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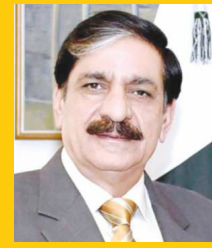
Price Rs. 20

Assault against nature must stop, says Munir Akram

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Future of world lies in Afro-Eurasian region

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Indonesia the largest trading partner of Pak

Detailed News On Page-07



Briefs

PDM wants horse trading

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Wednesday said opposition parties were representing the status quo for the continuation of sale and purchase of votes and horse trading in politics. Talking to media persons, he said that on the contrary, PM Imran Khan fully believed in strengthening of democracy and fair elections and intended transparency in the Senate elections. He said Imran Khan was striving for eradication of the practice of sale and purchase of votes and stood like a rock against the undemocratic practice.

CoD has united PPP, PML-N again

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said that Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz have joined forces for the Senate elections to restore the Charter of Democracy. The PPP leader, who was nominated by the Pakistan Democratic Movement for the Senate polls, said that politics is a day-to-day affair, adding that every party faces its share of highs and lows. "We have forgotten our past," the former prime minister said in reply to a question about the differences that developed between the two parties after the Memogate controversy.

Afridi urges youth to speak for Kashmir

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Chairman Sherryar Khan Afridi on Wednesday urged the youth to become a voice of unheard people of IIOJK whose voices were being gagged. Addressing the participants of a seminar held here at Lahore College for Women University with regard to the Kashmir Solidarity Day, he said the prosperous world needed to build pressure on India and compel it to end its genocide policy against the Kashmiris.

NCOOC loosens restrictions from March 15

All indoor dining, weddings to resume; cricket fans allowed to go to stadiums; work from home restriction also eliminated

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The National Command Operation Centre (NCOOC) on Wednesday decided to loosen coronavirus restrictions that it earlier put in place after carefully reviewing the second phase of precautionary measures or the Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs). The NCOOC added that the decisions could be reviewed again in view of the increased disease prevalence, whenever deemed necessary. According to a statement issued in this regard, provinces can, however, enforce targeted NPIs where required, depending upon disease prevalence in a given area or sector.

Following are some of the decisions taken by the NCOOC.

- Time-limit lifted from commercial activities and amusement parks;
- Condition of 50% work from home re-

moved for office employees;

- Indoor wedding ceremonies will be allowed from March 15, 2021, with stringent COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place;
- Indoor dining allowed from March 15, subject to a review on March 10;
- Opening of cinemas and shrines allowed with strict COVID-19 SOPs with effect from March 15;
- Wearing of face masks, social distancing, smart lockdowns will continue and will be ensured;
- From a health perspective, the conduct of local bodies and cantonment board elections may be planned by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) by the end of May or early June 2021.
- Spectators' attendance in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Pool matches to be increased to 50% from the current 20%. Whereas, full attendance will be allowed for play-offs with stringent COVID-19 SOPs in place.

Pakistan, Lanka mull \$1b bilateral trade

The Pak side announced 100 scholarships in the field of medicine (MBBS and BDS) for SL students

NEWS DESK

COLOMBO: Pakistan and Sri Lanka pledged to realize the goal of achieving one billion dollars bilateral trade target and to work to broaden and deepen Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement. In a Joint Communiqué, issued in Colombo, on Wednesday, on the conclusion of Prime Minister Imran Khan's two-day visit to Sri Lanka, the two sides reached broad consensus on ways and means to further strengthen cooperation in diverse fields. Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's support for the socio-economic development of Sri Lanka in line with the vision of a peaceful neighborhood. The two sides reviewed existing extensive engagement between

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Maryam asks ECP to expose vote theft

STAFF REPORT

WAZIRABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz has said that the eyes of 220 million people are on the Election Commission, vote thieves should be exposed. Addressing the workers in Wazirabad, she said that there must be a re-poll in the entire NA-75 constituency instead voting on 20 polling stations.

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"PDM does not need institutions' support"

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto has said that Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) does not need undemocratic support from any institution in order to take on the PTI government. He said this while addressing a press conference with PDM's joint Senate candidate Yousuf Raza Gilani and other leaders in Lahore on Wednesday. Bilawal Bhutto said that for now, it seems that institutions are playing a neutral role in the Senate elections.

Continued on Page 06

Kashmir issue needs dialogue

DNA

COLOMBO: Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan on Wednesday has said that the long standing issue of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) can only be resolved through negotiations. While addressing a trade and investment conference, the premier said that Pakistan is willing to resolve all the conflicts in Sub-Continent through dialogues. We had contacted Indian authorities to

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COLOMBO: Prime Minister Imran Khan holds one-on-one meeting with President of Sri Lanka Gotabaya Rajapaksa. -DNA

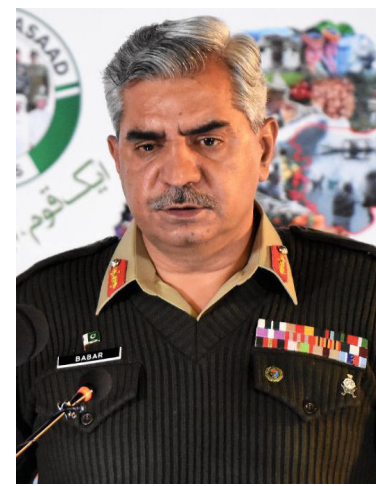
EHSANULLAH EHSAN'S ESCAPE

Action against responsible officers taken: DG ISPR

The DG ISPR also shed light on matter of missing persons and said that committee formed to investigate matter has shown great strides

NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: The director-general of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Major General Babar Iftikhar on Wednesday said that the escape of former TTP spokesperson Ehsanullah Ehsan from custody was a "grave matter," adding that the Army is trying to rearrest him. Speaking to international media outlets, the DG ISPR said that the military took prompt action against officers responsible for Ehsan's escape. "At the moment, we don't know about Ehsanullah Ehsan's whereabouts," Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar said, adding that the TTP leader's Twitter ac-



count, which was recently used to issue threats to Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai, turned out to be fake. The DG ISPR also shed light on the matter of missing persons and said that the committee formed to investigate the matter has shown great strides. "Out of more than 6,000 cases received by the commission, 4,000 cases have been resolved, while the remaining cases will also be resolved soon," said the DG ISPR. Answering a question about the murder of ten Hazara colliers in Machh, Balochistan back in January 2021, Maj Gen Babar said that some "important arrests have been made in connection to the killings."

Continued on Page 06

'Five new embassies to be opened in Africa'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Ethiopia Ismail Omar Guelleh Wednesday said the opening of five new embassies in Africa was a reflective of Pakistan's intention to build bridges of cooperation. The ambassador said this after presenting credentials to Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti, the first in the five being opened, said a press release received here. During the meeting, the president welcomed the envoy and expressed his strong desire to build closer partnership with Pakistan including security, trade and energy sectors.

CJCSC meets Emirati military leadership

DUBAI: General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, who is on a two days official visit to UAE, called on Lieutenant General Hammad Mohammed Thani Al Rumaithi, Chief of Staff UAE Armed Forces. CJCSC also held separate meetings with all Chiefs of tri-services.

During the meetings, both sides deliberated upon various areas of interest, bilateral cooperation including security, counter-terrorism and prevailing regional environment particularly with reference to Kashmir and Afghanistan. The dignitaries also dilated upon measures to enhance



Continued on Page 06

'Steps afoot to enhance foreign investments'

STAFF REPORT

QUETTA: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for National Security Dr. Moeed Yousuf on Wednesday said Pakistan was facing various challenges while incumbent government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was taking practical steps to cope them for betterment of the country. He expressed these views while addressing at a ceremony of trainees of 31st of Midcare Course on the subject of Pakistan's vision organized by at National Institute Management (NIM) here. The SAPM visited National Institute of Management (NIM) Quetta along with organizations and reviewed the facilities of trainees provided by the NIM.

Police make Europe's biggest cocaine bust

DNA

MUNICH: Authorities in Germany and Belgium seized more than 23,000 kilograms (50,700 pounds) of cocaine, worth billions of dollars, in an international operation that resulted in one arrest, officials said Wednesday, calling it the largest amount of cocaine ever seized in Europe. The operation lasted more than week and culminated in the arrest Wednesday of a 28-year-old man from Vlaardingen, the Netherlands, whose address was on the shipment, Dutch police said. Investigators found 16,174 kilograms of cocaine in 1,728 cans of putty.

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Islamabad United beat Kings by five wickets - Page 06

Indonesia is the largest trading partner of Pak: Amb. Hassan - Page 07

Pakistan priorities shifted from geo-political to geo-economic - Page 08

Parliament will decide Senate voting method: SC

"The Supreme Court is not a substitute for the parliament," he added. CJP Ahmed said that every state institution has to operate within its limits

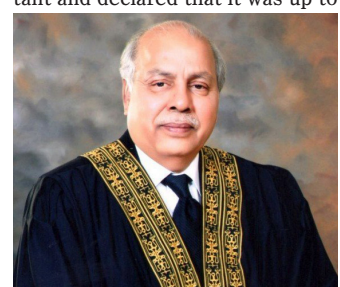
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed on Wednesday said that the parliament is the forum that must decide the method of voting for Senate elections, including the degree of secrecy to be allowed. Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed noted that the Supreme Court need only answer three questions: - Does Article 226 of the Constitution apply to Senate elections or not? - Could there be a single transferable vote in the Senate election through proportional representation or not? - Under Article 226 of the Constitution, are all elections held by secret ballot or not? The chief justice said that besides these, all matters must be deliberated in parliament, including which method of voting to imple-

ment. Counsel for the Sindh High Court Bar Association (SHCBA), Barrister Salahuddin, said the government is "dumping its political responsibilities on to the court". Salahuddin said an amendment bill on open balloting has been pending in parliament. He said arguments made by the Attorney-General for Pakistan Khalid Jawed Khan were not based on what the Constitution is, rather on what it should be.

"The attorney-general spoke of bags full of money and videos on which the court could not provide a ruling. The government had originally approached the court to seek an opinion but no opinion was taken," he said. He said the attorney-general, as well as the advocate generals from all the provinces, spoke in favour of open balloting, but none sought the court's opinion.

"It seems the government is not interested in an opinion. It only wants the open balloting method to be ratified," said the barrister. Recommending that the court not get involved in such matters, Salahuddin said that in the past, references were filed due to a gap in the Constitution, whereas now, no such void exists. He said in the past, the Supreme Court of Pakistan kept itself distant and declared that it was up to



the parliament whether or not to recognise Bangladesh as a state, after the partition of West Pakistan. The barrister also cited the example of the Babri Mosque's demolition. He said the Indian government had sought the opinion of the court on the future of the site but the court in 1992 had wisely refused to take upon itself such a burden.

The chief justice said that the Supreme Court will only respond to the questions asked in the presidential reference on the matter. "If the Constitution says there must be secret balloting then that's the end of the matter," he said. "The Supreme Court is not a substitute for the parliament," he added. CJP Ahmed said that every state institution has to operate within its limits. "We will not take matters the parliament is authorised to car-

ry into our own hands," he said. Barrister Salahuddin said the Constitution is silent on the National Assembly Speaker's elections and the details are only available in the election rules. He said that even then, if the Speaker's election can be held in accordance with the Constitution, then why not the Senate elections. Salahuddin said the Constitution makes no mention of ballot papers. He asked whether the end of the Election Act 2017 would mean an end for Senate elections. The chief justice remarked that the law "never has a void". "When any law is abolished, the one that was in place before it, becomes the law." The case was adjourned till Thursday, February 25. "We will individually listen to all those who are party to the case tomorrow," the chief justice said.

Briefs

LHC approves bail of Hamza Shahbaz

DNA

LAHORE: Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday has approved bail plea of Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly Hamza Shahbaz in money laundering case. While announcing the verdict on Hamza's plea after hearing arguments of both sides, the two-member bench of LHC has directed to release the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader from the Kot Lakhpat Jail. Hamza Shahbaz has been granted bail over two surety bonds of Rs one million each.

On June 11, 2019, the accountability watchdog had arrested Hamza Shahbaz in Ramzan sugar mills, money laundering and assets beyond means cases after LHC turned down his applications for extension in interim bail. Salman Butt, the defense counsel for Hamza, had argued that according to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) ordinance, the anti-graft watchdog could not issue arrest warrants unless an inquiry over the matter was completed. To which, Justice Naqvi had remarked that the judgment would be done according to the constitution, and justice would be ensured. On November 11, 2020, Hamza Shehbaz Sharif and his father Mian Shehbaz Sharif were indicted in money laundering reference by accountability court. All the accused in the case pleaded not guilty. Shehbaz Sharif, while rejecting allegations of the anti-graft watchdog, said that he was being politically victimized.

CM to initiate awareness drive against COVID-19

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Jam Kamal Khan Wednesday directed to launch a comprehensive awareness campaign for processes of vaccination against coronavirus across the province in order to control the deadly virus.

He was chairing a high level meeting on COVID-19 which was attended by Parliamentary Secretary for Information Bushra Rind, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Zahid Saleem, Secretary S&GAD Bilal Jamali, Incharge BCOC Imran Gachki, Secretary Information Sohail-ur-Rehman Baloch, DG Health Nasir Ali Bugti and others while NDP Chief Zulfiqar Durrani and other officials concerned were also present.

