national vaccination drive now being expanded to include the elderly, those at the highest risk of fatalities due to the virus will be protected. This was one of the most important sections to cater to and the government's responsible approach towards the expansion of the drive is noteworthy. Once all who are above the age of 65 are registered, the actual work can start. Any and all irregularities or exploitation of this opportunity need to be avoided for which all relevant authorities must be vigilant. The same amount of meticulousness also needs to be extended to the private sale of the Sputnik V vaccine in Pakistan. State authorities agreed to its commercial import and sale without a particular price cap. While this entails that a larger proportion of the population will receive vaccines, it also means that the socio-economic divide will become the basis of discrimination.

In the hands of private firms, the vaccination can be a lucrative product intended to fulfil desires of profit maximisation. The noble motive of safeguarding the people from the virus may become secondary and so, Sputnik V must be made available to all, at a low price point. With the global price being set at \$10, the government needs to ensure that local costs are around the same range, alongside regulating the market and imposing strict rules upon labs across the country.

BJP deploys its majoritarian tactics against farmers

Apoorvanand



The first stirrings of the farmers' discontent could be felt as early as September, but the government sat still, smugly assuming that since the opposition to the laws was visible only in Punjab and some pockets of Haryana, it could be ignored and would die down. But it started swelling and even the violent police crackdown did not disperse it. That is why the government of the BJP deployed its favourite approach to crushing dissent: Mobilising a majoritarian sentiment to deprecate minorities

FOUR layers of barricades, permanent cemented walls on highways, trenches, concertina wires and roads embedded with spikes - this is how New Delhi, the national capital of India is being fortified on its borders which separate it from the states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. Hordes of police and paramilitary personnel are manning these impregnable barricades round the clock. All these measures are aimed at separating the people of New Delhi from the hundreds of thousands of farmers who have staged a sit-in protest since the first week of December, camping on the borders of the capital. The internet has been shut down at protest sites, even in parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Water supply has been cut and electricity supply stopped to force the protesters to leave. Journalists are not allowed to reach them. The police has refused access to a delegation of the opposition. Farmers have marched from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and other states to Delhi demanding the repeal of the three laws enacted by the government of India to regulate farming and activities related to agriculture. They were prevented from entering Delhi. Since then, they have been sitting there peacefully expecting the government to bow before their determination. While the government claims the laws are urgently needed to reform the ailing farming sector, the farmers fear they will establish a legal regime, which would facilitate corporate takeover of farming and destroy farmers completely. They are asking the government to repeal the laws, as they were rushed through Parliament without any wider consultation, bulldozing the parliamentary deliberative process. The first stirrings of the farmers' discontent could be felt as early as September, but the government sat still, smugly assuming that since the opposition to the laws was visible only in Punjab and some pockets of Haryana, it could be ignored and would die down. But it started swelling and even the violent police crackdown did not disperse it. That is why the government of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) deployed its favourite approach to crushing dissent: Mobilising a majoritarian sentiment to deprecate minorities and bolster support for its faulty policies. In the beginning, the agita-

tion was dominated by farmers from Punjab, who are mostly Sikh. So the ruling party decided to vilify the movement by suggesting it is a conspiracy hatched by Khalistanis, elements demanding a separate homeland for Sikhs.

In the 1980s and 1990s, there was indeed a militant movement active in India, fighting for an independent Khalistan and there still are some Sikh groups outside India who still cherish this dream. However, today this demand does not enjoy support among the Indian Sikhs. Nevertheless, the BJP pressed its propaganda machinery into action telling its constituents, mostly Hindus, that the movement must be crushed as it is "anti-national" and is funded by Khalistanis from overseas.

Visible support from Muslim organisations that reached out to the protesting farmers was used to claim that "jihadis" are embedded in it. There were also claims the movement was led by Maoists. The mainstream media joined the smear campaign by broadcasting vicious propaganda against the movement. The BJP has applied the same template to crush other dissident movements in recent years. The 2019-2020 protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, which discriminates against the country's Muslim minority, were maligning in the same manner. They were called "anti-national" and a jihadi-Maoist conspiracy against India.

This succeeded in creating widespread hatred against the Muslim-dominated protests. The hate campaign turned into violence in Delhi in February last year, resulting in the death of 53 people and massive destruction. In the aftermath of the violence, the police launched criminal cases against the protesters, charging some of them under the draconian "anti-terror" law called the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). More than a dozen activists, most of them Muslim, are now languishing in jails as a result. Similar developments have taken place with the farmers' protests. An incident on January 26, in which a few thousand protesters entered the iconic Red Fort in New Delhi and planted a Sikh religious flag on one of the poles, has been used by the government to reinforce its propaganda that the movement was actually a Khalistani conspiracy to defame India. The movement's leaders condemned the incident, but the government slapped

criminal cases against them under the dreaded UAPA and the police has initiated the process of withdrawing their passports. In addition, more than 100 protesters have been arrested.

Meanwhile, the government-led propaganda has been successful in invoking anti-Sikh hatred, as social media has seen a flood of anti-Sikh posts, some inciting violence by referring to the events of 1984. That year, thousands of Sikhs were killed after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by a Sikh guard. While the farmers' movement refuses to be browbeaten by threats of violence and its ranks are swelling across states, the ruling party is still confident that its hate campaign would cement its support base.

Last week, the government propaganda was turned up a notch after pop star Rihanna, environmental activist Greta Thunberg and other celebrities spoke out in support of the protesting farmers. As a result, there are now claims there is an international conspiracy, which the Sikhs are a part of. In a bizarre move, the Delhi police lodged a criminal case invoking the anti-sedition law against unknown people for creating disaffection against the Indian government. Concerns expressed by foreign officials and legislators over the government's handling of the peaceful protest have been ignored. Instead, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stated the Indian nation needs to be protected from "foreign destructive ideology". The mishandling of the farmers' protests is not only damaging India's reputation abroad, but it is also stirring trouble at home. The country is ravaged by deep divisions like never before, as the ruling party continues to use majoritarian politics to push through questionable policies. This will have serious implication for the unity of the nation, inflicting wounds which would be difficult to heal. Psychological and physical violence is tearing communities apart and making it difficult to have a reasonable public conversation. By creating perpetual chaos, the government hopes to fuel insecurity in its constituents and present itself as a saviour, offering them safety. This may help it sustain itself in power -for now, but it will definitely destroy India as we knew it or wanted it to be.

- Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Swat Serena Hotel, A heritage property

Munaza Kazmi



Swat Serena Hotel, a magnificent heritage hotel, managed and operated by Tourism Promotion Services Pakistan, lies in the footstep of the Hindukush Mountains in an absolutely secure location in the capital city of Saidu Sharif, within walking distance of the colorful bustling markets selling brightly embroidered shawls

SWAT a valley as green as the emeralds that lie beneath the mountains. Cold and clear streams and rivers flowing from the snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush. A brilliant blue sky - it's hard to describe the Swat valley without getting carried away. It feels like one of the most beautiful and enchanted places on earth. Many know Swat Valley for its tranquility and natural beauty. But the valley houses several archaeological and heritage sites, that marked it as a desired destination among the tourist.

Swat Serena Hotel, a magnificent heritage hotel, managed and operated by Tourism Promotion Services Pakistan (Owner and Operator of Serena Hotels), lies in the footstep of the Hindukush Mountains in an absolutely secure location in the capital city of Saidu Sharif, within walking distance of the colorful bustling markets selling brightly embroidered shawls, folk jewelry and locally produced honey and ancient Buddhist sites of Mingora. Moreover, it's easily accessible from Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar and other major cities due to the recently constructed Motorway. The beautiful historic building, surrounded by the lush green neatly tended gardens, with centuries old trees telling the tales of history, the calming voice of water from the ever-flowing fountains, the welcoming serene blue pool, the classy Suvastu restaurant offering a variety of food, the immaculate modern rooms decorated with hint of Swati tradition, and on top the most hospitable staff reflects the true Pakistani culture.

The Hotel today is a heritage property, every

stone of it tells fascinating tales of the rich past. The Hotel was in fact a Prime Minister House, till today named as Wazir House, constructed in 1935 by then king Badshah Shahib Mian gul Abdul Wadud, the Wali of Swat and a descendant of the Akhund of Swat, for his Prime Minister. After Badshah Shahib death, his descendant Mian gul Jahanzeb took charge and in 1949 removed the Prime Minister from the Wazir House. Later in 1969, when the princely state of Swat merged with Pakistan, Jahanzeb handed over the Wazir House to the government of Pakistan, that transformed it in to the guest house. From the year 1969-1984 onwards, it was with PIA as a guest house.

Reasoning the poor maintenance and care, the House was losing its splendor. Fortunately, in 1984 government of Pakistan leased it to Tourism Promotion Services Pakistan (Owner and Operator of Serena Hotels) for a better change. Serena Hotels that come under the umbrella of Tourism Promotion Services, renovated the hotel and Wazir House with much diligence and converted into a luxury setting, the project was completed with the assistance of Aga Khan Trust and Culture, which resulted in adding up of another luxury hotel of Pakistan and promoting the element of tourism. Today the Wazir House regained its glory and known worldwide as Swat Serena Hotel-chain of Serena Hotels. Serena Hotels known for their luxury hotels, resorts, palaces, and forswith its remarkable hospitality, enjoy history of promoting tourism, culture and empowering the communities. Many stories can be related mainly, in the times

of unrest in Swat and recent pandemic of COVID-19, despite the empty rooms all of the uniformed staff have been kept on by the management of Serena Hotels.

However, recently the government of Pakistan had shown some ambiguity regarding the managing terms and leasing agreement of Swat property with Serena Hotels. During my stay at Swat Serena Hotel, which would become a memory of lifetime reasoning the luxury, comfort and unending hospitality, I have seen the hint of concern in the eyes of staff about their association of three decades of services with Serena, where they feel as family. Moreover, they felt the fear of losing the bread and butter of their family.

Contemporary government of all favorite Prime Minister Imran Khan, that seems keen to promote the tourism industry, must see this matter personally, since not only Pakistan would end up in losing one of its luxury hotels, but also the professional institution who maintained wellbeing of community, product and services. Moreover, it would be a question mark to the tourism industry, that is forecasted as to become blood circulation of the Pakistani economy. On recent visit to Hasanabdal while speaking at the inauguration of renovated Railway Station on 6th November 2020, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan quoted, we have to consider Tourism as a backbone of Pakistan economy and livelihood "If we improve tourism, there would be no need for taking debt from IMF or any other country. The opportunities are there we just need to take the first step to cash that".

Briefs

M Jordan gives \$10M for health clinics

SPORTS DESK

NEW YORK: American basketball legend and National Basketball Association (NBA) team owner Michael Jordan is donating \$10 million to open two new clinics in his home state North Carolina. The clinics, which are planned to open in 2022, will provide health services for people who do not have any or adequate health insurance in Wilmington, New Hanover County, according to a statement by Novant Health on Monday.

The regional health care network that serves in four states said the donation will bring health care to more rural and rural-adjacent communities in the region. "Everyone should have access to quality health care, no matter where they live, or whether or not they have insurance. Wilmington holds a special place in my heart and it's truly gratifying to be able to give back to the community that supported me throughout my life," Jordan said in a statement. Jordan, who is the principal owner and chairman of the NBA franchise Charlotte Hornets, had donated \$7 million to Novant Health in 2017 to open two clinics in Charlotte that provide behavioral health and social support services to vulnerable communities in the area, according to the statement. Although born in Brooklyn, New York, Jordan's family moved to Wilmington when he was five. He attended University of North Carolina where he made the game-winning shot in the 1982 NCAA National Championship. Jordan was selected in the 1984 NBA Draft by the Chicago Bulls where he spent the majority of his career winning six championships and earning six NBA Finals Most Valuable Player (MVP) Award.

Pak, IMF reach agreement

From Page 01
A 39-month EFF arrangement for the amount of SDR 4,268 million (about US\$6 billion) was earlier approved by the Executive Board.

Rigo was quoted by the statement as noting: "The policies and reforms implemented by the Pakistani authorities prior to the COVID-19 shock had started to reduce economic imbalances and set the conditions for improving economic performance. Most of the targets under the EFF-supported programme were on track to be met." "However, the pandemic disrupted these improvements and required a shift in authorities' priorities towards saving lives and supporting households and businesses," the IMF chief said. He said that Pakistan's response was aided by "the fiscal and monetary policy gains attained in the first nine months of FY2020".

"Aside from health containment measures, this included a temporary fiscal stimulus, a large expansion of the social safety net, monetary policy support and targeted financial initiatives," the statement read. It observed that measures were supported by "sizeable emergency financing from the international community, including from the Fund's Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI)". The IMF statement said that Pakistan's first COVID-19 wave started to dwindle in the summer of 2020, after which "the external current account improved, due to stronger-than-expected remittances, import compression, and a mild export recovery". It said that "high-frequency economic data" had also begun to show that a recovery is enroute. Pakistan's policy re-adjustment due to COVID-19 'shock' The Fund said that with the COVID-19 "shock", Pakistan has had to carefully recalibrate "the macroeconomic policy mix, the reforms calendar, and the EFF review schedule".

"Against this background, the authorities have formulated a package of measures that strikes an appropriate balance between supporting the economy, ensuring debt sustainability, and advancing structural reforms," according to the statement. It noted that the country's fiscal strategy "remains anchored by the sustainable primary deficit of FY2021 budget and allows for higher-than-expected COVID-related and social spending to minimise the short-term impact on growth and the most vulnerable".



