

# Samahan

Friday, February 19, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Afghan Peace is vital for whole region, says PM

**Detailed News On Page-08** 

10 nations **used 75% of** all vaccines

**Detailed News On Page-06** 



Pak-Belarus trade ties are below potential

**Detailed News On Page-07** 



# Diplomats still await vaccination

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was supposed to communicate with the Diplomatic Corps and brief it about updates, if any, however Foreign Office's silence has further added to the woes of the diplomatic corps

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

ISLAMABAD: As COVID 19 pandemic continues to taking heavy toll on all and sundry, the diplomatic community especially is worried about its well-being. It is still not clear to the community as to when will it get vaccination.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was supposed to communicate with the Diplomatic Corps and brief it about updates, if any, however Foreign Office's silence has further added to the woes of the diplomatic corps.

Even on Thursday, the Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez did not make any mention as to when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall update the missions about administration of vaccine.

**Vaccination** 

next phase

in March

SHAHEEN HANIF

that Pakistan would begin

its next vaccination phase

from March, with the arriv-

al of the AstraZeneca-Ox-

ford vaccine. The prime

minister's aide, addressing a press conference in Islam-

abad, said that people above

65-years of age would be

given the AstraZeneca-Ox-

ford vaccine that Pakistan

is set to receive through the

PTI

COVAX facility.

Special As-

sistant to the

Prime Minis-

ter on Health

Sultan

Faisal

said Thursday A few weeks ago, when Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi interacted with the ambassadors and high commissioners of various countries to brief them about Kashmir issue, some ambassadors raised this issue with the Foreign Minister nevertheless Minister Qureshi, as reports suggest, did not pay any heed to the question.

A few foreign missions including the Embassy of United Arab Emirates have administered vaccination to their staff on their own. The UAE Embassy arranged vaccine doses thru its own Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Likewise, reports suggest Embassies of United States of America and United Kingdom have also vaccinated their staff members, while a few other missions are in the process of getting vacMinistry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan has literally left the diplomats in the lurch. In such situation the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps should have taken the lead by raising the issue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but unfortunately the Dean of Diplomatic Corps is yet to act on this particular issue.

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

The primary responsibility never theless rests with the Pakistan and government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to address this issue as soon as possible because it involves reputa

tion and image of the country. It may be mentioned here that Pakistani missions abroad have been facilitated by the respective governments in provision and administration of vaccine. Diplomats based in Pakistan expect similar arrange



ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in Senate, Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

# Govt on its way out: Bilawal

NAZIR SIYAL KARACHI: PPP Chairman

Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Thursday claimed that PTI lawmakers "know that the government is on its way out" and will "not vote" for the government in the Senate elections - which is what the government is afraid of. Addressing a gathering in Karachi held to celebrate the victory of PPP candidate Yousuf Murtaza Baloch in the PS-88 Malir by-election, Bilawal asked: "If the government has faith in its members, why is it trying to enter through a back door?" The remark was a likely reference to the presidential orthe House and Aitzaz Ahsan dinance that has been promwas the Leader of the Opposition and the issue of horse ulgated to pave the way for open balloting in Senate elections due on March 3. The ordinance is subject to a pend-

# Court on open balloting. Pervaiz Rasheed's papers

ing opinion by the Supreme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The nomination papers of PML-N leader Pervaiz Rasheed have been rejected by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday on allegations that he had defaulted on payments that were to be made to the Punjab House. PTI MPA Zainab Omar had filed an objection against Rasheed through her lawyer Rana Mudassar to the returning officer/provincial election com-

# cine through their own sources. The lack of interest on the part of ments here as well. CPEC will bring Briefs

prosperity: C

The Army Chief said this in a meeting with Nong Rong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said that successful completion of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will bring more benefits and prosperity to the people of both countries. The Army Chief said this in a meeting with Nong Rong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan at GHQ, on Thursday. According to a statement

Makhdoom Shah Mahmood

Qureshi was received warm-

ly by the Egyptian Foreign

Minister, Sameh Shourky,

at Tahrir Palace in Cairo

on Wednesday. The Foreign

Ministers held delegation

level talks before holding

a joint press stakeout. Af-

ter addressing the media,

the two sides continued

their consultations over the

luncheon hosted at Tahrir

Palace, in honor of the For-

Foreign Minister Qureshi

said Pakistan accorded

high priority to its rela-

tions with Egypt, both as a

key Arab state as well as a

"Gateway to Africa". He ap-

preciated the progress and

development of Egypt in

recent years, and outlined

Pakistan's priorities aimed

at harnessing the country's

huge economic, investment

and human resource poten-

tial. Highlighting the sim-

ilarities in challenges and

eign Minister of Pakistan.

from ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations), matters of mutual interest including regional security issues were discussed during the meeting. The Chief of Army Staff thanked the dignitary for China's assistance in provision of COVID-19 vaccine to Pakistan and appreciated unwavering Chinese support at multiple international fora & capacity enhancement in defence & security domains, the statement added. Visiting dignitary acknowledged

and appreciated Pakistan's contributions for regional peace and stability, the statement concluded.

Earlier this month, China had donated Covid-19 vaccines for Pakistan's armed forces. "However, keeping with the Pakistan armed forces' traditional spirit of 'nation comes first, always and every time' it has been decided to contribute the complete donation to the national vaccination drive [for] frontline healthcare workers across Pakistan.

# rejected

missioner in Lahore.

# lawmakers not under its control

STAFF REPORT



other mistake just to hide a crime. Talking to media persons, she said that incumbent government is involved in vicious practice and made elections controversial and pinned institutions against each other just to keep its lawmakers under control.

# Inside..

Swedish envoy for JVs between Pak-Sweden private sector - Page 02

Religion and science are interlinked: Dr. Yasinzai – Page 03 'S Africa willing

to enhance bilateral

Russia - China supremacy in vaccine diplomacy - Page 05

EU to impose sanctions on Russians over Navalny Page 06

Nearly 500 detained in Myanmar, hackers target military websites

- Page 07 Peace in Afghanistan vital for whole region, says PM – Page 08

# to collaborate closely The Foreign Ministers agreed to revitalize and reinvigorate their agreed frameworks of cooperation

**Pakistan and Egypt agree** 

Qureshi meets Arab I.P.REPORT League Secy Gen CAIRO: Foreign Minister

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Thursday said Pakistan enjoyed strong political, trade and bilateral relations with all member countries of the Arab League. The minister, in a meeting with Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit during his visit to Arab League Headquarters in Egypt's capital Cairo, the foreign minister said Pakistan believed that its deep ties with Arab countries were a sign of special relationship with the Arab League.

During the meeting, a number of issues of regional and global importance, besides matters of mutual interest, were discussed. Referring to the memorandum of understanding between Pakistan and the Arab League, the foreign minister stressed the need to implement its framework through mutual cooperation and coordination.

He apprised the secretary general of Pakistan's reconciliatory efforts for the establishment of peace in neighbouring Afghanistan. He also updated him on the grave human rights violations by the Indian government in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir, which were posing threats to regional peace after India's unilateral step of August 5, 2019.

Earlier, Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit welcomed the foreign minister and showed him different sections of the Arab League Headquarters.

developmental needs of both countries, the Foreign Minister stressed that the two countries could build on their complementarities to develop a diversified bilateral relationship. He said his visit was a stepping stone for Pakistan's enhanced ties with Egypt. During the meeting, the Foreign Ministers reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and tasked their delegations to work towards enhancing cooperation in the fields of infrastructure development, defense and defense production, trade, investment, culture, education, television and media, tourism, agriculture and Information Technology. They also agreed to bolster parliamentary cooperation. The Foreign Ministers

discussed prospects of building maritime linkages between the two countries to augment their economic and commercial outreach respective regions

Continued on Page 06

# Opp. contradicts in words and deeds

Senator Shehzad says the market is set up every time in the Senate elections PDM nearing its end,

SHUJAAT HAMZA

says Shibli Faraz ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in the Senate of Pakistan Senator Shahzad Wa-BUREAU REPORT seem on Thursday said that PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Information and the opposition is contradict-Broadcasting, Senator Shibli Faraz here on Thursing its own stance opted in day said the people have got disenchanted with the 2016 against horse trading negative politics of Pakistan Democratic Movement in the meeting of whole (PDM) and defeat in the forthcoming Senate eleccommittee of the upper tion would be a final nail in its's coffin. house. He said that in 2015, Talking to media at provincial election commission of-Mian Raza Rabbani was the fice on occasion of scrutiny of his nomination papers Chairman Senate, Raja Zafor Senate election, the Information Minister said opfarul Haq was the Leader of position parties have united against open balloting be-

Continued on Page 06

# purchase of votes as witnessed in the past. Climber Ali Sadpara is no more

cause it did not serve their vested interests. He main-

tained that opposing open balloting was tantamount

to encouraging horse-trading, corruption and sale and

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The family of Pakistani mountaineer Ali Sadpara Thursday declared him and two other missing foreign climbers dead. The announcement was made by Ali Sadpara's son, Sajid Sadpara, in Skardu. "I will keep my father's mission alive and fulfil his dream," he said. He also thanked Prime Minister Imran Khan, Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa and the courageous pilots of the Askari Aviation for conducting



**Continued on Page 06** 



### Friday, February 19, 2021

Multiple

projects for Gawadar on

cards

ISLAMABAD: The Balochistan government will soon start carrying out mul-

tiple development projects amounting to Rs 12.3 billion in as many as 45 union coun-

cils of Gwadar and Lasbella for socio-economic develop-

All the proposed develop-

ment projects had received

approval of the competent

authority, an official of the

Balochistan government

He said the approved pro-

jects included construction

of two Jetties at Jiwani and

Ormara and floating Jetti at

Kundmalir, establishment

of eight hatcheries and 80

Under the special devel-

opment initiative, he said

programmes would be initi-

ated with an aim to impart

vocational and technical

trainings to around 12,000

The official said the govern-

ment was striving to devel-

op the coastal area, with an

objective to pull the people

out of poverty by covering

In addition to digitization,

he said more initiatives

would be rolled out soon

to boost the sector, which

remained neglected for the

last couple of decades due

to negligence of previous

To a query, he said Chief

Minister Balochistan Green

Boats Scheme for fisher-

men would be completed in

the financial year 2020-2021

with a cost of Rs500 million.

Govt

committed to

solve problems

of overseas

**Pakistanis** 

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Chairman Dis-

trict Overseas Pakistanis

Committee Adil Ali Khan

has said expatriate Pakistan-

is were great ambassadors

of the country and solving

their problems on priority

basis was a responsibility of

the state. He said this while

chairing a meeting of the

District Overseas commit-

tee at Deputy Commission-

er (DC) Office. He chaired

the meeting of Overseas

Pakistanis Complaint Cell

and reviewed the progress

of Departments in connec-

tion with the resolution of

complaints. The meeting

was attended by DC Ali An-

nan Qammar besides rep-

resentatives from revenue

department, police, town

planning and other govern-

ment departments. He said

a large number of Overseas

Pakistanis living abroad

belongs to Attock. He said

more than 70 percent cas-

es had been disposed off in

this regard. He directed lo-

cal authorities to take action

over the complaints of over-

seas at the earliest. He said

that the committee was fully

functional and weekly meet-

ings would be held in this connection to address these

issues. He said the govern-

ment was taking a number

governments.

all ultra-poor households.

females and 6,300 males.

commercial net cultures.

told APP on Thursday.

ment of its residents.

# **Briefs**

# **Dr Fowzia** worried about Aafia **Siddiqui**

**DNA** 

KARACHI: Aafia Movement Pakistan leader and noted neurophysician of the country Dr Fowzia Siddiqui has said that their family is worried about the health and life of the daughter of the nation, Dr Aafia Siddiqui, jailed in Texas, where is massive winter storm and suspension of electricity and heat system has posed massive threat to life and health of jail inmates.

She said as per reports of the US media as a winter storm wreaked havoc on Texas, about 1,000 women at the federal medical prison in Fort Worth were left without heat in freezing temperatures, according to women in the prison and family members of women incarcerated there.

Winter storm Uri left hundreds of thousands without power in Dallas-Fort Worth and damaged electric lines across the state. While FMC Carswell retained electricity, the heat never kicked on and only cold water was available from Sunday to Monday evening, women at the prison said

### **USAID** inaugurates CCC for Covid-19

KARACHI: States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), inaugurated a state-of-the-art Command and Control Center (CCC) to the Sindh. Health Department to respond to COVID-19 cases across the province. Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Sindh Minister for Health and Population Welfare, and the USAID

Provincial Director for Sindh and Balochistan, James Parys, participated in the semi-virtual ceremony, according to US Consulate Karachi statement.