The meeting was briefed in detail on the steps taken by BCOC and UNDP for COVID-19 data collection, forecasting methodology, vaccination management, registration. The meeting was briefed about measures taken against the coronavirus by the official concerned. It was informed that so far 98 percent patients in Balochistan have recovered from the virus. The daily cases, this month, were being reported in single digit. The virus is changing shape, which is alarming. Regarding the vaccination process, it was informed that so far 1033 health workers have been vaccinated. — APP

Future of world lies in Afro-Eurasian region: Janjua

He lamented that since the inception of the state of Pakistan, these unique attributes have made Balochistan a target for Pakistan's adversaries, and consequently has been destabilised by internal and external elements. Yet, concerns of people are genuine and they need to be addressed

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: "Future of world lies in the Afro-Eurasian region that begins from Balochistan and its significance has grown manifold with Belt and Road Initiative". This was stated by, Lt. Gen Nasser Khan Janjua HI(M), (Retd.), former National Security Advisor during his address at a Public Talk organized by the China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad today under its Distinguished Lecture Series. Members of the diplomatic corps in Islamabad, academics, civil society, former and current diplomats were also present.

Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC delivered introductory remarks and stated that Balochistan is pivot of CPEC as Gwadar is vital to the multi-billion-dollar project. For this, Dr. Shabbir said, "development of Balochistan is crucial for success of CPEC" and it has a promise to "address issues of socio-economic development, communication infrastructure and unemployment."

Lt. Gen Janjua, in his talk, gave an overview of emerging international geo-strategic environment and relevance of Pakistan. He stated that Pakistan seeks connectivity with Afghanistan, Central Asia and ultimately to Russia and in this, Balochistan plays a pivotal role through its geographical location and abundance of natural resources. He was of the view that even Pakistan's strategic significance lies in Balochistan, and only through peace and development in Balochistan it can be achieved. He stated that Balochistan is gift



ed in terms of its geostrategic location as well as being a hub of natural resources which if fully utilised could be a catalyst for the entire region. He lamented that since the inception of the state of Pakistan, these unique attributes have made Balochistan a target for Pakistan's adversaries, and consequently has been destabilised by internal and external elements. Yet, concerns of people are genuine and they need to be addressed. Drawing on his experience as Commander Southern Command he shared views on hard-earned peace and said that, "in a State, it is

all about people. If people are with you then you are victorious." Similarly, focus should be on national integration as visible and real improvement in the Balochistan situation can only come about not by imposing force, but by ruling the hearts and minds of the people. He identified negative sub-nationalism as the root cause of insurgency. However, in response an integrated and "people-centric civil-military strategy was formulated which helped Baluchistan transition from flag burning to flag raising." On CPEC, he said that, on-going conflict in Balochistan

requires political closure, which will open up new opportunities for people of Balochistan. Federation and other provinces need to address apprehensions of people of Balochistan about their access to natural resources and land for CPEC to be successful in Balochistan. Similarly, in Gwadar focus should be on job creation and providing economic opportunity to every citizen. He underscored that humans are the assets for economic development. The talk was followed by a question-and-answer session which was moderated by DG ISSI, Ambassador Aizaz Ah-

mad Chaudhry. While answering a question on fighting insurgency in Balochistan through force, he said "It is never enough to hate your enemy, you have to do much more". Meanwhile, to another question about Gwadar port, he stated "If Pakistan wants to contribute to the world then we should strive to bring everyone together and Gwadar port because of its location is an ideal port for whole of Asia". The talk concluded with Chairman BOG, ISSI Ambassador Khalid Mahmood presenting the Institute's memento to the distinguished guest.

SHC bars MPAs from voting

DNA

SUKKUR: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday barred members of the provincial assembly (MPAs) from voting during Senate elections if a dog-bite incident is reported from their constituency. The court's remarks came during a hearing of a plea for bringing a halt to increasing dog bite incidents in the province. During a hearing at SHC Sukkur bench, Justice Aftab Ahmed said that the dog bite incident would lead to the suspension of the MPA of the constituency and the lawmaker would further not be able to vote during the upcoming Senate elections. The judge further said that the salary of the concerned official in the area would also be stopped over any such incident and would be added to the provincial exchequer as surplus.

The government's lawyer, however, opposed the idea of action against the lawmakers and said that they had nothing to do with the matter. The judge, however, was not satisfied with the counselor's remarks and said that they know who was getting commissions from the money earmarked for action against dog-bite incidents. "It is better that we do not comment on the matter," he said adding that it was the responsibility of the MPAs to safeguard the lives of the public. The court's hearing was later adjourned for March 16. The SHC bench on October 21 expressed displeasure over rising dog-bite incidents in the province and ordered to register an FIR against the concerned municipal officer in case of a dog-bite incident.

Role of industry for economic prosperity lauded

DNA

KARACHI: The Department of Industry and Commerce has been playing an important role in driving the economic wheel of the province. Recognizing the importance of industries under the available resources, the Department of Industry will make every effort to solve the problems faced by the industrialists. Secretary Industries and Commerce Sindh Muhammad Riaz Uddin said this while addressing a luncheon given in his honor by the industrialists at Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI). Zahid Saeed, Farhan-ur-Rehman, Sheikh Manzar Alam, Zaki Ahmed Sharif and Nighat Awan also addressed the gathering. Secretary Industries Riaz Uddin acknowledged that despite all the difficulties, the way in which the industrialists are playing their role for the development and prosperity of the country and improvement of the economy is respectable to promote industrial growth. On the occasion, President KATI Saleem-uz-Zaman mentioned that unfortunately a single industrial unit have to deal with dozens of government departments and agencies, due to this our precious time and resources are being wasted.

CDA completes carpeting work of several roads of capital



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has completed carpeting work on 7th avenue, 9th avenue, Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, D-12 and other various roads in the city. The work on carpeting and repairing has also been started at IJP road. More than 370 kilometers roads have been carpeted by the joint efforts of the department of MPO and Road Maintenance. According to detail, CDA's work on

restoration of road infrastructure is continued. The departments of MPO and Road Maintenance have increased the pace of the work. More than 80% work has been completed during last few days in the markets of sector F-10, I-8, I-9, I-10, D-12. Carpeting work has also been completed at the main road, service road, and U-turn of sector D-12. Small sectors of the city are also being considered. Carpeting work is underway in the streets of I-9 and I-10. More than 90% carpeting work has been completed

in sector G-7, G-8, G-9, G-10, G-11, and G-5. Repairing work is in its final stages at main roads including Express way, F-10, I-9, I-10, Sohrawardy road, park road, and others. The work of repairing and restoration on neglected IJP road has also been started. U-turns and shoulders of the roads are also being repaired. Advertisements have been published in the Newspapers regarding further work of repairing and restoration. 100% work of carpeting will be completed in next few months.

'Trade diplomacy best tool to exploit untapped potential of Yemen'

He said that Pakistani products were the best and Pakistani exporters should introduce their branded products in Yemen. He also assured full cooperation to Pakistani exporters to have direct links with the reliable business partners from Yemen



ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Ambassador of Yemen in Pakistan Muhammad Motaah Alashabi on Wednesday said the trade diplomacy was the best tool to exploit the untapped potential of Yemen. Addressing the business community in the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said that Yemen needed everything for its reconstruction and Pakistani exporters should have direct links with their Yemeni counterparts.

"The skilled manpower from Pakistan will also be welcomed in Yemen", he said and added the both countries should translate the excellent relations into economic terms. He said that Pakistani products were the best and Pakistani exporters should introduce their branded products in Yemen. He also assured full cooperation to Pakistani exporters to have direct links with the reliable business partners from Yemen. Later, SVP Chaudhary Talat Mahmood presented a FCCI shield to Muhammad Motaah Alashabi.

FBR urged to follow PM directions to interact with stakeholder

KARACHI: Mr. Nasir Khan Acting-President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry has shown his serious concern over the no response and low priority to Business Community issues which is affecting FBR and Business Community partnership required for conducting smooth business and becoming fragile. He said that the issue of CNIC still not resolved despite COVID-19, the issue has reduced business activities. He stated that the issue of numerous laws and regulations have been imposed on the business sectors while at highest level meetings the FBR officials are unable to respond which is not suitable just time consuming. The highest level official should have autonomy to resolve and decide the issues being raised in the meetings. During the meeting with Chairman FBR the

working of the FBR was discussed which is not up to mark and no sign of any trade facilitation is seen. There is no representation of this apex body of trade and industry in the various crucial decisions being taken by the FBR i.e., formulations of the resolution committees and issuance of SROs without consultation. During frequent visits of Member IR (Operation) to the FPCCI Head Office wherein, a number of problems were put forward for decision but instead there should be any relief to the trade bodies no fruitful decision is made so that even a single problem is resolved. Instead to increase the net of the taxpayer the FBR machinery is engaged to squeeze the traders which are already under tax net. The seriousness of the FBR towards tax collections may be noted from the fact that there is no representation of the

FPCCI in various committees. It seems that there is a wide communication gap between the apex body of trade and industry (FPCCI) and the FBR Headquarters and if the position is not improved then the net results in progress to resolve trade related issues will be zero. While participating in the meeting Mr. Zakaria Usman, Convener, FPCCI Budget Advisory Council expressed that in trade business for more than 50 years and still would like to see an economical budget to be implemented by the FBR instead of revenue oriented budget. FBR is lacking consistency in policies which change rapidly affecting the working of businessmen and the commodities are gone out of costing. The policy of FBR to squeeze the already registered taxpayers may be shifted to a mechanism to explore new taxpayers and avenues accordingly.

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Briefs

Artists are asset of nation: Qasim Suri

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri Wednesday said that legendary dramatists and artists were the asset of the nation. He said that artists were the most sensitive segment of society and they were harbinger of positive change in society. He expressed these views while meeting delegation of Pride of Performance holders artists and dramatists which called on him at the Parliament House here. Deputy Speaker NA said that the agenda of the government was to bring quality change especially in the life of our youth. He said that Pakistan Television and Pakistan Radio need to be brought at par with the modern standards. He also expressed his appreciation that the nation remained united and steadfast to tackle the COVID-19 negative fall out. He said that the contribution of legendary actors and dramatists was of vital importance to improve social values. The legendary actor Anjum Habib expressed his gratitude to Deputy Speaker for his special focus to improve the living standards of artists. The delegation comprised famous PTV actors A. D. Baloch, Habib Panzai, Jahan Sultana Noshaba, Najeed Ullah Anjum, Rafique Ahmed Memon Esani, Jehanzeb Qamar, Anjum Hussain Habibi, Nadia Fayyaz, Tahir Farooq Sadequi and Yasir Arafat.

Audition for "Talent Hunt" at PNCA on Feb 28

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Audition for "Talent Hunt" programme at Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) will be held on February 28 to discover best singers and musicians from all over the country. PNCA has started this programme for the promotion of classical and semi-classical to folk, modern tunes and pop singing among the younger generation and to groom their hidden talent at National Art Gallery (NAG).

Renowned professionals and master artisans in different specialized music fields would be taking auditions of registered participants at PNCA.

According to an official, Talent Hunt programme attracting large number of young music aspirant as hundred of participants are taking registration of the said programme to show their skills. He said that the said programme was an effort to promote music field along with polishing the creative skills of the young blood.

He said that any citizen can participate in programme adding that competition for playing instruments will also be held for both boys and girls to present their skills in playing flute, tabla, guitar, violin, keyboard and harmonium, he added.

IRSA releases 101,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 101,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 41,500 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1414.71 feet, which was 22.71 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 18,500 and 35,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1145.15 feet, which was 107.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 11,600 and 55,000 cusecs respectively. - APP

PRCS, NH&MP sign joint road safety initiative MoU

Abrar ul Haq says resource and knowledge sharing between PRCS and NH&MP will help reduce fatalities in road crashes

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) on Tuesday signed an MoU to launch a road safety initiative to help reduce deaths and injuries on the motorway. Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed was chief guest on the occasion. PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq, Federal Secretary Ministry of Communications Zafar Hassan and NH&MP IG Kaleem Imam were present on the occasion. The MoU was signed by PRCS Acting Secretary General Dr Adeel Nawaz and NH&MP IG Kaleem Imam. Under the initiative, PRCS has provided eight fully equipped ambulances to the NH&MP for deployment on

M-2 Motorway besides first aid kits for delivery of emergency medical and relief services to commuters in case of any traffic accidents. The PRCS will also impart free of cost first aid training to NH&MP staff besides raising awareness among the general public about road safety so that road fatality rate can be minimized. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed appreciated the initiative taken by PRCS which he said will go a long way in helping people and saving lives in case of road crashes. He said with increase in volume of traffic, ratio of road accidents is also going up with each passing day. "It is our duty to not only make the travelling easier but also safer," he said, and assured the PRCS of all-out



support in implementing such initiatives. The minister said provision of ambulances by the PRCS is a praiseworthy step, however, the more important aspect of this initiative is first-aid training to the NH&MP staff. He said lack of first-aid

training is one of the major causes of fatalities in road crashes.

Speaking on the occasion, PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq said around 100 people die in road crashes every day in Pakistan, which is an alarming situation. He said

time is of great essence in the advent of any traffic accident as 59% of deaths can be averted due to timely and right intervention. "Timely intervention requires good vehicles to shift the injured to hospitals and the right intervention is not possible without skilled people," he said, adding that resource and knowledge sharing between PRCS and NH&MP will help numerous lives on roads. He said prevention is more important than service delivery, adding that through boosting preventive strategies, not only burden of billions of rupees being spent on service delivery in the health sector can be reduced but also many precious lives can be saved. NH&MP IG Kaleem Imam assured that the ambulances provided by the PRCS will be used in the best and

professional way. He said NH&MP will deploy these ambulances on the motorway at the earliest. He said shifting the injured to hospitals is a very challenging task on the motorway, adding that the PRCS and NH&MP joint initiative will help timely shifting of the injured in case of any accident.

