



Islamabad POST

Monday, March 15, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Constitution of Pak ensures rights for all and sundry

Detailed News On Page-08

Indonesia keen to diversify its relations with Pakistan: envoy

Detailed News On Page-02



Japanese envoy praises Pak community

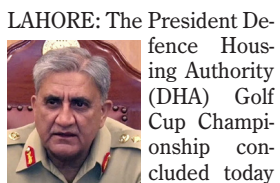
Detailed News On Page-01



Briefs

Army Chief visits Lahore

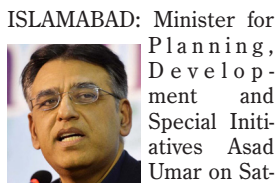
STAFF REPORT



LAHORE: The President Defence Housing Authority (DHA) Golf Cup Championship concluded today (14th March) at Lahore Defence Raya Golf and Country Club. General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) was the chief guest in the concluding session of the tournament. COAS appreciated the performance of the players and awarded prizes to the winners. Moreover, the COAS also inaugurated Raya Fairways. Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Lieutenant General Muhammad Abdul Aziz, Commander 4 Corps.

'Controlling inflation top priority'

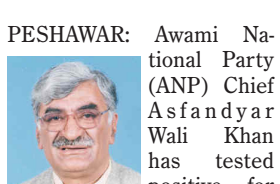
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar on Saturday said controlling inflation was the top most priority of the government. Talking to a private news channel, he said devaluation of Pakistani rupee was the real cause of increasing prices of edible items in the country but due to prudent policies of the incumbent government inflation was on decline nowadays. The minister said the government had tried to bring reforms in the electoral system but the opposition parties did not extend support in this regard. He said that people would see visible change in every sector of life in coming months.

Asfandiyar tests Covid-19 positive

BUREAU REPORT



PESHAWAR: Awami National Party (ANP) Chief Asfandiyar Wali Khan has tested positive for Covid-19, the party's spokesperson Samar Haroon Bilour revealed on Sunday. He has quarantined himself at Wali Bagh Charsadda, she said in a Twitter statement and requested prayers for his speedy recovery. "All meetings of ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including "Da Ghani Mela" have been postponed. New dates will be announced soon," she said.

Coronavirus positivity rate climbs to 6.6%

The fresh number of cases reported over the past 24 hours mean that the total number of cases in the country has risen to 652,000

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Coronavirus cases across the country continue to be on the rise with Pakistan reporting 2,664 new infections over the past 24 hours, on Sunday. The positivity percentage of the virus has been measured at 6.6% while 32 people have passed away from the disease in a single day. The fresh number of cases reported over the past 24 hours mean that the total number of cases in the country

Continued on Page 06

Punjab records over 1600 cases

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: As the third wave of the novel coronavirus intensifies in the country, Punjab on Sunday reported more than 1,600 Covid-19 cases for the first time since June 2020.

Data from the government's coronavirus portal showed that 1,653 new infections were detected in the province in the last 24 hours, marking the fifth straight

day Punjab recorded more than 1,000 cases. The last time the province reported such a high number of cases was during the first wave on June 24, 2020, when it confirmed 1,655 infections. The province's tally now stands at 185,468. The majority of cases - 973 - were reported in the capital, Lahore, followed by 81 in Gujranwala, 76 in Sialkot, and 73 in Rawalpindi, according to the daily situation report from the health department.

Pak welcomes unity govt in Libya

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has welcomed the endorsement by the Libyan Parliament to the Cabinet proposed by the Prime Minister-designate of the brotherly State of Libya and the successful formation of the Government of National Unity. We wish the Libyan parliamentary and political leaderships every success. We appreciate the resolve of the Libyan people for peace and security, which has led to this outcome. We also acknowledge the positive role played by the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), as well as the efforts of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Libya. Pakistan records high importance to its historically close and cordial ties with Libya. We remain committed to advancing our bilateral cooperation as well as coordination at the regional and international for a, the Foreign Office statement added.

Shaban moon not sighted

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The moon for the holy month of Shaban has not been sighted in Pakistan, media reported Sunday. The first of Shaban will begin on Tuesday, March 16, 2021. A meeting of Ruet-e-Hilal was held on Sunday to sight the crescent moon of the blessed month of Shaban al-Moazzam. The Chairman of the Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad presided over the meeting of the Zonal Committee in Islamabad for the purpose.

Per the piece, several other members of the Ruet-Hilal Committee attended the meetings of provincial/ district/zonal committees at their respective provincial/ district headquarters.

Pak to send Covid-19 relief to Iraq

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will dispatch three planes-load of COVID-19 relief goods to Iraq, on the directives of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

According to the Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry, the first plane-load was dispatched yesterday and the next two consignments will be sent in the coming week. He said Pakistan and Iraq have long-standing fraternal ties rooted firmly in shared faith and values. He said the government and people of Pakistan stand by their Iraqi brethren in this difficult time, he added.

PDM has fallen apart, says Shibli

He said that the PDM leadership was also frustrated over the vote of confidence of the Prime Minister Imran Khan and suffered more humiliation in the Senate Chairman and Deputy Chairman elections



ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said that the Pakistan Democratic Movement had fallen apart while the last nail in their coffin was the election of chairman and deputy chairman Senate.

Speaking at a conference along with Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhry Fawad Hussain in Islamabad Sunday, the minister asserted that the PML-N stabbed in the back of the PPP whereas the PPP stabbed in the back of JUI-Fazal and this was reflected in the results. He said that they thought that the win of one seat in the Federal Cap-

ital had revived them, but it turned out to be an isolated event. He said that the PPP had a different approach while Maulana Fazl wanted resignations and PML-N found differences internally on its future course of action. To a question, he said that though he was not much hopeful, the PDM should review its planned long march in the country's interest and in view of the risks involved in the backdrop of the third wave of the coronavirus. "Whatever identity of the PDM is left will be erased, if they go for their planned programme," Shibli Faraz said country's economy is getting stabled and all the business activities are underway despite Covid-19. The Information Minister said that in the first phase of agitation the opposition claimed that they would hold a long march, tender resignations from the assemblies but nothing happened and the entire protest movement fizzled out as the people rejected them. He said that the PDM leadership was also frustrated over the vote of confidence of the Prime Minister Imran Khan and suffered more humiliation in the Senate Chairman and Deputy Chairman elections. The minister said that they were trying to create unrest in the country as they see their political death in stability and economic development in the country.

PPP to approach IHC against Sanjrani's win

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the government used every criminal tactic against the Opposition in the Senate Elections

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has decided to challenge the victory of Sadiq Sanjrani as Chairman Senate in the Islamabad High Court (IHC). According to the details, a consultative meeting of the party was held under the chairmanship of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto. Yusuf Raza Gilani, Raja Pervez Ashraf, Sherry Rehman and others attended the meeting. The meeting agreed to

continue the constitutional and legal battle against the government of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI). Media reports said that the PPP has rejected Sadiq Sanjrani's win in Senate and decided to approach Islamabad High Court and challenge the results. Speaking on the occasion, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the government used every criminal tactic against the Opposition in the Senate Elections. Installing cameras and trying to steal votes is heinous crime and

violation of constitution. He said that the impression of deliberate mis-stamping by the opposition members is wrong and no senator had wrongly stamped the ballot paper. "I have full confidence in all the senators of the opposition. With such an impression, attempts are being made to split the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)." Said the party chairman. The PPP chairman said that the decision of the presiding officer would also be challenged in the high court.

UK police under fire after vigil crackdown

DNA

LONDON: Police in London drew widespread criticism after handcuffing mourners at a vigil for a woman who was murdered after setting out to walk home, in a case that has sparked national fury about violence against women. Officers scuffled with some members of the hundreds-strong crowd that gathered despite coronavirus restrictions for a candlelit tribute late Saturday close to the spot where

33-year-old marketing executive Sarah Everard disappeared on March 3. Reclaim These Streets - who initially organised the event in south London's Clapham - condemned the actions of officers "physically manhandling women at a vigil against male violence". Social media footage showed police restraining and handcuffing some mourners, leading to an outpouring of criticism from across the political spectrum. Both Home Secretary Priti Patel

and London mayor Sadiq Khan said they had asked for explanations from the Metropolitan police over how the vigil was handled. And Liberal Democrats leader Ed Davey called for Metropolitan police chief Cressida Dick to resign, having "lost the confidence of millions of women in London". The murder of Everard, who vanished after setting out to walk home from a friend's flat, has shocked the country and brought discussion around women's safety to the fore once again.

N.Korea 'not responding' to US contact efforts

The US and North Korea remain at loggerheads over North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden's administration says it has been trying to contact the North Korean government since February but has yet to receive a response. Washington had tried to reach Pyongyang in several different ways to prevent tensions escalating, officials said. The US and North Korea remain at loggerheads over North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. North Korean state media has yet to acknowledge that Joe Biden is now the American president. US attempts to communi-



cate with Pyongyang have included the "New York Channel" - through the North Korean mission at the United Nations. A US official told Reuters news agency there had been "multiple attempts" to engage with North Korea, but no meaningful contact for more than 12 months, which includes much of

Donald Trump's final year as president. Mr Biden has already announced a policy review on North Korea, which is expected to be unveiled in April. He has called Mr Kim a thug and stressed the need for North Korean nuclear disarmament before heavy US and UN economic sanctions can be eased.

Three Islamabad subsectors sealed

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad district administration has decided to seal three subsectors of the capital city, among other measures, amid a rising number of coronavirus cases.

According to Deputy Commissioner Hamza Shafqaat, subsectors I-8/4, F-11/1 and I-10/2 have been sealed. Shafqaat added that marketplaces and amusement marks will be kept shut on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

He said that all No-Objection Certificates (NOC) that had been granted to organisers of gatherings now stand cancelled. No indoor gatherings are allowed. The deputy commissioner said that outdoor gatherings of 300 people are allowed only for a two-hour duration. Offices are not allowed to call more than 50% employees to work.

DC Islamabad tests positive for virus



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Hamza Shafqaat has tested positive for coronavirus, according to a tweet posted by him on Sunday. "I have tested positive for COVID-19. Request for prayers," he wrote. National Command and Operations Centre chief Asad Umar prayed for his recovery, saying he has played "a very important role" in curbing the spread of coronavirus in the capital city. "Hope you get well soon," he said. A day earlier, Shafqaat had cited a "wedding function" as the source of the spread to his parents, who also tested positive for coronavirus. - Staff Report

Anyone found violating the standard operating procedures will have to face immediate legal action. A day earlier, the district administration had mandated the use of masks by all citizens. Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) has been put in place for the implemen-

tation of the rule, the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad, Hamza Shafqaat said, as he announced the new rule. Additionally, five sectors of Islamabad were declared coronavirus "hotspots" and were to be sealed - Sectors G-6/2, G-9/1, G-10/4, I-8/3 and I-8/4.

Inside...

Indonesia keen to diversify its relations with Pakistan: envoy - Page 02

Exotic Crafts Fair to be held from March 19 - Page 03

Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations on positive trajectory: experts - Page 04

Uzbekistan-Pakistan momentous relations - Page 05

Japan courageously faced triple disasters in 2011: Amb. Intiaz - Page 06

Pakistan, China construction giants to explore together - Page 07

Constitution of Pak ensures rights for all and sundry: envoy - Page 08

MARCH 2021

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk

www.dnanews.com.pk

www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad / @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza, G-8 Markaz, ISLAMABAD-PAKISAN Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



Briefs

94 cops contract with COVID-19 in seven days

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Spokesman to Sindh Police on Sunday informed that 94 new cases reported in last seven days and around 6250 personnel and officers of Sindh Police had contracted with coronavirus so far.

He told that currently 122 officers and personnel were under treatment while 6104 had recovered from the disease.

The spokesman said that 24 policemen lost their lives during battle against COVID-19.

He said all due care was being provided to the affected cops.

Government demanded to seek suggestions

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMAEA) senior vice chairman Riaz Ahmed Sunday said that the government should immediately start consultations on the proposed finance bill prepared for the budget for the next financial year and seek suggestions.

In a statement issued here Sunday, Riaz Ahmed said the more the government promotes consultation with stakeholders, the more positive the results would be generated for the economy. He further said the government should take into account the conditions of the IMF and the possible steps to be taken to meet them.

Riaz Ahmed said that according to reports, the government has prepared documents for the proposed finance bill for the next financial year, so now it is necessary to share it with stakeholders and seek suggestions on it.

He said under the current circumstances, no industry can afford to bear the burden of more taxes; therefore, there is dire need of reducing tax rates besides giving relief packages to exporters.

He demanded that the government should remove obstacles to the export of handmade carpets and in particular, the SBP should refrain from creating unwarranted complications so that Pakistani exporters maintain their credibility with foreign buyers.

Light snowfall in Kumrat, Dir attracts visitors

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: A dense crowd of snow lovers from various parts of the country thronged Kumrat and upper Dir valley on weekend to catch glimpse of white powdery snow capped hill station that are giving mesmerizing sights and famous for its scenic beauty.

Due to weekend hordes of tourists in Kumrat valley were seen enjoying the snowfall and spending happy moments with their families and friends.

According to locals in Kumrat, tourists were seen taking selfies and photos along roadsides which caused hindrance in the smooth flow of traffic. They added that with the light rain and snow a great crowd was observed at hotels, restaurants and stalls of Pakoras, fries and coffee/tea, where people were enjoying hot food and hot drinks to keep themselves warm.

A visitor talking to private channel said Kumrat is a beautiful valley in Pakistan and it is one of the scenic valleys of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and a picturesque spot for visitors from all over the Pakistan and the rest of the world.

Another visitor said he could not express the beauty of the snow-covered Kumrat valley in words, adding, they are enjoying themselves by throwing snow balls on each other.

An official of PTDC said that we are trying our best to facilitate tourists in hilly areas, adding, visitors should not be allowed to visit these areas without violating Covid-19 SOPs.