KABUL: Pakistani ambassador to Afghanistan, Mansoor Ahmad Khan called on Afghan minister of Public Health Dr. Waheed Majrooh and discussed for further strengthening cooperation between the two countries in the health sector. – DNA

Baku seeks Indonesian co-op in restoration of Karabakh

"After Azerbaijan liberated its territories and restored its territorial integrity, there are big opportunities for economic cooperation. Also, on the liberated lands, we want to see the Indonesian companies as our partners, as contractors to implement different projects which we plan, and demonstrate our unity

NEW DESK

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has invited Indonesian companies to be involved in the ongoing restoration work in Azerbaijan's newly-liberated lands in the same speech where he thanked Jakarta for its continuous support for Baku during Armenia's occupation.

Aliyev made the remarks while receiving the credentials of newly-appointed Indonesian ambassador Hildi Hamid on February 16. Aliyev invited Indonesia to economic cooperation with Azerbaijan on the latter's territories liberated from Armenia's occupation in a 44-day war in 2020.

"After Azerbaijan liberated its territories and restored its territorial integrity, there are big op-

portunities for economic cooperation. Also, on the liberated lands, we want to see the Indonesian companies as our partners, as contractors to implement different projects which we plan, and demonstrate our unity. That's our plan," the president said at a meeting with Hildi Hamid, after receiving his credentials. He added that a lot is to be done to bring Azerbaijan and Indonesia closer on economic track.

"I am sure that we will see good progress during the time of your presence in Azerbaijan," the president said. He stressed that the two countries have big potential to find very important areas of our partnership in the economic area.

"Strong political ties will, of course, be very helpful in expanding our cooperation to dif-

ferent spheres. On the political ground, we cooperate very successfully. We support each other in international organizations, in the United Nations. Of course, we coordinate our efforts in the Non-Aligned Movement and we are very grateful for the support Indonesia demonstrated to our initiatives in the Non-Aligned Movement," Aliyev said.

The president thanked particularly for Indonesia's continuous support to Azerbaijan during the years of Armenian occupation. "Indonesia always joined supportive resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly and also the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Non-Aligned Movement supporting the just cause of Azerbaijan. That was demonstrated throughout many years and it strengthened our position

and strengthened the process of creation of a very solid legal base for settlement of the conflict. During the conflict, your government expressed support to Azerbaijan. We highly value that," the head of state added.

Aliyev reminded that the Indonesian Foreign Ministry had issued a statement in support of the fulfillment of the UN Security Council resolutions which demanded the immediate, unconditional and full withdrawal of Armenian occupational forces from the territories of Azerbaijan and expressed Azerbaijan's gratitude. He also thanked the Indonesian parliament for support. The president added that Indonesia was among other NAM members expressing strong support for Azerbaijan's position during the war.

"As you know, some members of the Security Council wanted to start the process of adopting new resolutions and decisions. And actually, that was an attempt to stop us from just cause of liberation of the territories. And those attempts and wording of those planned steps did not embrace the reference to the Security Council resolutions which was adopted by the countries, members of the Security Council. So, Indonesia together with other friendly countries, NAM members actually blocked this attempt to stop us from the restoration of our territorial integrity, and we highly value that. We are grateful for that. This is a demonstration of solidarity, support and friendship. So, this is a political basis of our cooperation," Aliyev added.

Baku urges Armenia to take steps to ensure peace

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Leyla Abdullayeva has urged Armenian Foreign Minister Ara Ayvazyan to take real actions that will ensure regional peace, the ministry reported on its website on February 16. She made the remarks while commenting on Ayvazyan's statement about the ninth point of the trilateral Karabakh peace deal signed by the Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian leaders on November 10. "Now it is time for real actions that will bring peace, tranquillity,



development and progress to [regional] countries and the region as a whole, rather than the time for meaningless speeches," Abdullayeva said. She added that instead of commenting on the points of the deal, it will

be more useful for the Armenian Foreign Ministry to direct its efforts to specific steps to fulfill the declaration. Clause 9 of the declaration says that all economic and transport links in the region will be restored. Under the deal, Armenia guarantees the safety of the transport links between Azerbaijan's western regions and Nakhchivan exclave to organize the unimpeded movement of citizens, transportation of vehicles and cargo in both directions. The control over the transport communication will be carried out by the Border Service of the Russian Federal Security Service.

Turkish president vows to expand military operations

FOREIGN DESK

TRABZON: The Turkish president Tuesday vowed in the coming days to expand military operations which showed progress to other regions where threats are still significant. "Whichever hole they enter, we will find them there and we will bump them off," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said during the provincial congress of his ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party in Trabzon on the Black Sea coast.

"We are fighting against a terrorist organization with a past full of massacres of children, women, the elderly, civilians from all walks of life, and that finally descended to the point of ruthless execution of unarmed people," Erdogan added.

His remarks came after the bodies of the 13 Turkish citizens were found Sunday during Turkey's counter-terrorism operation in Gara, northern Iraq. Turkish forces carried out a four-day Operation Claw-Eagle 2 in Gara

last week to prevent the PKK and other terror groups from re-establishing positions used to carry out cross-border terrorist attacks on Turkey.

"Gara was an important, troubled area and it fell, God willing; the job was done," Erdogan said. The Turkish president also blamed the Western countries for being silent over the killing of 13 citizens by the terror group.

"We could not see anyone except a few faint voices. Hey West, where are you?" he asked.

"We will stay as long as we need in the places we made secure to avoid similar attacks again," the president said.

Operations Claw-Tiger and Claw-Eagle were initiated last June to ensure the safety of Turkey's people and borders.

In its more than 30-year terror campaign against Turkey, the PKK - listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the US, and EU - has been responsible for the deaths of 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants.



MELBOURNE: Novak Djokovic hits a return during the men's singles quarterfinal match between Novak Djokovic of Serbia and Alexander Zverev of Germany at the Australian Open in Melbourne Park, Melbourne. – Agencies

'9/11-style commission to probe US Capitol siege'

Cassidy said he was "attempting to hold President Trump accountable," and added that as Americans hear all the facts, "more folks will move to where I was." He was censured by his state's party after the vote

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that Congress will establish an independent, September 11-style commission to look into the deadly insurrection that took place at the US Capitol. Pelosi said the commission will "investigate and report on the facts and causes relating to the January 6, 2021, domestic terrorist attack upon the United States Capitol Complex" and relating to the interference with the peaceful transfer of power. "In a letter to Democratic colleagues, Pelosi said the House will also put forth supplemental spending to boost

security at the Capitol. After former President Donald Trump's acquittal at his second Senate impeachment trial, bipartisan support appeared to be growing for an independent commission to examine the deadly insurrection. Investigations into the riot were already planned, with Senate hearings scheduled later this month in the Senate Rules Committee. Pelosi, D-Calif., asked retired Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honore to lead an immediate review of the Capitol's security process.

