



Islamabad POST

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Zaheer Babar appointed new chief of air force

Detailed News On Page-01

Japan keen to expand bilateral ties with Pakistan

Detailed News On Page-08



Babar reclaims No. 3 spot in T20I rankings

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Government believes in free speech

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz said that the government gives due importance to freedom of expression. Addressing a seminar on "freedom of press and resolution of media crisis", he said the media was an important stakeholder as it pointed out weaknesses of the government though constructive criticism. The media should also highlight the achievements of government, he added. Shibli Faraz said it was the responsibility of government to protect the lives and property of the media persons.

PDM still united: Fazl

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Addressing the PPP, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, head of PDM, said that once half the House is vacated, they would have to resign. Fazlur Rehman was addressing a function in Peshawar and later answered questions of the media, saying that 9 out of 10 parties were of the opinion that they should resign before the long march, but the PPP wanted to take up the matter with its Central Executive Committee (CEC) before making a decision. The PDM head, while expressing indignation over media reports about the PDM meeting held Tuesday, said that revealing the inside story of the meeting was sheer dishonesty.

Bilawal slams PTI's attacks on ECP

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the PTI government's continuous attacks on the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and added that ECP's refusal to become a partner in the rigging and electoral engineering with the PTI is being taken as 'rebellion'. In a statement, the PPP Chairman said that ECP has to conduct its business in accordance with the Constitution and the relevant laws.

Taliban warn USA to obey Doha accord

"If they don't do it, then they will be responsible for the consequences," Taliban spokesman said

IP REPORT

KABUL: The Taliban have warned of "consequences" if the United States fails to meet a deadline to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, after President Joe Biden said doing so would be "tough". The US is supposed to complete a full withdrawal of troops within six weeks, according to an agreement signed in Qatar with the Taliban. Biden on Wednesday cast doubt on meeting the deadline, saying he was in the process of deciding when troops would leave. "The Americans should end their occupation in accordance with the Doha deal and fully withdraw their forces from Afghanistan by May 1," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told a news agency.

"If they don't do it, be it for any reason and pretexts, then they will be responsible for the consequences," he said, adding that "the people of Afghanistan will make their decision". The deal, which excluded the Afghan government, saw the Taliban pledge in return to hold peace talks with the administration of President Ashraf Ghani. The talks however have made little progress since starting in September, while violence - which Washington has blamed on the Taliban - has surged.

'Tough' to withdraw troops: Biden

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden warned that a deadline to withdraw all American soldiers from Afghanistan by May 1 as part of a deal with the Taliban was possible but "tough." "Could happen, but it is tough," Biden said when asked in a TV interview broadcast Wednesday. "I'm in the process of making that decision now as to when they'll leave," he said while taking a direct swipe at his predecessor Donald Trump. "The fact is that that was not a very solidly negotiated deal that the president, the former president worked out," he said. "The failure to have an orderly transition from the Trump presidency to my presidency, which usually takes place from election day to the time he's sworn in, has cost me time and consequences. That's one of the issues we're talking about now, in terms of Afghanistan." - DNA

Zaheer Babar appointed new chief of air force

Islamabad Post published news of his appointment on March 4, 2021

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD - Prime Minister Imran Khan has approved the name of Air Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar as new chief of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). Zaheer Babar belongs of village Sidh, Gujrat. He will replace outgoing Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Mujahid Anwar. Babar was among three air vice-marshals to be promoted as vice marshal in July 2018. Having commanded a fighter squadron, an operational air base, and

Zaheer Babar likely to be new air chief

STAFF REPORT
ISLAMABAD: Zaheer Babar is likely to be the new air chief as the incumbent Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan will retire on March 18. The new air chief is therefore likely to lead PAF from March 23.

Facsimile of news published in Islamabad POST on March 4, 2021 regarding appointment of new air chief

regional air command, Air Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar was commissioned in GD (P) branch of the PAF in April 1986. During his dazzling career, he has served as assistant air chief for operation research and development (R&D), assistant air chief for training officers, and the director-general of projects at the Air Headquarters in Islamabad. A graduate of the Combat Commanders' School, Air War College, and the United Kingdom's Royal College of Defence Studies, he has

Continued on Page 06

France, Pak sign credit financing agreement

France, through the French Agency for Development, is providing technical and financial support in energy and urban development sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Noor Ahmed, Secretary of EAD, Marc Barety, Ambassador of France, and Philippe Steinmetz, Country Director of the French Agency for Development (AFD), signed the Credit Financing Agreement worth Euros 65 million to co-finance with ADB, AIIB and GCF. Subsequent Project Agree-

ment was signed between AFD, Transport and Mass transit Department of Sindh Province, Sindh Mass transit Authority and TransKarachi for the implementation. Beyond the 26,6km corridor infrastructure, this project is innovative in many ways: - the substantial financial effort made by development agencies for a higher impact for people livelihoods.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of European Union Androulla Kaminara and others posing for picture after signing ceremony. - DNA

EU supports Pakistan to mitigate Covid-19 impact

The Aga Khan Foundation is delighted to partner with EU in strengthening community organisations and civil society

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The European Union will support Pakistan's Civil Society by financing three projects, for a total amount of 7 237 500 EUR, to alleviate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on communities and increase the voice of youth in society. The announcement follows the signing of three contracts by Ms. Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of the Euro-

pean Union to Pakistan and the representatives of the main implementing partners: Aga Khan Foundation, Norwegian Church Aid and Deutsche Welthungerhilfe. The three projects were selected through a call for proposals launched in April 2020 and focus on Punjab, Sindh and Gilgit Baltistan. In Pakistan, the virus is posing a threat to people's lives, straining communities, overwhelming health systems and endangering livelihoods. Young

people in particular, who make up a majority of Pakistan's population, have been severely affected by the pandemic in terms of unemployment, increased gender inequalities, social exclusion and a diminished voice in the decision-making processes. The projects aim to build Civil Society Organizations capacity to mobilise and engage youth, enhance involvement in decision-making, and improve

Continued on Page 06

Terrorist killed in IBO

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces conducted an Intelligence Based Operation (IBO) in Kanju, Swat on confirmation of presence of terrorists. According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release, terrorist Mukarram killed while terrorist apprehended during exchange of fire. Due to terrorists' firing, two local civilian pedestrians were also martyred.

Welfare of masses priority: PM

- inaugurates Islamabad Security Dialogue

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday inaugurated the Islamabad Security Dialogue and launched the National Security Division's Advisory Portal connecting over 100 think-tanks and university departments in Pakistan with policy makers. Addressing the inaugural session of the Dialogue, the premier said that Pakistan is pursuing a national vision focusing on economic prosperity and human welfare. The Prime

Minister said that security required that we make the common citizens of Pakistan safe, secure and provide them necessities of life. At the inaugural session, the Prime Minister was introduced to the New Comprehensive Security Framework (CSF) which is based on the three pillars of military, economic and human security with economic progress at the core. He added that Pakistan's economic security lens prioritizes connectivity, domestic and regional peace, and

Continued on Page 06

Kuwaiti FM due today

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: On the invitation of Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs of Kuwait, His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah, will be visiting Pakistan on 18-19 March 2021. He will be accompanied by a delegation comprising senior officials from the Kuwaiti Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health, Interior, and Trade and Industry.

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Inside...

- Chairman CDA directs to clean nullahs within one week - Page 02
- President urges youth to gain skill-based education - Page 03
- International workshop on Nanotechnology concludes - Page 04
- Why Pak is key to pushing Afghan peace forward - Page 05
- PNC denounces Kosovo, Czech embassies opening in Jerusalem - Page 06
- RCCI delegation visits Pakistani Consulate and Istanbul Chamber - Page 07
- Japan keen to expand bilateral ties with Pakistan - Page 08

Requiem for the PDM !!

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) seems to have evaporated in the air when former President and PPP Co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari who advised Nawaz Sharif to come back and face charges. Asif Zardari further advised the former Prime Minister and PML N leader that the movement cannot achieve its desired

targets if he is sitting abroad. Maryam Nawaz then was quick to retort to Asif Zardari. She said if Mr. Zardari can ensure safety of Nawaz Sharif then he was ready to come back. PDM chief Maulana Fazal ur Rehman had his own grudge against the PDM leadership. He complained that despite having majority in the Senate Abdul Ghafoor Haidri the candidate for the deputy chairmanship could not win. And the way Fazal left the press conference should also not bode well for the future of the alliance. In a nutshell, the PDM appears to be in a shatters. I had pointed out in these columns time and again that PPP is part of the alliance to have a better deal

is not getting a green signal from his elder brother, who does not want to abdicate reigns of the party. This disagreement is turning out to be a blessing in disguise for the PPP that is once again becoming relevant entity. Asif Zardari was right when he said that Nawaz Sharif should come back and resignations were not the option. The PPP leadership had become wary of Nawaz statements against the establishment especially and there was a consensus view within the party that if he wants to deliver such sermons, he should do it while being in Pakistan. His statements were obviously inviting troubles for the leadership on ground.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Lahore police's fake encounter exposed

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: A police encounter in Lahore has turned out to be fake as the police party shot dead the arrested dacoits.

According to reports, the police on Saturday claimed that they had killed two dacoits in an encounter at Kahna. Police then said that four dacoits riding on two motorcycles were looting the people in the area when the patrolling team reached there.

On seeing the police team, the dacoits opened fire on which the police also fired on them. As a result, two dacoits were killed on the spot while the other two managed to escape from the scene.

But now the video made with a mobile phone showed that the police party captured the dacoits alive, then they tortured them and later shot them dead.