USAID partnered with Pakistan's federal and provincial health departments establish Command and Control Centers at Health Secretariats across four provinces and two regions to reinforce the Government of Pakistan's response to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. The Sindh Command and Control Center will lead high-level monitoring and decision making on COV-ID-19 at present, as well as other public health threats in the future.

### Solution to Kashmir issue is dialogue, not war: Ch Shuiat

**DNA** 

LAHORE: Former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and President of PTI Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry called on PML-N President and former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujat Hussain at his residence here and inquired about his well-being. The current political situation in the country and Kashmir were discussed on the occasion. Senators Kamil Ali Agha, Ch Sabahat Elahi and Rana Khalid were also present in the meeting. Ch Shujat Hussain said that Kashmir issue is a national issue, all political leaders should think beyond party politics, Indian oppression on Kashmiris should stop, Indian extremism is on the rise, the world should take notice, now is the time for the world to stop the atrocities against Kashmiris. Ch Shujat Hussain said that the opinion of Kashmiris regarding Kashmir should be given importance. This is a tripartite issue. The real party in Kashmir issue is the Kashmiri people. Without their opinion, no solution will be acceptable to anyone. Ch Shuiat Hussain said that Kashmir issue will be resolved only through dialogue, war is not the solution to any problem, India has fought many wars for which no solution has emerged. On the occasion, Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry thanked Ch Shujat Hussain for his support on Kashmir issue and said that the Kashmiri people have the right to decide their own independence, Kashmir is also a party to this issue with India and Pakistan, so this issue should be resolved through dialogue.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani called on Speaker National assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House. - DNA

# Swedish envoy for JVs between Pak-Sweden private sector

Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah said that Pakistan and Sweden have been enjoying good diplomatic and trade ties for decades. He said that like any developing country, Pakistan had been experiencing trade deficit with Sweden

DNA

LAHORE: Ambassador of Sweden Henrik Persson Thursday called for joint ventures (JVs) between private sectors of Pakistan and Sweden in dairy, technical education, environment, telecom, renewable energy and other potential areas to strengthen trade and economic ties.

Talking to business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), the Ambassador said that Sweden and Pakistan have history of diplomatic, economic and trade ties and also similarities in different areas. He said that Sweden was playing an important role in economy of Pakistan as a number of Swedish companies were operational here.

He also appreciated the improved ranking of Pakistan in World Bank index, Ease of Doing Business (EODB) and said, "We would get benefit from this opportunity." He said that in future, business communities of the both sides would get more opportunity to connect and start bilateral negotiation on trade and investment, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah said that Pakistan and Sweden have been enjoying good diplomatic and trade ties for decades. He said that like any developing country, Pakistan had been experiencing trade deficit with Sweden. Sweden should import more from Pakistan to create a win-win situation for both the countries. He said that it should be a matter concern for us that

the volume of bilateral trade between is dipping from last two years. He said that from 2018 to 2019, the bilateral trade considerably dropped from 398 million dollars to 336 million dollars. During this period, the imports from Sweden came down from 260 million dollars to 205 million dollars while the exports dropped from 138 million dollars to 131 million dollars. The LCCI President said that major exports of Pakistan to Sweden include articles of apparel & clothing, articles of leather, rice, sports goods and cotton etc., while the imports consist of ferrous scrap of iron, paper & paperboard, data storage devices, chemicals and cellular phones etc.

He said that in addition to enhancing the trade volume in existing items of trade, there is a considerable room for Pakistan and Sweden to enhance economic cooperation in the fields of IT, Pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, agriculture technology and higher education etc.

Mian Tariq Misbah said that Government of Pakistan has recently put in place a policy framework for the manufacturing of mobile phones and electric vehicles with the aim of enhancing the manufacturing base of the country especially in the field of hi-tech products. He said that it will be a good opportunity for Swedish companies to make the best use of this policy framework by setting up their manufacturing units in Pakistan. He said that Special Economic Zones are being established all across the country under China Pakistan Economic Corridor with all the essential infrastructure facilities. The government is also giving lucrative tax incentives to both the local and foreign investors in these SEZs. He said that Swedish companies may be informed about these latest developments.

The LCCI President said that the role of Swedish Embassy to achieve the desired results is of key importance. LCCI would like to keep regular liaison with the commercial section of Swedish Embassy for this purpose. "We are ready to respond positively to any proposal made for deepening trade and economic ties between two countries", Mian Tarig Misbah added. He informed the Ambassador that the Lahore Chamber is planning a delegation for the European countries and Sweden is one of them.

# MoU for vehicles data sharing between provinces

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Excise & Taxation and Narcotics Control Department & Parliamentary Affairs Mukesh Kumar Chawla has said that department will sign MoU with provinces regarding data sharing of the vehicles to keep an effective eye on to proper watch on the activities using vehicles, while interprovincial throughout country and verify their particulars whenever necessary. During the meeting Secretary Excise & Taxation and Narcotics Control Department Ajaz Memon, Director Generals Haii Saleem Bhutto, Muneer Ahmed Zardari, Director Admn/

MVR Hasan Afandi, Deputy Directors Shakeel Ahmed. Than and others also attended. Provincial minister Mukesh Kumar Chawla added, 'It is the need of the hour that MoU would be signed with provinces in order to stop theft of the vehicles and also minimizing the illegal use of the vehicles

He also asked the concerned officers to examine the MoU draft and furnish a comprehensive report in this regard at earliest, so that it might be materialized effectively. He was of the view that the data sharing of the vehicles between the provinces was

very essential and for the purpose all the stakeholders must be taken on board.

# Pak can prosper by implementing Quaid's motto

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: President SAARC chamber of commerce and Industry and veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik on Thursday stressed the urgent need to implement the Quaid guiding motto of faith unity and discipline in true letter and spirit in every sphere of life that can make Pakistan as one of the most powerful country in the comity of nation. Addressing the 3-day con-

ria-I-Pakistan" held under aegis of Nazria Pakistan Trust,he said Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan gave us three golden principles which he followed in his life and got Pakistan. He said our success will depend mainly on following Unity, Faith and Discipline. If we follow these principles in our individual, social and political life, we can make Pakistan very powerful. Unfortunately, we have not paid

### of measures for the welfare and resolution of overseas Pakistanis problems including the establishment of overseas courts. He said government took many initiatives especially resolving the property related issues

of overseas Pakistanis.

PM to

inaugurate

cricket

stadium

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Prime Minister Imran Khan will pay a daylong visit to Hazro tehsil of Attock district tomorrow (Friday). During the visit, the prime minister will launch the plantation drive and inaugurate a cricket stadium in the Attock district. As per details,10,000 trees would be planted around the cricket stadium. The prime minister will be accompanied by a Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam. The SAPM Malik Amin, during his visit to Attock city last week had announced to construct 10 new cricket grounds in his constituency under the initiative of Clean Green Pakistan. The cricket grounds will be handed over to local young cricketers of Attock. In Attock, he will address a gathering of 32 cricket teams from Chhachh area. The tree planting campaign will be launched in Chichian village on the outskirts of Attock.

### Speakers urge Biden to rejoin abandoned multilateral accords an important country in the region, he requite tumultuous and unpredictable to say KHAYAM ABBASI the least. The past four years have not just marked that economic activities between

KARACHI: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the Party workers at the

residence of newly-elected Sindh Assembly member Yousuf Murtaza Baloch

from PS-88 Malir after Party's victory in by-election. - DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a Panel Discussion on "Biden's Foreign Policy Approach Towards the Middle East" today. The panel of experts included: Dr. Marvin Weinbaum, Director, Afghanistan and Pakistan Studies, Middle East Institute; Dr. Hassan Abbas, Distinguished Professor, NESA, National Defense University, USA & author of 'The Prophet's Heir: The Life of Ali ibn Abi Talib'; Dr. Nazir Hussain, Former Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, QAU and Ms. Fatima Raza, Research Associate, CAMEA, ISSI. Director CAMEA, Ms. Amina Khan opened the panel discussion by stating that former US President Donald Trump's tenure in office has been

been turbulent for US domestic politics but have also created new challenges for American foreign policy in regions across the globe, including the Middle East which occupies a special place in the US foreign policy calculus and was the main focus of today's discussion. While the new administration has announced a 'reset' in America's foreign policy, indicating its desire to re-assess and repair alliances, re-join abandoned multilateral agreements, as well as focus on the protection of human rights as an essential component of its foreign policy in the Middle East, it will be interesting to see how this 'reset' will impact countries within the Middle East. In his remarks Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad

Chaudhry, Director General, ISSI stated that the topic of today's discussion was of great importance. Highlighting Iran as Pakistan and Iran have been severely impacted due to harsh economic sanctions imposed against Iran. Pakistan aspires that JCPOA may somehow be revived as the lifting of sanctions from Iran will benefit Pakistan in many ways. In case of Syria, he maintained that Pakistan has followed a principled approach and will continue to follow it. With Turkey, Pakistan will continue to maintain a close bond.

Talking about key takeaways from President Joe Biden's fourth of February foreign policy speech, Dr. Weinbaum said that in substance and congruity, the policy would be the same but there would a clear difference in the style in which it is conducted. Major decisions will be taken with regards to Afghanistan and the rest of the Middle East will take

# cluding session of 13th namuch attention to them.

# **Facebook hosts 'Discover Ramadan 2021' virtually** Social conscience drives support for local communities. 68% of survey respondents in Pakistan believe brands

should find ways of giving back to consumers and the community (especially during the ongoing crisis), whereas 54% become more interested in a brand or product after learning about their business practices

for Pakistani businesses to share insights and key findings regarding Ramadan shopper behavior and trends, as these business es initiate the planning of their respective campaigns. These insights were shared from a report Facebook commissioned from YouGov, to help advertisers gain a better understanding of their target audience. The event consisted of four sessions altogether: Discover Ramadan Marketing Insights: Facebook sharedsix key insights into Ramadan shopper behavior and trends in Pakistan, as well as tips on how Facebook solutions can help businesses uncover growth during this period. The six key in-

KARACHI: Facebook hosted a virtual event

sights shared were: Social conscience drives support for local communities. 68% of survey respondents in Pakistan believe brands should find ways of giving back to consumers and the commisnity (especially during the ongoing crisis). whereas 54% become more interested in a

brand or product after learning about their Unity through technology; mobile empowbusiness practices. ers family connection. Among the majority



of Ramadan observers/shoppers surveyed in Pakistan, 75% agreed that their mobile phone is an important source of entertainment and reflection during the season, and 72% agreed their mobile helped them get things done during spare moments in Ramadan. Creators offer a new source of credibility. 86% of survey respondents in Pakistan said they follow public figures on social media, and 58% agreed that they follow public figures on social media as a great way to discover new trends. A demand for safety drives mobile shopping.

59% of survey respondents in Pakistan said they use mobile for Ramadan/Eid shopping because it's safer than going to a store, and 81% used mobile to research what to buy. Continuous shopping results in a surprising second shopping peak. The weeks leading up to Ramadan are traditionally seen as the main shopping moment, but there's now a surprising second shopping peak. Most shopping happens at the end of Ramadan. - APP

# **Briefs**

## Painting exhibition of special children held

GHULAM MURTAZA

RAWALPINDI: An exhibition of paintings by special children held in Punjab Council of the Arts in collaboration with Narjis Khatun Health and Education Foundation. The exhibition was inaugurated by Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Speaker Syed Amjad Ali Zaidi. The exhibition features photographs of more than 50 special children.

Addressing the event, Syed Amjad Ali Zaidi said that each picture created by special children has its own story, adding that we only need heart and mind to understand. He added that art and artist have no borders, Pakistani artists were doing well for promotion of local art globally, he added.

Naheed Manzoor said that exhibitions should be held regularly to further enhance the work of special children. The photo exhibition lasted for 2 days and a large number of people turned to the art gallery to see the exhibition.

### CDNS reaches net target of Rs 455b

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The savings of the Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has reached to the free deposit of Rs 455 billion in last 7th months starting from July 1 to February, 10 in the current Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21. The CDNS had compensated an amount of Rs 455 billion to its investors after the termination of major prize bonds of Rs 40,000 and recent cancellation of prize bonds of Rs 25000, senior official of CDNS told media

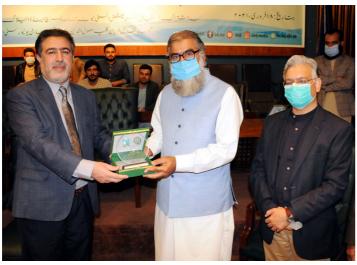
here on Thursday. He said that the federal government had recently suspended the prize bonds of Rs25,000 and had given a six-month deadline to investors to en-cash their savings of Rs188 billion. The government has already canceled prize bonds of Rs 40,000 and CDNS repaid to the investors the en-cashment worth Rs 158 billion in previous FY

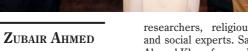
2019-20, he said. The CDNS has set Rs 249 billion annual collection target for the year 2020-21 as compared to Rs 352 billion for the previous year's 2019-20 to enhance savings and promote saving culture in the country. The CDNS had set Rs 352 billion annual collection target for the year 2019-20 as compared to Rs 350 billion for the previous year's 2018-19, he said.