Later, Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed, PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq and other dignitaries inspected the ambulances being handed over to the NH&MP. On the occasion, symbolic key of the ambulances was also handed over to NH&MP IG Kaleem Imam. Shields were also presented to the dignitaries on the occasion. PRCS and NH&MP senior officers also attended the ceremony.

HEC announces scholarships for Baloch students

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Wednesday announced LLB, LLM and Ph.D local and foreign scholarships for the students of Balochistan. The scholarships were announced under the project "Law Graduates Scholarships Programme".

According to an official document available with APP, HEC has asked students having domicile/local certificate of Balochistan province to apply for the award offering indigenous LLB (5 years), indigenous LLM, Foreign LLM and Foreign Ph. D. HEC has also asked the applicants to submit applications online at eportal.hec.gov.pk.

The last date for submission of applications is 18 March. The students were asked to visit www.hec.gov.pk/english-scholarships/grants/LGSP for further information. HEC has reserved 15-20 percent scholarships for the children of victims' families (martyred/severely injured) affected in the August 8, 2016 blast in Quetta, if they fulfill the required criteria.

IGP directs to resolve public complaints on priority

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman has directed all police officials to resolve citizens' complaints on priority and ensure effective measures for protection to their lives and property. He made these directions to police officials during his visit to Rescue 15 Office where SSP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer also briefed him about the performance of department. The SSP (Operations) said that Rescue 15 staff spearheaded by Additional SP Farhat Abbas Kazmi is performing its duties very effectively.

He briefed IGP about various wings of Rescue 15 including Police Complaint Redressal System and also about issues at residential barracks of police employees. The IGP was told that issues of citizens are being addressed through police complaint redressal system and 98 percent complaints of citizens have been addressed. The SSP (Operations) said that 4,616 out of 4,723 complaints have been addressed while remaining issues are being resolved. He said that most of the received complaints were related to bribery, poor investigation, registration of cases, police attitude and applications against Operational and Traffic staff.

IESCO issues power schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 25th February, 09:00AM to 02:00 PM, Orchard, G-6/3, Polyclinic, Mahfooz Shaheed, Tarlai, Chatha, Karwar, F-10/2, G-9/4, Sewage Treatment Plant, Old Exchange, G-11 / 2, G-12/4, Rehara, CM Pak Zong, Bahria Enclave, Isolation Hospital, Pindi Point, PC, Kohala, Kotli Satyan, Trit, Commercial Center, National Market, Sector Four, Farooq Azam, Liaquat Bagh, Sarafa Bazaar, Rajaabad, Ali Market, Bani, Tench Bhatta, Askari XI, Cheering Cross-, Captain Amir Shaheed, Bajniar, Lakho Road, Jahangir Road, Rehmatabad I, FECHS, Mehboob Shaheed, MSF, Humayun, Dharmyal 2, Dhok Noor, Mort, Church / UC Lakhani, Kent, Lehtar / I, Nara Motor, Klar City, Industrial, Mandira II, Karnab Kaswal, Mahota Mohra, Raman, Dushmaq Hussain, Dharoat, Muratqan Feeders and surrounding areas will be remain without power.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belarus, Andrei Metelitsa called on Federal Minister for national food security and research, Syed Fakhar Imam. - DNA

Installation of water plants at I-8 underway

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken several steps to ensure provision of clean drinking water to the residents of federal capital and a project for installation of water treatment plants at I-8 and Sangjani was in progress. CDA has estimated Rs 495 millions for repair and maintenance work of rotten water pipelines, tube wells, water tankers, installation of new pipelines and other projects. CDA officials told APP that the best team of the organization led by Chairman Amir Ali Ahmed was working day and night to make Islamabad the most beautiful city in the world. He said there was a serious problem of water in the city in summer but a strategy had been formulated to solve it and now all sectors of Islamabad would be provided with abundant water. The official said providing clean water to the residents was also part of the CDA's responsibilities. Water is already being provided to the federal capital from Khanpur Dam and Simli Dam, he informed adding work was also underway on other projects. The official said water treatment plants were being set up in Sector I-8 and Sangjani. He said tube wells in sector G-10, G-11, F-11, I-9, I-10 had been repaired and renovated by the Water Supply Department and water supply reservoirs were also being repaired. - DNA

ATC adjourns lawyers' bail cases

ISLAMABAD: An ATC on Wednesday adjourned hearing on post arrest bail petition of five lawyers including Secretary DBA Liaqat Kambo till next date. The petitioners' lawyer stated that an identical matter was pending already with the IHC and prayed the court to adjourn the case till its decision. ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan heard the case on post arrest bail petitions of the lawyers including Liaqat Kambo, Asadullah and Muhammad Umer in IHC ambush case. - DNA

FBR to publish taxpayers' list on March 1st

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue will publish the Active Taxpayers' List (ATL) for the Tax Year 2020 on March 1st. The list is being published in accordance with the provisions of Rule 81B of Income Tax Rules, 2002, said an FBR press statement issued here, adding presently, FBR's ATL was linked with income tax returns for Tax Year 2019.

It said that the ATL was a central record of online Income Tax Return filers for the previous Tax Year and was being published every financial year on March 1st, remaining valid up to the last day of February of the next financial year. According to the statement, a persons on the ATL could avail many benefits and were not subjected to withholding tax on cash withdrawals, other banking transactions, payment of fee to educational institutions etc. Similarly, for such persons, tax on imports, dividends, goods, services & contracts, profit on debt, prize & winnings, purchase of motor vehicles, purchase and sale of property etc. is withheld at a lesser rate. The list would include the persons who have filed income tax returns for tax year 2020 within the due date or the dates extended by the concerned Commissioner Inland Revenue. - DNA

Citizens above 65 to get COVID jabs from March 2

Pakistan was also one of the first countries that had allowed private sector to conduct vaccination and drug regulator had issued guidelines for the private companies to set up centers for administering the COVID-19 vaccines, she added

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for National Health Services Dr Nausheen Hamid Wednesday said the citizens above the age of 65 years would get COVID jabs from March 2. Pakistan under Covax programme would get 2.8 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine after which inoculation of the registered senior citizens would start, she said while talk-

ing to a private news channel. The health parliamentary secretary said the people above the age of 65 could register themselves for the vaccination as the second drive would start soon after the conclusion of health workers immunization. She said the government on the recommendation of experts had decided not to inoculate Chinese made Sinopharm vaccine to the people of 60 years or above due to lack of data available on its efficacy. She said nearly 9 million elderly



people from all over the country including Gilgit Baltistan would receive the vaccine through the Covax facility which was a global alliance formed to ensure equi-

table access to vaccines for low-income countries.

Pakistan was also one of the first countries that had allowed private sector to conduct vaccination and drug regulator had issued guidelines for the private companies to set up centers for administering the COVID-19 vaccines, she added.

She said around 130 countries were still lagging behind in the vaccination process and Pakistan was among 65 countries which had pledged for smooth vaccination

in the second phase of the coronavirus vaccine.

Replying to a query, she said the people would be administered vaccine in two doses and the second dose would be given after passing two to three weeks of the first dose. She also mentioned that Pakistan was fully prepared for undertaking the vaccination campaign and "we all are united in this mission. The federal and provincial governments are collectively working to make the campaign a success."

Briefs

Five injured in bikes collision

ATTOCK: At least five person received multiple injuries when the bikes they were traveling by collided head on near Dhok Gama in the limits of Attock Saddar police station on Wednesday. Two ambulances of Rescue-1122 shifted the injured to District Headquarters Hospital Attock. Those injured were included 7 years old Mizamil, 18 years old Talha, 21 years old Kashif, 23 years old Umer Shahzad and 22 years old Nauman. As per the Rescue 1122 sources the accident took place because of over speeding. Two of the injured who were in critical condition had been shifted to a hospital in Rawalpindi. — APP

Campaign to ensure tobacco vendors' licensing

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Excise and Taxation Department has launched a campaign to ensure the licensing of tobacco retailers to boost revenue, besides collecting real data on tobacco use in the federal capital. "By getting retailers licensed, the local administration can ensure the implementation of Tobacco Vendors Act (TVA) and monitor the tobacco sale across the city," Director Excise Bilal Azam told APP on Wednesday. The campaign was launched after serving prior notices to the tobacco retailers for obtaining licenses. He said the move would help saving the environment and children from falling prey to the trap of tobacco companies as well as getting them addicted to nicotine and other additives in these products. Azam said licensing bounds the vendors to submit an undertaking for not selling tobacco products to someone below age 18. He said the sale of loose cigarettes was already banned and the establishment of tobacco kiosks or selling points within 50 yards of an educational institute was also prohibited as TVA. To a query, the director said Excise teams were conducting raids at sheesha centres, following Supreme Court orders for complete ban on such practices in the premises of federal capital. The official data with the department has issued licenses to some 965 tobacco shops across the city and collected Rs 931600 tobacco vendor fee including renewal and registration during last two fiscal years. — APP

Committee formed to make proposals for next census

ISLAMABAD: The government has formed a committee to make recommendations based on international best practices for the next national census. The ministry of planning, development and special initiatives has included prominent demographers, researchers and experts in the committee. The committee will be headed by the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Dr. Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, a press release issued by the Planning ministry said on Tuesday. It may be recalled that the results of National Census 2017 have not yet been published as they await approval of the Council of Common Interests (CCI). The federal cabinet constituted the committee to look into the issues and complaints which had caused a delay in the approval and issuance of census results. The cabinet committee after detailed deliberations recommended that the results of census conducted in 2017 may be approved for publishing and at the same time the process and methodology for collection of data may be reviewed to make sure that these are according to the international best practices in the future. The committee also recommended that the next census may be conducted at an early date without waiting for the ten-year gap. The federal cabinet has endorsed the recommendations of the committee. These recommendations will be presented to the Council of Common Interests (CCI) for final approval. In the meanwhile, the Government has constituted the Committee for deliberating on the census process, data collection and field operation methodologies used around the world for Census. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Turkish ambassador to Pakistan Mustafa Yurdakul in a group photo with students of University of Peshawar. — DNA

'Malaysia wants to further increase trade ties with Pakistan'

The President's statement came in reference to the bill passed by the French parliament's lower house on Tuesday with overwhelming majority that would strengthen oversight of mosques, in an act of discrimination against Muslims

SHUJAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Iqbal Bin Muhammad Ibrahim, High Commissioner of Malaysia in Pakistan said that his country wanted to have greater bilateral trade with Pakistan as both countries have good potential to do trade in many items. He said that food processing products of Pakistan have good scope to penetrate in Malaysian market. He said that the lack of better connectivity between the private sectors of Malaysia and Pakistan was a hurdle in promoting bilateral trade up to the real potential of both countries that needed to be addressed. He said that Pakistani manufacturers should focus on products that have greater demand in the global market to improve exports. He said that private sectors of both countries should take full advantage of the



Pak-Malaysia FTA to improve two-way trade volume. He expressed these views while speaking as Chief Guest at a reception organized by Mian Arif Hussain, former Executive Member, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry at Kahuta Industrial Triangle. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President ICCI, Mian Akram Farid Chairman Founder Group and a large number of business communities of twin cities were present at the occasion. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas

Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pak-Malaysia bilateral trade was not reflective of the real potential of both countries and both should facilitate private sectors in promoting two-way trade. He said that many Pakistani products including rice, wheat, mangoes, halal food, seafood, meat products, cutlery & sports goods, spices, handicrafts, light engineering goods, hospital and surgical equipment, pharmaceuticals and gems & jewelry

could find a good market in Malaysia. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that a large number of industries including some prominent pharmaceutical companies were operating in the Kahuta Industrial Triangle, but this industrial estate was totally ignored for development due to which it was plagued with many problems including broken roads, faulty street lights, non-functional water and sewerage systems. He urged that CDA should start development works in Kahuta Industrial

Triangle on priority basis to facilitate the growth of industrial activities and exports promotion. Mian Akram Farid, Chairman Founder Group said that the government was keen to promote industrialization for economic stability. However, he urged that the government should focus on addressing the key issues of the industrial sector on an urgent basis and develop all existing industrial estates on modern lines that would give a boost to industrial activities and improve exports.

Ufone brings STARZPLAY by Cinepax for U

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Keeping customer convenience a top priority, Ufone has partnered with STARZPLAY by Cinepax to provide variety of latest TV shows, movies, kids' entertainment and Pakistani dedicated content including selected titles in full HD with flexible payment plans. Ufone subscribers can now stream their favorite shows from any device at all times; also getting the opportunity to download all their shows for offline viewing. The platform is available for all Ufone pre- and postpaid customers to enjoy unlimited movies, videos and short films. The service is available to users all across Pakistan with a daily price point for as low as Rs. 8/day, weekly price of Rs. 59/week and monthly price of Rs. 239/ month. The STARZPLAY app is available for both Android and iOS devices for Ufone customers. After signing up, users can get a free trial, before they are charged for their subscription. STARZPLAY users can view top TV shows like Friends, The Vampire Diaries, The Flash and The Walking Dead, box

sets of movies including Harry Potter, James Bond and Batman plus STARZPLAY Originals like Kaash Keh. Subscribers can also view Pakistani movies like Laal Kabootar and Motorcycle Girl and Pakistani short films which showcases STARZPLAY's support in strengthening the local talent of Pakistan. Now entertainment is truly just a click away, no matter what time of the day. To subscribe to STARZPLAY, visit www.starzplay.pk/ufone and choose a price plan. Fill in the mobile number after which click the "Start your Trial" button. Enter the verification code sent via SMS and start streaming STARZPLAY, anytime, anywhere. Speaking at the launch of the Ufone and STARZPLAY partnership, Arif Baig Mohamed, Chairman Cinepax Group, commented: "While STARZPLAY has a superb reputation for entertaining our Pakistani audience with an impressive library of movies, TV shows and more, our partnership with Ufone will help to strengthen our growing subscriber base and allow Ufone prepaid and postpaid customers to stream top content.

