



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, March 04, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Australia gifts Miyawaki forest to Pakistan**

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**PIEDMC, Belarus consulate ink trade agreement**

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**'Pakistan-China ties force for regional peace'**

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## Briefs

### 'Enough vaccines by end of May'

DNA

WASHINGTON: The US will have enough coronavirus vaccines for every adult by the end of May, President Joe Biden has said. This will be two months earlier than previously expected, but Mr Biden said the vaccination drive must be extended, too, and people convinced to take it. And he warned people to "stay vigilant" because "this fight is far from over", with new variants a major concern. His caution is at odds with some states, which are relaxing restrictions in order to boost their economies.

### 'PM Imran stands for transparency'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting Senator Faisal Javed Khan has said Prime Minister Imran Khan stands for transparency. Talking to the media persons in Islamabad on Wednesday, he said he wanted elimination of corruption at every level but regretted that the opposition is out to protect the corrupt practices. Later, he congratulated PTI's Fuzia Arshad for securing 174 votes in the Senate election, saying that her winning margin was evidence enough that "there was a clear horse-trading on the men's seat".

### Moeed hails Islamabad Dialogue

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Security Division (NSD) Dr Moeed Yusuf Wednesday said Islamabad Dialogue was a pioneer initiative of the NSD to gather outstanding global experts under one platform. In a tweet, the SAPM said, "[I am] looking forward to hosting Islamabad Dialogue alongside a stellar cast of think tanks on our Advisory Board - a pioneer initiative of NSD spotlighting conversations essential to the future of our holistic national security vision encompassing traditional, economic, and human security."

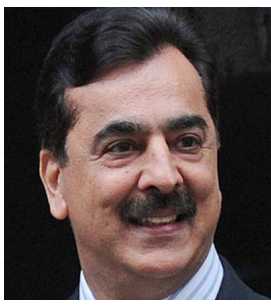
## PTI secures majority in the upper house Upset on Senate Capital seat

Gillani defeats Hafeez Shaikh; Shibli Faraz wins his seat; Faisal Vowda also becomes Senator from Sindh; PPP die-hard Farhatullah Babar loses; Sheery wins; BAP wins most seats from Balochistan; Seven votes rejected in Islamabad

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Democratic Alliance (PDM) has prima facie caused a major dent to the ruling alliance as the govt candidate for Senate from Islamabad and sitting Finance Minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh has been defeated. Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Yousaf Raza Gillani defeated Shaikh thus staging a big upset for the ruling party and its allies. PPP candidate Yousaf Raza Gillani who was backed by PDM parties got 169 votes while Hafeez Shaikh got 164 votes. It is interesting to note here that the government alliance total seats stood at 180 in the National Assembly while the opposition parties had 160, which

means Yousaf Raza Gillani got nine additional votes. This is however uncertain, and perhaps will remain uncertain as to who from the PTI or govt allied parties voted in favour of Yousaf Raza Gillani. Seven votes were rejected as well. It is also interesting to note that in the same election PTI and its allies won the women seat. PTI candidate Fouzia Arshad got 174 votes while PML N candidate Farzana Kausar got 161. The PTI win on women seat is a clear manifestation that the party still enjoy majority in the national assembly, therefore those who are suggesting PTI and Imran Khan to seek fresh vote of confidence, may not succeed in their demand. The Islamabad Senate elections also shows that PTI



**PDM: Yousaf Raza Gillani 169**



**GOVT: Abdul Hafeez Shaikh 164**

MPs or MPs from the allied parties were not happy with the Hafeez Shaikh so they voted against him. There is a perception as if Hafeez Shaikh's flawed economic policies led the MPs to vote against him, this perception does not hold ground. The

real issues appears to be fighting within the party. Another important factor happens to be the role of the Establishment. It is a widely held view that Hafeez Shaikh always enjoyed support of the Establishment and international monetary

bodies that is why he has served in almost all the governments. But in this election, as claimed by the winning candidate Yousaf Raza Gillani, the Establishment chose to be neutral. After the result was announced, Abdul Hafeez Shaikh and the former prime minister shook hands and hugged each other. The news of Hafeez's defeat was told to him by Zain Qureshi - who was the minister's polling agent - following which the two men embraced each other. Shortly after the announcement of his victory in the Senate election, Yousaf Raza Gillani held a press conference and said that he is thankful to the PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as well as the PDM leadership, including PML-N's Nawaz

Sharif, Shahbaz Sharif, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Akhtar Mengal, Maryam Nawaz, and ANP leadership, among others. "This is the victory of democracy," he said. "The Islamabad seat was the most important seat in the Senate elections and everyone was eyeing it. [Through my win], the PDM has been victorious." Adding to Gillani's point, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said that the PDM has won through the votes of MNAs, which is also a win for Pakistan. He went on to say that PM Imran Khan should "resign from his post," adding that he should adopt sportsmanship and honourably accept his defeat. "The PDM will decide a future course of action after mutual consultation with all members."

### 'PM to seek vote of confidence from NA'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Wednesday said Prime Minister Imran Khan had decided to seek a vote of confidence from the National Assembly, describing the victory of Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on the general seat of Senate from the Federal Capital as "negation of democracy". "The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has unanimously decided that Prime Minister Imran Khan will seek a vote of confidence from the National Assembly," Qureshi said while addressing a press conference along with federal ministers Shafiqat Mehmood, Asad Umar, Shireen Mazari, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Syed Ali Haider Zaidi, Hamd Azhar and others. He said the victory of Gilani, the candidate of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), also endorsed Prime Minister Imran Khan's view and conviction of corruption and corrupt practices in the Senate elections.

## PM's apprehensions proved true: Shibli

Dr Shahbaz Gill has announced that the result of election between Shaikh and Gillani will be challenged



BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz Wednesday said Prime Minister Imran Khan's apprehensions about the Senate elections' transparency had proved correct. It was evident from the result of election of the general seat for Islamabad, which was the outcome of the video leaked last night, he said talking to the media flanked by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister Shaikat Yousufzai here after the announcement of Senate elections results. The minister said

Imran Khan was the only person who could change the obsolete rotten system whereas the opposition alliance represented the forces of darkness, which believed in horse-trading, rigging, bullying and violence to manipulate the election results. About the defeat of his party candidate in Islamabad, he said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership was holding consultations and it would finalise the future strategy tonight. He reiterated the pledge that the PTI would end the politics of corruption, and sale and purchase of 'loyalties' under the leadership of Imran Khan. Those, who be-

lieved in honesty, democracy and merit were standing behind Imran Khan, and the ones promoting corruption in politics would be given a decisive blow. About the results in KP, he said the opposition parties were divided and they did not vote for each other's candidates. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Dr Shahbaz Gill has announced that the result of election between Abdul Hafeez Shaikh and Yousaf Raza Gillani will be challenged. In his tweet following the announcement of results by ECP, Shahbaz Gill said the winning difference was only 5 votes while 7 votes were rejected, we will now challenge this result. He wrote that PTI's Fuzia Arshad has won by 13 votes. Assembly members sold votes for money on the same ballot paper, proving Imran Khan correct. He said that once again, vote was sold off in Senate elections. After the video of Ali Haider Gillani came out, it became clear that the "Gillani clan" was buying votes.

### Zaheer Babar likely to be new air chief

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Zaheer Babar is likely to be the new air chief as the incumbent Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan will retire on March 18. The new air chief is therefore likely to lead fly past on March 23. Sources say that a panel of four senior most air marshals shall be sent to the prime minister for his approval. The prime minister then will pick one name for this coveted slot. Nauman Ali, Zaheer Ahmed Babar, Javed Saeed, Haseeb Piracha, Zahid Mahmood and Amir Masood are currently the senior most air marshals. Zaheer Babar stands more chances, sources disclosed. Zaheer Babar has served on a number of important positions. The Prime Minister, Imran Khan has already started consultations to make this important appointment. It is discretion of the prime minister to pick one name from the suggested names.

## 'Gillani to be new Chairman Senate'

Maryam Nawaz demanded the incumbent government to pack it up

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that defeating Prime Minister Imran Khan in his parliament is a historic achievement and vowed to have Yousuf Raza Gilani elected as Chairman Senate. Addressing a press conference after Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani won seat in Senate from Federal Capital by securing 169 votes, he thanked the opposition par-



ties for their support and said that the prestige of the parliament has increased today. "We have defeated the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in by-elections and now in Senate election," he said and added the war against the puppet government will continue.

### Senate polls results

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has emerged as the single largest party in the Senate followed by the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. According to unofficial and unconfirmed results, PTI bagged 13 seats in Wednesday election, PPP got eight, Balochistan Awami Party six, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl three, while Awami National Party and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement two each, Balochistan National Party one, and two seats won by independent candidates. According to new figures opposition parties have got 53 seats in senate and government 47 seats - DNA

## Qatar forces laud Pakistan Army's peace endeavors

Matters of mutual & professional interest, regional security situation including Afghan Peace Process and enhanced bilateral defence & security cooperation were discussed



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Major General Saeed Hasen Mohammad Al-Khayareen, Commander Qatar Emiri Land Forces called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ, on Wednesday. During the meeting, matters of mutual & professional interest, regional security situation including Afghan Peace Process and enhanced bilateral defence & security cooperation were discussed.

Visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan Army's sincere efforts for regional peace and reiterated that Pakistan and Qatar share brotherly relations which over a period of time are transforming into mutually beneficial ties. COAS thanked the dignitary and said that Pakistan Army greatly values its brotherly relations with its time-tested friend. Earlier on arrival at GHQ, Commander Qatar Emiri Land Forces, laid a floral wreath at Yadgare-Shuhada. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army presented the Guard of Honour to visiting dignitary.

### Saeed posted as DG Cyber Wing

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Saeed Ahmed Sheikh, a BS-20 officer, has been appointed as Director General, Cyber Wing, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Islamabad. According to a notification issued by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Saeed Ahmed Sheikh is currently posted as Director General (PR), Regional Information Office, Press Information Department, Lahore. He has now been transferred to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Islamabad, where he will serve as Director General, Cyber Wing. Saeed Sheikh enjoys impeccable repute and is considered as an upright and honest officer.

### Pak to get over 10m vaccines

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, Nigeria and Indonesia will be among the biggest recipients of free Covid-19 vaccines before June - more than 10 million doses each - the Covax scheme announced Tuesday.

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Kings beat Zalmi by six wickets PSL 6 - Page 06

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## Briefs

## Minister directs early start of hospital

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Punjab Minister for Social Welfare Syed Yawar Abbas Bukhari directed early start of mother and child hospital in Attock to provide the best healthcare facilities in remote areas. Presiding over a meeting in Attock, the minister maintained the establishment of mother and child hospitals was a vision of Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Uman Buzdar to ensure quality facilities to the people of remote areas, said a handout issued here. Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab (IDAP) Chief Executive Officer Mujahid Sherdil said that the allocated land as less than the requirement. The minister directed to contact the district administration for provision of additional land in Attock for the project and further directed to early complete the PC-I. This project should be included in new year's Annual Development Programme (ADP) for providing the best medical facilities to the locals, he added.

## DC for eradication of dengue

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali has directed that all the concerned departments should intensify their preventive measures for the complete eradication of dengue in the district as there is a danger of dengue virus as the current season is conducive for the growth and spread of larvae so could not afford minor negligence or inattention. He issued this directive while presiding over a meeting of the District Emergency Response Committee for Anti-Dengue in which the progress of implementation of anti-dengue campaign was reviewed. The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Sadar Umar Maqbool, District Coordinator Dr. Zulqarnain, officials of Environment Department, Social Welfare, FDA, PHA, Education, Agriculture and other. The Deputy Commissioner said that the district heads of all the departments should fulfill their responsibilities for the prevention of dengue and in case of negligence they would be held responsible. He said that it was very important to stop the spread of dengue in the current season. He directed to intensify the activities of surveillance in the field and said that possible sources of dengue larvae breeding should not be overlooked in this regard, check the tire shops on a daily basis while focusing on cemeteries, junkyards, plant nurseries.

## Punjab highway patrol registers 321 cases

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: On the directions of Addl: IG Punjab highway patrol Shahid Hanif, SSP PHP Region Faisalabad Zubaida Perveen said while talking about monthly performance of February, 2021 that as many as 321 cases were registered under different sections and 319 accused were arrested. SSP further told that 5 Rifles 12 Bore and 7 pistols 30 bore along with 24 bullets and cartridges were recovered. Furthermore, total 193 liter liquor and 220 Gram Cannabis was recovered. As many as 35 proclaimed offenders and 04 court absconders were arrested and put behind the bar. As many as 75 cases were registered against reckless drivers U/S 279 PPC. Moreover, 05 lost children were found and reunited with their relatives. Help rendering were extended to 1683 commuters. As many as 19 encroachments were removed and 37 Motorcycles were impounded. Furthermore, Incharge Mobile Education Unit Muhammad Rizwan Bhatti told that traffic rules awareness is essential for commuters to behave discipline on the roads. However, strict against is being taken against the vehicles having unauthorized Gas cylinders. He further said that COVID-19 is still persist and claiming many precious lives.

