

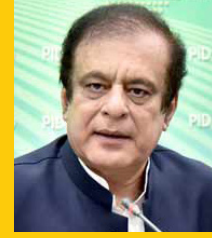


Esra Bilgic joins Peshawar Zalmi for PSL season 6

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PM to end role of money in polls, says Shibli Faraz

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British envoy praises Gwadar cricket capacity

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Islamabad POST

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Briefs

Pak desires Afghan peace: FM

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said there is a need to keep an eye on the foreign elements which are active to spoil the Afghan peace process. He was talking to Head of Masoud Foundation of Afghanistan Ahmad Wali Massoud, who called on him in Islamabad Friday. The Foreign Minister emphasized the need for reduction of violence in Afghanistan. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said all the stakeholders need to take joint efforts for a peaceful, prosperous and stable Afghanistan.

Siraj visits missing persons' families

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Holding both the present and former rulers responsible for the plight of the relatives of the mission persons, Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Senator Sirajul Haq has asked the government to immediately address the issue or at least inform the families if their relatives are alive or dead. "Both the present and past rulers paid no attention to the miseries of mothers, sisters and daughters of the persons who are missing for years for unknown reasons," he said.

Border fencing to finish by June

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmad Friday said the fencing of the boundary separating Pakistan with Iran and Afghanistan would be completed by June this year as most of the work has already been completed. After visiting Pak-Iran border, he said according to a press release that the border management was being modernized by ensuring internal security of the country.

Holiday Notice

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

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Daska by-polls: 2 dead during violent clashes

PML-N candidates leading in election; defeats PTI in Noshera; firing incident occurred at the Gondka polling station; in Kurm independent candidate leads

BUREAU REPORT

SIALKOT: Two persons died and eight others were injured as clashes broke out between PTI and PML-N workers in the city's NA-75 constituency on Friday. The firing incident occurred at the Gondka polling station which resulted in three persons getting injured, with two succumbing to their injuries on the way to the hospital. A heavy contingent of police officials and Rangers personnel are present at the Gondka police station to restore order there. PTI and PML-N workers had assembled outside the polling station where the firing incident took place, shouting slogans against one another. Out of 360 polling stations in the constituency, the voting process has been suspended at 15 sensitive polling stations. Two groups of people exchanging blows, armed with sticks in Daska can be seen in a video clips that have gone viral on social media. Police have yet to identify or arrest the suspects who were committed the killings.

Continued on Page 06

PML-N, PTI blame each other

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb has claimed that security guards of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate fired at PML-N workers and fled the scene. Reacting to the clashes and shootings in Daska that killed two and injured at least eight more, she accused PTI thugs of using state resources to conduct terrorism. "What did they get by taking the lives of innocent people", she asked. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that they had requested the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) to extend the polling time. All voters whether inside or outside the polling station should be allowed to cast their vote and voting should continue till the last voter has finished, she said.

Continued on Page 06

UN experts slam India on Kashmir

They urged the Government of India to ensure that the economic, social and cultural rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir are protected

I.P.REPORT

NEW YORK: UN human rights experts have expressed concern over India's decision to end Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy and enact new laws could curtail the previous level of political participation of Muslim and other minorities in the country, as well as potentially discriminate against them in important matters, including employment and land ownership. "The loss of autonomy and

Three Kashmiris martyred

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Indian troops in their fresh act of state terrorism martyred three Kashmiri youth in Shopian district on Friday. The youth were killed by the troops during a violent cordon and search operation at Badigam area of the district. - APP

the imposition of direct rule by the Government in New Delhi suggest the people of Jammu and Kashmir as no longer have their own government and have lost power to legislate or amend laws in the region to ensure the protection of their rights as minorities," said Fernand de Varennes, Special Rapporteur on minority issues and Ahmed Shaheed, Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

Continued on Page 06

British envoy praises Gwadar cricket capacity

BUREAU REPORT

GWADAR: British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner CMG on Friday saw at first hand the potential Gwadar has to be a key hub for Pakistan.

The High Commissioner presided over the coin toss for a celebrity cricket match - the Gwadar Dolphins led by the Prime Minister's Special Assistant Zulfi Bukari, versus the Showbiz Sharks led by Wasim Khan, CEO of the Pakistan Cricket Board. The match was dedicated to Pakistan climbing hero Ali Sadpara.



Continued on Page 06

Pakistan passing through a decisive moment: PM

"Insha'Allah Pakistan will emerge victorious," Prime Minister Imran Khan says

MUNIR FAISAL

HAZRO: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said that with masses and corrupt politicians standing on opposite sides, the nation was passing through a decisive moment, and Pakistan with the grace of Allah Almighty will emerge victorious. "This is a decisive moment for the nation. Masses are on one side, while these thieves and dacoits are on the other. Insha Allah Pakistan will emerge victorious," Imran Khan said while addressing a function after the inauguration of tree plantation drive in Ghazi Barotha under his initiative of 10 Billion Tree Tsunami. "This is a decisive moment for the nation. Masses are on one side, while these thieves and dacoits are on the other. Insha'Allah Pakistan will emerge victorious," Imran Khan said.

The Prime Minister while criticizing the

PM to end role of money in polls: Shibli

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Friday said Prime Minister Imran Khan was committed to end role of money in election process. Talking to media here, he said the government was striving to bring genuine representatives of the people in the parliament and this was not possible without abrogating the role of money in sale and purchase of votes. The minister said the people, now, realized the importance of transparency in the Senate elections. He said the politics of money needed to be eliminated and candidates should be elected on the basis of their capabilities. Shibli said buying and selling of votes undermined democracy and moral values. He said Election Commission of Pakistan would also be strengthened to further enhance its performance. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) believed that eligible persons could not come forward in politics until misuse of money was controlled, he said. He said the PTT's desire and demand was that under proportional representation, the parties and alliances should get seats as per their strength in the electoral assemblies. Shibli said the PTI's stance was justified and based on democratic principles and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had also hinted his inclination towards open voting.

Govt allows parade

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The preparations for celebrating March 23 have been put into top gear after the government allowed holding of the Pakistan parade. There was a possibility of the cancellation of the Pakistan Day parade for the second consecutive year due to the coronavirus pandemic. But, the government has allowed holding of the parade, provided the anti-virus guidelines will be observed strictly. The parade will be held at Shakkarparian Ground in Islamabad. Last year, the government had cancelled the Pakistan Day Parade scheduled to be held on March 23 as a precautionary measure to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The decision was taken by the National Security Committee in its meeting. The committee had decided to impose a ban on public events and the Pakistan Day Parade was no exception.

Russian envoy hails Pak role for peace

The Army Chief says that peace in both countries was in greater interest of the region

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Russian Presidential Envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at GHQ, here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the Russian envoy appreciated the positive role being played by Pakistan for Afghan Peace Process and expressed that Pak-Russia relations would continue to prosper manifolds, said the media wing of the Armed Forces in a press release.

The Army Chief said that peace in both countries (Pakistan and Afghanistan) was in greater interest of the region. During the

US commander calls on COAS

ANSAR MEHMOOD BHATTI

RAWALPINDI: General Kenneth F. Mc Kenzie Jr, Incoming Commander US CENTCOM, called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ, on Friday. According to a ISPR statement, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation with particular reference to ongoing Afghanistan reconciliation process were discussed during the meeting. Both expressed unanimity of views on importance of political resolution of Afghan situation. COAS said that Pakistan is committed to efforts for peace in Afghanistan as it is important for peace in Pakistan. Visiting dignitaries acknowledged Pakistan's commendable efforts in the fight against terrorism and ensuring regional stability.

meeting matters of mutual interest, regional security situation particularly developments in Afghan Peace

Process were discussed. Both the dignitaries reiterated the commitment to enhance bilateral relationship.

PDM leadership mulls anti-govt strategy

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: PDM President and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Friday telephoned former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and former president Asif Ali Zardari and discussed the opposition alliance's ongoing anti-government movement. According to reports, the three leaders agreed on reinvigorating the movement so that it could become result-oriented. During a chat with former president and PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, both leaders discussed the prevailing political situation in the country, Senate elections and long march. Both Zardari and Fazl also held consultations over candidates for the Senate elections; a strategy to be adopted for the much talked about long march besides running election campaign for PDM candidate by Islamabad Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani.

Pak-China enjoy special relations, says Dr Moeed

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Security Division and Strategic Policy Planning Dr Moeed Yusuf Friday said that China and Pakistan enjoy special relations and these ties would continue to grow. He said Pakistan would continue to build bilateral cooperation in various areas under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The SAPM was called on by Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong here, said a press release. Talking about cooperation in different areas,

Dr Moeed Yusuf said collaboration between the think tanks in the two countries should be improved to promote dialogue among them. On the occasion, Chinese Ambassador said the Pakistan-China relations should not be limited to government level rather should be expanded to interaction among the citizens of the two countries. "Think-tank can play a role in commemorating the 70 years of Pak-China friendship this year." Chinese Ambassador H.E. Nong Rong hoped to take Pakistan-China relations to new heights by improving collaboration, cooperation and partnership in various fields.

PM to visit Sri Lanka from Tuesday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the invitation of Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Imran Khan will embark on two-day official visit to Sri Lanka on Tuesday. According to Prime Minister Office, this will be his first visit to Sri Lanka after assuming office. The Prime Minister will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, including members of the Cabinet and senior officials. The Prime Minister's program includes meetings with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. The Prime Minister will also lead the delegation-level talks, covering all areas of cooperation between the two countries including trade and investment, health and education, agriculture and science and technology, defence and security, and culture and tourism.

PTI caught red handed says Maryam

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz has sought to sound the alarm, on what she claims, is theft of votes by PTI members, as counting in the by-polls held today continues. Maryam released a series of "bombshell" videos as supposed proof of the claim. In the first, she begins by claiming that PTI people were caught "red handed stealing bagfuls of votes". She said PML-N MPA Adil Chatta and Ataa Tarar were the ones to have caught the "culprit". Maryam claimed the seal of the bag of votes was also broken and further accused the police of being "a part of the plan to steal votes for PTI". She followed it up with videos showing the bag in question.

Briefs

Govt pursuing pro-business policies, says Omar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Omar Ayub Khan has said the government is pursuing pro-business policies and these are being appreciated by the business community. Responding to the points of opposition members in the National Assembly today, regarding the state of economy and price hike, he said the large scale manufacturing is now witnessing growth of 14.50 percent. The Minister for Power said the previous government set up expensive power plants, ignoring the indigenous sources of energy. He said the present government is focusing to exploit the potential of renewable energy to produce cheap electricity. He said the agreement signed with the IPPs will help save 800 billion rupees. He said the government is clearing the mess left by the previous regimes. Participating in the discussion on a motion regarding inflation, especially increase in the prices of essential food items as well as petroleum products, gas and electricity, Qaiser Sheikh of PML (N) said the devaluation of currency has led to increase in the prices of essential commodities including petroleum products. He said indirect taxes such as petroleum levy are affecting the poor segments of the society. He asked the government to promote the small and medium enterprises as per its commitment.

Gandapur pays homage to Ali Sadpara

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Friday paid tribute to Pakistani mountaineer Ali Sad Para, after his family officially declared him dead in a press conference in Skardu, the other day. Muhammad Ali Sadpara and two other climbers including Iceland's John Snorri Stigurjónsson and Chile's Juan Pablo Mohr Prieto were last seen on February 5, near the Bottleneck on K2 as they attempted to reach the summit of the Savage Mountain. Ali Sadpara laid down his life to shine the name of Pakistan and he would always be remembered, he said in a statement issued here. Expressing his deep condolence to the families of three climbers, he said the other two mountaineers were not only the hero of their respective countries but ours as well. He also lauded the efforts of Pakistan Army and other law enforcement agencies to carry out a massive rescue operation for the climbers that had been acknowledged across the globe.

Cop shot dead in Karachi's SITE area

DNA

KARACHI: A police officer deputed in the anti-vehicle lifting cell in Karachi's SITE area was shot dead by unidentified suspects on Friday. The incident occurred near Khat-tak Chowk of the Metroville area. The assailants opened fire at the 30-year old constable and fled from the scene. Contingents of police and Rangers rushed to the place of the incident. Police found emptied shells of a 9mm pistol as well as the constable's gun from the scene. The officer, Sheraz Khan, was recently transferred from Special Security Unit (SSU) to his current department in Shareefabad area of the city. He was a resident of Block D, Frontier Colony No 3. The Inspector General (IG) of Police has taken notice of the killing and sought a report in this regard. Meanwhile, police say they are probing the case from different angles, including whether a personal enmity was behind the murder. The law enforcement agency is also in the process of seeking information from eyewitnesses as well as gaining footage of the close-circuit television (CCTV) cameras that may be installed near the scene of the murder.