Indonesia keen to diversify its relations with Pakistan: envoy

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD. Indonesia has entered into the global value-added food sector and will establish a state-of-the-art noodle factory in Faisalabad very soon, said Ambassador of Indonesia Mr. Adam Mulawarman Tugio. He was addressing a meeting of the business community in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI). The meeting was also attended by a delegation of the Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mr. Tugio said that Pakistan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries form a huge market of one billion people and we must try our optimum best to exploit its potential. He said that Indonesia was already exporting palm oil to Pakistan and now it has planned to enter into the value added food chain. In this connection, some noodle factories have already been established in different countries while Faisalabad has now been selected in Pakistan because of its geographical location. He said that from Faisalabad we could ensure smooth supplies to every nook and corner of Pakistan within just a



FAISALABAD. Chaudhary Talat Mahmood senior vice president Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry is presenting FCCI shield to the ambassador of Indonesia Adam Mulawarman Tugio. Haji Jalat Khan Achakzai, President Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry is also present during this function. — DNA

few hours. He said that we are planning to introduce a special flavor of chicken and Curry Palao for Pakistani brethren.

Regarding China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said that it has laid down a strong foundation for infrastructure development in Pakistan and it will also spur economic activities in this region.

He also mentioned the scenic tourist destinations in both countries and said that we must cooperate for the

promotion of tourism as a full-fledged industry in Pakistan. Responding to a question about a ban on import of dry coconut from India, he said that he will look into this matter and convince Indonesian exporters to fill the gap on top priority basis.

About duty on Pakistani textile products, he said that the business community of Pakistan should raise this issue under the Trade in Good Agreement (TIGA).

He further said that Indonesian spare parts are being

imported by Pakistan through other countries. "Pakistan should ensure direct import of spare parts from Indonesia and raise the issue of duties on Pakistani textile products and import of Indonesian spares simultaneously at the highest level through (TIGA).

About educational scholarships, he said that he would try that Indonesia should also extend at least the same number of scholarships as offered by Pakistan to Indonesian students. He said

that Indonesia had a well-developed pharmaceutical industry. "We are preparing an anti-corona vaccine and are ready to share our expertise with Pakistan", he added. He further said that Indonesia was regularly organizing trade expos in October or November but last year it was cancelled due to corona. "However, this year it will be held and he wants maximum physical participation of Pakistani businessmen in it", he hoped. Haji Jalat Khan Achakzai, President Chaman

Chamber of Commerce and Industry also addressed the meeting and invited Indonesian ambassador to Chaman. Earlier, President FCCI Engineer Ihtasham Javed welcomed the Indonesian ambassador and his team and said that both countries are linked with strong religious, cultural and economic ties. He also introduced Faisalabad and said that it is a city of trade and industry which is contributing 70 percent share in total textile exports of Pakistan.



SWAT: Australian high commissioner to Pakistan Dr. Geoffrey Shaw visiting Butkhara Stupa. It may have been built by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka, but it is generally dated slightly later to the 2nd century BCE. — DNA

President underlines importance of human resource

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi Saturday underlining the importance of human resource said that better human resources could even rebuild the destroyed country.

Pakistan needed to focus on health and education to ensure progress and prosperity, he said while addressing the unveiling ceremony of new name of Salim Habib Hodgson University (formerly Banett Hodgson University).

Emphasizing upon inclusivity of the society, the president termed it as a key to progress and prosperity of any society. Women, minorities, underprivileged segment, differently abled people and all others must be brought to national mainstream for forming a robust society, he added. He said the neighboring country was excluding minorities from its mainstream and was also legislating in that regard. Dr. Arif Alvi said that the country was on path of developing an inclusive society under the 'Naya

Pakistan' vision. "Prime Minister Imran Khan is the first leader across the world, who refused to impose a complete lockdown during the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic as he realized the economic difficulties it could cause for the people," he added.

He said Pakistan was the country which had learnt from its experiences. The country faced terrorism and other challenges and fought tremendously, he said, adding now the country was at tipping point.

Dr. Arif Alvi also emphasized upon promotion of science and information technology for the progress and development of the country. He urged upon the youth to improve their intellectual abilities. In past the country produced brilliant professionals who were exported to other countries due to non availability of employment, he said, adding now the country was not producing professionals to export them to abroad. — APP

Government taking steps to promote tourism: Malik Amin

QUETTA: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam on Saturday said government was taking steps to promote tourism and forest sectors while Balochistan was the best region for conservation of natural beauty.

Talking to media at Quetta Press Club, he said target of planting 10 billion trees in the country was being achieved through public-private partnership.

On the occasion, Forest Secretary Siddique Mandukhel, PTI Information Secretary Muhammad Asif Tareen and Amjad, head of Taragee Foundation were present. The SAPM congratulated Sadiq Sanjrani and Mirza Mohammad Afridi on winning Senate Chairman and Deputy Chairman elections.

Malik Amin Aslam said Pakistan was among the top 10 most affected countries due to climate change and famine due to declining rainfall saying that rising temperatures have adversely affected Balochistan and tree planting was required to mitigate the effects of the weather. He said a plan had been launched to gain the target of planting 10 crores saplings in Balochistan and its coastal areas and in the vicinity of Quetta which would help to promote the forest sector, despite efforts were underway to expand Chilghoza forest in the monsoon areas of Balochistan.

Tree plantation was being done on the sides of 70 dams in Balochistan and six cities were included in the Clean Green project in Balochistan, he added. — APP

Pakistan Day: A reminiscent of heroic struggle

PESHAWAR: Following the unsuccessful War of Independence of 1857, the Muslims of Subcontinent was given a new hope and direction by the great educationist and reformer, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan who brought about an intellectual revolution among them through his educational, political and social reforms.

Keeping cognizance of educational backwardness of Muslims of British India, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's All India Muhammadan Educational Conference at Aligarh founded in 1875, had carried forward his vision of modern education, socioeconomic empowerment and political unity, which soon enabled millions of Muslims to compete with other communities including Hindus in all sectors of life besides provided a launching pad for

initiation of peaceful political struggle for a separate homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent. Sir Syed's reforms had helped excelled Muslims in education, social, economic and political sciences and their voices were strongly heard by British rulers. Seeing the charisma and strong determination of Father of the Nation Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Muslims got united under the flag of All India Muslim League (AIML) established on December 30, 1906 that gave new impetus to the Independence Movement.

The historic movement witnessed further acceleration after historic Allabad address delivered by the legendary poet Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal during 25th annual session of AIML in 1930 in which he outlined

a clear vision of an independent state for Muslims majority provinces in the northwestern India, thus becoming the first politician to articulate about two nation-theory that Muslims are a distinct nation and deserve political independence.

Following adoption of Pakistan Resolution on March 23, 1940, Quaid-i-Azam reorganized AIML by making repeated visits to all Muslims majority provinces of British India including NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) to mobilize masses and students for creation of Pakistan. He also visited the historic Islamia College, Peshawar (ICP) in 1936, 1945 and 1948 to acknowledge the outstanding role of its students during Pakistan Movement. The great Quaid received a rousing welcome

when he came to ICP in 1945 where its students and Muslim Students Federation (MSF) presented him Rs 8,000 as fund for Pakistan Movement and assured him to present 8,000 committed educated workers when he came again to this great alma-mater.

"The arrival of legendary leader committed to a cause of a separate homeland for Muslims of Subcontinent moved people of KP, who decorated their homes, bungalows, bazaars, markets, villages, towns and vehicles with national and Muslim League flags besides holding placards inscribed with different slogans of Pakistan Zindabad and Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad to welcome their beloved Quaid," said Manzoorul Haq, former Ambassador of Pakistan while talking to agency. — APP

CDA undertakes rehabilitation of IJP road

The management of CDA has immediately started the repair and carpeting work of the said highway in front of F-9 Park on the dilapidated condition of Blue area Road

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: On the special directives of management of Capital Development Authority (CDA), the repair and rehabilitation work of Blue Area and IJP Road has been started. The completion and rehabilitation of IJP Road and 4 lane project PC-1 has been approved. However, patch work and carpeting is being done to temporarily restore the flow of traffic. According to details, road carpeting, lane marking,



and repair work are being carried out by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) across the city. In

this regard, the management of CDA has immediately started the repair and carpeting work of the said

highway in front of F-9 Park on the dilapidated condition of Blue area Road, and the carpeting of the highway

will be completed as soon as possible. On the other hand, repair and rehabilitation work of long neglected

IJP Road has been started. The road will be completed in two phases. In first phase repairing from Faizabad to Sir Syed Avenue will be done, however in second phase repairing work will be done from Khayaban Sir Syed to GT Road. Along with this project, overhead bridges, interchanges and underpasses will also be constructed. The existing bridges will also be widened. New concrete roads will be constructed on both sides of the road. After that, IJP Road will be widened from 2 lanes to 4 lanes.

10 arrested in aerial firing, arms recovered

KOHAT: Kohat police have arrested 10 persons involved in aerial firing while conducting operations in different areas here on Sunday.

According to details, Kohat police arrested 10 persons involved in aerial firing while conducting operations in different areas on public complaints. Police recovered five pistols and dozens of explosives.

Police have registered a case against the accused in different police stations and started investigation. — APP

18 more tested Covid positive in Balochistan

QUETTA: About 18 new coronavirus patients were tested positive in Balochistan while number of total confirmed patients surged to 19206 in the province on Saturday.

According to Media Coordinator Provincial Health Directorate

Cell Balochistan Dr, Muhammad Wasim Baig, at least 608036 people were screened for the virus till March 13 out of which 18 more were reported positive.

As many as 18868 affected patients have been recovered from the coronavirus so far while 202 deaths were recorded due to the deadly virus in Balochistan. — APP

Govt starts Tilla Jogian hiking track

LAHORE: The Punjab government has started work on hiking track in Tilla Jogian with a vision to promote tourism.

Advisor to Punjab Chief Minister on Tourism Asif Mehmood on Sunday visited the hiking track and reviewed the work.

On this occasion, he said that attention was being paid on new tourist spots along with traditional tourism destinations. He said the beauty of Pothohar region was much attractive for tourists who love adventure tourism. Asif Mehmood said that Prime Minister Imran Khan wanted to make historical Fort Nandana an attractive tourist spot. Tilla Jogian hiking track would be good addition in tourist destinations, he added.

He entrusted the responsibility to the relevant officials regarding revival of temples in Tilla Jogian and ensuring cleanliness work. The Advisor on Tourism expressed his resolve to further upgrade work on Salt Range Jeep Track.

It is pertinent to mention here that hiking track would be 22 km long from Rohtas Fort to Tilla Jogian. — APP

PHC shuts down 75 illegal treatment centres

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab Healthcare Commission has shutdown 75 illegal treatment centres in different cities of the province.

According to the PHC spokesperson on Sunday, during the last week, the PHC teams carried out raids on 589 treatment centres. As many as 207 quacks' outlets had been either shutdown or converted to other businesses out of the raided centres, while on 27 healthcare establishments, qualified professionals have started serving the people.

On the other hand, the PHC has also started surveillance of 266 treatment centres where qualified persons were present at the time of the visits, but these have been reported to be run by quacks.

From the closed down centres, 13 were in Mianwali, 12 in Vehari, 11 each in Lahore, Sialkot and Lodhara, Rawalpindi 10, 3 each in Mandi Bahauddin and Sheikhupura, while one was in Hafizabad. Laboratories, dental centres, pharmacies, maternity homes, optical shops, circumcision centres, etc were included in the closed down illegal centres. Besides these, healthcare establishments of those 'hakeems' and homeopathic doctors were also shut down where allopathic treatment was being given.

Briefs

Schools mitigate impacts of virus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The public sector educational institutions of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) have successfully mitigated the negative impacts of coronavirus spread on education sector by transforming towards on-line mode of education. In an exclusive talk with media, Principles of the government schools & colleges and educationists said that modern technology have minimized the loss of education due to closures of schools especially during COVID-19 epidemic. They said that as pandemic hit all the sectors across the globe including Pakistan, the use of modern technology helped the governments to tackle the educational losses. Professor Ahmad Ali said that the government had taken two major steps with starting of coronavirus including reducing of syllabus and extending of time to conduct examinations. Due to these steps, the ICT public schools were able to complete their syllabus within short span of time, he added.

International Workshop on Nanomedicine from Monday

ISLAMABAD: Three-day International Workshop on "Nanomedicine: Development and Challenges" will commence from March 15 at COMSTECH Secretariat. Covid-19 spread has made it clear that indigenous capacity in science and technology is critically important for every country, big or small.

Investment in scientific research relevant to national needs has the highest rate of return. In this scenario, Nanotechnology offers new prospects of developing affordable, quick and scalable solutions in diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 and other diseases and manufacturing of personal protective equipment.

The workshop, organized by COMSTECH, will focus on the emerging field of Nanomedicine and include the participation of 15 leading scientists from United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Pakistan. Despite Covid-19 related constraints, several hundred participants from various countries are taking part in this important workshop.

Apart from over 100 young scholars physically present in the venue, numerous international participants will be taking part virtually.

These virtual participants are from many countries like Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Mauritius, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Niger, Iraq, Bangladesh, United Kingdom, China, Kyrgyzstan, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia.

As many as 45 academic and research institutions from Pakistan and other Organization of Islamic Countries states will be represented physically whereas more than 60 institutions will be joining virtually from across the world. APP. - APP

Exotic Crafts Fair to be held from March 19

The purpose of holding this special craft fair in Islamabad on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of Centaurus Mall, is to provide opportunities for artisans from all over the country to introduce their products and market them

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Exotic Crafts Fair organized by Handicrafts Association of Pakistan and Management of Centaurus Mall will be held from March 19 to March 23, 2021 at Centaurus Mall. Convenor Exotic Crafts fair/ Ex Office Handicraft Association

Pakistan Fahad Barlas said, this is craft fair to present all Pakistani craft to Rawalpindi/Islamabad audience. He said that besides Pakistani handicrafts, handicrafts from other countries will also be on display. He said that the special guest of the inaugural ceremony of the craft fair was Dean



of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov. The purpose of holding this special craft fair in Islamabad on the occasion of the 8th anniversary of Centaurus Mall, is to provide opportunities for artisans from all over the country to introduce their products and market them. He said that a

large number of foreign diplomats and citizens would attend the exhibition in Pakistan. Fahad Barlas said that President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan and President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Nasir Mirza were guests of honor in the fair.