In her letter Monday, Pelosi said, "It is clear from his findings and from the impeachment trial that we must get to the truth of how this happened." She added, "As we prepare for the Commission, it is also clear

and when they knew, all that, because that builds the basis so this never happens again." Cassidy said he was "attempting to hold President Trump accountable," and added that as Americans hear all the facts, "more folks will move to where I was." He was censured by his state's party after the vote. An independent commission along the lines of the one that investigated the September 11 attacks would probably require legislation to create. That would elevate the investigation a step higher, offering a definitive government-backed accounting of events. Still, such a panel would pose risks of sharpening partisan divisions or overshadowing President Joe Biden's legislative agenda.

There's still more evidence that the American people need and deserve to hear and a 9/11 commission is a way to make sure that we secure the Capitol going forward," said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Dele., a Biden ally. "And that we lay bare the record of just how responsible and how abjectly violating of his constitutional oath President Trump really was." House prosecutors who argued for Trump's conviction of inciting the riot said Sunday they had proved their case. They also railed against the Senate's Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, and others who they said were "trying to have it both ways" in finding the former president not guilty but criticizing him at the same time.

Justice Ahsan explained that the apex court was tasking the election commission to stop corrupt practices under the existing laws, adding that the ECP had full authority to draft roles for the electoral process.

Multinational exercise AMAN-21 concludes

From Page 01

The Chief of the Naval Staff thanked the honorable President for gracing the International Fleet Review with his presence. The Naval Chief assured that Pakistan Navy will continue to play active role in enhancing regional maritime security individually and in collaboration with partner navies. During Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN 2021, up to 45 countries participated in the exercise with their Naval warships, aircraft, Special Operation Forces and a large number of observers.

Govt. not to renew Nawaz's passport

From Page 01

person whose names in the ECL cannot be renewed," he added. However, the minister said if Muhammad Nawaz wanted to travel to Pakistan, he could be issued an Emergency Travel Document within 72 hours but Nawaz Sharif had not made any such request so far.

Sheikh Rasheed said one-time permission granted by the Lahore High Court (LHC) had been misused by the PML-N leader.

He further said the LHC had also issued a verdict asking Nawaz Sharif to return to Pakistan but neither he complied it nor submitted any reply so far.

The minister said Nawaz Sharif had not been stopped to return Pakistan.

Maryum Nawaz had said that she would not give any application to remove her name from the ECL, Sheikh Rasheed said, adding "we have not asked for any application, it is up to an applicant to apply or not."

About upcoming Senate elections, he said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan Pakistan Tehreek-Insaf would win the senate election, scheduled to be held on March 3, with majority.

"There will be no surprise, the political and constitutional issues will be solved after Senate Elections" he hoped. He expressed the hope that very important decision of Supreme Court regarding the open and secret ballot was expected before March 3. The minister said about 150 employees working in the various visa sections for the last 10 years had been transferred. He said the officers who failed to handover charge to newly deputed officials, within 14 days of the orders issuance, his/her services would be terminated.

Ensuring fair elections ECP's duty, says SC

From Page 01

presided over by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed was hearing a case pertaining to a presidential reference regarding holding Senate elections through an open ballot. The chief election commissioner and other heads of authorities were present in the courtroom for the hearing. "The election commissioner should tell us how he plans to stop corrupt practices in the Senate elections," asked the chief justice. "Money and political interference are used in elections," noted Justice Ahsan. "The election commission should tell us how it plans on stopping such practices."

The chief election commissioner responded by saying that the ECP does all it can under its jurisdiction to ensure that corrupt practices are thwarted. "Action is taken before and after elections, on grievances and complaints," said the election commissioner. "Chief election commissioner sahab, you are not informing us with a scheme to stop corrupt practices."

The election commissioner repeated that the votes that are polled in the National Assembly cannot be identified. The chief election commissioner said that the ECP has taken notice of the Senate 'horse-trading video' from 2018 and had called a meeting to discuss it. "The election commission got to know about a video from 2018 today?" asked Justice Ahsan.

Justice Ahsan explained that the apex court was tasking the election commission to stop corrupt practices under the existing laws, adding that the ECP had full authority to draft roles for the electoral process.

Briefs

Lebanon begins vaccinations campaign

WEB DESK

BEIRUT: Lebanon's COVID-19 vaccination roll-out has begun, but there remain concerns the most vulnerable people in the country may be left out of the campaign or excluded altogether. Regardless of nationality or legal status, anyone living in Lebanon is supposed to be covered under its vaccination campaign, including refugees and migrant labourers, who count for around 1.5 million of the estimated six million people living here.

"For refugees, one of the problems that we've noticed are very low registration — it could be a lack of awareness, or a lack of trust in the process," said Aya Majzoub, Human Rights Watch's Lebanon and Bahrain researcher. Of the almost 540,000 people who have registered in Lebanon for the vaccine so far, slightly more than 11,000 are Syrian or Palestinian, the two largest non-Lebanese populations in the country.

Ardern condemns Australia for revoking citizenship

WEB DESK

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has condemned Australia for refusing to accept responsibility for a woman detained in Turkey with alleged links to the ISIL (ISIS) group.

In a statement on Tuesday, Ardern said the woman had held New Zealand and Australian citizenships previously but the Australian government had "unilaterally" cancelled her citizenship.

Turkish authorities said on Monday that the 26-year-old woman was an ISIL "terrorist" and had been caught while "trying to enter our country illegally from Syria".

In her statement, Ardern said it was wrong that Wellington should shoulder the responsibility for a situation involving a woman who has not lived in New Zealand since she was six and has resided in Australia since that time. The woman's family also lived in Australia and she had left for Syria from Australia on her Australian passport, the prime minister added.

"New Zealand, frankly, is tired of having Australia exporting its problems," Ardern later told reporters. "If the shoe were on the other foot we would take responsibility, that would be the right thing to do and I ask Australia to do the same."

Int'l peace conference begins in Istanbul

DNA

ISTANBUL: A two-day international peace conference began in Istanbul on Tuesday with speakers from several countries including Turkey, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Kazakhstan.

The conference titled Turkey, Pakistan and Central Asia: Partnership for Peace is co-hosted by Turkey's Center for Diplomatic Affairs and Political Studies (DIPAM) in partnership with Pakistan's Lahore Center for Peace Research (LCPR).

