



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, February 04, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

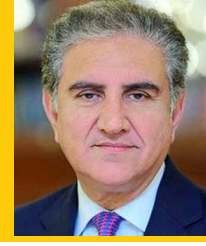
Price Rs. 20

**EU envoy for more Pak-EU cooperation and linkages**

Detailed News On Page-08

**'Revocation of 370 amounts to reinvasion'**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Rihanna tweets in support of farmers' protest**

Detailed News On Page-06



**Briefs**

**Pak-Afghan border open for 6 days a week**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Wednesday said that Pak-Afghan border will remain open for six days during a week and fencing will be completed there soon. He stated this while responding to a Calling Attention Notice in National Assembly regarding hampering of economic as well as social activities due to closure of Pakistan-Afghan border. The minister said that 82 percent fencing on Pak-Afghan border has been completed while fencing at Iran border would be completed till July, 2021.

**Ahsan accuses speaker of biasness**

SHAHEEN HANFI

ISLAMABAD: During Wednesday's proceedings, PML-N Secretary-General Ahsan Iqbal accused the speaker of being biased and not letting the Opposition speak. He said a speaker is not supposed to favour any party. "It seems the Opposition has been labelled pariahs in the parliament," he remarked. Iqbal also accused the National Accountability Bureau of gunning for "revenge" against the Opposition, saying prominent members are all in jail.

**Pak believes in interfaith harmony**

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony, Maulana Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, has said Pakistan believes in interfaith harmony and the situation in this regard is far better when compared with other countries. Talking to the media persons in Islamabad on Wednesday, he said minorities in Pakistan enjoy equal rights as per the constitution. The Special Representative rejected the propaganda against Pakistan of forced conversions.

## 'Ghaznavi' missile launched

President, PM and Service Chiefs have congratulated all ranks of Army Strategic Forces Command, scientists and engineers on successful conduct

NAVEED MIRAJ

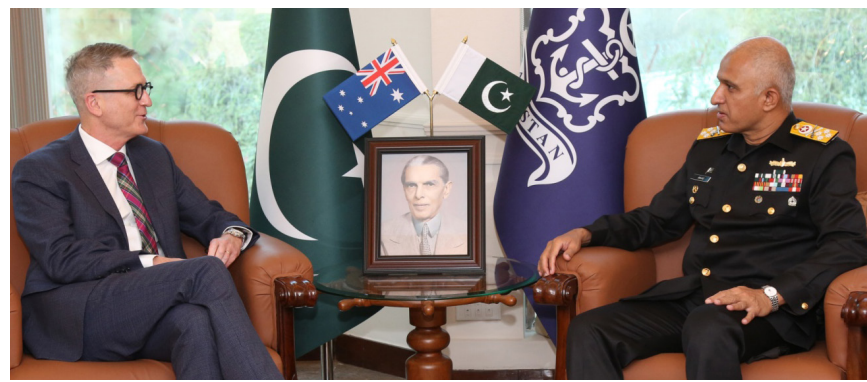
RAWALPINDI: Pakistan on Wednesday conducted a successful training launch of surface to surface ballistic missile Ghaznavi, capable of delivering nuclear and conventional warheads upto a range of 290 kilometers. According to a press release issued by Inter Service Public Relations (ISPR), this training launch was the culminating point of the Annual Field Training Exercise of Army Strategic Forces Command. The training launch was witnessed by Lieutenant General Muhammad Ali, Commander Army Strategic Forces Command, senior officers from Strategic Plans Division, Army Strategic Forces Command, Scientists and Engineers of the strategic organizations. Commander Army Strategic Forces Command appreciated the operational preparedness and display of excellent standard in handling and operating the weapon system. He also expressed full satisfaction on the training standards of participating troops, attained throughout this training activity, the statement added.

### Air Chief calls on PM Imran

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan called on Prime Minister Imran Khan at Islamabad on Wednesday. According to a statement issued here, professional matters pertaining to Pakistan Air Force were discussed during the meeting. Earlier on Monday, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad. As per sources, the country's civil and military leadership also discussed in details professional matters of the army in the meeting.

President, Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Service Chiefs have congratulated all ranks of Army Strategic Forces Command, the scientists and engineers on successful conduct of Wednesday's launch, it added.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Geoffrey Shaw at Naval Headquarters. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

### Egypt envoy meets PM Imran

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Tarek Dahroug, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday. According to a statement released here, Prime Minister reaffirmed the commitment to expand Pakistan-Egypt relations in diverse fields, including high-level exchanges, trade and economic cooperation, and education and culture.

### Australian HC meets Naval Chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, H.E Dr. Geoffrey Shaw visited the Naval Headquarters in Islamabad and called on Naval Chief Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi, according to a press release issued here. During the meeting, both discussed bilateral relations and cooperation in the maritime sector and regional maritime security situation, it added.

### Daniel Pearl case: US 'alarmed' over SC order

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US said on Wednesday that it was "alarmed" by the Supreme Court's order to move Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, the accused in the killing of Daniel Pearl, from his death cell to a government rest house. Speaking to journalists in Washington, a spokesperson for the US State Department said: "The United States remains deeply concerned by developments in the cases of those involved in Pearl's kidnapping and murder."

## Pakistan and Belarus discuss cooperation

Interlocutors also discussed the status of sixth Session of the Joint Belarusian-Pakistani Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belarus Andrei Metelitsa met with Dr. Muhammad Tariq, Additional Secretary (Europe) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. The sides exchanged information on the relevant issues of the Belarusian-Pakistani agenda in political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres. Primary attention during



Continued on Page 06

## PML N wants clear date for long march

The Opposition's coalition "had given this illegitimate regime the opportunity to step aside respectfully"

DESK REPORT

LAHORE: A recent meeting of the PML-N leadership held at former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's house formed a consensus on the need to adopt a clear stance on its anti-government drive and to ensure that the date of the long march is announced in the upcoming meeting of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).

The meeting, held on Tuesday night, was attended by senior PML-N leaders which included Maryam Nawaz, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Ahsan Iqbal, Mariyum Aurangzeb, Javed Latif, Khawaja Saad Rafique and Pervaiz Rasheed. Former prime minister and PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif also addressed the meeting via video link. Exchanging views on the current political situation, the leaders agreed

on pressing the PDM to announce the date of the long march in the upcoming meeting of the alliance. It was also decided that Nawaz Sharif will speak to former president Asif Ali Zardari and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman in this regard. A working group of the party has been formed which will be led by Khawaja Saad Rafique and will comprise of Rana Sanaullah, Mariyum Aurangzeb, Khurram Dastagir and Javed Latif.



The working group, according to sources, will present recommendations of the party for the upcoming PDM meeting. Bilawal says PDM will 'force the removal of puppets' from government.

The Opposition parties, which have joined hands under the anti-government campaign labelled the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), would now "force the removal of puppets", PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had warned on Sunday.

In a series of tweets, Bilawal Bhutto had that the "selected" Prime Minister Imran Khan "failed to resign by the deadline set by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)".

The Opposition's coalition "had given this illegitimate regime the opportunity to step aside respectfully & allow for a transition to democracy with free, fair & transparent elections", he had noted.

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Rouhani rejects calls for changes to Iran nuclear deal - Page 07

Pak-EU agree to enhance mutual collaboration - Page 08

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## Briefs

## Hurriyat leaders thank Pak for extending support

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Hurriyat leaders have thanked the government and the people of Pakistan for extending full political, diplomatic and moral support to the oppressed people of Jammu and Kashmir. In connection with the announcement by Pakistan to observe, like every year, 5th February as Kashmir Solidarity Day, the leaders in their statements in Srinagar said Pakistan is a source of inspiration for the Kashmiri people who are spearheading the struggle for freedom from India. They hoped that Islamabad would redouble its efforts on the diplomatic front to further expose India globally for its brutalities in Kashmir. The leaders made it clear to the Indian rulers that the Kashmiris' aspiration for freedom could not be defeated through brutal measures and military might. On the other hand, Kashmiri and Indian scholars have expressed outrage over the Indian government's order of making all public universities and institutions bound to seek approval before hosting international online forums on Kashmir.

## Timely information vital for successful operations

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Narcotics Control, Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah Wednesday said that exchange of timely information was vital for successful operations against drug suppliers and to combat narco business.

"It is very important that those working to fight the curse know where and when to act" the minister said during a meeting with Drug Liaison Officer of Saudi Arabia, Faisal Alboghami who called on him here said a news release. Ijaz Shah said, "His force will work in close coordination with Saudi officials to ensure effective action against drug suppliers." The two sides also discussed mutual cooperation to combat drug menace and create a drug free society. "The drug suppliers are the real culprits and they must be held accountable" the minister said.

The visiting guest agreed with the Minister and said that all institutions need to work together in order to eliminate drugs from the society. The minister also discussed in detail the MoUs between the two countries and offered full cooperation for renewal of the pending ones.

"Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have always worked together to eliminate drug from the society, we have a dream to see drug free society in both the countries" said Ijaz Shah. The meeting concluded with a promise to work together in close coordination in future to achieve the goal of drug free society. - APP

## National Kashmir CONFERENCE

3<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser addressing the participants of National Conference on Kashmir organized by Jamaat-e-Islami. - DNA

## 'National solidarity to inflict a blow on Indian designs'

He maintained that to stop India from changing demography of occupied Kashmir was a major challenge for the whole Pakistani nation, and this is possible only when the whole nation unanimously conveys the voice of Kashmiri people across the globe

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani and the Kashmiri political leadership, including the AJK President Sardar Masood Khan, has unanimously called upon the people from Peshawar to Karachi and Gilgit to Gwadar to take to streets on February 5 to convey a strong message to their brethren in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir that they are not alone in their valiant struggle against India's fascism and terrorism. The call came from the AJK President Sardar Masood Khan, Amir Jamaat Islami Pakistan Senator Sirajul Haq, Chairman Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Raja Za-

farul Haq, Jamiyat Ahle Hadith chief Senator Prof Sajid Mir, Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Kashmir Amir Dr Khalid Mehmood and former Amir Abdur Rashid Turabi, during a national conference on Kashmir organized by Jamaat Islami Pakistan in Islamabad on Wednesday. Addressing the conference, AJK President Sardar Masood Khan said that in spite of all political differences, leaders of all political parties of Pakistan, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan have a unanimous stand on the Kashmir issue. The entire Pakistani nation and people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir would practically demonstrate this unanimity on Friday in order to convey a message to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

that the days of his illegal and illegitimate occupation of Kashmir are numbered, and the whole Pakistani nation stands united with their Kashmiri brethren, and their unity will culminate in the freedom of occupied Kashmir and the defeat of so-called Hindutva ideology, Masood said. He maintained that to stop India from changing demography of occupied Kashmir was a major challenge for the whole Pakistani nation, and this is possible only when the whole nation unanimously conveys the voice of Kashmiri people across the globe. "Our main agenda should be the demographic transformation taking place in IIOJK. This is crucial issue as Hindus are being imported from all over India

to settle them in the occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir," he added. Saying that Kashmiris in IIOJK are fighting a war for integrity of Pakistan, AJK President said the only option to frustrate designs of the Indian fanatics against the existence of Pakistan, is to support the brothers and sisters in the occupied territory because they are fighting the war not only for our survival but this is also our religious and moral obligation to support them.

Sardar Masood Khan appreciated more than 600 MPs who have been presenting resolutions of condemnations against the Indian actions, in the European Parliament since August 5, 2019. Our political parties

should contact them to not only thank them but also seek more cooperation from them. "It is high time that we bring a change in our strategy on Kashmir and transform the Kashmir issue into an international political and peoples movement in order to compel the decision-making bodies of the world to speak in favor of the Kashmiri people," he said. We must keep in mind that the United Nations' Security Council or its Human Rights Commission will not offer Kashmir to us in a silver platter. We should take the baton and lead the struggle for liberty of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The core responsibility lies with us in this regard, Khan asserted.

## IMF preparing for attack on masses: Mian Zahid

DNA

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group of FPCCI, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid on Wednesday said the price of food and other essential items and services have seen an average increase of 31 percent during the last two and a half years. The new high prices are stabilising but a new wave will hit country soon as a result of seventeen percent hike

in the price of petroleum products and electricity, he said. Mian Zahid said that masses will have to brave further problems as the IMF is preparing to impose the so called stabilisation policies while will render many sectors of the economy lifeless. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that there is no reduction in the food prices and there is no chance for any relief as the government has failed to reduce prices. Coronavirus coupled with uncontrolled prices have damaged the buying power of masses and they are compromising

on health and education while medicine are moving to cheap houses to handle rising prices. Rates of edibles have crossed all limits at a time when the average incomes have decreased which is not enough to escape from hunger. This time around they are finding it hard to fulfil even their food needs from their meagre incomes. Failure of the departments to collect taxes as per the IMF targets has resulted in the imposition of indirect taxes of poor while the lender is pushing the economy into further trouble for which masses will have to pay while it will damage the vote bank of the government, he warned.