March 18 as last date to apply for scholarships

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced March 18 (Thursday) as last date for online submission of applications for Balochistan students to study in LLB, LLM and PhD scholarships, at local as well as foreign universities. According to the official sources, the students having domicile or local certificate of Balochistan can apply for scholarships to pursue their Indigenous LLB (5 years), Indigenous LLM, Foreign LLM, and Foreign PhD studies. Students who fulfil the eligibility criteria for the respective category can apply online through eportal.hec.gov.pk. The students from Balochistan are strongly encouraged to apply for these scholarships, initiated especially for the less developed areas of the country, the sources told APP.

After holding this opportunity, the provincial students would be able to play their effective role in the socio-economic development of the country, the sources remarked. The applicants will be required to obtain 50 per cent

marks (Accumulative Test Score) in the Aptitude Test. Maximum age limit for LLB studies is 25 years, for LLM 30 years, and for PhD 35 years.

For LLB studies, the candidates must have completed 12 years of education with at least 50 per cent marks in the intermediate or equivalent examination. For LLM and PhD studies, the applicants must have completed LLB and LLM, respectively, from HEC recognized degree awarding institutions with at least 50 per cent marks in Bachelor Degree.

Fifteen to 20 per cent scholarships are reserved for the children of victims' families of August 2016 blast in Quetta. Candidates who are already employed or serving should be from the Law relevant field.

They will be required to provide NOC and avail study leave from their respective organization. The applicants for foreign scholarship will have to provide letters of admission in the top 500 universities in the QS Ranking after their selection. Students aspiring to avail the opportunity can visit <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/scholarships/grants/LGSP> for further details.

AIOU gives scholarships to Egyptian students, faculty

The Egyptian ambassador informed the VC that Egyptian government was looking forward to establishing Al-Azhar School System in Pakistan in collaboration with AIOU

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) gave ten scholarships to Egyptian university students and faculty members to learn Urdu language at AIOU on the annual basis. To strengthen this mutual collaboration further, Egyptian government has made a principled decision to establish the Institute of Arabic language at AIOU.

In this regard, Egyptian Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Tarek Dahrough, visited

AIOU. He was accompanied by Amer us Syed Nasir ud Din Syed and Second Secretary of Egyptian embassy, Ahmad Rida. On reaching AIOU, Egyptian delegation was given warm reception by Vice Chancellor AIOU Prof Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum. The Egyptian ambassador informed the VC that Egyptian government was looking forward to establishing Al-Azhar School System in Pakistan in collaboration with AIOU. He, further, proposed to establish the 'Institute of Arabic Language' at AIOU which would not only offer

courses in Arabic language but also engage in multidimensional activities including online lectures of Al-Azhar academia, certificate courses and educational visits of Al-Azhar faculty, scholars and students. He lauded VC, AIOU for his wonderful contributions to mass education and apprised him that Egyptian Ministry of Religious Affairs has declared AIOU to be an institution of high-quality standards. Therefore, Egyptian embassy intended to further cooperate in organizing seminars,

conferences and workshops at AIOU. Prof Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum assured him to extend his full cooperation.

After formal approval and necessary arrangements, AIOU and Egyptian embassy would ink a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish institute of Arabic language at AIOU, he said. Dr. Zahid Majeed, Director, International Collaboration, Dr. Abdul Aziz Sahir, Chairman, Department of Urdu and Dr. Sami Ullah Zuberi, In charge, Department of Arabic were also present at the occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari Chairman Pakistan Cultural Forum, Mr. Ahsan Bakhtawari & Mr. waqar Bakhtawari are exchanging views with Mr. Nicolae Goia the ambassador of Romania at his embassy in Islamabad. Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari also presented his newly published book Jahan Dost to the ambassador after a meeting. - DNA

Sinopharm safe for people above 60

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary of National Health Services Dr. Nausheen Hamid Sunday expressed that the government on the recommendation of experts had decided to inoculate Chinese made Sinopharm vaccine to people aged 60 or above due to available data of neighbor countries regarding its efficacy. Talking to a private news channel, she said the Pakistan had launched a nation-wide coronavirus vaccination drive for the general public which was started with older people, adding, Pakistan was vaccinating its older age groups with Chinese-made Sinopharm vaccine after its approval of technical expert committee. She made it clear that initially Sinopharm vaccine was not recommended for elderly in Pakistan but

lately after getting data of other countries such as UAE and China, Pakistani experts has also approved its efficiency and allow it for elderly population.

She said remaining registered health workers from first phase and elderly should send a text message at 1166 or enter their details at the national immunization management system (NIMS) website, adding, the eligible citizens will be informed about the vaccine center and the date of vaccination through a text message.

She said government would give full coverage to both phases of population in second phase of Coronavirus vaccination drive.

Replying to a query, she said public who were directly dealing with public like teachers and police would also prioritize in vaccination drive, adding, its proposal was under consideration of NCOC which hopefully will approve soon.

PHA to organize Jashan-e-Bahran from March 23

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi would organize 'Jashan-e-Bahran' from March 23, said Vice Chairman, PHA, Malik Abid Hussain.

Talking to media he informed, all the arrangements were being finalized to organize a week long Jashan-e-Bahran festival at Allama Iqbal Park,

Shamsabad, Murree Road from March 23, if COVID-19 situation remains under control.

He said, most of the arrangements had been finalized on the special directives of Advisor to the Chief Minister Punjab/Chairman Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Asif Mehmood.

All available resources would be utilized to provide a healthy entertainment to the citizens, he added.

POSTAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

(Wholly owned by Government of Pakistan)

HIRING OF APPOINTED ACTUARY ON RETAINERSHIP

M/s. Postal Life Insurance Company Limited (PLIC) is incorporated with SECP as a Public Limited Company under the Companies Act, 2017 and registered as life insurer under section 7(1) read with section 10(2) of Insurance Ordinance, 2000. PLIC is seeking to appoint an Appointed Actuary pursuant provisions of Insurance Ordinance, 2000.

Responsibilities

The duties of the Appointment Actuary will be as laid down in the Insurance Ordinance, 2000, read with the SECP (Insurance) Rules, 2017 and all other Rules and Regulations issued from time to time.

Interested persons fulfilling the criteria laid down by the SECP in Rule 3 of the SECP (Insurance) Rules, 2017, are invited to send their resume along with expected monthly remuneration in a sealed envelope to the address given below. The resume should preferably include the following information:

- Complete information such as basic Bio Data, Qualification, Professional experience etc.
- Date(s) when the applicant became a Fellow of the actuarial body mentioned in Rule 3 of SECP (Insurance) Rules 2017;
- A Statement showing the applicant present and past employment detail in the last 10 years. Containing name of the employer, relevant dates, the nature of business, titles held and job description. AND/OR A Statement showing details of the clients and nature of services provided in the last 10 years, including in the capacity of Appointed Actuary.
- If the applicant is at present serving as an Appointed Actuary under the Insurance Ordinance, 2000, a sufficient disclosure must be made of any conflict of interest that might arise or appear to arise, if appointed as Appointed Actuary of PLIC.

We are an equal opportunity employer and all decision are based on merit. Applications along with relevant documents in a sealed envelope should reach the below mentioned address till April 05, 2021, during the office hours (09:00 am to 05:00 pm). Incomplete applications or the applications received after the expiry of the timeframe given herein for submission of applications shall not be taken into consideration. PLIC reserves the right to shortlist, and or reject any or all applications against the above listed position in accordance with PPR-2004.

Any applicant who directly or indirectly makes an attempt to influence the recruitment & selection process shall be disqualified.

(FAHAD ALAM)
COMPANY SECRETARY
Head Office: 2nd Floor, ECO Postal Staff College, G-8/4, Islamabad

PID (I) No.4992/20

ICCI for fostering entrepreneurship

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that the government should make entrepreneurship subject an essential part of schools syllabus in order to foster entrepreneurship in youth so that they could emerge as strong entrepreneurs and drive the economic growth of the country. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest the annual prize distribution ceremony at Dar-e-Arqam School, G-9 Campus, Islamabad. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President ICCI, Khalid Chaudhry and Muhammad Naveed Malik former Senior Vice Presidents ICCI also accompanied him at the occasion.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that entrepreneurship-focused education

helped in developing real-world skills in students and enabled them to play a productive role in practical life in a rapidly changing world. He said that entrepreneurs tended to start businesses, created jobs for others and brought progress and prosperity to society besides leading a successful life themselves. He said that the popula-

tion of Pakistan was increasing rapidly and it was not possible for the government to provide jobs to all youngsters, however, fostering entrepreneurship in youth was a better option to enable them achieve a prosperous career and provide jobs to others as well. He appreciated the role of Dar-e-Arqam school system for providing quality

education as well as the moral instruction on the Islamic model to the students, which would develop their strong morality and overall personality. He hoped that many of its students would emerge as strong leaders in various walks of life and contribute effectively towards the prosperity and progress of Pakistan.

Ms. Sadia Munir Principal and Malik Azhar Mehmood Director of Dar-e-Arqam School, G-9, Islamabad said that Dar-e-Arqam School System was started in 1990 and now it has more than 900 branches all over Pakistan. They said that G-9 Campus of Dar-e-Arqam was established in March 2011 and more than 500 students were now studying in it. They said that the school has produced 70 Hafize-Quran and achieved 100 percent result in matriculation, which showed its good performance.



Briefs

SMEDA to organize training

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) was going to organize one day training program on "Marketing and Advertisement Tools for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)" for profitable business growth on March 16 at Rawalpindi.

The session was being organized by SMEDA under National Business Development Program (NBDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium business, according to sources in the Authority. The training would provide information about SMEs in Pakistan, Difference between sales and marketing, advertising, tools of online advertising, essence of market, types of market and emergence of marketing. The session would be attended by small business owners and their staff, women participants, women owned SMEs, emerging and existing entrepreneurs and all those desirous of improving knowledge on the subject. - APP

SOPs to be implemented during anti-polio drive

RAJA PERVAIZ

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Health Authority Dr. Faiza Kanwal has said that COVID-19 Standard operating procedure (SOPs) would be followed in letter and spirit during the five-day anti-polio drive being commenced from March 29.

Talking to APP, the CEO said that to make the Polio campaign successful, training of Union Council Incharges of mobile polio teams is underway under the supervision of health officers of Health Authority. During the campaign 2964 polio teams would go door-to-door and administer polio drops to 885,000 children less than five years in all Tehsils and Union Councils of the district. Dr. Faiza that SOP's regarding COVID-19 would be implemented to ensure safety during the drive while wearing face masks and use of sanitizer would also be mandatory for polio teams. Meanwhile, in Charge of the anti-polio drive, Chaudary Muhammad Hussain informed that 396 area in charges, 204 medical officers, and allied hospitals, and Tehsil Headquarter hospitals would participate in the campaign. He said all possible steps have been taken by the concerned to make the campaign a success. "307 fix centers would also be set up to administer drops", he added.

Punjab Culture Day event held at RAC

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The one-day colourful celebration of Punjab Culture Day was started at Rawalpindi Arts Council (RAC) here on Sunday morning.

Organized by Punjab Council of Arts on the directions of Punjab government with aim to revive rich culture of Punjab and provide an opportunity to the people, particularly the young generation to get awareness about it. The event includes a series of cultural activities including performing art, artisan at work, folk dances, musical performances, food stalls of traditional cuisine and kids play area for jumping castle, swinging and traditional games followed by cultural walk by artists of the region from Iqbal Park to Arts Council.

Similarly, other literary and traditional events such as Mazahiya Mehfil-e-Mushaira (Humorous poetry) by renowned poets Dr Iman ul Haq Javed, Sarfaraz Shahid, Jawad Ahmed Jawad, Muhammad Arif, Dr Mahar Abbas, Saleem Akhtar, Mah Jabeen and Shahbaz Chuhan, narration of Dastan-e-Khusro by Badar Ali Khan from Lahore and performance by Qurban Ali Niaz (TI), Bakhtawar Qayyum, Tahir Nayyar, Azhar Awan and Bashir Lohar at folk night were special features of the day-long celebration.

Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations on positive trajectory: experts

Participants noted, that peace and stability not only in Afghanistan – for which chances are seemingly brightening – but also on both sides of Pak-Afghan border would be crucial for any lasting connectivity and cooperation between Uzbekistan, Pakistan and between south and central Asia

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations are moving on a positive trajectory. Initiatives taken by the two sides are not only strengthening bilateral cooperation but also contributing immensely for regional peace and stability.

Patricianly, the planned Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan connectivity through roads and railway set the stage for greater regional cooperation between Central and South Asia. These views were expressed in an international webinar titled "Pakistan-Uzbekistan Relations: Emerging Bilateral and Regional Dynamics" organized jointly by the Eurasian Century Institute (ECI), Islamabad

and Centre for International Relations Studies (CIRS), Tashkent.

The webinar noted that the visit of Uzbek Foreign Minister Dr. Abdulaziz Kamilov to Pakistan on March 9 and 10 was highly successful, taking the ties between the two countries further higher. The trip, in continuation of high level exchanges between the top leadership of the two countries witnessed in recent times, helped in further intensifying the atmosphere of cordiality and pushed the moves for bilateral and regional cooperation.

Speakers included Amb. Kurbanov Doniyor Javdatovic, head of CIRS, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director of China-Pakistan Study Centre, ISSI & Patron of ECI



Iqra University; Akram Umarov, senior researcher; Dr. Sarwat Rauf, National University of Modern Languages; Yunusova Zilola Bakhodirovna, CIRS and Irfan Shahzad Takalvi, found-

ing head of ECI. Webinar participants noted that already built and planned Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan connectivity initiatives particularly the railway linkage agreed

upon by the three countries would usher the two regions of Central and South Asia into a new era of commercial cooperation and people-to-people contact. This connectivity would

help the three partner countries and other players in the region to optimally utilize potential for collaboration in economic, developmental, social and people-to-people spheres.