"We have to learn from each other to be partners in peace," said Tolga Sakman, chairman of DIPAM. Sakman called for cooperation at all levels among Turkey, Pakistan, and the Central Asian nations including in cultural, economic, political and academic areas. Referring to Kashmir, Nagorno-Karabakh, and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, he said shared principles of Turkey, Pakistan and friendly countries in Central Asia "are going to make great contributions in the new era of the world order." Hopefully, this conference acts as a platform where different visions will be shared and worked upon," he added.

Holding our third conference in Turkey "shows the love and respect Pakistan has for this great country, Turkey," Nazir Hussain, the executive director of the LCPR, told the conference which is being held amid strict COVID-19 measures.

FPCCI, Greek ambassador discuss bilateral cooperation

He told the ambassador that Pakistani businessmen were keen to explore more and more business avenues with their Greek counterpart. In this regard he requested the ambassador to help Pakistani businessmen in this regard



COMMERCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Andreas Papastavrou Ambassador of Greece visited the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Capital office and met with the office bearers.

Both sides discussed ways and means to further enhance cooperation between the two countries. The Chairman FPCCI Capital Office Qurban Ali briefed the ambassador about the working of the Federation. He told the ambassador that Pakistani businessmen were keen to explore more and



more business avenues with their Greek counterpart. In this regard he requested the ambassador to help Pakistani businessmen in this regard. Qurban also shared with the ambassador Pakistani potential in various areas besides pin-pointing certain areas where both countries can cooperate.

Ambassador of Greece thanked the business community for giving him an opportunity of sharing with them difference business opportunities available in his country. He said his country greatly valued ties with Pakistan and looks forward to further boosting these ties.

UN 'alarmed' at military escalation in Yemen

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The UN's humanitarian chief says he is "very alarmed" by a Houthi rebel advance on the Yemeni government's last northern stronghold, saying an assault on the city of Marib could endanger millions of civilians. Mark Lowcock, the UN undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, tweeted on Tuesday that an assault would endanger two million civilians and could cause hundreds of thousands to flee the city, which would have "unimaginable humanitarian consequences". The Iran-linked Houthi rebels linked have this month resumed an offensive to seize oil-rich Marib, some 120 kilometres (75 miles) east of the rebel-held capital Sanaa. The city's loss would be a major blow for Yemen's government, which is backed by a Saudi-led coalition, as well as for the civilian population and the hundreds of thousands of displaced people sheltering

in camps in the region. "Now is the time to de-escalate, not to add even more to the misery of the Yemeni people," Lowcock said in his tweet. Military officials from the Yemeni government told AFP news agency that the rebels had advanced towards the city on two fronts overnight after heavy fighting with government forces. Dozens from both sides have been killed in the past 24 hours alone, they said. The total casualty toll from the battle for Marib is unknown but reports indicate it is now in the hundreds. The rebels have advanced north and west of the city after seizing al-Zor [in Sirwah district] up to the western sides of Marib dam, and tightened their grip on hills overlooking supply lines for several fronts," one of the officials said. The Saudi-led coalition, which intervened militarily in Yemen six years ago, has been pounding rebel positions. The Houthi-run Al Masirah television on Tuesday reported a total of 13 air raids in Marib — 11 on locations in the district of Sirwah, and two in the dis-

trict of Madghal. The fighting is endangering sprawling camps for internally displaced people, many of whom have fled several times before ending up in Marib, the only part of the north not under Houthi control. Until early 2020, Marib had been spared the worst of Yemen's six-year-old conflict, due to its strategic importance with its rich oil and gas reserves, and its location near the border of regional power Saudi Arabia. It became a sanctuary for many in the early years of the war, taking in those hoping for a new start. But that relative stability disappeared with fighting last year and — after a lull since October — residents once again risk being in the line of fire as the two sides battle for control. "If fighting moves towards populated areas or these displacement sites, we will see people flee again and towards locations to the east and south of Marib city with even less resources," International Organization for Migration spokeswoman Olivia Headon told AFP.

'Vaccine nationalism will hurt all countries'

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The World Trade Organization's (WTO) incoming chief has warned against "vaccine nationalism" that would slow progress in ending the COVID-19 pandemic and could erode economic growth for all countries — rich and poor. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala told the Reuters news agency that her top priority is to ensure the WTO does more to address the pandemic, saying members should accelerate efforts to lift export restrictions slowing trade in needed medicines and supplies. The former Nigerian finance minister and senior World Bank executive was appointed on Monday in a consensus process and starts her new job on

March 1. "The WTO can contribute so much more to helping stop the pandemic," Okonjo-Iweala said in an interview at her home in a suburb of Washington, DC. "No one is safe until everyone is safe. Vaccine nationalism at this time just will not pay, because the variants are coming. If other countries are not immunised, it will just be a blow-back," she said. "It's unconscionable that people will be dying elsewhere, waiting in a queue, when we have the technology." Okonjo-Iweala said studies showed that the global economy would lose \$9 trillion in potential output if poor countries were unable to get their populations vaccinated quickly and about half of the effect would be borne by rich countries.

Iraqi armed group vows more attacks on 'American occupation'

FOREIGN DESK

BAGHDAD: A volley of rockets targeting an US airbase in Iraq's Kurdistan region killed a foreign civilian contractor and wounded nine others including Americans in the worst attack in a year on the US-led military coalition. The rockets were launched late on Monday from an area south of the main city Erbil near the border with Kirkuk province and also fell on some residential areas close to the airport, officials said on condition of anonymity. The barrage was the first time in nearly two months that Western military or diplomatic installations were targeted in Iraq after a string of similar incidents last year.

The rare attack on Erbil was claimed by a little known Shia group calling itself Awliyya al-Dam, or Guardians of Blood. About a dozen such groups have cropped up in the past year claiming rocket attacks, but US and Iraqi security officials say they are front groups for prominent pro-Iran factions including Kataib Hezbollah and Asaib Ahl al-Haq.

"The American occupation will not be safe from our strikes in any inch of the homeland, even in Kurdistan, where we promise we will carry out other qualitative operations," the Awliyya al-Dam said, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, an NGO that tracks online activity of armed organisations. The United States reacted angrily to the base assault outside the international airport in Erbil, capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

"We are outraged by today's rocket attack," Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said in a statement, vowing to "hold accountable those responsible." "Initial reports indicate that the attacks killed one civilian contractor and injured several members of the Coalition, including one American service member and several American contractors," he said. Iraqi President Barham Saleh tweeted the attack marked a "dangerous escalation and a criminal terrorist act".



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi presenting memento to the Consul General of Japan, Toshikazu Isomura during The Pakistan Japan Business Forum 20th Years Celebration ceremony. — DNA

Lavrov accuses EU of breaking ties with Russia

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Monday that the EU has been consistently breaking off relations with Russia for many years. Most of the bodies created for the development of Russian-EU relations were either closed or frozen in recent years, he said, speaking at a news conference in Saint Petersburg with his Finnish counterpart Pekka Haavisto. Currently, bilateral contacts are mostly focused on separate topics such as the Iranian nuclear problem or the

Syrian conflict, Lavrov said. However, Russia is ready to restore normal cooperation when the EU is ready for it, he added.