Minister hails performance of district administration

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Rai Taimoor Khan Bhatti visited Faisalabad and got a detailed briefing on the implementation of government policies in the district. Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, CPO Sohail Chaudhry, Additional Deputy Commissioners Fazal Rabi Cheema, Muhammad Khalid, Khuram Pervez, Afifa Shajia, DHO Dr. Ata ul Moenum, District Sports Officer Sajida Latif and other officers were also present.

Deputy Commissioner gave briefing the Provincial Minister and said that the price control mechanism is being implemented in full swing in the district.

He said that last year 484000 inspections were carried out and 674 FIRs were registered against profiteers while this year the checking process is in progress.

He said that the first working day of every month Revenue Public Service Court is being held on and so far 6 courts have been conducted and 1585 complaints have been disposed off out of 1604. He said that total of 784 complaints and issues received by the District Overseas Committee so far and 405 complaints and issues have been resolved and the remaining applications are being processed expeditiously.

He also apprised of the progress made in resolving the public grievances received and said that increasing the public confidence ratio is a priority which is 51% so far and is leading in the province in Pakistan Citizen Portal.

The Deputy Commissioner apprised the health ranking details and said that Government General Hospital Samanabad came second in the province in terms of performance while Faisalabad came sixth in the BHU, seventh in the rural health center and 10th in the supervisory visit.



ISLAMABAD: Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan, paid farewell call on Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Prime Minister appreciated meritorious services of the outgoing Air Chief rendered in the service of the nation and wished him well. — DNA

Chairman CDA directs to clean nullahs within one week

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) has issued directions to complete the work on cleaning the natural nullahs within the time period of one week. Chairman made a surprise visit to nullahs at sector F-6, F-7, G-6, G-7, and others on Wednesday. Other officers and officials were also present at the occasion.

Speaking at the occasion, Chairman CDA said that all nullahs will be cleaned one by one. These nullahs can play a role in beautification



of the city. These nullahs should be cleaned as soon as possible, he added

Officers of CDA said that heavy machinery of the department of MPO is being

used for cleaning these nullahs. The issue of blockage is also being resolved side

by side removing the garbage. The work on cleaning the nullahs will be contin-

ued till all the nullahs of Islamabad get clean. Fencing will also be done across these nullahs so that garbage from corners may not go in nullahs again.

Administration will take strict action against those who will throw garbage in nullahs. Residents of slums have been warned against throwing garbage in nullahs.

A wetland is being constructed in F-11 to control smell and garbage, they added.

Chairman CDA directed to maintain cleanliness in nullahs after the completion of cleaning work.

SC nullifies SHC order on Agha Siraj Durrani's bail

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) on Wednesday nullified verdict of Sindh High Court (SHC) granting bail to Speaker of the provincial assembly Agha Siraj Durrani.

As per details, the Supreme Court heard the plea against bail of the PPP leader. During the hearing, National Accountability Bureau (NAB) prosecutor told the court that assets of Agha Siraj Durrani are beyond his income. Justice Umar Ata Bandial stated that the SHC granted bail to the Sindh Assembly speaker without considering any concrete basis. The apex court ordered the SHC to review the verdict within two month on the bail plea. The high court should decide on the matter keeping in view the facts and evidences and a bench comprising senior judges should hear the bail plea.

However, the Supreme Court barred arrest of the Speaker till Sindh High Court is reviewing its order. It is pertinent to mention here that SHC approved bail of provincial Agha Siraj Durrani in assets beyond income case on December 13, 2019. The speaker was arrested on February 20 from a hotel in Islamabad and was brought to Karachi the same night. On February 21, he was produced before the accountability court which sent him on a 14-day physical remand.

People avoiding vaccination: Azra Pechuho

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: "The COVID-19 vaccine have no side effects", Sindh's health minister said in a statement while commenting on the vaccination drive.

Provincial Health Minister Azra Pechuho said that people are avoiding getting vaccinated due to various rumours around the vaccine. "The health workers were also avoiding the vaccine," Pechuho said. "We have made the vaccination centres for coronavirus vaccine," she said. "The private hospitals have also been given permission for administering vaccine", Azra Pechuho said. This was stated by Dr. Azra Pechuho, Provincial Health Minister who was accompanied by Secretary Health, President Arts Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah, and Parliamentary Secretary Qasim Soomro on the occasion of inauguration of Covid-19 Vaccination Center at Karachi Arts Council on Wednesday.

Police committed to eliminate crime

MEHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: "It is our duty to eliminate crime and give relief to public". This was stated by Zaheer Ahmad Sub Inspector, Factory Area Police Station and Mujahid Hussain Shah, Muhammad Saqlain ASI, Mehr Muhammad Yousuf, ASI Mohammad Nawaz, Hawaldar Muhammad Fayyaz in an exclusive interview to Islamabad Post correspondent Mehboob Ahir. SI Zaheer Ahmed said, "eliminating crime is our number one priority". He added, "patrol system has been improved and people of the area will feel the change at the police station. He stated that it is not possible to eradicate crime without cooperation of public. He further said about the situation of corona and also urged to follow the SoPs. Six vehicles impounded. District Road Transport Authority on Wednesday impounded 6 vehicles and imposed Rs 15, 500 fines on 23 vehicle owners over traffic rules violation.

A spokesman for the department said DRTA secretary issued instructions that vehicles would be impounded on the charge of illegal fares hike, and their route permits would be canceled. "They would not be allowed to enter the highways".

Swedish envoy hails PM's tree plantation drive

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Sweden envoy to Pakistan Henrik Persson alongwith Adviser to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam Wednesday planted a tree at the Swedish Embassy in a bid to support Prime Minister Imran Khan's nationwide tree plantation drive.

The Swedish envoy embracing Prime Minister's tree plantation drive termed it a vital initiative to cope the climate change impacts.

After planting a tree, the envoy and SAPM Amin Aslam discussed the potential areas of collaborative works between the two countries and the



scope of green technologies in near future.

Malik Amin Aslam told APP stressed for nation's active participation in the ongoing countrywide spring tree plantation drive and urged masses to be part of government's 'Clean and Green Pakistan' project to make the initiative a complete success.

Malik Amin Aslam said that the international community particularly the World Economic Forum (WEF) had appreciated the role of Prime Minister Imran Khan for tackling worsening affects of the climate change.

"The world has acknowledged the PM's vision for 'Clean and Green Pakistan'" he said.

Rashakai to be a leading example of Sino-Pak partnership: KP-BOI

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Rashakai Special Economic Zone (RSEZ) will be a leading example of public-private partnership with China.

It is poised to uplift Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province by attracting local and foreign investment, creating thousands of jobs and bringing in economic and social services, said Hassan Daud Butt, CEO Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BOI).

Talking to Gwadar Pro, Hassan Daud Butt said, "Many Chinese enterprises and investors have shown keenness to invest in RSEZ. We are just waiting for the groundbreaking which will take place soon.

We have received many requests from Chinese investors for land acquisition in RSEZ and KP-BOI has prepared a plan to facilitate the investors upon the inauguration," he said.

Prime Minister Imran Khan is expected to perform the groundbreaking of RSEZ on March 19.

The internal development work will begin after the inauguration while the external developments such as road construction, laying of electricity and gas pipelines are going full swing. According to Hassan Daud Butt, the role of KP-BOI is to find potential investors, to interact with them and to give them potential projects.

"We also try our best to provide investors with one window service and to facilitate them in getting NOC (explain NOC) and regulation", he told Gwadar Pro.

There is a one-time tax exemption for developers if they bring equipment for the development to the economic zone. "However, we want them to bring technology which is the latest and modern and to employ our human resources," he said and added that there is a ten-year tax exemption for investors in RSEZ.

Revival of cultural values vital: Castro

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed along with Mian Javed Iqbal chairman National Group and other office bearers is presenting FCCI shield to Mr. Khayal Ahmed Castro provincial minister for Culture and Colonies Punjab, DNA

FAISALABAD: We must revive our golden, glorious and prestigious cultural values in order to further strengthen our rich heritage in addition to expediting the process of development in Punjab and Pakistan, said Mian Khayal Ahmed Castro Provincial Minister for Culture and Colonies. Addressing a special function organized by the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) to mark the "Punjab Culture Day", here today, he said that he was first perturbed when



the portfolio of the ministry of culture was entrusted to him.

However, later on, he along with his friends and colleagues understood the vitality of culture which actually means to build nations. He said that we should be proud of being Punjabi as our culture is one of the richest and oldest cultures in the world.

Ethical, social and societal values are directly linked with culture which is the main cause of its survival even after 5500 years. He appreciated the Punjab government who has taken a bold step to revive our unmatched traditions of love, brotherhood, harmony affinity, hospitality and unity and now every inhabitant of this province must contribute

its role for the revival of our glorious past. Lamenting, he mentioned marriages and other parties which are dominated by our cultural foe. He said that our enemy could not dominate us through guns but we have been forced to adopt its culture through the cultural onslaught of Indians. He said that the Punjab government

had decided to organize a colorful Punjab culture show but it was cancelled due to coronavirus. He paid a rich tribute to Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed President FCCI for organizing this colorful show by following corona SOPs. He told that on the special directive of Punjab government high civil and Police officials performed their official obligations by wearing traditional Punjabi dresses. He said that he is now contemplating to direct all officers to wear Punjabi dress in their offices at least once in a month.