However, the participants noted, that peace and stability not only in Afghanistan – for which the chances are seemingly brightening – but also on both sides of Pak-Afghan border would be crucial for any lasting connectivity and cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan and between south and central Asia.

The webinar suggested that relevant stakeholders of Pakistan and Uzbekistan should work to identify projects of practical commercial cooperation in areas of mutual comparative advantage.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati and Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani talking to media in Islamabad. - DNA

NAHE to improve quality of teaching

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), under Higher Education Commission (HEC) was making all-out efforts to improve the quality of teaching, research, and governance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Pakistan.

NAHE could provide support in three key areas, including individual-level capacity building, institution-level capacity enhancement and empowering higher education institutions to self-regulate and deliver quality learning for faculty, said Rector NAHE Dr Shaheen Sardar Ali while talking to media.

It would also help provide a platform for faculty development units across the country. She said that the pandemic has its costs but also provides an opportunity to improve and innovate. She also shed light on the importance of collaboration for excellence in teaching and learning in the

higher education sector. The Academy, Rector NAHE said, will provide multifaceted courses, workshops, certifications and degrees for Higher Education faculty and staff at different stages of their careers.

Whether general, need-based or customised, these offerings will address teaching practice, research methodology, administrative and leadership skills, educational management, as well as socio-culturally-/linguistically-specific topics and conventional professional development domains within the ambit of higher education.

Conducting and promoting research on higher education will be an integral aspect of all NAHE's activities so that it can function as a dynamic and reflexive institution, she said adding that this, in turn, will allow it to address the need to set benchmarks for quality across different spheres of academics and HEIs through evidence-based interventions and programmes.

HEC announces Phase-II of IPFP to support fresh PhDs

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced Phase-II (Batch-II) of the Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) Program, initiated to provide all Pakistani fresh PhD graduates an opportunity to be placed as Assistant Professors on a tenure track system for a period of one year.

Under the programme, HEC has invited applications for the fiscal year 2021-22 as 'IPFP Fellows' in all areas of study/disciplines.

Deputy Director National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Mehwish Jabbar told media that due to increase in the number of PhD holders, there was growing demand for such interim opportunities.

HEC has given final deadline for the submission of application as March 31, 2021, she added.

She urged that candidates should fill required information online, upload mandatory documents and apply at HEC e-portal <http://eportal.hec.gov.pk/ipfp>.

The aim to launch IPFP program is to create an opportunity for fresh PhDs



to obtain academic experience and mentorship, for one year in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), federal/provincial government post-graduate colleges or public sector Research and Development organizations, prior

to their formal entry into the academic job market, she added.

However, the official sources told media that the selected candidates would carry the title of IPFP Fellow throughout the period of their Fel-

lowship i.e., NFDP and subsequent placements.

IPFP Fellowship would be counted as part of professional experience, and treated as equivalent to a postdoctoral fellowship, they added.

They said eligible candidates would get an outstanding opportunity to attend free of cost, online, one month National Faculty Development Program (NFDP) with a team of highly reputed International and National Trainers.

Eligible applicants who have successfully completed NFDP would also get continuous capacity building opportunities through various online activities recommended by NAHE during the period of the Fellowship, the sources mentioned.

HEC, they said, would facilitate in providing opportunity of placement at HEIs for one year as an IPFP Fellow by sharing credentials of successful candidates.

According to them, a faculty mentor would be assigned to each IPFP Fellow at the host university for guidance on major career-related issues, setting academic targets and supervision of their work to ensure a high degree of research productivity.

Senate polls exposed weakness

DNA

Former President ICCI Shahid Rasheed Butt on Sunday said the highly controversial Senate elections have exposed serious flaws in the system.

The elections overshadowed with threats, bribes and spy cameras have made the whole process a laughing stock, he said.

The controversy should be settled as soon as possible lest it triggers political and economic uncertainty while the government should start fighting poverty, inflation and coronavirus, he added.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that now the opposition is exploring all the possibilities including lawsuits in the superior courts and protests while the increased political temperature will keep the government busy in firefighting.

He said that the government and opposition are blaming each other for spying while different ministers in the government are asking the Pakistan Democratic Alliance to accept its defeat in the Senate election.

The government has been trying to bring transparency in the electoral process and the opposition should abstain from making the election process controversial, they stressed.

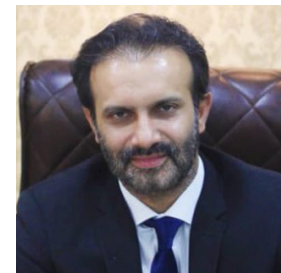
UNICEF establishes 228 ALCs

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Pakistan has established 228 Accelerated Learning Centers (ALCs) in five selected districts of the country to support the reintegration of Schoolchildren.

The ALCs were established for boys and girls in Khurram, Orakzai, North Waziristan, South Waziristan, and Khyber to support the reintegration of 6,754 School children, said a UNICEF Pakistan document.

UNICEF document also revealed that ALCs were provided with 228 facilitators including 128 women and 110 men who were trained on pedagogy and provided with teaching-learning materials, essential school supplies including school inbox kits, recreational kits, students' chairs, black boards, teachers table, and chair.



reach the deserving on the directives of PM Imran Khan.

He said government initially started this program for Rawalpindi and Islamabad, which would help the government learn about the issues and problems, and will improve it before its extension to other cities.

He said philanthropists in the country can also participate in program, adding, they can sign a contract with Bait Ul Mall and this pilot project in the twin cities would help us for winning the trust of donors towards its extension across Pakistan.

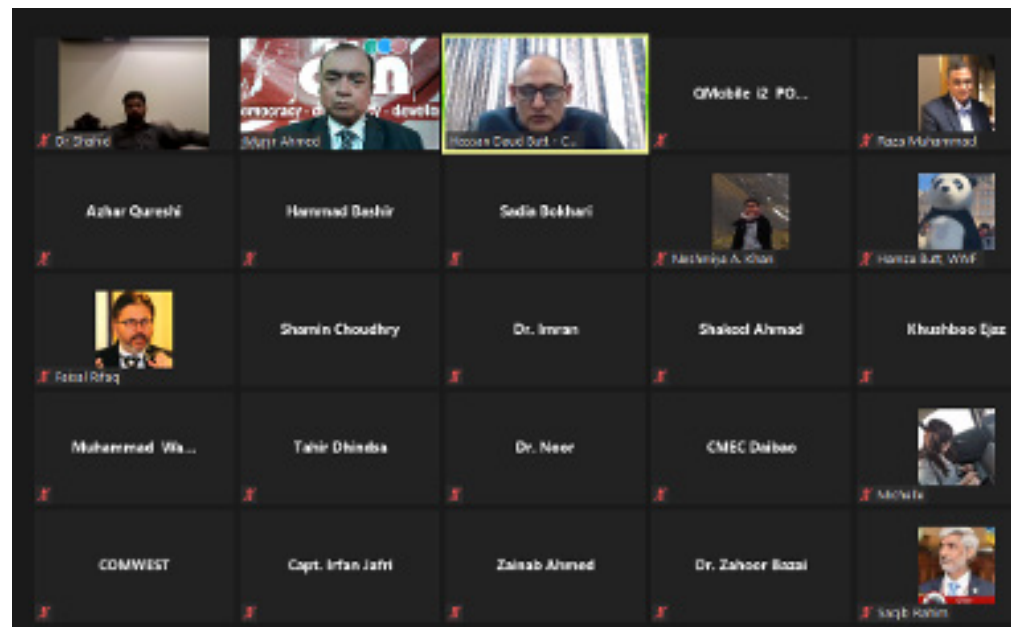
Efficient and empowered authority urged for CPEC

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Devcom-Pakistan webinar suggested inclusive and transparent decision making, brisk implementation and facts-based narrative building to make CPEC a success.

Islamabad – Speaking at a national webinar on Saturday, the experts feared that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) might become a debt trap if the authorities did not efficiently actualize the targets of the game-changer initiative. The institutions, experts and the public at large are still unclear about the scope and targets of the CPEC where the Pakistan government has committed billions of dollars to pool in on high rates of interest.

They said a fact-based narrative building is very important while the enemies and unwise friends are spreading rumors for their own vested interests and to malign the CPEC initiatives. One-window operation shall be the backbone



of the agricultural and industrial phase of the CPEC which should be handled by the relevant and expert human resource.

Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTN jointly organized the webinar titled CPEC authority legislation and future prospects for Pakistan on Saturday. The panel

of experts included Advisor to President National Defense University (NDU) and former Ambassador General Raza Muhammad who is doing PhD on CPEC,

former Project Director CPEC with the Planning Commission of Pakistan and presently CEO KP Board of Investment Hasan Daud Butt, the NASCOM Director and Former Executive Director CPEC Centre of Excellence, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Dr. Shahid Rasheed, Director CPEC Study Centre SDPI Shakeel Ramay, development experts Dr. Zahoor Bazai (Quetta) and Dr. Khushboo Ejaz (Lahore), and Executive Director Devcom-Pakistan Munir Ahmed.

General Raza Muhammad said CPEC is a ray of hope for the economic prosperity of Pakistan that could play a pivotal part in the future known as the Asian century. We need to make the CPEC projects more transparent and efficient if inspired to achieve the targets and harness the economic benefits. A rational narrative is imperative to wipe off the ambiguity and rumors by engaging parliamentarians and media counter offensive campaigns.

Hassan Daud Butt mentioned

that as many as 22 projects are in different stages of completion despite some delay in setting up Special Economic Zones. Regular meetings of the CPEC stakeholders may take place to improve efficiency further. The CPEC is indeed a game-changer and more hard work may be done to achieve the targets of the project. The CPEC authority shall have more powers and authority to combat the challenges and bottlenecks.

Dr. Shahid Rasheed said the CPEC improved Pakistan's GDP to 5.7 percent in 2018 from 3.3 percent in 2013, and also improved the security situation. The COVID-19 and the political instability has marred the performance of the CPEC in recent years. But, a reborn of the CPEC would bring much better benefits to the nation. The parliamentarians of both sides shall work in harmony for an inclusive CPEC authority that is much needed in the new phase of the CPEC to invigorate agriculture and industrialization around the CPEC.

Afghan peace

With Russia lending its support to the new peace process quickly developing in Afghanistan, things might move faster in chalking out a new plan. The US and Russia have now both indicated that a power-sharing arrangement between the Afghan Taliban and the government is the best way forward. The Afghan government is also willing to seek fresh elections in a bid to bring the Taliban into the mainstream.

However, even with major powers hedging their bets on the new strategy, there are still many concerns that have not been addressed. The most important factor is of course the violence. Civilians are deliberately targeted, and while the Taliban do not claim every attack the continuation of violence suits their narrative and stance perfectly. Each attack and civilian death brings more fatigue on the issue in the west, the Afghan government and civilians.

A power-sharing agreement, if accepted will require an end to the bloodshed. Otherwise, bringing the Taliban into government will give them a voice, but suppress others that are the targets of the incessant conflict. Any offer that the US and its allies make to the Taliban must set an end to violence as a precondition this time. If that does not happen, we might see the non-state actor use any adjustments to the agreement as a reason to continue spilling blood.

It is also worrying that foreign powers are not keeping the preservation of the rights of women, minorities and others as a central concern in any discussions moving forward. All stakeholders must recognise that 'peaceful Afghanistan' above all, means that its citizens are not threatened. Regional peace is important of course, but it does not exist if conflict within the country persists. The path forward is fraught with challenges. All stakeholders must navigate through and look for the best possible solution. But any course charted in haste and while ignoring important internal sections of the public will only keep stem the violence, not end it.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

ABC CERTIFIED

Vol: 01 Issue: 300

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Multilingual campaign

With the aim to encourage equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, the UN just launched its first ever campaign in Urdu, among nine other languages as well. It is comforting to see such efforts of international organisations as they work to uplift and incorporate countries like Pakistan in the global fight against the pandemic.

However, this does not entail that we take a step back under the illusion of a sense of security. Cases continue to rise while the national vaccination drive moves slowly, and preventative precautions seem to have been abandoned completely. We must not lose sight of the reality we live in. The UN's multilingual campaign titled 'Sub-aik-Saath', an Urdu translation of 'Only Together', intends to encourage the Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) project. Its main objective is to ensure that accessibility to all the various types of vaccines being produced is improved for countries across the globe—especially developing.

Such inclusivity is bound to have a positive impact on the mindset and morale of the people as well as the authorities. The only matter of concern is the authorities taking on a lax approach in the face of such progress. It is vital, now more than ever, that our proactive role in all of this is not reduced. Other provinces can look at the excellent start of the vaccination campaign in Punjab. We need to step up our efforts to vaccinate more sections of the general public. Pakistan is crossing the unsettling threshold of reporting 3000 cases per day. The fact that the vaccination drive still has immense ground to cover is not reassuring, along with the restraint shown by the people in taking the initiative of getting themselves registered for the vaccine.

We must take the extra step to encourage the public to take preemptive measures and finish the doses that were so hard to procure in the first place. We must keep moving forward—from one group to the other—while the strict implementation of Section 144 regarding the mandatory use of face masks must be expanded beyond Islamabad. When the new COVAX doses arrive, we should already be done with the batch we already possess.

Uzbekistan-Pakistan momentous relations

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



Uzbekistan's "Reconnect" with South Asia is heavily dependent on Pakistan which offers the shortest routes. It has various seaports to connect Uzbekistan not only with South Asia but also with Middle East Region

It seems that ancient "Silk Route" between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Pakistan is in its "resurrection". Civilizational "linkages" are re-emerging. Historical connections are "re-invented". Political understandings are getting momentum. Economic preferences are reshaping. Investment prospects are widening. Now Tashkent and Islamabad are getting closer and closer and fairies of true friendship, brotherhood and mutual respect are flying high on the connecting mountains. Commercial diplomacy is now at its peak and bilateral relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Pakistan are strengthening day by day. Moreover, changing "end game" in the region

has encouraged all the regional countries especially, Uzbekistan and Pakistan to immediately consolidate their relations in diverse fields of economy, trade & commerce, FDIs, JVCs, energy and agriculture to pursue peaceful means to achieve desired goals of peace, harmony, stability, prosperity, connectivity and above all sustainable economic development.