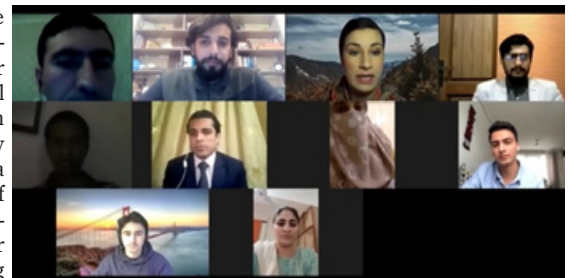


LAHORE: Country Head UNESCO Philo addressing during UNESCO unveiling plaque ceremony at Al-Hamra. - DNA

## Experts call for peaceful solution of Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD: Decades have been passed since the matter of humanity in Kashmir was brought to international arena and still their anguish reaches new heights every day. February 5th is not a day it is an emotion, a tale of agony which innocent Kashmiris face every day in their own land. Humanity is being held hostage by the Indian subjugation. While Indians are engaged in non-humanistic solution of Kashmir issue, Pakistan stands firm with their brothers and sisters in pain. In this regard Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (ICR) is paying homage to our martyrs in their struggle for freedom by organizing one day International Youth Conference on February 3rd, 2021 titled "Kashmir: A Question of Humanity". The participants included Mrs. Danielle Khan - Special Assistant to Dean Eliot A. Cohen at Johns Hopkins, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, USA, Mr. Arqam Al Hadeed- Leeds Youth MP 2018-2020, Leeds, UK, Mr. ShafiqMovsumlu - Scientist and Historian, Baku, Azerbaijan, Ms. Afifa Khan Sodozi - Kashmir Youth Ambassador, Mr. Khawaja Hammad Akbar - Political Analyst, Mr Salman Afridi a Kashmir youth activist and advisor to Kashmir committee Pakistan and a youth activist from Azerbaijan MrRamiShukurov. Session was moderated by Mr. Syed Nasir Hassan - Program Coordinator, IICR

The speakers emphasized that Kashmir is a flash point and there needs to be a peaceful solution for Kashmir issue which under theshick hindutva mindset of Modi is getting difficult. Kashmir is a question of not only basic human rights being bulldozed by the regime but world is witnessing a categorical constitutional abuse that is being carried out to rob the people of IIOJK of their identity and who they truly are. Panelists agreed that this design that is being carried out haven't left any space even for the moderate or liberal leadership of Kashmir. It is a case of minority rights as well, in India minorities are being manhandled . be it CAA, Sikhs protesting in Delhi or the genocide that is underway in Kashmir. - DNA



## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

(Barri Imam Complex Division)

## TENDER INVITING NOTICE

CDA invites sealed tenders on percentage basis duly filled in figures as well as in words from the contractors registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) and Income Tax Department for the year 2021 as per details given below:-

Sr. #	Name of Work	NIT Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Tender Fee (Rs.)	Bid submission date & Time	Bid Opening date & time
1	Construction of Drive Way in the Premises of Police Line HQs Sector H-11, Islamabad.	5,865,737/-	176,000/-	4,000/-	22/02/2021 at 11:30 am	22/02/2021 at 12:00 Noon
2	Construction of Footpath and Misc. works the Premises of Police Line HQs Sector H-11, Islamabad.	6,196,578/-	186,000/-	4,000/-	22/02/2021 at 11:30 am	22/02/2021 at 12:00 Noon

Tenders details shall be available at CDA web site [www.cda.gov.pk](http://www.cda.gov.pk) and PPRA website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)

- Bidding documents can be obtained from the office of Dy. Director, Bari Imam Complex, CDA, located at Room No. 67, CDA Office, Old Navel Complex, G-6 Markaz, Islamabad, on cash payment mentioned against the work (Non-refundable), on a working day up to 19.02.2021 against written request to be submitted up to 12:00 Noon. No application will be received after 12:00 Noon of 19.02.2021.
- Application should be on Company letter head pad having name, address, phone numbers and signature of the contractor enclosing call deposit and attested copies of CNIC, valid PEC registration certificate with relevant code, NTN, Tax Payer Registration Certificate, valid Professional Certificate.
- Firms is also provided ownership proof, in case of partnership deed/sole proprietor, special power of attorney provided attested through respective Court in favour of their authorized representative for this tender. Special power of attorney holder may not be the employee of any Government / Seme Government Institute.
- The Bid security (Bank Draft/Call Deposit) of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank Account and same be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder.
- In Case of the total bid amount is less than 10% of NIT cost, the bidder shall submit Call Deposit as measure of security equal to the between NIT cost & total quoted amount less than 10% of NIT cost. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of project, otherwise the tender will be rejected at the time of opening.
- The eligibility criteria of the firms with the relevant experience i.e at least three numbers of work order in last two financial years may be provided before issuance of tender documents, otherwise the tender will be not issued.
- Tender documents will be issued to those firms which are registered with Pakistan Engineering Council Civil category.
- The earnest money mentioned against the work in shape of bank draft/call deposit (CDR) from scheduled banks should be generated only firm accounts in favour of Deputy Director BIC, CDA must accompany with the application for tender documents.
- Bids will be received/opened as per date and time given above in the office of Director BIC, CDA located at Room No. 50-E, Old Navel Complex, G-6 Markaz, Islamabad in presence of contractors.
- CDA reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tenders as per PPRA rules and no conditional tender will be entertained.
- That NOC required from concerned department i.e Police Line Headquarters before issuance of tender documents.

Deputy Director  
Barri Imam Complex Division  
CDA, Islamabad

PID (I) No. 4127/20

## Directives for facilitating refugees issued

ISLAMABAD: Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Sahibzada Mehboob Sultan Wednesday said that special instructions have been issued to all security wings via Ministry of Interior to help avoid all sorts of inconveniences faced by the refugees. The minister expressed these views during his meeting with Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan Najibullah Alikhil, said

a press release. He said that keeping in view the problems faced by refugees with expired Proof of Registration (POR) cards, the ministry would ensure extension in their temporary legal stay. He said the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and international bodies shall not shy away from their responsibilities towards Afghan refugees.

The minister expressed these views during his meeting with Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan Najibullah Alikhil. The minister said that Pakistan is very clear in its approach towards the Afghan refugees and it will always be going an extra mile to facilitate the Afghan refugees. He further said that keeping in view the problems faced by refugees with expired Proof of Registration (POR) cards, special instructions have been issued to all security wings via Ministry of Interior to help avoid all sorts of inconveniences faced by the refugees. "Pakistan has been nurturing Afghan refugees by providing them with equal opportunities as its own citizens in every field of life. Resultantly, today many refugees can be seen constructively contributing to the economy and society of Pakistan. It has always been our priority to deal with all

refugees with care and dignity," said Mehboob Sultan. The minister emphasized that international bodies shall not abandon Afghan refugees, given the fact that world is forgetting the sacrifices made by Pakistan in graciously hosting four million Afghans over the past 41 years. He said that Afghans have been exempted from all the fees and taxes on visas and arrival to avoid any inconvenience. He said that Pakistan has been sharing its resources with the refugees, even when contemporarily no substantial foreign support is provided. He said that Afghan students have been provided jobs and granted admissions in schools and universities on priority basis. Ambassador Najibullah lauded the efforts made by Pakistan and its pivotal role in leading peace process in Afghanistan. - APP





## Briefs

**CPO holds 'Khuli Kutcheri' at CPO office**

DNA

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, DIG, Muhammad Ahsan Younas on Wednesday held a 'Khuli Kutcheri' here at CPO office. The 'Khuli Kutcheri' was attended among others by a large number of citizens, while on this occasion, Police officers concerned were also present. 38 citizens on this occasion recorded their complaints and presented applications to the CPO. On complaint of a woman, CPO directed the officers concerned to issue show cause notice to SHO Chontra while on another complaint of a citizen, Sub-Inspector Fahad Amjad was issued charge sheet. He also listened to the complaints of the citizens and issued orders on phone to the police officers concerned. According to a police spokesman, the CPO is holding Khuli Kutcheri on daily basis to provide relief to the citizens. The police officers had also been warned of strict action on negligence and directed to address complaints of the citizens particularly marked by the CPO within shortest possible time frame, he added.

**Anti-typhoid vaccination drive continues**

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A two week long anti-typhoid campaign to cover more than 18,76,539 children from nine months to 15 years of age is in full swing. Incharge District Vaccination Programme Chaudary Muhammad Hussain told APP that under the ongoing vigorous drive, over 135,000 children have so far administered the vaccine in urban areas of the Rawalpindi, Gujjar Khan, Murree, Kotli Satayan, Kalar Syeda, Taxila, Kahuta and Cantonment areas of Rawalpindi. Hussain said that 1101 mobile teams were participating in the drive to complete the task of vaccination while standard operating procedure (SOPs) regarding COVID-19 were being followed to ensure the safety of the teams during the drive. Hussain said that vaccination was also being carried out at educational institutions besides who were present at home. "The parents should cooperate with special teams so that the set target could be achieved," he added.

**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 4 th February from 09:00 AM to 02:00 AM, Orchard, G-6/3, Polyclinic, Pandorian, Khanna East, Lehtar Road, Tamir, Simli Dam, F-9 Park, G-9 Express, I-8/4, Carriage Factory, G-11/3, F-11/1, Rehara, CM Pak Zong, Bahria Enclave, Isolation Hospital, Company Bagh, Gharial, Patriata, Pir Sohawa, E-Block, A-Block, Kuri Road, Al-Noor Colony, Dhok Hekmadad, Gulshanabad, Jamia Masjid, Rajaabad, Muslimabad, Eid Gah, Kayani Road, Cheering Cross, Radio Pak-I, Azharabad, Nogzi, Golra, Jhangi, Pind Hoon, Mohanpura, Tipu Road, Mecca Chowk, Swan Garden-II, Park View, Gulistan Colony, Major Riaz, Dhanya-2, Dhok Noor, Garja, Union Consal Lakhani, Chahan, Nard, Nara Motor, Kallar City, Industrial, Mandir-I, Karnab Kaswal, Bhal, Sher Shah Suri, Purmiana, Lalazar, Lala Rukh, Burhan, Islampura, Kohsar Valley, Fawara Chowk, Kachehri, Darul-Salaam, Dhok Fateh, Ghor Ghasthi, Darya Sharif, Shadi Khan, Haji Shah New, Soni, Mianwala, Qutbal, Gadari feeder and surrounding areas will be remain without power. - APP

## Housing Authority issues final notice to G 14/1 occupants

All such owners have further been warned that if they do not get their dues settled by this date, the administration shall not be responsible for any damages that may take place as a result of operation against the defiant owners

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government employees Housing Authority has issued notices to the affectees and owners of land and houses in sector G-14/1, G-14/2, G-15/3, and MOZZAH JHANGI Sayidan to get in touch with the concerned authorities and get compensation. The Housing Authority has given advertisements in newspapers warning them to get their dues and vacate the land. They have been asked to make it possible to help award of houses by providing authentic ownership rights documents along with owned house document, Name, Father-name, National Identity Card, and

current living address.

So, all the residents and affectees of sub sector whose houses are legally built, have been asked to provide mentioned documents to office of the District Commissioner, Federal Government Employees Housing Authority till 1st February 2021 in order get received receipt. All such owners have further been warned that if they do not get their dues settled by this date, the administration shall not be responsible for any damages that may take place as a result of operation against the defiant owners.



It may be mentioned here that the G 14 sector was announced in 2004 but due to illegal Built Up Properties (BUP) it could not be developed. The foundation further said land for Sector G 14/1, 2, 3 was acquired by the DC office Islamabad vide an award under Section 11 of the Land Acquisition Act 1894 in January 2005. The award for Built up Property in G 14/3 could only be announced in 2014 and supplementary award in 2017. Almost 70 per cent of the area of Sector G 14/3 has been got vacated and development work is being executed

on the site. It further stated, the measurements for BUP are being conducted in Sector G 14/2 and award of BUPs in G 14/2 was done in February 2020. Similarly measurements for BUP have already started in G 14/1 and award of BUPs was expected by 31 March 2020, however it is delayed because people have not yet vacated houses despite the fact that they have already received the compensation. Sources say that the housing authority plans to give possession of the land to allottees within next couple of months. Development work in sub sector G 14/3 and G 14/2 is already underway. Even, people have started house construction after getting possession in these sub sectors.