ISLAMABAD: Ameer JI, Senator Siraj ul Haq, Abdul Ghafoor Haideri secretary general JUI along with other opposition members of the Senate expressed solidarity in the protest sit-in of the families of the missing persons and addressed a press conference at the sit-in. – DNA

'Strong govt in Kabul first pillar of peace in Afghanistan'

He opined that both Pakistan and Afghanistan needed to define their security and economic relations, understand each other's views, and build trust and subsequently a shared vision

ISLAMABAD: Head of Massoud Foundation and former ambassador of Afghanistan to the United Kingdom Ahmad Wali Massoud Friday said a strong government in Kabul was the first pillar of peace in Afghanistan. "This entails a formula based on a decentralized system rooted in the social fabric of Afghanistan because only when people from different ethnicities are present within the fold of the system; sustainable consensus can be achieved and hence a strong institution can be built," he added. Ahmad Wali Massoud stated this

during his address at a Public Talk organized by the Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) here at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISS) under its Distinguished Lecture Series, according to a press release. Members of the diplomatic corps in Islamabad, academics, civil society, and former and current diplomats were also present. CAMEA Director Ms Amina Khan gave welcome remarks. Ahmad Wali Massoud, who spoke about the special bond Pakistan and Afghanistan shared - be it politics, economics, security, cul-

ture and religion, and said he had come with a message of friendship and peace. "Peace in Afghanistan means peace for Pakistan," he remarked. He said dialogue between the two countries was very important because direct discourse would strengthen the prospects for peace. Ahmad Wali Massoud, who is on a visit to Pakistan, said like any other relationship, there were always conflicts of interests and instead of wasting time on them, competing claims from all sides should be put on the table and resolved. He opined that both Pakistan and Afghanistan needed

to define their security and economic relations, understand each other's views, and build trust and subsequently a shared vision. Massoud stressed the importance of achieving consensus democracy [in Afghanistan] where the people were their own representatives. He talked about his late brother, Ahmad Shah Massoud's contribution towards building a sovereign, inclusive and strong Afghanistan. By taking a similar stance, peace could be achieved in Afghanistan, he added. Massoud was of the view that the people of Afghanistan had suffered for far too long and yearned

for peace. According to him, values adopted by different factions in Afghanistan varied in a distinct manner, however it was important to take all of them into account if the peace process was to move forward in Afghanistan. It was time for all stakeholders to accommodate each other, he added. Talking about the Afghan foreign policy, he said a very balanced approach was required so that Afghanistan was not perceived as a threat nor used as a strategic tool by any party. By doing so, balance could be achieved internally as well as externally, he added. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Dutch ambassador, Wouter Plomp pose for a group photo with Federal minister for national food security and research, Syed Fakhar Imam and others at the launch of a capacity building project for potato growers in Punjab hosted by Dutch embassy. – DNA

Pervaiz Rashid challenges rejection of nomination papers

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N leader Pervaiz Rashid has challenged the Election Commission of Pakistan's decision to reject his nomination papers for the upcoming Senate election. Rashid has filed an appeal at the Election Tribunal of the Lahore High Court and a hearing related to the matter will take place on Saturday. In his appeal, Rashid stated that the returning officer of the ECP "unlawfully rejected the nomination papers," adding that he was ready to deposit Rs9.5 million to the administration of the Punjab House as required by the ECP for the purpose but he did not receive the related bank details. A day ago, Rashid's nomination papers had been rejected by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on allegations

that he had defaulted on payments that were to be made to the Punjab House. The Punjab government had released a list of people in 2018 who had not cleared their bills for staying and taking meals at the Punjab House. Rashid was among those who were named in the list. PTI MPA Zainab Omar had filed an objection against Rashid through her lawyer Rana Mudassar to the returning officer/provincial election commissioner in Lahore. "Imran Khan can't tolerate criticism," Rashid had said, reacting to the development as he spoke to media. "I criticize [the government] hence efforts are being made to keep me out of the parliament." Rashid had accused the government of preparing a fake 'demand' against him. "To dispose of this fake demand, I am ready to make the payment," the senior PML-N leader had said. "You can close the doors on me,

but you can't stop my voice," he had said, addressing the government. "I will appeal against the decision to reject my nomination papers." Rashid had alleged that fake cases against PML-N leaders were being made, accusing the government of keeping political opponents "away from the field." "I did not keep silent then and I will not be silent now," he had said. "People such as me are like a thorn in their [government's] side," he added. According to the list released by the Punjab government a couple of years ago, Rashid and several PML-N leaders, government officials and their relatives owed a total amount exceeding Rs60 million. As per the list, Rashid owed a sum of Rs7.05 million of which Rs0.69 million was owed for his stay in 2011 from January to August and Rs6.4 million for his stay between June 2013 and May 2018.

ECP directs to ensure presence of lawmakers in custody

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday directed all the chief secretaries and the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman to ensure presence of any member of National or provincial assemblies in custody, at their designated polling stations for casting their votes on the Senate polling day on March 3 (Wednesday). According to the ECP order, the chief secretaries of governments of Sindh and Punjab, and the NAB chairman have been directed to ensure presence of MNAs Ali Wazir, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Syed Khurshed Ahmed Shah and Khawaja Muhammad Asif and MPA Hamza Shehbaz Sharif (Punjab) at their designated polling stations for casting their votes on the polling day. It added,

"It has been informed that Ali Wazir, MNA, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, MNA, Syed Khurshed Ahmed Shah, MNA, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, MNA and Hamza Shehbaz Sharif, MPA are currently in the custody of provincial governments of Sindh and Punjab, and National Accountability Bureau (NAB) respectively." The ECP said it had issued its order while exercising its powers under the Articles of the Constitution as Article 220 of the Constitution read with Section 5 of the Elections Act, 2017, which "provides that it shall be the duty of all executive authorities in the Federation and in the provinces to assist the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioner in the discharge of his or their functions". – APP

'Govt mobilizing local community for green Pakistan'

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam on Friday said that government was taking measures to involve local community and students of educational institutions for promotion of clean and green Pakistan. Under the dynamic vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, we have started the campaign in different parts of the country to achieve the targets of ten billion tree tsunami, he stated in an interview with state television channel. The

PM, he said was leading the program of "Plant for Pakistan Day" and students played active role in that regard, he added. In reply to a question, SAPM said that concerned departments were choosing the environment friendly trees so that PM's vision for clean and green Pakistan could be made successful. To another question, he said provincial and federal governments are engaged in afforestation aimed at creating healthy environment for the future of Pakistan. – APP

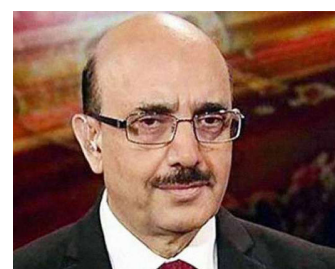
'World can't take any decision sans Pakistan's approval'

Addressing a gathering of teachers and students at The University of Haripur on Friday in connection with the Kashmir Solidarity Week, the state president said that India is scared of Pakistan's potential to become a powerful country

DNA

HARIPUR: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan has said that in spite of numerous odds and challenges, Pakistan is considered among the big countries of the world and no decision can be made on the international level without the assent of Pakistan. "The Pakistanis must not consider themselves to be inferior as India fears only Pakistan in the region and its proof is that on the one hand, India is engaged in plots to weaken and destabilize Pakistan while on the other, it has deployed a big chunk of its army on our eastern border and in occupied Kashmir," he asserted. The President

questioned if India does not face any danger from Pakistan, why it has made such a big military concentration around our country. Addressing a gathering of teachers and students at The University of Haripur on Friday in connection with the Kashmir Solidarity Week, the state president said that India is scared of Pakistan's potential to become a powerful country. He said that if we are determined to safeguard not only the geographical boundaries but ideological borders of our country, we would be able to liberate Kashmir from India without which Pakistan would remain incomplete. "The people of occupied Kashmir have been offering unprecedented sacrifices since 1947 to become part of Pakistan, and they are still



giving their blood by holding the Pakistani flag in their hands. A similar spirit for Kashmir is visible among the Pakistani youth right from Karachi to Khyber and Gwadar to Khunjarab. Addressing direct to the students, Sardar Masood Khan urged them to, side by side getting an education, they should expose India's false narrative, and promote their

own objective narrative by reaching out to their international peers. About the latest situation of occupied Kashmir, the AJK President said that India had illegally settled in the disputed territory more than two million of its Hindu citizens within a short span of eight months in order to change the demography of occupied Kashmir and to turn it into a Hindu majority state. This exercise under the Hindutva policy warrants us to rise to save our Muslim Kashmiri brethren from the Indianization of the territory. He stressed the Pakistani students to complete their education, and turn Pakistan into a strong and stable economic and military power, and on the other hand, take the voice of Kashmiri people in every length

and cranny of the world by using social media and other means of communication. Sardar Masood Khan thanked the vice-chancellor and the teachers of the University of Haripur for observing Kashmir solidarity week, and establishing a Kashmir desk in the institution. The gathering was also addressed among others by Vice-Chancellor University of Haripur Prof Dr Anwarul Hassan Gilani and Vice-Chancellor AJK University Prof Dr Kalim Abbasi. Earlier on arrival at the University of Haripur, the AJK president inaugurated the Kashmir Desk established in the university and also attended a ceremony to sign a memorandum for cooperation between the AJK University and the University of Haripur.

Notice issued to Mehmood-ur-Rasheed

DNA

GUJRANWALA: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued notice to PTI's Provincial Minister Mian Mehmood-ur-Rasheed for violating the code of conduct in today's by-election. According to details, the notice was issued to Mian Mehmood-ur-Rasheed by ECP for violating the code of conduct in the PP-51 Wazirabad by-election. The Election Commission has sought a reply from Mian Mehmood-ur-Rasheed within two days. It said that the PTI leader participated in the election campaign despite the ban imposed by ECP. The notice said that according to the Election Commission Code of Conduct, no minister or sitting member of the Assembly can participate in the election campaign.

ATC orders blocking Pashteen, Dawar's CNICs

DNA

KARACHI: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) ordered to block the identity cards of Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) leaders Manzoor Pashteen and MNA Mohsin Dawar on Friday. The PTM leaders were previously declared absconders, after the failed to appear before the court in a case pertaining to provocative speech and sedition. Before adjourning the hearing till March 9, the court ordered the identity cards of the accused to be blocked and a report submitted regarding it. Both the PTM chief and MNA Dawar are nominated in a treason case and for provoking the public against the state through their speeches. Late last year, an ATC sent another PTM leader, MNA Ali Wazir, and others to jail on a judicial remand. Police produced Wazir and others before the ATC in Karachi. The court sent all the accused to jail on judicial remand. The court further directed the investigating officer to submit the challan before the court till the next hearing. PTM leader was arrested in Peshawar on December 16 on charges of hate speech against state institutions while addressing a rally in Karachi on December 6, according to police sources.

PSDF to launch DVV system developed

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) has launched Digital Verification and Validation (DVV) system deployed by Jazz to offer an end-to-end digitalized attendance system and a comprehensive stipend disbursement solution. This collaboration is an initiative of Jazz Business, which has the largest and most comprehensive portfolio of B2B ICT services and is currently serving 95 of the top 100 PSX listed companies. In the approval phase with NADRA for biometric integration, the project will benefit over 100,000 PSDF's students across Punjab. The DVV system will digitize students' data by collecting, biometrically verifying, and validating it against NADRA's database. The DVV system will integrate trainee profiles into PSDF's management information system, validate student attendances, and monitor the distribution of training learning resources. Using portable biometric devices, the system will ensure reduced staff hours, quicker turnaround times, and the elimination of fake and ghost trainees. Moreover, through JazzCash, allocated monthly stipends will be deposited directly into the trainees' accounts, giving them instant access to stipend and subsequently increasing digital financial inclusion. Jawad Khan, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PSDF, stated: "PSDF is the most modern and technology-savvy development sector company in Pakistan. The partnership with Jazz in the deployment of advanced technologies at PSDF training partner locations is part of our continuous efforts to deliver digital solutions to manage our entire operation." Ali Naseer, Chief Business Officer of Jazz, said, "Jazz Business provides unique solutions, offering reliability, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency to our customers."

Briefs

AIOU designs time duration policy

GHULAM MURTAZA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has designed time duration policy for the educational programs offered through open distance learning mode (ODL). This policy will be effective from spring 2020 semester and it would be applicable to the students seeking fresh admission in this semester. According to the details, minimum duration for the completion of matriculation and intermediate programs is two years (4 semesters) while maximum duration would be five years. On the other hand, minimum duration for all post graduate diplomas is one year (2 semesters) and maximum duration is three years. Similarly, maximum duration for B Ed (1.5 years) is three years and for B Ed (2.5 years) is five years. For 4 years programs including BS/ BBA and B.Ed, maximum duration is eight years. Likewise, maximum duration for M.Ed is three years and for all master's programs is four years. Moreover, students failing to earn their certificates, diplomas and degrees within the maximum time limit will be required to take readmission.