Commenting on the case of opposition leader Alexey Navalny and the detentions in Russia during unauthorized protests urging his release, Lavrov said the EU is concerned with human rights violations against Russians only in Russia while it ignores such violations against Russians in European countries, particularly in the Baltic states, where a non-citizen status for ethnic Russians exists.

"When Russian-speaking [TV] channels are being shut down and Russian-speaking journalists are prosecuted just because they are doing their job, when the shameful phenomenon of statelessness remains in the EU and the EU looks on without much desire to change anything, I believe that it's not Russia that is distancing itself from the EU, but the EU drifting away from the Russian Federation," he said. Speaking on behalf of Finland and the EU, Haavisto noted that the EU did not bring up the issue of a possible break in bilateral relations.

Suu Kyi faces second charge by military

"We guarantee ... that the election will be held," he told the nearly two-hour news conference, which the military broadcast from the capital, Naypyidaw, live over Facebook — a platform it has banned

FOREIGN DESK

YANGON: Myanmar's military regime has hit deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi with a second charge, this time under the country's natural disaster management law. "Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been charged with an extra [violation] ... under the Natural Disaster Management law," lawyer Khin Maung Zaw said on Tuesday. Since being overthrown from power earlier this month, Aung San Suu Kyi has already been charged under the country's import and export law for having walkie-talkies in her home. Myanmar's military, meanwhile, guaranteed on Tuesday it would hold an election and hand over power. It denied that its removal of an elected government was a coup, or that its leaders had been detained, and accused protesters of violence and intimidation. The military's justification of its February 1 seizure of power and arrest of Aung San Suu

UN warns Myanmar military

NEW YORK: The United Nations has warned the Myanmar military of "severe consequences" if it responds harshly to the protests that have taken place across the country following the February 1 coup, as the junta leaders justified anew on Tuesday the seizure of power from civilian control. "Ms Schraner Burgener has reinforced that the right of peaceful assembly must fully be respected and that demonstrators are not subjected to reprisals," UN spokesman Farhan Haq said in New York, referring to the UN special envoy who spoke to the deputy head of the junta. "She has conveyed to the Myanmar military that the world is watching closely, and any form of heavy-handed response is likely to have severe consequences." In an account of the meeting, Myanmar's army said Soe Win, the regime's second in command, had discussed the administration's plans and information on "the true situation of what's happening in Myanmar." Despite the UN warning, the spokesman of the coup leaders later said the military's action to takeover power was justified because fraud in a November election was not addressed, adding that it would hand back power after a new election. "Our objective is to hold an election and hand power to the winning party," Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun said on Tuesday, without specifying when the election would be held. It has imposed a state of emergency for one year. The general also accused protesters of inciting violence, adding that one police officer has denied — sparking fears of more violent military reprisals. — Foreign Desk

Kyi and others came as protesters again took to the streets and after a UN envoy warned the army of "severe consequences" for any harsh response to the demonstrations. "Our objective is to hold an election and hand power to the winning party," Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, spokesman for the ruling council, told the first news conference held by the military since the coup. The military has not given a date for a new election but it has imposed a state of emergency for one year. Zaw Min Tun said the military would not hold power for long. "We guarantee ... that the election will be held," he told the nearly two-hour news conference, which the military broadcast from the capital, Naypyidaw, live over Facebook — a platform it has banned. Asked about the detention of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi and the president, Zaw Min Tun dismissed the suggestion they were in detention, saying they were in their homes for their security while the law took its course.

Turkey so far gives 5M+ jobs nationwide

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey has so far administered over 5 million coronavirus vaccine jobs across the country, according to official figures. According to Turkish Health Ministry data, over 4.32 million people to date have received their first doses of a vaccine against the novel coronavirus, while second vaccine doses were given to nearly 703,000. In the commercial hub Istanbul, home to nearly one-fifth of Turkey's population, over 810,000 coronavirus vaccine jobs were administered, including more than 680,000 first doses and 120,000 second doses. Following Istanbul, nearly 450,000 coronavirus vaccine jobs were given in the capital Ankara. Last week, ahead of starting to give second doses, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said Turkey intends to vaccinate 60% of its population. Turkey ensured at least 15 million COVID-19 vaccine doses and reached agreement for over 100 million vaccine doses in total, he said. He added the country will receive 500,000-800,000 doses of the BioNTech vaccine in February, with the total number reaching 4.5-5 million by the end of March. Turkey began its mass COVID-19 vaccination campaign on Jan. 14, starting with healthcare workers and then the elderly.

Saudi woman handed death sentence

WEB DESK

RIYADH: A criminal court in Saudi Arabia has handed the death sentence to a Saudi woman for killing her Bangladeshi maid in a ruling rights groups say was a rare example of an employer being found guilty of abusing a migrant worker in the Middle East country.

Ayesha al-Jizani was sentenced on Sunday to death by the court for killing Abiron Begum in March 2019, some two years after Begum went to the Gulf state in search of better paid work, a Bangladeshi government official said. Begum's relatives urged the Bangladeshi government to take action against the brokers who "tricked" Begum, 40, into taking the job in Saudi Arabia four years ago. "She" wanted to go abroad to earn more money so that she could pay for her aged parents," Ayub Ali, Begum's brother-in-law, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"They started torturing her two weeks after she left. She would call us and cry ... we begged the brokers here to bring her back, but no one listened to us. Jizani's husband was jailed for three years for failing to help Begum access medical treatment and making her work outside the family home illegally, confirmed Ahmed Munir Saleheen, a senior official at Bangladesh's expatriate ministry. Jizani's son was sent to a juvenile facility for seven months, Saleheen added. Campaigners said the Saudi court's verdict against an employer was unusual.

"I have been working in the migration field for several years and I have never heard of such a verdict," said Shakirul Islam, the head of the Oivashi Karmi Unnayan Program, which deals with migrant rights in Bangladesh.