## UNDP, US govt, KPK government strengthen justice sector capacity

Additional training topics will focus on women and juvenile protection laws and procedures, criminal trials, the right to a fair trial, anti-terrorism laws, anti-fraud laws, and cybercrimes, among others. Simultaneously, participants will also be trained on developing a work ethic, communication, and advocacy skills integral to their roles

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Successful governance institutions have systems and processes in place that contribute greatly towards their success.

For the reason, on March 23, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan organized a two-day consultative workshop in Islamabad on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Prosecution Academy, a press statement said here Wednesday.

Funded by the United States Government through U.S. Embassy Pakistan's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) section, with 50-kanal land allocated by the KP Government, the KP Prosecution Academy will train prosecutors, lawyers, and staff of other rule of law institutions on various criminal laws and procedures. Additional training topics will focus on women and juvenile protection laws and procedures, criminal trials, the right to a fair trial, anti-terrorism laws, anti-fraud laws, and cybercrimes, among others. Simultaneously, participants will also be trained on developing a work ethic, communication, and advocacy skills integral to their roles.

The KP Prosecution Academy will have a dedicated women's wing with a hostel and a daycare facility to create an enabling environment for women prosecutors and encourage more women's representation in the legal profession. Established in Peshawar District at Mira Kachori, the academy will



have a training facility, administration block, and a residential compound. It will be fully functional by May 2021 with training and meeting halls, monitoring and research rooms, auditorium, library and computer labs, a dedicated residential area, gymnasium, and recreational lounges. In addition to its construction, UNDP, with INL funding, is providing support to set up a structured training system, which includes developing a training policy and implementation plan, comprehensive training curriculum for the basic and specialized training, e-learning centre, and SOPs. The two-day consultative workshop allowed senior prosecutors to learn about the functions of the KP Prosecution Academy, personnel roles and responsibilities, various communication protocols, and the criteria and mechanisms to ensure a safe and healthy working environment. Director-General of Prosecution Mr. Mukhtiar Ahmad, INL Pakistan Program Officer Ms. Cristian Martinez-LuSane, and UNDP Paki-

stan Resident Representative Knut Ostby delivered remarks on the first day of the workshop. Ahmad thanked INL and UNDP and said this initiative would play a monumental role in strengthening the criminal justice system in the region: "I am certain that this academy will build the capacity and skills of KP prosecutors and enable them to play their part in strengthening the rule of law in Pakistan." UNDP Pakistan Resident Representative Knut Ostby thanked INL Pakistan for being

a consistent partner and the KP Government for its continued support: "With the right infrastructural support, enhanced capacity within the rule of law sector, and more gender-inclusive institutions, the rule of law sector in Pakistan is headed in the right direction." Acting INL Pakistan Director Ms. Erika Zielke appreciated UNDP Pakistan's efforts to make this project a success: "INL is proud to partner with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prosecution Service and UNDP to strengthen the rule of law in

the province. We are certain that the Prosecution Academy will play a significant role in building capacity and skills of prosecutors in the years ahead." Director of Administration Prosecution Directorate Mr. Atiq-ur-Rehman, a participant in the workshop said that the experience has helped him understand how institutions are made and how they operate successfully. "This understanding and knowledge will be useful throughout the course of my career as I leave it with a better understanding of my line of work."

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## NBP enters into equity partnership with "EveryWater"

STAFF REPORT

KARACHI: National Bank of Pakistan and EveryWater a Pakistani innovative start up signed an agreement; where NBP will extend financing to enable this Pakistani Startup formed by young chemical engineers go to market with its innovative water purification solution. EveryWater (EW) was founded by, Shayan Sohal, Usama Tanweer and Arslan Ahmed, bright young graduates of University of Engineering & Technology Lahore. At EveryWater, they invented a unique polymer technology, that they named "Esoterik Resistive Membrane", also known as intrinsically biofilm resistant membrane. EW has patent coverage across 82

geographies around the world for its ERM.

EW has designed and tested sustainable and affordable water purification solutions suited for individual, household, community, agriculture and industrial use. EW products enable off-grid water purification for years without the need to replace devices or membranes. EW has succeeded in bringing down the cost of clean sweet raw water for domestic users to Rs. 20/100 liters, and cleaning brackish water to Rs.40/100 liters. The awareness and recognition of ERM technology and its impact on societies is growing. This growing recognition is evident from the many international awards that the founders have received.



LAHORE: Sri Lankan high commissioner visited Lahore chamber of commerce and industries, and had a productive dialogue to take trade between both nations to a much higher level. Honorary consul Peshawa, Joiya honorary consul designated to Lahore and Niyas the counsellor political and trade also accompanied. – DNA

## KP province, next spot in China's global poverty alleviation move

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of Chinese political and social leaders will be gathering in Beijing for routine annual meetings of two Parliamentary bodies on March 4. However, the "Two Sessions" this year, have significant importance both from Chinese and Pakistani perspectives. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday, the meetings are being held in the backdrop of an announcement by Chinese President Xi Jinping to have eradicated absolute poverty from the country 9 years ahead of the actual

schedule. Also, the meetings are going to approve the new 5-year and 15-year plans, focusing technology as the main enhancer of the Chinese economy at home and its influence worldwide. From Pakistan's perspective, these meetings are crucial as Islamabad sees itself as the next battleground for the China's war on poverty. Pakistan is already betting heavily on CPEC as a cure for its ailing economy and outdated infrastructure. Yet it needs a systematic and well-structured programme to do away with extreme poverty, especially in rural areas. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, looks more active than others in capitalising on opportunities brought by CPEC, to alleviate poverty from its central and peripheral areas. The KP is emerging as a strong base for a potential Chinese poverty alleviation programme, as hinted by the International Poverty Reduction Centre in China (IPRCC) and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong. The KP government is not only developing two major Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC framework, but also taking measures to rehabilitate the existing industrial estates devastated due to decades of neglect.

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LAHORE: Vice Chancellor Punjab University presenting souvenir to ambassador of Tajikistan. – DNA

## SECP's policies conform to values of objectivity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman SECP, Aamir Khan said that the apex regulator has been continuously striving to create an efficient and transparent business ecosystem in Pakistan, by ensuring that its policies and decisions conform to values of objectivity, integrity and equitability. He was speaking as the guest of honour at the closing ceremony of CFA Institute Research Challenge 2020-21. The CFA Institute Research Challenge is an annual global competition that provides university students with hands-on mentoring and intensive training in financial analysis and professional ethics.

The SECP Chairman congratulated the winning team from Pakistan, which bagged the first position amongst competing teams from Malaysia and Singapore. He applauded the CFA Society Pakistan, for organizing such competitions to prepare students for real-life scenarios.

Khan said that the SECP is steadfast in introducing reforms in local markets by promoting transparency, ensuring consistent regulatory actions, and leveraging technology to enhance ease of doing business. These reforms are designed to build and sustain the trust of investors in the financial markets in Pakistan and promote financial inclusion at grass-root level, he added.

## Rapist shot dead in a police encounter

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: A culprit (who raped and killed a nine years old girl a few days ago) has been shot dead by his own accomplice in a police encounter. As per a press release issued from Attock Police headquarters, police teams which were constituted to arrest the culprit raided a hide out near Ghazi interchange. The culprit along with his accomplice retaliated and started firing on the police team. During the encounter the culprit was hit by a bullet fired by his accomplice and died on the spot while his accomplice whose identity could not be known escaped from the crime scene. Police are on the hunt to arrest him. It is mention worthy that nine years old girl was raped and strangled to death in the limits of Hazro police station a few days ago DPO Attock Syed Khalid Hamdani had constituted different teams to arrest the culprit.

Capital Development Authority  
Road Division No.III

Sealed tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis from the approved contractors of PEC enlisting up-to-date in Category C-6 or above, with Project Code CE-01 for the year 2020-21, as per following details:-

S. #	Name of Work	N.I.T Cost	Earnest Money	Date & Time of Opening
1	REHABILITATION OF ROADS IN HUMAK TOWN ZIMNI, ISLAMABAD.	Rs.9,155,823/-	Rs.274,675/-	26.03.2021 (Box closed at 11:30AM & opened on 12:00 Noon)
2.	REHABILITATION OF STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM IN SHAHZAD TOWN, ISLAMABAD.	Rs.9,455,599/-	Rs.283,668/-	26.03.2021 (Box closed at 11:30AM & opened on 12:00 Noon)

Detailed terms & conditions can be seen from CDA Website [www.cda.gov.pk](http://www.cda.gov.pk) and PPRA website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)

- Tender documents can be obtained on Non-refundable cash payment of Rs. 2,000/- per set. Open in the office of Director Roads (South), CDA on during office hours. Application for issuance of tender documents will be received up to 24.03.2021, 12:00 Noon and tender documents will be issued on 25.03.2021 and no tender will be issued on the opening date.
- E/Money in the shape of deposit at call in favor of Dy. Director Roads Division-III, CDA must accompany the tender application. Cash / Cheque will not be accepted. No tender document will be issued without showing deposit at call.
- The authority (CDA) may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of the bid or proposal. The authority (CDA) shall upon request communicate to any supplier or contractor who submitted a bid or proposal, the grounds for its rejection of all bids or proposals, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- The bid security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank Account and same may be returned after the acceptance of the Contract with the successful bidder.
- The eligibility criteria of the firms with the relevant experience i.e. at least three (03) No. of works in last two (02) financial years may be observed / fulfill before issuance of tender documents.
- Authority letter in favor of the person deputed by the contractor to submit the application and collect the tender from along with CNIC (original) is to be provided.
- Certificate is required on Judicial Stamp Paper worth of Rs.50/- their firm are not involved in any litigations.

Deputy Director  
Road Division-III  
051-9212719

PID (I) No. 4773/20

## Briefs

### IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 a.m. to 02:00 p.m., Doda, Jund City, Jund City 2, Pari, State Bank, Humayun Road, Jail Park, Makkah Chowk, Rehmatabad 1&2, 502 Workshop, Bostan Road, Chaklala, Scheme-III, National Park, MSF, Murree Brewery, Gulistan Colony, Topi Pumping, Chaklala Garrison, GSHQ, LohiBhair, Koral, Burma, Waheedabad, ISI, Burma, Tarlai, H-8, Highway, Iqbal Town, Faza, NPCC-2, Club-1, Safa Mehfooz Shaheed, Orchard, Filtration Plant, Scheme-II, Pandorian, Gariyal, I-14/3, Nogazi, Fazia, RCCI 1,2,3,4&5, Chowk Pindori, Sihala, KRL, Fazia, Jinnah Camp, Falcon, CDA, FHS, I-8/4, Kurri Road, Kurram Colony, Service Road, Muslim Town, Tariq Shaheed, Shakrial, Noor Mohammad, Azizabad, PAF, Kahuta City 1&2, Hanif Shaheed, Nara Motor, Ghazan Khan, KRL Colony, Lehtar-1, Khawaja, THQ, Abrar Shaheed, Miltly College, Fatah Pur, Sarai A Gir, Shakreela, MandiBalwal, Khohar, Sagharpur, Riaz Shaheed, Abdullah Pur, Borian, Chip Board, Industrial, Matwa, Sohawa City, Kot-Dhamik, Jermot, Thakra, KurankKaswal, Islampura, Feeders and surrounding areas.

### Webinar on 'Academic Collaboration and OIC' on March 22

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH and Department of International Relations will jointly organize an International Hybrid Webinar on "Academic Collaboration, Science Diplomacy and OIC: Challenges and Opportunities" on March 22.

The webinar is being arranged with reference to the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence (CCOE) set up by The Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) comprising of leading science, technology, and engineering academic and research institutions of Pakistan, under the "Science Diplomacy Initiative" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) being the founding member of the CCOE, through its Department of International Relations is organizing the international event in collaboration with COMSTECH. The webinar is being arranged to bring stakeholders from academic management and diplomatic circles together to address bottleneck and create opportunities for international academic collaboration through science diplomacy. The participants including diplomats, academicians, bureaucrats, policy makers and university or education managers will attend the event. International and national participants will join online at zoom and local may join in-person at venue given below and online as well. - APP

## Nepal wants direct flights with Pak to promote bilateral trade

He was addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The delegation of the Chaman Chamber of Commerce & Industry led by President Jalal Khan was also present at the occasion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Tapas Adhikari, Ambassador of Nepal has said that Pakistan and Nepal have great potential to enhance trade and economic cooperation and stressed that PIA should explore the possibility of starting direct flights with Nepal that would help in promoting two-way trade between the two countries.