ATC extends judicial remand of lawyers

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) on Friday extended the judicial remand of five lawyers involved in vandalizing the Islamabad High Court (IHC) building during a protest. The court also sent another lawyer to jail on judicial remand and adjourned the hearing of post arrest bail petitions of three accused due to lawyers' strike. ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan heard the case pertaining to vandalizing the IHC building by the violent protesters. The lawyers including secretary district bar Liaqat Manzoor Kamboh, Sardar Najam Abbas, Muhammad Umer, Zafar Khokhar and Khalid Mehmood were brought from the jail and produced before the ATC judge. The police also produced another lawyer Asadullah who was arrested last day in the same case. The court extended the judicial remand of Liaqat Manzoor Kamboh till March 2, while the remand of Sardar Najam Abbas and Muhammad Umer till March 3, and Zafar Khokhar and Khalid Mehmood's remand was extended till March 4. The court, however, send Asadullah and Raja Zahid Mehmood to jail till February 26. Secretary Islamabad High Court Bar Association (IHC-BA) Sohail Akber Chaudhry and other lawyers also appeared before the court. The same court also adjourned hearing on bail petition of Liaqat Manzoor Kamboh, Muhammad Umer and Khalid Mehmood till February 22, due to lawyers' strike.

Three-day workshop on Islamic law from Monday

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: A three-day workshop on the scope and importance of Islamic Law would start from Monday (Feb 22) at Gomal University in collaboration with Sharia Academy, International Islamic University Islamabad. The importance of the workshop on Islamic Law is to acquaint students and teachers with the scope of Sharia law," said Vice Chancellor Gomal University Dera Ismael Khan Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed. A meeting chaired by VC was held to review the arrangements for the workshop, said a handout issued here. Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Iftikhar Ahmed remarked that the job of universities was to provide research and training along with education.



ISLAMABAD: V/Admiral Iftikhar Ahmed Rao presenting his book "Elements of Blue Economy" (recently published by IPS Press, the publishing arm of Institute of Policy Studies) to Pakistan's Foreign Minister Mahkdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the concluding session of 9th International Maritime Conference. — DNA

Development in E-12 to be completed in 3 years: CDA

The projects on which work has been completed include overhead bridge, laying of new line, widening of roads and other projects including special grounds

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is working on various development projects in which some projects have reached completion while several mega projects are under implementation in this regard development activities have also started in the sector E-12 and its sub-sectors. Ongoing and new projects in Islamabad will be completed on time and PWD underpass on expressway will be completed by April this year. Talking to APP on Friday, CDA spokesman Syed Asif Raza Shah said that progress was being made on important development projects in urban and rural areas of Islamabad under the leadership of CDA Chairman Amir Ali Ahmed. The projects on which work has been completed include overhead bridge, laying of new line, widening of roads and other projects

CDA restores 80% street lights

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has restored 80% street lights across the city and colorful lights are being installed in underpasses and flyovers to enhance their beauty. On the other hand 1102 conventional lights have been replaced by LED lights in different areas of the city. 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 roads. Conventional lights are also being replaced by LED lights. Colorful lights are also being installed and 90% work on restoring and installing new lights in parks of the city has been completed. Patrolling team of CDA is continuously restoring the street lights which are disorder since long. CDA has allocated 10 vehicles and staff for addressing the complaints of the masses. — DNA

including special grounds. Similarly, new development projects in Islamabad include Interchange on Expressway, Rawal chowk and other numerous development projects including Seventh Avenue and Kashmir Road are currently under construction. Timely completion of these projects will create more facilities for the citizens, he added.

The spokesperson said that the best team of CDA is working under the leadership of Chairman CDA which is striving to make the capital the most beautiful city in the world. He said that the construction of PWD underpass on Islamabad Expressway will be completed by the end of April this year by the CDA management while the earthwork and pipe work of East and West ramp of the said project will be completed soon. Due to the interest of the present administration in the construction work, work is also in progress for the completion of several important pending projects. He said that development works costing Rs. 309.861 million have also been started in Sector E-12 and its sub-sectors E-12/2 while tenders for new development works worth Rs. 272.8 million have been issued. — APP

Providing justice to masses at their doorstep top priority

The IGP directed all senior officers that they must listened complaints of citizens and welcome them in Khuli Kacheries with open arms and provide maximum relief to them

ISLAMABAD: Police is organizing "Khuli Kacheries" in the city to resolve public grievances and to provide justice at their doorsteps. Police spokesperson said in the light of the orders of IGP Islamabad Qazi Jameel-ur-Rehman, 10 Khuli Kacheries have been organized so far in which large number of local dignitaries, civil society, business community have participated and this initiative will continue. During the Khuli Kacheries, the officers listened to the issues of citizens, various problems were solved on the spot and while other were assured to be resolved soon on merit. These Khuli Kacheries were very popular in the public and the initiative of the police is being appreciated. IGP Islamabad in his message said that the purpose of holding these Khuli kacheries is to solve the problems faced by the citizens on priority basis, to promote the police community, to reduce the gap between police and public, to give access to a common man to senior police officer. Objective of this he said, was to eliminate menace of corruption and to ensure prompt justice by finding out their problems. The IGP said that, when true justice is provided to the people at their doorstep, these measures will enhance the honor and dignity of the police. He added that the step will remove barriers between the police and the public, and create an atmosphere of trust. "When public issues will be resolved automatically, citizens will be happy to help the police in curbing crime", IG Islamabad observed. — DNA

Admin retrieves over 171 kanals land

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration accompanied by the local police has launched a grand operation against land mafia and retrieved over 171 kanals state and private land from the occupation of the encroachers. According to a District Administration spokesman, the administration on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Capt. Anwar ul Haq conducted an operation in 'Moza Khana Dak' here in Sadiqabad area and retrieved nearly seven kanals private land from the occupation of land grabbers. The owner of the land, Amir Hayat had given an application to the Deputy Commissioner in an open kutchery against the land grabbers. The operation was conducted under the supervision of ADCR Capt. Muhammad Shoaib Ali, AC Sadder and ASP Sadder. Meanwhile, an operation was also conducted in 'Kalyan Awan area, Gujar Khan' and nearly six kanals state land was retrieved. — DNA

Kite flying ban openly violated as 'Basant' celebrated

RAJA PERVAIZ

RAWALPINDI: The ban on kite flying and metallic strings and aerial firing was openly violated here in cantonment areas on Thursday night and Friday as 'Basant' was celebrated while police claimed to have netted 36 violators besides recovering 4774 kites and 69 kite flying string rolls. According to details, the residents expressed concerns over Kite flying and use of metallic strings, banned by the Punjab government, adding that such violation was a question mark on the performance of the authorities concerned. The administration has failed to implement the ban, a citizen said adding, Tench Bhatta, Peoples Colony, Kiani road, Bakra Mandi, Dhoke Syedan, Tahli Mori, Dhari Hasanabad, Lalkurti and many other areas were noticed where the activity was openly done especially on Thursday night and Friday. There was also aerial firing with the kite flying.

Locals said that the metallic strings used for flying kites injured many persons, adding that it could have taken their lives. The citizens said that kite flying could lead to traffic accidents. They demanded of Chief Minister Punjab and the district government to strictly implement the ban of kite flying which may take lives of innocent citizens. Though, earlier City Police Officer (CPO) Ahsan Younas had said that strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against the ban violators but despite their operations and raids in different areas, the ban was violated. Strict action should also be taken against those who demonstrated negligence and laxity in this regard and could not stop the activity which is illegal. Owing to easy availability, children purchased kites and violated the ban not only on rooftops but even on roads. The local social, political and religious circles have demanded the government to take notice

of the sheer violation of kite-flying ban and order a stern action against the violators to save public life. They also demanded the police to ensure a complete ban on sale of kite and flying along with the sale of fireworks. Meanwhile, police claimed to have arrested 36 kite flying ban violators and recovered over 4774 kites and 69 kite flying string rolls. The police spokesman informed that police under the supervision of Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) Operations and Superintendent Police Potohar conducted raids to arrest the ban violators while the teams also conducted monitoring and surveillance through drones and other cameras. He informed that Race Course police arrested nine namely Owais, Sajawal, Sher Khan, Muhammad Khan, Tahir, Shan Ali and other and seized 1403 kites and 20 string rolls. R.A. Bazaar police rounded up two, Shahzor and Abu Bakar on recovering of 250 kites and two kite flying string rolls.

CTO distributes pamphlets among bikers

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Mazhar Iqbal on Friday distributed awareness pamphlets and back view mirrors among motorcyclists under an ongoing awareness campaign launched by Education Wing of CTP. On the occasion, the CTO said that one glance can save a two wheelers life as most of the road accidents and deaths of the bikers reported due to non-usage of back view mirrors. Side-view mirrors are an important road safety aid, he said, the CTP have taken a new initiative to make roads safer for two-wheeler riders. He said, the CTP were making efforts to spread awareness about the rear view mirror which must be used by the two-wheeler riders, as these mirrors are the rear eye of the drivers during heavy flow of traffic on roads. The CTP Education Wing officials have been directed to make the two-wheeler riders aware of the importance of rear view mirror, he informed. Mazhar Iqbal directed the CTP education wing to accelerate the public awareness campaign about traffic rules and road safety.

PSEB to sign MoU with PSX soon

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) soon, ensuring sustainable growth of Pakistan's IT sector in the country. The MoU is a giant leap forward for the development of Pakistan's IT Industry, said a news release. This would be the first-ever MoU between PSEB and Pakistan Stock Exchange. The aimed is to increase the number of listed technology companies on the PSX Main Board & GEM Board which would in turn help to strengthen the financial ecosystem for IT sector growth and build a strong brand image of Pakistan's IT industry in the international markets. There are significant benefits for Pakistani technology companies to list on the stock exchange. By listing on the stock exchange, a company gains instant credibility and stature with prospective clients and suppliers.

US officially back in Paris accord

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday officially returned to the Paris climate accord, with President Joe Biden's administration vowing to make the environmental battle a top priority. Exactly one month after Biden took office and immediately moved to rejoin, the world's largest economy and second largest carbon emitter was formally back in the 2015 accord aimed at confronting the planet's dangerously rising temperatures. The re-entry of the United States means that the Paris accord again includes virtually every country after Biden's predecessor Donald Trump made the United States the sole outlier. "Climate change and science diplomacy can never again be 'add-ons' in our foreign policy discussions," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement saluting the return of the United States. "Addressing the real threats from climate change and listening to our scientists is at the center of our domestic and foreign policy priorities. It is vital in our discussions of national security, migration international health efforts, and in our economic diplomacy and trade talks."

COMSTECH, Cuban embassy to work together

H. E. Prof. Dr. Choudhary appreciated the vision of the Ambassador and his support to Pakistan at the critical moments. He also invited His Excellency to visit COMSTECH headquarters in Islamabad

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator General, COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary along with Dr. Syeda Tanveer Kausar Naim, Former Chairperson, Pakistan Council for Science and Technology, UNESCO International Advisory Board (IAB), had a meeting with H.E. Mr. Zéner Javier Caro González, the Ambassador of Republic of Cuba on Feb. 18, 2021 at the Embassy of Cuba in Islamabad to discuss avenues of cooperation for capacity building of OIC member states.



During the meeting it was agreed upon that COMSTECH would work closely with the esteemed Embassy of the Republic of Cuba and collaborate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Cuba for capacity building of OIC member states in the fields of virology, vaccines, nutrition, agriculture, and training of paramedical staff. H. E. Prof. Dr. Choudhary appreciated the vision of the Ambassador and his support to Pakistan at the critical moments. He also invited His Excellency to visit COMSTECH headquarters in Islamabad.

Briefs

1 held for aerial firing, displaying weapons on social media

RAWALPINDI: Police on Friday claimed to have arrested an accused on the charges of aerial firing, displaying weapons and uploading its videos on social media. An accused Tahir Naseer resorted to aerial firing, displaying weapons openly and uploading its video on social media, a police spokesman. Receiving information, a special team under the supervision of SHO, Kahuta conducted raid at a place in the and arrested the accused. Police also recovered 1 pistol 30 bore with ammunition from his possession.