Israel blocks shipment of vaccine to Gaza

WEB DESK

RAMALLAH: Israel has stopped 1,000 doses of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine that are intended for front-line medical workers from entering the besieged Gaza Strip. Palestinian Health Minister Mai Alkaila said in a statement on Monday that Israel bore "full responsibility" for blocking the shipment acquired by the Palestinian Authority (PA), which governs parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank. The PA has said it will share its vaccine supply with Gaza, where Hamas has been in power since a violent power struggle in 2007. The enclave, which is home to more than two million Palestinians, has yet to receive any vaccines. Authorities there have reported more than 53,000 infections and at least 537 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

The PA has acquired about 2,000 doses of the Sputnik V vaccine. Israel — which is carrying out one of the world's fastest vaccination campaigns per capita — has faced international calls to share its stocks as an occupying power with Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Briefs

PTI's Haleem Adil Sheikh arrested

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: PTI leader Haleem Adil Sheikh has been arrested, Senior Superintendent of Police Malir Irfan Bahadur said on Tuesday, as polls were underway in the city's PS-88 constituency. An armoured personnel carrier was requested for his transport, said the police officer, adding that he will be taken to the Memon Goth police station. As the arrest took place, riot police were stationed outside the SSP's office. Water cannons and additional troops were also at the ready to deal with any protests. All the police personnel were given anti-riot gear. At one point, Sheikh attempted to exit the police station but his departure was prevented by police personnel. No case has yet been registered against Sheikh, reported media. Conflicting reports had emerged earlier of the arrest, with the move being denied by the DIG East. On the orders of the Election Commission of Pakistan, Sindh Police had escorted Sheikh out of the PS-88 constituency as clashes broke out with polling underway. "Haleem Adil Sheikh is being removed from the constituency on the orders of the Election Commission," said DIG East Muhammad Nouman Siddiqui, insisting that the PTI leader was not arrested. He added that the Opposition leader in the Sindh Assembly has been taken to the SSP Malir's office.

PTI to work for prosperity of farmers, says Firdous

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Punjab chief minister's aide on information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that the ruling PTI would work for the prosperity of Pakistan's farmers. In a press conference Tuesday afternoon, Dr Awan said the PTI government "is the guardian of the farmer's rights". "It's not just the water running through rivers but also the blood of our farmers and smallholders that run Pakistan's economy and provide it oxygen through agricultural output," she maintained. The CM's aide said the provincial irrigation minister took revolutionary measures in line with his duties. "[During the tenure] of previous governments, the most important sector - agriculture - was ignored which not only hurt the farmers and smallholders but also the barren land, resulting in discouraging results from the agricultural output, no prosperity for the farmers, and a dearth of digital technology," she said. Awan put the responsibility behind the lack of focus on the agriculture sector on the Sharif clan, saying that the "royal family made Jati Umrah its centre of attention".

IHC orders demolition of illegal chambers

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday ordered demolition of illegally constructed chambers of lawyers on the premises of district courts in the capital in F-8 Markaz. An IHC larger bench, headed by Chief Justice Athar Minallah, ruled: "The encroachments on any state land and any construction thereon in violation of the Ordinance of 1960 and the rules or regulations made there under are illegal, void and liable to be removed forthwith." "Since a small fraction of the total number of members of the Islamabad District Bar are beneficiaries of the illegal construction of chambers, therefore, we are confident that as a gesture towards the actual stakeholders i.e. the general public, the members of the Bar will clear the illegal construction and restore the playground for public use," read a 30-page order issued by the bench.

South Africa to send one million vaccine doses back to India

South Africa received one million doses of the license-made AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine last week and another 500,000 were set to arrive in the next few weeks

DNA

PRETORIA: The South African government has asked drugmaker Serum Institute of India (SII) to take back the one million doses of the AstraZeneca-Oxford Covid-19 vaccines it had sent in early February, the Economic Times reported on Tuesday, a week after the country suspended the use of the shot after preliminary studies suggested limited effectiveness against the more contagious local variant of the virus. South Africa received one mil-

lion doses of the license-made AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine last week and another 500,000 were set to arrive in the next few weeks. South Africa's health minister previously noted that the vaccines which arrived from India have an expiry date in April and had asked SII to swap them out for doses with later expiry dates. But after the vaccines roll out was halted last week, the minister said the government may sell the doses to other nations. The country, which has yet to begin its vaccination program, will

begin vaccinating health workers with the Johnson & Johnson single dose shot as part of an "implementation study" with researchers, although a date for the rollout has not yet been set. The Economic Times report cited officials aware of the development, however, SII has not yet commented on the issue. Last week, South Africa halted plans to roll out the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine after a preliminary study suggested that the shot provides "minimal protection" against mild disease from the more

contagious variant of the virus spreading in the country. This decision was made despite the World Health Organization giving emergency approval to the shot allowing it to be rolled out in several poorer nations. The AstraZeneca-Oxford shot is currently being rolled out in large scale across several countries including the U.K., India and it has also been approved for emergency use by the Australian government. SII, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, has emerged as a key supplier of the Astra-

Zeneca shot around the world. Even the U.K., which is home to AstraZeneca, is reportedly auditing SII's sites for future orders of the vaccine amid a crunch in supplies. Last year, SII inked a deal with AstraZeneca to manufacture a billion doses of the Oxford vaccine for India and lower- and middle-income countries during the pandemic and sell it at the cost of production. The firm has a similar license manufacturing deal for Novavax's vaccine candidate and is also developing its own vaccine.

Ahmad Wali Massoud due in Islamabad today

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Ahmad Wali Massoud, Head of Massoud Foundation, will be visiting Islamabad along with a delegation from Wednesday (today). During the visit, Ahmad Wali Massoud will call on the Foreign Minister, Speaker National Assembly, and other dignitaries. He will deliver a keynote address at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad and also have interaction with the media. Visit of Mr. Ahmad Wali Massoud is part of Pakistan's policy to reach out to political leadership in Afghanistan and deepen people-to-people linkages. It will provide an important opportunity for exchange of views on the Afghan peace process. Pakistan attaches highest importance to its fraternal relations with Afghanistan, rooted in shared history, culture and traditions. Pakistan remains committed to strengthen bilateral relations with Afghanistan and supports an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement of the Afghan conflict through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

Taliban call on US to honour deal

KABUL: The Taliban on Tuesday urged the US to honour a landmark withdrawal deal under which all foreign troops would exit Afghanistan in the coming months, even as violence continues to rage in the war-ravaged nation. In an 11-point statement, the insurgent group called for the Americans to stick to the agreement ironed out in Qatar last year that paved the way for ongoing peace talks between the Taliban and the Kabul government. "We urge the American side to remain committed to the full implementation of this accord," wrote the group's co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in an open letter addressed to the American public. "It is the responsibility and in the interest of all to bring an end to this war, and the implementation of the Doha agreement is the most effective way of ending it." - Agencies

PPP moves SC against presidential reference

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has on Tuesday filed a petition in the Supreme Court against the presidential reference on Senate elections open balloting. The plea has been filed by PPP Secretary Farhatullah Babar and requested the apex court to return the reference. The petition states, "It is the view of PPP that the instant Reference is only a political question made in furtherance of political objectives and hence ought to be returned. "The Senate Elections are held under the Constitution as the same are explicitly detailed therein and no plausible reason has been given as to why the Legislature has omitted the same from the purview of Article 226."