Punjab talent hunt competitions held at PUCAR

IBRAR KHAN

RAWALPINDI: Punjab council of the Arts has organized Punjab Talent Hunt competitions in poetry, fiction and painting at the district level in Rawalpindi. The special guest of the competitions was Vice Chairman PHA Malik Abid Hussain. While addressing Vice Chair-

man PHA Malik Abid Hussain said that our youth are very creative, Talent Hunt will further enhance the art of the youth. The interest of students in poetry and fiction is commendable. In the painting competitions, the children have given a message of peace to the world by painting beautiful pictures of Pakistan. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that in line with the vision

of Punjab Chief Minister Mr. Usman Bazar, a Talent Hunt Program has been launched to promote arts and culture in the province. Talent hunt has helped in highlighting the creativity of our children. Prizes were awarded for positions in poetry, fiction and painting. Hundreds of students from schools, colleges and universities participated in the competitions.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people participating in walk for mass awareness campaign against drug abuse from D-Chowk to Parliament House. — DNA

VC's emphasize over Student Centric Policies

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prior to 3rd Rectors Conference 2021, an important online panel discussion was successfully concluded on the topic of "Debating Pakistan Education Policy 2021: Student Centric Policies and Effective engagement of Students". The panel comprising of concerned stakeholders including government officials from the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Vice-Chancellors and leading academics suggested various recommendations for incorporating in new education policy which is going to be announced by the federal government soon. The panel discussion was organized by Superior University, Association of Private Sector Universities Pakistan (APSUP), Inter University Consortium for Promotion of Social Sciences Pakistan (IUCPSS), University of Lahore, and Government College University Lahore. There was consensus among the speakers over vibrant university campuses through active involvement of students in various activities. The speakers urged that the higher education policies should be student centric. In order to ensure effective engagement of students at the campuses, student societies/clubs should be strengthened. These student societies should also play an

effective role in inculcating values of responsible, critical thinking, citizenship, peace, co-existence, tolerance and harmony. Necessary revisions should be made to incorporate these values as part of curriculum especially at undergraduate level. Through such engagements, students get the chance to enhance their skills in the team work and in leading other students for specific well defined causes. However, there is a need of innovations in this model, and societies/ clubs must start thinking about contributing to the societal issues (rather than restricting themselves to the university/departmental level activities only). Some recent innovations regarding the student societies at GC University Lahore offer good

practical example. They were of the view that the new education policy should be aimed at producing responsible, active and tolerant citizens equipped with the problem solving, critical thinking, conflict resolution and other required skills. The speakers emphasized over provision of counselling services at each university campus to provide guidance to the students and faculty over stress and emotional management and future career pathways. It was also suggested that vibrant university campuses are only possible through independent functioning of student societies/clubs and provision of required space & financial resources for student led activities. It was also demanded that 34 points Roadmap on Peaceful and Tolerant University Campuses

developed by the Vice Chancellors on 19 & 20th April 2017 should be implemented. The panel discussion was conducted was Mur-taza Noor Executive Director APSUP while Mr. Mohiuddin Wani Additional Secretary/Focal Person Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training shared the background, objectives and consultation process in formulating new education policy. The speakers included Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar Vice chancellor National Skills University Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Athar Mehboob Vice Chancellor the Islamia University Bahawalpur, Prof. Dr. Asghar Zaidi Vice chancellor Government College University Lahore, Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Kasur Vice chancellor Government College Women University Sialkot, Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana Vice chancellor Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Tayyaba Zarif Dean Faculty Social Sciences Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Nawabshah, Prof. Dr. Rauf I Azam Pro Rector University of Lahore, Prof. Dr. Wasim Qazi Vice Chancellor Iqra University Karachi, Prof. Dr. Vali Uddin Vice chancellor Sir Syed University of Engineering and Technology Karachi and Prof. Dr. Tahir Hijazi Vice Chancellor Muslim Youth University Islamabad. Released by Mur-taza Noor National Coordinator Inter University Consortium for Promotion of Social Sciences Pakistan Cell 0300 9840120



Two held for running illegal LPG agencies

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police under an ongoing operation against illegal Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Petrol agencies conducted raids and arrested two accused. According to a police spokesman, Race Course police netted Mudassar Abbas and Umar Farooq for operating illegal LPG agencies. Police confiscated LPG cylinders and refilling gadgets from their possession and registered separate cases against both of the accused, he added. He said, police would continue operation against the rules violators and the illegal petrol and LPG agencies would be sealed. Superintendent Police, Potohar warned the violators to stop the illegal business immediately otherwise strict action in accordance with the law would be taken. — APP

'Sugar being offered at govt subsidized rate'

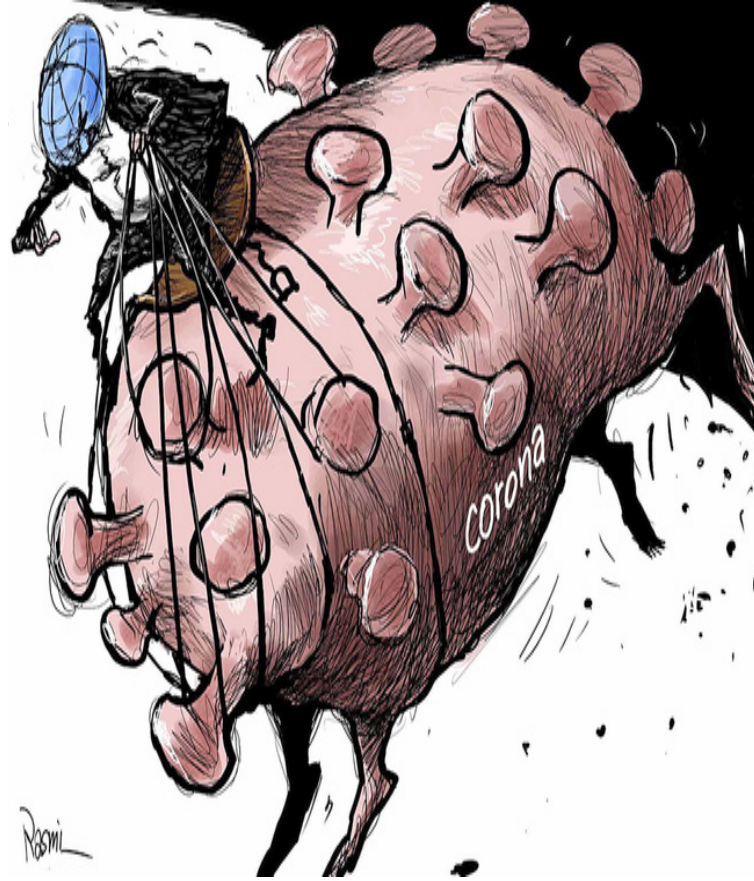
ISLAMABAD: Utility Stores Corporation (USC) Managing Director Umer Lodhi Wednesday said sugar was being offered at subsidized rate of Rs68 per kilogram at all the Utility Stores Corporation (USC)'s outlets. Talking to a private news channel, he said as per prime minister's directives, the relevant departments were cracking down against the essential commodities hoarders in the market. The government machinery was fully active to ensure the availability of quality edibles at affordable prices and no negligence would be tolerated in that regard, he said adding sugar, flour and ghee were expensive in the open market as compared to the USC's outlets. Lodhi, however, said the price of sugar at utility stores was Rs68 per kg, 20 kg bag of flour Rs800 and ghee Rs170 per kg under the package. He further said every citizen had the equal right to buy sugar from the utility stores and the quality of sugar being sold at the USC outlets was also far better than the open market. The USC managing director asked the public to act responsibly, saying that some dealers could be involved in getting sugar from the utility stores on fraudulent means. He said it was almost impossible to differentiate between the genuine customers and dealers. The dealers sent their workers as customers in the stores for purchasing the sugar, he added. Replying a query, he said a customer could only purchase 4kg sugar in a day from the utility stores. He said a sufficient stock of sugar, ghee, flour, rice and pulses was available with the corporation. He said the Ramadan Relief Package summary had also been finalized and it would be forwarded soon to the Ministry of Industries and Production. — APP

PUC to celebrate 'One nation on Destination' month

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Wednesday said Pakistan Ulama Council will celebrate the month of March as "One nation One destination" to promote harmony among various segments of society. Speaking at Istahkam-e-Pakistan Conference, Hafiz Tahir, who is also Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council, said the conferences, seminars and conventions would be held at Masjid, Madaris and worship places from March 1 to 31 on diverse topics like peace, moderation and promoting brotherhood in the country. He said religious scholars must not be prejudiced. Rather they would play their role for protecting minorities. Interfaith Harmony Councils will promote tolerance, compassion and brotherhood in the society. He said that conspiracies were being hatched to tarnish the image of Pakistan's institutions and urged the nation to frustrate nefarious designs of the enemies. Fatwas and decisions based on prejudiced thinking were neither accepted by the nation in the past nor will be acknowledged in the future. He said that the incumbent government has been making endeavours to protect the honor and sanctity of Namoos-e-Risalat and belief in the finality of Prophethood at the international level. — APP

Decline in FDI

ACCORDING to the State Bank of Pakistan, there has been a decline in Pakistan's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) numbers. During the first seven months of the current fiscal year, from July to January, the FDI fell by 27 percent compared to the same period last year. Pakistan fetched FDI amounting to \$1,145.3 million in this half of the financial year, compared to \$1,577 million in the same period of the last fiscal year, thus showing a decline of \$431.7 million. The government ought to not panic too much over these numbers nor blame itself—this is, after all, a comparison between post-pandemic and pre-pandemic numbers. FDI, like all other areas of business, was bound to suffer due to the lockdown, shrinking of the world economy and restrictions on travel. The pandemic has eroded the trust of investors in investment—which has an adverse impact on every step of FDI, including input supplies, increasing uncertainties and liquidity constraints for the multinational firms. There are also other external factors out of the government's control. A major chunk of the recent foreign investment was contributed by China, which has remained the largest investor with over 35 percent share in overall FDI. This means that our fate is inextricably tied to China's. Details showed that net inflow of FDI from China was \$402.8 million against \$502.6m in the same period of last fiscal year. Yet this does not mean that the government should sit easy. Even if the state has been dealt difficult cards, it can still act wisely to ensure that it can utilise the maximum benefit to the country out of this situation. It needs to pick up on the sectors of investment less affected by the pandemic and diversify our FDI plans. The status quo for international investment for Pakistan has always focused on coal and power—but the government should tap into the small, growing sectors, such as technology, to see how it can build a more sustainable economic base, even in times of crisis.



World Environment Day

THIS year, to mark the launch of the UN's Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, Pakistan has officially been made the host of World Environment Day. It seems that our efforts to combat climate change and minimise its effects on the country are receiving international recognition and appreciation. Taking advantage of the platform being extended to us, we must ensure that we use this opportunity to bolster our diplomatic reach within the environmental sector to learn, emulate and produce innovative solutions to repair the ecosystem. According to the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Executive Director, Inger Andersen, our country has shown immense resolve for the cause of improving environmental conditions. Starting with the 10 Billion Tree Tsunami project to the Ecosystem Restoration Fund and Spring Tree Plantation Campaign that utilises the Miyawaki technique, Pakistan's Ministry of Climate Change has been on the move constantly. This is a testament to our commitment towards ecological restoration and protection. Hence, hosting the World Environment Day is not only an award but also a chance for our authorities to take charge and lead other nations through the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The event promises to highlight Pakistan and the environmental issues it faces along with the initiatives the government has taken domestically. Our diplomatic reach is bound to expand substantially especially considering that there has never been specific focus on environmental progress we have achieved throughout the years. However, the long ahead is still long. Ecosystem restoration is something the government has worked on, but other aspects of climate change such as pollution lie ignored. It is time to adopt a holistic approach.