Dr Ishrat appreciates NTC

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms and Austerity Dr Ishrat Husain Friday visited the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) Headquarters, Islamabad and got a briefing on working of the corporation and National Data Centre (NDC). NTC Managing Director Brig. (Retd.) Viqar Rashid Khan gave a detailed briefing to the advisor on performance of the NTC and NDC, a news release said. Dr Ishrat appreciated the MD and NTC management for the phenomenal development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure in the public sector departments without any assistance from the federal government. During the briefing, the MD said it had always been NTC's endeavor to provide the latest state of the art telecom and ICT services to the valued customers of all public sector organizations. "The NTC is probably one of the few federal Organizations which has recovered from a loss making entity to a profitable organization. NTC has earned a record profit of Rs.578 Million in last FY 2019-20 especially during COVID-19 Pandemic," he said. The NTC, during COVID-19 Pandemic, also provided the Data Hosting platform and Video Conference System to the federal government for hosting of their entire data and for conducting Prime Minister Office, Cabinet, Economic Coordination Committee and National Command and Operation Centre meetings in a safe and secure environment. — APP

Imam for providing seed on subsidised rates

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam on Friday said that government would provide subsidy on cotton seeds fertilizers, pesticides for the eradication of white fly in order to promote cotton crop in the country. He said that Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet had approved the subsidy and it would be disturbed with close coordination of provincial governments. Talking to media men, the minister further said that agriculture sector was badly neglected by the previous governments and incumbent government has allocated huge amount for the development of agriculture sector. Imam said that agriculture development was among the highest priorities of current government and it was allocating all possible resources for its uplift. In order to provide proper information about the crops, pesticides and diseases, a web portal is being designed that would keep updated. He said that plant breeders bill and other legislation regarding agriculture development was pending from years, adding that current government has passed these bills and finalised other monetary policy measures. He said that cotton which was the most important crop was effected badly, adding that efforts would be made to revive the crop for socioeconomic uplift of the country. Besides, work on different agriculture sector development projects were in progress which initiated under National Agriculture Emergency Program, adding that projects would be completed to enhance fisheries, livestock and crops enhancement. — APP



RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and industry (RCCI) signed MoU with PVTC - Punjab Vocational Training Council. Both organisations had discussion on long term partnership and collaboration. — DNA

Internal divisions need work to tackle hybrid warfare

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

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) organised an international webinar on 'Hybrid Warfare against Pakistan: Challenges and Response Options', here in Islamabad to discuss the complex dynamics of hybrid war that are at play in South Asia and analyse how they are taking a toll on the country's national security. Speakers from Pakistan and the United Kingdom highlighted that Pakistan, like any developing country, has its own set of vulnerabilities, with its major challenges being identity conflict, ethnic and sectarian divide, poor economy, poor governance, political instability and weak institutions. All these serve as ominous assets of exploitation for India which has been using grey zone tactics to destabilize and harm Pakistan. In his Introductory Remarks, Air Marshal M Ashfaq Arain (Retd),



Director, Strategic Defence and Security at CASS, said that spearheaded by non-traditional use of power centres, not only great powers but various middle powers were also engaging in hybrid warfare to destabilize, demoralize and disintegrate their core adversaries. He added that India has been continuously waging hybrid war against the country since its inception. This

has been expedited more recently with increased funding and training separatist militias in Pakistan, conducting economic subversion by politicizing international bodies like FATF and carrying out diplomatic sabotage in the form of disinformation campaigns, revelations by EU DisinfoLab are the latest example of Indian endeavours. Conceptualizing the theory and

practice of hybrid warfare, Sir Lawrence Freedman, Professor Emeritus, King's College London, outlined that sabotage, propaganda and deception had always been part of war strategy and there was nothing new in hybrid warfare. However, he argued that duration, more than decisiveness had become a critical factor in war because if the enemy proved to be resilient, then over

time non-military factors become progressively more important. In such cases, the ability to absorb a surprise attack and draw out a war was the winning strategy, he emphasized. In his view, modern society's dependence on the Internet had provided new opportunities to opponents to cause problems that were not there before, not only to spread information, but also disinformation on a wide scale. "An adversary would always pick up and amplify divisions within a state, so the response option has to be based on reducing fissures and divisions within one's society", he remarked. On the subject of 'India's Hybrid Warfare against Pakistan', former High Commissioner of Pakistan to India Ambassador (Retd) Abdul Basit observed that the ongoing 5th generation warfare was all about keeping Pakistan politically unstable, economically weak and regionally and internationally maligning the country; and its objectives ranged from Kashmir to Afghanistan.

CDA retrieves 250 kanal land during operation

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) retrieved 250 kanal government's land from land mafia by conducting operations in Sanyari and Chontra here on Friday. According to detail, the administration of CDA is continuously conducting operations against encroachments, illegal constructions, and land grabbers in the city. Operations are being conducted under the supervision of the department of Enforcement. Heavy machinery of the department of MPO is being used for carrying these operations. 110 rooms, 51 boundary walls, 38 DPC, 52

washrooms, 20 kitchens, and 35 water tankers were demolished during the operation of CDA in Chontra. More than 200 kanal land was retrieved by operation. Similarly, CDA also conducted operation in Sanyari and retrieved more than 50 kanal land. The land mafia had done constructions at the land of CDA on both the said places. The mafia was also involved in illegal buying and selling of the land. They were also doing new constructions at the site. The land grabbers were issued notices for demolishing the constructions two times before conducting the operation. But, the land grabber did not cooperate with CDA.

SASSI to promote Pakistan-Russia bilateral trade ties

ISLAMABAD: South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) University on Friday forged a close collaboration with the Pakistani diplomat based in Russia and business fraternity forums to promote Pak-Russia bilateral trade cooperation and strategic understanding. Director General South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) University Dr. Maria Sultan held meeting with Honorary Consul General of Pakistan St Petersburg and Leningrad Region Russia, Dr Abdul Rauf Rind, Secretary General US/Pakistan International Chamber, Pakistan Chapter Malik Sohail Hussain and Pakistan Japan Business Forum Dilawer Khan. — APP

PM urges youth to plant more trees

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Prime Minister Imran Khan has urged the youth to play their due role in making the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami drive a success to protect the country from adverse impact of the climate change. Addressing the launching ceremony of Spring Tree Plantation Campaign at Ghazi Barotha this afternoon, he said trees are vital to preserve the future

of coming generations as Pakistan is amongst the ten most affected countries of the world by the negative impact of the climate change. He asked the youth to protect trees and the government will provide them sports grounds. Imran Khan said 70 percent of Lahore's tree cover was eroded and the previous regimes paid no heed to that regard. He said we have to plant more trees to reverse the adverse impact of climate change. Responding to some demands

raised by Malik Amin Aslam, the special assistant on climate change, for the area, Imran Khan announced setting up of Special Technology zone at Kamra. He said the entire Punjab, including Attock district, will be provided with universal health coverage under Insaf Health Card by the end of this year. The Prime Minister said it has been government's policy to give priority to local people for jobs in projects established in an area



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan, Erik Beishembiev, in a group photo with Pakistani businessmen and members of the global Entrepreneurs Organization (EO). — DNA

'Peace in Afghanistan means peace for Pak'

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 Ulama Council chairman urged minorities living in Pakistan not be intimidated as the state will stop those who try

to harm them. The honor and status bestowed on women by the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W) is unmatched 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 mak-

ing 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 NGOs with objectives to invite 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.



Police submit challan in Osama Satti murder case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The police on Friday submitted interim challan to an Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) in Osama Satti murder case against five police personnel. ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan instructed to shift the case to the ATC Judge Shahrugh Arjamand. The court observed that the case challan had been submitted and instructed to share the challan copies with the five accused. The court extended the judicial remand of the accused and adjourned hearing till March 5.

Admin-Faculty Badminton C'ship held

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The first Faculty and Staff Badminton Championship was organized by the Directorate of Sports at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), here on Friday. PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Qamar-uz-Zaman was the chief guest while eight teams from different departments participated in the championship under men's double category. The final match was won by the Administration team comprising Nadeem Ahmad Malik Principal Officer Public Relations & Publication and Fazeel Sultan Assistant Registrar Purchase while the faculty team comprising Dr. Awais and Dr. Muhammad Kashif of Veterinary Faculty declared as runner up with a score of 19-21, 21-18, 21-13. At the end, the Chief Guest distributed trophies and certificates among winners and also appreciated efforts of players and the Sports Department.

Commission seeks proposals to ensure minorities' rights

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The One-man Commission on Implementation of Minorities Rights, constituted by the Supreme Court, has sought recommendations of all the provincial police departments on the implementation of the apex court verdict to ensure protection of minorities' rights. Commission head Dr Shoaib Suddle chaired a meeting of the Inspectors General of Police (IGPs) of all the provinces, including Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Additional IGP from Islamabad Capital Territory Police to review the matters pertaining to forced conversions and marriages of non-Muslim girls, and implementation of paragraph 37 of the SC's Minority Rights Judgment in the suo motu case (SMC) 1 of 2014. Dr Suddle said the forced conversions of religion and marriages were mostly taking place with Hindu and Christian girls in Punjab and Sindh, which were damaging the country's image at the global level. He called for a separate data of such crimes from the provincial police departments so that recommendations could be formulated for proper legislation. A foolproof mechanism should be devised in order to ensure proper age determination of the victim girls, he stressed. Dr Suddle asked the IGPs to modify investigation patterns and official hierarchy leading investigation process in the matter of forced conversions and marriages of minority girls. He said in case of forced marriages, there should be thorough investigation to verify whether the girls had given their consent willingly or through coercion. Dr Suddle also directed the police high-ups to take steps for curbing hate speech and material related to minorities, filling vacant positions on minorities' quota in their respective departments, and raising a dedicated force in their domains for the protection of minorities' religious places.

Visit to Sri Lanka

THE Prime Minister's upcoming visit to Sri Lanka dominated news on Thursday, but not necessarily for the right reasons. The reports of his address to the Parliament being cancelled overshadowed the rest of his itinerary. It must be remembered that even with this change, the PM will be meeting both the President and Prime Minister, alongside the business community of the island state.

The Pakistani Prime Minister's visit to Sri Lanka is important because Sri Lanka is a key regional partner and with Indian designs for hegemony Pakistan's relationship with South Asian nations is ever more important. Let it not be forgotten that Pakistan and Sri Lanka have firm brotherly ties and both countries have defeated the menace of terrorism and sacrificed much for peace.

The bonds between the two countries run deep and direct flights between the two were also established which have been suspended post Covid. These must be resumed. Pakistan and Sri Lanka also benefit from a shared affinity for cricket, among other things. The Prime Minister enjoys international renown as a sportsman, and this too will no doubt afford him an extremely warm welcome in Colombo. Regional stability depends on well-meaning and upright nations such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan forming a bulwark against malicious designs. For the prosperity of both peoples, the leaderships must work together to walk in step.

This two-day visit must be a charm offensive, while also bringing us opportunities for partnership, as well as greater people-to-people ties and tourism exchanges between Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan must mirror the success he has had on previous foreign outings.

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

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Public inconvenience

THE 2021 edition of Pakistan Super League (PSL) will kickstart February 20, with a match between Karachi Kings and Quetta Gladiators. Just days after South Africa's tour, the beginning of PSL means that cricket has come home with a very loud bang. Indeed, the sport brings entertainment and joy to Pakistanis whose love for it knows no bounds.

However, it is also true that the environment in which cricket with international stars is organised causes great inconvenience to ordinary citizens' lives. They face difficulties in performing their day-to-day activities smoothly during any scheduled matches.

Hopefully, Karachi's residents will continue with their normal routine this time even when players move to the stadium for playing matches at the National Stadium. While hearing a petition regarding the cricket hassles, the Sindh High Court (SHC) got reassurance from police authorities that cricket would not disrupt the metropolitan city's normalcy.

The visits of more international players to Pakistan indicates that the environment is conducive for hosting contests here at home. But this should be done in a way where authorities can take security arrangements and the daily routine of a city hand in hand. Some may see the traffic jams as a small price to pay for bringing international cricket home. But ordinary people do not think that way.

It is easier to keep players safe if there are no long travel plans through the busiest streets involved. Ordinary citizens will also find commuting easier. This is what the Sindh government needs to replicate in Karachi. Constructing lodging facilities for players near stadiums will help better management of cities' activities and alleviate security concerns that we have grown accustomed to with international sportsmen visiting.

Electoral legislation of Uzbekistan: Effects of steadiness

Makhmud Istamov

The adoption of the Election Code allowed to systemize the norms of electoral legislation, eliminate similar norms and unify this sphere of legislation. The draft Code was subject to international legal examination by the Venice Commission and a conclusion was obtained. The Code has implemented a number of international election standards, as well as recommendations of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. As a result, the Election Code has been enriched with a number of improvements. These important changes include: allowing the participation in the elections of persons who have committed misdemeanors and crimes not constituting great social danger

EXACTLY one year has passed since the Parliamentary and Local elections held in our country on the basis of the new legislation. In a democratic state and society, it is paramount that the will of the people is respected above all else, without deviation. Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan stipulates that "the people are the sole source of state power" and Article 32 states that "Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have the right to participate in the management of public and state affairs, both directly and through representatives". The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. These rights find their practical expression exactly in the elections. The dedication of a separate chapter in the Constitution to electoral issues has served as an important legal basis for the formation of the national electoral legislation of the country. At the same time, this constitutional provision is an important factor in the continuous improvement of electoral legislation in Uzbekistan. From this point of view, if we focus on the changes that have taken place in the electoral legislation and practice in recent years, we can see a high degree of efficiency of the systematic reforms in the field of national elections. Over the past six years, Uzbekistan has held two parliamentary and two presidential elections. The extensive practical and legal experience gained during these elections, as well as the recommendations made by both national and international observers, have played an important role in improving electoral legislation.

In 2014, amendments were introduced to Article 117 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Central Election Commission was granted constitutional status and guarantees of its formation and independent activity were established. The independence of the CEC members is guaranteed by the fact that their term of office is not limited in time and they are elected by local representative bodies and parliament. H.E. Mrs. Tanzila Narbaeva, the Chairperson of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan. According to the Law of 2015 and presumption of innocence it was determined that polling stations should be set up in temporary detention places to ensure that persons under investigation and whose guilt is not established by legal order participate in the elections. The number of signatures in support of presidential candidates has also been sharply reduced, based on international electoral standards. Specifically, the required number of signatures was reduced from five to one per cent of the total number of voters. In 2019, on the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the adoption of a single and unified Election Code, which included five existing election laws and dozens of by-laws, created an important legal basis for raising the electoral practice to a high quality level. The Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The adoption of the Election Code allowed to systemize the norms of electoral legislation (codification), eliminate similar norms and unify this sphere of legislation. The draft Code was subject to international legal examination by the Venice Commission and a conclusion was obtained. The Code has implemented a number of international election standards, as well as recommendations of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR). As a result, the Election Code has been enriched with a number of improvements.