Divisional Commissioner Mr. Saqib Manan said that generally we mix-up culture and religion which are two separate identities. He narrated an incident of his mother during migration and told that the elders of each village accorded them full protection in addition to providing them food and shelter on their way to Pakistan in 1947.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
(WORKS DIVISION-II)

TENDER INVITING NOTICE

CDA invites the sealed tenders on percentage basis duly filled in figures as well as in words from the contractors registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in relevant category and Income Tax Department for the year 2020-21, as per details given below:-

Sr.#	Name of Work	NIT Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Tender Fee (Rs.)	Bid submission date & Time	Bid Opening date & Time
1	Construction of Admin Block, Magazine, Quarter Guard, Barracks, Mt Shed, Horse Stable & Parade Ground in Diplomatic Enclave, Islamabad. Sub-Head: Construction of Quarter Guard in Diplomatic Enclave.	12,689,051/-	380,700/-	5,000/-	05-04-2021 at 11:30 AM	05-04-2021 at 12:00 Noon

- Tender details are also available at CDA web site www.cda.gov.pk and PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk
- Bidding documents can be obtained from the office of Dy. Director, Works Division-II CDA, located at Room No. 22, CDA Office, Old Navel Complex, G-6 Markaz, Islamabad, on cash payment as given above per set (Non-refundable) on any working day up to 02-04-2021 before 2:00 PM against written request.
- Application should be on letterhead having name, address, phone numbers and signature of the contractor enclosing call deposit and attested copies of CNIC, valid PEC registration certificate with codes CE-09, CE-10, Income Tax registration number/certificate, valid Professional Tax certificate and ownership proof in shape of partnership deed/sole proprietor/power of attorney in favour of authorized representative.
- In case of incomplete documents mentioned in Sr. 4, bidding documents will not be issued to the applicant. Original documents should also be available with the applicant/authorized representative for verification, if deemed necessary.
- The earnest money in shape of bank draft/call deposit (CDR) from local scheduled banks in favour of Dy. Director, Works Division-II must accompany with the application for issuance of tender documents.
- That only legitimate attorney holder may be allowed to get tender documents.
- The Bid Security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA bank account and same may be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidders.
- The eligibility criteria of the firms with the relevant experience i.e at least three number of work in last two financial years may be observed / fulfilled before issuance of tender documents.
- Bids will be received/opened publicly as per date and time given above in the office of Director Works, CDA located at Room No. 21, Old Navel Complex, G-6 Markaz, Islamabad.
- CDA reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tenders as per PPRA rules 33(1) CDA, upon request of bidder/contractor who submitted a bid, will communicate the grounds for its rejection, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- Conditional tender will not be entertained.

Dy. Director,
Works Division-II, CDA

Briefs

10,795 people
got covid
shot in dist.
Rawalpindi

IBRAR KHAN

RAWALPINDI: About 10,795 people including 3,038 health workers and 2,202 senior citizens have got a COVID-19 shot at 23 centers operating across the district since the vaccination drive launched last month. District Health Officer Dr. Jawad Khalid while talking to APP, informed as many as 399 people had been inoculated the vaccine at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital (THQ) Taxila, 241 at THQ Murree, 346 at THQ Kahuta, 355 at THQ Gujar Khan, 211 at THQ Kotli Sattian, 421 THQ Kallar Sayda, 1750 Rawalpindi Institute of Cardiology, 1840 Holy Family Hospital, 938 DHQ Hospital, 1974 Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 151 Government T B sanatorium Samli, 581 at Wah General Hospital, 366 at Shabbaz Sharif Complex, 36 at Tehsil Office (TO) Taxila, 51 at TO office Kallar Syedan, 149 at TO office Gujar Khan, 6 at TO office Kotli Sattian, 26 at TO office Murree, 105 at TO office Potohar, 124 at TO office Kahuta, while 725 senior citizens received the jab at Red Crescent Center. He said number of beneficiaries being vaccinated every day was showing progressive increase.

Over 90% of
healthworkers
vaccinated

MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: Over 90 per cent of healthcare workers have been vaccinated in Attock district so far against novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The health authorities have set up six different centers for the vaccination of the healthcare workers. The process of vaccination started from last month and so far 93 per cent of the healthcare workers have been administered their first dose. The data available said that 2153 healthcare workers were registered for the vaccination and so far 1790 have been vaccinated with first dose and 374 have been administered with second dose while 2865 are scheduled for the vaccination. The health authorities have set up six centers for the vaccination across the district which include DHQ Hospital Attock, THQ Hospital Hasanabdall, THQ Hospital Fatehjang, THQ Hospital Hazro, THQ Hospital Jand and THQ Hospital Pindigheb. The document said that 93 per cent of healthcare workers have been administered first dose while 12.70 have been administered second dose.

CTO urges
citizens to
cooperate with
traffic police

DNA

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) on Wednesday finalized all the arrangements to facilitate the motorists of twin cities on March 19, Friday and Mar 21, Sunday while vehicular traffic would not be allowed to enter Rawalpindi and Islamabad from Faizabad during full dress rehearsal for Pakistan National Day Parade. According to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Rai Mazhar Iqbal, the entry of heavy vehicles would be banned in Rawalpindi city on March 19 and Mar 21 particularly after 12 am, midnight.

The CTP has formulated a comprehensive traffic plan to facilitate motorists of twin cities during full dress rehearsals for March 23 Parade. As many as 336 officers and Traffic Wardens would be deployed on various city roads to regulate traffic, he said adding, Faizabad Interchange would remain closed for all kinds of traffic either going towards Islamabad or entering Rawalpindi from 5 am to conclusion of the rehearsal.

President urges youth to
gain skill-based education

“We have to develop our skills, build our brains and excel in fields like information technology where the possibilities are limitless”

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi Wednesday emphasized on youth to gain skill-based education, adopt new technologies and develop analytical skills to make good decisions and achieve progress in life. He was speaking at a ceremony held at President House here to acknowledge the excellence of the position holders in the Higher Secondary School Certificate examination 2020. While congratulating the position holders in the examinations, he said recognizing achievements of the brilliant students will encourage others to set a path for themselves and move ahead. He said the real education was the ability to process the acquired information, develop analytical and logical thinking, reach good decisions and draw conclusions. Talking about the emerging fields of artificial intelligence and neural networks, he noted that human brain was amazing with

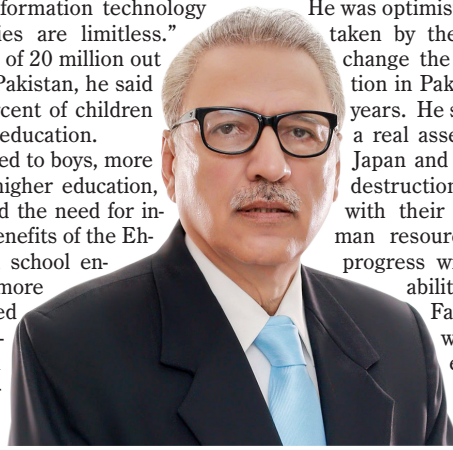
its 100 billion neurons and 100 trillion connections and one could increase his brain capacity by indulging in mental exercises similar to the way physical exercises were done to strengthen a human body. “We have to develop our skills, build our brains and excel in fields like information technology where the possibilities are limitless.” Referring to the issue of 20 million out of school children in Pakistan, he said in Bangladesh 98 percent of children were getting primary education. In Pakistan as compared to boys, more girls were obtaining higher education, he said and underlined the need for incentives and linking benefits of the Ehsaas programme with school enrollment to educate more children. He mentioned the scheme of providing lunch in schools in New Delhi to encourage children to attend school. “We have to

give incentives to increase enrollment.” He said the government of Pakistan Tehreek I Insaaf (PTI) was working on introduction of uniform syllabus in the education system, teacher training and had allowed the private institutions to print textbooks.

He was optimistic that the measures taken by the government would change the landscape of education in Pakistan in the next few years. He said human brain was a real asset and countries like Japan and Germany after their destruction rebuilt themselves with their intellectual and human resources. “Nations make progress with their intellectual abilities. Companies like Facebook and Google were the product of endeavors of individuals who brought the information technology revolution.”

Poverty could be alleviated by ensuring education and health facilities for the citizens, he remarked. He said education should be all encompassing and the student should get the opportunities to excel in the fields of science and arts.

Recalling that Pakistan suffered from brain drain in the previous decades, he said in the next few years, Pakistanis could make significant progress with their hard work and harnessing of intellectual capabilities. President Alvi said character building of youth was the way forward for progress of the nation and advised the students to stay away from corruption, speak truth and earn their living through honest means. Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafiqat Mehmood in his speech informed about the reforms being undertaken by the government to improve the education system. Earlier, the President gave away prizes to the position holders in the examinations of the education boards of all the provinces, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

SPARC proposes govt to
implement Health Levy Bill

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Society for Protection of Rights of the Child (SPARC) proposed the government to implement the much awaited Health Levy Bill which has been passed by the Parliament last year. The health levy would help generate additional 40 billion that can be used to minimize the cost of prevailing COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Addressing a press conference here Wednesday,

representatives of SPARC said that it was need of the time to get multiple objectives through imposition of the health levy.

Khalil Ahmed, Program Manager SPARC said Pakistan's budget has restricted the percentage allocated for the health sector. Health levy was proposed to increase the prices of tobacco to keep children out of reach and generate additional revenue. Extra 40 billion can be generated by implementing Health levy on cigarettes which could be used for

healthcare infrastructure. He further added that revenue generated from the health levy could have been utilized in procuring and distributing vaccine against the COVID-19. Khalil Ahmed said that during COVID-19, the imposition of Health Levy had taken great importance as the pandemic had caused additional health spending which increased the annual health budget. The government announced vaccinations for senior citizens whereas, maximum people should be vaccinated, and

the hurdle remains the same, inadequate financial resources. He also called upon the media to play its vital role against tobacco use as opinion leader. Ch. Sana Ullah Ghuman, Secretary General, Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) said that as per study, non-communicable diseases were the main causes of most of the deaths in the world of which smoking was the major reason. Responsible countries were already working on providing immunity against COVID-19.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Sania Nishtar chairs final meeting on the Ehsaas Private Sector Engagement Policy at Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division. — DNA

NA panel seeks report of action
taken against Aurat March

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Standing Committee on Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony on Wednesday directed ministries of interior and law and justice to furnish the details of action taken against the elements behind displaying the objectionable material in the Aurat March of March 8. The meeting of the committee presided over by Maulana Asad Mehmood, the son of Maulana Fazlur Rehman, expressed its indignation over sacrilegious banners, placards and slogans displayed in the women march on March 8 and declared the march as unethical, in contrary to the constitution

and opposite to the teachings of Islam. The committee sought details about the participant (NGOs) non-governmental organisations of the March and source of the funding (of the participant NGOs). Chairman Asad Mehmood said the impious slogans displayed in the March could not be even repeated. Shahida AKhtar Ali, a member of committee said the videos of various female participants of the March have already gone viral on social media. Shagufta Juman, another member of the committee said she was ashamed after watching the banners of the march which were totally against our moral values.