The directorate had also revised and increased the gross target of Rs1570 billion for the fiscal year 2019-20, he said. he said CDNS had maintained the same interest rate on the savings certificates investment due to the market situation and PIB policy decision.

# Religion and science are interlinked: Dr. Yasinzai

The seminar was also addressed by Khurshid Nadeem, Allama Ammar Nasir, Dr. Khalid Masood, Dr. Bibi Ameena and Dr. Ayesha Qurat ul ain. On the occasion, a book published by IRD on the topic of "Sainsi dor aur Mazhabi Biyaniye" by "Abid Tihami was also launched





al Institute for Research and Dialogue (IRD) Thursday organized a one day seminar on "Religion & Challenges of Scientific Age" at Faisal Masjid Campus of International Islamic University (IIU). It was addressed by IIUI lead-

ISLAMABAD: Iqbal Internation-

researchers, religious scholars and social experts. Sardar Ateeq Ahmed Khan, former PM AJK addressing the seminar elaborated the facts similar and proved both by religion and science. He discussed evolution of life, universe, theory of relativity, Quranic ideology and other aspects in the light of science and religion. He also discussed micro and mac-

ro level challenges and shed light

on the approach of solutions in the light of religion and science. Speaking on the occasion, IIUI Rector Dr. Masoom Yasinzai said that there is dire need to address the confusion prevailing in the minds of youth regarding religion and science.

He elaborated that both are interlinked and the masses, specially the youth must be told that religion and science are not against each other. He called upon the universities to prepare young Muslim minds integrated with teachings of Islam who should also be well aware of the contemporary changes of science.

Vice-President AF&P, Dr N.B.

Jumani in his speech at the seminar called upon Muslim world to promote research on comparative religions. He stressed for quality research and improve-

ments in research on the scientific bases. He congratulated IRD on organizing the seminar on the vital topic and hoped that the learned speakers will enlighten the minds of participant youth. Executive Director IRD, Husnul Amin in his welcome address briefed about the Institute's activities of research and Dialogue. He said this is the age of reasoning

and freedom of discussion that is

why debate on religion and science has increased. He vowed that the IRD will keep its efforts on for useful and constructive dialogue. The seminar was also addressed by Khurshid Nadeem, Allama Ammar Nasir, Dr. Khalid Masood, Dr. Bibi Ameena and Dr. Ayesha Qurat ul ain. On the occasion, a book published by IRD on the topic of "Sainsi dor aur Mazhabi Biyaniye" by "Abid Tihami was also launched.

# PRCS deploys ambulances to reduce mortality on motorways

Abrar ul Haq says joint road safety initiative with NHMP will help reduce deaths and injuries due to accidents on motorway besides raising awareness among public on road safety laws

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in collaboration with the National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) is launching an initiative to help reduce deaths and injuries due to roadside traffic accidents and save lives. Under the joint road safety initiative, PRCS will not only deploy ambulances on the M-2 Motorway service areas but also provide first aid kits to NH&MP for delivery of emergency medical and relief services to commuters in case of any traffic accidents. PRCS will impart

free of cost First Aid training to NH&MP staff as they are first on scene of any accident usually on national highways and motorways. Steps will also be taken to raise awareness among the general public about road safety so that road fatality rate could be minimized. According to the World Organization Health (WHO), globally 1.25 million people die in road traffic accidents every year and about 50 million sustain injuries. According to NHMP sources, around 36,000 people were killed in road accidents across the country

in 2019. A survey suggests

that 59% of deaths due to

IHC seeks reply from 32

lawyers in contempt case

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday once again served con-

tempt of court notices to 32 lawyers involved in IHC rampage and directed them to

submit their written reply on next date. The court of Justice Aamer Farooq adjourned

hearing against 26 lawyers for three weeks. Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IH-

CBA)'s President Haseeb Chaudhry and other lawyers appeared before the court. The

lawyers on the occasion requested the court to constitute a JIT to probe the Capital

Development Authority (CDA)'s operation against their chambers. They pleaded before

the court that the lawyers were being targeted deliberately, adding that it was attempted

to arrest them on gate. Justice Farooq said that if the lawyer organisations itself demon-

strate responsibility then the other lawyers wouldn't face problems. This incident was a

tragedy for black coat and judges, he said. The court asked the bar representatives to

injuries during accidents can be saved through timely provision of First Aid.

In a statement, Chairman PRCS Abrar ul Haq said that being a leader in emergency response, PRCS will collaborate with the NH&MP to provide ambulance and first aid service on motorways beside imparting free of cost First Aid training to NHMP staff Ambulances will be deployed for provision of timely First Aid on spot and later shifting of injured to nearby hospital for specialized care. Highways and motorways

are the frequently used routes for transportation both for LTV and HTV traffic and therefore account for a considerable number of road crashes. It is estimated that every five minutes, someone is killed or badly injured in a road traffic crash in Pakistan and lack of awareness about road safety laws is one of the major causes of such incidents. First Aid and Pre- Hospital Care is a flagship program of PRCS to reduce injuries, deaths in country like Pakistan where health facilities are already burdened. "Road safety is a shared responsibility and everyone needs to play his part to protect people from deaths and injuries on roads," he concluded.

### Language Festival on 21

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) has planned to celebrate the 6th Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival on February 21 to highlight the value of languages in Pakistan. Intellectuals having experiences from Pakistani mother languages will participate in the event as speakers and moderators to promote Pakistan's linguistic and cultural diversity by fostering critical thinking and learning through effective use of creative expression in mother languages. - DNA

# PTCL launches WhatsApp service

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has established its official presence on WhatsApp to better connect with customers and provide them with a convenient and customer friendly communication platform. To start using PTCL WhatsApp, customers have to first save the PTCL WhatsApp number, which is 033 1218 1218 and then send a message on this number to get the required service, said a news release issued here on Thursday. PTCL WhatsApp, a fast, simple and reliable communication tool, will provide quick answers to customers' frequently asked questions and introduce customers to the various options such as complaints registration, order new products or services. Moreover, customers can get information about all kinds of packages and promos, along with getting their bill information and much more This service will be round the clock facilitation for the customers and will help bridge the communication gap. On the

launch of WhatsApp service, Moqeem ul Haque, Chief Commercial Officer and Group Corporate Strategy Officer, said, "Despite COVID-19, we have adapted to changing business environment and have taken proactive measures to provide convenience to our customers. As one of our core values is "We Put Customer First", we are always exploring new avenues to adopt latest technology that will help in digitalization. The successful launch of our WhatsApp service will provide seamless services to our customers and enable them to get timely response on their queries and complaints, thus ensuring enhanced customer experience." – DNA

# ITP removes traffic diversions

RAWALPINDI: The twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Thursday witnessed huge rows of automobiles and commuters on Islamabad Express way and Faizabad interchange due to protesters creating a traffic mess and blockade on its major arteries. The ITP had, soon after the protest dissipated, removed diversions from Faizabad Interchange to Khanna Bridge on Islamabad Expressway, said an official statement of the ITP. The ITP keeping in view the

situation had deputed its officials on the key positions to ease out the congestion and ensure smooth flow of traffic, it added.

The police officials had placed diversions placed for traffic to contain any untoward situation due to the protest on Islamabad Highway at various points. Elaborating the diversions placed, it said traffic from Koral to Khanna was diverted at Khanna Bridge early due to the protest on Faizabad Bridge. – **DNA** 

# Media urged to counter conspiracy theories

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson of the Punjab government, Musarrat Jamshed Cheema Thursday appealed to the people to seek correct information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine from authentic sources. She also an awareness campaign to counter baseless conspiracy theories about the vaccine. Talking to a Private news channel, she urged people not to pay heed to rumors and propaganda and reiterated that the vaccines are well tested and safe.

"It is important that no-one

will be forced to take the vaccine but we urge people to registered themselves for vaccine instead of believing in fake messages shared on social media", she added. She said we live in a time of fake news and misinformation so it is important that people make their decisions about the vaccination based on reliable information and not on lies peddled by conspiracy theorists who seem hell-bent on forcing their beliefs on others. "Working together we can and will defeat this virus," she

theorists who seem hell-bent on forcing their beliefs on others. "Working together we can and will defeat this virus," she stressed. She said that priority was given to high-risk category including frontline healthcare professionals and elderly people, adding, the vaccination of the frontline health workers in the country was started on February 2, a day after China donated 500,000 Sinopharm doses to Pakistan.

# point out the lawyers involved in IHC attack if they were sincere to take the matter to its logical end and bring the courts on routine. The court noted that the CCTV cameras were not functional on that day. The lawyers said that they were neither provided verified copies of FIRs not they were given the rights of bail. The lawyers submitted that the police was raiding the houses of lawyers in the name of the honorable court. – **DNA**

The jury finalized the winners with delicate observation. Secretary information Miss Shahira Shahid congratulated the winners

**Javed Malik gets** 

**Purazm Award** 



SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Fifth purazm award ceremony 2021 under Pakistan Peace Collective, research project of ministry of information was held at Information Services academy Islamabad. In professional categoryof text story, a renowned jour-

nalist Javed Malik was awarded first prize. On other categories, Fazle Khaliq, Sheeza Mustaseem, Sundas Mehboob, Seema Iqbal, Waleed Akram, Shahrukh Khan, Musa Yawari, Omer Nafees, Ahmed Zolaid, Anam Naseer, Zaheer Mukhtar, Furqan Azeez, Iqra Imtiaz, Muhammad Talal and Ghulam Abbas were awarded with prizes.

During the introductory speech, CEO of the project Mian Bashir Anwar apprised the participants that more than one thousand shortlisted documentary films, stories, pictures and digital posters were judged by the jury consisting of experts like Nadeem Omer Tarar, Katrina Hussain, Professor Kamran Butt and Haroon ur Rasheed. The jury finalized the winners with delicate observation. Secretary information Miss Shahira Shahid congratulated the winners and told the participants that the ministry would take more such steps to bring forward the real talent so that we could introduce our talented writers, filmmakers and experts of digital work to the world. This would be helpful in projecting positive image of Pakistan.

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# **Briefs**

## **CTO** conduct surprise visit to check performance

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Rai Mazhar Iqbal conducted surprise visits of check posts set up at New Town, Sadiqabad, Committee Chowk and Pir Wadhai to check performance of traffic wardens, informed spokesman here on Thursday.

On the occasion, he directed all the circle and sector in-charge traffic personnel should work hard and diligently to maintain the flow of traffic in their respective sectors in an effi cient manner.

He said that any negligence on the part of the traffic wardens in the matter of traffic flow would not be tolerated at all. CTO said that all sector in-charges should submit reports on cleanliness of surroundings on daily basis. He also appealed to the citizens to cooperate with the traffic wardens and always park their vehicles in the parking area or in a suitable place during shopping so that the public would not face any hassle while driving.

## NAB chairman briefed about revised contracts with IPPs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A negotiation committee of the government for tariff reduction of IPPs (Independent Power Producers) on Thursday briefed National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Justice (Retd) Javed Igbal about the revised contracts with 47 IPPs and concessions extracted from the recent deal with IPPs.

According to NAB spokesman, the chairman was briefed about the arbitration clause of these contracts which determines the alleged excess savings of Rs. 55 billion.

It was worth mentioning here that the idea of negotiation was floated by NAB after finding some flaws in the IPPs agreements inked by the previous governments. The strategy of NAB proved advantageous and beneficial which resultantly brought savings of billions of rupees.

Reiterating firm commitment to resolve the issue, the spokesman said NAB always gives top most priority to the development and prosperity of the country. Chairman NAB appreciated the efforts of negotiation teams and the whole process which would help saving Rs. 836 billion from remaining terms of these IPPs

NAB absolutely denied the reports appeared in a section of media alleging that NAB was finding wrongdoing on these revised IPPs contracts.

### Six died, 19 injured in road accident

DNA

HASSANABDAL: At least six died, and 19 seriously injured in a head on col lision between a speedy coaster and trailer near Gali Jagir on Thursday. Police said the deceased were identified as Humayun Hassan son of Ghulam Hassan resident of Ikhlas Tehsil Pindi Gheb, Mohammad Waseem son of Mohammad Yasin, resident of Malal Tehsil Fateh Jang, Yasir Mahmood son of Malik Khudadad, resident of Ratwal (a bus conductor), Mohammad Akram son of Mehr Khan resident of Gali Jagir.