These important changes include: allowing the participation in the elections of persons who have committed misdemeanors and crimes not constituting great social danger; abolishment of 15 reserved seats for Ecological Movement in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis; participation in the observations of

elections by the representatives of non-governmental non-profit organization – citizens' self-government bodies; allowing voters to sign in support of one or more political parties or presidential candidates. H.E. Mr. Nurdinjon Ismailov, the Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Reforms in the electoral legislation and practice have been widely recognized not only by the participants of the electoral process, but also by the international community. This was also evident in the 2019 elections to the parliament and local Kengashs.

Specifically, the report of OSCE ODIHR's full-fledged Election Observation Mission in connection with the 2019 parliamentary elections under the slogan "New Uzbekistan – New Elections" acknowledges a number of positive changes. In particular, the Mission emphasizes in its report that "the elections took place under improved legislation and with greater tolerance of independent voices. There is more acceptance of free expression. The contesting parties presented their political platforms and the media hosted debates, many aired live. The Election Code incorporates several previous ODIHR recommendations and brings the legal framework closer in line with OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards for democratic elections. The elections showed that the ongoing reforms need to continue". Undoubtedly, the updated electoral legislation of 2019, as well as the strengthening and widening environment of openness and transparency in our country, allowed the Central Election Commission to organize the parliamentary elections and raise it to a new, higher level. H.E. Mr. Akmal Saidov, the First Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan. What are the systematic changes that are being steadily implemented? The formation of a single electronic voter list to ensure the implementation of the principle of "one voter – one vote" has become a completely new practice in the national electoral system of Uzbekistan. The list includes information on more than the 20.5 million citizens of voting age and was used during the previous elections. Political parties and candidates have been provided with more opportunities than ever before to hold pre-election meetings. The 26 TV debates they held were all broadcast live. All this contributed, for the first time in the history of modern Uzbekistan, to elections held in a true competitive environment. The opportunity of all our compatriots living abroad to vote is another important change. At 55 polling stations established in 38 foreign countries, 112,411 citizens exercised their constitutional right to vote. In the previous elections, only registered citizens in the diplomatic missions of our country abroad could participate in the elections. During the preparation for the elections, about 180,000 members of election commissions were trained in practical seminars. One of the most important innovations in the national electoral system of Uzbekistan – for the first time in the history of our country persons who have committed misdemeanors and crimes not constituting a great social danger had the honor to vote. Thus 4,308 such individuals exercised their right to vote in the previous elections. A mechanism for a rapid response to media, social networks and citizens reports of electoral violations has been created which also allowed appropriate legal action to be taken if necessary. Through this mechanism, the results of the elections of the local representative bodies in two constituencies were declared invalid and the process of repeat elections was used for the first time in the national electoral practice.

It should be noted that this is, first of all, a clear confirmation of changes in the socio-political environment of new Uzbekistan, the principles of democracy, openness and transparency are be-

ginning to be implemented. The whole world is watching with interest as the reforms are being steadily implemented, which require great wisdom, patriotism, a huge devotion to national traditions and ideas of modern democracy and a strong political will. The adoption and successful implementation of the Election Code was a major step towards further strengthening and improving our national electoral legislation, which was formed during the years of independence, and relied on our nearly thirty years of experience in conducting democratic elections.

For the first time, the Central Election Commission has developed analytical information on the parliamentary elections in 2019, which, along with the achievements in the organization of elections, reflected the shortcomings and problems, the measures to be taken. Further improvement of our national electoral legislation, to bring it in line with universally recognized international standards is a continuous and ongoing process.

The recommendations of international organizations on the improvement of the electoral system will be taken into account and implemented in compliance with the ongoing structural reforms in our country, of course, based on the national traditions and unique cultural values of our people. At the same time, the analysis of Uzbekistan's scores in the World Democracy Index over the past six years in the "Electoral Process and Pluralism" category raises some concerns and we hope that our international partners will pay more attention to this issue. For six years in a row from 2014 to 2019, the score of Uzbekistan was the same – 0.08 in the World Democracy Index "Electoral Process and Pluralism". According to the criterion of "free and fair elections" of the Transformation Index, compiled by the Bertelsmann Foundation – 2. However, we believe that the effective reforms implemented in the electoral system of Uzbekistan in 2019 alone will significantly improve these numbers. As noted, it would be considered fair if the next international rankings reflect the adoption of a single Election Code and the analytical reports of influential international organizations published in 2020. Of course, the ultimate goal is not to improve the numbers in the rankings. The most important thing is to firmly establish democracy, which is steadily strengthening in new Uzbekistan, and to further improve the conditions that serve to expand the electoral rights of citizens. On 5 February 2021 elected New Chairman of the Central Election Commission Zainiddin Nizamhodjaev.

– Makhmud ISTAMOV is the Member, Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan



Valentine's Day – a well misunderstood reality

Munir Ahmed



Valentine's Day has many tales associated with it. The most cited one is that the day is commemorated in memory of 3rd century Saint Valentine of Rome who was beheaded by the emperor on February 14, which has been observed as the Feast of Saint Valentine since 496 AD

PRETENDING that I know nothing about February 14, I put up a post on my Facebook page asking my about 5000 'friends' what is February 14 about? Less than fifty responded hesitantly. Most of them wrote on my wall, "we have nothing to do with it" or making jokes about the post. No one dare to say that it is a day of love – a day of red roses, chocolates and red balloons. Perhaps for only one reason that, in Pakistan, the day is explicitly termed as the day promoting the pre-marital sexual relations. This is quite unfortunate.

No doubt, Valentine's Day is mostly celebrated by the youth world over according to their social and cultural norms or may be exceeding limits in many of the cases. But, the day is the most cursed demon in Pakistan. Against the day are mostly the social hypocrites and the religious fanatics. They have their own arguments without differentiating between love and courtly lovemaking. Every year, they start shouting on the sellers of the red rose, cards of the day, and red heart-shaped balloons which are usual gifts of the day. They have shown their rowdy and violent behaviour against the sellers of these products at many places in Pakistan in the past years. It is just because of the misconceptions denoted to the day and spread all over by the religious extremists.

Valentine's Day has many tales associated with it. The most cited one is that the day is commemorated in memory of 3rd century Saint Valentine of Rome who was beheaded by the emperor on February 14, which has been observed as the Feast of Saint Valentine since 496 AD. From the High Middle Ages this Saints' Day has been associated with a tradition of courtly love. However, with the evolution over the centuries, the day has emerged

as a significant element of the culture around the world promoting love among men and women, and a feast for the family too.

Each year on February 14, according to world's leading US greeting cards and gift company Hallmark, more than 170 million cards – not including packaged kids' valentines – are exchanged. But in Pakistan, religious groups oppose the idea of celebrating Valentine's Day and have termed it an un-Islamic practice. The government, unfortunately, caves in to their absurd demands and Valentine's Day celebrations in the country have been 'banned' through a court order. Many moderates believe that the decision should be repealed and the day may be celebrated as a feast within the social and religious limits. Renowned Islamic scholar Javed Ahmed Ghamdi has already said that the day may be adopted as we have imported other western days after excluding un-Islamic part of it. Feasts within limits are not prohibited in Islam.

A huge economic activity is also attached with this day like many other international and global days including Father's Day, Mother's Day and several other social and environmental days. The importance of such days is imperative in pledging our commitment to pursuing the objectivity related to the day. Celebration and feast is also significantly attached to these days just to enjoy the fun filled moments with the loved ones, and to make them memorable. Religious fanatics – who have a habit of declaring just about everything 'un-Islamic' – believe that Valentine's Day is a western concept and 'spoils the morals of our youth'. It is very strange that conflicting concepts of jihad can be imported from extremist organisations for vested interests, but the festivals

and feasts of spring are frowned upon. Cultures, being the living phenomenon, consistently keep on attracting new additions. The local norms and values edit the parts of a fest not relevant to the society. So, the festivity goes on in the localised formats.

The Islamabad High Court in a ruling a couple of years back had ordered a ban airing the Valentine's Day promotions. In pursuance of the orders, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) reminds every year the TV and radio channels to comply with the court orders. The notification says, "In the meanwhile, respondents are directed to ensure that nothing about the celebrations of Valentine's Day and its promotion is spread on the electronic and print media. No event shall be held at official level and at any public place."

Three years back, speaking on a TV channel, well-known Islamic scholar Javed Ahmed Ghamdi also spoke on the positive aspect of the Valentine's Day saying, if I exactly recall, "even if it is western tradition, we can benefit from the positive approach of the day that is only meant to promote and celebrate love. And, the love can be among the siblings, spouses and parents. There shall be no harm if this day brings an opportunity for a family or spouses and those who are engaged to each other for matrimony to exchange cakes, chocolates, flowers and greeting cards expressing heart-felt sentiments, or dine out at the public places without indulging into anything contrary to social and moral values."

– The writer is a freelance journalist and broadcaster, Director Devcom-Pakistan, a policy advocacy and outreach think tank in Islamabad. His email: devcom.pakistan@gmail.com Twitter Handle: @EmmayeSyed

Briefs

UN experts slam India on Kashmir

From Page 01
“These legislative changes may have the potential to pave the way for people from outside the former state of Jammu and Kashmir to settle in the region, alter the demographics of the region and undermine the minorities’ ability to exercise effectively their human rights,” the experts said. They urged the Government of India to ensure that the economic, social and cultural rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir are protected, and that they are able to express their political opinions and participate meaningfully in matters affecting them. The experts said they were in contact with the Indian government on this matter.

Iraq sees record cases as lockdown begins

BAGHDAD: New lockdown measures came into effect in Iraq on Friday as it recorded its highest new coronavirus caseload in 2021 – double the daily figures from less than a week ago. Earlier this week, health authorities announced new overnight curfews would begin on February 18th, from 8:00 pm until 5:00 am, as well as full lockdowns on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. On its first full lockdown day on Friday, Baghdad’s main roads were clear of the usual traffic and security forces had set up new checkpoints to stop violators. Pharmacies remained open and restaurants were allowed to provide delivery service only, but all other businesses were ordered shut. On Thursday evening, AFP correspondents saw customers lining up outside pharmacies and supermarkets to buy face masks as the new measures included a fine of 25,000 Iraqi dinars (\$17) for anyone not wearing one. The sudden demand sent prices soaring from 2,500 IQD (less than \$2) to 6,000 IQD for a box of 50 medical masks. – APP

US hits Belarusian officials with travel bans

FOREIGN DESK
MINSK: The United States on Thursday imposed travel restrictions on 43 Belarusian nationals identified as taking part in President Alexander Lukashenko’s “crackdown” on protesters and journalists. The US action was announced by Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a statement that followed the sentencing Thursday of two journalists who had livestreamed an enormous protest in Minsk in November. Katsiaryna Bakhvalava, age 27, and Daria Chultsova, 23, both of the Polish-funded Belsat TV channel were sentenced to two years in prison covering the protest. The State Department also noted raids by Belarusian authorities on February 16 on Vyasna, an association of journalists, and on independent trade union workers. Blinken’s statement said the US “remains alarmed by the Lukashenko regime’s continuing violent crackdown on peaceful protesters, pro-democracy activists, and journalists”. The sanctions restricting travel to the US apply to “high-ranking justice sector officials, law enforcement leaders and rank-and-file personnel who detained and abused peaceful demonstrators”, Blinken’s statement said. In addition, judges and prosecutors involved in sentencing protesters and journalists, as well as academic administrators who threatened students for participation in protests were also sanctioned. More than 33,000 people have been detained in a violent crackdown on protests against Lukashenko’s rule following a contested election last August that his opponents have said was rigged to extend his rule, according to the Reuters news service. The crackdown has prompted Western countries to impose new sanctions on Minsk. Lukashenko has refused to step down, buttressed by support from Moscow, which sees Belarus as a buffer state against the European Union and NATO.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Ahmad Wali Massoud head of Massoud Foundation, Afghanistan called on Foreign minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi at Ministry of Foreign Affairs. – DNA

US offers to restart talks over Iran nuclear deal

The state department later said it was open to an “informal meeting” with the so-called P5+1 – the parties to the agreement including Iran – that a European Union official has offered to host. It is the most concrete step the Biden administration has publicly made towards direct engagement with Tehran on the nuclear deal to date

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States has said it was ready to restart talks with Iran to revive a 2015 nuclear agreement, reversing former President Donald Trump’s decision to walk out of the landmark deal that was aimed at preventing Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, after a meeting with his European partners on Thursday, stressed President Joe Biden’s position that Washington would return to the accord formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) if Tehran came into full

compliance with the deal. The state department later said it was open to an “informal meeting” with the so-called P5+1 – the parties to the agreement including Iran – that a European Union official has offered to host. It is the most concrete step the Biden administration has publicly made towards direct engagement with Tehran on the nuclear deal to date. However, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh seemed to immediately throw cold water on the suggestion, tweeting on Friday “It is now only Iran and P4+1”. “Gestures are fine. But to revive P5+1, US must Act: LIFT sanctions,” he wrote.