Lamenting the absence of any authority to prevent the misquoting of Qur'an, Hadith and religious material, the committee granted its consent to present a Bill for establishing an authority to prevent the misuse of religious material. The forum also discussed the absence of government authority on blasphemy and printing of non-Islamic writings or similar materials. “Is there any authority in our country to review and take action on controversial writings”? Questioned the chairman. Authorities have been set up to investigate everything including milk and water and take action against the culprits. — DNA

Pakistan must avail benefits
of cryptocurrency: Waqar

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka has said that journalists will be taught cryptocurrency to stabilize the economy. He said that a Crypto advisory board has been formed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, efforts are also underway in the center. According to details, a discussion session was held with journalists in Islamabad regarding cryptocurrency and its importance in which

Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka briefed the media about cryptocurrency and its po-



tential benefits. Talking to the media, Waqar Zaka said that Pakistan cannot move forward in the field of tech-

nology unless journalists and the conscious class understand the importance of cryptocurrency.

He said that the government should launch its own digital currency of Pakistan so that people can invest in it and earn huge profits. He also announced a free crypto course for journalists. He said that in a short span of one month, journalists would be able to make a profit from cryptocurrency and bitcoin. The session was attended by a large number of journalists.

Police net
7 POs

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested seven proclaimed offenders (POs) allegedly involved in different cases including murder and dacoity. According to Rawalpindi police spokesman, special raids on the directive of City Police Officer (CPO) Muhammad Ahsan Younas were conducted to net POs, court absconders and other outlaws. Waris Khan, Saddar Wah, Rawat, Cantt, RAJA Bazaar and Kahuta police managed to net seven POs namely Muhammad Zahoor, Anayat Imran alias Lakhani, Muhammad Ali, Basharat Hussain, Amin, Muhammad Usman and Wasif Ali who were wanted in different cases including heinous crimes. He said the police crackdown against criminals would continue and the outlaws would be sent behind the bars. He said the CPO had directed the police to launch crackdown against POs and strict action in accordance with the law should be taken against criminals particularly most wanted.

RDA starts
operation
against illegal
construction

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

RAWALPINDI: RDA on the directives of DG RDA, Capt. (R) Abdul Sattar Isani has accelerated its ongoing operation against illegal construction and encroachments. According to RDA spokesman, the RDA teams are continuously conducting raids against illegal construction and encroachments in residential and commercial areas of the town. He said the RDA, Land Development & Estate Management (LD&EM) Directorate staff conducted an operation in residential area of Ghazni Colony, Bagh Sardaran and sealed three shops constructed illegally at Plot No, 147 occupying the open spaces. He informed that the owner of the plot namely Khawaja Shahzad constructed the shops illegally in violation of Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976. He said the DG had directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against illegal construction and encroachments without any discrimination. LD&EM Directorate staff including Assistant Director, Inspector encroachment, Scheme Incharge and others conducted the operation.

AIOU offers B. Ed,
M. Ed programs

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) occupied the most significant position in teachers training across the country by offering courses in B. Ed and M. Ed programs. After graduating from the university, thousands of its trained teachers were serving the country and shouldering their responsibilities at various educational institutions of the country including schools, colleges and universities. Admissions offered in the second phase of spring 2021 semester are in progress including one year M.Ed. and 1.5, 2.5 and 4-year B.Ed. programs, said a news release issued here on Wednesday.

M.Ed. program has been offered in five different specializations including Elementary Education, Teacher Education, Distance Education, Non-Formal Education, Science and Special Education. The eligibility criteria for B.Ed. program is MA, M.Sc. /BS/BA (Hons.) with 2nd division. Eligibility for admission in 2.5-year B.Ed. Elementary Education is BA / B.Sc. or equivalent in second division whereas candidates with BA/B.Sc. in second division could apply for admission in 2.5-year B.Ed. in Science Education. The four-year B. Ed has been offered in three specializations including Science Education, Secondary Teacher Education, School Leadership and Management. Intermediate with second division is the eligibility criterion for admission in these three specializations. Admission forms and prospectuses for these programs are available online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). Interested candidates can apply online till March 25. Moreover, the university has also offered admissions in BA (Associate Degree) program in five fields in spring 2021 semester which include BA (Associate Degree) in General Arts, Library Science, B.Com, and Mass Communication. As per director admissions, the university will award associate degree in the relevant field to the graduates of BA program as per the policy of HEC. — DNA



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

Briefs

One window facilities to overseas Pakistanis

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman, Syed Tahir Shahbaz Wednesday showed great concern over provision of facilities to Overseas Pakistanis at One Window Facilitation Desks at 8 International airports. He said that 8.5 million Overseas Pakistanis were our valuable assets who send billions of US dollar every year to Pakistan. Provision of facilities to them would be a top priority of every government institution, he added.

He said that representatives of all 12 concerned departments would ensure their presence round the clock at one window facilitation desks.

He was chairing a high level meeting in his office which was attended by the Kashif Ahmed Noor, ED, Bureau of Immigration & Overseas Employment, Mrs. Shaheena Ali, Joint Secretary M/o Overseas Pakistanis, Dr. Inamul Haq Javed, Grievance Commissioner for Overseas Pakistanis and Senior Adviser Appraisal Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi.

The Grievance Commissioner for Overseas Pakistanis presented a report and informed the meeting that at Peshawar airport approximately 80 flights were operated in a week and mostly people belongs to labour class who had number of problems regarding Overseas Employment Bureau. The Federal Ombudsman directed the ED, Bureau of Immigration and Overseas Employment to resolve all issues of overseas employees.

Drugs smuggling attempt foiled

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Noon police have foiled an attempt of smuggling and seized huge cache of drugs, a police spokesman informed on Wednesday.

A police team headed by station house officer Noon police station, sub-Inspector Ishtiaq Hussain Shah stopped a vehicle on suspicion at a check post.

After searching the vehicle it recovered 38 kilogram hashish and 10 kilogram opium. The department, he said had renewed efforts against drug dealer/smugglers, following directions of Deputy Inspector General (Operations) Afzaal Ahmad Kausar to purge this menace from the city.

IGP Islamabad and DIG (Operations) have appreciated the performance of Noon Police team and announced cash rewards for the team, the spokesman added. — DNA

COVID-19 positive cases surged to 1363

FASIAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: After four new positive cases of novel coronavirus (Covid-19) appeared in district Attock during the last 24 hours, the total number of the cases tested positive across the district soared to 1363 on Wednesday, it was officially said. According to the data revealed by district health authorities, as many as two four patients were tested positive in the district during last 24 hours.

District focal person for Covid-19 Kashif Hussain has informed that among them two belongs to Attock city while one each to Hazro and Hassanabdul.

He informed that the number of active patients in the district is 60 in which 57 are home isolated and all are asymptomatic while three others are under treatment in district.

He informed that four suspected patients are also admitted in which two are in critical condition.

He said that number of suspected patients in the district raised to 26,911 while screening of as many as 30,163 persons is carried out across the district in which 25,324 were tested negative. Responding a question, he said that result of as many as 224 suspected patients are awaited. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Senator Shibli Faraz addressing to National seminar on Freedom of the Press & Resolution of Media Crisis arranged by PFUJ. — DNA

International workshop on Nanotechnology concludes

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Three-day international workshop on "Nanomedicine: Development and Challenges" concluded on Wednesday after participation of a number of national and international experts calling for mutual efforts to make use of Nanomedicine possible for diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 and other diseases. The speakers of the workshop acknowledge the importance of nanotechnology that offers new prospects

of developing affordable, quick and scalable solutions in diagnoses and treatment of COVID-19 and other diseases and manufacturing of personal protective equipment. They highlighted that Covid-19 outbreak has made it clear that indigenous capacity in science and technology is critically important for every country, big or small while investment in scientific research relevant to national needs has the highest rate of return. They observed that Nanotechnology offers new

prospects of developing affordable, quick and scalable solutions in diagnoses and treatment of COVID-19 and other diseases and manufacturing of personal protective equipment. The event was inaugurated by Federal secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, Dr. Arshad Mahmood as chief guest. Speaking on the occasion, he appreciated the efforts of COMSTECH to ensure the presence of international speakers and participants for this workshop. He urged the experts of the meeting

to formulate future directions for promoting the field of Nanomedicine in Pakistan. Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary highlighted the role of COMSTECH promoting science and technology among different OIC member countries. The ultimate aim of this institution is to build and nourish a scientific culture in addition to using Science and Technology as a major contributor to socio-economic development and

rapid industrialization. The workshop was delivered by 15 leading scientists from UK, USA, Germany, France, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Pakistan. More than 100 academic and research institutions from Pakistan, other OIC member states and from across the world participated both physically and virtually in this international event. Apart from more than 100 young scholars who participated in-person, more than 200 international participants

joined this event virtually from Egypt, UAE, Mauritius, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Niger, Iraq, Bangladesh, UK, China, Kyrgyzstan, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia. The workshop was consisted upon four technical thematic sessions. The themes of the sessions were functional materials for disease sensing and treatment, functional Nano-particles for biomedical applications, nanotechnology for diagnostics and clinical applications, and Nano-antimicrobials.