He said that trade promotion would help both countries to reduce unemployment and improve living standards of their people. He said that Pakistan and Nepal have great scope to enhance cooperation in tourism sector as both countries possessed highest peaks in the world. He said that Pakistani business community should visit Nepal while he would also try to bring a delegation of Nepalese businessmen to Pakistan for promoting business linkages between both



countries. He said that Nepalese people have great love for Pakistan and they wanted to further promote trade relations with Pakistan. He was addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The delegation of the Chaman Chamber of Commerce & Industry led by President Jalal Khan was also

present at the occasion. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan and Nepal should focus on developing strong business linkages between their private sectors in order to explore all untapped areas of bilateral trade and economic relations as the current volume of trade was far less

than the actual potential of both countries. He said that Pakistan could provide many products to Nepal including machinery & parts, pharmaceuticals, electronic appliances, textiles products, leather goods, furniture products, fruits & vegetables, meat products and many others, therefore, both countries should find ways for direct trade to achieve mutually ben-

eficial outcomes. He said that Pakistan and Nepal have the potential to cooperate with each other in agriculture & livestock, industry, energy, tourism, IT, banking & finance, health & education, civil aviation and many other fields for which direct connectivity between private sectors was important. He said that Pakistan and Nepal should encourage frequent exchange

of trade delegations to promote mutual collaboration and strengthen trade relations. He said that Pakistan and Nepal had signed a trade cooperation long time ago which should be fully exploited for two-way trade promotion. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Jalal Khan President Chaman Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Zafar Bakhtawari former President ICCI and others also spoke at the occasion and called for restarting direct flights between Pakistan and Nepal to bridge gap and promote trade relations between the two countries. They said that direct flights took only 2 hours while currently indirect flight was taking around 22 hours between the two countries, which showed the importance of direct flights for promotion of B2B and people to people relations between Pakistan and Nepal.

### Police arrest two for aerial firing; seven kite flyers, sellers

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district police on the special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas on Wednesday continued raids to net those involved in aerial firing and kite flying ban violation and managed to arrest two for aerial firing and seven on kite flying and selling. According to a police spokesman, Pirwadhai police arrested two namely AdilWaheed and Muhammad Hamza, who were engaged in aerial firing during Basant after a video they posted on social media of the act went viral. Police also recovered a 12 bore repeater and a 30 bore pistol from their possession. SHO Pirwadhai informed that two other accused involved in aerial firing, Raja Ali and Raja Asad who were identified from the same video were already sent behind the bars. The accused youngsters posted a video on their social media accounts showed them enjoying on their rooftop as they fired into the sky aimlessly. As they carried out the criminal activity using automatic guns and pistols and songs could be heard playing in the background, he added. - APP

### APHC holds protest in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: All parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC), Azad Kashmir chapter, held a protest in front of National Press Club Islamabad over continuous detention of Hurriyet leaders by occupied forces in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). On the occasion the members of APHC said India was detaining senior leaders of freedom movement to break the will of people of IOJK. The demonstrators condemned the recent killing of innocent youth in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and termed it as cold blooded murder. APHC convenor Mohammad Hussain Kateeb said India was trying to change demography of erstwhile state by killing innocent people and settling Hindu people by giving them domicile of Jammu and Kashmir. India was continuously ignoring United Nations Secretary Council UNSC resolutions. APHC members raised slogans against India and in favor of Pakistan and freedom struggle. - APP

## PARC holds field demonstration of mechanical pruner at NARC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Conventional agricultural practice is not only a laborious and time consuming process but also cause low yield and post-harvest losses. To cope the challenges in mechanization of agriculture, Chairman PARC Dr. Azeem Khan arranged a field demonstration of mechanical pruner in presence of honorable Federal Minister for M/o National Food Security and Research, Fakhar Imam on March 1, 2021 at Citrus Orchard of NARC.

DG NARC, Engr. Shamim-ul-Sibtain Shah and other high officials also joined the field demonstration. This was a single arm pruner, having five saw disc cutters on it. The pruner machine mounted on an 85-hp tractor is delivered to Agricultural Engineering

Institute (AEI), NARC by Agricultural Mechanization Research Institute (AMRI), Multan on the request of Chairman, PARC for demonstration purpose. The machine is tractor front-mounted and is operated by hydraulic pump and motors operated by tractor PTO shaft. It can prune all kinds of orchards like; apple, apricot, cherry, olives, mango, citrus, guava and peach up to 20 feet height with 120-150 trees per hour, depending upon the canopy load. The tractor consumes 7-8 liters diesel per hour while operating this machine. At the occasion Fakhar Imam expressed his views "Like in socio-economic development sectors the most important factor for agronomists, agricultural scientists, researchers and farmers is to seek technological transformation in agriculture. How farmer can pace with the fast going and growing world is the key question

for scientists. As compare to neighboring countries like China, Pakistani farmers are slow in technology adoption process. However, PARC interventions in technological transformation is laudable in this regards". Dr. Azeem while highlighting the importance of machine told, "this mechanical pruner is very useful for managing and training the orchard canopies. The unproductive branches are pruned so new branches start to grow on time, which will bring more fruit next season. Furthermore, aeration and sunlight in the inner canopy is another reason for obtaining maximum fruits from orchards. Suitable time for mechanical orchard pruning is December-January i.e. before flowering stage. He further told that the local fabrication of this machine has been started at Multan because the imported machine is very expensive.

## Ethical and Responsible finance by Islamic banking

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The conference theme was, moving to social, ethical and responsible finance by the Islamic banking and finance institu-

tions (IBFIs). The current banking and finance systems have transferred the wealth to the financial sector operating based on interest and trading in absolute risk. In the backdrop of the failure of the MDGs, the United Na-

tions moved to Value-based Intermediation (VBI) and social finance with sustainable development goals (SDGs). The UN's 2030 agenda seeks to achieve 17 vital SDGs and 169 specific targets, encompassing the social, economic

and environmental dimensions of development. The SDGs' agenda for human dignity, and to leave no one behind", is certainly in line with the principles and objectives of development from the Islamic perspective.



ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Narcotics Control, under its Drug Demand Reduction campaign conducted a Drugs Awareness programme in Quaid-e-Azam University. - DNA

## 'Govt to oppose Justice Isa's plea'

During the course of proceedings, the court issued notices to the Federal Government on the request of Justice Faez Isa regarding live broadcast of its proceedings and Justice Isa's review petition

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Additional Attorney General (AAG) AamirRehman on Wednesday informed the Supreme Court that the Federal Government would oppose Justice QaziFaez Isa's request for live broadcast of the review petition proceedings.

A ten-member SC larger bench, comprising Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice MaqboolBaqar, Justice Manzoor Ahmed Malik, Justice MazharAlam Khan Miankhal, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed and Justice

Aminuddin Khan, heard the review petition, seeking removal of paragraphs 2 to 11 of the June 19, 2020 verdict. On June 19, 2020, seven judges of a 10-member bench had quashed a presidential reference against Justice Faez Isa and ordered Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to conduct an inquiry into the judge's family mem-

bers' foreign assets and submit a report to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). During the course of proceedings, the court issued notices to the Federal Government on the request of Justice Faez Isa regarding live broadcast of its proceedings and Justice Isa's review petition. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali

Shah said that technology should be welcomed to further ensure transparency in the judicial system. Technology had played a great role in improving and ensuring transparency in the system, he added. He said that cameras had also been installed at premises of the district courts for overall supervision.

### ATC adjourns session courts hearing

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Wednesday heard the case regarding attack on session courts of the federal capital. Police produced the arrested lawyers Mohammad Arif, Najam Abbas and Mohammad Omer before the court under tight security. The court extended one day judicial remand of the accused lawyers and adjourned the hearing till today.. - APP

### DG RDA visits development projects

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Director General (DG) Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Captain (r) Abdul Sattar Isani has visited various development projects, says a press release. He checked dualization of Dr. Qadeer Khan Road from Islamabad Highway to Falcon Complex, construction/widening and improvement of Dry Port Road from Rahimabad flyover at Airport Road to Welfare Complex via Chaklala Railway Station, Shell Depot, and build-

ing three pedestrian bridges on Airport Road. He appreciated construction work on Dr. Qadeer Khan Road as 2.25 km road work has been completed. He directed that construction work on Dr. Qadeer Khan road, Dry Port Road and three pedestrian bridges on Airport road should be completed as soon as possible, so that the sufferings of people could be lessened. Chief Engineer Aamir Rasheed, RDA, Director Architect Shuja Ali, DD Engineering Amanat Ali and other officers also visited along with DG RDA.

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For further information please contact the following.

**Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman**  
Mobile: 0300 8553342

## Briefs

## Telenor Velocity invites start-ups for its 7th Cohort

ISLAMABAD: Telenor Pakistan's Digital Accelerator Program, Telenor Velocity, has opened for applications from start-ups for its 7th Cohort. As a part of this program, Telenor Velocity will guide, support and mentor start-ups using Telenor Pakistan's experts, analytics and access to scaling opportunities over a period of four months. The world is going through radical transformation, and Telenor Pakistan is on the lookout for founders who are embracing the constraints and letting their innovation create solutions using technology.

Start-ups that specialize in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Block chain, Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Internet of Things (IOT) can particularly benefit from this opportunity, as this cohort brings along with it the experts and tools necessary for building impactful, modern solutions.

The cohort selects start-ups that have been in the market for more than two years and offers them scaling opportunities through Telenor Pakistan's digital assets. Speaking at the development, Khurram Ashfaq, Chief Operating Officer Telenor Pakistan said "Entrepreneurs are essential to the growth and development of Pakistan's economy and are the key to bring innovative solutions into the market."

Telenor Velocity aims to nurture and mentor start-ups that use technology as an enabler across various verticals which is Telenor Pakistan's expert domain. We are living in the start-up generation with increasing digitalization by the day. These tech-based new businesses need a platform to jet start their ventures that not only enable solutions for the society but also put Pakistan on the map for innovation through technology." The 7th cohort is accepting applications from start-ups focusing on verticals such as Fin-tech, Ed-tech, Agri-tech, Health-tech, Entertainment/Content/Media, Gaming, Inclusion, E-commerce, Smart Cities and Connectivity. Due to the pandemic, the cohort will be run on a hybrid model with physical and online meetings. Launched in 2016, the accelerator has to date conducted 6 cohorts, with 32 graduated start-ups, 4+ Pilot Runs, \$40,000 Pilot Investment, and \$3 million investment raised by Telenor Velocity start-ups. To apply for Telenor Velocity's 7th Cohort, please fill out the application form (<https://gust.com/programs/telenor-velocity-cohort-7>). Last date to apply: April 3rd, 2021. - APP

## 'Technological transformation vital for agriculture development'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam here on Wednesday said that technological transformation in agriculture sector was vital in order to attain sustainable agriculture growth and economic development of the country. Addressing a ceremony held at National Agriculture Research Center to demonstrate the mechanical pruner, he said that conventional agricultural practice were labor intensive, time consuming, low yielding and increased post-harvest losses.

He said that agriculture sector development was also requisite for socio-economic development and social prosperity and called upon the agricultural scientists, researchers and farmers for persuading technological transformation in farming sector. Imam was of the view that local farmers were slow in technology adoption as compare to the neighboring countries. He said that PARC interventions in technological transformation was laudable as it introduced innovative solutions in different fields. Director General NARC Engineer Shamimul Sibtain Shah while briefing about the pruner said that it was a single arm pruner, having five saw disc cutters on it. The pruner machine mounted on an 85-hp tractor and it was delivered to Agricultural Engineering Institute, he added. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Senator Shahzad Waseem with Prime Minister Imran Khan at the Parliament House soon after casting of his vote for senate election. - DNA

## RCCI sensitizes traders about opportunities in SAARC countries

"SAARC region with its significant economic power, vast natural resources, and dynamic workforce, has a huge development potential which needs exploration in the better interest of all member nations", he added

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) on Wednesday organized Virtual International Trade Forum to make the business community aware of trade and export opportunities in South Asian Association of Regional Coopera-

tion (SAARC) countries. President Mohammad Nasir Mirza, Executive member SAARC Chamber, Ahsan Ali Mangi, President Pak-Afghan Chamber Zubair Motiwala, Deputy Secretary Ministry of Commerce Fahad Raza, Assma Kamal, Trade and Investment Attaché Sri Lanka, Suleman Khan, Trade and Investment Attaché Bangla-

desh and Asif Khan, Trade and Investment Counselor Afghanistan attended the event. RCCI President Nasir Mirza in his welcome address said the SAARC was founded in 1985 with the aim of promoting socio-economic development within the member states but unfortunately the member countries could not materialize the true potential of

this forum. "SAARC region with its significant economic power, vast natural resources, and dynamic workforce, has a huge development potential which needs exploration in the better interest of all member nations", he added. Zubair Motiwala, Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) Chairman ac-

knowledged the initiatives of RCCI for organizing the SAARC trade forum and raising the voice of the business community with respect to regional trade. Commercial Secretary Doha, Salman Khan said there was a huge potential to increase bilateral trade between Pakistan and Bangladesh, adding Business visa relaxation tariff barriers

and flight issues had been raised at the government levels. Assma Kamal, Trade and Investment Attaché Sri Lanka said the recent visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Sri Lanka had put a positive image and two countries had agreed to further strengthen bilateral relations in diverse areas, including trade, and tourism through enhanced connectivity.