Iran has in recent months stepped up its nuclear activity in breach of the deal blaming the US and European powers – the other signatories to the deal – of renegeing on their commitments. Tehran says Washington and European powers must be first to return to its commitments under the historic 2015 nuclear deal. Iran has also threatened to stop part of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections of its nuclear facilities scheduled for February 21 if the other signatories do not implement their own commitments under the deal. European powers Britain, France and Germany – a group

known as the E3 – and the US on Thursday warned Iran it would be “dangerous” to limit UN nuclear agency inspections. “If Iran comes back into strict compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA, the United States will do the same and is prepared to engage in discussions with Iran towards that end,” said a joint statement issued at the meeting in Paris. Iran began breaching the deal in 2019, about a year after Trump withdrew and reimposed punishing economic sanctions. Responding to the four nations’ statement, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that Washington should

make the first move. “Instead of sophistry & putting onus on Iran, E3/EU must abide by own commitments & demand an end to Trump’s legacy of #EconomicTerrorism against Iran,” Zarif said in a tweet. “Our remedial measures are a response to US/E3 violations. Remove the cause if you fear the effect,” he continued. “We’ll follow ACTION w/ (with) action.” He said in a second tweet on Friday: “US unconditionally & effectively lift all sanctions imposed, re-imposed or re-labeled by Trump. We will then immediately reverse all remedial measures. Simple: #CommitActMeet.”

Qalandar partners with Daraz to provide its merchandise

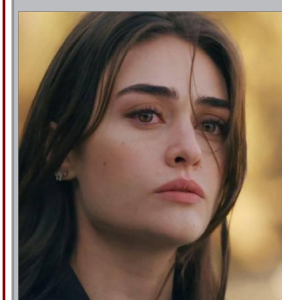
DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan’s leading e-commerce platform announces its partnership with the HBL PSL 2020’s runners up Lahore Qalandar as their official merchandise partner. This exclusive partnership between Daraz and Lahore Qalandar will help establish both sides to target different segmented audiences. The platform aims to bring a unique shoppertainment experience for users with support of tech innovation and gamification for cricket enthusiasts in Pakistan. The e-commerce platform will be sell-

ing the exclusive merchandise of the team for HBL PSL season 6. The consumers and fans of the franchise and the e-commerce platform will be able to buy the team’s merchandise at an exclusive price aided by discounts and deals offered during the tournament. Daraz stands at the forefront of bringing a one of a kind experiences to millions of users by getting a chance to win official merchandise through live videos, competitions and the exclusive One Rupee Game that are scheduled to be announced shortly. Ammar Hassan, Chief Marketing Officer, Daraz Pakistan said, “Daraz being the pioneer in the e-commerce sector

aims to uplift the industry of sports merchandising. To achieve this, we have partnered with the most talked about team of HBL PSL.” “We are thrilled to welcome Daraz as our sponsor partner. This is an exciting partnership which will help us achieve the segmented audience. We hope that both the organisations will maintain a healthy professional relationship,” said Atif Rana, Owner of Lahore Qalanders. With this partnership in order, Daraz will be using the platform to target the audience for Qalandar’s High Performance Centres. This initiative will help in identifying the talent with the passion for the said sport.

Esra Bilgic joins Zalmi for PSL 6



SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Turkish star Esra Bilgic aka Halima Sultan of Drilis: Ertugrul has been appointed ‘goodwill ambassador’

for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 6. Taking to Twitter, the franchise confirmed Bilgic as their goodwill ambassador for this year’s mega event. Remember, Peshawar Zalmi won the PSL title in 2017 in Lahore. It must be noted here that PSL 6 will take place from February 20 to March 22 in Karachi and Lahore. National Stadium will host 20 matches in the first phase whereas Gaddafi Stadium will host 14 matches including Play-offs and final.

Undefeated IoBM wins HEC Badminton Championship

DNA

KARACHI: The Institute of Business Management (IoBM) remained undefeated to win the HEC Intervarsity Zone ‘G’ Badminton Boys Championship 2020-21. IoBM defeated IBA (3-2) in the finals. The two-day event (February 17-18) was organized under the aegis of the HEC – Pakistan University Sports Board, Islamabad. The tournament, hosted by IoBM, included eight university teams from

across Karachi. The third place was secured by Karachi University. The Sindh Badminton Association (SBA) provided the Technical Officials (Referees) for all matches. President SBA, Mr. Adnan Siddiqui, and Secretary-General, Mr. Farhan Lashari were present throughout the event. IoBM’s alumnus, Ms. Palwasha Bashir, the current and 10-time Women’s Double Badminton National Champion was the Chief Guest during the closing ceremony.



GAWADAR: The world’s most beautiful and scenic Gawadar cricket stadium hosted an exhibition match for the first time. Match between Showbiz Sharks & Gawadar Dolphins. – DNA

Munir urges ‘bold’ actions to eradicate racism

The meeting has been convened to discuss “Reimagining Equality: Eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all in the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”

NEW YORK: The President of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan, Thursday called for “bold” action for eliminating existing structural racism and injustice, saying promotion of equality and non-discrimination must remain a priority for the world community. “The COVID-19 crisis has revealed existing inequalities in unequal access to food, education, health, housing, as well as access to justice. It has also incited xenophobia and discrimination,” he said in his opening remarks to a Special Ministerial Meeting of the 54-member Council. The meeting has been convened to discuss “Reimagining Equality:

Eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all in the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”. “We must address the Structural inequalities in economic, social and political spheres,” the ECOSOC chief said. Noting that reducing inequalities is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Ambassador Akram said, “Leaving no one behind is also the overarching principle for this universal framework.” During the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations last September, he pointed out that the world leaders committed to addressing the root causes of inequalities, including violence,

human rights abuses, corruption, marginalization, discrimination, all its forms, poverty and exclusion, as well as lack of education



and employment. “Solidarity and cooperation among countries, societies, communities, and individual citizens is the only possible way to eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all,” the ECOSOC chief said. Stressing the need to re-imagine the economic and financial models, priorities and assumptions, Ambassador Akram said, “They need to be people-centered and serve humanity. Systems that perpetuate racism and inequalities must be dismantled.” “Time,” he added “is of the essence; we have reached a tipping point in which economic, social and environmental inequalities are intersecting in intolerable ways.”

British envoy praises Gwadar

From Page 01
Dr Turner said, “Gwadar has so much potential as a cricket venue. As we know the UK and Pakistan relationship is very strong because cricket is in our blood. “The cricket ground in Gwadar, I think, is the most beautiful in the world. I hope the England Cricket Team might play here one day.” The High Commissioner saw the long-term potential of Gwadar to be a sporting, leisure and business centre for Pakistan, as well as how it could be a key hub to connect Balochistan with the rest of Pakistan, as well as neighbouring countries. During his visit the High Commissioner underlined that any inward investment must be environmentally friendly and should benefit the local community. The visit was also an important opportunity for the High Commissioner to tour Gwadar port facilities and discuss key investment issues with political and government figures, including Ali Zaidi, Minister for Maritime Affairs, and Fawad Chaudhry, Federal Minister for Science and Technology. Dr Turner was joined by Mike Nithavrianakis, the UK’s Deputy High Commissioner in Karachi and Trade Director for Pakistan.

Daska by-polls: 2 dead during

From Page 01
According to sources, PML-N’s thug Javed Butt murdered PTI worker Majid by firing at him and severely injured Sajid,” tweeted Dr Shahbaz Gill. “The PML-N is full of goons such as Gullu Butt and Javed Butt. These are criminals, politics is just a cover-up. Every drop of blood will be accounted for,” he added. The city’s traffic situation worsened because of the clash. The atmosphere outside the polling station remains tense as no law enforcement agency remained present outside the Gondka polling station where the firing incident took place and where currently charged-up workers of both political parties are face-to-face.

PML-N, PTI blame each other

From Page 01
The PML-N leader said the shooting took place in the presence of police, adding that a case should be registered against the Punjab Chief Minister, IG Punjab and CCGO for the incident. Meanwhile, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Punjab on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said that the firing of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader’s guard led to the death of two citizens during by-election in Daska. Addressing a press conference in Daska on Friday, she said that the PML-N leadership tried to sabotage the election staff, adding that those who were empowered by the law were busy benefiting the PML-N. The SAPM said that an army of royal family held the constituencies hostage in Daska, while the workers were harassed outside the polling stations.

Amla appointed Zalmi’s coach

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Legendary South African batsman, Hashim Amla has been appointed as batting coach-mentor of Peshawar Zalmi for the second consecutive PSL season. While sharing his thoughts after rejoining PSL, Amla said he is excited to see cricket fans here once again. “I am happy to be back with Peshawar Zalmi in PSL. I am really looking forward to the start of this super exciting league and I hope my team wins the title this year,” he said. Remember, Zalmi won the PSL title in 2017 in Lahore. It is pertinent to mention here that PSL 6 will start on February 20 here at National Stadium. Karachi will host 20 matches whereas Lahore will host 14 matches including Playoffs and the final on March 22.

Briefs

Baku lauds Indonesia statement

DNA

BAKU: A letter of appreciation was sent to the Indonesian colleagues on behalf of the Azerbaijani parliamentary Working Group for Interparliamentary Contacts between Azerbaijan and Indonesia, the Press and PR Department of the Azerbaijani parliament told media on Feb. 19. Leader of the Azerbaijani parliamentary Working Group for the Azerbaijan-Indonesian Interparliamentary Contacts Bakhtiyar Aliyev has sent a letter of appreciation to the Leader of the Indonesia-Azerbaijan Interparliamentary Friendship Group Muhammad Iqbal.

The letter lauds the political statement passed by the Chamber of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia in connection with the 29th anniversary of the Khojaly Genocide. In accordance with the letter, the statement in question is based on historical facts and references to the known resolutions of the UN Security Council. Aliyev thanks the colleagues on behalf of the whole Working Group for the fraternal support expressed by the Parliament of Indonesia.

The Azerbaijan Republic attaches a great importance to the furtherance of bilateral cooperation with the friendly Republic of Indonesia in every field available, the letter says. "Mr. Aliyev writes with confidence that the interparliamentary collaboration created through a combined effort will continue deepening henceforth, which, in turn, will serve to strengthen the current relations between our nations," the letter said.

Australia to push ahead with news law

WEB DESK

CANBERRA: Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison promised on Friday to press ahead with a new law to force Facebook to pay media organisations for their content after a news blackout triggered outrage not only in Australia but in other countries where governments are considering similar laws. Facebook stopped its 13 million Australian users from viewing and sharing news on Thursday, stripping the pages of domestic and foreign news outlets of content in a sharp escalation of a dispute over Australia's plan to force technology giants to pay publishers for their content.

The blackout also erased content on the pages of emergency services, health authorities and non-profit organisations, adding to the outrage. Morrison, who later condemned Facebook on its own platform for "unfriending" Australia, said on Friday the leaders of Britain, Canada, France and India had shown support. "There is a lot of world interest in what Australia is doing," Morrison told reporters in Sydney. "That is why I invite ... Facebook to constructively engage because they know that what Australia will do here is likely to be followed by many other Western jurisdictions."

Russia blasts ECHR ruling on Navalny case

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Russia on Thursday called a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on opposition figure Alexei Navalny "illegal" and an intrusion in its internal affairs. "The decision is illegal. It is a very serious attempt to interfere in internal court cases, which, from our point of view, is unacceptable," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in Moscow. Russia is not looking for confrontation, but the haste and obvious bias in making such a decision raises a lot of questions, he added. Europe's top human rights court urged Russia on Wednesday to immediately release Navalny, saying the government could not provide "sufficient safeguards for his life and health."

The ECHR, based in Strasbourg, France, is an international court of the Council of Europe which interprets the European Convention on Human Rights. It has 47 member states, including Russia.

Pakistani envoy to enhance Pak-Indonesia educational links

Later on, the Ambassador visited the Al-Azhar Mosque, where he was received by Honorable Prof. Dr. Jimly Ashiddique, the chairman of the supervisory board of the Al Azhar Islamic Education Foundation (YPI Al Azhar), and Drs. Sobirin, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Foundation



DNA

Ambassador Muhammad Hassan, accompanied by the Deputy Head of Mission, Mr. Muhammad Faisal Fayyaz, visited Al-Azhar University, and the Al-Azhar Foundation in Jakarta today. At the university, the Ambassador was received by Professor Dr. Ir. Asep Saefuddin, the Rector of the University and a renowned academic. During their detailed meeting, both sides discussed the possible areas of cooperation between the university and the Embassy. Ambassador Hassan highlighted the need for enhanced educational collaboration between the universities of

Pakistan and Indonesia especially exchange of students and faculty, for the mutual benefit of both the countries.