Social justice issues are constantly in the focus of SCO

Vladimir Norov



Special to Islamabad POST

The enormous potential for cooperation in digital transformation has been highlighted and the importance of strengthening comprehensive digitalization cooperation to narrow the digital divide for economic growth has been highlighted. There is an interest in the development under the auspices of the UN of a broad exchange of experience and best practices in the digital economy

pledged to address poverty and unemployment, as well as to build stable, secure, and just societies. However, 12 years have passed before the General Assembly adopted the above-mentioned special resolution on the initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic, one of the founding members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The document was co-sponsored by 76 UN Member States, including the SCO Families countries - Kazakhstan, China, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Mongolia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Nepal, and Turkey. By adopting this important document, the UN Member States have recognized that social development and social justice are necessary to ensure and maintain peace and security within and between countries, and that, in turn, social development and social justice cannot be achieved in the absence of peace and security or in the absence of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Member States have also recognized that large-scale and sustainable economic growth in the context of sustainable development is a prerequisite for social development and social justice. It is also particularly important for the international community to recognize in the resolution that globalization and interdependence through trade, investment and capital flows, as well as advances in technology, including information technology, offer new opportunities for the growth of the world economy and the recovery and improvement of living standards around the world, while serious financial crises, insecurity, poverty, exclusion and inequality within and between societies, and obstacles to further integration into the global economy, and full participation of developing countries, as well as some countries in transition. It should also be noted that UN Member States were unanimous in recognizing the need to further strengthen the international community's efforts to eradicate poverty, ensure full employment, decent work, gender equality, social well-being, and social justice for all. The International Labour Organization, which includes all SCO Families, adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice and Fair Globalization on 10 June 2008. The Declaration emphasizes the guarantee of equitable outcomes for all through employment, social protection, social dialogue and fundamental principles, and workplace rights. The Declaration has been adopted at a crucial political moment and reflects the strong consensus that globalization needs to make a strong social sound to achieve greater and fairer outcomes for all. It also reflects the real prospects for development by highlighting the importance of viable enterprises in increasing employment and generating income opportunities for all. The issues of ensuring and promoting social justice, removing barriers and obstacles of all kinds, including on the basis of gender, age, race, ethnicity or religion, culture or disability, have been and remain on the agenda of our countries of the large SCO Families, which are both active and active members of the United Nations and make a great contribution to this global international organization, whose commitment to social justice lies at the heart of all, the promotion and respect for human dignity. Referring to the joint cohesive work of all UN Member States, culminating in the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the resolution on World Social Justice Day, I would like to emphasize the importance and timeliness of its adoption, because, in the course of time and in view of the raging pandemic of coronavirus infection, which is already going on as a "third wave" and has affected almost all corners of the world, it is social justice that is the fundamental principle of peaceful and prosperous coexistence in the countries themselves, so well between different countries. The International Labour

Organization stated that the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic is experiencing the worst crisis since World War II. The quarantine measures have affected 3.3 billion people, or 81 per cent of the world's workforce, in temporary full or partial closures. The loss of working hours during 2020 compared to the fourth quarter of 2019 was 8.8% and was equivalent to the loss of 255 million jobs, about four times more than during the global financial crisis of 2009. The effects of the new coronavirus pandemic have increased the total sovereign debt of all countries by \$24 trillion. last year, bringing it to a record of \$281 trillion. This represents 355% of global GDP. Twenty years ago, the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization made a commitment to cooperate and engage in political, economic, and cultural and humanitarian spheres are guided by the noble principles and goals enshrined in the SCO Charter of 7 June 2002, the Treaty on Long-Term Neighbourhood, Friendship and Cooperation of SCO Member States of 16 August 2007, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Strategy until 20 July 2015. The SCO Strategy stated that "there are preconditions for bringing the SCO to a qualitatively new level, characterized by increased cooperation in the fields of policy, security, economy, development of cultural and humanitarian ties, increased participation in the affairs of the region and the process of global regulation." The SCO countries intend to encourage the international community to give equal importance to "all kinds of human rights, including the right to development." Among the main goals and objectives of the SCO in the Strategy are "deepening trade, economic and investment cooperation, as well as joint project activities on the priority areas of cooperation for the sustainable development of member states, improving the well-being and standard of living of their population." One of the key elements of the fight against the pandemic is ensuring equitable, universal access to COVID-19 vaccines, which requires a portfolio of effective and safe drugs, and helping interested member countries deliver vaccines to those in need. At present, on the one hand, several positive results have been achieved in the development of COVID-19 vaccines, and many countries have approved plans for large-scale vaccination. On the other hand, the gradual rise of selfishness in this regard deals a serious blow to global cooperation in the fight against the pandemic. It is necessary to ensure that all people can get vaccinated as soon as possible, said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. "If the virus can spread in developing countries, it will mutate 'again and again', and its new species may become more contagious, more deadly," the UN Secretary General stressed. At a critical juncture in the global response to the epidemic, SCO member countries are showing that they are fulfilling their commitments to promote research and spread vaccines. For example, China's accession to COVAX, which aims to ensure that all countries and regions of the world are fairly vaccinated against coronavirus, is solely aimed at promoting the equitable distribution of vaccines on a global scale. This is a de facto guarantee that the vaccines will be available to developing countries, as well as an important signal to other Powers, an active call to join the programme. Like many other dates established by the United Nations Organization, World Social Justice Day has a new "theme" each year to focus on one aspect or another. For example, the theme of 2019 is "If you want peace and development, work for social justice." In 2020, the theme "Bridging the gap in inequality to achieve social justice" was defined. The theme of the 2021 day is "Social Justice in the Digital Economy." The digital economy is fundamentally changing the sphere of

work. Over the past decade, the spread of broadband, cloud computing and big data has led to the introduction of digital platforms in several sectors of the economy that have a significant impact on society. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid onlineization of a large part of business life, the work of the most important government and educational services has shown the effectiveness of IT technologies. The practice has shown not only the importance and demand of Internet platforms, but also reflected their successes in creating new jobs, forming a fundamentally new level of the relationship between supplier and consumer on a global scale, leveling geographical and socio-political boundaries. By 2030, the world is expected to have about 30% of the world's smart jobs, and the global economy will grow by 13.4 trillion, thanks to the widespread adoption of digital technologies. Euro. Following last year's SCO Summit, the heads of the member states adopted the Statement on Cooperation in the Digital Economy, which notes that the consequences of the socio-economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic necessitate the acceleration of digitalization in various sectors of the economy, including the SCO space. The enormous potential for cooperation in digital transformation has been highlighted and the importance of strengthening comprehensive digitalization cooperation to narrow the digital divide for economic growth has been highlighted. There is an interest in the development under the auspices of the UN of a broad exchange of experience and best practices in the digital economy. In summary, I would like to point out the following points. The founding principles of the SCO since its founding have been mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultation, respect for multiculturalism and the desire for joint development. Strictly adhering to the principles of solidarity in accordance with the Shanghai Spirit, the Organization in its day-to-day activities is based on "the implementation of international cooperation in resolving international problems of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian nature". Social justice issues are complex. At this difficult time, scores countries demonstrate mutual support, solidarity, mutual assistance and work together both within our Organization, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, and on the international stage, within the FRAMEWORK of the UN system. Our countries are determined to overcome the dire consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, are advocating for overcoming political instability in different parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, Syria, other hotspots, and working to address global problems of poverty, climate disasters, terrorism, extremism, and other destructive factors that hinder good neighbourliness and joint development. The Declaration of the MOSCOW SUMMIT emphasizes that member states will continue to strengthen the SCO as a pillar of the emerging more representative and just world order, based on the rule of international law, first of all, the UN Charter, respect for civilizational diversity and the independent choice by peoples of the path of their political and socio-economic development, equal partnership of states in order to ensure equal, joint, indivisible, integrated and sustainable security, progressive growth and prosperity in the SCO space and the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development for that period 2030. There is no doubt that the successful implementation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's 2021-2025 Development Strategy, approved by the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in 2020, will enable our countries to make a major contribution to the issues of social justice and social well-being for all. — The writer is the SCO Secretary General

Western media's negativity on China and Xinjiang

Irfan Shahzad Takalvi



Xinjiang, again, is an example worth mentioning. Xinjiang, undoubtedly, is bridge between China and the Muslim World – more so between China and Pakistan. What the West is trying to do is to turn this bridge into a wall

THERE certainly is a method in this madness. It is obvious. Vilify China, malign the country, its institutions and beyond that its very people, is the ostensible objective. China's ban on airing of BBC World has generated a lot of debate in recent days. Prior to that, however, the UK had also banned airing of CGTN. Yet, it was not only a tit-for-tat decision on part of Beijing. Global media's especially BBC's reporting on China in general as well as Hong Kong and Xinjiang in particular need to be understood in proper context. What has been reported about Xinjiang, specially, is devoid of required journalistic standards of fact-fullness and transparency. It amounts to slander. It is based on flimsy and in some cases outrightly concocted 'evidence'. In case of origin of COVID-19 and China's response to pandemic as well, facts have been twisted, situation has been angled to give a certain, preconceived message. Add to it the reports about situation in Hong Kong – where those vandalizing public and private properties and putting thousands of lives in danger are promoted as 'heroes of democracy. One can easily decipher that this falls drastically short of standards and level of journalism expected from a media houses of global repute. Impartiality is lacking. Why so? My understanding is that it is out of desperation. This is not limited to any one major Western media house but some indeed are doing it with noted intensity. As mentioned above, anti-Chinese 'reporting' is a common thread of propaganda that runs through almost all the media in the West. The objective is to demonize China, to present China in a negative light,

to falsely show China as a nation that has no regard for rights of people, including its own. This desperation is a result of failing to digest China's miraculous peaceful rise, and in recent months, failure to digest China's splendid successful effort against pandemic. It is aimed at creating an image of China that ignites doubts in the minds of people in increasing numbers of countries that are flocking to China as partners of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Xinjiang, again, is an example worth mentioning. Xinjiang, undoubtedly, is bridge between China and the Muslim World – more so between China and Pakistan. What the West is trying to do is to turn this bridge into a wall. Western media is serving as the vanguard in this attack, in the form of misinformation and disinformation. That is how BRI, and its flagship projects such as CPEC, are being targeted – for sabotage. The reality is that Xinjiang of today is a peaceful, fast developing, increasingly open region of China. I have had chances to visit Xinjiang a number of times over past about 13 years, repeatedly. I have met people of all ethnic backgrounds and all walks of life. It would not be an overstatement to say that Xinjiang's people are living happy, content lives. Yes, there may always a segment of society in every country which is never happy with their government and state's policies. No country and region is an exception, and so may be Xinjiang of China. But one has to talk about the majority. My own direct observation is that 99.9% of people are happy being the citizen's of a rising global power; they are confident about the way their nation is developing continuously and their lives are being transformed, towards the better.

Let us make no mistake that the way China has dealt with extremism and terrorism has brought peace and stability not only to Xinjiang, but it has also contributed positively to peace and stability in the whole region of Central and west Asia. Furthermore, vocational training and educational centers – what the Western media so falsely labels as 'camps' – have changed the lives of thousands – if not hundreds of thousands of families towards better. While reporting about Xinjiang, Western media so conveniently and unprofessionally highlight the concocted stories of few individuals whose sole purpose is to garner undue sympathies, seek asylum and get visas – so on and so forth. And it is not limited to Western media alone: the same we see increasingly elsewhere. It is a professional duty of independent and impartial media that China's story – be it response to pandemic or effective de-radicalization, anti-terror and anti-extremism policies – is reported that way it exactly is. Importantly, how China's policies contribute towards regional and global peace, stability and development must be told. Transformation of people's lives, and their socio-economic development, particularly in Xinjiang, should be reported about as those actually are. Examples of inter-ethnic harmony must be shown to the world. China's transnational development and connectivity initiatives that are making hugely positive impact on the lives of partner countries must be reflected to the world. — The author is founding president of Eurasian Century Institute (ECI), Islamabad, which also runs a center dedicatedly studying Xinjiang. He may be accessed at irfanzad@gamil.com

Briefs

CJCS meets Emirati military leadership

From Page 01

the level and scope of military engagements between both countries and reaffirmed to continue to forge deeper strategic ties. Chairman JCSC also visited International Defence Exhibition & Conference (IDEX) and Naval Defence & Maritime Security Exhibition (NAVDEX) in Abu Dhabi. CJCS visited the stalls established by different organisations from Pakistan as well as participating Pak Naval Ships. Chairman JCSC lauded the efforts of these organisations in showcasing Pakistan's indigenously manufactured defence related equipment at global level. On the sidelines of the exhibition, Chairman JCSC also called on General Enzo Vecchiarelli, Italy's Chief of Defence (CHOD). During the meetings, Chairman JCSC said that Pakistan defence manufacturing sector is capable of meeting the bulk requirements of foreign customers in the select areas of medium to high end technologies.

Pakistan, Lanka mull \$1b bilateral trade

From Page 01

the two countries for promotion of cultural linkages, human resource development, and capacity building in diverse. The Pakistan side announced 100 scholarships in the field of medicine (MBBS and BDS) for Sri Lankan students. Earlier, Prime Minister Imran Khan met with the Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, at the President House in Colombo on Wednesday. The one-on-one meeting between the two leaders was followed by delegation-level talks. The talks were held in a warm and cordial atmosphere.

Kashmir issue needs dialogue

From Page 01

de-escalate hostility and resume trade ties but Indian PM Narendra Modi rejected the offer, he told. We cannot prosper until resolution of disputes among us, he asserted. Meanwhile, PM Imran said that terrorism has greatly affected Pakistan and Sri Lanka by exploiting its tourism sector. Sri Lanka and Pakistan have signed memorandum of understanding to promote tourism of both the countries, he stated. The premier further asked the business community of Sri Lanka to participate in CPEC as it will open the opportunity for the investors to utilize Gwadar port for trading. Poverty can be eliminated by boosting the business sector by adopting new techniques of investment, he said. Imran Khan said that he came to politics with the dream of a welfare state and poverty alleviation.