The injured were Mohammad Shafiq, son of Siddique, Mohammad resident of Khor city Tehsil Pindi Gheb, Ghulam Raza, son of Gul Jaha A, resident of Chichi Tehsil. Telangana besides oth-Police have registered a case and started investigation.



RAWALPINDI: President Rawalpindi chamber of commerce and industry, Nasir Mirza presenting chamber memento to High Commissioner of South Africa, Methuthuzeli Madikiza during his visit to RCCI. - DNA

# 'S Africa willing to enhance bilateral trade with Pak'

The high Commissioner expressed these views during his visit to the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Thursday. He was accompanied by Deputy head of Mission and Political Consular, Christo Janse Van Noordwyk

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: South Africa High Commissioner Methuthuzeli Madikiza has said that South Africa considers Pakistan an important market for trade cooperation and is keen to further enhance bilateral trade with it as the two countries have good potential for trade in many areas. Pakistan is the 14th big exporter to South Africa. He said that the trade relations between the two countries, Pakistan, South Africa, the Chamber of Commerce and the private sector needed to be further strengthened.

The high Commissioner expressed these views during his visit to the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Thursday. He was accompanied by Deputy head of Mission and Political Consular, Christo Janse Van Noordwyk. President of the Chamber Muhammad Nasir Mirza, Senior



President Shahraiz A Malik, members of the executive committee and chamber members were also present on the occasion.

During the meeting, the High Commissioner said that the volume of bilateral trade could increase to one billion dollars in the next few

tures can be initiated in other sectors, including tourism, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and services. The efforts of the Rawalpindi Chamber in expanding trade activities and promoting trade relations are commendable. The High Commission considers the Rawalpindi Champromoting trade ties. The Corona epidemic has affected trade activities in many parts of the world. Meeting new challenges requires joint efforts and cooperation, he added. The high Commissioner offered RCCI to organize its annual achievements awards in Cape Town forum with African Countries through a virtual platform despite the Corona epidemic. Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) were also signed with South Africa and the Minara Chamber on the sidelines of the International Chambers Summit (ICS 2021). In order to increase trade with South Africa, trade related information should be shared and exchanged at the delegation level, he suggested. He also apprised the High Commissioner about the investment opportunities in Pakistan. Joint ventures can also be launched in the fields of information technology and construction,

neering, poultry and textiles, he

participate in Build Expo 2021 being organized by the Chamber. Earlier, Chamber President Nasir Mirza briefed the High Commissioner about the ongoing activities and future programs of the Chamber. He said that the Chamber had successfully conducted the trade including pharma, marble, engi-

# 21 lawyers served notices

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday served notices to 21 lawvers for misconduct and ambush Islamabad High Court (IHC). A three member bench headed by Chief Justice Athar Minallah and comprising Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Lubna Saleem Pervaiz sought reply from the law-

yers within one-week. Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHCBA)'s President Haseeb Chaudhry, Riasat Ali Azad and other lawyers appeared before the bench. "This is not my presonal issue but directly relates with the sanctity on the honorable court. We would send references against lawyers, involved in IHC attack, under the law." Chief Justice Athar Minallah remarked. He observed that the Islamabad Bar Council (IBA) had condemned this incident and requested the court to send references against the involved lawyers. It was a list of more than 150 names but the court didn't want any kind of injustice with anybody, he added. - APP

# Chairman HEC condoles demise of Dr. Rafiq Baloch

ISLAMABAD: Chairman HEC Tariq Banuri has condoled the death of Dr. Muhammad Rafiq Baloch, Vice Chancellor, Lahore Leads University who passed away due to heart attack in Lahore on Wednesday. Mr. Banuri on behalf of the higher education fraternity, sent heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and students. He prayed for the departed soul and his family, saying that the entire higher education community shared the grief of this irreparable loss. Dr. Baloch served HEC as Director General Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and performed his obligations with utmost dedication and commitment As a former head of QAA, his contributions to the HEC's efforts for enhancing the quality of higher education will never be forgotten. Dr. Baloch did his PhD in Education in Leadership from Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. He remained attached to Academic Quality Assurance for over a decade while serving as Director Quality Assurance in two universities. - DNA

# CDA restored 80% of street light of capital



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has restored 80% street light across the city. Colorful lights are being installed in underpasses and at flyovers to enhance their beauty. On the other hand 1102 conventional lights have been replaced by LED lights. According to detail, the administration of CDA is committed for enhancing the beauty of capital city. Street lights have been restored at Express Way, Srinagar Highway, Jinnah Avenue, Margalla Road, 7th avenue, 9th avenue, F-6, F-7, F-10, G-10 and other commercial areas, main roads and services. Conventional lights are also being replaced by LED lights. Colorful lights are also being installed. 90% work on restoring and installing new lights in parks of the city has been completed. Patrolling team of CDA

# CDA launches operation against land mafia

ISLAMABAD: The administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) has launched a large scale operation against the land Mafia, illegal constructions and encroachments. The operations are continuing continuously, In this regard, a large scale operation has been launched against the land mafia in Malpur yesterday. According to detail The operation is being carried out under the supervision of the Enforcement Department, while a heavy machinary of the MPO department was used for the operation. During the operation, illegal constructed structures have been demolished and 40 kanals of government land worth crores of rupees has been handed over. The operation will be re-operated. In Sector H-8, encroachments from the side of the highway, Sector I-14, four walls and a hut from GT Road, while nine walls from Quaid-e-Azam University area were demolished. It should be noted that the operation against encroachments will continue. - DNA

is also continuously restoring the street lights which are not in order. CDA has allocated 10 vehicles and staff for addressing the complaints

of the masses. Lights have been installed at 25,468 different places during last 03 months and 36 parks have been enlightened

# 'Force marriages, conversions unislamic'

Responding to a question, he said killing of any non-Muslim or damaging their property has nothing to do with Islam. The killer of a non-Muslim doctor who was killed in Peshawar has been arrested.

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The forced marriages and conversions to Islam were against the teachings of Islam, Special aide to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East, Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi said Thursday.

Addressing, 'National Interfaith Women Conference' held under the aegis of Church of Pakistan and Interfaith Harmony Councils, Ashrafi, who is also Pakistan Ulema Council chairman urged minorities living in Pakistan not be intimidated as the state will stop those who try to

The honor and status bestowed on women by the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W) is un-

matched anywhere else Islam is the protector of the rights of minorities and state was responsible to ensure the protection of the rights of every Pakistani living in the country.

Responding to a question, he said killing of any non-Muslim or damaging their property has nothing to do with Islam. The killer of a non-Muslim doctor who was killed in Peshawar has been arrested.

Elements accomplice in terrorism and extremism activities in



the name of Islam are not making any service to Islam and are

not friends of Islam. The sanctity of all religions and holy places of all the schools of thought must be respected, he said adding government was in constant coordination with human rights organizations and

them to seek solution on different issues through dialogue. Some conspiring forces misuse social media to fan unrest and

anarchy in Pakistan, he said adding endeavors were being made to restrict misuse of blasphemy law. Ashrafi urged Human Rights Organizations and NGOs to come forward and play positive role for promotion of interfaith harmony. He said Interfaith Harmony Councils are being organized at Union Councils level. At the behest of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Human Rights is working together to im-

NGOs with objectives to invite Talking to reporters after the conference, Ashrafi said that money had been used in the Senate elections in the past.

Prime Minister Imran Khan wants to make an end the culture of buying and selling of votes in elections.

He urged the opposition to support the government for trans-

parency in polls. Referring to the approval of new boards of Madaris, he said that the government has made the right decision and the formation of new boards of Madaris will improve the quality of education added that more boards will also be formed.

### **ATC** extends judicial remand of two lawyers till March 1

ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) on Thursday extended the judicial remand of two lawyers and sent them to jail till March 1, in Islamabad High Court ambush case.

The court also adjourned hearing on bail petitions of three lawyers due to lawyers' strike.

ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan heard the case. The two lawyers including Naveed Malik and Nazia Abbasi were produced before the bench after completion of their remand period.

During the hearing, accused Nazia Abbasi pleaded that she had no connection with the violent protest of lawyers. The prosecution should present evidence to prove her involvement in the incident, she said, adding that she was being dragged in personal disputes. Naveed Malik Advocate said that he was a practicing lawyers for 25 years and he had not been part of such incident. We are being treated as terrorists, he said. The court on the occasion directed the jail administration to bring the lawyers separately from other prisoners.

The lawyers said that the concerned investigation officer was not cooperating with them to this the court summoned the IO and held a recession. After this, the court extended the judicial remand of the two lawyers till March 1. Meanwhile, the court adjourned hearing on bail petitions of Secretary District Bar Association Liaqat Manzor Kambo, Muhammad Umer and Khalid Mehmood till February 19, due to lawyers' strike.

# Six died, twelve injured in road mishap

ATTOCK: Six died while twelve received multiple injuries when hus collided with a trawler, 10 km away from Fatehjang on Pindigheb Fatehjang road. The dead and injured were shifted to THQ Hospital Fatehiang by Rescue 1122. As per details a Pindigheb bound bus coming from Rawalpindi, collided head on with a trawler because of rash driving of the bus driver. Those died include Muhammad Shafiq r/o Khaur , Hamayun r/o Ikhlas . Muhammad Waseem r/o Malal , Yasir bus conductor r/o Ratwal , Muhammad Akram r/o Gali Jageer and Ghulam Raza r/o Chenji Talagang . Those received multiple injuries include Junaid r/o Nowshera Pindigheb, Muhammad r/o Malal , Mansha Bibi r/o Gali Jageer, Shafqat r/o Ikhlas, Rameez r/o Gali Jageer, Muhammad Afzal r/o Muslim Town Pindigheb, Sikandar r/o Dhulian, Mehrban r/o Khaur , Arshad r/o Jhandiyal , Mehmood Khan r/o Khundi Dheri Pindigheb , Musarat Bibi r/o Khaur and Talha r/o Dhuliyan . Meanwhile Afaq Ahmad a Ist year student r/o Khaur committed suicide because of unknown reasons. On the other hand police arrested four gamblers namely Akram ,Liagat , Nisar and Abdul Jabbar from the jurisdiction of Basal police station. – APP

## Admin retrieves over 62 kanals land

RAWALPINDI: District administration Rawalpindi accompanied by the local police on Thursday launched an operation and retrieved 62 kanals and 16 marlas state land from the occupation of the encroachers.

According to a District Administration spokesman, the administration on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Capt (retd) Anwar ul Haq conducted an operation in 'Moza Ahal Paswal', Taxila under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Taxila Shahzad Mehboob and the Revenue officers concerned. He informed that 62 kanals and 16 marlas state land worth Rs 200 million was retrieved.

'Operation against the illegal constructions was carried out in 'Moza Ahal Paswal' Taxila and the land was retrieved from the occupation of the encroachers,' he added. The district administration as per orders of the Punjab Chief Minister has issued strict instructions to all the departments concerned to man out illegal encroachments and take strict action against them, he said. - APP

# FM In Cairo

AKISTAN'S Foreign Minister (FM) Shah Mahmood Qureshi is in Cairo on his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Hassan Shoukry's invitation. Ever since Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has come to power, the top leadership of Pakistan has been engaging with that of Egypt. The meetings between Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan and President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi on the sidelines of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Makkah Summit and the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York (2019) and subsequent telephonic conversations have shown that the two sides are eager to cultivate deeper bilateral terms.

While Pakistan enjoys cordial relations with Egypt and other countries in the North African region and the broader Arab world, there is a lot of room for enhancing cooperation. Asia and Africa are undergoing rapid transformation, given China's ambitious Belt and Road project. Therefore, today's engagements with Egypt can bring Pakistan sustainable dividends and turn "Engage Africa" initiative into a great success story. Admittedly, the FM will discuss a wide range of topics with Egyptian officials. Nevertheless, commerce will be the most crucial one. According to Pakistan Business Council's (PBC) profile report of Egypt, the trade exchange volume between the two sides is less than \$220 million against the untapped potential of \$3.40 billion.

Since agricultural products account for a significant portion of Egypt's import bill, Pakistan can play its part in boosting the untapped trade potential. Similarly, Pakistani and Egyptian governments are on board on many regional and global issues and united on the war on terror front. The two sides by boosting up their defence ties can further enhance the trade volume. Cairo can potentially become a key buyer of Pakistan's military equipment. Cooperation in agriculture and defence can open up other avenues of partnerships between the two sides; Pakistan can use Egypt as a "gateway' to make sustainable inroads in Africa.