Later on, the Ambassador visited the Al-Azhar Mosque, where he was received by Honorable Prof. Dr. Jimly Ashiddique, the chairman of the supervisory board of the Al Azhar Islamic Education Foundation (YPI Al Azhar), and Drs. Sobirin, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Foundation. At the mosque, the Ambassador delivered a speech covering the current status of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Indonesia, especially in the fields of educational collaboration and Islamic affinity. The Ambassador also touched upon the issues being faced by the Muslim Ummah



today, including Islamophobia, Palestine, and Jammu & Kashmir dispute. He described in detail, the ongoing wave of intolerance and state sponsored repression against minorities (especially Muslims) in India with special reference to the plight of the Muslims of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). The Ambassador conveyed Pakistan's strong rejection to the illegal actions of the Indian Government, of trying to bring the demographic changes in the area. He expressed firm resolve of the Government of Pakistan to support the case of Jammu & Kashmir at all forums. He also urged the Indonesian brothers and sisters to raise their voices against this injustice being done to the

Kashmiri Muslims. At the end, Ambassador Hassan appreciated the great service being done by the Al-Azhar Foundation Indonesia, in promoting education across the country and expressed desire to work together with the foundation in bringing the people of the two brotherly countries closer.

Al Azhar foundation is one of the biggest and the oldest organization in Indonesia, established in 1952. The organization has more than 200 institutions under its umbrella, from Kindergarten to High Schools and a University. The Embassy of Pakistan and Al-Azhar foundation have a history of close collaboration, and both sides are working to further enhance this partnership.

Myanmar female protester dies

FOREIGN DESK

YANGON: A young woman protester in Myanmar who was shot in the head last week as police dispersed a crowd has died, her brother said, marking the first death among opponents of the February 1 military coup since they began demonstrating two weeks ago. News of her death on Friday came as police and soldiers arrested about 50 people in the northern town of Myitkyina, a human rights activist said, after breaking up a procession carrying banners of detained government leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Mya Thwate Thwate Khaing, who had just turned 20, had been on life support since being taken to hospital on February 9, after she was hit by what doctors said was a live bullet at a protest in the capital, Naypyidaw. "I feel really sad and have nothing to say," said her brother, Ye Htut Aung, speaking to the Reuters news agency by telephone. Her death could become a rallying cry for the protesters who were again on the streets on Friday. "I'm proud of her and I'll come out until we achieve our goal for her," protester

Nay Lin Htet, 24, told Reuters at a rally in the main city of Yangon. The news comes as Myanmar's military coup leaders stepped up its crackdown against protesters that have emerged in smaller towns and cities across the country, indicating a hardened approach against dissent despite growing international pressure and expanded sanctions. In the northern city of Myitkyina, images on social media showed on Friday the military rounding up protesters and blocking the streets in the northern city near the border with China. Several people in civilian clothes were seen being hauled up a military truck as uniformed personnel march nearby. One video shared by the Myanmar Civil Disobedience Movement showed government forces breaking up a march and chasing away protesters at a crowded street. One officer was later shown trying to destroy the banner bearing an image of Aung San Suu Kyi. Another video posted by US-based news website The 74 Media showed several people, among them journalists carrying their cameras, running away as they were being pursued by government forces.

NASA lands rover, first-ever helicopter on Mars

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: The USA's Perseverance rover has successfully landed on Mars with a helicopter called Ingenuity strapped to its belly. The Mars 2020 mission is seen as a first step towards bringing samples of Martian rock back to Earth. It may be last but by no means least - NASA's Mars 2020 is the third mission to have successfully arrived at the Red Planet in the space of 10 days. It's the USA's largest Mars rover and it's carrying the first-ever Mars helicopter. The "show," as NASA put it, started late

morning Pacific Time (early evening in Central Europe). But it was another two hours before the USA's latest rover, Perseverance, touched down on the surface of Mars at 20:56 UTC. To land on Mars, the rover started its descent at a speed of over 20,000 kilometers per hour (12,000 miles per hour). A parachute and a powered descent mechanism then slowed the rover to about 3 km/h before a large sky crane lowered it on three bridle cords down to the surface of the planet, touching down on its six wheels. As planned, Perseverance landed at Jezero Crater, just north of the Martian equator, in a region

called Isidis Planitia. It's a region well-traveled by American landers, including the Curiosity rover, which is still active. But Curiosity is about 3,700 kilometers (2,300 miles) away at Gale Crater. Utopia Planitia is also not too far away, relatively speaking. That's where China intends to land its first Mars rover in May. Three Mars missions launched in July 2020. Aside from NASA's Mars 2020, there is the Emirates Mars Mission and China's Tianwen-1. The UAE and Chinese missions are centered around spacecraft orbiting the Red Planet. But as mentioned above, Tianwen-1 will also attempt to land a rover

on Mars later this year. By far the more experienced Mars explorer is the USA. And they have gone straight for the jugular, and that with an added bonus. First, it's landed Perseverance, NASA's largest-ever Mars rover. The rover will search for water and other signs of life below the surface of the planet. It will also collect rock and soil samples and deposit them in canisters, which - it is planned - will be collected by joint US and European missions and brought back to Earth within the next 10 years. Then, there's that helicopter, Ingenuity, strapped to the belly of the rover.

Gambia: Ambassador Arain presents his credentials



DNA

DAKAR: H.E. Dr. Ali Ahmed Arain, High Commissioner of Pakistan to the Republic of The Gambia, with residence at Dakar, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr. Adama Barrow, President of the Republic of The Gambia in an impressive ceremony on 10 February 2021. The High Commissioner was escorted to the State House by a large motorcade. He was received by the Head of State Protocol and the Chief of Staff of the President. During the 30-minute audience, the

High Commissioner presented his Letters of Credence to the President which accredited him as the High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in The Gambia. The High Commissioner, on behalf of the President and the Prime Minister, conveyed best wishes to President Barrow, the Government and the people of The Gambia. He also shared proposals relating to cooperation in the fields of Higher Education, Agriculture, Trade, Defence, Infrastructure, Tourism and Information Technology. The High Commissioner expressed his desire to work for further strengthening the

relations between the two brotherly countries. President Barrow warmly welcomed the High Commissioner to the State House. Appreciating friendly relations between Pakistan and The Gambia, the President extended warm wishes to the President, Prime Minister and the people of Pakistan. He appreciated the proposed initiatives of the High Commissioner and assured that the government of The Gambia would do its best to get them materialized. The High Commissioner thanked the President for such warm welcome and presented a hand-made Pakistani carpet, which he greatly appreciated.

Algerian president dissolves lower house of parliament

Tebboune described the dissolution of the parliament as part of reforms after voters approved amendments to the constitution aimed at giving parliament more powers in November last year

FOREIGN DESK

Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has dissolved the lower house of parliament and called for snap legislative elections as activists have launched a campaign to mobilize the street again against authorities. "I decided to dissolve the assembly and call elections to build a new institution," Tebboune said in a televised address to the nation, without giving a date for the vote. The five-year lower house of parliament was formed after the May 2017 election which saw allies of deposed President Abdelaziz Boutefli-

ka winning a clear majority. Tebboune described the dissolution of the parliament as part of reforms after voters approved amendments to the constitution aimed at giving parliament more powers in November last year. He also announced that a government reshuffle would take place "within 48 hours at most", and ordered the release of about 60 detainees of the "Hirak" protest movement that ousted his predecessor, Bouteflika, in 2019.

The release of protesters, who have been in detention since the protests broke out on February 22, has been one of the major demands of the Hirak. "We have vowed to meet all de-

mands raised by the Hirak," Tebboune said in the speech. His speech comes amid calls on social media to stage street marches to mark the second anniversary of the demonstrations. The Arab Weekly reported that opposition activists launched a large campaign on social media to turn the movement's second anniversary into a launchpad for a new wave of anti-regime protests. The new announcements are seen as an attempt to appease protesters. Thousands of people staged a protest in the town of Kherrata, the cradle of the Hirak, on Tuesday to mark the second anniversary of the movement, defying coronavirus restrictions. They chanted "President Tebboune is a

forger brought in by the army" and "the generals in the trash." The protesters called for "a civilian, not military state," "the release of detainees" and "the exit of the authorities and the generals," bringing back memories of the political protests that swept Algeria between 2019 and 2020 before the government banned marches in March last year as part of measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus. Tebboune, once a prime minister under Bouteflika, was elected in December 2019 amid protests demanding the removal of the whole ruling elite, with many people boycotting the vote as they saw it as unfair and not transparent.

Huawei exec loses UK court bid

LONDON: A senior executive for the Chinese tech giant Huawei lost a British High Court bid Friday to access banking records which she said would help her battle extradition from Canada to the US. Huawei chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou - whose father is the Chinese company's founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei - has been in a two-year battle against extradition over charges Huawei violated US sanctions on Iran.

Meng is accused in the US of defrauding HSBC by falsely misrepresenting links between Huawei and a company that sold telecoms equipment to Iran.

In the UK ruling, High Court Judge Michael Fordham rejected the application and ordered Meng to pay £80,000 (\$111,000, 92,000 euros) towards HSBC's legal costs. The judge said the Canadian court in Vancouver, where the executive's extradition hearing is being considered, was the "appropriate forum" to decide whether the HSBC records were necessary for a fair hearing. "I have no real confidence that I am properly equipped to judge whether and if so what HSBC documents would be needed to secure a fair hearing for the applicant in Canada," he said. Meng's arrest on a US warrant during a Vancouver stopover in December 2018 - and Beijing's subsequent detention of two Canadians - caused a major diplomatic rift between Canada and China. She has denied hiding Huawei's relationship with the covert subsidiary Skycom in Iran from HSBC.

Rouhani, European Council head discuss nuclear deal

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and President of the European Council Charles Michel spoke over phone to discuss ways to revive the 2015 nuclear deal. Following the conversation on Thursday evening, Michel tweeted that the European Union "supports the full implementation of the #JCPOA [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action]."

"Preserving a space for diplomacy, underpinned by positive steps, is crucial at this stage," he noted.

Rouhani, according to Iran's state media, emphasized the importance of the European Council's role in helping keep the 2015 nuclear accord alive. "The European Union, as an important player in the global arena, must play an effective role in countering the US unilateralism," the state media quoted Rouhani as saying to Michel. He hailed the 2015 Iran nuclear deal as an "important achievement for multilateral diplomacy" and stressed that the achievement should be preserved. In a related development, Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif commented on the latest developments regarding the nuclear deal, saying EU must abide by its own commitments.

Azerbaijani civilian killed in Karabakh mine explosion

DNA

BAKU: An Azerbaijani civilian was killed after a mine planted by Armenian forces exploded in Upper Karabakh region. In a statement, the Azerbaijani Prosecutor General's Office said the mine was exploded in the Talish village of Tartar district, which had been under Armenian occupation for three decades. It was an anti-tank mine laid by Armenian soldiers during the occupation period, it added. Relations between the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia have been tense since 1991 when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Upper Karabakh, a territory recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions. New clashes erupted on Sept. 27, 2020, and ended with a Russian-brokered truce six weeks later. Baku liberated several strategic cities, and nearly 300 of its settlements and villages from the Armenian occupation during this time. Before this, about 20% of Azerbaijan's territory had been under illegal Armenian occupation for nearly three decades.

Briefs

SC for Senate seats proportional to votes

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan, while hearing the presidential reference on Senate open balloting, on Friday said that representation of every political party in the elections must be proportional to its votes.

A five-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed conducted the hearing and remarked that members of a political party in any provincial assembly can vote for the candidates of their allied parties.

The CJP inquired about the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) answer, to which its lawyer replied that the answer has been submitted which is similar to the first one. Justice Gulzar Ahmed said the apex court will examine the details.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) counsel Raza Rabhani said the purpose to constitute the Senate was to provide equal representation to all provinces, and consensus between both houses in the parliamentary system is not possible. The hearing was adjourned till Monday.

Murad has a plan to kill me: Haleem

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf PTI Vice President and parliamentary party leader in Sindh Assembly Haleem Adil Sheikh has said that Murad Ali Shah on behest of Bilawal Zardari wants to get him assassinated and for this purpose a cobra snake was put in his jail cell.

According to details, Haleem Adil Sheikh here Friday was presented before ATC Clifton and the court ordered to shift him to the central jail on judicial custody. The court ordered to present him before the court again on Feb 25. Later, Haleem Adil Sheikh was presented before Malir court.

Talking to media, he said a cobra snake was put in jail cell to get him killed. He said Bilawal had tried to kill him through Murad Ali Shah. He said DSP Aftab Alam is witness who himself saw the snake in his jail room. DSP Aftab on the occasion confirmed it.

Haleem Adil said the police later killed the snake and made its video, which is sent to AIG Ghulam Nabi. He said in this city the chief justice himself recovered wine from the room of Sharjeel Memon and the Sindh government converted this wine into honey. However, now these people would say it was not a snake but a rope.