Action against responsible

From Page 01

He, however, refused to provide further details. Maj Gen Iftikhar also touched upon the recent attack on the car of a non-governmental organisation in North Waziristan which led to the death of four female social workers. He said that terrorists are retaliating to the operation the Army is carrying out in North Waziristan, adding that the attack on the women's car was also a part of the retaliation tactics (used by militants). "At present, there are no organised [terrorist] groups in Waziristan, the Army's spokesperson said, adding that some "small groups from the region are resorting to petty terrorist activities there." "These petty extremists will be eliminated from Waziristan soon, the DG ISPR said. Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar said that terrorists in Pakistan operate with the assistance of groups in Afghanistan and said that India is involved in supplying arms, money, and new technology to the terrorists (to create unrest in Pakistan and disturb regional stability). "It won't be a stretch to say that the Afghan intelligence is well aware of such developments," he said. "Pakistan wants peace in Afghanistan at all costs and to that end, it has taken all possible measures."



Match-6



Islamabad United beat Kings by five wickets



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad United beat Karachi Kings by five wickets in the sixth fixture of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) at Karachi's National Stadium on Wednesday. Despite putting up a huge 197-run score on the board, Islamabad were struggling at 13-2 and the

Kings were firm favourites to keep their winning streak going. However, then came the most expensive over of PSL history, bowled by Aamer Yamin, whose seven-ball third over was bled for 29 runs by Alex Hales (46). That over gave a massive boost to the Islamabad run-rate and set the tone for the rest of the innings. It still needed some clutch cameos

from the middle order, especially Hussain Talat (42) and Iftikhar Ahmed (), to seal the win. Earlier, Sharjeel Khan and Babar Azam's 176-run stand for the opening wicket saw Karachi finish with 196-3. Sharjeel, in particular, was in devastating form. After being dropped by Hales, the lefty from Hyderabad made capital city bowlers pay with a 59-ball 105 laced

with nine 4s and eight big ones. Squads: Karachi Kings: Amir Yamin, Arshad Iqbal, Babar Azam, Colin Ingram, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Amir, Sharjeel Khan, Waqas Maqsood, Mohammad Nabi, Dan Christian, Chadwick Walton, Joe Clarke, Noor Ahmad, Danish Aziz, Mohammad Ilyas, Zeeshan Malik, Qasim Akram

Islamabad United: Alex Hales, Asif Ali, Fawad Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Hussain Talat, Musa Khan, Shadab Khan, Zafar Gohar, Hassan Ali, Paul Stirling, Lewis Gregory, Phil Salt, Rohail Nazir, Ali Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Ahmed Saifi Abdullah, Zeeshan Zameer The ball-by-ball updates of the match are below the line.

China's E-sports Association eager for collaboration with Pak

BEIJING: China's Beijing E-sports Association eager for collaboration with Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. China, USA and South Korea are dominating forces in the global E-sports arena, and now, electronic sports are in the process of being granted as an official sport for Pakistan. According to the report, Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Fawad Hussain, confirmed that discussions regarding the legitimization for Pakistan's E-sports among Pakistan Sports Board and Pakistan Science Federation are underway, while the memorandum has already been signed. Moreover, the first Pakistan E-sport tournament is set to be held in March this year.

"I am glad to learn that Pakistan realized the huge economic benefits behind E-sports, and stimulated to greater efforts. At the current stage, it will be incredible if Chinese and Pakistani organizations can host championships together. We are definitely interested in the performance of Pakistani E-athletes", Liu Zhen, Chairman of the Beijing E-Sports Association told Gwadar Pro.

The development of gaming and E-sports industry in Pakistan has been kept under the main-stream media's

radar for decades. General perceptions of gaming remain skeptical. As the news came out, the majority of Pakistani netizens reacted positively, yet some postering their concerns under the Minister's Twitter announcement as well. "I am not surprised that such a proposal triggered public debates. Years ago, the majority of Chinese did not take gaming and E-sports seriously." Liu Zhen reacted to the comments. "I think people need to understand that, just like in every other sport, there are only a few who can 'make it' and become world-class athletes. It takes commitment, concentration and sadly yet most importantly, real talent, to become successful in this industry. We turn down students who wish to be E-sports athletes almost everyday, and being an E-sport practitioner does not mean that you have to be a professional athlete." Liu told the reporter that currently in China, many types of careers are generated from the E-sports industry. "Aside from being professional players, E-sports related jobs include shout caster, referee, event organizer, video producer, PR executive, audio engineer, customer/fan base manager, E-sport finance practitioner, etc." - APP

US seeking seat on UN rights council: Blinken

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States will seek election to the United Nations Human Rights Council, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday.

The announcement comes three years after former president Donald Trump's administration withdrew the US from the council.

"I'm pleased to announce the United States will seek election to the Human Rights Council for the 2022-24 term,"

Blinken told the council in a video message.

"We humbly ask for the support of all UN member states in our bid to return to a seat in this body."

Annual elections for three-year membership on the 47-member council are scheduled to be held at the UN General Assembly in October. Britain, China and Russia are among current members. Each year, roughly 15 new members are voted in, to replace those whose terms are complete.

Blinken added that the Biden administration would work to eliminate what

he called the Geneva forum's "disproportionate focus" on its ally Israel. The council, established in 2006, has a stand-alone item on the Palestinian territories on its agenda every session - the only topic that receives such treatment, and a move which both Democratic and Republican administrations have opposed.

While Washington vowed to begin active participation in the council's activities immediately, it could not automatically regain the membership after walking away in June 2018.



DUBAI: Consul general of Pakistan, Dubai and northern Emirates, Ahmed Amjad Ali and Samina Nasir, Director Sarhad university of science and information technology sub campus Ras Al Khaimah signing an MoU at Consulate general of Pakistan Dubai. - DNA

Assault against nature must stop: Munir

The coronavirus pandemic was a grim reminder of the relationship between people and nature, he said, stressing that if the environmental targets were not achieved, most of the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will also fail to be realized by 2030

UNITED NATIONS: The world must stop its assault on nature and find more political will to combat climate change, the president of United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan, has told the 5th UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5). "The impact of global warming and climate change are visible and the impacts of biodiversity loss, though less visible, will be equally devastating for the future of humanity," the Pakistani envoy said in a speech to the Assembly, which ended a two-day online meeting on Tuesday. Attended by thousands of online participants, including more than 1,500 delegates from 153 UN member states and over 60 environment ministers, the Assembly, which is the pre-eminent forum for multilateral action on environmental issues, also agreed on key aspects of UN Environment Programme's work, kicked off the commemoration of UNEP's 50th anniversary and held leadership dialogues on how to build a resilient and inclusive

post-coronavirus pandemic world. A political statement adopted by the Assembly warned that the world risks new pandemics "if we don't change how we safeguard nature." In his remarks, Ambassador Akram said while our planet was a hospitable and bio-diverse, "unfortunately, in the industrial era we have severely abused nature." In the past 50 years, he said, the world's population has doubled, the global economy has grown nearly fourfold and global trade has increased tenfold, driving up the demand for energy and materials. Many types of pollution were increasing, with negative impacts for nature. "Over a third of our forests have disappeared, 66 per cent of the ocean area is experiencing increasing cumulative impacts, half the live coral cover on reefs has disappeared since the 1870s, and over 85 per cent of wetlands have been lost. "Humans have assaulted nature...." the ECOSOC chief added. The coronavirus pandemic was a grim reminder of the relationship



between people and nature, he said, stressing that if the environmental targets were not achieved, most of the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will also fail to be realized by 2030. Economic models that are driving states to fight nature, and each other, must be discarded and new paradigm that values its preservation adopted, the Pakistani envoy said. "The three areas of focus I have identified for ECOSOC this year - finance, sustainable infrastructure and science and technology - are vital to achieve environmental goals," he said. An estimated \$4.3 trillion was needed for developing countries to

recover from the COVID crisis and achieve the SDGs targets, Ambassador Akram said, adding no recovery, much less a green recovery, was possible without access to adequate finance and as such the promise of \$100 billion annually must be fulfilled. Science and technology offered answers to the challenge of recovery, he said, pointing out that the rapid vaccine production affirmed the ability of innovation. "The world is at a critical inflection point," Ambassador Akram told the Assembly, while identifying that the choice was massive suffering and impending economic and environmental catastrophe or sustainable and equitable global growth. "We must mobilize the political will to take critical decisions - to end the rape of nature, to contain economic greed, to reverse policy negligence, and to prevent humanity from destroying the hospitality of our planet," he said in conclusion. The political statement, which the Assembly adopted, also warned that "more than ever that human health and well-being are

dependent upon nature and the solutions it provides, and we are aware that we shall face recurring risks of future pandemics if we maintain our current unsustainable patterns in our interactions with nature." Sveinung Rotevatn, President of the Assembly and Norway's Minister for Climate and Environment, echoed the warning. "Everyone gathered at the Environment Assembly today are deeply concerned about how the pandemic causes new and serious health, socioeconomic and environmental challenges, and exacerbates existing ones, all over the world," he told a press conference on the closing day of UNEA-5. "We shall work together to identify actions which can help us address climate change, protect biodiversity, and reduce pollution, at the same time," he added. The Assembly agreed to a new Medium-Term Strategy, Programme of Work and budget for UNEP. The new Strategy - which will take UNEP from 2022-2025 - sets out a vision for UNEP's role in delivering the promises of the 2030 Agenda. - APP

PSL-6 Fixture

Wednesday, February 24: Karachi Kings v Islamabad United (7pm)
Friday, February 26: Lahore Qalandars v Multan Sultans (3pm); Peshawar Zalmi v Quetta Gladiators (8pm)
Saturday, February 27: Karachi Kings v Multan Sultans (2pm); Peshawar Zalmi v Islamabad United (7pm)
Sunday, February 28: Karachi Kings v Lahore Qalandars (7pm)
Monday, March 1: Islamabad United v Quetta Gladiators (7pm)
Wednesday, March 3: Karachi Kings v Peshawar Zalmi (2pm); Quetta Gladiators v Multan Sultans (7pm)
Thursday, March 4: Lahore Qalandars v Islamabad United (7pm)
Friday, March 5: Multan Sultans v Karachi Kings (7pm)
Saturday, March 6: Islamabad United v Quetta Gladiators (2pm); Peshawar Zalmi v Lahore Qalandars (7pm)
Sunday, March 7: Multan Sultans v Quetta Gladiators (2pm); Islamabad United v Karachi Kings (7pm)
Wednesday, March 10: Peshawar Zalmi v Karachi Kings (7pm)
Thursday, March 11: Quetta Gladiators v Lahore Qalandars (7pm)
Friday, March 12: Multan Sultans v Peshawar Zalmi (3pm); Islamabad United v Lahore Qalandars (8pm)
Saturday, March 13: Quetta Gladiators v Karachi Kings (2pm); Multan Sultans v Islamabad United (7pm)
Sunday, March 14: Quetta Gladiators v Peshawar Zalmi (2pm); Lahore Qalandars v Karachi Kings (7pm)
Monday, March 15: Islamabad United v Peshawar Zalmi (7pm)
Tuesday, March 16: Multan Sultans v Lahore Qalandars (7pm)
Thursday, March 18: Qualifier (1 v 2) (7pm)
Friday, March 19: Eliminator 1 (3 v 4) (7pm)
Saturday, March 20: Eliminator 2 (loser Qualifier v winner Eliminator 1) (7pm)
Monday, March 22: Final (7pm)

"PDM does not need institutions' support"

From Page 01

"We criticize only when their character is not neutral. It is heartening to see institutions function within their boundaries", he added. He said that in the Charter of Democracy, our position was that the correct procedure should be adopted in the Senate elections. The secret ballot cannot be challenged anywhere. If we want to improve the senate election process, it can only be done through parliament and dialogue. PTI only wants to bring laws for its own benefit.

Maryam asks ECP to expose vote theft

From Page 01

Maryam Nawaz said that Daska belonged to Nawaz Sharif before and will remain so. After defeat in every province, Imran Khan robbed Daska's seat.

Robbery in Punjab cost Imran Khan dearly, people caught him red handed. Maryam Nawaz urged the ECP to take bold steps and expose the elements involved in the alleged poll rigging. She demanded the ECP to conduct re-election in the entire constituency to restore its credibility. Talking about the Broadsheet case, Maryam claimed that the government got more than it had bargained for in its bid to recover assets from PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif. She said that an attempt was made to keep Nawaz Sharif out by blaming him. The "fraud sheet" was asked to bring evidence against Nawaz Sharif. Billions of rupees of people's taxes money were paid to "fraud sheet". If there was a justice in Pakistan, the court would have declared the cases to be false. "We fought a war for the honor of the vote, despite the bullying and rigging," she said. Maryam's father will make the vote thieves cry, she added. Opposing the open balloting in the Senate election, the PML-N leader said "The government cannot amend the Senate elections law, only the Parliament has the power to amend it."

Briefs

Indonesian FM cancels Myanmar trip

FOREIGN DESK

JAKARTA: Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi has cancelled a visit to Myanmar following opposition to visiting the country, where the army recently seized power in a coup, the Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday. "After taking into account the current development and the input of other ASEAN countries this is not the ideal time to conduct a visit to Myanmar," Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman Teuku Faizasyah told a news briefing. Marsudi has been touring member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to seek a common stance on the February 1 military coup in Myanmar, which has sparked nationwide street protests and international condemnation. Marsudi also visited Thailand on Wednesday, meeting both of her counterparts as part of her ASEAN tour to discuss the situation in Myanmar. Myanmar's Foreign Minister Win Myint held talks with Marsudi and his Thai counterpart, Don Pramudwinai, in what was the first known face-to-face meetings between a senior member of Myanmar's junta and foreign governments.