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# CSS reforms

HE federal government promises to cleanse the civil service of an arbitrary promotion process along with corrupt officers through the new reforms proposed by the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS). While the authorities may be on the right track, there are still certain concerns being expressed about the new reforms that must be heard and responded to. Such small, but necessary, actions let the people know that such initiatives are as consultative as is being claimed. According to Dr Ishrat Hussain, the Adviser to the PM on Institutional Reforms, the CSS reforms were only passed after the expertise of more than 1900 officers was sought, in addition to over 60 sessions of intense discussions. As was needed, all the stakeholders came to the logical conclusion of there being a need to weed out all the causes of inefficiency with the CSS.

As such, to force all the fraudulent officers into retirement and creating a trackable promotion process was the right move forward and any controversy in this regard needs to be clarified immediately. Otherwise, vital progress bears the risk of being derailed by those who claim that not only are the reforms outdated or repetitive but that the PAS has been in charge of the reins for a significant period of time since they were initially called the District Management Groupthose in charge of creating such structures within the CSS. These internal bureaucratic squabbles should not tarnish a process that could bring positive restructuring. It is imperative that the government, before taking any further steps to modify the CSS, takes a step back to assure the public, officials and relevant institutions that cooperation is its primary goal when embarking upon such tasks. Furthermore, it can clarify the credentials of the PAS to ensure that such misunderstandings are clarified immediately.

# Russia - China supremacy in vaccine diplomacy

Dr M Ali Hamza



The global vaccine race is a part of international power game and the west is in danger of losing more ground. In fact the damage to American and EU standing is already done. EU failed badly on supplying vaccine to their own citizens, even their closest neighbor like Serbia issticking her hopes to Russia and China. Hungry is the first EU member state to approve Chinese vaccines; a huge credibility boost to Beijing

OVID-19 vaccines are turning out to be an important form of diplomatic currency around the world; atool for soft-power gains. Russia and China have been challenging the West for years. Their military build-ups, infrastructure projects and targeted economic support have already strengthened their geopoliticalinfluence. And now, as the deadly coronavirus pandemic upsets the world, the two powers are presenting themselves as globalrescuers. They offer the most in demand commodity what everyone desperately needs; yes the COVID-19 vaccine. Russia produced the first ever corona vaccine proven to have 95% efficacy. President Putin proudly presented 'Sputnik V Serum' after 8 months development and courageously offered his daughter for the first shot. Naming vaccine after the world's first satellite launched by the USSR explicitly evokes images of Russia as a superpower. Vaccine was a big win for Putin administration domestically as well as internationally.

It portrayed to its people that the current regime is strong and capable to face any challenge. China quickly followed Russia by two of their own manufacturers Sino-Vac and Sino-Pharm. Though western media tried it's all best to accuse China for the pandemic, and Trump even called it a China-Virus, but Beijing is busy leading a fight against the Corona tragedy. It is an understood fact that China look forward to a positive response of her vaccine generosity from the receivers of Chinese vaccine. Global vaccine race is political and pulls in lot of business. As USA being a global player seems absent from the vaccine race and EU is looking inward, it is no surprise that Russia and China have rushed into fill thevacuum.

The global vaccine race is a part of interna-

of losing more ground. In fact the damage to vaccines doses to Pakistan and it would do-American and EU standing is already done. European Union (EU) failed badly on supplying vaccine to their own citizens, even their closest neighbor like Serbia issticking her hopes to Russia and China. Hungry is the first EU member state to approve Chinese vaccines; a huge credibility boost to Beijing. Even EU giant nations like Germany, opening the idea of buying Chinese or Russian Vaccine once they are approved; are they waiting for western approval? The EU pledges from the start to help developing and poor nations. It invested heavily on research and development, and sealed deals with 6 different drug manufacturers to secure 2 billion doses of vaccine where as their need was only 450 million doses. Indeed the rest was planned for the world but those promises seem to have been postponed as vaccine supply is too slow for their own people. EU which buys vaccines on behalf of its 27 member states has authorized three shots developed in Germany, the US and the UK. But the bloc was slow to sign contracts and authorize the shots, while manufacturers have struggled to deliver the doses promised. Shortages have been even worse in non-EU countries in Europe. Have some European capitalist gobbled the public money? The story needs attention.

Some small European governments are turning to China for Covid-19 vaccines as EU procurement stumbles and Western vaccine makers' production hiccups hamper the fight against the pandemic. This trend would definitely increase China's influence in the region. China was one of the first countries to make a diplomatic vaccine push, promising to help developing countries last year even before the nation had mass produced a vaccine that was proved to be effective. tional power game and the west is in danger Just in February Chine donated 500, 000

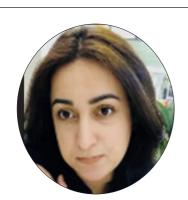
nate 300,000 vaccine doses to Egypt in the same month. Other low to middle-income countries from Brazil and Nigeria to Algeria are looking to Moscow and Beijing for doses. Chinese vaccines are finding buyers in Latin America and the Middle East. Vaccines from state-owned Sino-Pharm are distributed in the United Arab Emirates and the Balkans. Sino-Vac received orders from Turkey and Brazil. Russia has received orders for 1.2 billion doses of 'Sputnik V Serum' and Iran started mass vaccination by giving a Sputnik V dose to the son of its health minister.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi of China toured four countries: Myanmar, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines, in January this year, and since October, he has visited every country in Southeast Asia except Vietnam. At each destination Wang assured that helping others through vaccineis top priority of Chineseforeign policy. The world is witnessing that US and EU are unable to maintain a balance of domestic needs fulfillment on one hand and helping the needy on other. They are struggling to immunize their own peoplebut Russia and Chinais making their offerings at a time when the United States and other rich nations are scooping up the world's supplies. West is once again on the

brink of a catastrophic moral failure. Strangely the western media showed their ignorance about this development and western critiques were stingy in appreciation; rather the critics say Russia and China threatening the international order. Instead of accusing, shouldn't we be applauding Russia and China for their efforts? and why not? Instead of forcefully sending troopsunder a deception of securing a country and later destroying nations, Russia and China are protectingthe countries by saving lives, by saving their economy, by helping with their vaccination.

# Kashmir and the higher Game of Thrones

Wajeeha Bilal



The future of any society is its youth; they are supposed to be protected by hesociety and not used by it. The Convention on the Rights of the Child asserts that: "The child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth"

T can be quite irksome to watch television today. News and media revolve around civil wars or natural disasters. Movies depict terrible scenarios to keep the viewers engaged. Children are living with or witnessing violent environments, which is an endless emotional and psychological harassment. In the disputed lands of Kashmir, children are profoundly affected by situations of crisis they do not understand. The Culture of Violence prevails in their daily lives with damaging consequences.

Children's well-being should be the concern of the entire society but why is it always the children who have no part to play in the politics of power, suffer the most? The wounds of every war are deep and intimate and trying to be comfortable can spark the hidden gashes and the trapped doors in the consciousness. Unlike physical wounds, the countless effects of war on the mind are unaddressed.

An armed revolt has been going on against Indian rule in the region of Kashmir for decades, claiming tens of thousands of lives. Even before India and Pakistan won their independence from Britain the area was bitterly contested. The accord to align Kashmir with India resultedin decades of rivalry in the debated region, including two wars and a long-

The underlying reasons of conflict among two states remain the moving force of international relations, that have led to a great deal of diplomatic activity. They are disputed with the suspicion of an escalation, that might lead to a nuclear strike between two nuclear powers. After years of debates and resolutions, none of these efforts have shown any significant results, and the cost of war is heavy on the Kashmiri children both mentally and physically. Lack of food, malnutrition, and illness are part of their daily lives. Mistreatment is their daily routine, that is a violation of basic human rights and a violation of family rights.

"Children in Jammu and Kashmir are living in the most militarized zone of the world, with the presence of 700,000 troops, which exposes them to the risk of all six grave violations against children as laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the

Child," according to a report.

The children in Kashmir are experiencingviolence both directly and indirectly as their lives are shaped by a sense of injustice, and the susceptibility to accept violence increases with time. All these things have a

negative impact on their mental health. The future of any society is its youth; they are supposed to be protected by hesociety and not used by it. The Convention on the Rights of the Child asserts that: "The child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth." Even though many resolutions have been aproved at the United Nations to protect children in a situation of crisis, these laws prove difficult to be applied and the physical and emotional suffering experienced by these children has lasting repercussions for them.

The Kashmir problem is a mixture of state terrorism, revolutionand general horror that has continued for decadesin history. Indians and Pakistanis have lived with the ramifications for years, but currently blame each other, rather than an impaired partition process. Consequentially, Kashmir came to play a huge role in the respective politics of both states as the Kashmir issue has outlived a cold war status and the old feud that Kashmir is not self-sufficient unless it accedes to a major state, has lost value. The leadership in both countries aggravated the original problem when they turned Kashmir into a medallion of their separate national identities.

If we are unable to solve the issues that has a direct impact on the psychology of our children, then how can we cope with bigger emerging issues that define our truth. We do not want to be a part of the faction that does not want to negotiate Kashmir and seems to be content with the bleeding souls of a suffering land. We cannot be cautious in a massive war by calculating and concluding its uncertain outcomes, while the psychological damage that is done everyday rips our children of their rightful childhood

History cannot be undone, and Kashmir may have ceased to be the only cause of bad relations between

two states, but it remains a cause. It is also a symbol of their failure to compose their differences and live-in peace. Over the years, several proposals have suggested the possibility of putting an end to this majordispute, but it is important to recognize the crucial role of timein resolving the Kashmir problem. History has been a testament to the fact that time is not on our side as the Kashmir problem has been mismanaged by two generations for decades.

People take distinct views about the inevitability of war, but everyone is affected by the ways in which the war comes. They say everything will change and a new world is bound to evolve yet even after generations of wars, children still suffer at the hands of the empowered. After the confrontations have closed, after the speeches have been given, the sermons concluded, the smoke dies down and the danger moves from outside to inside. The war continues to ring in the hearts of the little souls who experience it. In the higher play of game of Thrones, it is always the faultless and the children who suffer the most. The ongoing Wars between the authorities have proven that it is the fight to be in power, and power it always is; power to destroy the societies and psyches of children more swiftly than has ever been done by any human

It is not our intelligence or our knowledge of the past that defines us, but instead our lessons that we have derived from them. So basically, our identity is not what we have come to know, but what we stand for. The responsibility for standing up for the future generation of Kashmir lies on all of us, when we think, write or speak, we do it to raise awareness for the suffering souls. In the hopes that those higher authorities who have the power to make amends may take the right actions. A nation's integrity is based on the realization that it needs to raise a voice against corrupted powers not on reminiscing the past. It's the only way to acknowledge that the power to healing the young wounds lies within each one of us.

- Wajeeha is author of "The Conscious Ego" and The Beautiful Present and runs a blog "A Purposeful Life"

# World / Sports



# **Briefs**

# **Pakistan and Egypt agree**

From Page 01

They also exchanged views on enhancing people to people linkages between Pakistan and Egypt. Highlighting the sacrifices and successes of both countries in counter ing terrorism and extremism Foreign Minister Qureshi said the two countries could also benefit from sharing of experience and capabilities.

The Foreign Ministers agreed to revitalize and reinvigorate their agreed frameworks of cooperation. They decided to organize, the next sessions of their Annual Bilateral Consultations, at the senior officials level in March, and the Joint Ministerial Commission at the Ministerial level immediately after Ramadan.

The two sides also reviewed their excellent cooperation in the multilateral arena, in par ticular, the United Nations, the OIC and the Non-Aligned Movement. They agreed to continue collaborating closely with each other.

The Foreign Ministers discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest. Foreign Minister Qureshi briefed his counterpart on the Afghan peace process. He also sensitized Foreign Minister Shoukry on the worsening human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Iammu and Kashmir, especially since August 2019, and India's belligerent approach in South Asia that threatened regional and global peace and security. Foreign Minister Qureshi expressed his sincere appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to his delegation during the visit. He cordially invited the Egyptian Foreign Minister to visit Pakistan, who accepted it graciously.

### **Pakistan to** host Kabaddi **World Cup in** 2024

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan Kabaddi Federation (WKF) Secretary Rana Mohammad Sarwar on Wednesday announced that the country will host the Kabaddi World Cup in 2024 and Asia Kabaddi Cup in 2022.

"We have been given the right to host the World Cup in 2024 and the Asia Cup in 2022. This is indeed a great news for Pakistan and for kabaddi fans in the country," Sarwar said.

He added that the country's win in the 2020 World Cup was key to attaining hosting rights. "Now Pakistan is a big power in the kabaddi world and that is evident from our successful bid for both the major events to be hosted in the country within the next three years," Sarwar said. The PKF official also announced to hold international matches between Pakistan and India near Kartarpur Corridor in coming years, "It is also a big development for Pakistan and Indian Punjab kabaddi fans," he said.

"We are planning to host international matches between the two countries on the premises of Kartarpur Corridor for the sake of fans emerging from both sides."