MQM ex-leader M Anwar passes away

IBRAK KHAN

LONDON: Former Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leader and a close aide of Muttahida founder, Muhammad Anwar, breathed his last in London on Friday. Anwar has been under treatment at a London hospital for the last three days. He had quit MQM over its properties in London.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) had sacked London-based Muhammad Anwar from the party's central coordination committee, also known as the 'Rabita Committee', in 2015.

The party had cited Anwar's continued illness, which had often caused him to "remain absent from crucial meetings, for his sacking. "It is pertinent to mention here that Anwar was arrested in April 2015 by the London Metropolitan Police and was questioned for hours before being released on bail in connection to a money-laundering investigation.

Ambassador of Qatar lauds NAB's performance

It was agreed that the draft MOU be made available to H.E. Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman Al-Thani, The Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic Pakistan through proper channel for necessary action

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman Al-Thani, The Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic Pakistan called on Justice (RETD) Javed Iqbal, Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) at NAB Headquarters and discussed possibility of execution of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Qatar and Pakistan.

It was agreed that the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be made available to H.E. Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman Al-Thani, The Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic Pakistan through proper channel for necessary action. It was also assured by H.E. Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman Al-Thani, The Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic Pakistan that every possible help will be rendered to Pakistan Anti Corruption Academy (PACA). It was further assured that the facility of training of NAB Officers/Officials will be considered in the main institutions of Qatar i.e:



Rule of Law and Anti Corruption Center, Qatar. Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman, National Accountability Bureau appreciated the efforts being made by H.E. Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman Al-Thani, The Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic Pakistan to make the ties more stronger between Qatar and

Pakistan. Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman, National Accountability Bureau Chairman NAB apprised H.E. Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman Al-Thani, The Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic Pakistan about NAB's National Anti Corruption Strategy in order to eradicate corruption from Pakistan

and remarkable efforts to nab the corrupt elements and to recover looted money and deposit it in national exchequer as per law. NAB during the present management of NAB has recovered Rs. 487 billion from 2018 to 2020 which is a remarkable achievement as compared to other anti corruption organizations with an overall conviction

ratio of 68.8 percent. NAB is the focal organization of Pakistan under United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) as Pakistan has ratified and its signatory of UNCAC. NAB is the chairman of SAARC Anti Corruption Forum. This was the recognition of NAB's excellent work as NAB is considered as a role model among SAARC countries.

NAB's anti corruption efforts have been acknowledged by the World Economic Forum, Transparency International Pakistan, Global Peace Canada, Mishal Pakistan and PILDAT. As per Gillani and Gallup survey, 59 percent people have shown trust upon NAB which gives NAB encouragement. H.E. Sheikh Saoud Abdulrahman Al-Thani, The Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic Pakistan lauded NAB's excellent performance under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in order to make Pakistan corruption free considering it as our national duty through concerted efforts to eradicate corruption from Pakistan.

President for enhanced Pakistan-Vietnam ties

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday emphasized the need for further expanding bilateral ties with Vietnam in all areas of mutual interest including trade and economy. He was talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Vietnam, Ms. Samina Mehtab, who called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President said that Pakistan highly valued its ties with Vietnam in all spheres of bilateral and multilateral interactions. He asked the Ambassador-designate to work for promoting trade and commercial relations with Vietnam as Pakistan offered immense investment opportunities and Vietnamese business community needed to benefit from the country's investment-friendly environment. The President asked the Ambassador to also work for promoting the prestige and image of the country as



well as highlight the tourism potential of Pakistan which was a good destination for the Vietnamese tourists with Buddhist Gandhara civilization. He underscored the importance of bilateral political and cultural exchanges at the highest level and asked the Ambassador to explore the possibilities of

such exchanges which greatly helped in further strengthening bilateral cooperation. The President congratulated the Ambassador-designate over her appointment as Pakistan's Ambassador to Vietnam and expressed the hope that she would work for further enhancing bilateral relations with Vietnam.

NA witnesses heated debate on food, gas prices

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Friday witnessed heated debate on food inflation and hike in electricity and gas prices that had been real issues for the people. Speaking on the motion that this House may discuss the food inflation and gas and electricity prices, Qasir Sheikh said the people had voted the parliamentarians to discuss and redress their issues. He said the people had lot of expectations from PTI-led government and added the opposition leaders Shahbaz Sharif and Bilawal Bhutto had offered the government for charter of economy to resolve these issues. He said the issues could only be resolved through joint and collective efforts and added that the PTI government came to power with the slogan to root out corruption and control inflation. He passionately called for focusing on these specific issues. Taking part in the discussion, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said that inflation was the real issue for common people. He said PTI had contested the general elections on major issues: elimination of corruption, inflation and unemployment. He said the government should now move forward and called for taking drastic measures to redress these issues for ensuring proper relief to people. - DNA

COVID-19 infects 1,245 more people

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Friday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 24,139 with 1,245 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,243 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Forty corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 39 of them were under treatment in hospital and one in their respective quarantines and homes on Thursday, according to the latest update issued by the NCOC. - APP

'Iran will reverse nuclear actions once US lifts sanctions'

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Friday once again reiterated that Tehran will "immediately reverse" actions liable on it under the nuclear deal when US Sanctions are lifted. The Joe Biden administration said on Thursday it was ready to revive a 2015 agreement between Iran and world powers that former president Donald Trump abandoned in 2018 before reimposing sanctions on Iran. When sanctions are lifted, "we will then immediately reverse all remedial measures. Simple," Zarif said on Twitter. On Thursday, Zarif had tweeted that Iran's "remedial measures" were in response to violations of the accord by the US, Britain, France and Germany. Other signatories to the 2015 deal were China and Russia. Breaches of the deal by Iran began in 2019, about a year after Trump withdrew from it. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday that the Biden administration would return to the accord if Tehran came into full compliance with it. Tehran has set a February 23 deadline for Washington to begin reversing sanctions, otherwise, it says, it will take its biggest step yet to breach the deal - banning short-notice inspections by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency. - DNA

PTI to challenge Gillani's papers in tribunal

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) on Friday has decided to re-challenge the nomination papers of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader and joint candidate of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) for Senate elections, Yousaf Raza Gillani in appellate tribunal. Sources told that PTI representative has obtained the verified copies from the ECP in this regard. The decision came day after ECP had rejected the objections raised by PTI leader Fareed Rehman and approved nomination papers of Gillani, allowing him to contest the Senate elections. 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 SC had given him a symbolic sentence. - DNA

'Tareen convincing lawmakers to vote PTI'

SHUJAAT HAMZA

LAHORE: Business magnate-turned-politician Jahangir Khan Tareen has been "in touch with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) lawmakers in Punjab to convince them to vote for the ruling party in the upcoming Senate polls," a member of the National Assembly claimed on Friday. Speaking to a private TV channel, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) MNA Raja Riaz said that Jahangir Tareen is "in contact with the ruling party's MNAs and MPs," not only in South Punjab but throughout the province, asking them to vote for its candidates in the Senate polls scheduled for early March. When asked if Tareen - the party's former secretary-general and the main sponsor of its operations - was doing so in a personal capacity or the on the directions of the party's chief, Prime Minister Imran Khan, Riaz claimed that the business magnate "took up the task on the premier's request." The Senate elections are scheduled on March 3, with the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) expected to clinch the majority number of seats in the upper house. Earlier in the day, media had reported, citing sources, that Jahangir Tareen had initiated consultations with Punjab lawmakers closely associated with him, especially from the Seriki-speaking areas, in wake of the upcoming Senate polls.

Govt allows holding of Pakistan Day parade

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The preparations for celebrating March 23 have been put into top gear after the government allowed holding of the Pakistan Day parade. There was a possibility of the cancellation of the Pakistan Day parade for the second consecutive year due to the coronavirus pandemic. But, the government has allowed holding of the parade, provided the anti-virus guidelines will be observed strictly. The parade will be held at Shakkarparian Ground in Islamabad. Last year, the government had cancelled the Pakistan Day Parade scheduled to be held on March 23 as a precautionary measure to contain the spread of the coronavirus. The decision was taken by the National Security Committee in its meeting. The committee had decided to impose a ban on public events and the Pakistan Day Parade was no exception.

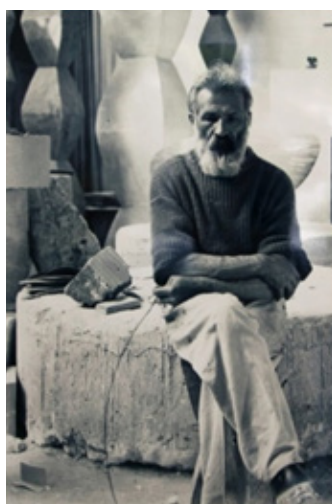
China confirms 4 soldiers died in June clashes

DNA

BEIJING: China's military on Friday named four soldiers killed in a brawl with Indian forces last year, the first confirmation of deaths by Beijing from the border clash that also killed at least 20 Indian soldiers. The Chinese soldiers "sacrificed themselves" during the June confrontation in the contested Galwan Valley border area with an unnamed "foreign military", the defence ministry said. India and China fought a border war in 1962 and have long accused each other of seeking to cross their frontier - which has never been properly agreed - in India's Ladakh region, just opposite Tibet. In mid-June, 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a brutal, high-altitude border battle in the Galwan valley in one of the deadliest clashes between the two sides in recent decades. Beijing at the time acknowledged that the clash had resulted in casualties but did not confirm if any Chinese soldiers died. Battalion commander Chen Hongjun and three other soldiers have been given posthumous awards, the defence ministry said. It blamed the battle in June on "foreign troops blatantly violating the consensus reached with us and crossing the line to set up tents".

Romania celebrates Constantin Brancusi Day

ON 19th February in Romania is celebrated "Brancusi Day" as a national holiday in honor of Constantin Brancusi, one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th-century and a pioneer of modernism, called also "the patriarch of modern sculpture". This year is celebrated 145 years since Constantin Brancusi was born in Hobita (Romania), on 19th February 1876. A passionate wood-carver, he produced numerous wood sculptures, often with a folk flavour, and he frequently carved prototypes for works later executed in other materials. He is best known for his abstract sculptures of ovoid heads and birds in flight. Formal studies took him to Craiova School of Arts and Crafts, where he pursued his love for woodworking, graduating with honors in 1898 and then to Bucharest School of Fine



Constantin Brancusi in his studio

hard, and quickly distinguished himself as talented. He continued his studies in Munich, and École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and was invited to enter the workshop of Auguste Rodin. Even though he admired the eminent Rodin he left the Rodin studio after only two months, saying, "Nothing can grow under big trees". He continued After leaving Rodin's workshop, Brancusi began developing the revolutionary style for which he is known. His first commissioned work, The Prayer, was part of a gravestone memorial. It depicts a young woman crossing herself as she kneels, and marks the first step toward abstracted, non-literal representation, and

shows his drive to depict "not the outer form but the idea, the essence of things." He also began doing more carving, rather than the method popular with his contemporaries, that of modeling in clay or plaster which would be cast in metal, and by 1908 he worked almost exclusively by carving. In the following few years he made many versions of Sleeping Muse and The Kiss, further simplifying forms to geometrical and sparse objects. His works became popular in France, Romania and the United States and in 1913 Brancusi's work was displayed at both the Salon des Indépendants and the first exhibition in the U.S. of modern art, the Armory Show. One of his major groups of sculptures involved the Bird in Space - simple abstract shapes representing a bird in flight.

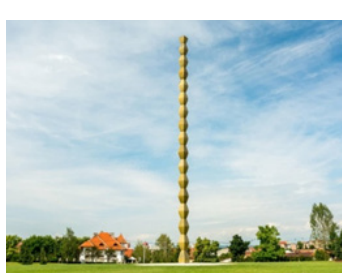


The works are based on his earlier Măiastra series. In Romanian



The Gate of the Kiss

folklore the Măiastra is a beautiful golden bird who foretells the future and cures the blind. In 1938, he finished the World War I monument in Târgu-Jiu (Romania) where he had spent much of his childhood. Table of Silence, The Gate of the Kiss, and Endless Column commemorate the courage and sacrifice of Romanians who in 1916 defended Târgu Jiu from the forces of the Central Powers. Brancusi spent most of his artist career in France and in 1952 he became a French citizen. He died on March 16, 1957, aged 81. He was buried in the Cimetisre du Montparnasse in Paris. At his death Brancusi left 1200 photographs and 215 sculptures. He bequeathed part of his collection to the French state on condition that his workshop be rebuilt as it was on the day he died. This reconstruction of his studio, adjacent to the Pompidou Centre, is open to the public nowadays. Brancusi was elected posthumously to the Romanian Academy in 1990.



The Endless Column

Google commemorated his 135th birthday with a Doodle in 2011 consisting of seven of his works. Brancusi's works are housed in the National Museum of Art of Romania (Bucharest), the Museum of Modern Art (New York) and other museums around the world. The Philadelphia Museum of Art holds the largest collection of Brancusi sculptures in the United States. A small copy of The Endless Column of Brancusi can be observed in the central



part of Islamabad, to the Allama Iqbal - Mihai Eminescu Monument, a symbol of friendship between Romania and Pakistan.