## AIOU establishes student facilitation desks across country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open in its final stage of transforming all of its key academic and administrative operations from manual to automation, has taken various key measures to train its students of distant regions of the country in the effective use of latest technology. In this regard, university has recently established student facilitation desks at all of its regional centers on the special directives of Prof Dr. Zia-ul-Qayyum, VC AIOU. The trained staff at the regional centers will facilitate the students in uploading assignments on the Aaghi LMS Portal, participating

in online workshops and seeking information about the tutors and workshops related issues.

On the basis of experiences of previous semester's online workshops, it was realized by the university administration that majority of the students are not trained in the use of latest educational technology, therefore, they seek technical support from the market professionals in submitting their application forms online as well as uploading their assignments.

In order to save their hard-earned money and to provide them training, the university has established students facilitation desks and it is expected this measure would serve the dual purposes.

## 'Politics of corrupt to be buried in senate polls'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries and Production Hammad Azhar on Wednesday, said that the politics of corrupt lawmakers of opposition would be buried after senate polls and truth would triumph with majority seats. Talking to PTV news, he said transparency in the electoral reforms is the only way forward to put the country on the right track, adding, Pakistan Democratic Movement alliance was supporting a corruption-friendly system but PTI will stop cycle of corruption by introducing 'open ballot system' for transparent elections. He also reacted to the video shortly after they went viral said that it showed how corrupt lawmakers drowned the country in debt and destroyed the country's morals. "The videos has badly exposed the faces of so-called politicians and showing the shameful way in which politicians buying & selling votes", he added. He claimed that whatever they (PDM) do PTI would emerge a largest party in senate polls. He further criticized the trend of purchasing votes in Senate elections during the last 30 years was a big question mark on the credibility of politicians who supported a corrupt system. - APP

## Theatre Wallay to arrange performance on feminism

ISLAMABAD: Theatre Wallay, in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, would organize a theater performance 'Feminism Apna Apna' followed by an open discussion with the audience on feminism, its contradictions and ambiguities on March 11. The event is being organized with reference to the International Women's Day 2021, said a press release issued here.

International women's day would be observed on 8 March with theme of "Women in leadership: Achieving an

equal future in a COVID-19 world." The participation in the theater performance would be free but prior registration is mandatory.

The performance and open discussion session would be held at The Farm in Banigala office.

Theatre Wallay is a non-commercial group of artists with a passion for theater and literature. Active in Islamabad since 2005, Theatre Wallay has put up many performances of plays hailing from world literature.

The group is also involved in 'Theatre

for Social Change' projects and works to promote the use of creative expression as a tool for empowerment and critical dialogue.

To this end, Theater Wallay conduct regular workshops, readings, trainings and other activities in partnership with local and international organizations. "We also conduct theatre education programmes and workshops with students of all ages", an official said. She said that since November 2016, our team has been running a not-for-profit cultural space and community center.



ISLAMABAD: Afghan Ambassador Najibullah Alikhil met with Mr. Salman Javed, Director Pak-Afghan Youth Forum. Praising the previous initiatives, we discussed the vital role of youth in people to people interactions and public diplomacy as well as further coordination in organizing various programs in both countries. - DNA

## Ali Gilani exposes agenda of opposition: Murad

He alleged, "Yusuf Raza Gilani was nominated in the Senate election as he had refused to write a letter to Swiss government against Asif Ali Zardari on the directions of Supreme Court"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications Murad Saeed on Wednesday, said that leaked video of Ali Raza Gilani has exposed the covert agenda of the opposition based on protecting their personal interests at the cost of violating law and exploiting people. Talking to media outside the Parliament House, he said the incident also revealed that they can go to any extent for accumulation of illegal money and horse-trading.

The Minister said after the video of Ali Raza Gilani, Yousuf Raza Gilani has no moral grounds for contesting the elections as he was disqualified by the Supreme Court. He alleged, "Yusuf Raza Gilani was nominated in the Senate election as he had refused to write a letter to Swiss government against Asif Ali Zardari on the directions of Supreme Court." Murad alleged that Yousuf Raza Gilani also stole the necklace of the Turkish President's wife given for the flood victims. He said that when Hollywood



Superstar Angelina Jolie visited Pakistan to show solidarity with victims of earthquake and fund raising, the former Prime Minister's family was brought on a special private jet from Multan to meet her.

He said Prime Minister Imran Khan has always stressed for transparency in the system throughout his 22-year long struggle and PTI was committed to implement his vision. He said transparency in the system is the only way forward to put the country on the right track. The Minister said that PPP and PML-N would never want transparency in the election process. He said that the government had brought amendments and approached Supreme Court for open balloting with an objec-

tive to ensure transparency in the Senate election. He was of the view that PPP and PML-N has opposed open ballot as they wanted continuation of corrupt system. Murad recalled that PTI had expelled 20 of its MPs after they were found guilty of taking money in the 2018 Senate polls. He alleged that development funds of Sindh were used by the PPP for corruption purposes. He said the government had refused NRO to the Opposition despite their blackmailing tactics during FATF related legislation.

## SC delists PPP leader Khursheed Shah's bail plea

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court delisted Pakistan People Party (PPP) leader and former Leader of Opposition in National Assembly Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah's bail matter due to unavailability of the bench. A three-member SC bench headed by Justice Mughir Alam was to hear bail pleas filed by Syed Khursheed Shah and his family. The case was delisted due to unavailability of Justice Sardar Tariq. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had also approached the Supreme Court against the decision to grant bail to Syed Khursheed Shah's son-in-law, wife and others. According to the NAB, on receipt of multiple complaints against the petitioner (Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah, MNA) that he was richest man in the Sindh beyond his known sources of income, the NAB conducted inquiry and investigation whereby collected the evidence against him and filed a Reference in NAB Court Sukkur. He was nominated the accused No.1 in the Reference No.17/2019 along with seventeen others. The Petitioner/ accused in connivance with other co-accused persons accumulated assets beyond their known sources to the tune of Rs.1,229,449,803/-, which were disproportionate to their known sources of income. He was nominated the accused No.1 in the Reference No.17/2019 along with seventeen others. The Petitioner/ accused in connivance with other co-accused persons accumulated assets beyond their known sources to the tune of Rs.1,229,449,803/-, which were disproportionate to their known sources of income. - APP

## 4th Int'l PATS Competition-21 underway

RAWALPINDI: The 4th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Competition-2021 was on Wednesday underway at National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) near Kharian. The participating teams so far had taken part in endurance test, hideout occupation and rehearsed quick tactical level battle drills, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release. Team Spirit competition was being held under very challenging environment, aimed at evaluating physical endurance, mental agility and tactical proficiency of the participating teams. The participants would take part in the most challenging enduring march and water obstacle crossing events today. - APP

## Rapist shot dead in a police encounter

ATTOCK: A culprit (who raped and killed a nine years old girl a few days ago) has been shot dead by his own accomplice in a police encounter. As per a press release issued from Attock Police headquarters, police teams which were constituted to arrest the culprit raided a hideout near Ghazi interchange. The culprit along with his accomplice retaliated and started firing on the police team. During the encounter the culprit was hit by a bullet fired by his accomplice and died on the spot while his accomplice whose identity could not be known escaped from the crime scene. Police are on the hunt to arrest him. It is mention worthy that nine years old girl was raped and strangled to death in the limits of Hazro police station a few days ago DPO Attock Syed Khalid Hamdani had constituted different teams to arrest the culprit. Behram Khan an Afghan refugee residing near village Nartopa told Hazro police that his nine years old daughter Fatima Bibi along with her aunt Gulmakai had gone to neighborhood to attend a function. Her aunt came back alone late night and told that Fatima had come back home a little earlier. Behram Khan said that on this all were worried as Fatima had not come back home. He further told police that he along with his two brothers went out in search of his daughter. In the nearby fields we saw our neighbor Dost Muhammad, who on seeing us escaped from there. At a little distance I saw my daughter strangled to death. - APP

## Unfair treatment

The proposed resolution by Germany, France and the United Kingdom (UK) to condemn Iran during the upcoming International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) board of governors meeting is likely to make matters in an already restive region much worse. Why are these three countries, members of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, displaying hawkish behaviour? Is it because Iran boycotted the EU-brokered talks with the US over the future of the nuclear deal? In all probability, the resolution is a coercion tool through which the Europeans want to bring Iran to the dialogue table.

The troika's resolution is akin to Trump's failed policy of "maximum pressure" against Iran. Unfortunately, Germany, France and the UK, instead of playing a constructive role in the resumption of talks, are complicating the already undermined deal. The European states need to see Iran's threats of not adhering to the agreement as a bargaining chip.

It is important to remember that it was not the Iranian government that violated any terms of the deal but the United States (US) walked out of the agreement. Biden's administration, instead of honouring its promises, is backing the European resolution. This does not reflect the Biden administration's stated commitment to return to the 2015 deal. If the resolution is passed by the IAEA, Iran will show no leniency in ending the temporary three-month agreement that it struck with the United Nations' (UN) watchdog last month. Instead of bringing a resolution against Tehran, the European countries must convince the US to comply and lift the sanctions. There is no reason to condemn Iran when the watchdog has already declared its nuclear programme peaceful so far. The bitter truth is that the US is trying to play a double game. While it promises that it is returning to Obama's deal, its actions show that it has not moved an inch from Trump's doctrine. Securing peace and a successful nuclear deal with such duplicitous dealings is just wishful thinking.

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## Bird flu reemerging

In the plethora of issues that the Pakistani government has to deal with, the reemergence of bird flu is threatening to induce further complications. With the virus reaching Russia even, transmission seems to be taking on a formidable character. Instead of waiting to deal with the problem as it comes, we need a preventative strategy in place that protects the country from the imminent disaster that the bird flu, coupled with Covid-19, could bring.

While Pakistan has not yet experienced any cases of this new variant of the bird flu, H5N8, neighbouring countries seem to be elbow deep into the crisis. India and Iran reportedly culled over 1.4 million poultry birds to contain the transmission of the virus. Unfortunately, the virus seems to have been transmitted to humans as Russia has reported its first case. Clearly, there is an immediate need for precautionary measures to be implemented to protect the nation from the lethal combination of the coronavirus and bird flu.

Provincial governments, especially of Sindh and Balochistan, must aid poultry farmers so that disease surveillance is made possible. New laws must be enacted to facilitate routine inspections and enforce protocols for handling poultry along with standards of maintenance. Furthermore, a provision needs to be included that allows the respective governments to allocate funding for research and construction of diagnostic laboratories across the region. Only through such measures will we be able to evade the bird flu crisis completely and focus on eradicating the pandemic and all the hardships it has incurred—economic instability, unemployment, inflation and poor quality of life.

It is beyond our capacity to deal with another outbreak of virus that will threaten lives, businesses and the economy further—as the third wave is already doing. We cannot let it get to a point where we have to play catch up. The government must act diligently and strictly now to avoid a future plagued by intense restrictions and suffering.

# COMSATS and ANSO contributing to South-South Co-op

Huma Balouch



Over the past three decades, the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation has been particularly highlighted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS)

As the process of developing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development started, the world was increasingly conscious of the need to develop new and innovative cooperation modalities. This brought a new impetus to the developing countries in the South to increase the depth and breadth of their cooperation to address common socio economic and development challenges, such as Global health, climate change, food security, good governance etc. Over the past three decades, the importance of

South-South and triangular cooperation has been particularly highlighted by the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS). As stated in the Foundation document establishing the Commission in 1994, its basic purpose is to "provide leadership and support for major South-South and North-South cooperative schemes in education, training and research" to its member states. Utilizing South-South cooperation as mechanism to improve member countries' capacities to better deal with the global challenges and to join the knowledge and resources in the South in a more collective and effective manner, COMSATS encourages the Governments, development agencies, research institutions, private sector, and civil society in developing countries to collaborate, combine their efforts and expertise and to form necessary partnerships to promote science-based solutions for common development.