### Sarfaraz opens up on Twitter row with Hafeez

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed has clarified that he holds no grudges with senior player Mohammad Hafeez after the two indulged in a Twitter dispute last week. "There is no grudges between the two of us. Hafeez is a senior player and will always have my respect," Sarfaraz said in a pre-tournament presser of Pakistan Super League (PSL) season six. Remember. Hafeez and Sarfaraz indulged in an argument on Twitter after which the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) stepped into the matter. Hafeez praised Rizwan's performance in the first T20I and also raised a question on how long will it take for him to be recognized as the number one wicket-keeper batsman in Pakistan. In reply, Sarfaraz reminded Hafeez that whoever will play for the country will remain number one and expected that positivity from a player of Hafeez's caliber. Meanwhile, Sarfaraz is confident that Quetta Gladiators have all the ingredients to play the final of PSL 6.

"We have formed a brilliant squad with the induction of new players. We will try to built a team from match one that is capable of playing the final," he added. - APP



CAIRO: Foreign minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a meeting with Secretary General of the Arab League, Ahmed Aboul Gheit at Arab League Headquarter. - DNA

# EU to impose sanctions on Russians over Navalny

There was no discussion of halting the huge Nord Stream II gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, however, despite calls from some EU members for it to be targeted with sanctions. It was not immediately clear if powerful business elites, known as oligarchs, would be targeted, as Navalny's supporters want

SPORTS DESK

BRUSSELS: The European Union is set to impose travel bans and asset freezes on allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin in March, possibly in the run-up to an EU summit, after a meeting of envoys gave approval for punitive measures, diplomats said.

Reuters reported on Feb. 11 that the sanctions, in response to the jailing of Putin's main domestic critic Alexei Navalny, could be the first to be imposed under a new EU framework that was enacted in December and allows the bloc to take measures against human

BAKU: The visa-free regime between

Azerbaijan and Turkey entered into

force today after President Ilham

Alivev signed the law to approve the

protocol between the Azerbaijani and

Turkish governments on changes to

the Azerbaijani-Turkish mutual visa

exemption agreement, Azertag re-

The relevant protocol, which was

signed in Baku on December 10,

2020, was approved by the Azerbaijani

Under the changes to the Azerbai-

parliament on February 1, 2021.

ported on February 18.

rights violators worldwide. "I expect additional sanctions to be in place before the EU summit in March," said a senior EU diplomat, referring to the March

25-26 gathering of the bloc's 27

leaders in Brussels. EU foreign

ministers meet on March 22. A meeting of EU ambassadors on Wednesday showed broad support for sanctions, with countries including Sweden, Germany, France, Poland and Baltic countries all calling for the travel bans and asset freezes.

There was no discussion of halting the huge Nord Stream II gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, however, despite calls from

Azerbaijani-Turkish visa-free

regime enters into force

agreement, the use of a passport

will be mandatory for persons enter-

ing Azerbaijan and Turkey from third

countries. Other border crossing

documents specified in Appendices 1

and 2 of the agreement are used only

for direct travel from the territory of

one side to the other. On December

10, the Azerbaijani and Turkish gov-

ernments signed in Baku Protocol

No.1 on amendments to the Azerbai-

iani-Turkish mutual visa exemption

agreement. After the entry into the

force of the protocol signed in addi-

tion to the agreement, citizens of both

countries will be able to travel without

MELBOURNE: Serbia's Novak Djokovic competes during the men's singles semifinal

between Serbia's Novak Djokovic and Russia's Aslan Karatsev at Australian

Open in Melbourne Park in Melbourne, Australia. - DNA



some EU members for it to be targeted with sanctions. It was not immediately clear if powerful business elites, known as oligarchs, would be targeted, as Navalny's supporters want.

border-crossing documents and stay

without a visa for 90 days. This rule

will apply only to citizens of two coun-

tries travelling directly between Tur-

key and Azerbaijan, Citizens wishing

to travel to third countries through

the territory of Azerbaijan or Turkey

must use a passport. For the first time

in its history, Azerbaijan has signed an

agreement to use the identity card as

Some experts believe that visa-free

travel between Turkey and Azerbai-

jan will create great opportunities for

both countries in terms of tourism

a border crossing document.

and economic cooperation.

jani-Turkish mutual visa exemption a visa with an identity card and other

Pressure for sanctions has grown since Moscow infuriated European countries on Feb. 5 by expelling German, Polish and Swedish diplomats without telling the EU's foreign policy chief, who was in Moscow for a visit. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called the EU an "unreliable partner" during a news conference, which EU lawmakers say aimed to humiliate Brussels. "Sanctions need to be soon, otherwise their impact is weakened," a second senior EU diplomat said. Some countries have put forward names of those they think should be subject to

details out of concern potential targets could move assets out of European banks. The EU already imposed economic sanctions on Russia over its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. Last year it imposed travel bans and asset freezes on six Russian officials close to Putin over Navalny's poisoning in August. Moscow has denied blame for Navalny's illness and says it has seen no proof he was poisoned. Navalny was detained after returning to Russia from Germany last month and jailed on Feb. 2 for violating the parole terms on what he says was a politically motivated charge

# Greece protests to Turkey over research vessel

ATHENS: Greece said on Thursday it had protested to Turkey over its deployment of a research vessel in the Aegean Sea, in what it called an "unnecessary" move as the two NATO allies seek to resume talks over long-standing maritime dispute. An advisory issued by Turkey's navy this week showed the research vessel Cesme would be conducting a hydrographic survey from Feb. 18 until March 2 in an area of international waters

tial interests. "It's an unnecessary move

made a verbal complaint, government officials said, adding the so-called NAV-TEX advisory was illegal as it was issued from a station with no such jurisdiction. After a five-year pause and months of tension over overlapping claims for energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean last year, Greek and Turkish officials met in Ankara on Ian, 25 to discuss the delimitation of maritime zones. The meeting in Istanbul

odds over a number of decades-old issues including the extent of their continental shelves, have agreed to meet again in Athens. Athens has sent an invitation to Ankara suggesting the talks resume in early March

- ahead of a European leaders summit - and it is awaiting a response from Turkey, foreign ministry spokesman Alexandros Papaioannou told reporters.

Since 2002, the two countries have held dozens of rounds of talks to try to lay the groundwork for full negotiations over the issue. But obstacles remain. including what each side is

willing to discuss. An advisory issued by Turkey's navy this week showed the research vessel Cesme would be conducting a hydrographic survey from Feb. 18 until March 2 in an area of international waters where both sides have potential interests. "It's an unnecessary move which does not help positive sentiment," government spokesman Christos Tarantilis told reporters. The foreign ministry has made a verbal complaint, government officials said, adding the so-called NAV-TEX advisory was illegal as it was issued from a station

# sanctions, but declined to give

**DNA** 

where both sides have poten-

which does not help positive sentiment.' government spokesman Christos Tarantiis told reporters. The foreign ministry has

ended after a few hours

with no such jurisdiction.

# **10 nations used 75% of all vaccines: UN Chief**

Addressing a high-level meeting of the UN Security Council on Wednesday, Antonio Guterres said 130 countries have not received a single dose of vaccine Reporting from the UN headquar-

ters, Al Jazeera's diplomatic editor

James Bays said there was a broad

DNA

NEW YORK: The United Nations chief has sharply criticised the "wildly uneven and unfair" distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, pointing out that just 10 countries have administered 75 percent of all vaccinations.

Addressing a high-level meeting of the UN Security Council on Wednesday, Antonio Guterres said 130 countries have not received a single dose of vaccine.

"At this critical moment, vaccine equity is the biggest moral test before the global community," he

Guterres called for an urgent

Global Vaccination Plan to bring together those with the power to ensure fair vaccine distribution scientists, vaccine producers and those who can fund the effort - to ensure all people in every nation get inoculated as soon as possible. The secretary-general further called on the world's leading economic powers in the Group of 20 to establish an emergency task force that should have the capacity to bring together "the pharmaceutical companies and key industry and logistics actors". Guterres said a meeting on Friday of the Group of Seven top industri-

alised nations "can create the mo-

mentum to mobilise the necessary

financial resources".

agreement over the potential future problems in the fight against the pandemic due to the uneven distribution of vaccines. "Rich countries are vaccinating

people but many other parts of the world are not. You're never going to get rid of COVID-19 if you have it spreading in some parts of the world and potentially mutating, and potentially in the future making vaccines not work," Bays said. "Less than 1 percent of COVID-19 vaccines so far globally have been administered in the 32 countries currently facing the most severe humanitarian crises.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, whose country holds the Security Council presidency this month, urged the UN's most powerful body to adopt a resolution calling for ceasefires in conflict zones to allow the delivery of COV-ID-19 vaccines.

The UK said more than 160 million people are at risk of being excluded from coronavirus vaccinations because they live in countries engulfed in conflict and instability, including Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia.

"Humanitarian organisations and UN agencies need the full backing of the council to be able to carry out the job we are asking them to do," said Barbara Woodward, the

UK's ambassador to the UN. Woodward said ceasefires have previously been used to carry out vaccinations, pointing to a two-day pause in fighting in Afghanistan in 2001 that enabled 35,000 health workers and volunteers to vaccinate 5.7 million children below the age of five against polio.

Thirteen ministers were scheduled to address the meeting on improving access to COVID-19, including new United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken. On Tuesday, Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said Mexico would stress the importance of equal access for all countries to COVID-19 vaccines at the council meeting.

### **Climber Ali** Sadpara is no more

a thorough search and res-

From Page 01

cue operation amid the harsh weather for his father. Sadpara, Iceland's John Snorri and Chile's Juan Pablo Mohr had departed for their journey on February 3 after Sadpara's birthday, asking fans and admirers to "keep us in your prayers". They had started their attempt for the final summit in the early hours of February 5, hoping to accomplish the herculean feat by afternoon. According to updates posted on Snorri's facebook account on Friday, at 12:29pm, the GPS stopped working and had not updated in six hours.

Ali Sadpara's management revealed a few days ago that the government and other stakeholders were employing their best efforts to find Sadpara and the other climbers who went missing, despite him being missing for almost 10 days.

Sadpara's management, which operates his official Twitter account, on Monday announced that a meeting of the apex committee regarding the missing climbers' search and rescue (SAR) operation will be held on Feb 17, 2021, in Gilgit.

"Please avoid any premature statements and keep away from fake reports," the management had said.

# Opp. contradicts in words

From Page 01

trading was debated in the Upper House on August 7, 2015. On August 10, 2015, the Leader of the House moved a motion to refer the matter to the Senate Committee on Whole.

The Committee of Whole met on 11 November 2015 and 12 May 2016. On May 20, 2016, the Committee of Whole presented its proposals. These were unanimous proposals and no one opposed these proposals. The Committee of Whole suggested that transparency in the Senate elections is not possible without electoral reforms. Committee also suggested that the names of the voters should be published on the ballot paper and the vote should be identified. Addressing a press conference along with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Shahbaz Gill, Senator Shehzad said the market is set up every time in

the Senate elections. He said that Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto had signed an agreement in the Charter of Democracy to ensure transparency in the Senate elections but the promise was not fulfilled.

'Their statements are on record in which they supported the transparency of open ballot" he said, adding that PML-N and PPP passed 18th amendment but no action was taken on the issue. Despite all the promises. long rule and majority, the opposition did nothing to ensure transparency in the Senate elections because their intentions were wrong, he said. Senator Shahzad sais that in the Supreme Court, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Chairman of the Senate, the Speakers of the Assemblies of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have supported the open ballot. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf expelled its 20 MPAs from the party on allegation of minting money from Senate elections. Earlier Shahzad Waseem expressed his grief over

## FB blocks Australians from sharing

news

the sad demise of Senator

Mushahid Ullah Khan.

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: The US-based company says it has restricted news content from being read and shared in its news feed, drawing a line in the sand against a proposed Australian law that would require it and Google to pay the country's news publishers for journalism. Facebook has blocked Australians from viewing and sharing news on the platform because of proposed laws in the country to make digital giants pay for journalism, angering Canberra that called the news blackout "heavy-handed". Australian publishers can continue to publish news content on Facebook, but links and posts can't be viewed or shared by Australian audiences, the USbased company said in a statement on Wednesday. Australian users cannot share Australian or international news.

# Business / World



'China to

import dairy products

from Pak'

BEIJING: China will import

dairy products (Nestle cream) from Pakistan, says a report

published by China Economic

to complete, and there is a vital requirement for dairy

products in western China

provinces, according to Badar

uz Zaman, Commercial Coun-

sellor Pakistan Embassy here.