## CDA holds E-Kachehri to address issues

The officers and staff of the department of estate, land, planning, and others were present at the occasion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Upon the special directions of the administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) an e kachehri was held here on other day. Citizens told their issues regarding estate and land to members through e kachehri. Citizens have been assured that their issues will be resolved very soon.

E kachehri will be held after every 15 days. According to detail, the current administration of Capital Development Authority is committed to resolve issues being faced by the masses side by side providing them the best facilities. In this regard, an open kachehri was held at Capital Development Authority's headquarter in Islamabad on Tuesday under the supervision of member estate.

The officers and staff of the department of estate, land, planning, and others were present at the occasion. Member estate listened the issues of the masses and also directed the concerned authorities to promptly resolve the issues of the citizens. During the e kachehri a citizen registered a complaint regarding his lost file upon which the member took the prompt notice and asked

the concerned officer to resolve the issue at once. While responding the complaints of allottees of sector I-12 and I-15, member told them that the developmental work in the said sectors has been started. The main purpose of holding an e kachehri was to bridge the gap between Capital Development Authority and people which has been created due to coronavirus pandemic situation.

## Qasim Suri inaugurates SDGs wall at FJWU

*Qasim Suri said the efforts were being made to ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development*

RAWALPINDI: National Assembly Deputy Speaker Muhammad Qasim Khan Suri Wednesday inaugurated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) wall at Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) to create awareness about SDG goals among students and the faculty. Pakistan Red Crescent Society Chairman Abrar ul Haq, Secretary Young Parliamentarians Forum, MNA Uzma Jadoon, SDDO Executive Director Syed Kausar Abbas and FJWU Vice Chancellor Dr. Saima Hamid were also present on this occasion. Department of Sociology in collaboration with Sustainable Development Organization organized the ceremony. Addressing the participants, Qasim Khan Suri said the efforts were being made to ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development. Being future of the country, youth should follow the SDGs in letter and spirit and work hard as this would help the country and it could be brought at par with the developed nations. SDDO Executive Director Syed Kausar Abbas briefed the audience regarding the initiative, saying, the purpose to launch the SDGs wall was to educate the students about 17 SDGs recognized by the UN. "The students and the faculty members will be engaged in the research and advocacy of the SDGs with an aim to involve them in the development process of the country and to achieve the global targets" Syed Kausar Abbas said. Similar walls would also be launched in other public and private universities as well, he added. The development of the country needs active participation of youth and academia and it is imperative to educate the youth about the SDGs. Uzma Jadoon said that the parliamentarians are playing an important role in achieving SDGs. She further said that the young parliamentarians' forum is engaging different communities for dialogue on SDGs and engage the communities and the local stakeholders in the sustainable development of the country. - DNA

## Lok Virsa to hold "Kashmir Cultural Exhibition"

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) will hold three-day long "Kashmir Cultural Exhibition" from February 5, to show solidarity with Kashmiris. A series of programs and activities will be held to highlight the sacrifices of innocent Kashmiri people struggling for their right of self-determination in the Indian Occupied Kashmir through purely a cultural perspective. Executive Director Talhan Ali Khan told APP that in three-day long exhibition, various events has been planned including Wazwan, a special and prominent banquet meal of Kashmir will be presented for visitors. He said that preparing this is not less than an art and this multi-course meal is an important part of Kashmiri traditions and culture. There will be special exhibition of Kashmiri Artisans-at-work and exhibition of Kashmiri Folk Crafts. Kashmiri musical night will also be held to mesmerize the audience with folk songs and local dances by folk singers, he added.

**PAL to hold Literary Seminar today**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) will organize a day long National Literary Seminar to observe Kashmir Day. The Seminar aimed to highlight the sacrifices of innocent Kashmiris and to mobilize the international community to play its due role to provide future to the Kashmiri people. Parliamentary Secretary of National Heritage and Culture Division and member of Parliamentary committee on Kashmir Affairs Ghazala Saifi will be the chief guest, an official informed APP. He said that Prof Dr Ahsan Akbar and Dr Masood Jafari will be guest of honor. Different writers and scholars will participate including Javed Ahmed, Asghar Abid, Ayesha Masood Malik, Israr Ayub and Hanif khaleel to highlight the miseries of Kashmiri people. - APP

## Tanzara Art Gallery to hold art exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Tanzara Art Gallery will hold an art exhibition titled "From Ordinary to Extraordinary" on February 4 that will feature works of renowned Shanghai based, Pakistani artist Irfan Cheema. According to an official, theme based oil paintings will be displayed including crafts work. He said that in this exhibition 26 paintings will be displayed which may all be described as beautiful and attributes such as pattern and decoration, nature, sensuality and clarity of colour. Cheema is known for his timeless still life paintings and he is a classical realistic painter, but his paintings are more than an imitation of what is seen, he added. He has the magic of capturing the essence of the vignette that he replicates on canvas. - APP

## Early detection can help cure most of cancers

are being reported every year, out of which 40 to 50 percent of patients lose their lives because of late diagnosis and treatment. He said breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in Pakistan while 2nd common is a cancer of the head and neck while lung cancer is on 3rd number. Dr. Asif stressed the need for early detection, screening, and treatment to prevent a large number of deaths. While explaining the treatment options of cancer disease, he said that treatment depends on the patient's stage of cancer that includes surgery combined with radiation therapy and chemotherapy.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: World Cancer Day was observed at Shifa International Hospital (SIH) under the theme "I Am and I Will" to raise public awareness and access to early detection and diagnosis for preventing deaths due to the disease. Dr. Asif Masood, Consultant Radiation Oncologist & Head of the Radiation Oncology Department at Shifa International Hospital, said that worldwide cancer is the third cause of death and according to 2018, WHO data about Pakistan, 200,000 new cancer cases

are being reported every year, out of which 40 to 50 percent of patients lose their lives because of late diagnosis and treatment. He said breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in Pakistan while 2nd common is a cancer of the head and neck while lung cancer is on 3rd number. Dr. Asif stressed the need for early detection, screening, and treatment to prevent a large number of deaths. While explaining the treatment options of cancer disease, he said that treatment depends on the patient's stage of cancer that includes surgery combined with radiation therapy and chemotherapy.



**ATTOCK: Special Assistant for Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam inaugurating sui gas expansion project in Hazro. - APP**

## 25 'land grabbers' held during last week

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police has arrested as many as 25 people allegedly involved in land grabbing from various areas of the city during last week. According to police spokesman, the accused were nabbed during anti-encroachment drive being conducted across the city to vacate the state land. The suspects were shifted to relevant police stations after lodging FIRs against them. He said joint operations were conducted in collaboration with Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad administration. Around 1257 kanal government land valuing Rs 1557 million was retrieved from the occupiers, he maintained. Around 50 kanal was recovered in the jurisdiction of Golra police station followed by 1000 kanal at Noon police station and 150 kanal in the area of Sabzi Mandi police. Similarly, the illegal possession of diplomat shuttle service was also recovered after arresting the culprits, he added. "The land grabbing would not be allowed in the federal capital and the law will take its course if someone found illegally occupying land of other," the spokesman said while quoting IG Islamabad.

## Concrete measures for 'Look Africa' policy urged

The ambassador emphasized resuming direct flights from South Africa to Pakistan and opening of banking channels as no Pakistani bank operates in South Africa. He also suggested promoting Pakistani films and dramas and organizing cultural events in South Africa to bolster cultural ties

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan must take concrete measures to materialize the recently announced 'Look Africa' policy in real terms, said Ambassador (ret'd) Najam-us-Saqib, former Pakistan's envoy to South Africa, Brazil, Kenya, Bangladesh and Cuba, at a webinar titled 'Pakistan's relations with Southern African countries' held at Institute of Policy Studies. The session was chaired by Chairman IPS Khalid Rahman and moderated by Sr. IPS Associate Ambassador (ret'd) Tajammul Altaf and attended by many foreign policy analysts and researchers. Commenting on Pakistan's bilateral relations with South Africa, which is the biggest country in

the southern region and member of G-20 and BRICS, the former ambassador said that Pakistan enjoys strong ties with it, especially defense cooperation as the COASS from both countries visit each other regularly. However, he rued that bilateral

trade volume between both countries stands at meager \$600 million, and no Pakistani head of the state has paid a visit there in the last 15 years, except former President Mammooon Hussain, who went there to attend the last rites of late Nelson Mandela.

Najam-us-Saqib believed that despite a large number of Pakistani expatriates living in South Africa, the stretch of cultural and political relations with South Africa and other southern countries including Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and Mozambique is not significant.

People in South Africa, he informed, still remember the leading role played by Pakistan against the apartheid. However, the benefits of such cordial relationships are yet to be reaped. He further stressed the need for initiating joint ventures in the mining sector with South Africa. The ambassador emphasized resuming direct flights from South Africa to Pakistan and opening of banking channels as no Pakistani bank operates in South Africa. He also suggested promoting Pakistani films and dramas and organizing cultural events in South Africa to bolster cultural ties. Concluding the session, IPS Chairman Khalid Rahman opined that Pakistan needs to acknowledge the importance of African countries, especially the southern region, and identify areas of cooperation.



## IRSA releases 63,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 63,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 36,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1463.77 feet, which was 71.77 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 15,500 and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1173.30 feet, which was 133.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 7,300 and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 44,700, 42,100 and 7,000 cusecs respectively. - APP



## Briefs

## Illegal structures demolished in Hazro

DNA

ATTOCK: In a massive anti-encroachment operation carried out by tehsil municipal administration Hazro, scores of fences, sheds and other encroachments were demolished to pave way for smooth flow of traffic in the city. The Tehsil Municipal Administration carried out the anti-encroachment operation with the assistance of Punjab highway department, public health engineering department, district administration and Police. During the operation, all sunshades, grills, walls and extended portions of shops were razed to the ground with heavy machinery, while meat stalls, cabins and pushcarts set up on footpaths were confiscated. During the drive against encroachment mafia, several cabins, birds' cages, food stalls and chairs and tables of tea kiosks were confiscated by the authorities at Hattain chowk, Jehanin chowk, Tarbela chowk, Fowara chowk, toll tax chowk, Dua chowk, Stadium chowk and Gondal mandi chowk. Cemented slabs were also removed from rain drains which were placed by owners of meat shops. The authorities also demolished several food stalls and tea kiosks set up over rain drains by shop owners purge the main roads.

## People support tax on sugary drinks

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A survey on complex diseases and mortality caused by excessive consumption of sugary drinks revealed that 72 percent of people supporting the implementation of tax on sugary drinks to prevent NCDs, including heart, cancer, obesity, and other diseases. Conducted by Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA) in collaboration with the Pakistan Health Research Council (PHRC) in twin cities and surrounding areas, the survey report was launched here Wednesday which was hosted by Major General (ret'd) Masood-ur-Rehman Kayani, President PANAHA. Besides Dr. Noshin Hamid, Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Member National Assembly, the event was attended by Additional Secretary Health Department, representatives of government, welfare organization and journalists. Addressing the ceremony, Sana Ullah Ghuman, General Secretary PANAHA said that hard work brings positive result only through collective efforts. The government representatives and the media, he said are greatly appreciated for taking a positive view of the role of PANAHA in protecting the health of the people and for providing information to the public. Your cooperation will help in building a disease free society, he added.