ISLAMABAD: Officials of Habib Metropolitan Bank posing for a picture with Malaysian High Commissioner Ikrum Mohammad Ibrahim. — DNA

ICCI, NUST sign MoU to promote research initiatives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the National University of Science & Technology (NUST) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote research initiatives for the benefit of the industrial sector. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President ICCI and Lt. Gen. Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST signed the MoU during a ceremony held at NUST University. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Ms. Arooba Gillani GM Placement NUST, Umar Hussain, Omais Khattak and others were also present at the occasion.

By signing the MoU, both sides agreed to work together on joint research projects that would help in resolving the key issues of industry and improving industrial efficiency. Both sides would offer testing facilities/labs to each other, hold workshops, seminars and business competitions, arrange professional development courses for ICCI member companies at NUST. ICCI would facilitate the job placement of NUST students in its member companies besides providing them internship opportunities in local industries. NUST would invite ICCI member companies to its job fairs, seminars, workshops, training programs and other important events that would help them in business promotion.

Sania chairs meeting on Ehsaas engagement policy

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation Dr. Sania Nishat Wednesday chaired the final meeting on upcoming Ehsaas Private Sector Engagement Policy (EPSEP). The meeting was held at the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD). The objective of EPSEP is to engage and facilitate non-government stakeholders to leverage their technical, financial, entrepreneurship and outreach support to amplify impact of Ehsaas. The policy highlights the types of support, the engagement model for each type of support, and the safeguards put in place to address risks of partnerships that may form under the agreement.

EPSEP is applicable to five groups including private sector organizations (PSOs), non-government organizations, foundations, academia, and individuals. The policy covers the engagement process, governance, and monitoring and evaluation mechanism for different engagement types. Over time, Ehsaas expects that the implementation of this policy and creation of partnerships with private sector will diversify Ehsaas' partner base. Pakistan scores very high in philanthropic giving. According to '10th Edition of World Giving Index (WGI)' report published in October 2019 by Charities Aid Foundation, Pakistan has been ranked as the 91st most generous country out of 144 nations. Estimates reveal that more than PKR 300b is channeled

to welfare, annually. However, up until now, the government and welfare organizations have worked in silos. The private sector involvement and engagement in development agenda of Pakistan, is of significance and much can be achieved through complementing and supplementing each other's poverty reduction and social protection agenda. "Ehsaas envisages nine kind of interactions and engagement with the private sector contractual engagement according to PPRA rules; mobilizing the private sector through Solution Challenge approach; private sector participation in technical committees; role of private sector in infrastructure public-private partnerships; true public-private partnerships where the private sector con-

tributes resources; harnessing technical input of volunteer arrangements; soliciting financial contributions; receiving in-kind contributions; and engagement through corporate social responsibility initiatives", Dr. Sania said in a statement issued today. Alongside, a pledge to Ehsaas process is also being devised where private sector will be able to make commitments. These commitments will have to be aligned with one or more of the seven goals of Ehsaas in terms of the criteria of a commitment; action steps of a commitment should be clearly defined in terms of solution, outcome, timeframe, and desired impact; commitment should have qualitative and quantitative goals that can be monitored and tracked over a period of time.

1,500 laborers to get flats, houses' ownership: Zulfi

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Shelter less Industrial laborers of the Federal Capital will get possession letters of over 1,500 houses and flats on Thursday as the Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) has completed all the arrangements for its balloting.

Prime Minister Imran Khan will inaugurate fully constructed phase I of labor Complex at Japan Road Zone V Islamabad tomorrow and distribute possession certificates of 1,000 flats and 500 houses among the eligible

workers after transparent balloting process, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari said on Wednesday. He was speaking to a selected group of journalists at his office. Zulfiqar Bukhari aka Zulfi Bukhari said the prime minister would also break the ground for second phase of the Labor Complex which would be developed on modern lines to provide accommodations to more than 1,500 laborers of the federal capital. He said the first phase was

started in 2011 but remained in limbo due to slackness of the previous government which was more focused on looting the public money by making kickbacks in mega projects. The SAPM said the present government, soon after coming into the power, revived the sick project and fully developed the flats and houses which were abandoned in the past. He said another major initiative was taken by the government that was meant to change the WWF housing allotment policy. The policy was changed with approval of the federal cabinet.

Zulfi Bukhari said under the new policy, the workers would be entitled to get the incentives being offered by the banks to a lender for financing a housing facility under the Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme. Unlike past, now they would be provided houses on ownerships basis instead of rental ones, he added. Explaining the eligibility criteria for the workers, he said they should not have any allotment in any housing scheme or did not own a property. Adding further, he said the worker should not be convicted by

any court of law and did not own more than Rs 500,000 assets, and must be registered with Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) or Employees Social Security. To a query, he said the workers would get their own house against Rs around 2.6 million payment due to the incentives being provided under the Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme. According to an official source in the WWF, the first phase of Labor Complex spanned around 2,560 Kanals and completed with a cost of over 5,079.751 million. He said each flat covered 750

Square feet and had two rooms, and a kitchen, lounge and bathroom. While, each house built at 775 square feet area having ground floor, rooms, kitchen, lounge and bathroom. The complex had other amenities including Masjid, utility stores, community center dispensary, water supply networks, gross drainage and sewerage works, he added. As regards second phase, the official said it would have model school for girls and boys, poly technical college, parks, playground and many other amenities.

NUMS, DRAP ink 5-year DOU

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) and the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) Wednesday inked a five-year Document of Understanding (DoU) to exchange information, compliance, training and capacity building in view of the university's plans revolving around bio-equivalence and clinical trials involving human subjects.

NUMS Vice Chancellor Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Muhammad Imran Majeed and DRAP Chief Executive Officer Asim Rauf signed the agreement at a ceremony here, a news release said.

Director NUMS Office of Research, Innovation and Commercial (ORIC) Dr. Awais Siraj and DRAP Director Pharmacy Services Dr. Abdul Rashid were also present during the signing ceremony.

On the occasion, the Vice Chancellor said NUMS was planning to set up a National Institute of Advanced Studies and Research (NIASAR).

The planning division of Finance Ministry, he said, had earmarked special funds to specifically train NUMS's faculty from the world leading universities like Harvard and Queen Mary for supporting the national endeavor of research and development.

NUMS Pro Vice Chancellor Administration Maj Gen (Retd) Syed Ammar Reza Hamadani, who was present on the occasion, was working on this project, he added.

The vice chancellor said the DOU between the two institutions would help realize words of the Father-of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who once said, that whatever products are created, should carry the brand name of Pakistan.

DRAP CEO Asim Rauf billed the DOU as a paradigm shift to further achieve DRAP and NUMS objectives to lay foundation for research and quality products in the country.

He said the percentage of spurious and sub-standard drugs in Pakistan were almost the same as were in the United States of America and Europe.

The cooperation between the two national institutions, he said, would synergize DRAP to monitor and manufacturing of products which would help flush out spurious drugs from the country.

VUP, ICAP join hands for CA Exam

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Virtual University of Pakistan (VUP) and Institute of Chartered Accountancy of Pakistan (ICAP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Wednesday aimed at conducting the Chartered Accountancy Examination through electronic format across the country.

Controller Examination VUP Dr. Faisal Tehseen Shah and Secretary ICAP Syed Masood Akhtar signed the MoU in the presence of Federal Secretary MoIT Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui, who was the chief guest at the signing ceremony, a news release said.

At the MoU signing ceremony, Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque sent a congratulatory message to Rector Virtual University on achieving yet another milestone.

He said the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoIT) was doing its best to digitalize every educational activity through Virtual University.

Secretary Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui praised Virtual University for its continuous efforts to uplift the educational standards in every aspect.

Arms market

THE countries in the Asia and Oceania region emerged as the biggest arms exporters in the world in the last five years, according to a report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri). Pakistan's purchases accounted for 2.7 percent. All these years, China supplied us with major arms to strengthen our security requirements. China was the leading seller of weapons to many countries in South Asia and the Oceania region, as is evident from Pakistan's deals that account for 74 percent of the country's imports. However, China must protect its market to shore up future prospects.

India is making attempts to create a space for itself in the arms market in the Oceania region. Narendra Modi's government's offer to countries to buy from India is nothing short of an effort to present New Delhi as an alternative to China. India's offer is quite an ambitious one. Will New Delhi be able to lure the smaller states? It will still take India time to convince other nations to buy arms from it when it is the second-largest importer of weapons itself.

Nevertheless, one thing that India understands better than most of the other nations is that it can earn billions of dollars from establishing a military-industrial complex. The arms industry thickens the pockets of any state and provides it with the necessary economic stability. All the economically powerful states have the most sophisticated arms industries that earn them billions of dollars. Our government also needs to keep up efforts to find buyers for indigenous products.

The ministries of industries and defence with the Foreign Office must sit together to chalk out a business strategy in this regard. The government must direct the defence attaches posted at Pakistani missions to work closely with forces of the countries they are residing in. Similarly, the government must collaborate with China to continue the spirit of cooperation that we saw in the case of the Al-Khalid tank and JF-17 jets. The sooner we lock deals with potential buyers the more our defence industry will prosper.

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Dangerous escalation

POLITICAL discourse should never be allowed to escalate into violence. Unfortunately, civility and humanity was a casualty on Monday when Prime Minister Imran Khan's aide on political communications, Dr Shahbaz Gill, got his eye infected due to the ink thrown at him during an attack. Eggs and ink were thrown on the PTI member allegedly by PML-N workers in the Lahore High Court.