Fawad slams 'joker' Indian media

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry on Tuesday has given mouth shutting response to Indian media's allegations regarding farmers' protest. In a post on social-networking website Twitter, the minister said, "Indian leadership and media is run by jokers accusing me of running an international disinformation campaign against India is absurd." "Let me assure you with leadership like Narendra Modi no one needs to plan anything. He himself is enough to destroy India," he said. The reaction came after Indian media accused American journalist Pieter Friedrich of running disinformation campaign against Indian government on the directives of Fawad Chaudhry. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Amir Jamat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq presenting a gift to Ambassador of Iran Ali Hosseini, who visited JI office in Islamabad. - DNA

PPP leads in by-elections

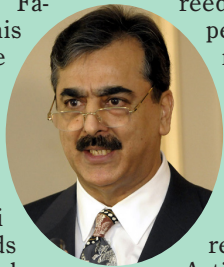
NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Polling took place on Tuesday in the by-elections for vacant Sindh and Balochistan Assembly seats - PS-43 Sanghar III, PS-88 Malir II and PB-20 Pishin III. All three seats fell vacant, last year after the lawmakers elected from the seats passed away due to the coronavirus. In all the three seats, counting is now underway. At least seven candidates are vying for the vacant Sindh Assembly seat from Sanghar with many observers seeing a close contest between PPP's Jam Shabbir Ali and PTI's Mushtaq Junejo. The seat had fallen vacant after PPP Jam Madad Ali passed away due to coronavirus complications in November of last year. The constituency has 157,210 voters with 132 polling stations set up to facilitate them in the electoral process. Out of the 132, 37 have been declared extremely sensitive and 34 are sensitive.

PTI challenges nomination papers of Gilani

The PTI leader has appealed that the ex-prime minister nomination papers be rejected

ISLAMABAD: The ruling PTI has challenged the nomination papers of the Opposition alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) joint candidate Yusuf Raza Gilani for allegedly hiding "facts". PTI leader Fared Rehmman has claimed in his petition that the former prime minister did not mention that he was convicted by the Supreme Court. He added that by not mentioning Gilani does not meet the standards required of a lawmaker under Article 62. He also claimed that the candidate was not of "good repute". The PTI leader has appealed that the former prime minister's nomination papers be rejected. The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) had nominated Yusuf Raza Gilani as its consensus candidate from Islamabad. He was proposed as a candidate by former prime minister Raja Pervez Ashraf and was seconded by former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. Gilani, who was the prime minister from 2008 till 2012, was removed after he was convicted by the SC.



Pak to promote economic diplomacy with Egypt: FM

"In line with Pakistan's desire to forge stronger ties with the Islamic world, as well as the government's 'Engage Africa' initiative, Pakistan accords high importance to its partnership with Egypt"

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Tuesday said Pakistan was keen to promote economic diplomacy with Egypt and other African countries. In a video message before departing for Egypt on a two-day visit, the Foreign Minister said strengthening trade ties with African region was one of the government's top priorities. Terming Egypt the 'gateway to Africa', he said it was also an important country in the Muslim world. Qureshi said there existed immense potential for the development of economic cooperation between Pakistan and Egypt. During the visit, he said, he would hold in-depth discussions

with the Egyptian Foreign Minister on bilateral relations. Qureshi said he would also visit Al-Azhar University, the cradle of knowledge, and expressed desire to benefit from the experiences in the field of education. The Foreign Minister said he would meet the business community in Egypt and also interact with media persons. The visit of the Foreign Minister is taking place in the backdrop of the meetings between Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi; first, on the sidelines of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Makah Summit in 2019, and then on the sidelines of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York in 2019. During these meetings,

the two leaders agreed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and enhance high-level exchanges. More than 40 agreements signed between the two sides in diverse fields provide a firm basis for enhanced cooperation. Last year, the Prime Minister also had a telephone conversation with Egyptian President regarding his 'Global Initiative on Debt Relief' for developing countries, which was supported by Egypt. The Foreign Office said: "Pakistan and Egypt enjoy close fraternal relations firmly anchored on common faith, culture and values. The two countries have similar perceptions on a range of regional and global issues." Bilateral cooperation is advanced through strong

institutional mechanisms, including the Joint Ministerial Commission, Annual Bilateral Consultations, and Joint Business Council. Pakistan and Egypt also work closely in the multilateral arena, in particular the United Nations, OIC and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Egypt is an important country in the Middle East and Africa. Egypt plays a key role in the Middle East, while its deep linkages with the African Continent make it a gateway to Africa. "In line with Pakistan's desire to forge stronger ties with the Islamic world, as well as the government's 'Engage Africa' initiative, Pakistan accords high importance to its partnership with Egypt," the FO statement said.

NAB establishes "Pakistan Anti-Corruption Academy"

The PACA will be an entity under the Training and Research Division of NAB and will perform above functions and role as per prescribed organogram, delegation and job description

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Honorable Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting to review monthly performance of NAB at NAB Headquarters. During the meeting it was informed by DG Training and Research that on the directions of Honorable Justice Mr. Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB, NAB has established its own state of the art "Pakistan Anti-Corruption Academy (PACA)" at NAB Headquarters as NAB always accords high priority for capacity building of its Investigation Officers and Prosecutors on regular basis on modern lines as training is continuous process which is an effective tool for improvement and maintaining the quality of Investigation Officers and Prosecutors. Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB said that NAB is an apex anti corruption organization

of the country which has assigned gigantic task of eradication of corruption from the country. He said that this requires an extremely dedicated and highly trained manpower to undertake this responsibility. He said that NAB attaches great importance to its Human Resource Development. Accordingly, a comprehensive yearly Training Plan for 2021 has been devised to ensure continued professional development of its officers/officials and Prosecutors. In order to ensure successful implementation of the Training Plan, it is equally important that trainers are fully capable and geared up to undertake this responsibility. He said that the



mandate of "Pakistan Anti-Corruption Academy (PACA)" will be to plan and arrange trainings for freshly recruited NAB officers and continuous Capacity Building of the existing Human Resource in the fields of Financial Crime Investigation, Forensic Examination and Prosecution for National Accountability Bureau and other

Law Enforcement Agencies in the Federal and Provincial Governments and to carry out Research and Reformation Projects to highlight weaknesses in the system and purpose improvements based on the need assessment, system analysis and latest good practices in the fields of financial Crimes and prevention of corruption reforms for good governance. He said that "Pakistan Anti-Corruption Academy (PACA)" will further coordinate with all Local and Foreign Agencies for International Cooperation, Trainings, Research and Reformation, Forensic Examination, Curriculum Development and Accreditation of Investigators in the fields of Financial Crimes and Anti-Corruption. The PACA will be an entity under the Training and Research (T&R) Division of NAB and will perform above functions and role as per prescribed organogram, delegation and job description.