## Business community to observe Kashmir Day

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The traders and business community will observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on Friday (February 5) to express solidarity with Kashmiris and highlight their plight said President Anjuman-i-Tajirun Rawalpindi Sharjeel Mir. He said that the entire Pakistani nation including traders and business community, fully stands with Kashmiri brothers as they were struggling for their fundamental right to self-determination for last seven decades. He said that India has committed worst human rights violations in the occupied territory of Kashmir valley. Sharjeel Mir said that India's illegal occupation in Kashmir was a matter of grave concern for the world powers and the United Nations should take immediate notice of Indian atrocities. He said that India has destroyed the peace of Kashmir by occupying the valley aggressively.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin ul Haque in a meeting with German ambassador to Pakistan Bernhard Schlagheck. – DNA

## PRCS holds donation camp to address shortage of blood

NA Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri urges all segments of society to wholeheartedly help PRCS in this humanitarian cause. PRCS chairman Abrar ul Haq urges youth to rise to challenge and play their role in saving precious lives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) on Wednesday organized a donation camp in the federal capital to help address serious shortage of blood amid depleted donations due to coronavirus pandemic. National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri was chief guest on the occasion. PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq and other senior officials were also present at the camp which was organized in F-7 Markaz. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri said thousands of people have lost lives to Covid-19 across country, however even more lives are at risk due to blood shortage, especially of those who are suffering from leukemia, thalassemia, hemophilia, anemia or those undergoing critical surgeries or injured in road accidents. He welcomed the PRCS initiative of setting up blood camps which he said was also in line with the government's agenda of ensuring provision of safe blood to every patient as well as those injured in road accidents. He urged all segments of the society to wholeheartedly help the PRCS in this humanitarian cause. Speaking on the occasion,

PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq said Pakistan has an additional requirement of blood supply because of a high number of thalassemia patients, adding that this challenge has magnified due to lack of blood donors amid Covid-19 pandemic. "Estimates suggest that only 28 out of 10,000 people donate blood in Pakistan. Out of these, only 11 percent of donations are by people who don't have a friend or family in immediate need," he said. "It is estimated that every five minutes, someone is killed or badly injured in a road accident in Pakistan out of which many lose their lives for want of timely supply of blood," he lamented. "According to a Pakistan Thalassemia Centre report, Pakistan has approximately 100,000 patients suffering from the genetic blood disorder. Among other diseases, an estimated 5,000 children with beta thalassemia are born per year," he added. Abrar ul Haq said educational institutions and industrial units have been the major source of blood collection and their closure in days of pandemic has severely impacted the blood donations. However, since all schools, universities and other institutions have now reopened, it is time for an urgent intervention to ensure an uninterrupted supply of blood for those whose life depends on regular blood transfusions, he added. He said the majority of blood donors fears that they might contract coronavirus during the blood transfusion process, calling for a robust awareness campaign to ward off people's concerns in this regard. He said the PRCS has always been in the frontlines of arranging and donating blood and its components for the deserving patients.



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## Mishal slams Indian govt atrocities

RAJA PERVAIZ

RAWALPINDI: Mishal Malik, the wife of Hurriyat leader of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K) Yasin Malik said that the silence over crimes of Indian occupying forces against innocent Kashmiris was for a temporary period after which Kashmiris would enjoy their long time liberation for ever. Kashmir Solidarity Day, she paid gratitude to the Pakistani nation for popularizing the slogan of 'Kashmir liberation' across their country. She said that like every year, the 220 million people of Pakistan along with their government would also stand shoulder to shoulder with their Kashmiri brethren and raise voice as part of expressing solidarity with them. Mishal Malik also said, India has suspended communication links of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K) with the rest of the world to suppress their voice for just right of self determination. She said that Kashmir Solidarity Day would be observed in Pakistan and across the world on 5 February to highlight the right of self determination of Kashmiris and against Indian atrocities. Protest rallies would be held in Pakistan and across the world against brutalities of Indian occupying forces on Kashmir Solidarity Day, she said and added that the aim of celebrating the Day was to pay tribute to Kashmiri brothers, sisters and mothers on valiantly facing the state terrorism by India against them.

## Government to establish computerized land bank

DNA

ATTOCK: Provincial Minister for Revenue Malik Muhammad Anwar Khan said that Provincial government has decided to establish computerized land bank in Board of Revenue. Complete record of retrieved state land from Qabza Mafia is being restored in land bank. This was disclosed by Provincial Minister for Revenue Malik Muhammad Anwar Khan while talking to media on Wednesday. The minister said that modern and latest centralized system of land bank is being established in Board of Revenue where data of state land of 36 districts will be collected and stored. This data will be collected from the deputy commissioners of the districts. He said that a comprehensive crackdown against land grabbers is being carried out throughout the province. He further maintained that Board of revenue has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against Qabza Mafia. He said that the government is working to eradicate status quo and corruption in the same time. Land bank will greatly help to eradicate corruption in revenue matters, he added.

## Chaudhry Rehmat Ali remembered

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chaudhry Rehmat Ali who created the name of Pakistan and authored famous pamphlet "Now or Never; Are We to Live or Perish Forever" was remembered on his 70th death anniversary on Feb 3 (today) to pay homages for his unforgettable services for nation. Chaudhry Rehmat Ali was a Muslim nationalist who was one of the earliest proponents of the creation of the state of Pakistan. Chaudhry Rehmat Ali was born in Hoshiarpur district of eastern Punjab on November 16, 1897. He proposed the advice first time in 1915 during the inauguration session of Basm-e-Shibli in Islamia College Lahore, private channels reported. He emphasized that northern areas of Hindustan shall change into a Muslim state. He went to England in 1929 where he published a pamphlet titled "Now or Never" on January 25, 1933. In this pamphlet he had presented a notion of separate homeland for Muslims of subcontinent and proposed its name "Pakistan". However Chaudhry Rehmat Ali's dream came to true on August 1947. In 1933 he founded Pakistan National Movement in England.

## Mayor endorses ICCI stand for reduction in property tax



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mayor Islamabad Pir Adil Shah Gillani here on Wednesday endorsed the demand of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) for withdrawal of exorbitant hike in property tax to save citizens from unnecessary problems. While addressing the business community during his visit to ICCI, he said that he was a public representative and protecting the interests of the public was his key responsibility. He further said that 300 percent hike in property tax by Municipal Corporation Islamabad in one go was not in favour of the citizens of Islamabad. Adil Shah Gillani said that the business community was the main pillar of the economy and facilitating them was important for smooth growth of business activities.

## Seminar on cancer awareness held

ISLAMABAD: First Lady Samina Alvi on Wednesday said awareness on breast cancer could result in early diagnosis of the disease and save lives of thousands of women in the country. Speaking at a seminar organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in connection with World Cancer Day, the First Lady stressed the need for mass awareness in society to shun taboos affiliated with breast cancer. The First Lady attributed the lack of awareness to be the main reason behind the alarming death rate of 98 percent in patients with breast cancer in the country. Since Pakistan could not afford expensive treatment, she said, every woman must be aware of self-diagnosis techniques to find out any possible lumps of breast cancer. – DNA

He said that he would be completing his term by February 15, 2021, however, he would try his best to address the maximum issues within his capacity in this short term, which were highlighted by the business community. He appreciated the role of the business community during Covid-19 pandemic for providing relief to the needy people and said that ICCI has always taken an active part to support people in times of need, which was laudable. He said that Director Municipal Administrator would be asked to remain in touch with ICCI to resolve the major issues of the business community. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President said that ICCI and MCI were working for common objectives to develop a better infrastructure for business activities and beautification of the city, therefore, both should work jointly to achieve common goals more effectively.

## PTCL hands over health kits to ITP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), as part of its coronavirus support program, has handed over face masks and hand-sanitizers for the Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) frontline officers. The ceremony of handing over of health kits was held at the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Security Office. The event was also attended by Group Chief Marketing Officer, PTCL & Ufone, DIG Security Division, Islamabad Police, along with officials from both organizations. DIG Security, Islamabad, was presented with face masks and hand-sanitizers by the PTCL representatives, to acknowledge the efforts of courageous Traffic Police frontline officers, said a news release here on Wednesday. On the occasion, Waqar Uddin Syed, DIG Security Division, Islamabad Police, said, "We laud PTCL's contribution and appreciate their support during the pandemic. This will surely help to further curb the spread of Coronavirus amongst our frontline officers, who are performing their duties fearlessly. We also appreciate and pay tributes to the PTCL frontline workers, who are keeping our country connected and are standing with the nation during these testing times." – DNA

## PARC establishes technology display center at Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: PARC has opened its another technology display center at Commercial Market, Rawalpindi for extending its technology transfer initiatives to farmers for value addition of agriculture products. In this regard PARC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with M/s Organic N Organic to introduce healthy, hygienic and high nutritional food to messes. Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Agrotech Company Dr Muhammad Amjad and Representative of M/s Organic N Organic Farid Alam signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. The other objective of the initiative was to promote agri-business, and value addition activities carried out by the PARC in collaboration with private sector, says a press release. Chairman PARC Dr Muhammad Azeem Khan inaugurated the display center and said that PARC had planned for establishing 10 display centers across the country for promotion of agriculture business and value addition. – DNA

## Book titled "Tragedy in Kashmir" launched at PNCA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts in collaboration with Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur hosted a book launch titled "TRAGEDY IN KASHMIR" authored by (late) ABDUL HAQ SUHARWARDY, the first and only Kashmiri origin Chief Secretary of Azad Kashmir after partition. The author has comprehensively covered the struggle for freedom by Kashmiri Muslims despite the atrocities put forward before the partition. The book also covers the narrative of the foul play and sinful plot of Nehru family and the British raj that made the heavenly valleys of Kashmir into a living hell for their true citizens. The story of how Muslim majority districts of

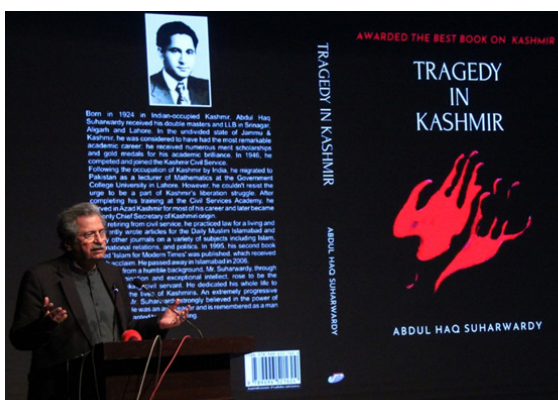
Gurdaspur and Batala were given to India to establish a road connection to India. The tragedy of Kashmiri leadership, Sheikh Abdullah whose lack of foresight ended up in the debacle of the Indian Occupation of Kashmir. Finally, the heroic struggle of the tribal people and Poonchi exarmy servicemen who were successful in liberating what we now know as Azad Jammu and Kashmir, including Gilgit and Baltistan. The book traces how the Kashmiris, a race of strong fighters in the days of Sultan Shahabuddin, changed over 200 years of Sikh oppression and subjugation. Yet they rose up against Dogra Raj in 1930 and were able to develop an indigenous political movement. The development of the

Muslim Conference and later its division into the National conference led by Sheikh Abdullah and a Muslim conference which was a popular party but lacked a recognizable public leader. How Mr Nehru identified Mr Abdullah and developed a strong relationship with him, showering him with favors to induce him to

support accession to India. It details the background intrigues involving the Radcliffe commission, the British government in India with Indian leaders to pave the way of accession to India by subterfuge and clever manoeuvring. The chief guests for that ceremony were Mr. Shafiq Mehmood, Federal Minister for Education & National History & Culture Division., Senator Walid Iqbal, Chairperson of the Senate Committee for Defence along with DG, PNCA, Dr. Fouzia Saeed. Renowned anchor and media person Mr Ahmed Qureshi hosted the book launch followed by the presentations of Dr Zarqa Suharwardy who briefly demonstrated the essence of book and role of today's youth towards Kashmir Cause. Mr. Shafiq Mehmood, Federal Minister for Education & National History & Culture Division in his remarks stated that this is a very important time in the history of Kashmir and this book on the bases of content and ideology is most relevant and resonates to the current situation. He appreciated the efforts

of Dr Zarqa and DG PNCA for making this event happen. Senator Waleed Iqbal enlightened the sacrifices of Kashmiri people and suggested a way forward under the vision of Dr Alama Iqbal. DG PNCA Dr Fouzia Saeed gave a brief insights on PNCA activities on Kashmir Solidarity Day and shared her thoughts on the extra ordinary efforts by Dr Zarqa in these critical times. Other speakers of that evening were Mr. Farhan Bukhari, International Journalist and Gulam Muhammad Safi, Convener Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir (THJK) Host Mr Ahmed Qureshi concluded the session and showed his gratitude towards distinguished chief guests, speakers and the worthy participants for making that launch successful.