This is not the first of such incidents where political rhetoric resulted in actual injury and physical retaliation. The blame lies on both sides—on March 6, in a press conference held by PML-N, a shoe was thrown at PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal as he had stood on a platform and shouted slogans criticising the PTI regime. Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Senator Mushahid Hussain also faced physical altercations by the workers present there.

This culture is absolutely not acceptable, and all parties must take the step forward and condemn this. The opposition must regardless reject this attack on Gill—it might just have been eggs and ink this time but if this culture is encouraged, it may result in more dangerous injuries.

The solution to this is not 'what-abboutism' and claims of other parties being at fault. Both PTI and PML-N have reacted defensively when confronted with the question of escalating political violence by their workers by blaming the other for starting it. Both need to condemn this wholeheartedly, train their workers and put in place strict sanctions and punishment for those who violate codes of conduct.

Not doing so is harmful for the country, for the state of democracy and for the politicians themselves. We do not want to live in a country where politicians have to fear for their lives and safety while holding a press conference. The political status quo must recognise how dangerous this can be—not speaking out, political leaders are ensuring that this cycle of polarisation and hate culminates into attacks by some who will inevitably take the law into their own hands.

Why Pak is key to pushing Afghan peace forward

Syed Talat Hussain

The United States thinks that the time has come for them to define what matters the most to their interests and that is anything but a prolonged, expensive stay in a war-torn and afflicted country. China and Russia have their own interests in ensuring that more hardline and religion-based resistance is not strengthened in the area because this would jeopardise their core financial and national interests. The world at large wants to end to the festering trouble because there isn't enough money floating around to help sustain a state building process in the country

IN the new push for creating some sort of a workable peace arrangement in Afghanistan, Pakistan is striving hard to ensure that this does not end up as another failed venture.

The Biden Administration has laid its interests bare by telling the Afghan government of President Ashraf Ghani that they will have to play ball with the idea that the Taliban are to be included in any successful plan to help Afghanistan transit from bedlam and violence to some measure of stability. After initial reluctance, Kabul has finally agreed to participate in two Washington-Moscow-backed and all-stake holders endorsed conferences to be held in Russia and Turkey. Pakistan's burden of responsibility lies in keeping the Taliban positively engaged in the process and somehow ensuring that the ongoing violence is kept in check.

Islamabad has not done badly so far on both the counts considering how limited its diplomatic resources are in effecting change in ground realities where the Taliban have become a force to reckon with—something that the US secretary of state Anthony Blinken has no qualms in acknowledging. Pakistan's policymakers have been shuttling between Islamabad and different world capital to keep the momentum going. They have their work cut out. To begin with, the new Administration's review of the Afghan policy has disrupted Islamabad's aims to close the deal that Washington had with the Taliban under which, among other things, the US was to pull out all its troops by May 1.

Even though this was too good to be true even it was agreed upon, the change of Administration in Washington has now made it well-nigh impossible that this deadline will be met. Clearly, a new agreement or

understanding has to be developed for a pathway to open up for foreign troops to leave the Afghan land.

This means that much of the work that was done to underwrite the first agreement has to be done all over again. This is painful and time-consuming.

Afghanistan is a melting pot of colliding interests. One man's honey is another's poison. To make a potion out of this witches' brew that everyone can hold up as a drink to peace is a nightmare.

The second challenge is to keep itself above the fray of criticism that it is not doing enough to convince the Taliban that this is their best bet for stabilising the country that has seen too much death and destruction. Pakistan's policymakers believe that they are the real victims of the "do more" demand that is thrown their way every-time peace moves slip and get derailed.

In background briefings by key policymakers, the one point that repeatedly gets mentioned is the worry that any deadlock that might ensue on account of say obduracy of any of the parties in the conflict will be squarely blamed on Pakistan's doorstep. "We have had enough of the do more mantra", said one policymaker deeply involved in the new peace initiative.

An extended part of the same challenge is to keep its vital national security interested balanced with the competing demands from the international community. As the same source explained: "We don't want to deal with a dangerous vacuum in Afghanistan (created by a hasty withdrawal of the US and international support) and prolonged involvement of the foreign forces (which is a sure way of perpetuating mayhem here). Ideally, we want to have a peace regime that is sanctioned and supported by world powers and signed on by Afghanistan's stake-

holders — one that is allowed to take root before everyone goes back to their barracks and bury their guns forever."

But the problem is that we don't live in an ideal world and there are too many loose ends that can cause rupture in an already fraught situation. The Taliban think that they have an advantage on the ground. Kabul thinks that the Taliban's advantage does not translate into a full victory and as long as it has the US and other powers on its back, the Taliban will not be able to run a solo show on ground.

The US thinks that the time has come for them to define what matters the most to their interests and that is anything but a prolonged, expensive stay in a war-torn and afflicted country. China and Russia have their own interests in ensuring that more hardline and religion-based resistance is not strengthened in the area because this would jeopardise their core financial and national interests.

The world at large wants to end to the festering trouble because there isn't enough money floating around to help sustain a state building process in the country.

This summary tells you how different are the timelines and even the basic goals that Afghanistan's peace managers are pursuing at present. These have to be factored in to meet the urgent needs of the people of the country who cannot wait for months for their lives to become normal again.

There is too much violence that has begot more violence for decades ruining two generations of the Afghans. Can the ongoing process produce a result that is acceptable to all and be of solace to the Afghan people? "Difficult", says a top Pakistani member of the country's powerful establishment. "But it is not impossible."

— Courtesy: Gulf News

The US and China: Avoiding a meltdown

Marwan Bishara



Trump increased the Pentagon's already colossal budgets to \$738bn in 2020, while Xi rushed to modernise and expand China's military power as tensions flared, notably in the South China Sea. Against this chilling backdrop, Washington intensified its criticism of China. It condemned China's mistreatment of its Uighur Muslims and its devouring of Hong Kong

THE world's leading powers, the United States and China, are like giant glaciers moving slowly but surely towards a collision. Their chilling conflict and competition are destined to dominate the 21st century as the Cold War dominated the second part of the past century, and more. So it is fitting that their national security teams are meeting in Alaska on March 18 to avert an early crash with dire consequences for both nations and the world. Early reports that the two governments did not agree even on the framing of the high-level meeting does not bode well for its outcome. Beijing sees it as the start of a "strategic dialogue", but the Biden administration, which called for the meeting, deems it a one-off event, possibly to put China on notice regarding their differences.

On the face of it, this may seem like a misunderstanding over diplomatic phraseology. But in reality, President Xi Jinping is in a rush to normalise their great power relationship as the world's leading G2, while President Joe Biden would like to see China moderate its strategic posture and tone down its menacing ultimatums before restoring normalcy to the bilateral relationship, which had deteriorated under his predecessor, Donald Trump. Truth be told, the relationship was not exactly peachy during the eight years of the Obama administration either. Although President Barack Obama maintained a civil tone with Beijing and welcomed a constructive, responsible and strong China, his "Pivot to Asia" was in fact a serious attempt to contain rising China. But Trump's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership undercut Obama's containment strategy. He killed the expansive free trade agreement, which included 12 nations that make up 40 percent of the world's economy, and which could counter Chinese power on the continent. Instead, Trump embraced a populist-nationalist course, accusing China of "theft" and of "raping our country" through unfair trade practices and pursued a dual policy of offering deals and threatening sanctions. But Beijing is no donkey to be treated with carrots and sticks, and four years later, his strategy seems to have produced more pain than gain, as China continues to expand in Southeast Asia undeterred. Meanwhile, Trump increased the Pentagon's already colossal budgets to \$738bn in 2020, while Xi rushed to modernise and expand China's military power as tensions flared, notably in the South China Sea. Against this chilling backdrop, Washington intensified its criticism of China.

It condemned China's mistreatment of its Uighur Muslims and its devouring of Hong Kong, warning against potential

military invasion and annexation of Taiwan. It criticised Beijing's overall threat to regional stability and its "sabre-rattling" in the strategic, resource-rich South China Sea. And it condemned China's overall human rights violations, intellectual property theft, currency manipulation and cyber attacks. But pretty much all of that indignation has fallen on deaf ears in Beijing. China reckons the West is the least qualified to preach about minority rights, respect for national sovereignty, cybersecurity, and military overreach, considering, for example, its horrific record in the Middle East. More importantly, all these diatribes are in fact symptoms and pretexts, not the actual root causes of the American-Chinese friction. The real cause of the conflict lies in China's assertive rise as a regional hegemon that is slowly reshaping the structures of power in Asia and in America's attempt at containing its influence before it becomes a peer competitor or a truly global power.

From the Napoleonic wars, through the world wars to the Cold War — the geopolitics of the past two centuries, and their tragedies, were largely shaped by this type of great power conflict between dominant and rising world powers. Long considered a "sleeping lion", China has finally awakened. And, despite Xi's assurances that it is a "peaceful, amicable and civilised lion", its roaring is already shaking foes and friends alike. China is moving rapidly to occupy what it considers to be its "rightful place" at the helm of the world power structure, and there is little the US can do to stop it. It aims to surpass America as the world's largest economy by setting up a global network of economic relations through its massive Belt and Road Initiative.

It has also established various multilateral and financial institutions like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS as well as the New Development Bank and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank to compete with the West-dominated IMF and World Bank.

Xi believes China has long punched below its weight, and it is high time for the Chinese to "make China great again". After all, the country was a great power throughout much of its 5,000-year history.

The seasoned Biden understands that all too well and seems to fully realise the momentous challenges ahead. His administration has already named China the top national-state threat to the US.