COMSATS perennial ties with one of its member country, China, for strengthening international research collaboration has expanded with COMSATS accession to the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO) in November 2019. With determination to progress on the leave no one behind agenda in context of global development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental, thirty seven national and regional scientific organizations and the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) as leading and founding member, agreed in November 2018 to establish a long-term effective and multilateral cooperation mechanism, the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO). ANSO facilitates ST&I cooperation among countries in the Belt and Road region around their shared challenges and concerns to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. Within these few years, ANSO has made important strides in facilitating collaborative priority-setting for innovation and research cooperation in cross-cutting fields, policy and strategic advice, capacity building and development, and conducting solution-oriented projects among several countries.

COMSATS membership to ANSO enabled COMSATS Member States and Centres of Excellence to participate in ANSO's activities including

fellowship and scholarships; prize and awards; training program; collaborative research; and professional associations. COMSATS and ANSO endorsed South-South cooperation as a more relevant and responsive strategy for the implementation of its Programme of Action and are actively pursuing close cooperation in S&T to help member countries achieve their development goals. COMSATS-ANSO cooperation involved institutional support, scientific training, joint research programmes, and technology transfer, to equip the South with stronger and effective mechanisms for South-South cooperation. COMSATS and ANSO jointly supporting the building of research capacity in developing countries in the South through PhD-level training and short courses on research training organized by ANSO in China.

Examples of ANSO and COMSATS major initiatives of South-South cooperation include collaborative research activities through multi-lateral cooperation by focusing on issues of immediate concern to member organization or its respective country. With an aim to initiate and improve action-oriented interdisciplinary research, with greater focus on early identification, prevention and appropriate intervention for emerging problems and opportunities, ANSO announced a Call for Collaborative Research Project for 2020-2021, for which two research projects R&D projects of COMSATS Centre of Excellence have been granted sums of about US\$ 150,000/- each, on the recommendation of, and as a result of efforts made by COMSATS. These Collaborative research & innovation projects entitled "Mosquitome of Flying Syringes-Aedesegypti and Aedesalbopictus & their Fitness vis a vis their Competency to Transmit Infection With Changing Climate" and "Energy and Raw Material Recovery from Treatment Sludge as a Conceptual of Zero Waste" are being carried out by consortia of academic and research organisations from Pakistan, China, Palestine, Tanzania, Thailand and Turkey.

In parallel, COMSATS also providing opportunity to the less technologically advanced member institutions to join International Thematic Re-

search Groups (ITRGs) for working in collaborative project to benefit from the expertise and experience of the superior Lead Centre. COMSATS, along with its partner organizations, has also been organizing a series of webinar on theme of South-South Cooperation in which the eminent experts from member countries and international partner organizations are sharing their insights on how to effectively address the socio-economic needs of the developing countries through South – South and Triangular cooperation in science and technology. To highlight opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation and the role of the Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO) in scaling up SSC in the region, Prof. Dr. Jinghua Cao, Executive Director, Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO), China, delivered a talk on "Insight on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in S&T" on 23rd February 2021. ANSO's support for international R&D collaboration is directed at the researcher or at institutional level, both in and outside Belt and Road region. Providing unique cooperation models for research-practice collaboration, knowledge transfer, most of these R&D collaboration activities take place at overseas centres of Chinese Academy of Sciences in partnership with member institutions and organizations and other relevant counterparts. A few include: the Sino-Africa Joint Research Centre - China-Africa Partnership on ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture and food security; Alliance of International Science Organizations on Disaster Risk Reduction (ANSO-DRR) to enhance the B&R countries' resilience against natural hazards; China-Pakistan Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences (CPJRC) to carry out pilot technologies for eco-environmental protection and recovery; and ANSO-Rice & Wheat Variety Technology Innovation and Transfer (ANSO-RWIT) to further develop agricultural innovation & technology in nations alongside the Belt and Road.

*The writer is Senior Assistant Director at COMSATS Secretariat, Islamabad. With her Doctoral degree in Biotechnology underway, her research interests include molecular biology and microalgae biology*

## A thriving victory

Pakistan's decision to join the global war on terrorism was the result of geostrategic imperatives and the international community's call. Pakistan's counterterrorism operations resulted in decrease in terrorism in the region. In 2011, 144 operations were carried out, resulting in the execution of 1,016 terrorists. In 2012, the Pakistan military brought peace to North Waziristan. In 2013, Karachi and Balochistan got rid of terrorists due to Pakistan Rangers operations. Operation Zarb-e-Azb focused on North Waziristan, killing 2,100 terrorists in the area till December 28, 2014. In February 2017, Operation RaddulFasaad (Counter Turmoil/Mayhem) eliminated remaining terrorist elements from Lahore, Sehwan Sharif, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the erstwhile FATA. Anti-state elements have been on the verge of destroying the peace in Balochistan. Briefing journalists about the situation along the eastern border, the DG ISPR said there had been an increase in ceasefire violations by Indian troops, who had "especially targeted" the civilian areas near the Line of Control including women, children and the elderly. He further said that Army has always given a befitting response. India is using three major routes to supply heaps of explosives in Balochistan. This explosive is forwarded to Panjgor to the terrorist organizations. The latest report of EU DisinfoLab is an eye-opener, which has exposed Indian designs to malign Pakistan through the creation of fake material against the country. "February 27 is a bright day in the history of Pakistan," Maj Gen Iftikhar said, referring to the downing of two Indian fighter jets on this day last year.

Who isn't aware of the 27th February 2019 incident? Not only did Pakistan Air Force bring down two of the Indian fighter jets, they also caught one of the Pilots. Abinandan, the Indian Pilot, was handled with care and respect, although he was one of the enemies. Modi's government is spreading disinformation through an organized system, with propaganda units affiliated with BJP, RSS and likeminded parties pushing false information to influence the political deck and spreading venom against Pakistan. The false-flag operation also exposes to what extent the cold-

blooded and heartless Modi and his companions can go in their witch hunt by slaughtering their own soldiers. This released chat has justified Islamabad's position on the Pulwama operation as well as the terrorist attacks. The prior information and access to top-secret military operation of Indian army to a blue-eyed media person is also a big question mark on capability and responsibility of Indian army. For sabotaging CPEC, India raised a militia of 700 militants to conduct terror activities in Balochistan, said Maj Gen Iftikhar. "A commission comprising 24 members was created which included 10 RAW operatives. \$60 million dollars were dedicated for this force." He added that the Indian mission in Afghanistan has paid handsome amounts to sub-nationalists under the garb of humanitarian assistance and projects. The spokesperson also gave details of the transactions for such activities.

"Indian intelligence agencies are managing 87 such terrorists' camps out of which 66 are located in Afghanistan whereas 21 are located in India." He gave the example of the attack on PC Gwadar and said an officer of RAW, Anurag Singh, planned the attack and \$0.5 million dollars were allocated by Indian intelligence for the attack. He said New Delhi's intelligence apparatus aims to exploit the prevalent environment by staging terrorist attacks on large public gatherings and will attempt to assassinate a mainstream or sub-nationalist leader or a religious figure in Azad Kashmir or GB to arouse public anger.

Tangible evidence reflects that Indian foreign missions in FATF member countries have always been extensively lobbying with hosts prior to FATF meetings to undermine Pakistan's achievements and create conditions for our grey/blacklisting," the military spokesperson. Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad was announced in the aftermath of a fresh resurgence in terror attacks in Pakistan. Operation Raad-ul-Fasaad, was the 11th such operation launched against the same cocktail of terrorist organizations., the operation has earned Pakistan praise for its achievements in countering terrorism. In public statements from leaders around the world, Pakistan has earned

praise for its efforts to curb terrorism. Overall, the Pakistan Army has averted more than 400 terrorist plans in the past three years. Since February 22, 2017, the Pak Army conducted more than 149,000 Intelligence-Based Operations across the country. During the same period, the army issued more than 3,800 threat warnings, which helped save hundreds of precious lives. In the war against terrorism since 2001-2020, more than 350 major and more than 850 minor operations were conducted by the Pakistan Army. The terrorist-ridden Karachi city also moved from sixth on the Crimes Index in world capitals to 91st position due to the massive efforts of Pakistan Army.

When Operation Rah-i-Haq-1, was launched, followed by Rah-i-Haq-2, in 2008, both in Swat Valley. While Pakistani people have a special bond with their armed forces and if there is any public institution left that enjoys the trust and respect of people then it's Pakistan Army. However, given the long list of operations launched against more or less the same set of terrorists, public and media quietly wonder: How will Raad-ul-Fasaad any different? The history of operations is long and speaks for itself. Operation Sirat-i-Mustaqeem was launched in Khyber Agency in 2008, Operation Sherdil was jointly launched with Frontier Corps in Bajaur Agency in 2008, Operation Rah-i-Haq-III in Swat valley and Shangla in 2009; Operation Black Thunderstorm in Buner, Lower Dir and Shangla district in 2009, Operation Brekhna in Mohmand Agency in 2009; Operation Rah-i-Rast, commonly known as Swat Operation in 2009; Operation Rah-i-Nijat in South Waziristan in 2009 and finally Operation Zarb-i-Azb in North Waziristan along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border (2014).

India is indeed working with some Balochi groups in Pakistan to cause unrest and to strike at targets such as the CPEC. The evidence presented by Pakistan provides a concrete proof of Indian financial and material sponsorship of multiple terrorist organizations, including UN-designated terrorist organizations Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, Balochistan Liberation Army and Theeek-i-Taliban Pakistan.

*(The writer is freelance columnist from Peshawar)*

Mehr Ispahani



Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad was announced in the aftermath of a fresh resurgence in terror attacks in Pakistan. Operation Raad-ul-Fasaad, was the 11th such operation launched against the same cocktail of terrorist organizations., the operation has earned Pakistan praise for its achievements in countering terrorism

## Briefs

## Bowlers hand first win to Gladiators in PSL 6

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Sarfaraz Ahmed led Quetta Gladiators have won first match of the ongoing Pakistan Super League (PSL) season six over Multan Sultans here at the National Stadium.

Gladiators restricted Sultans to 154 and dismissed them in 19.4 overs. Gladiators have also broken the pattern and are the first side to defend a total this year. Earlier, Gladiators posted 176/7 in 20 overs courtesy of a brilliant debut by Usman Khan. The right-handed batsman smacked 81 off 50 which included 10 fours and three sixes.

He partnered with Saim Ayub (23 off 18 balls) at the top and post 69. Usman continued to put Sultan bowlers under pressure but his lone battle came to end after he tried to reverse sweep Imran Tahir (2/29). He was given LBW on the last ball of the 14th over.

At the backend, Sultans bowled good lengths and didn't allow Gladiators' batters to score freely. Shahnawaz Dahani once again were among the wicket-takers as he picked three for 44 in four overs. Set to chase 177, Sultans were provided a strong start by openers Mohammad Rizwan and James Vince. The duo added 63 until Afghanistan's Qais Ahmed with his leg-spin bowling changed the complex of the game.

In his three consecutive overs, he removed Vince (24), Shan Masood (1), Rilee Rossouw (3), Mohammad Nawaz joined the party and bagged the wicket of hard-hitter Sohaib Maqsood (2).

## PCB decides to offer vaccine shots

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to offer SARS-Coronavirus Vaccine doses to all participants of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season six. PCB becomes the first cricket board to use the vaccine that produces protection against the Covid-19 virus.

The decision was made after four members part of the PSL 6 tested positive for COVID-19 since Monday. "The decision has been made in the line with the PCB's duty of care policy and to ensure all participants of the league remain safe and healthy during the event, which concludes on 22 March," PCB said in a statement. "The vaccine doses will be administered on Thursday and will be offered to all those inside the bio-secure bubble. However, it will solely be the players and officials' decision if they want to get the vaccine shots," it added.

In this regard, PCB is in contact with the federal and provincial government officials, highlighting the national cricket teams' international engagements and commitments as well as the significance, reputation, integrity and credibility of the PSL6.

## UN warns of 'catastrophic education emergency'

## FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Millions of children are facing a "catastrophic education emergency" as coronavirus lockdowns have closed schools worldwide, the UN's main organization for children said on Wednesday. UNICEF said schools for more than 168 million children in 14 countries had been completely shut for almost an entire year because of the pandemic. It warned that 214 million children globally — or 1 in 7 — had missed more than three-quarters of their in-person learning since March 2020. "As we approach the one-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are again reminded of the catastrophic education emergency worldwide lockdowns have created," UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore said. "With every day that goes by, children unable to access in-person schooling fall further and further behind, with the most marginalized paying the heaviest price," she said.