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## Digital economy

THE annual report for 2020 released by Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) shows positive growth trends about Pakistan's digital economy. According to the report, more than 90 million users, around 42.2 percent of the total population, are now benefiting from broadband services. The increase of more than 13 million internet users during the coronavirus pandemic is enormous. Undoubtedly, the single biggest reason behind this growth is the pandemic. Educational institutions and business shifted to online activities, and many individuals and organisations switched to the work-from-home policy. There were around 20 million internet users in Pakistan only five years ago. The data compiled in the annual report of PTA show that the growth trends increased by 17 per cent during fiscal year (FY) 2020. This is undoubtedly a great achievement. The accelerated internet penetration indicates that the stage is now all set for us to truly go digital. Pakistan's internet market is ideal for investment purposes. The government can earn giant fruits for itself and the population. With a mass influx of users, this is the opportunity that the government cannot waste. Authorities and policymakers must offer incentivised policies to attract businesses and corporations to invest in infrastructure so that access is no longer a problem for prospective internet users in Pakistan. Moreover, the government also needs to engage tech giants and companies in software and tech development by allowing them to take initiatives with Pakistani youth. Pakistan has the fourth largest pool of freelancers in the world. Officials can lure tech companies to invest in Pakistan and allow for these freelancers to gain mainstream employment, or at the very least, a chance to increase their incomes. The government needs to direct the new generations' energies and creativities towards the digital economy. The possibility of gaining financial stability while earning from the internet is limitless with the size of our potential digital labour force and market.

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Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



## Sedition charges

IN the wake of the recent violent breach of the Red Fort by farmers, the Indian government has decided to clampdown on the press by registering cases against journalists who dared voice their honest opinion. At this point, such blatant censorship comes as no surprise for those who are well aware of Indian authorities' tactics of diverting attention from the international condemnation they receive because of their oppressive actions. As observers of this horrific trend, it is about time that international organisations set a precedent by denouncing the deed and reevaluating their global rankings on journalistic freedoms and human rights. Citing intent to promote conspiracy against the state, as well as inciting treason, the government of India has registered criminal cases against at least five well-established journalists who made the mistake of reporting the protests on a public platform. In fact, such reactions have become somewhat expected considering the state's track record of frequent internet shutdowns, suspension of network services and constricting social media platforms. As long as the protests and the unrest in IIOJK continues to attract bad press, the Indian government will continue to take such drastic measures. As such, now even various media associations have come to the realisation that they live in a country subjugated to the tyrannical rule of a populist and far-right government as they go onto criticise the restraints being imposed on them. It is about time that international bodies take notice of such unlawful actions and reprimand the country so as to not only set a precedent but to highlight the lack of moral integrity shown by India currently. Reporters Without Borders has already voiced its concerns of the Indian state imposing its own narrative onto the protests, now more must also either speak up or correct global journalistic rankings to reflect the truth that Indian media associations face in the status quo.

# Regional Integration Center: An important milestone

Dr. Fouzia Hadi Ali



RIC has initiated a mechanism of cooperation with the neighboring states by establishing academic/research institutes with the capacity to award the graduate-level degree. RIC brings together highly qualified experts, intellectuals, analysts, and policymakers worldwide to deal with the emerging challenges and find venues of cooperation among states. Moreover, RIC is governed by Patron In Chief University of the Punjab, Lahore and will seek guidance from the Board of Advisors

### INTRODUCTION

REGIONAL connectivity is the key catchword in today's political discourse and economic activities. Therefore, to overcome the impediments in the free flow of people, ideas, and services among the countries, there is a dire need for regional integration. Besides, such divisions also hamper economic growth among the developing countries. So keeping in view the significance of the regional integration, there was a need to establish a platform that provides long-term opportunities for the regional countries to cooperate in academic, social, economic, political, and cultural domains. For this purpose, the University of the Punjab, Lahore, in collaboration with the Center for Global and Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad, has established the Regional Integration Center (RIC) on Eurasia. The Regional Integration Center (RIC) aims to enhance the connectivity with regional countries in spheres of education, culture, media, policymaking, economy, ecology, security, technology, research, sustainable goal development, human capacity development, and lawfare.

**Eurasia: The Heartland Region**

A theoretical underpinning to emphasize the enhanced cooperation and relations with Eurasia can be linked to Mackinder's "Heartland Theory" which postulates Eurasia as the core and pivot area of the Heartland and proposes that whosoever wants to rule the world has to rule the heartland. Therefore, it is imperative to explore this region, which is rich in natural resources and cultural heritage. Besides this, it is substantial to highlight the Eurasian region's emerging significance dating back to the ancient Silk Road. The region has deep genetic, cultural, and linguistic links with the sub-continent. It comprises the continental area with several distinct peripheral coastal regions, including the Middle East, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Western Europe, linked by Central Asia and Eastern Europe's interior mass. Moreover, the three Western, Eastern, and Southern Asia regions are developed around fertile river valleys. The civilizations in Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and China shared many similarities, i.e., exchanged technologies and ideas. Ancient Egypt has also shared this model. These civilizations were most likely in more or less regular contact with each other by the early versions of the Silk Road. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Regional Connectivity China has taken various regional and sub-regional initiatives to develop better connectivity within Asia. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a mega project directed to promote regional integration and mutual economic development in Eurasia and beyond. It aims to promote the connectivity of Asian, European, and African continents and their adjacent seas, establish and strengthen partnerships among the countries along the Belt and Road, set up all-dimensional, multi-tiered, and composite connectivity networks, and realize diversified, independent, balanced and sustainable development in these countries. BRI

approach encapsulates the pillars of multiple national, sub-national, regional, and local economies. Profound and ambitious in its reach and scope to ensure complementary advantages, BRI can influence sustainable development outcomes. It passes through 80 countries that generate 40 percent of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and account for 60 percent of the world population. The energy sector is deemed as the largest beneficiary of this project that accounts for 75 percent. The acceptance reflects the desire among the states to be a part of Beijing's successful model of economic development, peace and stability, greater prosperity, and an idea of a community of shared future. Pakistan is optimizing benefits from the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is part of the larger Chinese economic strategy (Belt and Road Initiative) based on inter and intra-regional connectivity with the mega projects.

### The mission of the RIC

The RIC's mission is to attract international students, enhance academic exchange, strengthen and broaden research on regional issues and cooperation between Pakistan and Eurasia. RIC aims to become a regional integration model that it seeks to acquire by actively collaborating with regional countries in various sectors and creating joint institutions for consultation and decision-making in the region and beyond. The center will develop a concept of a shared community for regional prosperity.

### RIC Vision

The Regional Integration Center (RIC) envisions a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable region with strengthened relations with the regional states to act as a bridge between Pakistan and Eurasia.

### Core Objectives of the RIC

- To attract international students in all departments, centers, colleges, and institutes of PU;
- To provide one-window operations to facilitate international students seeking admissions at PU;
- To initiate joint projects for mutual academic exchange and development, especially for the youth;
- To sign agreements with various academic and professional organizations;
- To organize various national and international conferences, workshops, and seminars, etc.;
- To organize various national and international conferences, workshops, and seminars, etc.;
- To introduce a research journal that publishes peer-reviewed articles relating to multifarious regional issues;
- To engage international experts/analysts to provide their input in global socio-political and economic domains;
- To promote cultural and linguistic ties within the region;
- To enhance cooperation in the agricultural sector;
- To excel in the multifarious research including Social Sciences, Law, Health, Education, Climate change, Peace and Security, Media, Technology, and so forth in collaboration with the regional countries;
- To develop strategies and framework to counter the future regional and global security challenges and threats;

- To study and provide possible solutions to regional disputes;
- To develop a policy cell that can guide various Eurasian countries on developing multilateral connectivity; and
- To explore the opportunities generated by BRI in the region.

### RIC Mechanism

RIC has initiated a mechanism of cooperation with the neighboring states by establishing academic/research institutes with the capacity to award the graduate-level degree. RIC brings together highly qualified experts, intellectuals, analysts, and policymakers worldwide to deal with the emerging challenges and find venues of cooperation among states. Moreover, RIC is governed by Patron In Chief University of the Punjab, Lahore and will seek guidance from the Board of Advisors (Honorary Basis) for reviewing the academic and research activities of the Center. RIC has equal members from both the Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad and the University of the Punjab, Lahore.

University of the Punjab, Lahore proudly announce Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad as its collaborative partner for regional and international connectivity. Also, RIC plans to engage higher education institutes and centers across Pakistan by collaborating with regional academic think-tanks, universities, and academic institutes. This enhanced arrangement would allow for strengthening trade integration in the region by engaging relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, RIC will also initiate infrastructure programs to improve economic growth and regional integration. The collaboration would be facilitated by taking on board the Area study centers of the Pakistani universities, which would present the recommendations and suggested policy papers to the stakeholders in various subjects. RIC will also study the socio-economic development models worldwide and identify best practices to develop an integrated model for relevant departments.

### Major Projects: Activities under the RIC

The Regional Integration Center shall attract international students from the Eurasian region. It also aims to enhance academic exchange, strengthen and broaden research on regional issues and cooperation between Pakistan and Eurasia through joint Seminars, Conferences, and Roundtable Discussions with renowned regional universities. Furthermore, realizing a need for extensive research on the Eurasian Region, the center will promote research publications by publishing a research journal to make this region a single community with a shared future. Moreover, to support academic collaborations, collaborative International Online Internship Programs are being initiated between RIC and renowned regional educational institutes. Furthermore, RIC also offers certified Courses and Diplomas in various regional languages to facilitate and enhance people to people connectivity in the Eurasian region. Additionally, RIC's major projects include Online and Physical lectures of famous regional scholars, establishing Chairs of regional countries in Pakistan and vice versa, and establishing a Eurasian E-Library.

— The writer is Incharge Director, Regional Integration Center, University of the Punjab, Lahore

# India's sham Covid-19 "Vaccine Diplomacy"

Iqbal Khan

Hurriyat leaders and organizations in their separate statements sharply reacted to the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) police charge-sheet. They urged the United Nations to set up a special tribunal to probe all such killings in the occupied territory. Then there was another encounter in Srinagar on December 30, in which three innocent students were killed. According to Kashmir Media Service, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) Bar has demanded an impartial probe into killing of 3 students

IT is ironic that India continues to brandish its so-called vaccine diplomacy abroad while at the same time it has turned hospitals in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) into graveyards, choking essential medical supplies, let alone the Covid vaccine. Bigger aspect of the problem, however, is that it's prioritising such exports at the expense of meeting "domestic" demand in the world's second most populous country. The UN needs to step-in to quantify the exact requirement of Covid-19 vaccine for IIOJK and institute requisite monitoring mechanism to ensure that inhabitants of IIOJK are not exposed to India's vaccine terrorism through deprivation of medicine. After all India's military and paramilitary forces deployed in IIOJK take pride in using rape as counterinsurgency weapon. On March 23, 2020, UN Secretary General António Guterres issued an urgent appeal for a global ceasefire in all corners of the world to focus together on defeating COVID-19. He repeated the call at the start of the 75th UN General Assembly session in September. Since the first call, 180 countries, the Security Council, regional organizations, civil society groups, peace advocates and millions of global citizens have endorsed the Secretary-General's ceasefire call. The world needs a global ceasefire to stop all "hot" conflicts, both inter-state and intra-state. While we endorse UN Secretary General's intent for a global ceasefire, he also needs to make a specific call for ending atrocities in IIOJK. Since the illegal occupation of Kashmir in 1947, killings of Kashmiris and aggression continues to this day. In 1947, at least 237,000 Kashmiri Muslims were killed just because they wanted to join Pakistan. Their enduring love for Pakistan is an unpleasant truth for India. The UN resolutions about Kashmir have not been implemented because of the Indian intransigence. Hindutva regime has unleashed unspeakable brutality on the vulnerable Muslims of Kashmir. World powers have failed the people of Kashmir. Despite the presence of 900,000 troops, the people of Kashmir are continuing struggle for their self-determination and are peacefully opposing the alien rule. They are determined to carry on their struggle. They have been fighting occupation for 200 years and they will not give up. On July 18, 2020, an Indian army Captain Bhoopinder Singh-abducted three labourers, staged a gunfight, killed all three, and branded them as militants. All three were away from home to earn daily wages. According to police charge sheet, army captain staged this fake encounter in Amshipura, a village of Shopian, district Rajouri, just for paltry sum of Rs 20