Talking to CEN, Badar said

that in Pakistan, livestock

plays an important role and

Pakistan is the fourth largest

milk producer globally. Within

the livestock sector, milk is the

"In Pakistan, the production of

fresh milk is about 50 million

tonnes. We have a strong live-

stock history that many multi-

national and the local compa-

nies are processing milk. And

the additional cream that is ex-

tracting is a great exportable

He further said that Chinese

Huiyu group has taken up the

process and signed an MOU

They are about to complete

the process of getting per-

mission to import into China.

They have a solid distribution

"Chinese customers are very

eager to use that cream. The

samples distributed among

the Chinese buyers, and they

liked it very much, and there

is great potential as Pakistani

dairy products prices are low.

Earthquake

hits

product", he mentioned.

with Nestle Pakistan.

base in China.

largest single commodity.

Net (CEN) on Thursday. The quarantine and agreement process is about

# Briefs

## Georgia's prime minister announces resignation

WEB DESK

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia has announced his resignation after a court ordered the arrest of a top opposition leader, a move that prompted calls for early elections

Gakharia, who had held the post since 2019, said on Thursday he was stepping down because of a disagreement with his own team over the decision a day earlier to arrest Nika Melia, chairman of the United National Movement (UNM) opposition party. Gakharia said Melia's detention was unacceptable if it threatened to fuel political divisions in the South Caucasus country of 3.7 million people. "I've made the decision to leave my post," Gakharia said, according to the Sputnik Georgia news outlet. "Of course, I believe and want to believe that this step will contribute to lower ing the level of polarisation in our country."

A court in the capital Tbilisi had ruled on Wednesday that Melia be taken into custody for allegedly failing to post bail. The opposition leader had been accused of inciting violence at street protests in June 2019, a charge he has dismissed as politically motivated. Following Gakharia's resignation on Thursday, the interior ministry said it was postponing carrying out the order to take Melia into custody. If convicted, Melia faces nine years in prison.

Leaders of nearly all of Georgia's opposition parties had gathered since Wednesday at the UNM party headquarters in Tbilisi, vowing to obstruct police if they moved to arrest Melia. Inside the UNM headquarters, Melia called for early elections.

## 'Climate change bigger threat than pandemic'

# FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: Climate change is a "bigger" threat than the COVID-19 pandemic in the long run, and it requires immediate and collective action, said the head of the EU delegation to Turkey.

"Climate change is not only a risk in itself, but it is also a risk multiplier for all of our societies." Nikolaus Mever-Landrut told the meeting held with the theme of "Tackling Climate Change" in the Turkish capital Ankara on Wednesday. The global community, he said, has passed the stage of questioning the causes of climate change, however, it still has an advantage as it knows a way to address the problem: the decarbonization of countries' economies. The German diplomat said the international community should not view climate change as a risk only for its gradually increasing effects on societies and stressed global-scale solidarity.

### **Zimbabwe** begins vaccine roll-out with Chinese jabs

HARARE: Zimbabwe's vice president was first to be inoculated Thursday as the southern African country began coronavirus immunisation three days after receiving jabs donated by China. Constantino Chiwenga, wearing a rosary around his neck, received a dose of Sinopharm vaccine at a hospital in the capital Harare and urged citizens to register for the shots. The 64-year-old was first swabbed to test for coronavirus before taking off his jacket and unbuttoning his shirt to receive the shot in the shoulder. Chiwenga said the health ministry had done "all scientific processes" to vet the jab. "My presence here today with some ministry officials (...) is to exhibit the government's confidence in the Sinopharm vaccine," said Chiwenga, who doubles as the country's health minister. Zimbabwe's fight against the virus has been blighted by a

run-down healthcare system and a struggling economy. On Monday, it received a shipment of 200,000 doses of the vaccine, whose efficacy against a fast-spreading local variant is unclear. Frontline healthcare workers and custom officials will be the first receive the shots. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Sualeh Ahmed Faruqui, secretary commerce in a meeting with Obaid Alzaabi, ambassador of UAE. - DNA

# Nearly 500 detained in Myanmar, hackers target military websites

It is unclear if the AAPP list includes six celebrities, who are said to have been charged for inciting strikes that have paralysed many government offices. Those charges can carry up to two years in jail

### Foreign Desk

YANGON: Myanmar's military has ordered more arrests, with nearly 500 individuals facing charges or sentenced to jail in relation to the burgeoning protests and civil disobedience movement following the February 1 coup, as protesters return to the streets on Thursday following a massive demonstration the previous day.

Some 495 civilian political leaders, activists and protesters have so far been detained or charged, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), which has been tracking detentions in the country over the past two weeks, said in an update on Wednesday night. Three people have already been convicted to two years in jail and a third for three months, the group said. Some 460 people remain in detention.

Among those arrested in recent days was a regional minister of environment in Mandalay, while four train operators and two others were reportedly taken at gunpoint by the

TASHKENT: The Inter-

national Monetary Fund

(IMF) said on Thursday

that Uzbekistan's large

timely and well-targeted,

though the COVID-19

pandemic has had "a

marked, but so far rela-

tively short-lived, adverse

impact" on the country's

economy. The Uzbek au-

thorities' strong policy

reaction led to the coun-

try being among the few

countries that showed

positive overall economic

growth in 2020, at a rate

of 1.6 percent, the IMF

said in a statement follow-

ing a three-week remote

mission in Uzbekistan.

"Growth is expected to

pick up further in 2021,

but the level of uncer-

tainty remains high and

package was

IMF hail's

Uzbekistan's

the recovery will depend

especially on vaccine

roll-out," it said, adding

that the Uzbek economy

is projected to grow by

about 5 percent this year.

The Uzbek authorities

faced the challenge of

not only supporting the

recovery, but also contin-

uing with the country's

transformation to a mod-

ern market economy, ac-

cording to the statement.

Uzbekistan has made

significant progress dur-

ing the last few years in

implementing ambitious

reforms, focusing main-

ly on improving overall

macro-economic manage-

ment, foreign exchange,

trade liberalization, and

major improvements in

fiscal and monetary policy

frameworks. - APP

Uzbekistan authorizes use of

Russia's Sputnik V vaccine

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan on Wednesday authorized

the use of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine

and decided to purchase 1 million doses, authorities

said. Russia's Sputnik V vaccine is certified and approved for mass use following Phase 3 clinical

trials, said Uzbekistan's Special Republican An-

ti-Coronavirus Commission. It has also allowed a coronavirus vaccine developed by China's Anhui

Zhifei Longcom Biopharmaceutical Co., Ltd

whose Phase 3 clinical trials are continuing - to

be produced in Uzbekistan. The country will start

a vaccination program next month, with more than

4 million people are expected to get vaccinated in

the first phase. So far, Uzbekistan has reported a

total of 79,497 COVID-19 infections, including 662

Rakhine. Eight civil servants were also put on trial on Wednesday for going on strike as part of a growing civil disobedience movement. It is unclear if the AAPP list includes six celebrities, who are said to have been charged for inciting strikes that have paralysed many government offices. Those charges can carry up to two years in jail. Some of those detained were defiant. "It's incredible to witness that our people are unified. People's power must return to the people," actor Lu Min wrote on his Facebook page. The Defend Lawyers website also reported that at least 40 barristers could face prosecution for participating in the anti-coup movement. Many of the country's lawyers have join the Red Ribbon Campaign calling for the restoration of democracy in the country. On Thursday, the demonstrators returned to the streets for the 13th straight day of nationwide protests against the coup leaders. In the capital, Naypyidaw, a group of engineers in motorcycles joined a convoy of protesters and demanded that the government release the country's civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. They were joined by other protesters from the Civil Disobedience

Movement. In the country's largest city of Yangon, protesters also started pouring into the streets, with student groups and workers from different ethnic minorities also expected to join the crowds.

On social media, images have started to circulate on Thursday showing several people, some in the orange robe of monks, carrying sticks and smashing cars of protesters in Yangon. In the city of Mandalay, protesters on horseback paraded the streets of the country's second largest city, carrying red flags in support of the ousted civilian leaders. Meanwhile, the group Doctors Without Borders (also known as MSF) said on Thursday that it is "gravely concerned" about the recent arrests and detentions of health care workers and other civilians.

It said the government's actions "have the potential to severely interrupt the lifesaving health care" that MSF and others have been providing to some of the most vulnerable people in the country, particularly in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We see this crisis brings real fears, expressed by so many of our colleagues, and worry for the immediate and long-term effects on public health and general safety."

On Wednesday, tens of thousands of people took to the streets in the biggest anti-coup demonstrations since the generals detained Aung San Suu Kyi and the popularly elected government to seize power more than two weeks ago. The generals have claimed fraud in the November election that was won by Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) in a landslide, saying they will hold new elections at an unspecified date. The elections commission has rejected claims of fraud.

The rallies have brought sporadic incidents of violence. The AAPP accused the military and the police in Mandalay, Myanmar's second-biggest city, of destroying a house belonging to one of the anti-coup protesters, leaving at least one person injured. There were also reports that government forces opened fire at protesters and striking railway workers in Mandalay late on Wednesday. Early on Thursday, there were also reports that hackers had attacked military-run websites as the internet was shut down for a fourth straight night.

# southwestern Iran

### WEB DESK

TEHRAN: At least 43 people in Iran have been injured and several properties destroyed in an earthquake that shook the country's southwestern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province on Wednesday night, local authorities said on Thursday. According to the Institute of Geophysics of Tehran University, the epicenter of the 5.6 magnitude earthquake, which occurred at 10:55 p.m. local time (1925GMT), was some 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) east of the provincial capital Sisakht, where it inflicted the maximum damage.

The strong tremors were felt in many neighboring provinces, including Isfahan and Shiraz, officials said.

The footage shared online showed piles of rubble in Sisakht, which is considered an

earthquake-prone city. According to local officials, electricity and water supply had been cut off in the area following the earthquake, which has now been gradually restored. Local residents, who spent the night in open areas.

reported multiple after-shocks throughout the night. Immediately after the earthquake on Wednesday night, relief and medical teams were dispatched to the affected areas and injured were shifted to nearby hospitals, officials said. The relief and rescue operations being led by Iran's Red Crescent Society continue. Iran is located in a seismically

active zone, and the country has seen many catastrophic earthquakes in the past.

# Global debt hits new high of \$281T

# Monitoring Desk

LONDON: Global debt rose to a new record high of \$281.5 trillion in 2020, driven by measures to curb economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, according to the Institute of International Finance (IIF), a global trade group of financial institutions. "Coupled with a sharp pandemic-driven decline in government and corporate revenues, total private and public debt for the 61 countries in our sample rose by \$24 trillion last year, making up over a quarter of the \$88 trillion rise over the past decade," the IIF said in a report released late Wednesday.

Global debt outside the financial sector totaled \$214 trillion in 2020, compared to \$194 trillion the previous year, it said. Debt in mature markets amounted to \$203.7 trillion while emerging markets saw \$77.7 trillion of debt at the end of last year. Global debt-to-GDP ratio hit 355% last year, up 35 percentage points yearon-year. "The upswing was well beyond the rise seen during the 2008 global financial crisis," it noted.

European countries saw some of the biggest increases in debt ratios in 2020, notably France, Spain, and Greece.

# Indonesia to boost air force with F-15EX, Rafale jets efforts to COVID

# Foreign Desk

JAKARTA: Indonesia will purchase F-15EX jets from Boeing and Rafale fighter aircraft from France between 2021 and 2024, the head of its air force said on Thursday.

The country will also buy C-130J transport planes and medium-altitude long-endurance unmanned combat aerial vehicles, Marshal Fajar Prasetyo, chief of staff of the Indonesian Air Force, said at the annual Air Force Leadership Meeting. According to the meetsia plans to buy 36 Rafale and eight F-15EX jets, with six of the latter expected to arrive by 2022.

Along with the new additions, the air force will also modernize its existing combat aircraft this year, Prasetvo said. He said Indonesia's defense procurement plans have undergone several changes in view of global conditions and the country's capacity.

"Despite having guidelines for posture, strategic plan, and Minimum Essential Force, the implementation is very dependent on that keep changing dynamically, Prasetvo said.

He explained that all stakeholders, including the Defense Ministry and the Indonesian Air Force, had analyzed and discussed plans to solve procurement issues. "This is solely to facilitate our

steps in obtaining the best defense equipment that meets operational requirements, commonality aspects, obtaining the transfer of technology, in line with the state's capability and the condition of the Indonesian Air Force," he said.