DRC prohibits diplomats from traveling outside capital

FOREIGN DESK

KINSHASA: The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has prohibited the travel of ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions outside the capital Kinshasa without prior authorization from authorities. President Felix Tshisekedi made the decision late on Tuesday at the presidential palace during a special security meeting with the country's foreign minister, deputy defense minister and security officials. The meeting came a day after the killing of Italy's Ambassador Luca Attanasio and two others in an attack on a World Food Program (WFP) convoy in the eastern part of the country. Tshisekedi had earlier condemned the "heinous acts" perpetrated in the Kibumba area near the city of Goma in North Kivu province and ordered an investigation into the incident. Foreign Minister Marie-Therese Tumba Nzeza, who addressed the media after the meeting said: "The ambassadors and other representatives of the representations can no longer leave Kinshasa for the interior of the country without informing the head of the diplomacy [Foreign Ministry], and other competent services." "Firm commitment has been made to strengthen security in the red zones, parts of the DRC considered to be at high risk," she declared.

UNEP sounds alarm over loss of wildlife

NAIROBI: The world risks losing wildlife and natural resources if advice by experts is not acted upon promptly, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) warned on Wednesday. The world must start to make peace with nature to prevent catastrophic events from happening in the future, Inger Andersen, UNEP executive director, said on the sidelines of the fifth UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5). "If we don't take advice seriously, then the future generation will not see the big rhinos and other animal species," Andersen told journalists at the event. She urged global leaders to hasten commitments made at global initiatives such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and promote actions that are less greenhouse gas intensive compared to prevailing alternatives. "Recall the agreed goals that were set in 2010 and earmarked for implementation for delivery in 2020 but are yet to be implemented," said Andersen. She commended African countries for banning the importation, production, sale and use of plastic bags. — APP

Indonesia is the largest trading partner of Pak: Amb. Hassan

The Ambassador apprised the Minister on the current level of cooperation between the two countries in the field of trade and investment, especially after the operationalization of Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement in 2013



DNA

JAKARTA: Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia, H.E. Muhammad Hassan called on the Minister of Trade of Indonesia, H.E. Mr. Muhammad Lutfi today. The Ambassador apprised the Minister on the current level of cooperation between the two countries in the field of trade and investment, especially after the operationalization of Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement in 2013. He thanked Indonesia for unilat-

erally providing concessions on additional tariff lines to Pakistan in 2018. The Ambassador expressed Pakistan's keen desire to further expand our trade. Expressing concern that the balance of trade is heavily tilted in favour of Indonesia, the Ambassador proposed that in order to create a win-win situation for both countries, Indonesia may consider importing more goods from Pakistan, particularly those lines for which there were high demand in the country. Minister Lutfi stated that Pakistan was an important trading partner with



bilateral trade touching to the level of US\$ 2.6 billion. Indonesia was keen to expand cooperation in all fields including trade and investment. Indonesia was also willing to import more from Pakistan. Keeping in mind the availability of huge consumer market in Pakistan, Indonesia was considering to invest in lucrative sectors in Pakistan including the huge food and beverages sector. He also expressed his interest to visit Pakistan and meet his Pakistani counterpart. Indonesia is the largest trading partner

of Pakistan in the Southeast Asian region. Bilateral trade between the two sides have crossed US\$2.6 billion during 2020. Among major exports from Pakistan to Indonesia, cotton, kinnow, seafood, articles of apparel accessories and sports goods are showing upward trend after operationalization of Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). Pakistan's main import from Indonesia include Palm oil, coal, petroleum, paper products and rubber. The two countries are determined to further expand our cooperation in all fields.

Armenian general admits ballistic missile launch on Shusha

FOREIGN DESK

YEREVAN: Chief of Armenian Army's General Staff Onik Gasparyan has admitted that his country launched the Iskander tactical ballistic missile during the 44-day war with Azerbaijan in 2020. Day.az reported on February 24. The report added the head of one of the largest Russian media holdings, Aram Gabrelyanov, published a stunning entry on his Telegram channel, which confirmed the essence of Armenia as a terrorist state. In this entry, he revealed new facts about the war crime committed

by Chief of Armenian Army's General Staff Onik Gasparyan. Gabrelyanov writes that in Moscow, about a month ago, he had a hard, long conversation with Gasparyan. "On the third day of the [44-day] war, as the chief of staff of the army, I decided to use Iskander [missile] on two strategic targets. The Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline and another one. Pashinyan categorically forbade, although the Russians made it clear that this is your business and your war. Three days before the fall of Shushi [Shusha's regain by Azerbaijani troops], I asked Pashinyan for permission to strike with two Iskander missiles a huge accumulation of enemy

manpower right at the foot of Shushi," Gasparyan was quoted as saying. He added that Pashinyan opposed his proposal. "Pashinyan categorically forbade, saying that the world community would curse us if we kill several thousand enemy soldiers at once. The only time I was allowed to use the Iskander was in the city of Shusha. I used it. We took advantage of this and managed to bring several tanks into the city. Two days later, an order came - to leave Shusha and retreat," the publication said. It should be noted that Pashinyan admitted in an interview with the Armenian media that

Armenia had used the Iskander operational-tactical missile system during the war with Azerbaijan, but the missile did not explode. Pashinyan also noted that Russian missiles are not suitable for use and that they do not fully explode. Former Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan was the first admitting the launch of the Iskander missile on Shusha. Following the statement, Azerbaijani Human Rights Commissioner Sabina Aliyeva urged relevant sanctions against the Armenian military and political leadership as the actions they had committed are a gross violation of the provisions of international documents.

G-7 condemn crackdown on anti-coup protesters

TAORMINA: The Group of Seven countries have strongly condemned the heavy-handed crackdown committed by Myanmar's military against anti-coup protesters. In a joint statement, the foreign ministers of the G-7 countries, including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, and the United States as well as the European Union's high representative for foreign policy, urged the Myanmar security forces to exercise utmost restraint and respect human rights and international law. — APP



ABU DHABI: Federal minister for defence production, Zobaida Jalal called on minister of state for defence UAE Muhammad Ahmed Al Bowardi. — DNA

Japan to spend \$1.9B to host US troops

FOREIGN DESK

TOKYO: Japan said Wednesday it would spend \$1.9 billion to host US troops this fiscal year beginning April. The announcement was made by Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi after Japan secured a cost-sharing deal for the roughly 55,000 US troops stationed in the country, Kyodo News

reported. The deal extended by one year a five-year cost-sharing agreement under a bilateral security alliance between the two sides that would have ended next March - the end of Japan's fiscal year. "We want to maintain close cooperation with the United States to strengthen our alliance's deterrence and ability to respond to challenges," Motegi told a news conference in the

capital Tokyo. Cost-sharing is revised every five years and is set to be tabled in the Japanese parliament in the coming days for legislative approval. Japan and the US will, however, continue discussions for cost-sharing in the coming years. Under former President Donald Trump, the US had sought to hike costs from host countries where American troops are deployed.

TeK UK observes Kashmiri Women's Resistance Day

DNA

LONDON: An online Conference on Kashmiri Women's Resistance Day was organised by Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the tragic incident Kunan & Poshpora Mass Rape incident to honour the victims & awaken the world conscience on the century's most barbaric crime mass rape because the world has become a silent spectator of heinous crimes of Indian occupational forces especially murder & rape in illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir. The Conference was titled "Kunan Poshpora Mass Rape with Denied Justice for 30 Years". It was chaired by President Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK Raja Fahim Kayani & Moderated by Information Secretary Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK Rehana Ali. President TEK UK Raja Fahim Kayani said in his opening remarks. "The Mass Rape Kunan Poshpora 1991 is an unforgettable incident in the Kashmir history which was committed under the

black RAPE Law under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) 1990's section 7 which gives impunity to the Indian army to search, torture, kill & rape innocent Kashmiris & burn their properties too even on suspicion". Kayani Further said "Indian should be sanctioned for its war crimes in IIOJ&K. Former Australian Senator Lee Rhiannon while expressing her views said that, I pay tribute to the history, the culture and struggle for justice of the Kashmiri people. Rape is a shocking crime, have been used as a tactic of war to violate humiliate women and through them the whole communities. On 23 Feb 1991, the villages of Kunan and Poshpora Indian Forces committed mass rape of more than 100 young, older and minor women. It was a pre-planned crime and systematically raped by the Indian army. Indian Laws such as AFSPA effectively allow military personnel to get away with Rape and Brutality. The world needs to put more focus on violence perpetrated by Indian forces in Jammu & Kashmir.

Hungary becomes 1st EU member to use Sinopharm

DNA

BUDAPAST: Hungary on Wednesday became the first European Union member state to use the Chinese vaccine against COVID-19. "Today we begin to inoculate with the Chinese vaccines," said Prime Minister Viktor Orban in a Facebook video message. The country last week received the first 550,000 doses of the Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine. Hungary is the first EU nation to have a vaccine agreement with Russia and China. This month, Hungary also began administering Russia's Sputnik V vaccine, becoming the first among the EU countries. The country will purchase 5 million doses of vaccines from China and 2 million from Russia in the next four months. The amount will be enough to vaccinate 2.5 million people in a country of nearly 10 million.

Indian climate activist gets bail

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: A court in the Indian capital has granted bail to a 22-year-old climate activist, saying there was "scanty and sketchy evidence" of sedition in her efforts to help farmers protest in a case that has drawn global attention. Disha Ravi was arrested in the southern city of Bengaluru on February 13 and charged with sedition for her alleged role in the creation of an online toolkit that police said contained action plans used to foment violence during the farmers' protest. Tens of thousands have been camped out on the outskirts of New Delhi in the bitter cold since December to protest new agricultural laws they say will hurt them and benefit of large corporations. The government says the reforms will bring new investment in the vast and antiquated produce markets. Judge Dharmender Rana on Tuesday said there was little to hold Ravi, a founder of the local chapter of Swedish climate crusader Greta Thunberg's Fridays for Future movement, in custody any longer and criticised the authorities for detaining anyone who differed with government policy.

Boeing: FAA orders engine inspections

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) says it is ordering immediate inspections of Boeing 777 planes fitted with Pratt & Whitney PW4000 engines after one of the jets failed on a United Airlines flight on Saturday. Operators must conduct a thermal-acoustic image inspection of the large titanium fan blades - essentially a way of peering under the surface of the metal - located at the front of each engine, the FAA said on Tuesday. "Based on the initial results as we receive them, as well as other data gained from the ongoing investigation, the FAA may revise this directive to set a new interval for this inspection or subsequent ones," the FAA said.

Khojaly Genocide - A crime against humanity

DNA

Armenians committed the genocide in Khojaly in the most terrible way: some civilians were shot at close range, while others were scalped, beheaded, burned alive, had their eyes gouged out and were subject to other kinds of painful death. The attackers had no mercy even on the Azerbaijani women - they were raped and the babies of the pregnant ones were in-

manly taken out of the abdomen and nailed to the walls. The Khojaly massacre was one of the most serious crimes not only against the people of Azerbaijan, but the hu-

manity as a whole. The events that have unfolded around Nagorno-Karabakh since 1988 led to the destruction of villages, cities, the death of tens of thousands of innocent people, the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis by Armenia from their historical lands. Azerbaijan's nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev unveiled the essence of Khojaly genocide and in February, 1994, the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan gave legal and political assessment of this crime, issuing a resolution. The document describes causes of the tragedy and its perpetrators.

The Khojaly Massacre has been recognized as Genocide by 18 countries including Pakistan, 26 states of the USA and by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Turkic Council. The Azerbaijani people will never forget the genocide in Khojaly, which was one of the most terrible massacres against civilians in the history of mankind. Every year, the Azerbaijani government and society hold events dedicated to commemorating this crime against humanity.



Briefs

Hamza Shahbaz granted bail

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) granted on Wednesday bail to Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly and PML-N leader Hamza Shahbaz in a money laundering case. A two-member bench of the LHC comprising Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar and Justice Asjad Javed Ghural heard the bail plea of Hamza in the money laundering case. The bench ordered the release of the PML-N leader from the Kot Lakhpat Jail in Lahore. Special Prosecutor Syed Faisal Raza Bukhari appeared on behalf of the National Accountability Bureau, while Azam Nazir Tarar and Amjad Pervez appeared on behalf of Hamza. After hearing the arguments of both parties, the court granted bail to Hamza and ordered him to submit two surety bonds of Rs10 million each.

Alliance, govt candidates will win: Parvez Elahi

LAHORE: Kamil Ali Agha, a candidate for the Senate of Pakistan Muslim League, called on Speaker Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Parvez Elahi in his chamber. MPs Sajid Ahmad Khan Bhatti, Mian Shafi Muhammad, Dr Muhammad Afzal, Chaudhry Ehsanul Haq, Secretary Punjab Assembly Muhammad Khan Bhatti and DG Parliamentary Affairs Inayatullah Luck were also present. Ch Parvez Elahi said that the coalition and the government are working together for the Senate elections, insha'Allah Pakistan Muslim League and government candidates will be successful. He said that it is the beauty of democracy for the opposition to be ready to contest the Senate elections. In this regard, contacts are being maintained with our like-minded friends. Kamil Ali Agha took the Speaker Punjab Assembly into confidence regarding the Senate elections.