Lakh. This is the value of civilian lives in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to the police charge sheet, Bhoopinder Singh had hatched a conspiracy along with two civilians, Tabish Nazir and Bilal Ahmed Lone, with the motive for "grabbing" a reward money. The charge sheet was submitted before the chief judicial magistrate of district Rajouri. Lone has since turned an approver and recorded his confession statement before a magistrate. Captain is currently in the custody of the Indian army, and is likely to face Court Martial proceedings. After reports emerged on social media that the three youths were not associated with terrorism, the Army had ordered a Court of Inquiry which completed its probe earlier in September 2020. It had found "prima facie" evidence that the troops had "exceeded" the powers granted under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). Following this, the Army had initiated disciplinary proceedings. General officer in Command of the XV Corps, Lt Gen B S Raju had said earlier that the Summary of Evidence had been completed and the Army will take the next course of action as per law. The charge sheet submitted by the Special Investigation Team of Jammu and Kashmir Police has listed 75 witnesses in support of its findings and has also provided technical evidence including call data records of the accused persons involved in the case. The charge sheet also has the statements of four army personnel who were part of Captain Singh's team. Singh and two other civilians also "purposefully destroyed evidence" of real crime that they had committed. The accused captain "furnished false information to mislead the senior officer and for getting" an FIR lodged to "tailor fit his motive for grabbing prize money in furtherance of criminal conspiracy". Hurriyat leaders and organizations in their separate statements sharply reacted to the IIOJK police charge-sheet. They urged the United Nations to set up a special tribunal to probe all such killings in the occupied territory. Then there was another encounter in Srinagar on December 30, in which three innocent students were killed. According to Kashmir Media Service, IIOJK Bar has demanded an impartial probe into killing of 3 students. Harassing of freedom fighters is a norm in IIOJK. On January 11, the special TADA/POTA court of Srinagar framed fake charges against illegally detained Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Chairman, Muhammad Yasin Malik in a three-decade-old fake case of Rubiya Sayeed kidnapping. The Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Liberation party, at a party meeting presided over by Chief Coordinator Dr Sarfaraz

Ahmad Khan, reiterated the demand for immediate release of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and all other political leaders and activists languishing in various jails in India and in IIOJK. Moreover, International Forum for Justice and Human Rights Jammu and Kashmir Chairman Mohammad Ahsan Untoo has strongly condemned the authorities for keeping nineteen students in jail for the past four years in a fabricated murder case. Many of the detained youth are undergoing treatment for many ailments. IIOJK Tehreek-e-Wahdat-e-Islami's spokesman in a statement said that Indian troops had martyred hundreds of youth in fake encounters in different areas of occupied Jammu and Kashmir during the past 33 years. He demanded of the United Nations to set up a special tribunal to probe the killing of innocent Kashmiri youth in fake encounters by Indian troops. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference leader and Member of Indian Parliament Justice (retired) Hasnain-Masoodi has called for reversal of illegal annexation actions of August 05 2019, initialization of dialogue with all the stakeholders of the Kashmir dispute. He also rejected Modi-led fascist Indian government's so-called industrial policy for IIOJK and emphasized that the scheme would not fetch any results in absence of an aggressive peace initiative to address the political aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. General Secretary of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Molvi Bashir Ahmed has said that the dark night of oppression imposed by India will end and the Kashmiris will see the dawn of freedom, one day. While addressing party workers in Pulwama, Bashir Ahmed said, the Kashmiris have never submitted to Indian machinations and will fight till end. A Human tragedy is brewing in the IIOJK. International community can no longer afford to be indifferent towards this snowballing crisis. Kashmiris stay hopeful that one day their agony would end through exercise of right of self-determination leading to peace and prosperity. The turbulent IIOJK region has long weathered violence and political strife. India's security crackdown and the coronavirus have brought life in the tourist-dependent region to a near halt. As the world continues its silence on the greatest human tragedy—Kashmir, it must also remain cognisant of the possible implications of the denial of basic human rights to the Kashmiris and their continued suffering at the hands of an extremist Hindutva regime in India.

— The writer is a freelance contributor; email: iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com



## Briefs

## Mickey Arthur, Lahiru Thirimanne test positive for COVID-19

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Sri Lanka's head coach Mickey Arthur and top-order batsman Lahiru Thirimanne have tested positive for COVID-19. The positive results came after PCR Tests carried out on Sri Lanka's provisional squad, which was preparing to take part in the upcoming tour of the West Indies. The entire squad along with the coaching staff, net bowlers, and the HPC staff underwent PCR Tests yesterday. Both Arthur and Thirimanne are now directed to follow protocols laid by Sri Lankan government. Meanwhile, SLC is exploring the possibility of rescheduling the Tour of West Indies, which was scheduled to commence on 20th Feb. 2021.

## Manchester United thrash Southampton 9-0 in league

SPORTS DESK

MANCHESTER: Manchester United tore apart nine-man Southampton 9-0 in a Tuesday English Premier League match to equal the division's biggest win. Southampton's Swiss midfielder Alexandre Jankewitz was shown a red card in minute 2 after a harsh tackle on Red Devils midfielder Scott McTominay. Man Utd scored the opener as Aaron Wan-Bissaka made a close-range tap. Marcus Rashford doubled the gap in minute 25 at Old Trafford. Southampton's Jan Bednarek scored an own goal in the 34th minute as Man Utd led the match 3-0. Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani's header in minute 39 made it 4-0 for Manchester United. The first half was 4-0 for the home team. In the second half, French forward Anthony Martial scored before McTominay's long-range effort to make it 6-0 for Man Utd. In minute 82, Manchester United were awarded a penalty after a foul against Martial, who had a goalscoring opportunity. Bednarek was sent off after the professional foul in the area. Southampton were down to nine men. Portuguese star Bruno Fernandes converted the penalty successfully for Manchester United. Martial made a close-range finish to make it 8-0 for his team. Welsh midfielder Daniel James named the result 9-0 in the stoppage time. So the victors, Manchester United had the 9-0 home win to equal their own record they set in 1995. On March 4, 1995, the Man Utd dominated Ipswich Town with the same score (9-0) to be the record holder in this field. But Leicester City whipped Southampton 9-0 in 2019 to tie the Premier League's largest win record, which is still the league's biggest away win. Following the win, second-place Manchester United have 44 points in 22 matches in the league table. League leaders Manchester City have 44 points as well but they have two matches remaining. Man City will visit Burnley on Wednesday. Liverpool are now in the third position with 40 points. The Reds will face Brighton and Hove Albion on Wednesday at the Anfield Stadium, Liverpool.

## Hariri visits Egypt for talks

WEB DESK

BEIRUT: Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Saad al-Hariri met on Wednesday with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi in Cairo to discuss developments in Lebanon and the region, according to his office. Talks between the two leaders also dwelt on bilateral relations and the situation in Lebanon, the statement said. Hariri is scheduled to meet later with Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri and Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Abul-Gheit. Hariri's visit comes amid efforts to form a new government in Lebanon as the country is facing its worst economic crisis aggravated by the massive blast that rocked Beirut's port on Aug. 4.



ISLAMABAD: Italian ambassador Andreas Ferrarese in a meeting with CM Gilgit Baltistan, Muhammad Khalid Khursheed Khan. – DNA

## Italy turns to Mario Draghi to end political crises

After being formally tasked by President, Draghi urged Italy's splintered and squabbling political parties to get behind him at this "difficult moment". Italy has been without a fully functioning government for weeks after PM Conte's outgoing coalition collapsed

ROME: Former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi agreed Wednesday to try to form a new government to see Italy through the devastating coronavirus pandemic, after the previous coalition collapsed. After being formally tasked by President Sergio Mattarella, Draghi urged Italy's splintered and squabbling political parties to get behind him at this "difficult moment". Italy has been without a fully functioning government for weeks after Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte's outgoing coalition collapsed in a row over the handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Conte quit last week but stays on in a caretaker ca-

capacity while Draghi – famous for promising to do "whatever it takes" during the eurozone debt crisis – tries to build his own majority in parliament. "I am confident that... unity will emerge and with it the ability to give a responsible and positive answer to the appeal of the president," Draghi said after talks at Mattarella's lavish palace in Rome. The economist noted the huge challenge facing Italy, the eurozone's third largest economy, which was the first European country to face the full force of Covid-19 and is still suffering badly. More than 89,000 people have died in the past year, while re-



strictions and the collapse of tourism have plunged the economy into its worst recession since the end of World War II. The government expects more than 200 billion euros (\$240

billion) in European Union recovery funds to help it get back on its feet – but only has until April to submit a spending plan to Brussels. Conte's centre-left coalition took office in September 2019 but was fatally weakened last month when former premier Matteo Renzi withdrew his Italia Viva party in a row over the handling of the pandemic. Conte finally resigned last week, but hoped to return with a new government comprising the populist Five Star Movement (M5S) and the centre-left Democratic Party (PD). Mattarella gave them until Tuesday to patch things up with Renzi, but the deadline came

and went – leaving the president with what he said were only two viable options. He ruled out snap elections because of the pandemic, opting instead for a "high-profile government" without political affiliations – a national unity government led by an impartial figure. Draghi, dubbed "Super Mario" for his action calming the markets during his stint at the ECB during 2011 to 2019, had long been discussed as a potential saviour for Italy. The Milan stock exchange jumped three percent in midday trading on Wednesday in anticipation of his appointment, which was also welcomed by the EU's economy commissioner. – APP

## China to provide 10 mln doses to COVAX initiative

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China plans to provide 10 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines to global vaccine sharing scheme COVAX, as three Chinese companies have applied to join the initiative for approval, the foreign ministry said on Wednesday. The COVAX scheme, backed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and GAVI vaccine alliance, is due to start rolling out vaccines to low- and middle-income nations this month, with 2 billion of 3 billion doses

expected to be delivered this year. China's foreign ministry said in January that Sinovac Biotech, China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) and CanSino Biologics have applied to join the scheme. Wang Wenbin, a spokesman at the Chinese foreign ministry, announced the supply plan at a regular media briefing on Wednesday, without going into details. The three companies were not immediately available for comment. The WHO, which is reviewing the applications, could make decisions on vaccines made by Sinopharm and Si-

novac in March at the earliest, according to a COVAX internal document seen by Reuters. Vaccines from Sinopharm and Sinovac are already being rolled out in several countries, including Brazil, Indonesia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. CanSino's vaccine is approved for use in China's military. None of the three companies have released detailed efficacy data of their vaccines to the public yet, but limited early access to rival shots developed by Western drugmakers have prompted many developing countries to sign up for Chinese vaccines.

## Rihanna creates flutter with tweet on farmer protests



NEW YORK: Pop superstar Rihanna has created a flutter in India by wading into the months-long protests by Indian farmers against new farm laws passed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, which has slammed international celebrities for their "inaccurate" comments. "Why aren't we talking about this?!" Rihanna said in a Twitter post, sharing a CNN network's article on the demonstrations with her 100.9 million followers on the platform, using the hashtag #FarmersProtest. It was not immediately clear what led Rihanna, whose songs have done well in India, to suddenly tweet on the subject. A couple of hours after Rihanna's tweet, Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg also posted the same CNN article, expressing solidarity with India's protesting farmers. "We stand in solidarity with the #FarmersProtest in India," Thunberg tweeted to her 4.6 million followers. Human Rights Watch also tweeted Rihanna, saying the government of Prime Minister Modi is "presiding over a dangerous regression in free speech rights in pursuit of its Hindu nationalist agenda". Earlier Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfikar Abbas Bukhari Wednesday praised a leading American singer Rihanna for speaking in support of Indian farmers, who were on roads to protest against the new agricultural laws. Sharing an article of the CNN news on alleged cut in internet services around New Delhi, the capital of India, Rihanna tweeted as to why the world was not speaking about this. "Well said and well done. That's because they've blocked all credible media in India. Not just with the farmers but also with the oppressed Kashmiris," the SAPM said while re-tweeting her tweet with #FarmersProtest. – DNA



TASHKENT: Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Furqat Sidikov accompanying Abdul Razak Dawood, adviser to Prime Minister of Pakistan Commerce and Investment on the way to Samarqand. – DNA

## Rules outlined for Tokyo Olympics-2021

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: No singing, no dancing and masks at "all times" – these are some of the measures unveiled by the organisers of the Tokyo Olympics as part of a COVID-19 plan seeking to ensure the event goes ahead in a safe way. The roll-out of the first of a series of "playbooks" on Wednesday was aimed at assuring athletes and sports officials, and an attempt to convince the Japanese public that the Olympics should not be postponed again. Opinion polls across the country show up to 80 percent want the games – which are scheduled for July – postponed or cancelled, despite Japan having controlled

the pandemic better than most countries. It has fewer than 6,000 deaths, but a recent surge in cases forced it to close its borders to non-resident foreigners and declare a state of emergency in some parts of the country. "There are indeed a lot of questions in the public domain about how the games will take place this summer. And today is a preliminary review of how things will be done," Olympic Games executive director Christophe Dubi said in a video news conference with Tokyo officials. The playbook introduced on Wednesday is aimed at international sports federations and technical officials, with guides for athletes, broadcasters and the media set to come in the next few days.