Economic reunion promotes spirits of connectivity and beneficial propositions between the two countries. Now trade & commerce activities, signing of meaningful commercial MOUs, prospects of Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), protocols of trans-regional railways connectivity, easy and smooth access to hot waters (seaports), joint ventures in textiles, pharmaceutical, agriculture, automobile, energy and infrastructure development have given new impetus to Uzbekistan-Pakistan bilateral relations.

Uzbekistan's "Reconnect" with South Asia is heavily dependent on Pakistan which offers the shortest routes. It has various seaports to connect Uzbekistan not only with South Asia but also with Middle East Region.

Most recently, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Dr. Abdulaziz Kamilov paid personal visit to Pakistan and met Prime Minister Imran. While meeting with Prime Minister of Pakistan Uzbek foreign Minister Kamilov conveyed cordial greetings of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and reiterated Uzbekistan's commitment to expand bilateral cooperation with Pakistan in diverse fields.

On his part, Prime Minister Imran Khan fondly recalled his interactions with President Mirziyoyev in Beijing and Bishkek and reiterated his invitation to the Uzbek President to visit Pakistan at the earliest convenience.

Pakistan Prime Minister Khan highly projected the importance of historic and civilizational links between the two countries. He highly valued its close fraternal ties with Uzbekistan and wished to deepen bilateral cooperation in all areas. By emphasizing importance of economic development and enhanced bilateral trade he termed regional connectivity as the cornerstones of economic growth and development. He underlined Pakistan's resolve to forge closer ties with Central Asia, covering trade, investments, energy, and people-to-people exchanges.

Moreover, the Prime Minister appreciated the proposed Trans-Afghan railway project between Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. He showed Pakistan's commitment to support all efforts for the earliest realization of this important connectivity project. While showcasing the strategic geographic importance of Pakistan which offers the shortest route the Prime Minister offered the international seas to all Central Asian Republics through Karachi and Gwadar ports and could be the gateway to landlocked

Central Asia. He reaffirmed the resolve to facilitate Uzbekistan's access to Pakistani sea-ports.

Interestingly, the government of Uzbekistan has discarded its intentions to connect Asia through Iranian soil which is indeed a good omen for further strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries and moreover, Uzbekistan is one of the important countries of One Belt & One Road Initiative (BRI) and CPEC is the flagship project. Thus commercial convenience and convergence is there to further strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries. During the meeting with prime minister Foreign Minister Dr. Kamilov also handed over a letter from President Mirziyoyev addressed to Prime Minister Imran Khan, inviting him to participate in a Central Asia-South Asia Connectivity Conference in Tashkent in July 2021. The Prime Minister thanked for the invitation and mentioned that he was looking forward to visiting Uzbekistan. The Prime Minister reaffirmed his government steadfast support to the Afghan peace process, stressing the imperative of negotiated political solution. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the Afghan sides will seize this historic opportunity to work together constructively and secure an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive negotiated political settlement.

Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi also held delegation level talks with the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Dr. Abdulaziz Kamilov which were very effective, productive and positive in its multilayered orientations. Views were exchanged on enhancement of economic cooperation, mutual support in international fora, regional connectivity and tourism promotion. Foreign Minister Kamilov extended an invitation to Foreign Minister Qureshi to participate in the Central Asia-South Asia Connectivity Conference to be held in Tashkent in July 2021.

During the meeting, both sides expressed their firm resolve to boost high-level interactions to give impetus to the existing positive momentum in bilateral relations. It was agreed to maximally utilize the existing institutional mechanisms by regularly convening sessions of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPCS) and Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC).

Both sides expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in advancing rail connectivity between the two countries and agreed on early completion of Trans-Afghan railway project. Foreign Minister Qureshi emphasized the importance of direct air connectivity to further trade and tourism. He also stressed facilitation of visas for businessmen and tourists. Here it is worth mentioning that Uzbekistan government is already working upon it. According to reliable resources, PIA is going to start its direct flights to Tashkent

which will hopefully play an important role in regional connectivity, speed and scope of bilateral relations in the days to come.

Foreign Minister Qureshi underlined the need to further strengthen the existing parliamentary cooperation between the two countries through exchange of visits. He welcomed the proposed "Re-connect Silk Route Conference" scheduled for July 2021. The event would help showcase Pakistani exports and products in Central Asia.

He also underscored the importance of closer agricultural cooperation between the two countries particularly in cotton seed sector. Uzbekistan is blessed with natural colored cotton which may be utilized by initiating a joint venture in public-private partnership between the two sides.

Foreign Minister Qureshi expressed satisfaction at the level of cooperation between the two countries in the multilateral organizations such as the UN, OIC, ECO and SCO.

The Foreign Minister highlighted Pakistan's positive role for the facilitation of Intra-Afghan Negotiations. The Foreign Minister reiterated Pakistan's support to Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process culminating in an inclusive and broad-based political solution. Establishment of lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan would contribute to progress on various connectivity initiatives leading to regional prosperity.

Most recently, during various spells of bilateral meetings Pakistan and Uzbekistan agreed to enhance trade relations, bilateral transit trade agreement, Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), banking and visa issues, and aviation and customs cooperation. Unfortunately, National Bank of Pakistan has recently closed its banking operations in Tashkent due to which potential investors and businessmen are now facing acute problems. It is suggested that banking operations in all the central Asian countries especially, Tashkent may be reopened immediately. Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood and Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister Sardor Umurzakov had various meaningful meetings to further strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. In order to further deepen the trade ties, both sides also agreed to hold a business conference in Tashkent in July this year.

Pakistan offered cooperation to different stakeholders including customs, maritime affairs, railways and aviation sectors. Uzbekistan and Pakistan held the first meeting of the joint working group on trade and economic issues, as well as a railway project to link the two countries.

For 'love': charity-washing colonialism and genocide

Azeezah Kanji



Take the reaction of the VHPA to the Indian Supreme Court's Ayodhya decision – which despite characterising the destruction of the ancient Babri mosque, followed by anti-Muslim pogroms, as an "egregious violation of the rule of law" effectively legalised it anyway by giving title to the destroyers. According to the VHPA, this represents a triumph against "five centuries of colonial subjugation"

In the name of "charity", the Jewish National Fund of Israel is buying up Palestinian land in the West Bank for colonial settlements and calling it "environmentalism"; far-right Hindutva nationalist organisations are propagating their fascist-inspired ideology across the world and calling it "decolonisation" and "anti-rac-

ism"; and monks who justify genocide in Myanmar are running tax-exempt centres across the United States for the practice of "religion for peace" Buddhism.

While Muslim and Palestinian charities in the US have been listed and prosecuted as "terrorists", even for donations to hospitals and other entirely non-violent initiatives, those promoting violence against Muslims and Palestinians continue to be subsidised by tax exemptions from the state.

Such absurdities expose the contradictions of the "non-profit industrial complex": which, like the military-industrial and prison-industrial complexes, serves to enforce deeply-rooted structures of domination. The difference is that the non-profit version operates under the mantle of benevolence and love – "love" being the literal translation of the Latin term caritas, from which the word "charity" is derived.

"Philanthropy is the private allocation of stolen social wages," as eminent American abolitionist scholar Ruth Wilson Gilmore has observed. In fact, as Gilmore points out, the wealth redistributed through philanthropy is actually "twice-stolen – (a) profit sheltered from (b) taxes". When it comes to the US's "empire of charity", one might even say thrice-stolen, considering the foundation of the American state on the theft of Indigenous lands – another genocidal enterprise that self-righteously framed itself as a charitable undertaking. For instance, the American branch of the Jewish National Fund openly advertises its role in constructing projects in the settlement cluster of Gush Etzion. Yet it somehow simultaneously maintains that it "is not involved in any settlement building and never has been".

Perhaps the confusion stems from the organisation's idiosyncratic definition of the Green Line – the line demarcating Israel from the occupied Palestinian territories – which the JNF-USA once bizarrely stated refers to "the millions of trees JNF planted there". The continuities between colonial processes unfolding on either side of the Green Line are illustrated by the JNF-USA's flagship Blueprint Negev project – a "blueprint" for the continuing dispossession of Indigenous Bedouin Palestinians from the Naqab (Negev) Desert within Israel's pre-1967 borders.

On both sides of the Green Line, the "millions of trees" planted by the JNF have functioned as forest cover concealing the ruins and appropriating the land of ethnically cleansed Indigenous villages. For example, the GodTV Forest – an interfaith collaboration between the JNF and evangelical Christian media organisation GodTV, which also has non-profit status in the US – occupies land constituting part of the Bedouin village of Al-Araqib. GodTV's channel was expelled from Israel's airwaves last year for trying to convert Jewish Israelis to the Gospel of Jesus, but the GodTV Forest converting Indigenous land into colonial territory remains.

Three weeks ago, Al-Araqib was bulldozed by Israel for the 183rd time: a continuation of the "Bedouin Nakba", in the words of academic Eyal Weizman, through which 90 per cent of the Bedouin population was removed from their ancestral homes by rape, massacres, and relocation into "concentration towns".

In JNF-USA promo materials, this violently emptied land of the Negev is portrayed as a "nobody's land" waiting to be claimed and developed by the state of Israel: the old colonial myth of "terra nullius". It is soon to be the site of the shining new World Zionist Village, proudly sponsored by the American JNF.

The Bedouins, meanwhile, are reconfigured as the beneficiaries of JNF munificence – as other settler states similarly exalted themselves for charitably providing "care" to Indigenous peoples for diseases and other problems introduced by the colonisers in the first place.

As its unholy alliance with GodTV indicates, the JNF is one part of an extensive archipelago of American nonprofits bolstering and bankrolling Israel's colonial rule. A current search of the US Internal Revenue Service's database turns up 30 charities whose very names explicitly declare their entire raison d'être is funding illegal settlements – for example, the Gush Etzion Foundation, or the American Friends of Ariel.

Americans can "adopt a settlement" through the Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, or "adopt a battalion" of the occupation army through the Friends of the Israel Defence Forces (FIDF). FIDF alone raises millions of dollars through celebrity-studded galas for the Israeli army every year, despite restrictions in US law against donating money to foreign militaries.

Yet while US charities donating to humanitarian projects in Gaza have been held liable for deaths attributed to Hamas – on the theory that "money is fungible" and "giving money to Hamas [is] like giving a loaded gun to a child" – lawsuits against settlement-supporting nonprofits have consistently been thrown out by American courts.

From under this Iron Dome of impunity, hundreds of US-based charities have been funneling billions of dollars to every stage of the settler-colonial life cycle: from expropriating Palestinians' homes, to arming settler militias (whose "loaded guns" are all too literal), to exonerating settlers who murder or maim Palestinians.

For example, Americans are among those who donate the most to Israeli legal organisation Honenu – which specialises in securing exculpation for settlers who attack Palestinians and providing financial support to their families. Honenu casts itself as a courageous David confronting the Goliath of anti-settler persecution. Forget that David (like many Palestinians classified as "terrorists") was armed only with stones – while settler communities are equipped with sniper scopes, armoured vests, thermal imaging, and other advanced surveillance technology, thanks in significant part to the generosity of charitable givers in the US.

A similar Goliath-as-David inversion complex is manifest by Hindutva and Buddhist nationalist organisations, which depict themselves as bravely standing up to Muslims and other minorities being crushed underfoot by the Indian and Myanmar states.

The US is the new virtual homeland of the Hindu Rashtra ("nation"). As of 2012, more websites propagating Hindutva ideology were hosted on the US servers than on

the Indian ones. Many of these sites are connected to organisations registered as nonprofits in the US, such as the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) and the Vishva Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA).

Take the reaction of the VHPA to the Indian Supreme Court's Ayodhya decision – which despite characterising the destruction of the ancient Babri mosque, followed by anti-Muslim pogroms, as an "egregious violation of the rule of law" effectively legalised it anyway by giving title to the destroyers. According to the VHPA, this represents a triumph against "five centuries of colonial subjugation".

On top of supposedly having invented air travel, plastic surgery, and the genetic sciences, Hindutva nationalists also seem to have discovered a new meaning of "colonial subjugation" – one in which the alleged colonisers are some of the most impoverished, politically marginalised, and abused communities in India.

Hindutva's founders spoke of relegating Muslims "to the position of negroes in [Jim Crow-era USA]". Now, the VHPA has the audacity to analogise its supremacist struggle to the American "Civil Rights movements, or to the movements of Native tribes to reclaim back their sacred grounds". (Israeli settlers have similarly been known to liken themselves to Rosa Parks.)

An ideological father of the infamous "face of Buddhist terror" Wirathu, Sitagu Sayadaw was vice chair of the Ma-BaTha: the organisation of monks behind Myanmar's "race and religion protection laws" restricting Rohingya marriages and births. (Measures to prevent reproduction constitute a genocidal act under the UN Genocide Convention and Statute of the International Criminal Court.)

Hailed as a great humanitarian for his contributions to natural disaster relief, he has simultaneously fomented the human-made disaster against the Rohingya by urging stronger cooperation between monks and the genocidal military, praising Israel for "fencing in [Muslims] like pigs and bulls", and absolving mass slaughter of Rohingya on the ground that they are not fully human.

Sitagu Sayadaw's comments illuminate the paradox lying at the heart of the concept of charity – repeatedly used to justify oppression and domination in the name of "love for humanity" against those deemed sub-human, from the Crusades to colonialism.

Political philosopher Hannah Arendt famously analysed the "banality of evil". Here, we have the "benevolence" of evil. Violence is rationalised not simply as mundane, but morally imperative.

Against this colonial caritas, communities and movements are demonstrating their own forms of decolonial love: building up interfaith and intercommunal solidarity against the politics of genocidal nationalism and fascism, from Myanmar to India to Israel to the US.