JERUSALEM: This morning, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock is covered in a layer of snow in the Holy of Holies, Al-Quds Palestine. - DNA

# BelCCI, Pak embassy Minsk organizes business event

He said Kinnow (Mandarin) have always been considered as a traditional symbol of good fortune in China. This is mainly because the word orange, when spoke in mandarin, sounds similar to the word 'wealth'. The orange hue of the fruit is also said to symbolise 'gold' which makes it a very auspicious fruit

MINSK:, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BelCCI) in collaboration with the Embassy of Pakistan, Minsk organized a business interactive event at the BelC-CI, which was attended by businessmen/representatives from more than 30 Belarusian companies. Additionally, the session was also attended by around 40 businesspersons on virtual basis, as the event covered via Zoom and YouTube

Welcoming the participants of the business event titled "Meet the Ambassador", the Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr. Vladimir Ulakhovich impressed upon the need to working closely

for greater economic cooperation. On the occasion, Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan made a detailed presentation on "Pakistan-Belarus Trade Prospects", particularly tages, political and economic strength and trade potential. Referring the excellent polit-



the improving trade and climate in Pakistan in the context of the government's initiatives and reform agenda. Mr. Nasir Hamid, Minister (Trade & Investment) at the Embassy of Pakistan, Moscow also briefed the participants over investment and tourism potential of Pakistan through video link. He highlighted the rich economic prospects offered by China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the benefits of enhanced regional connectivity for the firms investing in Pakistan as the pro-

and other procedures were addressed.

ical relations between the two countries, Am-

bassador Khan pointed out that the existing

trade ties was much below the potential. He

urged the participants to take advantage of

ject nears fruition. Following this, a networking session was held whereby the precise queries of Belarusian businesspersons regarding exports, certifications, payments







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# Briefs

# ECP allows Gillani to contest Senate polls

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday has approved nomination papers of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader and joint candidate of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) for Senate elections, Yousaf Raza Gillani. While announcing the reserved verdict, the returning officer has rejected the objections raised by Pakistan Tehreeke-Insaf (PTI) leader Fareed Rehman and allowed the former Prime Minister (PM) to contest the elections.

It is to be mentioned here that on February 16, 2021, PTI had challenged Gillani's nomination papers and accused him of concealing the facts. Yousaf Raza Gillani had not mentioned his sentence in contempt of court case in his nomination papers, PTI leader said. Fareed Rahman further said that Gillani didn't fulfill the requirement of Article 62 of the Constitution.

While recording arguments on the objections, the counsel of PDM candidate said that his client was charged not convicted in the case and that Supreme Court (SC) had given him a symbolic sentence. The sentence of Yousaf Raza Gillani ended in 2017 and he contested the General Elections in 2018, he told.

# US, Pakistan promote water governance

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with the Government of Punjab, opened the 2021 Pakistan Water Conference today to highlight the challenges facing the water sector in Pakistan and the importance of governance for increasing water productivity.

The United States and Pakistan have a long history of partnering on water issues. Joint investments in water infrastructure and management are generating new jobs, increasing farmers' incomes, improving health and sanitation, and contributing to economic growth on both a national and provincial level.

"Today's conference is a major step toward achieving a better balance between water supply and demand. Improving water governance is a prerequisite for achieving better water productivity," said USAID Mission Director Julie Koenen.

"Better water productivity means service delivery to households, farms, and industry can be improved without damaging surface and underground water systems, as well as the broader environment."

Policy makers, federal and provincial government representatives, water experts, including from USAID, other development partners, academics, and private sector stakeholders attended the conference.

## Chairman NAB reviews NAB Lahore performance

GHULAM MURTAZA

ISLAMABAD: Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting. The meeting reviewed the performance of NAB-Lahore especially conviction made under Section 10 of National Accountability Ordinance (NAO)-1999 and under Section 25 (b) of NAO-1999 during the year 2018 to 2020. Maj (R) Shahzad Saleem, DG NAB Lahore informed that during the year 2020, under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal 13 persons were convicted by different Accountability Courts under section 10 of NAO-1999. The details of the 13 convicted persons under section 10 of NAO 1999 were presented.

# Peace in Afghanistan vital for whole region, says PM

The Prime Minister said Pakistan has been emphasizing to all sides to work together constructively, take steps for reduction of violence leading to ceasefire, and secure a political solution for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said return of peace in Afghanistan will have lasting benefits for the region and beyond, through economic development, regional trade, and improved connectivity. He was talking to Head of Mas-

soud Foundation of Afghanistan Ahmad Wali Massoud, who called on him in Islamabad on Thursday. The Prime Minister reiterated his conviction that there is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and that a negotiated political settlement is the only way forward. He said after Afghanistan, Pakistan is the most desirous to see return of peace in Afghanistan as it is deeply affected by the conflict. In the context of Afghan peace



process, the Prime Minister highlighted that Pakistan has extended full support to facilitate the US-Taliban Peace Agreement and the initiation of Intra-Afghan Negotiations. He stressed that the Intra-Afghan Negotiations provides a historic opportunity which must be seized by the Afghan leadership to achieve an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement.

The Prime Minister said Pakistan has been emphasizing to all sides to work together constructively, take steps for reduction of violence leading to ceasefire, and secure a political solution for a

peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Imran Khan further highlighted the range of steps, including introduction of a liberal visa regime and increased facilitation in bilateral and transit trade to further strengthen fraternal ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan. He said Pakistan's assistance for Afghanistan's development efforts and human resource capacity-building

will continue apace.

NATO chief rejects

early pullout from

Afghanistan

BRUSSELS: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg

said Wednesday that the military alliance will only leave

Afghanistan when security conditions allow, as a dead-

line for withdrawing troops set out in a peace deal with

the Taliban nears. President Joe Biden is reviewing his

predecessor's 2020 deal with the Taliban, which in-

cludes a May 1 deadline for a final US troop withdrawal.

In Washington, calls are mounting for the US to delay

the final exit or renegotiate the deal to allow the pres-

"Our presence in Afghanistan is conditions based, and Taliban has to meet their commitments," Stoltenberg

told reporters after chairing a meeting of NATO defense

ministers, including new U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd

Austin. "The main issue is that Taliban has to reduce vio-

lence, Taliban has to negotiate in good faith and Taliban

has to stop supporting international terrorist groups like

Al Qaeda," Stoltenberg said. "We will only leave when

the time is right and the focus now is how we can we sup-

port the peace talks," he said, referring to slow-moving

negotiations between the Taliban and the Kabul govern-

ence of a smaller, intelligence-based American force.

Extending war welcome to Ahmad Wali Massoud, Imran Khan said Pakistan and Afghanistan are bound by a fraternal relationship, rooted deep in shared history and commonalities of faith, culture and traditions. He recalled the historic contribution of the late Ahmed Shah Massoud, who was a key Mujahideen leader, during the Afghan resistance movement.

# India bars pilgrims from visiting Pakistan

ATHAR SUFI

LAHORE: Indian authorities on Thursday have barred over one thousand Sikh Yatrees from visiting Pakistan through Wagha Border. According to spokesman of Evacuee Trust Property Board, the Yatrees were scheduled to take part in their religious Saka Festival at Gurdwara Janamasthan at Nankana Sahib on February 21, for which all the arrangements have already been finalized. The spokesman said that community members will stage a protest at Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore this afternoon against Indian government for not allowing the pilgrims to visit Pakistan.

# ECP decides to take affidavits

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday has decided to take affidavits from the candidates to ensure transparency in the Senate elections.

The commission will take a pledge from the contesting candidates not to take bribe over party tickets. ECP will be informed if anyone approaches any nominee for horse trading.

The candidates have to submit a written assurance, mentioning that they will not carry out any corrupt practice, violation of the Constitution or law and avoid taking or giving bribe during the polls in the upper house of the Parliament. On the other hand, ECP has continued scrutiny of the nomination papers of candidates for Senate elections.

Senate elections.

A total of 170 candidates had filed their nomination papers in the ECP for the elections on 48 seats in the upper house of the Parliament. 29 candidates from Punjab, 39 from Sindh, 51 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 41 from Balochistan and 10 from the federal capital Islamabad had submitted their details.

As per schedule, the candidates can file appeals against acceptance or rejection of nomination papers on February 20 and the last date for disposing of these appeals is February 23. The revised list of candidates will be published on February 24.

# Altered contracts with IPPs: NAB to probe 'wrongdoing'

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has decided to investigate if there was any "wrong doing" at the conversion of MoUs into altered contracts, starting from the signing of MoUs with 47 IPPs up to the sign-

ing of amended power purchase agreements (PPAs). To start its probe, the anti-corruption watchdog has written a letter to the secretary power on February 10, asking for details about the MoUs,

amended Power Purchase Agreements. It has also asked for details for the rationale to invoke local arbitration on the excess profit of Rs53 billion. "This move from National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has made the top mandarins of Power Division jittery, who fear if the entire exercise would materialise or not," a senior official privy to the development told media.

"National Accountability Bureau (NAB)

may look into the process for any deviation from MoUs. In the MoUs signed on August 12, 2020, there is no mention of local arbitration tribunal to resolve the excess profits by 13 IPPs. Rather, it mentions that NEPRA will decide the issue through due diligence."

The same day when National Accountability
Bureau (NAB) sent the letter, Federal
Energy Minister Omar Ayub Khan
said that the anti-graft body, National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) or
Securities and Exchange
Commission of Pakistan

(SECP) will be authorised to proceed against independent power producers (IPPs) for any misdeed or criminality even after they agreed to the about Rs770 billion discount over maining 20-year life of their contracts.

give about Rs770 billion discount over the remaining 20-year life of their contracts. It is worth mentioning that the PTI government and 'powerful circles' continue talks with IPPs for discounted tariff valued at Rs770 billion in the next 20 years to cope with the circular debt that has made the power sector unsustainable.

# Senator Mushahid Ullah Khan laid to rest

Raja Pervaiz



League-N, was laid to rest on Thursday at the H-11 Graveyard.

His funeral prayer was attended by people from all walks of life including Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani and Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.

The senior PML-N leader had passed away early in the morning at the age of 68. Mushahid Ullah Khan had been a member of the Senate from March 2009. He did his early education at Islamia High School and completed graduation at Gordon College Rawalpindi. He received L.L.B. degree from Urdu Law College, the University of Karachi in1997.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan Benedict de Cerjat received UNMOGIP Head of Mission, Major General José Alcaín of Uruguay in his office. Switzerland contributes three officers to the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan. – DNA

# CJP disappointed over PPP, PML-N negating CoD

"The SC can only answer questions that are raised," said the Attorney General of Sindh, adding that it has an "advisory" role

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed on Thursday expressed disappointment over the PPP and the PML-N going against an agreement signed between them – the Charter of Democracy – which calls for an end to secret balloting in Senate elections.

Senate elections.

A five-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justice Mushir Alam, Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan and Justice Yahya Afridi was hearing the presidential reference seeking an opinion on open balloting for the upcoming Senate elections.

During the hearing, the Advocate General of Punjab Ahmad Awais agreed with Attorney-General for Pakistan Khalid Jawed Khan's point of view that parliamentarians were bound by their party's code of discipline and in case of any violation, action can be taken against them.

Responding to a query of the chief justice, the advocate general said a lawmaker can be disqualified for either buying or selling votes but not for voting against the party's policy.

After the Punjab advocate general had concluded his arguments, the Advocate General of Sindh Sultan Talib ud Din presented his arguments, stating that

everyone has heard about horse-trading but no one has ever produced any evidence to back it up. "The court should steer

"The court should steer clear of questions of a political nature," he said, adding that the Election Commission of Pakistan should instead be allowed to fulfil its responsibilities.

"The Supreme Court can only answer questions that are raised," said the Attorney General of Sindh, adding that it has an "advisory" role. At this, the chief justice re-

sponded by saying that the Constitution is a political document and when the court interprets it, then it is carrying out a political task. The Advocate General for

Sindh said that there is no proof that introducing open balloting would eliminate horse-trading.

"We can not say whether open balloting will eliminate horse-trading but it is disappointing that the PPP and the PML-N have gone back on their earlier agreement," responded the chief justice.
"Both parties agreed to

"Both parties agreed to bring an end to the secret balloting method in the Charter of Democracy but now they are not implementing it," Justice Gulzar Ahmed said.

At this, the Attorney General of Sindh said that without amending Article 226, the wishes of the federal government cannot be fulfilled.

# SAMJHAUTA EXPRESS BLASTS Pak seeks justice

ISLAMABAD: The victims of Samjhauta Express terrorist attack continue to await justice. Fourteen years ago, on 18 February, the Delhi-Lahore Samjhauta Express train blasts resulted in the death of 68 passengers, including more than 40 Pakistani nationals. Despite the availability of clear evidence, India's continuing failure to provide justice to the victims of this horrible incident is a reconfirmation of the culture of impunity that the perpetrators of terrorist attacks enjoy in India. While expressing solidarity with the families of the victims, Pakistan calls upon India to fulfill its legal obligation of bringing the perpetrators of the Samjhauta Express blasts to justice without further delay. – **DNA** 



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