## Match-13



## Karachi Kings beat Peshawar Zalmi by six wickets PSL 6



## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Babar Azam and Mohammad Nabi led Karachi Kings to beat Peshawar Zalmi by six wickets in 13th match of Pakistan Super League (PSL) season 6. They both scored 118 runs to help Kings chase down 189 runs and grab the first position on the points ta-

ble after winning the third match out of five. Earlier, Ravi Bopara and Sherfane Rutherford drove Zalmi to 188-5 in 20 overs against Kings. The duo partnered for the fifth wicket to score 82 runs together to rescue Zalmi after they lost a couple of early wickets. Sent into bat first, Zalmi's opener Kamran Akmal and

Tom Cadmore scored 30 runs before Kamran fell to debutant Abbas Afridi. He scored 21 runs with the help of four boundaries. Bopara and Rutherford took the charge completely and dominated opponent's bowlers. Bopara remained not out for 58 runs laced with six boundaries and a six whereas Rutherford scored 46 with the help of three

boundaries and as many sixes. Amad Butt struck 26 runs in the last over with Daniel Christian conceding 32 runs in an over, the most expensive so far in PSL. Amad scored 27 runs spread over three boundaries and two sixes. For Kings, Mohammad Ilyas and Abbas Afridi bagged two wickets each while Daniel Christian took a wicket.

In reply, Mohammad Imran Randhawa bagged Sharjeel Khan for naught to take Zalmi on high. Joe Clarke (17) and Colin Ingram (13) departed earlier to pave the way for Babar and Nabi to show solid partnership. Babar remained not out for 77 runs off 47 balls with the help of seven boundaries

and three sixes whereas Nabi consolidated for 67 runs laced with eight boundaries and four sixes. Daniel Christian, in the end, struck two boundaries and a six to score quick 16 runs as Kings wrapped up their third successive win. For Zalmi, Saqib Mahmood bagged two wickets while Imran and Mohammad Irfan took a wicket each.

## Palestine hails ICC prosecutor decision

## DNA

RAMALLAH: The State of Palestine welcomes the announcement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on proceeding with the investigation into the Situation in the State of Palestine. This is a long-awaited step that serves Palestine's tireless pursuit of justice and accountability, which are indispensable pillars of the peace the Palestinian people seek and deserve. The State of Palestine reminds the Prosecutor and States Parties that the crimes committed by officials of the occupying Power against the Palestinian people are ongoing, systematic, and wide-

spread. In accordance with the objectives and mandate of the Rome Statute, this calls for a particular urgency to promptly conclude investigations into these crimes, to ensure accountability, promote deterrence, and save lives. All States Parties must refrain from politicizing these independent proceedings. They must also respect their obligation to protect the Court and its proceedings from interference and to shield Court staff, including judges, the Prosecutor, and their families from any threats or attempts at coercion. The State of Palestine stands ready to cooperate with and extend all assistance to the Office of the Prosecutor and the Court during this investigation.

## Ronaldo marked his 600th league appearance

TURIN: Cristiano Ronaldo wrote his name into football's record books once again on the occasion of his 600th league game. When he netted Juventus' third goal in a 3-0 victory against Spezia on Tuesday, Ronaldo became the first player to score at least 20 goals over 12 consecutive seasons in Europe's top five leagues. Alvaro Morata and Federico Chiesa scored Juventus' first two goals before Ronaldo, who had hit the post in the first half, finished off a counterattack in the game's final minutes. The result leaves Juventus third in Italy's Serie A, seven points behind league leader Inter Milan. "We didn't make a brilliant start, which is normal when you're playing every three days," said Juventus coach Andrea Pirlo as it took his side an hour to open the scoring. "We tried to manage the game and also created some chances in the first half. In the second half, thanks to some fresh faces, we were able to be more threatening and change the contest, with the wingers and midfielders making good runs into the box." Ronaldo has now scored 20 goals in 21 league games this season and remains the top scorer in Serie A, two ahead of Inter's Romelu Lukaku. — Sports Desk

## Myanmar military cracks down on journalists

## FOREIGN DESK

YANGON: Myanmar's security forces forcibly arrested a reporter from the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) on Monday night from his home in Myeik, Tanintharyi Region, where he has been reporting on anti-regime protests. A DVB live-stream at around 10:20pm showed police and military personnel surrounded his home and shouting at him to come out. When Ko Kaung Myat Naing, also known as Ko Aung Kyaw, asked whether they had a

warrant, they fired into the air. When Ko Aung Kyaw asked them to remain peaceful, the security forces started throwing stones at his house. Ko Aung Kyaw can be heard shouting that a stone injured his head and appealing to neighbors for help before the security forces break into his house and arrest him. The arrest came after he live-streamed police and soldiers shooting at houses and destroying furniture and other possessions in their ongoing crackdown. He also reported that how a pregnant woman in Myeik was beaten and her home loot-

ed by the security forces. DVB chief editor U Aye Chan Naing told The Irrawaddy that before Ko Aung Kyaw's arrest, the security forces threatened his neighbors with guns to turn off their lights and stay silent. U Aye Chan Naing said the editorial team is trying to find Ko Aung Kyaw's whereabouts and if he faces charges. DVB said it has employed a lawyer and written to the International Committee of the Red Cross for help. U Aye Chan Naing said: "The regime does not want to let people know its brutal acts. That's why it is arresting journalists."



KABUL: Muhammed Umer Daudzai, Afghan president's special envoy for Pakistan met British ambassador to Afghanistan Alison Blake. Both sides discussed the ongoing peace process, Afghanistan-Pakistan relations, and UK's support with the peace talks. — DNA

## World's so-called largest democracy 'no longer free'

Under Modi, India appears to have abandoned its potential to serve as a global democratic leader, elevating narrow Hindu nationalist interests at the expense of its founding values of inclusion and equal rights for all," the report said

## DNA

WASHINGTON: India's status as a free country has changed to "partly free", according to an annual report on global political rights and liberties. Civil liberties in India have been in decline since PM Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, said Freedom House in its report Democracy Under Siege. It said the change in India's status is part of a global shift in the balance between democracy and authoritarianism. There was no immediate response from the Indian government to the report. US-based Freedom House, a non-profit organisation which conducts research on political free-

dom and human rights, added that the number of countries designated as "not free" was at its highest level since 2006. It added that India's "fall from the upper ranks of free nations" could have a more damaging effect on the world's democratic standards. Since 2014, it says, increased pressure on human rights organisations, intimidation of journalists and activists, and a spate of attacks, especially those against Muslims, had led to a deterioration of political and civil liberties in the country. And this decline only "accelerated" after 2019, it added. In 2014, India's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a landslide general election vic-

tory. Mr Modi returned to power with an even greater majority five years later. "Under Modi, India appears to have abandoned its potential to serve as a global democratic leader, elevating narrow Hindu nationalist interests at the expense of its founding values of inclusion and equal rights for all," the report said. It said that the crackdown against those protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act, a bill which offers amnesty to non-Muslim illegal immigrants from three neighbouring countries had contributed to India's decline in the ratings. The government argues that the law will give sanctuary to people fleeing religious persecution. Crit-

ics say the bill is part of the BJP's agenda to marginalise Muslims in Hindu majority India. The report also noted the government's response to the pandemic, saying it had exacerbated the global decline in freedom. Last year, in March, India imposed a sudden lockdown which left millions of migrant workers stranded in cities across India without work and money to get home. Many walked hundreds of miles, while some died because of exhaustion or in accidents along the way. The report mentioned a host of other countries, including China, which it said had spread "global disinformation and a censorship campaign" to counter the negative fallout of the initial attempt by the

country to cover up the Covid-19 outbreak. China has always denied allegations of a cover-up. The US also had a democratic decline during the final years of Donald Trump's presidency, the report noted. Mass protests, the rise of armed vigilante groups and Mr Trump's "shocking attempts to overturn his election loss" which culminated in the storming of the Capitol Hill by rioters in January "has damaged the United States' credibility abroad", it said. The global freedom report also added that "the countries with declines in political rights and civil liberties outnumbered those with gains by the largest margin recorded during the 15-year period".

## PSL-6 Fixture

Thursday, March 4: Lahore Qalandars v Islamabad United (7pm)

Friday, March 5: Multan Sultans v Karachi Kings (7pm)

Saturday, March 6: Islamabad United v Quetta Gladiators (2pm); Peshawar Zalmi v Lahore Qalandars (7pm)

Sunday, March 7: Multan Sultans v Quetta Gladiators (2pm); Islamabad United v Karachi Kings (7pm)

Wednesday, March 10: Peshawar Zalmi v Karachi Kings (7pm)

Thursday, March 11: Quetta Gladiators v Lahore Qalandars (7pm)

Friday, March 12: Multan Sultans v Peshawar Zalmi (3pm); Islamabad United v Lahore Qalandars (8pm)

Saturday, March 13: Quetta Gladiators v Karachi Kings (2pm); Multan Sultans v Islamabad United (7pm)

Sunday, March 14: Quetta Gladiators v Peshawar Zalmi (2pm); Lahore Qalandars v Karachi Kings (7pm)

Monday, March 15: Islamabad United v Peshawar Zalmi (7pm)

Tuesday, March 16: Multan Sultans v Lahore Qalandars (7pm)

Thursday, March 18: Qualifier 1 (v 2) (7pm)

Friday, March 19: Eliminator 1 (3 v 4) (7pm)

Saturday, March 20: Eliminator 2 (loser Qualifier v winner Eliminator 1) (7pm)

Monday, March 22: Final (7pm)

## Pak to get over 10m vaccines

## From Page 01

Some 238.2 million doses will be distributed around the world by the end of May through the programme aimed at boosting access to coronavirus jabs in poorer nations. Though vaccination campaigns have gathered pace globally, the majority of injections have been administered in wealthier countries while many nations have yet to receive a single dose.

The Covax scheme, aimed ensuring equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines, on Tuesday outlined plans to deliver to 142 countries and territories by May 31, in its first wave of distribution.

The five biggest confirmed recipients are Pakistan (14,640,000 doses), Nigeria (13,656,000), Indonesia (11,704,800), Bangladesh (10,908,000) and Brazil (9,122,400). Iran, Myanmar, Kenya and Uganda are also in line for more than three million doses each.

Overall by the end of May, India is likely to be the biggest recipient of Covax doses, but its allocation was not finalised before the publication of the distribution list on Tuesday. The Pacific island nation of Tuvalu is meanwhile set to receive the smallest number of doses at 4,800, followed by Nauru and Monaco with 7,200 each. Covax is co-led by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Gavi vaccine alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations. The scheme is aiming to distribute enough doses to vaccinate up to 27 percent of the population in the 92 poorest participating economies by the end of the year, with at least 1.3 billion doses intended to go their way.

## Pak HC holds virtual 'Khuli Katchehry'

LONDON: High Commissioner Moazzam Ahmad Khan Wednesday held the second virtual 'Khuli Katchehry' with the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom (UK). Community members from various walks of life attended the virtual event and discussed their issues. The interaction was organized in accordance with the guidelines given by the Prime Minister of Pakistan to ensure close contact with the Pakistani diaspora and resolve their issues. The diaspora members conveyed their complaints and suggestions regarding visas, National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistanis and passports. The high commissioner welcomed the suggestions and redressed some of the complaints instantly. He assured the participants that the high commission and its four consulate general were making constant efforts to improve the consular services. — APP

## Briefs

## Israel razes 2 Palestinian houses

## FOREIGN DESK

JERUSALEM: Israeli forces demolished two houses owned by Palestinians in East Jerusalem on Wednesday. Teams razed a building in the Shuafat refugee camp area in the north of East Jerusalem. The building owned by the Abu Mayala family was destroyed by the Jerusalem Municipality on the pretext that it was built without authorization.

Another house was demolished in East Jerusalem's Ras Khamis neighborhood, according to Palestine's Wafa news agency. A Palestinian teenager protesting against the move was also arrested. Palestinians, as well as several international rights groups, accuse the Jerusalem Municipality of deliberately hindering construction by Palestinians since Israel occupied East Jerusalem in 1967.

Rights groups have pointed out that Israeli settlers, in contrast, encounter little difficulty obtaining permits to build Jewish-only housing units on seized Palestinian land in the city. Israeli forces have demolished over 5,000 homes in East Jerusalem since 1967, according to Palestinian sources.

Israel occupied East Jerusalem during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and, in a move never recognized by the international community, annexed the entire city in 1980, claiming it as the self-proclaimed Jewish state's "eternal and undivided" capital.

## 10 people killed in Sudan plane crash

## WEB DESK

KHARTOUM: At least ten people, including the two pilots, died when a plane crashed at an airstrip in South Sudan's Jonglei state, the region's governor and the airline said.

The airline said all aboard the commercial plane died late afternoon Tuesday when it took off from the airstrip at Pierei on a return flight to Juba. It could not give a specific death toll, saying up to 24 people could have been on the flight.

"It was with great shock and horror to receive the news of the plane crash (HK-4274) of South Sudan Supreme Airline," Governor Denay Jock Chagor said. "Ten people including the two pilots lost their lives," he added. Ayii Duang Ayii, director of South Supreme Airlines, told that it was "not clear how many people" were on board the flight. "But the first information communicated to us was that there were 11 people on board," the director said. "We are still working to send a team to establish for us the facts. All on board died," he said. "The plane left to Pierei well, landed well and when it was taking off back to Juba that was when it crashed," Ayii Duang Ayii added.