As philosopher Cornel West said, "justice is what love looks like in public" – even if it continues to be punished by the "charitable" state.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

Mass school abduction foiled in Nigeria

KANO: Security forces have foiled an attempt to kidnap hundreds of schoolboys in northwestern Nigeria, a state official said on Sunday, days after dozens of students were seized in the latest mass abduction. The kidnapping of 39 students on Thursday was the most recent in a string of abductions complicating the security challenges facing President Muhammadu Buhari's security forces, who are also battling a more than decade-long Islamist insurgency in the northeast. "Between the late hours of Saturday night and the early hours of today, suspected bandits stormed the Government Science Secondary School, Ikara... in an attempt to kidnap students," Samuel Aruwan, state home affairs commissioner said of the foiled attack in a statement.

"Fortunately, the students utilised the security warning system in place, and were thus able to alert security forces in the area", he said.

He said a joint security force, comprising soldiers, policemen and vigilantes, deployed to the school and "engaged the bandits, forcing them to flee".

The military managed to rescue 180 students, including eight staff members, after a fierce battle with the gunmen.

Heavily armed gangs in northwestern and central Nigeria have stepped up attacks in recent years. They have recently turned their focus to schools, where they kidnap students or schoolchildren for ransom - Thursday's abduction was at least the fourth such attack since December.

Aruwan said all 307 students in the school targeted on Saturday had been accounted for after a headcount.

"The attempted kidnap was foiled completely and no student was taken from the school." - APP

Kenya snubs ICJ hearing over Somalia border

NAIROBI: Kenya will not attend International Court of Justice hearings that begin this week over a long-running border dispute with Somalia, according to a letter seen Sunday by AFP. The ICJ was asked by Somalia to rule in a case that could decide which of the two countries will have control over a large Indian Ocean zone that is rich in fish and which might contain substantial crude oil reserves.

But in a letter sent Thursday, Kenyan prosecutor general Kihara Kariuki told the Hague-based court his country "shall not be participating in the hearing in the case" that is scheduled for Monday. Kariuki said the first reason was that "Covid-19 pandemic conditions have hampered Kenya's ability to prepare adequately for the hearing."

The UN tribunal rules in disputes between countries, and has been hearing a case brought by Somalia in 2014. Somalia, which lies northeast of Kenya, wants to extend its maritime frontier with Kenya along the line of the land border, in a southeasterly direction. Kenya wants the border to head out to sea in a straight line east, giving it more territory. - APP

Coronavirus positivity...

From Page 01 has risen to 652,000. Out of these, 570,000 have recovered from the novel virus while total death toll has increased to 13,508. On Saturday, Pakistan conducted 40,564 tests of the virus after which the above-mentioned results were obtained.

Earlier this week, the NCOC and the education ministry had taken important decisions on closing schools in certain cities of the country owing to the rising number of cases. The NCOC had also announced that the ban on shrines, outdoor dining and other activities, such as the reopening of cinemas, has been extended as the country braces for a third wave of the virus.

Japan courageously faced triple disasters in 2011: Amb. Imtiaz

Exceptional voluntary work and welfare activities enhanced the image of Pakistan not only in Japan but all over the world, when the Japanese government and people admired their support in this critical situation

DNA

TOKYO: Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan, Imtiaz Ahmad on Sunday said that Japan has courageously faced triple disasters in 2011 and with its best strategy after a decade completed the rehabilitation and revitalization work.

During the 'Great East Japan Earthquake' occurred on March 11, 2011, the Japanese have averted three types of gigantic disaster including earthquake, tsunami and nuclear threat and set an example in human history that sets a pattern for other nations to manage

crisis, Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan, Imtiaz Ahmad said this in addressing to a webinar on the 10-years completion of 'Great East Japan Earthquake' organized by the Japanese embassy in Islamabad.

Imtiaz Ahmad said Japanese were committed nationals, who amicably did the rescue, rehabilitation and managed the huge disaster of 'Great East Japan Earthquake' through their commitment, dynamism, zeal, unity and tendency of teamwork.

Sharing his experience about the 'Great East Japan Earthquake', he said, "I was deputy ambassador in Japan

during this huge disaster and witnessed how Pakistani community in Japan played an exemplary role in rescue and provided food to the people in affected areas." He said this exceptional voluntary work and welfare activities enhanced the image of Pakistan not only in Japan but all over the world, when the Japanese government and people admired their support in this critical situation.

He said the Pakistan embassy fully supported the volunteers to carry on the relief activities at that crucial time. "We established a helpline for Pakistani lived in Tsunami hit areas," he

added. He said few Pakistani students and workers were in the affected areas and the Pakistani embassy provided every support to them as it provided relief goods to the local community.

Replying to a question, he said the Japanese government had executed the 10-year plan and revived from this huge disaster within one decade, which was a remarkable joint effort by the Japanese government and community.

"We can learn from Japan for preemptive measures, rescue and rehabilitation in this kind of situation to minimize the loss of human life

and material lost" he said. While in discussion, Mayor of major areas earthquake hit Kamaishi city, Iwate Takenori Noda said the rehabilitation and reconstruction work after the 'Great East Japan Earthquake' was almost 98 percent completed and few works of infrastructure to be completed by next few months.

He said the huge catastrophe of the earthquake and Tsunami's destruction were not a challenge for us but it was an opportunity for reemergence from crucial situations with national unity, teamwork and commitment. He said the national government and local gov-

ernments in the affected areas continued to work together during the last ten years for the reconstruction and revitalization. Sharing his experience about the huge disaster, the Pakistani community volunteer Mian Ramazan, said after a day, "We reached the Tsunami hit area of Kamaishi city and provided food to the local people."

He said during this critical situation, "I learned that Japanese are more disciplined nation of the world." Another volunteer Anees Ahmed said he was religiously motivated to help people without discrimination of creed, color and race.



HYDERABAD: A group photograph of transgender cricket team with winning trophy during cricket match between transgender and street girls teams organized by Active Women Foundation at Niaz Cricket Stadium. - DNA Photo by Jan Ali Laghari

Mumbai City win first Indian Super League

NEW DELHI: Mumbai City have clinched their maiden Indian Super League title just over a year after being taken over by the owners of English Premier League giants Manchester City. India midfielder Bipin Singh scored a 90th-minute winner to edge out three-time winners ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the final played behind closed doors in Goa on Saturday.

The Sergio Lobera-coached Mumbai, who had already qualified for the AFC Champions League by finishing top of the regular-season standings, became just the second team to complete the double by going on to

win the four-team finals. Bengaluru FC first achieved the feat in 2019.

The Abu Dhabi-controlled City Football Group took a majority stake of the Indian club in November 2019 to add to their stable of seven other clubs, including Manchester City, who have won the Premier League four times since they were bought by the company in 2008.

City Football Group's majority shareholder is Abu Dhabi United Group, the investment company owned by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a member of the Abu Dhabi royal family. - APP

Pak Military AG National Annual Games begins

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Military Accountant General Defense Games was underway in a thrilling opening ceremony here at Peshawar Sports Complex on Sunday.

Director Local Audit Defense Services Syed Abdus Salam Asif was the chief guest on this occasion who formally inaugurated the Games which was an annual feature of the PMAD sporting calendar. Hundreds of players from nine different stations including Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Abbottabad, Rawalpindi,

Wah Cantt, Quetta and Peshawar were taking part in Games comprising Tennis, Hockey and Athletics at Qayyum Stadium Peshawar.

The ceremony was started with recitation from the Holy Quran followed by the National Anthem and a smart March Past and excellent display of the Military Band. The players from all across the country enthusiastically took part.

Speaking on this occasion, Director Local Audit Defense Services Syed Abdus Salam Asif appreciated the athletes for their enthusiastic participation.

He said "The Games are very much important because of their hectic schedule."

The Games, he said, refresh their mental and physical capabilities.

He said "The Games is an annual feature of the PMAD calendar and this year it was decided to host the Games in Peshawar. He said in way back 2017, Peshawar was also the host city of these Games."

He also lauded the support extended by Directorate General Sports KP for providing a class sporting facilities inside one wall. He

assured the players that all out efforts and steps have been taken for facilitating them.

He said these PMAD National Games were held annually since inception of Pakistan and flourishing much needed talent to the national teams in different Games.

The closing ceremony of the Games would be held on March 15 with Accountant General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Murtaza Khan and Military Accountant General of Pakistan would grace the occasion as guests. - APP

Uzbek, Kyrgyz leaders 'Agree' to solve border issues

Over the past decades, there have been numerous incidents along the border which in some cases involved gunfire

DNA

TASHKENT: Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev says he has agreed with visiting Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov on how to proceed to solve border issues between the two Central Asian nations within three months.

"For the first time in relations between our two nations we have agreed who should do what and when at the border because this is a serious problem that our people are waiting to be fixed," Mirziyoyev said on March 12 after holding talks with his Kyrgyz counterpart in Tashkent.



"If everything goes according to the plan, [the issue will be solved in] three months, which we agreed to be the longest possible time," he added. The border between the two Central Asian neighbors has been a major bone of contention in bilateral ties since

1991, when they gained independence from the Soviet Union.

Over the past decades, there have been numerous incidents along the border which in some cases involved gunfire.

The situation began to improve following the 2016

death of Uzbekistan's longtime authoritarian president, Islam Karimov.

His successor, Mirziyoyev, has said that improving ties with Uzbekistan's neighbors is a major priority of his foreign policy. Border sections still have an undefined status around the Uzbek exclaves of Sokh and Shahmardan in Kyrgyzstan, as well as around the Kyrgyz exclave of Barak in Uzbekistan.

This is Japarov's third foreign trip since he was elected president on January 10. His first and second trips were made in February and early-March to Russia and Kazakhstan, respectively.

Syria's Asma al-Assad faces probe in UK

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Police in the United Kingdom have opened an investigation into allegations that Asma al-Assad, wife of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, incited and encouraged "terrorist" acts in Syria.

Al-Assad, a dual British-Syrian national, could be stripped of her UK citizenship if convicted of the crime, according to media reports. The Metropolitan Police told UK media outlet Sky News on Sunday it "received a referral" in July last year "relating to the ongoing Syrian conflict".

"The referral is in the process of being assessed by officers from the War Crimes Unit," the statement said. The case against al-Assad was brought by Guernica 37, a conflict-



focused international justice law firm that also deals with "transnational litigation involving the enforcement of fundamental human rights protection".

"This is an important step in holding senior political officials accountable for their acts and ensuring that a state, through an independent and impartial legal process, takes responsibility for the acts of its own nationals," Guernica 37 said in a statement on its website.

Western Australia re-elects state govt

SYDNEY: Voters in Australia's westernmost state have returned their centre-left government to power in an "unparalleled" landslide, demonstrating popular support for the Labor party's handling of Covid-19.

In Western Australia, a hub for the country's lucrative resources sector, a strict pandemic border closure shut out other Australians for much of the past year. The incumbent Labor government is projected to win 53 of the state's 59 parliamentary seats, while the opposition conservative Liberal Party was all but wiped out - reduced to just two seats after Saturday's election.

Public broadcaster ABC called it a "historic" and "unparalleled" win, in a sprawling state that often casts itself as distinct from the more populated eastern coast.

The crushing victory was led by state Premier Mark McGowan, who championed the prolonged border closures despite legal challenges and criticism from Australia's ruling conservative government.

"The magnitude of what has happened today is not lost on me. But with it comes great responsibility," McGowan said. - APP

Zaghari-Ratcliffe back in Iran court

TEHRAN: British-Iranian dual national Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe appeared in a Tehran court Sunday to face new charges of "propaganda against the system", a week after she finished serving a five-year sentence, her lawyer said.

The hearing has dashed the hopes of family and supporters for a swift release of the 42-year-old, in a case that has heightened diplomatic tensions between London and Tehran.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said it was "unacceptable that Iran has chosen to continue a second wholly arbitrary case".

According to Zaghari-Ratcliffe's lawyer, Hojjat Kermani, she is now being prosecuted for "propaganda against the system for having participated in a rally in front of the Iranian embassy in London" in 2009.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe spoke in court where she denied all charges, according to the Free Nazanin support campaign.

"Nazanin... pointed out that all the accusations and evidence put forward had been part of her trial in 2016," the group said.

"She had already been tried and convicted on this evidence."

Kermani told AFP that "the hearing took place in a very calm and good atmosphere, in the presence of my client". - APP

Greek far-left hitman ends hunger strike

ATHENS: Jailed Greek far-left hitman Dimitris Koufodinas on Sunday ended a 66-day hunger strike, his lawyer said, a day after doctors warned he risked "sudden death" from disruption to multiple vital organs.

"We persuaded him to end the strike," Koufodinas' lawyer Ioanna Kourtovik told agency.

In a statement released through Kourtovik, Koufodinas thanked "progressive people" for having shown their support in multiple protests around the country in the past months. The demonstrations were often marred by violence.

"What is happening out there is more important than what initiated it," he said.

Koufodinas, who turns 63 next week, is serving multiple life sentences for 11 murders he carried out for the extremist group November 17.

For 20 years, the group targeted industrialists, policemen, foreign diplomats and soldiers, before being dismantled in 2002.

Considered the outfit's top assassin and dubbed "Poison Hand" by Greek media, Koufodinas began a hunger strike in January after being denied transfer to a high-security jail in Athens to be near his family.

His health has been in critical condition for the last two weeks. - APP

UN urges withdrawal of mercenaries from Libya

"The Security Council calls on all parties to implement the ceasefire agreement in full and urges member states to respect and support the full implementation of the agreement," the world body said in a statement

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The United Nations Security Council has called for an immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya as the conflict-ridden African country ushers in a new era with the formation of a national unity government.

In a unanimously approved declaration, the Council urged foreign fighters to leave Libya "without further delay".

It also welcomed the Libyan parliament's approval of a new unified government, which is set to

lead the North African country to December elections after a decade-long conflict. "The Security Council calls on all parties to implement the ceasefire agreement in full and urges member states to respect and support the full implementation of the agreement," the world body said in a statement.

A ceasefire agreement reached in October called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries in three months and adherence to a UN arms embargo, provisions which have not been met. The UN said in December last year that there were about 20,000 foreign troops and mercenaries help-

ing the opposing sides in Libya. Calling for full compliance with the UN arms embargo by all member states, the 15-member body stressed on Saturday that plans were needed "for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of armed groups, security sector reform and to establish an inclusive, civilian-led security architecture for Libya as a whole."