15 heads of parties appear before ECP

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday has directed the concerned authorities to issue advertisement in newspapers to inform the political parties regarding the proceedings on illegal foreign funding case. According to details, 15 out of 19 heads political parties appeared before the commission today while the remaining four didn't attend the hearing. The ECP has adjourned the hearing till April 5. Earlier, the election commission had summoned heads of 19 political parties including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP). The decision to summon the heads of all political parties was taken on the request of PTI.

NAB summons Maryam Nawaz on March 2

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has summoned Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-president Maryam Nawaz on March 2 at 11:00 AM in a case pertaining to illegal transfer of 180 acres of land in Raiwind. The previous hearing, on August 11, 2020, was adjourned after a clash had erupted between outraged PML-N workers and police when Maryam Nawaz reached the NAB office. According to officials, PML-N workers - who accompanied Maryam Nawaz from Jati Umrah to the NAB office in a convoy - had pelted stones at police officials and tried to break the barriers outside the anti-corruption watchdog's office. In retaliation, the police resorted to aerial firing, shelling and baton charge to disperse the infuriated crowd.

Pakistan priorities shifted from geo-political to geo-economic

The country is also looking at ways to promote tourism, noting that Pakistan had several Buddhist sites that would be attractive to Sri Lanka's citizens

DNA

COLOMBO: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that Pakistan has "shifted its geo-political priorities into geo-economic priorities", while speaking about Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Sri Lanka. The foreign minister was briefing the media about the premier's maiden visit to Colombo. Qureshi said that Pakistan has offered a credit line of \$15 million to Sri Lanka for defence and security cooperation to "end the menace of terrorism [which is] of equal importance to

both" countries. Furthermore, the government has also decided to offer scholarships to 100 Sri Lankan students in the top medical institutes in Pakistan, he said. FM Qureshi assured that Pakistan stood by Sri Lanka in the fight against terrorism especially when the latter was "in trouble and terrorism [there] was at its peak". "They share credit [of defeating terrorism] with Pakistan," Qureshi said in a conversation with reporters. He said that the prime minister's visit will help in strengthening bilateral ties and increase cooperation

Pak, Lanka for making SAARC more vibrant

COLOMBO: Pakistan and Sri Lanka have emphasized on making South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) more vibrant to promote regional connectivity and reiterated the resolve for mutual cooperation at all international and regional forums. The understanding reached at a meeting between Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena in Colombo on Wednesday. Dinesh Gunawardena warmly received the Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi at the ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka. During the meeting, they exchanged views on bilateral relations, promoting cooperation in various sectors, and other matters of regional and international importance. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said recent visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan indicates that Pakistan is eager to expand bilateral relations with Sri Lanka. - DNA

between the two countries, Radio Pakistan reported. The two sides also discussed ways to enhance bilateral trade and investment during the visit, Qureshi said, adding that trade between the two countries was below potential even though a free trade agreement existed. The country is also looking at ways to promote tourism, noting that Pakistan had several Buddhist sites that would be attractive to Sri Lanka's citizens. Furthermore, the varied landscapes and climate zones in Pakistan are also of attraction for visitors.

PM Imran arrived in Sri Lanka on Tuesday on a two-day visit on the invitation of the country's prime minister, Mahinda Rajapaksa. On arrival in Colombo, he was received by his Sri Lankan counterpart and presented a guard of honour. He was later introduced to members of the Sri Lankan cabinet. Prime Minister Imran and Rajapaksa then held a one-on-one meeting at Temple Trees, the official residence of the Sri Lankan prime minister. It was followed by delegation-level talks between Imran and Rajapaksa, according to the former's office.

SCO announces competition

DNA

BEIJING: In the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO's) 20th anniversary celebrations, the SCO Secretariat announced a competition among the students for writing the best scholarly article on the theme "20 Years of the SCO: Inspiring Growth and Broad Prospects". The objectives of the competition are to support promising young people, encourage their creative activity, facilitate professional development of future political experts, economists, scientists and expand their knowledge, including about the activities of the SCO, said a statement issued here on Wednesday. Students studying in 3rd or 4th year in the departments/faculties of International Relations, International Economics and International Law of the universities of the SCO member states are eligible for the contest. The article must not have been published earlier can be written in Chinese, Russian or English languages. The universities' management can select the articles and forward it both in electronic and printed versions to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the respective country addressed to the SCO National Coordinator of the respective member state. The national coordinators of the member states will submit these articles to the SCO Secretariat. The deadline for submission of articles to the SCO Secretariat by the national coordinators is till September 5, 2021 at e-mail: sco@sectco.org with the title/subject "Competition". Articles will be reviewed by the members of the SCO Secretariat Council who will select one winner from each SCO member state.

Operation Swift Retort: PAF releases song promo

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on Wednesday has released promo of a national song prepared to honor the heroes of Operation Swift Retort. According to the details, the song will be released tomorrow. The promo highlights patriotism reaffirms the resolve that every personnel of Pakistan Air Force is ready to defend Pakistan at every time. Earlier in the day, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan in his statement said that operation Swift retort proved Pakistan's aerial power, Pakistan chose the time, targets, aircraft and weapons. Air Chief Marshal said that India's belligerent attitude can destabilize the power dynamics and strategic stability in the region. Air power is the most important aspect of modern warfare. Swift Retort proved the operational and psychological superiority of the PAF.

World's largest stadium renamed after Modi

DNA

AHMEDABAD: India renamed the world's largest stadium after Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday, a move that drew immediate praise and criticism. The name change to the Narendra Modi Stadium was unveiled at the 132,000-seat venue formerly known as Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad, in the western state of Gujarat, where India are playing England in the third match of a four-game test series. A gifted orator and consummate populist, Modi is by far the most popular and recognisable politician in India, and won a second term in power with an increased majority for the nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2019. But Modi has also been accused of centralising power in the world's biggest democracy. "World's largest stadium dedicated to the world's largest personality!," Priti Gandhi, a BJP spokeswoman, said in a tweet.

Govt to turn 'Digital Punjab' dream into reality

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Punjab on Information and Culture Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Wednesday said the government was actively promoting information technology (IT) education at school level under the 'Digital Punjab' vision. "We are going to turn the 'Digital Punjab' dream into reality," she said talking to a private news channel. Dr Firdous said as Pakistan possessed huge young population, the government was taking initiatives to equip them with the latest knowledge and skills. The provincial government had already started work on

new IT-based schools and universities in line with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's agenda of bringing about reforms in the education sector, she added. She said employment targets would be achieved through promotion of the IT education. Talking about the 'Rahmatul-Lil -Aalameen (Peace Be Upon Him) scholarships programme, she said the students of government colleges and 30 public sector universities would benefit from the scholarships. She said low grade employees' children would also get scholarships on merit across the province while nine new universities, colleges and schools were also being established.

'Education system must focus on developing character'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for removing disparity among different streams of education in the country by ensuring implementation of Single National Curriculum. Chairing a meeting and briefing given by Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in Islamabad on Wednesday, the President said focus of our education system should be on character building and promoting critical and creative thinking among students. The meeting was attended by Minister for FE&PT, Mr. Shafiqat Mehmood, Minister for Science & Technology, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Minister for Human Rights, Dr. Shireen M Mazari, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Ali Muhammad Khan, Parliamentary Secretary, FE&PT, Ms. Waheha Akram, and Secretary FE&PT, Mrs. Farah Hamid Khan. Highlighting the importance of education, the President said that it was essential to provide quality and research-based education which could play significant role in the socio-economic development of the country. The Ministry of Education briefed the meeting about the development of SNC and informed that

SNC was designed, in consultation with all federating units of the country and other relevant stakeholders, including private sectors and religious schools (Deeni Madaris). The Ministry highlighted that SNC had been developed in accordance with the International standards to meet the educational requirements of the country. The meeting was apprised that the SNC was designed in three phases which would be implemented in all streams of education. Initially, the new scheme of education would be introduced for the students from Grades 1-5 during Academic Year 2021-22. Similarly, the process of development of SNC for phase-2 (6-8) and phase-3 (9-10) had already been started. The meeting was informed that the development of SNC was driven by the key considerations like teachings of Quran & Sunnah, constitutional framework, national policies, aspirations and national standards, alignments with SDGs for goals and targets, visions of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal and focus on our values. The President appreciated the efforts of M/o FE&PT and congratulated the entire team of the Ministry by designing a comprehensive Single National Curriculum.

Vladimir Putin accuses West of wanting to 'shackle' Russia

DNA

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin urged his domestic intelligence agency Wednesday to be on guard against Western attempts to "shackle" the country, after the EU agreed on new sanctions on Moscow. The comments came as relations between

Russia and the West approach their lowest point since the Cold War, with new EU and US penalties looming over Russia for its arrest of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. Speaking to the Federal Security Services (FSB) in his annual address to the domestic intelligence agency, Putin said the West is "trying to shackle us with economic and other sanctions".

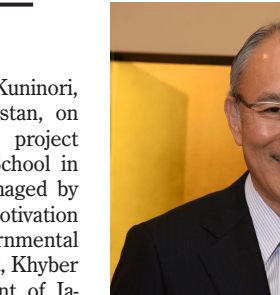
"We are faced with the so-called policy of containing Russia," he said. "This is not about competition... but about a consistent and very aggressive line aimed at disrupting our development, slowing it down, creating problems along our borders," Putin added, saying the West was employing tools "from the arsenal of the special services". He said the efforts were aimed at "provoking in-

ternal instability to undermine the values that unite Russian society and ultimately weaken Russia and bring it under external control". Putin earlier this month accused the West of using Navalny - whom he alleges has the support of US security services - to try to contain Russia, a term connoting the US strategy towards the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

Japan funded education project inaugurated in Jamrud

DNA

ISLAMABAD: MATSUDA Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, on Wednesday inaugurated the project for re-expansion of Primary School in Village Raziq Kalay being managed by Learning Awareness and Motivation Program (LAMP), a non-governmental organization, in Khyber District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Government of Japan, under its Grant Assistance, had provided financial assistance of USD 73,514 (Equivalent to around PKR 11.4 million) for this project. The NGO, community



representatives and school students attended the inauguration ceremony. It is pertinent to mention here that the Government of Japan had extended financial

assistance to LAMP in fiscal years 2011 and 2015, for the establishment and subsequent expansion of classrooms in this school to provide safe and comfortable learning environment. The grant provided to LAMP has been utilized to overcome the problem of overcrowded classrooms as over 300 students sat outside their classrooms in an open space because of the limited seating capacity in the school. MATSUDA Kuninori, while speaking at the inaugural ceremony, congratulated the community members and the representatives of the NGO for the successful completion of this important project.

NAB to conclude mega corruption cases: Chairman

Transitory remand of 5 days was granted and physical custody of both accused persons was handed over to NAB Karachi vide dated 20-02-21

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Justice (ret) Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has chaired a meeting to review performance of Regional Bureaus of NAB at NAB Headquarters. During the meeting, it was informed that on the directions of the Chairman NAB, the cases of NAB are vigorously pursued by NAB investigation Officers and Prosecutors in the Honorable Courts. During the meeting, it was informed that respected Accountability Court Karachi has announced judgment in reference No 02/2018. The accused Nisar Moari, Sultan

Qamar, Imran Afzal, Haji Wali Muhammad Shaukat Hussain and Abdul Manan were granted 07 years of rigorous imprisonment and fine of 10 million each and 02 years additional in case of failure to pay fine, except accused Abdul Manan who is absconding was awarded 03 years. Accused Nisar Morai further awarded 04 years of rigorous imprisonment and fine of Rs 0.5 million. It was informed that the respected Accountability Court Lahore has announced judgment in reference No 26/2007, whereby the accused Adnan Qayyum and Suleman Farooq were sentenced for 07 years of rigorous imprisonment along with the fine of Rs.3 millions and Rs 4.2 million each. It was further

informed that the respected Accountability Court Lahore has announced judgment in reference No 06/2019 whereby the accused Alaudin was sentenced for 03 years of rigorous imprisonment along with the fine of Rs 16,708 million. During the meeting, it was informed that respected Accountability Court Quetta has announced judgment in reference 06/2017 whereby accused Talat Ishaq was sentenced for 05 years of rigorous imprisonment with fine amount of Rs. 4, 11, 06,644. Moreover, accused Saima Talat was sentenced for 06 months of rigorous imprisonment with a fine amount of Rs. 15, 44,341. The assets/Properties of both the accused persons are

forfeited/confiscated in favor of state. If the amount of fine is not paid by the accused persons, the same can be realized by disposing of their properties by NAB. Moreover, it was further informed that the respected Accountability Court Quetta has announced judgment in reference No 05/2005 whereby the accused Khalid Shamim was sentenced for 04 years of rigorous imprisonment with fine amount of Rs. 1 million. Moreover, Accused Abdul Ghani was sentenced for 04 years of rigorous imprisonment with fine amount of Rs. 6.4 million. In case of default, further 03 months of rigorous imprisonment will be served by both accused persons. During the meeting, it was fur-

ther informed that respected Accountability Court Hyderabad has announced judgment in reference No 02/2007/H, whereby the accused persons Mushtaq Ahmed Qureshi & Wali Dad Khoso were sentenced for 05 years of rigorous imprisonment along with the fine of Rs.2 million and rigorous imprisonment of 01 year along with fine of Rs.2 million respectively. During the meeting, it was informed that two accused persons namely Roshan Ali Kanasro, Ex-MD, STDC, Sindh and Ghulam Murtaza Daudpoto, Ex-GM, STDC were arrested after their dismissal of pre-arrest bail by the august Supreme Court of Pakistan vide order dated 19-2-21.