Biden also moved quickly to fill his national security team with Asia experts, including Kurt Campbell, the architect of Obama's Pivot to Asia, as his "Asia tsar", in order to meet

the China challenge early on in his administration. The US president will try to slow down the rise and expansion of China's influence through an effective containment strategy. And, unlike his predecessor, he knows the US cannot go it alone. It needs its Asian and European allies. Desperately.

Biden's virtual meeting with the leaders of Japan, India and Australia on March 12 may be the first step towards a Pivot to Asia 2.0. Likewise, the follow-up meetings in Japan and South Korea of his secretaries of state and defence this week are meant to lay the ground for an effective new grand strategy.

But this may still prove an uphill battle as some of these allies had moved on to shape their own foreign relations with mighty China during the disruptive Trump presidency. The EU, for example, concluded the landmark Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with China only three weeks before Biden took office.

Moreover, the US president is certain to face an even greater challenge because he seems to have decided to take on both China and Russia at the same time, which will help bring them closer together.

When the West slapped Russia with sanctions in response to its military intervention in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, it was China that came to the rescue, signing a \$400bn gas pipeline deal with Moscow, only two months after Western retaliation. The case of Ukraine has resonated in Taiwan among those who worry that their country could meet the same fate.

China wishes to see the island return to the fold peacefully but makes no secret of its ambition to outright annex Taiwan by force if necessary. Only a few days after Biden took office, China threatened Taiwan with war if it seeks "independence" — even though the two have been separate since the end of the civil war in 1949.

All of this leads to certain pessimism about the outcome of what seems to be an inevitable collision. But it does not have to end in tragedy.

Instead of supporting this or that side, Asian and other major powers with much at stake, like Japan, India, Indonesia, Russia and Brazil to name a few, must come together and deter the United States and China from resolving their differences through unsavoury means.

Hegemons like the US and China cannot be trusted with power and should not be entrusted with global security.

— Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

One Pakistan cricketer tests positive for virus

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: One of the Pakistani cricketers has tested positive for the novel coronavirus ahead of the South Africa tour, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced on Wednesday. A total of 35 tests were conducted on the South Africa-bound Pakistan men's national cricket team on Tuesday. All squad members have tested negative, except for one player. PCB did not mention the name of the player who tested positive.

Those who have tested negative will now assemble in Lahore on Thursday, for the training camp, which will commence at the Gaddafi Stadium on Friday.

The player who has tested positive will undergo a repeat test on Thursday at his residence. "If he tests negative, only then he will be eligible to travel to Lahore where he will remain in isolation for two more days before being retested," the PCB statement added. The team will depart for South Africa on March 26.

France, Pak sign credit financing...

From Page 01

It will be one of the very first collaborative operations for AIIB and GCF in Pakistan on urban development. - on climate change mitigation, the choice made for the bio-methane hybrid bus technology, powered by a dedicated waste methanisation plant. This technology combined with the massive transport supply, will further limit CO2 emissions from the public transport system. - the holistic street approach for this urban development project, including organization and facilities for the all public space along the BRT corridor. - its Gender and Social Inclusion dimensions through adoption of good practices in accessibility and gender mainstreaming. In addition, the project includes a support component for the transition of the existing bus sector with the integration of informal operators into the new system, which is an essential prerequisite for their proper and full commissioning. France, through the French Agency for Development, is providing technical and financial support in energy and urban development sector in Pakistan, where Euros 850 million financial support has been committed since 2016.

Zaheer Babar appointed...

From Page 01

also served as the additional secretary at the Ministry of Defence. In recognition of his outstanding services, he has been awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Military). Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan spent an eventful tenure which also saw Operation Swift Retort on February 27, 2019 when PAF fighter jets conducted airstrikes at six multiple locations in Indian Occupied Kashmir while remaining within Pakistan's airspace and also shot down two Indian warplanes.

Welfare of masses priority...

From Page 01

development partnerships with the world. The Prime Minister congratulated the National Security Division for crystallizing this framework. The Prime Minister lauded the efforts of the Army, intelligence and civilian law enforcement agencies for playing a monumental role in the fight against terrorism. He said that to ensure a truly secure country we must make the common citizens of Pakistan secure. "National Security today includes many aspects that have been ignored in previous decades, including climate security, food security and economic prosperity," he added. Prime Minister Imran Khan said that the dollar inflow must be consistently greater than dollar outflow in order to expand our national resource pie and use these resources for human welfare and robust defense.



TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga received the first dose of Pfizer vaccine at a hospital in Tokyo, in a bid to reassure about the safety of the jab against COVID-19. - DNA

Japan's PM receives 1st dose of Pfizer vaccine

DNA

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Tuesday received the first dose of Pfizer vaccine at a hospital in Tokyo, in a bid to reassure about the safety of the jab against COVID-19. Suga will head to the United States in April for a meeting with US President Joe Biden and in doing so making Suga the first foreign leader to meet Biden in person. The prime minister will get his second dose in three weeks. Initially Suga said he would wait until mid-April when the national vaccination stage would reach people aged 65 or older, after all of the country's healthcare workers had been vaccinated. After those aged 65s and older, those with underlying conditions and working in elderly care facilities will be eligible to be inoculated. The general public will be last in line to receive their jabs. Suga was keen to have his jab in front of the cameras in light of there being some reluctance among the Japanese population about being inoculated. A survey conducted by Kyodo News showed that only 63.1 percent of respondents wanted to be vaccinated.

EU supports Pakistan...

From Page 01

access to economic opportunities for marginalized groups. At the signing ceremony, Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, said, "As the world continues to battle the COVID pandemic, it is important to focus our efforts on supporting the most vulnerable. Civil society organisations are important partners for the EU wherever we work, and have been crucial in Pakistan's efforts to respond to the current crisis. The initiative leading to today's successful proposals was one of the first concrete actions taken by the EU last year to alleviate the effects of the pandemic in the short and long term in Pakistan. The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on young people - which is reflected in the areas prioritised by these projects including youth engagement and economic empowerment." Dr Matt Reed, CEO of Agha Khan Foundation (UK), said: "During this pandemic, in Pakistan and around the world, civil society has been vital: raising awareness, teaching people how to help their families and neighbours safely, protecting their communities from COVID-19. The Aga Khan Foundation is delighted to partner with the European Union in strengthening community organisations and civil society at this crucial time." In her speech, Anne Masterson, Country Director of the Norwegian Church Aid emphasized that, "Through this project young people will have opportunities to improve and diversify their skills, obtain training and establish livelihoods. Youth, particularly young women, will become more effective change agents by strengthening their voice within their communities and in the wider society."

the growth of cricket among the young generation of the country. "Babar Azam is our national hero and an ideal of our cricket crazy youth. - DNA

PNC denounces Kosovo, Czech embassies opening in Jerusalem

PNC also considered the opening of the offices a blatant assault on the right of the Palestinian people, and a violation of international law and international legitimacy resolutions, which all affirmed that Jerusalem is an occupied Palestinian city

DNA

RAMALLAH: Palestine National Council (PNC) considered the move by Czech Republic and Kosovo Territory to open offices for their countries' embassies in occupied Jerusalem as an illegal act that rewards the Israeli occupier instead of making Israel

accountable and imposing penalties on it.

In a statement issued today, Monday, PNC added that this step is an explicit recognition of Israel's illegal annexation of the occupied city of Jerusalem, and it is a unilateral step that violates the legal status of this occupied city, which requires accountability and punishment of the oc-

cupier in accordance with international law.

PNC also considered the opening of the offices a blatant assault on the right of the Palestinian people, and a violation of international law and international legitimacy resolutions, which all affirmed that Jerusalem is an occupied Palestinian city. PNC called on the parlia-

ment of Czech Republic and Kosovo to pressure the governments of their countries to backtrack on this irresponsible step that violates the resolutions of international legitimacy, which will not have any legal effect and will not change anything in the legal and historical status of occupied Jerusalem, and its fate will not be determined by unilateral

decisions that are inconsistent with the principles of justice, respect for peoples' rights, and United Nations resolutions.

International parliaments should exert pressure on the parliaments of Czech Republic and Kosovo to oblige the governments of their countries to backtrack on this condemned step and adhere to UN Security Council resolutions, especially Resolutions 476 and 478 of 1980 and Resolution 2334 of 2016, which called on all countries not to establish diplomatic missions in the city of Jerusalem, and that all administrative and legal decisions and measures taken by Israel in Jerusalem are absolutely null and void, PNC called on and explained.



MADRID: Real Madrid's Luka Modric vies with Atalanta's Josip Ilicic during a UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match between Real Madrid and Atlanta in Madrid, Spain. - DNA

Babar reclaims No.3 spot in ICC T20I rankings

LAHORE: Pakistan captain Babar Azam has reclaimed his No.3 spot in ICC T20I rankings for batsmen. The 26-year-old Babar jumped to third from fourth after India's K.L. Rahul had a bad outing in the first three T20Is against India. The 28-year-old Rahul scored 1,0,0 in three games in Ahmedabad. Meanwhile, India's skipper Virat Kohli jumped to the fifth spot after back-to-back fifties. On the other hand, England's Dawid Malan sits at the top with 894 rating points.