Moreover, the council welcomed the parliamentary approval of Libyan Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah's cabinet. It said the new Libyan government should take necessary preparations to set Libya for "free and fair national pres-

idential and parliamentary elections on 24 December 2021." Libya's parliament granted a vote of confidence to Dbeibah's new unity government on Wednesday, with 132 votes of the 133 lawmakers who attended the session.

Libya, which sits atop the largest oil reserves in Africa, has been grappling with unchecked violence since the overthrow of former dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 during an operation backed by the Western alliance of NATO. Since 2014, two rival seats of power have emerged in Libya, namely the UN-recognized government based in the capital Tripoli, and

another camp based in the eastern city of Tobruk, backed militarily by armed rebels. The country descended into unprecedented chaos last year after the so-called Libyan National Army (LNA) under rebel commander Khalifa Haftar moved toward Tripoli to seize the city. They were repelled by government forces.

The conflict has escalated into a regional proxy war fueled by foreign powers pouring weapons and mercenaries into the country, with the Tripoli government receiving major backing from Turkey, and the rebels from the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Jordan.

Briefs

Garment industry wants early approval of textile policy

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: The garment industry on Sunday called for the final approval of new textile policy 2020-25 by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet as it is vital for new investment and marketing plan in this major export-oriented sector.

Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRGMEA) vice chairman Adeeb Iqbal Sheikh said that Prime Minister Imran Khan has already approved the five-year textile policy for onward submission to the ECC. However, the ministry was unable to oblige due to undisclosed reasons.

He said the government announced several schemes including settlement of outstanding refund claims, rationalization of refund regime, establishment of Exim bank, duty-free import of textile machinery and reduction of mark up rate for export refinance in past but the sector was not getting benefits yet.

Australians protest for gender equality

SYDNEY: Thousands protested in Australia's Perth on Sunday, kicking off a nationwide campaign for gender equality as anger swells over rape accusations that have rocked the country's halls of power.

The Western Australian city launched the #March4Justice with a packed rally where people chanted "enough is enough" and held up placards demanding action to address sexual violence against women, local media reported.

More than 40 protests will be held across the country Monday, including outside Parliament House in Canberra, where the government has been roiled by sexual assault accusations in recent weeks.

Former government staffer Brittany Higgins publicly came forward last month to allege she had been raped by a colleague in a minister's office weeks before the 2019 election and then treated like a "political problem" when she told her bosses.

Attorney-General Christian Porter, who is from Perth, was then accused of raping a 16-year-old girl in 1988 when they were both students. He denies the allegations, which she took to police before her death last year, and the investigation has been closed.

One dead in Myanmar anti-coup protest

YANGON: At least one anti-coup protester was killed Sunday as demonstrators across Myanmar continued to defy military rule, a day after a group of ousted MPs in hiding urged them to overcome the nation's "darkest moment".

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi from power in a February 1 putsch, triggering a mass uprising that has seen hundreds of thousands protest daily for a return to democracy.

The junta has repeatedly justified its power grab by alleging widespread electoral fraud in November's elections, which Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won by a landslide.

In response, a group of elected MPs, many of whom are in hiding, have formed a shadow "parliament" called the Committee for Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) - the Burmese word for the country's governing bloc - to denounce the military regime.

The junta's security forces are staging near-daily crackdowns against demonstrators calling for a return to democracy, deploying tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds to quell anti-coup protests. More than 80 have been killed in the unrest, according to a local monitoring group. - APP



KABUL: Former president Hamid Karzai met with the NATO civilian representative for Afghanistan Stefano Pontecorvo and discussed the peace process and the next steps. - DNA

Pakistan, China construction giants to explore together

The main cities like Karachi, Lahore Hyderabad and Faisalabad face flooding during rainy weather or monsoon. Therefore, in the meeting, it was discussed that the fresh water and wastewater related projects have to be executed on urgent basis

DNA

BEIJING, March 14 (): Chinese and Pakistani construction giants - China Energy Engineering Company (CEEC) and Zahir Khan Brothers (ZKB) Construction Company have decided to work together to explore opportunities in the construction sector of Pakistan. According to China Economic Net (CEN), the two companies, in a meeting hosted by Commercial Section of Embassy of Pakistan, Beijing, discussed ways and means to take advantage of up to \$ 3 billion of projects in road infrastructure sector to be available in Pakistan this year, according to

Badar uz Zaman, Commercial Counselor. "They will also work together to tap opportunities in the special economic zone construction, and buildings for the new factories. The estimation of the construction activities is around more than \$ 2 billion. So, the joint venture having a great experience in the building sector has also agreed to work together," he told CEN.

Badar stated as both companies specialize in road construction projects, they have a strong record. Particularly CEEC has done many projects overseas. And similarly, ZKB has also played its role in the large construction projects in Pa-

kistan. It is to be noted that in the backdrop of the construction package announced by Prime Minister Imran Khan and a lot of growth in the construction sector, the joint venture and the memorandum of understanding between the two companies will enable their participation into many construction projects.

In Punjab, he said that there will be more than \$ 400 million worth of water related projects this year, and these projects will also be targeted. Besides, many of these projects are financed by the Asian Development Bank and other multilateral fund. The Commercial Counselor mentioned that Pakistan

is experiencing a strong growth in the construction sector and there has been recorded uplift of cement in the country last month. "The monthly uptake of cement is around six million tonnes. Similarly, the steel industry is also operating at its full capacity and nowadays, the construction industry is at its peak as well," he added.

Badar said there is also a peak that has been observed in the construction sector from the private sector. So many developers have started many new projects this year. He informed that there is a strong trend of construction of high rise buildings, and both companies are special-

ized in the construction of high rise buildings. "Both companies agreed to introduce skyscrapers to Pakistan similar to China's because the high urban population density causes space limitation in cities," he stated.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has already underlined to raise the cities vertically to meet the problems of transportation and communication faced by the dense populated areas.

He said large cities including Karachi are also facing water-related issues like the distribution of fresh water and tankers. Sometimes, the distribution is done through tankers. So, the pipelines are required to be

laid from home to home and to the factories. The main cities like Karachi, Lahore Hyderabad and Faisalabad face flooding during rainy weather or monsoon. Therefore, in the meeting, it was discussed that the fresh water and wastewater related projects have to be executed on urgent basis so that this flooding problem can also be overcome.

Badar informed there is strong support in the construction projects that is coming from China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) related projects, and both countries, China and Pakistan have increased their efforts to materialize CPEC projects very quickly.

New EU Covid-19 vaccine setback as AstraZeneca announces shortfall

LONDON: The European Union was faced with another setback in its coronavirus vaccination programme after AstraZeneca announced a shortfall, as countries across the world tried to step up their Covid-19 drives. The pharmaceutical company's image had already taken a hit with several countries suspending the rollout of its vaccine over blood clot fears, though the World Health Organization said there was no reason to stop using it in the fight against the pandemic. Mass vaccinations are considered critical to ending the pandemic, which has claimed more than 2.6 mil-

lion lives globally, and the AstraZeneca announcement was another blow for EU leaders, who have already faced criticism for the stumbling start to the job drive on the hard-hit continent. "AstraZeneca is disappointed to announce a shortfall in planned Covid-19 vaccine shipments to the European Union... despite working tirelessly to accelerate supply," the firm said Saturday. It had previously warned of shortfalls from its European supply chain due to lower-than-expected production output, and was hoping to compensate by sourcing shots from its global network. - APP

FEBR rejects new taxes, duties exemptions in Budget

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Friends of Economic & Business Reforms (FEBR) on Sunday rejected the government's plan of imposing additional taxes of billions of rupees in the upcoming federal budget 2021-22, besides ending duties and tax exemption, leading to a new wave of inflation in the country.

The FEBR President Kashif Anwar said that the new taxation measures include increasing income tax burden of the salaried and business individuals and the corporate sector, as the government will also withdraw

about Rs360 billion worth of sales tax exemptions from next year while the sales tax is already high. He resented that the frequent increase in electricity tariff and petroleum products' prices along with burden of new taxes on the behest of the International Monetary Fund is dangerous game for the economy of the country, as it would make the Pakistani products uncompetitive in the international market. Kashif Anwar said that the government continued to raise gas and power tariffs, besides lifting rates of petroleum products for the revival of the stalled IMF loan pro-

gramme. He said that during the first year of the IMF program, the government had introduced billions of rupees new taxation measures to achieve the tax target but the measures did not help the government achieve its target despite putting additional burden on trade and industry. He said that the country's economy is recovering from a slow pace of growth and it will be an uphill task for the FEBR to chase the high target of tax collection. It is impossible for the Pakistan's economy to sustain the burden of additional tax burden equal to 1.5 percent of the GDP at a time when

the economy just recovered from the Covid pandemic, he pointed out. He said that the IMF has also asked the government to reduce the number of income tax slabs for the business class, which will increase the tax burden of the people falling in higher income brackets, resulting into jump in cost of production and high inflation. He said that the regular attempt of economic managers to impose new taxes and increasing oil prices along with the hike in power and gas tariffs will ultimately harm the government's overall move of reducing the production cost for the businesses.



DUBAI: Advisor to the Prime minister on commerce and investment Abdul Razak Dawood is being briefed at the Pakistan Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. - DNA

SAARC chamber greets PM on Senate Chairman win

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Sunday unanimously greeted the Prime Minister Imran Khan on the victory of Sadiq Sanjrani as Chairman and Mirza Muhammad Afridi as Deputy Chairman Senate which will strengthen the democracy, rule of law, supremacy of the constitution besides restoring the confidence of business community.

In a joint statement President SAARC Chamber Iftikhar Ali Malik, FPCCI Vice

Presidents FPCCI Raja Muhammad Anwar, Muhammad Nawaz, Adeel Siddiqui and Muhammad Asif Yousaf Jeeva said that political stability is pre-requisite for sustained economic growth to cope with multiple challenges confronting Pakistan. He said that Pakistan can neither bear the brunt of political instability nor afford politics of confrontation at this crucial juncture of time in the wake of Covid 19.

They urged Prime Minister now to focus on the manifesto of his party and live up the aspirations of the people of Pakistan who voted him to power besides special focus on economic growth.

2 arrested at Denmark protest

COPENHAGEN: Two people were arrested on the sidelines of a weekend protest against anti-coronavirus restrictions in Denmark's capital Copenhagen, the police said Sunday.

One person was arrested for throwing fireworks at police during the Saturday march, while another was detained over violent behaviour, the police told AFP.

The rally was organized by a group calling itself "Men in Black Denmark" which has called regular demonstrations since the end of last year against what it calls the "dictatorship" of the country's Covid-19 restrictions. Walking through firework smoke, the protesters held torches as they moved through the city center chanting "Freedom for Denmark" and "Mette Ciao," a reference to Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

Local media reported that the march took place in a "sometimes intense" atmosphere, but without major incident.

The protest came a day after a 30-year-old woman was sentenced to two years in jail for calling for violence during a previous "Men in Black Denmark" rally against Covid-19 restrictions in January.

The case provoked a debate about the sentence which commentators deemed unusually harsh for her at times ambiguous comments.

"Are you ready to walk around and smash the city in a non-violent way?" she had told the crowd during an impromptu speech. Her sentence was originally set to one year, but the court also invoked a law passed at the end of 2020 that allowed the sentence to be doubled since "it had a background in and was connected to the Covid-19 epidemic". - APP

5 detained over hospital deaths in Jordan

AMMAN: The director and four other officials of a Jordanian hospital treating coronavirus patients were detained on Sunday over deaths at the facility after it ran out of oxygen, judicial sources said.

A prosecutor decided to place them in custody for a week for questioning after seven patients died Saturday in the hospital in Salt, near Amman, they said.

Public anger over the deaths led to the resignation of health minister Nazir Obeidat, and King Abdullah II, who visited the state hospital on Saturday, ordered its director Abdel Razak al-Khashman to also step down.

The head of health services for the province where Salt is located has likewise been suspended pending the completion of an investigation.

In video footage posted online, a visibly angry Abdullah, shaking his head, is heard telling the hospital director: "How could such a thing happen. This is unacceptable." - APP

Belarus-China mull co-op in healthcare

FOREIGN DESK

MINSK: Belarusian Deputy Economy Minister Anzhelika Nikitina met with CAMCE Director General Wang Yuhang and Director of the Jintai Institute of Culture and Economics Cai Chuanying in the Economy Ministry the other day. Prospects of Belarus-China cooperation in healthcare were discussed during the meeting, the ministry's press service told BelTA. The sides discussed prospects of promoting traditional Chinese medicine in Belarus and the creation of a traditional Chinese medicine center in the China-Belarus industrial park Great Stone.

The Chinese side also expressed interest in breeding medicinal herbs in Belarus' territory, production of medicinal drugs and preventive remedies out of Belarusian herbs, and their consequent export to China.

China CAMCE Engineering Company (CAMCE) is a daughter enterprise of the China National Machinery Industry Corporation (Sinomach). CAMCE specializes in general contracts for international projects, domestic and international investments and trade.

Saudi labor reforms usher in new era

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has ushered in a new era with historic labor reforms offering greater freedom to millions of migrant and expatriate workers taking effect on Sunday.

Under changes to the kafala sponsorship system, foreign workers in the private sector will have improved job mobility, and be able to change jobs and leave the country without employers' consent. The dramatic overhaul - part of the Kingdom's efforts to build an attractive jobs market - also will allow expat workers to apply directly for government services,

with their employment contracts documented digitally. As many as 10 million migrant workers are expected to benefit from changes under the Kingdom's Labor Reform Initiative (LRI), intended to foster "a competitive and fair working environment."

The initiative will help foreign workers acquire residency status that is not tied to a specific employer, and will allow job mobility as well as exit and re-entry visas while protecting the rights of both employee and employer. Expat workers have greeted the reform package enthusiastically, saying it offers them greater choice and support in employment.

"This is one of the best things to have happened since I came to work in Saudi," Imroz Abdulrahman, an Indian expat who has been living in the Kingdom for five years, told Arab News.