The 32-page document deals with hygiene, testing, immigration and states that officials



will be allowed to skip quarantine as long as they monitor their health for 14 days after arriving in Japan. It bans singing and chanting

during events and mandates participants to wear masks at "all times" except when eating, sleeping or outdoors. It also requires delegations and staff to appoint a COVID-19 liaison officer, who will be responsible for ensuring the participants follow the guidelines, and advises against shopping at the airport upon arrival in Japan. Rule breakers will face "consequences that may have an impact on participation" at the games, the guide warned, with "repeated or serious failures" potentially leading to offenders being kicked out. The rules are set to be updated in April and again in June. Pierre Ducrey, the director of Olympic Games Operations at the International Olym-

pic Committee (IOC), told Wednesday's joint press briefing that the event would be a "different experience". "There will be a number of constraints and conditions that the participants will have to respect and follow, which will have an impact on their experience, particularly when it comes to social aspects," he said. While details on rules for athletes are still being finalised, officials said they would be tested for COVID-19 at least every four days – in addition to being tested before leaving their country and again on arrival in Japan. A decision on the number of overall spectators that would be allowed at the events will be made by spring, they added.

## Pakistan's squad unchanged for 2nd Test

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: The national men's team selectors have decided to retain the same 17 players for the second Test who were part of the squad in the first Test in Karachi. The final XI will be now decided by the captain in consultation with the head coach for the match, which will start at the Pindi Cricket Stadium from tomorrow (4 February). Pakistan squad: Abid Ali, Imran Butt, Azhar Ali, Babar Azam, Fawad Alam, Saud Shakeel, Faheem Ashraf, M Nawaz, M Rizwan, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Nauman Ali, Sajid Khan, Yasir Shah, Harris Rauf, Hassan Ali, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Tabish Khan. Meanwhile, the remaining three players (Salman Ali, Kamran Ghulam, Abdullah Shafique) will continue to be part of the squad but won't be available for selection.

## Pakistan and Belarus discuss cooperation

FROM PAGE 01

the meeting was paid to the topic of enhancing interaction between the Foreign Ministries of two countries, including the holding of the next round of inter-ministerial political consultations. Interlocutors also discussed the status of preparation for the sixth Session of the Joint Belarusian-Pakistani Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation in Minsk coming spring. The Sides reached an understanding to restore the previous dynamics of bilateral cooperation after the gap caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

## BJP govt aiding dangerous regression in free speech rights: HRW

NEW DELHI: In pursuit of its dangerous Hindutva nationalism, the government of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) is presiding over "dangerous regression in free speech rights", stated Human Rights Watch South Asia Director Meenakshi Ganguly. Activists seeking protection of marginalised Dalit and Adivasi communities, protesting against discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Bill already face politically motivated charges, she added. The farmers, many of them who are Sikhs, have now joined that list, facing criticism for opposing the government's controversial farm laws. Many of the activists and journalists are facing criminal charges for mere participation or coverage of the farmers protest, Ganguly noted. In Modi's India, independent institutions including investigators, prosecutors and the courts, which should be impartially defending human rights, are protecting the BJP government's supporters and targeting its critics. So much so, the courts refused to protect from arrest the producers of an Amazon Prime drama series, Tandav. A local official from India's ruling Hindu nationalist party on Sunday registered a police complaint against the web series alleging it insults Hindu gods and goddesses, and threatened to launch a protest at the company's office in Mumbai. However, this isn't the first time the BJP has displayed its fascist streak. Recently, another Muslim artist was bullied and trolled for a very similar reason. 28-year-old Munawar Faruqi was arrested for allegedly "hurting religious sentiments and insulting the Hindu faith" through his work – both crimes under India's penal code. Even without proof, the standup comedian was put into police custody after being beaten up by a Hindutva vigilante group called the Hind Rakshak Sangathan in Uttar Pradesh. The assault was led by Aklavya Singh Gaur, the chief of the organisation and son of a BJP MLA on January 1. While one would assume Faruqi's problems have ended by now, another case has now been dug up against him, hanging his career – and his life – by a thread. – APP



## Briefs

## US moves carrier from Gulf

## WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden's administration has pulled an aircraft carrier out of the Gulf in a move to potentially ease tensions with Iran, which had soared under former President Donald Trump. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said on Tuesday the USS Nimitz Carrier Strike Group had sailed from the US military's Central Command in the Middle East to the Indo-Pacific Command region. Kirby did not confirm reports the Nimitz was headed back to the United States after some nine months at sea.

But he indicated that, after the Trump administration ramped up the US military presence in the Gulf, the Biden administration did not see keeping the carrier there as necessary for US security needs. Kirby declined to discuss the Pentagon's current assessment of a potential Iranian military threat to US bases or Gulf allies. However, he said: "We don't make decisions like this lightly." Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin "believes that we have a robust presence in the Middle East to respond" to any threat, Kirby added. "The secretary was mindful of the larger geostrategic picture when he approved the movement of the carrier strike group from the Central Command area of responsibility to the Indo PACOM area of responsibility," he said. Kirby would not say if the Nimitz would be replaced in the region in the near future, noting the US Navy has a limited number of aircraft carriers.

## Bezos to step down as CEO later this year

## WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Amazon.com Inc has announced that longtime CEO Jeff Bezos will step down from his post later this year, transitioning to executive chairman of the world's largest online retailer. In a statement on Tuesday, the company said Bezos will be replaced in the fall by Andy Jassy, who currently runs Amazon's cloud business.

"Amazon is what it is because of invention... When you look at our financial results, what you're actually seeing are the long-run cumulative results of invention," Bezos said in the statement. "Right now I see Amazon at its most inventive ever, making it an optimal time for this transition." Bezos founded Amazon as an online bookstore 27 years ago and turned it into a behemoth that sells just about everything. In the process, he became one of the world's richest people, with Forbes estimating his current net worth at over \$196.2bn. Amazon has faced criticism, however, for working conditions at its warehouses, with human rights groups urging the company to ensure workers' safety is protected.

## UK outlines post-Brexit subsidy scheme

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The United Kingdom wants to establish a more flexible system of subsidy rules than those in place when it was a member of the European Union, business minister Kwasi Kwarteng said on Wednesday. Having left the EU fully in January, the UK is reshaping its economy and fought hard in negotiations with Brussels for the right to set its own state aid rules – albeit with agreed limitations. Kwarteng said the new subsidy rules would make the UK more attractive to investors while staying within the terms of the EU exit agreement and avoiding a return to 1970s policies of supporting unprofitable industries. "We want to use our newfound freedoms to propel the UK to the forefront of innovation and help create the jobs of the future, while also making the UK the best place to start and grow a business," he said in a statement. He was speaking as the government launched an initial public consultation on the scheme, the first stage in a process that will eventually lead to legislation.



TASHKENT: Ambassador of Pakistan in Uzbekistan presenting a souvenir to Abdul Razzaq Dawood Prime Minister Adviser on Commerce during his recent visit to Uzbekistan. – DNA

## Rouhani rejects calls for changes to Iran nuclear deal

Speaking at a cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, Rouhani said the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as the nuclear deal is named was not achieved easily, but was the fruit of 10 years of diplomatic endeavors

## FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has once again rejected calls for changes to the content of the 2015 nuclear deal and its original participants, after France said any new negotiations on the multilateral agreement should also include the Saudi regime. Speaking at a cabinet meeting in Tehran on Wednesday, Rouhani said the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – as the nuclear deal is named – was not achieved easily, but was the fruit of 10 years of diplomatic endeavors. "No article of the JCPOA will be changed. No one will also be added to the JCPOA. If we are 4+1, we will remain

the same. If we are 5+1, we will remain the same," he told the world community, especially the signatories to the agreement.

Rouhani was responding to certain calls for the participation of Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states in any talks on reviving the JCPOA, better known as the Iran deal.

The latest such call came from France, whose President Emmanuel Macron said late last month that Riyadh and other regional allies of Paris.

"Dialogue with Iran will be rigorous, and they will need to include our allies in the region for a nuclear deal, and this includes Saudi Arabia," Macron told Al Arabiya on Friday.

Iran has repeatedly said the



JCPOA is a done deal, rejecting any renegotiation or amendments to it. The JCPOA was reached between Iran and a group of countries then known as the P5+1 – which included the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany – in July 2015. It was ratified in the form of UN Security Council Resolution 2231. However, in May 2018, then US president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled his country out of the JCPOA and re-imposed the sanctions that had been lifted under the UN-endorsed deal.

Iran remained fully compliant with the JCPOA for an entire year, as verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), waiting for the co-signatories to honor their commitments and offset the impacts of the US withdrawal. But, as the European parties continued to renege on their obligations, the Islamic Republic moved in May 2019 to suspend its JCPOA commitments under articles of the deal covering Tehran's legal rights in case of non-compliance by the other side.

Trump successor, Joe Biden, has pledged to return the accord if Iran returns to compliance. Iran, however, says the US should first prove its resolve to rejoin the agreement by

lifting the sanctions.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani said Iran feels that the world's public opinion and politicians – including those in the US – believe the JCPOA benefits security, peace and interactions among countries.

He further noted, "There have been seven chairs and we six parties are sitting on them [after the US quit]. One side was suddenly struck by periodic mania and left. Now, that party has come to its senses to some extent and the episode of mania has ended. It should return to the table. What does it have to do with the other [signatories] who are already at the table? The Americans must return to Resolution 2231 and international law."

## Oxford vaccine cuts COVID-19 transmission

## MONITORING DESK

LONDON: The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine may reduce the transmission of the coronavirus by up to two-thirds, a study has suggested, marking the first time a jab has been shown to have such an effect.

The Oxford University study published on Tuesday, which is awaiting peer review, found that those who had been vaccinated with a single dose of the vaccine were 67 percent less likely to test positive with a PCR test. The paper suggested the vaccine, which was developed by Oxford University in partnership with British-Swedish pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, may have a "substantial effect on transmission of the virus" as a result and also prevent severe disease.

Health secretary Matt Hancock said the study, which also suggested the Oxford-AstraZeneca shot is highly protective after a single dose, showed "vaccines are the way out of this pandemic". "This news about the Oxford vaccine is absolutely superb," Hancock tweeted. "This vaccine works & works well." The study also showed the vaccine was 76 percent efficient against symptomatic infection for three months after a single dose, a level which increased if the second shot was delayed.

## Twin blasts hit northern Syria

## FOREIGN DESK

RAS AL-AYN: Two simultaneous terrorist bomb explosions struck northern Syria on Wednesday. Twin blasts took place in the northern Ras al-Ayn province, according to an Anadolu Agency reporter in the area. No casualties were reported, according to initial reports. An explosive device was detonated by terrorists inside a shop in the city center. Later, another bomb explosion rocked the same region.

The explosions occurred while Turkish soldiers in Ras al-Ayn were distributing humanitarian aid in a school yard near the area. Anadolu Agency correspondent, who was following aid activity, was also very close to the scene of the attacks. Local security forces believe that the attacks were carried out by the YPG/PKK terror group.

Ras al-Ayn was liberated from YPG/PKK terrorists on Oct. 12, 2019 as part of Turkey's Operation Peace Spring. It was launched to secure Turkey's borders by eliminating the terror group from northern Syria, east of the Euphrates River, aid in the safe return of Syrian refugees, and ensure Syria's territorial integrity. The terrorists, however, continue to carry out attacks in Ras al-Ayn, and the nearby city of Tal Abyad, despite their withdrawal from the border area following negotiations between the US and Turkey on Oct. 17, 2019.

## Ukraine bans three pro-Russia TV channels

KIEV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has banned three pro-Russian television channels in a move the presidency said was aimed at staving off Kremlin propaganda. Kiev says it has become a regular target of Russian misinformation since 2014, when Moscow annexed the Crimean peninsula and backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, a conflict that has claimed more than 13,000 lives.

The ban came into effect in the early hours of Wednesday after Zelensky issued a decree imposing sanctions against pro-Russian lawmaker Taras Kozak and eight of his companies, including the three TV stations. The channels – 112 Ukraine, Zik TV and NewsOne TV – are formally owned by Kozak, but are also linked to powerful MP Viktor Medvedchuk, a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The decree late Tuesday made no mention of the reason for the ban, but Zelensky said on Twitter later his country supports freedom of speech, and "not propaganda financed by the aggressor". Zelensky's spokeswoman described the three television channels as "a propaganda tool" and said they receive funding "from Russia". – APP



MINSK: Pakistan ambassador to Belarus, Sajjad Haider met with Kazakh ambassador and discussed bilateral ties between both countries. – DNA

## Myanmar police file charges against Aung San Suu Kyi

RANGOON: Myanmar police have filed charges against overthrown leader Aung San Suu Kyi for illegally importing communications equipment and sought her detention until February 15 for investigations, according to a police document. The Nobel laureate was overthrown and detained by Myanmar's army, which cut short a transition to democracy in a takeover that has drawn condemnation from the United States and other Western countries. The police filed a request with a court detailing the accusations against 75-year-old Aung San Suu Kyi, claiming that walkie-talkie radios had been found in a search of her home in the capital, Naypyidaw. It said the radios were imported illegally and used without permission. The document reviewed on Wednesday requested Aung San Suu Kyi's detention "in order to question witnesses, request evidence and seek legal counsel after questioning the defendant". A separate document showed that the had police filed charges against overthrown President Win Myint for offences under the Disaster Management Law. Reporting from Yangon, Al Jazeera's Myanmar's import-export act was "notoriously vague". "It could be anything from a fax machine to a walkie-talkie, because it was used under the former military regime all political prisoners," said Fowle. "There was a lot of criticism for the NLD for not changing that law power because their members have been arrested under added."