## Kremlin slams new anti Russian sanctions

## WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov slammed on Wednesday the new EU and US sanctions against Russia over the alleged poisoning of Russian opposition figure Alexey Navalny. According to Peskov, the Kremlin sees new restrictions as "an interference in Russia's internal affairs," and considers the grounds for their introduction "absurd accusations."

"They [sanctions] are nothing but interference in the internal affairs of Russia. In general, we can only express our regret that our opponents, in this case, resort to such methods, which have an absolutely destructive impact on bilateral relations. "We consider any such restrictions absolutely unacceptable, because they significantly harm the relations that are already in a deplorable state, in this case, relations with the United States of America and relations with the European Union," he said. Peskov also pointed out that sanctions against law enforcement chiefs simply repeat the existing Russian legislation, prohibiting them from having accounts and property abroad.



BAKU: General Nadeem Raza, Chairman joint chiefs of staff committee (CJSC) visited the Alley of Shehids (Martyrs), where they laid wreaths and flowers at the graves of the heroic sons of the Azerbaijan. – DNA

## Azerbaijan and Pakistan vow to continue military cooperation

Expressing satisfaction with the development of Azerbaijan-Pakistan military cooperation, Colonel General Z. Hasanov thanked the leadership and people of Pakistan for supporting the fair position of Azerbaijan at all levels

## DNA

BAKU: Minister of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Colonel General Zakir Hasanov has met with the delegation led by General Nadeem Raza, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Ministry of Defense of Azerbaijan told media. The delegation is on an official visit to our country. First, the guests visited the Alley of Shehids (Martyrs), where they laid wreaths and flowers at the graves of the heroic sons of the Motherland, who sacrificed their lives for the independence and territorial integrity of the country. Then, an official welcoming ceremony

was held at the Ministry of Defense. The guest passed along the guard of honor, and the national anthems of both countries were played. General Nadeem Raza has signed the "Book of Honor" following the protocol. During the meeting, the sides discussed the prospects for the development of cooperation between the two countries in the military, military-technical, military-educational, and other spheres. The sides also expressed satisfaction with the development of traditional friendship and mutual trust between the peoples of the two countries, including Azerbaijani-Pakistani relations, as well as the level of strategic partnership. The Minister of Defense



noted that under the command of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Mr. Ilham Aliyev the Patriotic

War ended with a glorious victory of the Azerbaijan Army, and our lands were liberated from the occupation. The Minister, having informed the guest about

the successful military operations carried out by the Azerbaijan Army, stressed that the combat experience of our army gained in this war is being studied by the

armies of many countries of the world and the international military experts.

Expressing satisfaction with the development of Azerbaijan-Pakistan military cooperation, Colonel General Z. Hasanov thanked the leadership and people of Pakistan for supporting the fair position of Azerbaijan at all levels and within the international organizations, as well as for the humanitarian aid and moral support provided to our country. Noting that friendly relations between the leaders of the two countries play a significant role in the development of ties between our states, Colonel General Z. Hasanov stressed the importance of holding such meetings in terms of expanding mutual cooperation.

## PIEDMC and Belarus consulate ink agreement



## ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab Industrial Estates Development and Management Company (PIEDMC) and Belarus Consulate on Wednesday signed an agreement to enhance bilateral trade between the two countries.

The agreement was signed by the PIEDMC CEO Ali Moazzam Syed and Honorary Ambassador General Belarus Waleed Mushtaq. According to the MOU, chambers delegations and trade information would be exchanged to promote trade between the two countries, and both sides

would support each other to explore avenues of potential growth. Ambassador of Belarus Andrei Metelitsa said Belarus was interested in the auto sector, economic zones and tractor manufacturing in Pakistan. There were fraternal relations between Pakistan and Belarus and both the countries could promote mutual trade by working in tractor manufacturing in auto industry, said the ambassador. Chairman PIEDMC Syed Nabil Hashmi offered to set up an office of Belarusian Consulate in Quaid-e-Azam Business Park to enhance cooperation. Hashmi said the PIEDMC would provide all possible assistance to Belarusian investors and companies in Pakistan. There was a huge gap in the electric two-wheeler in which cooperation could be enhanced. The dream of industrial revolution could not be fulfilled without the support of modern technology and knowledge, he observed.

## Strong earthquake rocks central Greece

## FOREIGN DESK

ATHENS: A strong 6.3-magnitude earthquake hit central Greece on Wednesday, damaging several buildings, including schools, and prompting residents near the epicentre to rush into the streets. "Everything happened very fast, people ran out of buildings, there are still aftershocks," Chrissoula Katsioulis, a staffer at the mayor's office in the local town of Ellassona told AFP. The fire department said that according to the first reports, a local home and a school had been damaged. Police also sealed off a bridge cracked by the quake. Another local official said in Damassi, a village near the epicentre, another local school had also been damaged. "Fortunately, the teachers managed to get the children out very quickly and there were no victims," the mayor of Tyrnavos Yiannis Kokkouras told

Skai TV. Greek media reported that a disabled man trapped in his home in the village of Mesochori had been rescued. TV images showed the side wall of his house had completely collapsed. The Civil Protection agency also reported landslides had occurred in the region, and authorities were assessing further damage. The US Geological Survey said the earthquake, which could be felt across central and northern Greece, was magnitude 6.3. But the Institute of Geodynamics in Athens said earlier the quake had measured at a magnitude of 6.0. According to the Athens observatory, the epicentre of the quake was 21 kilometres (13 miles) south of the town of Ellassona, near Larissa and was eight metres (26 feet) deep. There were at least three aftershocks following the main tremor - including one at magnitude 4.0 - and authorities warned there could be more.

## Nine protesters shot dead in Myanmar

At least five were shot dead in a violent crackdown by riot police and soldiers on an anti-coup protest in the morning in Monywa city in Sagaing Region, locals told The Irrawaddy. Of them, 25-year-old Ma Kyawt Nandar Aung was shot in the head and died on the spot

## FOREIGN DESK

YANGON: At least nine protesters were killed and several wounded in three cities in Myanmar as police fired live rounds and rubber bullets at anti-coup protesters on Wednesday morning. In Mandalay, a 19-year-old female protester was shot in the neck and another man was shot in the chest. Both died on the spot. Another man also died from a gunshot. In Myingyan, Mandalay Region, a 14-year-old protester also reportedly died after being shot in the head and at least a dozen protesters were wounded by gunshots. At least five were shot dead in a violent crackdown by riot police and soldiers on an anti-coup protest in the morning in Monywa city in

Sagaing Region, locals told The Irrawaddy. Of them, 25-year-old Ma Kyawt Nandar Aung was shot in the head and died on the spot. Her sister told The Irrawaddy that Ma Kyawt Nandar Aung together with her siblings had participated in protests against the military regime for several days on the frontline. When the incident happened, her younger sister was also at the frontline of the protest. "She is still too young to leave," her sister, who was crying over the phone, told The Irrawaddy. "She was so brave. I take her death as something to be proud of." She added that she and her remaining siblings will continue to take to the streets to fight for democracy until victory is achieved, to compensate for their sister's death. The military regime has ramped up the

## ASEAN calls for peaceful solution

JAKARTA: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has called on all parties in Myanmar to seek a peaceful solution through constructive dialogue and practical reconciliation in the interests of the people and their livelihoods. "We expressed our concern about the situation in Myanmar and called on all parties to refrain from instigating further violence and exercise utmost restraint as well as flexibility," said the chair's statement on the Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting released on Tuesday evening. The statement called for the release of political detainees and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Myanmar Christine Schraner Burgener to engage the parties concerned. ASEAN was formed on Aug. 8, 1967, and has 10 members from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. It is headquartered in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital. The special meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers led by Brunei Darussalam was held virtually to address the current political situation in Myanmar following the Feb. 1 coup and find an amicable solution to the ensuing crisis. – Foreign Desk

crackdown on mass protests nationwide. At least 21 protesters were reported killed in shootings by police and soldiers from Feb. 1 to March 2. Besides the three cities, protests in Yangon, Magwe and Mandalay regions and Kachin state were also cracked down upon on Wednesday. Several people were shot and wounded, and a number detained during the crackdowns. In Yangon's Tamwe Township, at least 200 protesters, mostly young people, were detained on Wednesday at noon. Soldiers forced them to stand in the middle sun near the township's police station before pushing them into army trucks. The killings came as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) failed to make a breakthrough in a virtual foreign ministers' meeting on Myanmar.

## Kuwait swears in new cabinet

## FOREIGN DESK

KUWAIT CITY: Kuwait's new cabinet has been sworn in, weeks after the government quit amid a deepening deadlock with Parliament that has blocked badly needed reforms in the oil-rich Gulf Arab state.

Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaleed Al Hamad Al Sabah on Wednesday swapped out four ministers whose selections had angered various lawmakers for less contentious, veteran politicians, an apparent gesture to appease Parliament.

The worsening rift between Kuwait's emir-appointed government and elected parliament presents the first significant challenge to Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who ascended the throne late last year.

The infighting diminished public confidence, caused instability and hastened the country's worst debt crisis since the 1990 Iraqi invasion. As Kuwait's general reserve fund runs out of cash, lawmakers, sceptical of deep-rooted corruption, have prevented the government from borrowing like other Gulf states in response to the coronavirus pandemic and low crude prices. Sheikh Nawaf suspended Parliament last month until mid-March as tensions escalated over the cabinet appointments.

## Blast at Dutch COVID test centre appears intentional

## WEB DESK

AMSTERDAM: A coronavirus testing centre in the Netherlands was intentionally targeted, Dutch police said, after an explosion at the site. The blast on Wednesday in Bovenkarspel, a northern town, shattered windows but caused no injuries, police from the province of North Holland said in a statement.

An explosives team was on site to examine the device, police in North Holland province said. The metal remains of the explosive were found in front of the building; the device "must have been placed" there, police spokesman Menno Hartenberg told Reuters news agency. "Something like that doesn't just happen by accident, it has to be laid," he said, adding the device was about 10cm by 10cm (four inches by four inches). There was one security guard inside the building when the explosion took place, but that person was unharmed. Health Minister Hugo de Jonge described the incident as an "insane" act. "For more than a year we have been leaning on these people on the front lines and now this," he tweeted. Officers cordoned off the area as they carried out investigations. Wednesday morning test appointments in Bovenkarspel were cancelled, according to public broadcaster NOS.

## 'Migration crisis not our top priority'

## FOREIGN DESK

TRIPOLI: Libya is not capable of handling the migration crisis by itself, the country's interim Prime Minister-designate has warned, adding that the international community should step up its support if monitoring and rescue operations are to be successful. There are more than 570,000 migrants currently in Libya, according to UN estimates. Libya has become the major transit point for people hoping to reach Europe, after the North African country plunged into a bloody conflict following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. "The problem of migration does not concern Libya alone... it is a global problem that concerns the entire world," Libya's PM-designate Abdul Hamid Dbeibah said at a press conference late last month. Dbeibah was selected in early February in a UN-sponsored inter-Libyan dialogue, the latest internationally backed bid to salvage the country from a decade of conflict and fragmented political fiefdoms. Smugglers often pack desperate families into ill-equipped rubber boats that are unable to survive the journey across the Mediterranean Sea.

## Briefs

### Afghans in shock after 3 female media workers' killing

JALALABAD: Outrage rippled through Afghanistan Wednesday as funerals were held for three female media workers gunned down in the eastern city of Jalalabad, with insurgent violence increasing as peace talks stall. Journalists, activists and judges have recently been ambushed by gunmen or killed by explosives attached to their vehicles as surging violence forces many into hiding - with some leaving Afghanistan. The killings have escalated since peace talks began last year between the Afghan government and the Taliban, sparking fears that the insurgents are eliminating perceived opponents as negotiations stall. The three women were shot and killed in two separate attacks just ten minutes apart after they left the Enikass TV station on Tuesday in what one colleague described as an orchestrated hit. An Islamic State affiliate later claimed responsibility for the murders, saying its gunmen carried out the killings of what it called "journalists working for one of the media stations loyal to the apostate Afghan government". Friends and family gathered at the women's funerals in Jalalabad where men took turns digging fresh graves with a shovel as others pleaded for an end to the deaths. Rohan Sadat described his sister Sadia Sadat as "shy but active" who was also passionate about fighting for women's rights and had planned to attend university and study law. - APP

### Court indicts culprits in Motorway rape case

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday indicted the two main accused in the Lahore Motorway rape case. The accused pleaded not guilty and contended to contest the charges, said Deputy Prosecutor General Hafiz Asghar. Hafiz told APP that the court recorded statements of 10 prosecution witnesses, including a car mechanic, a Dolphin Squad member, and a doctor after the accused denied the charges. Subsequently, the court adjourned further proceedings and summoned more prosecution witnesses on the next date of hearing. ATC Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta conducted the case hearing at the Camp Jail, wherein jail authorities produced Abid Malhi and Shafiq Ali, prime accused and co-accused. It should be noted that due to the sensitivity of the case, the trial of the accused is being conducted within jail premises. The Gujjarpora police had filed a challan against the accused, wherein they were declared guilty. The police had requested the court for awarding strict punishment to the accused as sufficient evidence was available against them.