"I remember four years ago, when I wanted to leave my former employer and go to work for another family, the process was very complicated and difficult for everyone involved. The problems took months to resolve."

He added: "This is a great development and will help a lot of people. I am happy to have more control over where I can work and knowing that people like me will have more support in future." However, Abdulghani Al-Ansari,

chairman of information technology firm Bayt Al-Edarah, said that the labor reforms are a "big challenge" for private sector SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), adding that the government sector is leading the overhaul as part of the Vision 2030 objectives. "The private sector is still absorbing the changes," he told Arab News.

Employers will be required to digitally document employee contracts to reduce the disparity between Saudi and expat workers. "Today there is a big challenge ahead of us in terms of developing the human resources in SMEs, which are finding it difficult to absorb the concepts and mecha-

nisms of the initiative easily." Al-Ansari said that he hoped SMEs will be given six months to adapt to the new rules.

"SMEs do not have laws protecting their secrets, meaning that the secrets of a company will go to another competitive company," he said.

Al-Ansari, who led the human resources committee at the Madinah Chamber of Commerce, said the labor market is changing dramatically. "However, minds and skills do not have a nationality or a race, and the private sector believes in profitability and competency, meaning that diversity is a good thing and will benefit the national economy," he said.

Briefs

Coronavirus: NA secretariat closed for four days

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly secretariat will be closed for four days from March 13 to March 16 for the disinfection of the Parliament House building in Islamabad, a notification issued by the government on Sunday read. "The heads of respective departments shall call minimum essential staff from March 17 until further orders." The order stated that the employees working from home should remain vigilant as they may be called on a one-hour basis in case of an emergency. "Employees who have tested positive for the virus will have to send their reports to the Establishment Branch," it added. Here are some essential SOPs that have to be followed by the staff. Wear face masks at all times. Don't shake hands maintaining social distance. Under the new orders, the office timings will be 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday. According to the National Command and Operation Centre, 32 people lost their lives to the deadly virus in the last 24 hours while over 2,500 new cases were reported countrywide. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Faisal Sultan said that Pakistan is now facing the third wave of the novel coronavirus. The country crossed the 600,000-case mark on March 11. Dr Sultan urged people to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Inoculation for people over 60 started on March 10 and they will also receive the Chinese-made Sinopharm vaccine being given to health workers.

Pak embassy to mark Sino-Pak friendship

DNA
BEIJING: A puppet show will be arranged to celebrate 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan here at China Puppet Art Theatre on March 21. The show, being arranged by embassy of Pakistan, Beijing in collaboration with China Puppet Art Theatre and Rafi Peer Art Theatre, would be held in connection of celebration of Pakistan-China civilizational and cultural heritage through puppets and related art on World Puppetry Day. Pakistan and China have agreed to hold over 100 events to mark the 70 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations in a wide range of areas including the political, economic, trade, cultural and military sectors. People from all walks of life in both countries, especially the young generation will be welcomed to take an active part to enrich the celebrations and make them more broad-based and fruitful. A senior official informed on Sunday that the detailed list of events, once confirmed, will be released as soon as possible and said, of course the commemorative activities will go far beyond the list.

Constitution of Pak ensures rights for all and sundry: envoy

Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan Bernhard Schalgheck says that his country was extending support to Pakistan for protection of human rights in a number of areas

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: The participants of an inter-provincial dialogue stressed the need for bridging gap between civil society and government for bringing democratic and human rights reforms in the country. They said that human rights formed the foundation of democracy and a strong democracy guaranteed protection and safety of human rights in a society. The main challenge in this regard is weak engagement, they said, adding that political support is vital to stop violation of human rights. The dialogue titled 'Inter-Provincial Exchange: Democratic and Human Rights Reforms in Pakistan' was organised by Democracy Reporting International (DRI) that was attended by lawmak-

ers, rights activists and development experts from all the four provinces of the country besides foreign diplomats. Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan Bernhard Schalgheck, who was chief guest at the first session of the event, said that his country was extending support to Pakistan for protection of human rights in a number of areas. He said that the constitution of Pakistan guaranteed protection of rights for all its citizens irrespective of religion, caste and ethnicity. He said that a social change was being witnessed. He said that women empowerment would also lead to economic stability. "Any change in a society comes from within. International support is also important for it but the job should be accomplished by the people themselves," he added. The diplomat said



that different segments of the society should build coalitions among themselves for protection of their rights. The first session of the

dialogue, moderated by Shaheera Syed, was also addressed by Javed Ahmed Malik, Country Representative of DRI; and Rakhshanda

Naz, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplaces. They said that civil society

always played pivotal role in restoration of democracy in the country. They added that concerted efforts were needed to reduce the gap between government and civil society. The second session, moderated by Nadia Tariq Ali, was addressed by Niaz Ahmed, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Deputy Speaker Mehmood Jan, Punjab Assembly's Standing Committee on Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights Chairperson Tahir Khalil Sindh, Sindh Assembly Standing Committee on Social Welfare and Human Rights Chairperson Barrister Pir Mujeeb Haq, Balochistan Assembly Standing Committee on Social Welfare and Human Rights Chairperson Ahmed Nawaz and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan General Secretary Haris Khalique.

PIA to start flights to Swat's airport after 17 years

DNA

KARACHI: In order to promote tourism, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has decided to operate flights to the Saidu Sharif Airport in Swat. The airport that was closed in 2004 owing to the precarious security situation will be made operational. The national flag carrier will operate a test flight to the airport using an ATR aircraft in the last week of this month, the PIA said and called for the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to make arrangements in this regard. The required development work at the Saidu Sharif airport has been carried out. A CAA official said that the airport has been non-operational for a long time and will be re-opened following an approval of the federal government. He said the airport's runway has been readied for flights to land and take off.

Muslim boy beaten for drinking water from temple

UTTAR PRADESH: A Muslim boy was beaten in India for entering and drinking water from a Hindu temple, multiple Indian media outlets reported on Sunday. The incident took place on Thursday in the city of Dasna in Ghaziabad district, which lies in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. The 14-year-old boy had entered the temple to drink water when he was noticed by the temple caretaker, Shringi Nandan Yadav, 23, who proceeded to beat the boy, the boy's family told the Hindustan Times. "My son stopped to drink water from a tap located inside the temple as he was thirsty. He was beaten up after they asked his identity. He suffered a head injury," said the father, adding that his son usually didn't frequent the temple and has been told to stay clear of it in the future. "He was badly beaten up and humiliated. Does water have a religion? I don't think there is any religion that can refuse water to a thirsty person," he said while speaking to The Indian Express. He lamented that the temple had been open to the public in the past but that changed, adding that he hoped his son would receive justice. Ghaziabad police took notice of the incident and arrested the main accused, Yadav, along with Shivanand Saraswati, another caretaker, who had recorded the incident. The recorded video was circulated online on social media platforms and went viral on Friday evening. - APP

'Nawaz Sharif, MQM founder gift of 1985's politics'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry on Sunday said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif and founder of MQM are not political persons and are a gift of politics of 1985. Talking to media persons along with Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz, Fawad Chaudhry condemned statement of PML-N Javed Latif and termed him a pawn. The minister said that Nawaz Sharif and MQM founder received similar training and both are not coming back to Pakistan from London. He said anti-Pakistan statements after defeat in an election is condemnable and stressed that people who want to follow

footsteps of MQM founder should also take into account his political end. Fawad Chaudhry said that PML-N and PPP both supported open balloting for Senate elections in Charter of Democracy and urged senior leadership of the both parties to take matters into their hands and cancel the long march that is scheduled for March 26. He reiterated that there would have been no issues if Senate elections were held through open vote and urged political parties to sit with government for electoral reforms instead of conducting long march. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz on Sunday said that opposition alliance Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) has faced defeat at every turn.

Environment policies of PTI recognised globally: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday said environment policies of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf were being recognised globally. In a tweet on social media platform Twitter, he said especially the government's green recovery programme from the Covid 19 pandemic and the climate action plan were being appreciated by the world. According to World Economic Forum (WEF), in three ways Pakistan was building a greener future. Pakistan had pledged to source 60

percent of energy from renewables by 2030. It had cancelled coal projects replacing them with hydroelectric power. It had created more than 85000 green jobs from plant care to protection of forests. Pakistan was training 5000 young people to be nature guardians. Pakistan was investing in green space and had attracted \$ 180 million in funding and it was working towards the creation of 15 new national parks. It was also launching a \$ 500 mil-

lion green Eurobond and will soon provide a monetary valuation of its green space making its worth clear and easier to protect. As a pandemic devastated the globe and climate change threatened our way of life, our relationship with nature demanded a rethink. One million animal and plant species worldwide were at risk of extinction. Investing in a nature positive economy could generate 395 million jobs by 2030, the WEF says. - APP



WARSAK: Interior Minister Shaikh Rashid Ahmed inspected Passing out parade of Frontier Corps at Scouts Training Academy Warsak Peshawar as Chief Guest. Minister appreciated services of FC in the peace of KP and distributed awards. - DNA

Swati stresses need of electoral reforms

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati has stressed the need of electoral reforms for country's betterment. Addressing a news conference along with newly elected Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani in Islamabad on Sunday, he said electoral procedure should be made easier to bring transparency in elections. Appreciating the positive role of Sadiq Sanjrani as Chairman Senate, he expressed hope that in future Sadiq Sanjrani will help implementing Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision. The Minister said PDM's sole motive is to protect their personal interests. He said PML-N leader Javed Latif should resign over his condemnable statement. Speaking on the occasion, Defence Minister Pervez Khattak said that political parties in PDM have betrayed each other and now ironically they are blaming institutions. - APP

Sri Lanka to ban burqa

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's government says it will ban the wearing of the burqa, a full-body veil that covers the face as well, and close more than 1,000 Islamic schools, the latest actions affecting the country's minority Muslim population. Separately, the government on Saturday announced using a controversial anti-terror law to deal with religious "extremism" and gave itself sweeping powers to detain suspects for up to two years for "deradicalisation".

Minister for Public Security Sarath Weerasekera told a news conference he had signed a paper on Friday for cabinet approval to ban the burqa - an outer garment that covers the entire body and the face and is worn by some Muslim women - on "national security" grounds. "In our early days, Muslim women and girls never wore the burqa," he said. "It is a sign of religious extremism that came about recently. We are definitely going to ban it."

The minister said he signed documents outlawing the burqa, but they need to be approved by the cabinet of ministers and Parliament where the government has a two-thirds majority to see its bills through. Weerasekera also said the government plans to ban more than 1,000 Islamic schools that he said were flouting national education policy. "Nobody can open a school and teach whatever you want to the children," he said. - Agencies

Japanese envoy praises Pak community

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Kuninori Matsuda on Sunday appreciated the role of Pakistan's community in Japan during the 'Great East Japan Earthquake' occurred on March 11, 2011 and said that the government and people of Japan will never forget the services rendered to the Pakistan's community in this crucial situation. The Pakistan's community in Japan has won the hearts of Japanese People during this difficult time and both sides can be proud of this friendly humane attitude, Ambassador Kuninori Matsuda told APP here. While admiring the role of volunteers during the huge disaster, he greeted volunteers especially hailed from the Pakistani community in rescue, reconstruction and rehabilitation works in the areas affected by the earthquake and Tsunami including Kamaishi city, coasts of Iwate prefecture, Ibaraki, Chiba and south of Miyagi. The Ambassador said

the Japanese government had prioritized the economic and industrial revival of areas hit from 'Great East Japan Earthquake' to ensure human safety and provide livelihood to affected people. After the huge disaster in 'Great East Japan Earthquake', rescue, rehabilitation, reconstruction and revitalization were the biggest challenges which were overcome by the joint efforts of Japanese central and city government, local community and especially the commitment shown by expatriate Pakistanis living in Japan's affected areas, Matsuda said. The envoy said in Japan, the government was always prepared for disaster and had adopted the preemptive measure to meet any untoward incident, however this time, "We face three different types of catastrophes which are beyond our imagination. But the government's teamwork, unity and determination helped to revive the



socioeconomic life of earthquake and tsunami hit areas of Japan." He said Japan experienced the strongest earthquake in its recorded history recently as it struck below the North Pacific Ocean, 130 kilometers east of Sendai, the largest city in the Tohoku region, a northern part of the island of Honshu. The ambassador said the disaster education was part of the curriculum in local education institutions including school, colleges and universities to aware the future generation for adopting the preemptive measure to minimize the loss against the calamities. He said preemptive measures

through education, utilization of modern technology, political will, sense of responsibility, teamwork and unity were the major measures adopted by the Japanese nation to revive from the 'Great East Japan Earthquake'. While replying to a question, he said Japan and Pakistan are considering further cooperation and exchange of information to deal with future natural disasters, and a coordinated strategy is needed to deal with such situations. The Japanese Ambassador further said that Japan and Pakistan are located in areas prone to major natural disasters such as earthquakes and climatic conditions where preparedness for natural disasters is of utmost importance. He said the Japanese government raises awareness in school curricula to protect children from natural disasters. That is why, despite the devastating tsunami and earthquake in 2011, not a

single child was killed in these areas, he added. He said Japan had introduced reforms in the education sector in 1970 and now our education system was producing the modern innovative technology driven generation, who could adequately work in any sort of situation for economic, social and cultural growth of the country. Replying to another question on cooperation and coordination between the Japanese and Pakistan's disaster management institutions, he said, "We are in close coordination with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to enhance the cooperation and information sharing in future to minimize the loss in natural disasters." Ambassador Matsuda said Japan and Pakistan are committed to extend cooperation in every sector of the economy to boost trade and investment relations between the two countries. - DNA

NOW IN PAKISTAN
Invisible Braces
Dental Implants

Dr. Abrar & Associates
DENTAL SURGEONS

House # 6-A, Ismail Zabeeh Road, (Service Road Parallel to Faisal Avenue) F-8/3, Islamabad.
e-mail: abrar_associates@yahoo.com | www.drabrarassociates.com
Ph: +92 51 228 7691 / +92 51 228 7692 | Fax: +92 51 228 7693