## Navalny jailed, prompting protests across Russia

French President Emmanuel Macron also called for his release, with German Chancellor Angela Merkel labelling the decision "far removed from any rule of law" and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson calling it "pure cowardice"

## FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: The court's decision on Tuesday to turn a 2014 suspended sentence into real jail time will see the 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner – who accuses Moscow of poisoning him last year – serve a lengthy prison term. Britain, France, Germany, the United States and the European Union denounced the ruling and called for his immediate release, as Moscow accused the West of interfering in its affairs. By early Wednesday, 1,408 people had been detained across Russian cities – mostly in Moscow and Saint Petersburg – the civil monitoring group OVD-Info said. Many

were detained before Navalny's sentence.

Navalny's supporters had earlier called for more demonstrations against the decision after thousands joined nationwide protests against his arrest over the last two weekends. The case is presenting one of the most serious challenges to the Kremlin in years, with some in the West calling for new sanctions against Russia.

Judge Natalya Repnikova ordered a suspended three-and-a-half-year sentence Navalny received on fraud charges in 2014 to be changed to time in a penal colony, an AFP journalist at the courthouse said. He was accused of violating parole conditions by refusing to check in with prison officials and was arrested

when he flew back to Moscow on January 17 from Germany, where he spent months recovering from a poisoning.

Navalny said it was impossible to make the appointments while abroad, but the judge said he had

skipped meetings prior to the poisoning. Navalny had spent time under house arrest after the 2014 conviction – which was denounced by the European Court of Human Rights – and Repnikova said that would count as time served.

His lawyer Olga Mikhailova said he would now serve around two years and eight months in prison. His legal team plan to appeal, she added, with Navalny expected to stay in detention in Moscow during that process. His Anti-Corruption Fund immediately called for a protest in central Moscow.

Several hundred of his supporters marched through the streets and AFP journalists saw police in riot gear detaining dozens across the city centre. Videos released by lo-

cal media showed officers hitting protesters with batons and chasing them through the streets.

In a fiery courtroom speech ahead of the ruling, Navalny accused Putin of trying to intimidate his critics. "They are putting one person behind bars to scare millions," he said. And he mocked the Russian leader over allegations the Novichok nerve agent used to poison him had been placed in his underwear, telling the court that Putin "will go down in history as a poisoner of underpants".

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called for Navalny's release, warning Washington and its allies would "hold Russia accountable for failing to uphold the rights of its citizens".

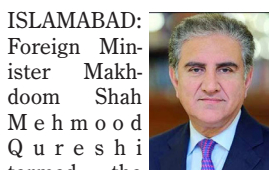




**Briefs**

**'Revocation of Article 370 amounts to reinvasion'**

SHUJAAT HAMZA



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Mahmood Shah Mehmood Qureshi termed the revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution on the part of the Indian government as illegal invasion of the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). He was speaking at a seminar titled 'Standing with the Unheard Voices of Kashmir' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Wednesday. He condemned the Indian action of issuance of over 1.8 million domicile certificates to non-residents of IOJK under the watch of around one million-strong Indian forces stationed in the territory. He was of the view that the move was aimed at changing the demography of Kashmir. He added that India faced international censure for its August 2019 actions and called for greater focus on exposing Indian atrocities in Kashmir by engaging not only foreign governments but also foreign parliaments and think-tanks.

**US, Pakistan to increase private investment**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States Government, through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and local partners, launched the Pakistan Private Sector Energy project today to increase private sector investment in clean energy. The project will support small and medium-scale energy activities throughout Pakistan to boost local and national economic growth. The Pakistan Private Sector Energy project will encourage more private investment in the energy sector, with a focus on low-cost, renewable energy sources, which are critical to expanding economic growth. UNIDO will work with clean-energy project developers and private sector investors to access project financing. "Sustainable, low-cost energy is a key ingredient in Pakistan's economic development. Harnessing the power of private sector investment will generate economic growth and create new jobs," said USAID Mission Director Julie Koenen. "This new USAID-funded project will complement the Pakistani government's efforts in facilitating a cleaner, cheaper, more climate friendly, and sustainable energy mix for Pakistan," said Minister.

**Pak to provide Rs 549m for Afghan development**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday accorded approval to release funds of Rs 549 million for two development projects in Afghanistan. The approval was made as part of Afghanistan Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programme of Pakistan government, says a statement issued here. Out of total grant, the government has approved release of Rs 61 million for feasibility study for construction of new railway link from Peshawar to Afghanistan's city of Jalalabad. Whereas another Rs 488 million were approved for the construction of various health projects including Jinnah Hospital Kabul, Aminullah Khan Logri Hospital and Nishtar Kidney center Jalalabad. Chairing the meeting in this regard here, the Secretary Ministry of Planning Mathar Niaz Rana said the economic development and reconstruction of Afghanistan was Pakistan's top priority.

**Pak-EU agree to enhance mutual collaboration**

EU ambassador Androulla Kaminara agreed with the views of Deputy Chairman Senate and emphasized for more cooperation and institutional linkages

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Saleem Mandviwalla has said that Pakistan is keen to increase cooperation with European Union and strengthen collaboration to work together for promoting understanding on issues of mutual concern. He expressed these views while talking EU Ambassador to Pakistan Ms. Androulla Kaminara during a meeting at the Parliament. Deputy Chairman Senate observed that Pakistan accords high importance to its relation with EU and same has been reciprocated in a similar fashion by extending support to Pakistan on many issues. He suggested that parliaments and parliamentarians of both Pa-



kistan and European Parliament should further engage in boosting mutually beneficial cooperation. "We place our bilateral relationship with EU Parliament at a high esteem", Deputy Chairman Senate remarked.

During the meeting both emphasized was laid on frequent exchanges at parliamentary and other levels and promote parliamentary diplomacy to create a sense of mutuality and togetherness. Senator Mandviwalla also extended invita-

tion to the EU President to visit Pakistan at a convenient time. Deputy Chairman Senate and Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq and Rana Maqbool raised the issue of deaths in the NAB Custody, they also emphasized that there shall be proper amendments in the NAB Laws. During the meeting, Deputy Chairman Senate thanked EU on the GSP plus issue and said that business community of the two sides needs to be brought together, it is also evident that the trade between both the countries is substantively low. EU ambassador agreed with the views of Deputy Chairman Senate and emphasized for more cooperation and institutional linkages. She said that the next 7-year cooperation plan is being prepared and in this regard, EU wants to carry out a consultation sessions with all the stakeholders including political leadership of the country. Deputy Chairman Senate appreciated the overall assistance and cooperation in diverse fields.

**SC vows action over anything suspicious in funds**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan said it will take action if anything is out of order in the matter of the prime minister approving development funds for MPs. "Can the prime minister approve development grants according to the law, Constitution and judicial decisions?" asked the Supreme Court on Wednesday. The two-member bench of the apex court comprising Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Maqbool Baqir took notice of the case during the hearing of a case and summoned the attorney general. The apex court tasked the attorney general to seek directives from the government regarding the matter and provide an answer to the Supreme Court. If the matter pertaining to the development funds was handled according to law, then we will close the chapter," said Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

**DNA**



**RISALPUR:** Saudi Ambassador in Pakistan Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Maliki, Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan cutting cake during a passing out ceremony of Pakistan Air Force. - DNA

**China Cultural Center to host online programs on New Year**

Spring Festival in 2021 is on Feb 12. A series of online celebrations for "Happy Chinese New Year" will be given by China Cultural Center

DNA

ISLAMABAD: This year marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relation between China and Pakistan, to celebrate this significant event and in conjunction with upcoming Chinese Lunar New Year, China Cultural Center in Pakistan will host a series of cultural activities to celebrate online the Happy Chinese New Year in Pakistan. The Spring Festival, which is also known as Chinese New Year, according to the lunar calendar, is held by the Chinese as their most important festival and has a history of over 4,000 years. It is an occasion on which people pray for a good harvest, celebrate and enjoy themselves. Nowadays, the festival is celebrated from the evening of the last day of the 12th lunar month to the 15th day of the new lunar year. During the Spring Festival, Han Chinese and many of China's other ethnic groups hold a variety of

distinctive celebrations in order to honor deities and ancestors, symbolize the replacing of the old with the new, and to welcome the New Year and pray for a bumper harvest. People do everything in their power to spend Chinese New Year with their families so that they can welcome the New Year and the happiness that they wish it will bring with those closest to them. The Spring Festival in 2021 is on February 12. A series of online celebrations for the "Happy Chinese New Year" will be given by China Cultural Center in Pakistan from February 4th to February 26th. Our Center has prepared a variety of online programmes, such as "Paper Cut Animation Chinese New Year", "Chinese New Year Virtual Exhibition", "Longquan Celadon Experience Tour" and "Ice Show" Animation Celebration



**Vaccination drive started**

ISLAMABAD: Vaccination drives against the novel coronavirus started simultaneously in all federating units of the country on Wednesday, a day after 500,000 doses of the vaccine arrived in Islamabad as a gift from China. As per the government's vaccination strategy, health workers were the first to receive the vaccine. Simultaneous inauguration ceremonies, held in major cities of all provinces as well as in AJK and GB.

**Amin stresses for enhanced ties with Germany in IT**

ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador to Pakistan Bernhard Schlagheck called on Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque here on Wednesday. Federal Minister for IT welcomed the German Ambassador in his office, and during meeting matters of mutual interests and related to digitalization were discussed. Federal Secretary Ministry of IT and Telecommunication Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui was also present in the meeting. The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in IT and Telecommunication sector.

Talking to German Ambassador, Federal Minister for IT Syed Amin Ul Haque said Pakistan greatly values its relations with Germany and want to enhance cooperation between the two countries in the field of IT and Telecom. He said that steps are underway for fulfilling Digital Pakistan Vision. He said that Ministry of IT & Telecom is taking strong initiatives for the development of IT and Telecom sector, adding that Federal Minister for IT & Telecom has great potential. The Federal Minister for Information Technology and Communication (ICT) export remittances surged to US \$958 million at growth rate of 40% during July-December of FY 2020-21 in comparison to same period of last financial year. He urged the IT and Telecom companies of Germany to invest in Pakistan as environment for investment in Pakistan is conducive. Ambassador of Germany appreciated the role of Minister of IT & Telecom regarding digitalization and for the development of IT and telecom sector of Pakistan. Meanwhile, Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque held virtual meeting with Director International Telecommunication Union (ITU)-BDT Doreen Bogdan-Martin. During meeting they discussed about connectivity and telecommunication services. While talking to ITU Director, Federal Minister for IT said that Ministry of IT & Telecom is fully committed to end the digital divide between urban and rural areas of the country. Steps are being taken through Universal Service Fund (USF) for the provision of broadband services in unserved and underserved areas of the country. - DNA



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**CGSS, Uzbek embassy agree to enhance mutual cooperation**

The ambassador acknowledged and appreciated CGSS's efforts in enhancing the bilateral ties of Pakistan, Uzbekistan

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies, Islamabad met with His Excellency Oybek Usmanov, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, on Wednesday. During the detailed meeting, it was discussed that CGSS and the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan will work in collaboration in areas of mutual interest. Both, CGSS and the embassy agreed to enhance cooperation in the academic

field to support academic linkages between various renowned universities of Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Also, it was decided that both the institutions will work together to improve people to people contact.



Furthermore, both parties will cooperate to facilitate bilateral ties of Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Furthermore, projects to promote socio-cultural dimensions of both countries were finalized. CGSS vowed its maximum support for such projects and initiatives. Moreover, the ambassador acknowledged and appreciated CGSS's efforts in enhancing the bilateral ties of Pakistan and Uzbekistan and expressed his keen interest in playing an active role in improving the already friendly relations.