### Pakistan born takes oath as Youngest HoL member

LONDON: Pakistan-born British citizen Wajid Khan has taken oath as the youngest member of the United Kingdom's House of Lords. In a video message, the 41-year-old member has expressed happiness and thanked Allah Almighty and his parents for helping him in achieving this position. He also pledged to serve the community with honesty and determination. Born on October 15, 1979, in Burnley, Wajid Khan served as a British Labour Party councillor and Burnley Council cabinet member. As a member of the European Parliament for North West England, he played an important role in highlighting the human rights violation in Indian Occupied Kashmir. Wajid Khan was also honored with Sitara-i-Quaid-i-Azam by the government of Pakistan in 2019. - DNA

# Australia gifts Miyawaki forest

The Australian Government has committed \$1.5 billion for global climate finance and over \$15 billion domestically to make Australia's natural resources, environment and water infrastructure more resilient to climate disasters

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Geoffrey Shaw on Wednesday joined the Minister of State for Climate Change, Zartaj Gul to inaugurate a Miyawaki Forest at Fatima Jinnah Park Islamabad. The Australian High Commission gifted the forest to the public park as part of an initiative, organised by the Capital Development Authority to support Pakistan's Miyawaki Forest and the Spring Tree Plantation Campaign 2021. Speaking at the tree plantation ceremony, Dr Geoffrey Shaw said, "This Miyawaki Forest is a gift from the Australian Government to the people of Pakistan. I hope that the trees and shrubs planted here today help regenerate not just the environment of Islamabad but contribute to making Pakistan cleaner and greener." Australia has longstanding cooperation with Pakistan on the environment and tackling climate change including improving water management and security, access to clean drinking water, flood forecasting and disaster risk reduction. "Green initiatives



such as this are becoming ever more important in the face of the growing impacts of climate change affecting our region - something both Australia and Pakistan are keenly aware of and taking action on," Dr Shaw added. Director General Capital Development Authority, Naveed Tareen said, "Miyawaki is one of the techniques to develop forests quickly and Prime Minister Im-

ran Khan has taken keen interest in its implementation. We all are aware of the threat of global warming and how it's already affecting our lives. Right and timely initiatives like this are much needed. We are thankful to Australian High Commission for their collaboration in this amazing initiative." Australia is committed to combating climate change and is on

track to beat our 2030 emissions reduction target under the Paris Agreement, having achieved 17 per cent reduction in emissions since 2005. The Australian Government has committed \$1.5 billion for global climate finance and over \$15 billion domestically to make Australia's natural resources, environment and water infrastructure more resilient to climate disasters.



### COVID-19 claims 75 more lives

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Wednesday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 16,648 with 1,163 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,388 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Seventy-five corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 70 of them were under treatment in hospitals and five in their respective quarantines and homes on Tuesday, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOCC). Out of the total 75 deaths, 27 people had died under treatment on ventilators. - DNA

# COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for Hajj 2021

Saudi Arabia takes pride in its guardianship of Islam's holiest sites in Mecca and Medina and its smooth organisation of the annual Hajj, which has been marred in the past by deadly stampedes, fires and riots

DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's health ministry says only people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 will be allowed to attend the Hajj this year, Saudi newspaper Okaz reported. "The COVID-19 vaccine is mandatory for those willing to come to the Hajj and will be one of the main conditions (for receiving a permit to come)," Monday's report said, citing a circular signed by the health minister. Saudi Arabia takes pride in its guardianship

of Islam's holiest sites in Mecca and Medina and its smooth organisation of the annual Hajj, which has been marred in the past by deadly stampedes, fires and riots. In 2020, the kingdom dramatically reduced the number of pilgrims allowed to attend Hajj to about 1,000 Saudi citizens and residents of the kingdom, in order to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, after barring Muslims abroad from the rite for the first time in modern times. Hajj, a once-in-a-lifetime duty for every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it, is a major source of income for the Saudi government.

The congregation of millions of pilgrims from around the world can be a major cause of coronavirus transmission. In the past, worshippers have returned home with respiratory and other diseases. In the same circular, Saudi Minister of Health Dr Tawfiq al-Rabiah said the government must be prepared to "secure the manpower required to operate the health facilities in Mecca and Medina". These facilities will be stationed at entry points for pilgrims, he said, in addition to a formation of a vaccination committee for pilgrims within Saudi Arabia.

## PM to open virtual 14th ECO Summit today

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will chair the 14th Summit, the Foreign Office said in a press release

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan will open the 14th Summit of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), to be held virtually today (March 4), and share Pakistan's perspective on COVID-19 challenges. The theme of the summit is "Regional Economic Cooperation in the Aftermath of Covid-19". The prime minister will open the summit in Pakistan's capacity as the Chair of the 13th Summit, held in Islamabad in March 2017. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will chair the 14th Summit, the Foreign Office said in a press release. Sharing Pakistan's perspective on COVID-19 challenges, the prime minister will outline his vision for regional economic development in line with the ECO's founding principles of promotion of trade and connectivity, it added. Pakistan, Iran and Turkey are the founding members

### PTI seeks disqualification of Gillani; files petition in ECP

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf has filed a petition in Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) seeking disqualification of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) joint Senate candidate, Yousaf Raza Gilani. Talking to media, outside ECP, Parliamentary Secretary for Railways, Farrukh Habib and PTI leader Kanwal Shauzab said that billions of rupees are spent to buy votes in senate elections. Farrukh Habib said, Yousaf Raza Gilani committed corrupt practices and his son Ali Haider Gilani urged MNAs to waste their votes. He said, a petition has been filed for Yousaf Raza Gilani's disqualification and now action in accordance with the law should be taken on corrupt practices. Reacting to the video went viral on Tuesday he said that it showed how corrupt lawmakers drowned the country in debt and destroyed the country's morals. Kanwal Shauzab said, the video has badly exposed the faces of so-called politicians and showing the shameful way in which the politicians buying and selling votes.

## NAB shuts inquiries against Ishaq Dar over lack of evidence

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Wednesday announced to shut inquiries against the former finance minister Ishaq Dar and former Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province Akram Khan Durrani besides approving another reference against CM Punjab Shehbaz Sharif. According to a handout issued by the NAB, the accountability watchdog's meeting headed by Chairman Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal approved the decisions during the executive board meeting. The watchdog shut down the inquiries against Ishaq Dar, JUI-F leader Akram



Durrani and chairman FBR over lack of evidence against them. The NAB further said that it has decided to form a committee regarding the PIA-owned Roosevelt Hotel in the United States, which would review the decision to shut down the hotel. The accountability watchdog also approved references against former Capital Development Authority (CDA) chairman Imtiaz Inayat and Director General

Parks Liaquat Qaimkhani, besides also approving investigations against other CDA officials. On February 28, Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice Ret'd Javed Iqbal on Sunday said that those who remained untouched in the past were probed by the accountability watchdog in his tenure. "They have been asked about illegal acts, assets beyond income and measures that caused losses to the national exchequer as per the law," said the chairman. He said that the accountability watchdog believes in zero corruption and 100 percent prosperity policy. - APP

### 'Pak-China ties force for peace'

NEW YORK: Commemorative diplomatic ties between Pakistan and China, Ambassador Munir Akram has said that for peace and stability in the relationship has withstood enjoys the full support of our kistani envoy to the UN said nity members. "It (relationship) mutual respect and win-win



ing the 70th anniversary of stan and China, Ambassador the relationship was a force region and beyond. "This the vicissitudes of time and peoples at all levels," the Pa in a message to the commu- ship) is marked by warmth, cooperation." Ambassador Akram said. "It is a force for peace, stability and development in the region and beyond. "As we commence the commemoration of 70 years of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations, we recommit ourselves to work with our Chinese brothers and sisters to promote regional and global peace and prosperity, uphold the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, strengthen international cooperation and the United Nations system and realize a better future for all humanity," he added. - APP

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# FM stresses importance of economic diplomacy

The fifth virtual meeting on Economic Diplomacy, chaired by Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, focused on Europe

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: As part of Government's economic outreach initiative, the fifth virtual meeting on Economic Diplomacy was held on Wednesday. The meeting, chaired by Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, focused on Europe. Pakistan's Envoys to France, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania and Russia participated in the meeting. Highlighting the growing importance of geo-economics in international politics, the Foreign Minister underscored Economic Diplomacy as an essential part of modern diplomatic practice.

He stated that, in line with Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Missions abroad were at the forefront of safeguarding and advancing Pakistan's economic interests. They played an important role in successful implementation of a range of measures including the Prime Minister's 'Global Initiative on Debt Relief' for developing countries, Prime Minister's Economic Outreach Initiative (EOI), and the Roshan Digital Account. Foreign Minister Qureshi encouraged Envoys to cultivate and broaden mutually beneficial trade and economic partnerships with European countries, focusing on key goals of trade promotion,

financial inflows, investments, remittances, tourism and technology transfer. Underscoring the importance of consolidating and expanding Pakistan's economic outreach with Europe, Foreign Minister Qureshi stressed the need to diversify exports to the EU countries to fully utilize the benefits under the GSP Plus status. He further emphasized the need to constructively engage with Parliamentarians in Europe and EU Parliament with a view to maximizing avenues for economic outreach and collaboration. The Foreign Minister appreciated the increased inflow of investment from Europe into Pakistan and urged the Missions to pro-

actively engage with their interlocutors to showcase the investment potential of the country. Highlighting the government's continued efforts in this regard, the Foreign Minister highlighted Pakistan's impressive improvement in Ease of Doing Business ranking. Pakistan had also secured 6th place among world's top 10 business climate improvers. Foreign Minister Qureshi instructed the Envoys to identify and address bottlenecks that hinder expansion of economic collaboration with host countries. The Envoys were also asked to identify sectors where Pakistan could enhance its economic footprint in Europe. During the virtual meeting,

the Pakistani Envoys apprised the Foreign Minister of their activities and programmes in economic and commercial domains. They briefed about measures to strengthen existing linkages and forging new ones for bolstering Pakistan's economic imprint in Europe. In keeping with Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision, Foreign Minister Qureshi has consistently accentuated promotion of economic diplomacy and increased economic cooperation with partner countries. Regular virtual meetings and interactions on Economic Diplomacy with Pakistani Envoys in key capitals are part of these efforts.

### One killed as rockets hit Iraq military base

BAGHDAD: One person was killed after at least 10 rockets slammed into a military base in western Iraq hosting US-led coalition troops on Wednesday, security sources said. The attack on the sprawling Ain al-Assad base in Iraq's western desert comes after several weeks of escalating US-Iran tensions on Iraqi soil. It also comes just two days before the first-ever papal visit to the country by Pope Francis, who said he would still make the visit it so as not to "disappoint" the Iraqi people. Ain al-Assad hosts both Iraqi forces and US-led coalition troops helping fight the Islamic State group, as well as the unmanned drones the coalition uses to surveil jihadist sleeper cells. - APP

### ISPR releases teaser for Pak Day celebrations

RAWALPINDI: Inter Services Public Relations has released a video teaser highlighting preparations to mark Pakistan Day celebrations on 23rd of this month with renewed spirit. The 15-second video teaser highlights different visuals of historic moments of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's address to the processions during Pakistan Movement, Minar-e-Pakistan, military parades of various Pakistan Day celebrations, children holding national flags and singing national songs, youth holding largest national flag and rallying with it in streets. - APP

### PTI's Faisal Vawda resigns from NA seat

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Faisal Vawda on Wednesday resigned from National Assembly and submitted his resignation in Islamabad High Court (IHC). PTI leader resigned after casting his vote for Senate elections and his counsel submitted the resignation in the court and argued that disqualification case now becomes ineffective. Earlier, after casting his vote in National Assembly, Federal Minister Faisal Vawda claimed that Yousaf Raza Gilani will lose and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) will sacrifice some other senator to elect Gilani to Senate later. It is pertinent to mention here that Faisal Vawda is also contesting Senate elections from Sindh on ticket of PTI. The minister's bid to contest the elections of upper house of the parliament was challenged by PPP leader; however, Election Tribunal gave the PTI leader clean chit and allowed him to contest the polls. - DNA