Note, Babar slipped to fourth spot last week after Australia's Aaron Finch rose to the second spot. Earlier Pakistan cricket team captain Babar Azam called on Director General Sports Punjab Adnan Arshad Aulakh at National Hockey Stadium here on Wednesday. The role of clubs in the promotion of cricket was discussed in detail during the meeting where Director Admin Javed Chohan, Deputy Director Planning Rauf Bajwa and other officials were also present. Adnan Arshad Aulakh lauded Babar Azam's effective role in the growth of cricket among the young generation of the country. "Babar Azam is our national hero and an ideal of our cricket crazy youth. - DNA

OMNES Media, Kharabeesh sign MoU

DUBAI: OMNES Media, the leading developer of digital media and marketing solutions, has signed a strategic partnership agreement with Kharabeesh, the leading producer of media, entertainment and animation content, to provide advanced advertising solutions to advertisers in numerous sectors. The agreement was signed at OMNES Media's headquarters in Dubai recently by Fahed Aldeeb, Chief Executive Officer of OMNES Media, and Mohammed Asfour, Chief Executive Officer of Kharabeesh. OMNES Media and Kharabeesh have joined hands for providing their services to advertisers in public and private sectors worldwide in innovative and professional products aimed at enhancing the impact of advertising campaigns on the targetted audience by using creative content. Talking about OMNES Media's role in this agreement, Fahed Aldeeb, CEO, said: "OMNES Media has developed digital tools tailored to meet the requirements of advertisers, including (www.omnesmedia.com) that provides information about media globally; and (www.advertonclick.com). - DNA

Pakistan should impose a mask-mandate: Dr. Mubashar

DNA

WASHINGTON: Renowned Pakistani American physician expressed concerns on a surge in Covid19 cases in Pakistan and asked the government to at least impose the mask mandate to control rising cases throughout the country. Dr Mubashar Choudry, a renowned cardiologist in an exclusive chat said that cases are surging, and limited testing com-

pared with other countries suggest the virus could be racing through the country at an even higher rate. "In Pakistan ineffective government limits on personal contact and widespread doubts, often fueled by conspiracy theories, that Covid 19 poses a threat", he added. According to NHS the death toll in Pakistan due to Covid is rising while the positivity rate was recorded at approximately 5 percent. Pakistani officials have warned

of a third wave hitting the country if steps were not taken to stop the tide. "In Pakistan Mosques, Marriage Halls, Restaurants, Shopping Malls, Buses look crowded while political activity is at the peak and hardly anyone is wearing a mask," Dr Mubashar Choudry observed. "Last summer, infectious disease specialists in America warned that the Covid-19 pandemic could spiral into a "twinemic" when seasonal

influenza hit but that nightmare scenario never unfolded. The flu didn't get a strong footing in the United States this season because the safety precautions used to prevent Covid-19, such as mask wearing and physical distancing, also helped cut down the activity", Dr Choudry explained. He said the evidence in clear that masks can help prevent the spread of Covid-19 and that the more people wearing the masks, the better.

'Govt committed to promote extreme sports'

Sirbaz appreciated this gesture of presenting Pakistani flag and meeting with the team and said that it will be a source of encouragement not only for him and his team but also to the other emerging climbers towards this mountaineering

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Fehmida Mirza, President, Pakistan Sports Board presented Pakistan's Flag to Mr. Sirbaz Khan, a young mountaineer from Hunza to hoist at the Peak of Annapurna (8091-M) and see him off for Nepal. Mr. Sirbaz Khan had call on the Minister yesterday, before travelling (today) for his expedition to Nepal to summit Annapurna alongwith Mr. Abdul Joshi another mountaineer and his supporting 3-members. Earlier, he climbed five peaks of above 8000-M, he told the Minister that he has a mission to climb 14 peaks those are above 8000-M. Dr. Fehmida Mirza, federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination appreciated the endeavor

of young mountaineer and his team and said that the Government is taking all possible

measures and steps to promote sports at grass root level to nurture young talent like him who

can bring glory to the name of Pakistan and promote its good image globally. She also said that



the Government is already playing its role but the true vision of revival of sports can only be achieved when all stakeholders of the sports' ecosystem including national federations, provincial associations, and media play their role in collaboration. She wished the young mountaineers good luck on behalf of Government and people of Pakistan. Sirbaz appreciated this gesture of presenting Pakistani flag and meeting with the team and said that it will be a source of encouragement not only for him and his team but also to the other emerging climbers towards this mountaineering. Mr. Abu Zafar Sadiq (President) and Mr. Karrar Haideri (Secretary) from Alpine Club of Pakistan were also present during the call on.

Requiem for the opposition...

From Page 01

On resignations too his stance seemed to be logical. PDM can be more effective and relevant while being part of the system. Then, PPP has more stakes in the system at this point in time for it controls Sindh province and occupies decent number of seats in the National Assembly and the Senate. The PPP for sure, would like to keep all this intact. The govt on its part should take postponement of long march as a breather. It has few more months at its disposal to set things in order. People have been bearing the brunt of price hike and other challenges ever since this government has taken charge. People have nothing to do with opposition long march. They only want somebody to stand with them in this difficult time. That is the only charm for them if they would like to be part of the long march or any other movement against the government. It is time for government to act and act immediately.

Briefs

Biden to hold first press conference on March 25

WASHINGTON: U.S. President Joe Biden will hold the first press conference as president on March 25, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced. "President Biden will hold a formal press conference on the afternoon of Thursday, March 25th," Psaki said in a statement.

It took Biden a longer period of time than his predecessors before addressing reporters and taking questions at a formal news conference. By the time of the conference, it will be more than two months since Biden was sworn in. Psaki defended Biden on the matter earlier this month, telling reporters during a White House news briefing that the president is busy with some more important affairs.

"I think the American people would certainly understand if his focus and his energy and his attention has been on ensuring we secure enough vaccines to vaccinate all Americans, which we will do by the end of May, and then pushing for a rescue plan that will provide direct checks to almost 160 million Americans," Psaki said. —APP

Uzbekistan receives first batch of AstraZeneca

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan has received 660,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, the first batch of two million doses within the COVAX facility, the health ministry said in a press release Wednesday.

Under COVAX, an international vaccine campaign co-led by the World Health Organization and its partners, Uzbekistan will receive enough vaccines, syringes and safe disposal boxes to vaccinate 20 percent of the population by the end of the year, the ministry said. The first stage of the mass vaccination campaign will cover 4.1 million people, it added.

The elderly and disabled persons, and those in healthcare, education as well as law enforcement will be vaccinated first. Uzbekistan this month also authorized the use of a vaccine produced by China's Anhui Zhifei Longcom Biopharmaceutical Co., Ltd.

Uzbekistan has registered a total of 80,858 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 622 related deaths.

Philippines to reimpose entry curbs

MANILA: The Philippines has announced that it will temporarily suspend the entry of foreigners and some citizens as the Southeast Asian country battles a renewed spike in COVID-19 cases.

In a statement issued on Tuesday night, the Philippines' coronavirus task force said foreign citizens and returning nationals who had not been working overseas will not be able to enter the country from March 20 until April 19 under the ban. The task force also directed concerned agencies to limit the number of inbound international passengers to 1,500 a day. However, the ban doesn't include foreign government officials, diplomats, and Filipino workers returning from overseas.

"This is in view of the rising COVID-19 cases and the entry of the coronavirus variants in the country," Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a video message sent to the media. Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello on Wednesday also welcomed the suspension, saying the limit would help ease the burden on hotel quarantine facilities.

"Truthfully, we are running out of hotels ... We reach as far as Tagaytay, as far as Batangas, in search of hotel for quarantine accommodation. This is a good policy," he said. The Southeast Asian country has just opened its door ajar to allow the entry of some foreigners who already have visas and exemption letters, after having closed its door to foreign travellers for a long time. —APP



ISTANBUL: President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Nasir Mirza presenting shield to Consul General Bilal Khan Pasha during his visit to Turkey. — DNA

RCCI delegation visits Pakistani Consulate and Istanbul Chamber

DNA

ISTANBUL: The delegation led by President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) Muhammad Nasir Mirza visited Pakistan Consulate General in Istanbul and met Consul General Bilal Khan Pasha during his visit to Turkey.

Consul General Bilal Khan Pasha welcomed the Rawalpindi Chamber delegation and said that Pakistan and Turkey have deep and historic ties. Mutual trade relations have further strengthened it. The Chamber of Commerce has an important role to play in

promoting trade relations between the two countries. He assured the delegation of all possible cooperation and assistance from the Consulate.

The delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber also visited the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce. The delegation was received by Vice President Dr. Israfil Kuralay. He discussed with the delegation the ongoing trade cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey, joint ventures and exchange of delegations at the Chamber of Commerce level. On this occasion, President Nasir Mirza invited the Vice President to visit Pakistan. And invited them to partic-



ISTANBUL: Istanbul Chamber of commerce vice president Dr. Israfil Kuralay presenting shield to President RCCI Nasir Mirza other officials of RCCI are also present at the occasion. — DNA

ipate in various programs and events organized by the Chamber, which they

accepted. On the occasion, Senior Vice President Usman Ashraf also briefed the

Vice President on bilateral cooperation in various fields, especially in the field

of electronics products, cables, construction and tourism.

FPCCI initiated mega dialogue with business community

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry has initiated on regular basis to interact with the business community to seek their ideas and strategic measures to improve business environment and economic development of Pakistan. The FPCCI has invited all leading businessmen, industrialists, trade bodies to participate in the Open House web session that will be held on every third Saturday of the month, the first one will be held on Saturday, 20th March 2021 at 11:00 am. Since resumption of the office of the President FPCCI Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo is keenly pursuing the agenda of economic prosperity of Pakistan through implementation of suitable policies that will only be designed with the consultation of stakeholders particularly representatives of economic and business sectors.

He said that the apex body of trade and industry will play its role by supporting the present government which is struggling to bring socio-economic prosperity despite multidimensional challenges at domestic and international fronts as well. Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo further said that the vision and economic policies of the government which he believes will re-track the economy needs broader consultation to formulate mechanism of implementation under the changing dynamics due to global pandemic COVID-19.

Govt wants to develop export culture: SACM

STAFF REPORT

SIALKOT: Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM) Punjab for Trade, Investment/Chairman Board of Investment and Trade Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan said on Wednesday the government wanted to develop export culture and for this purpose a policy was being evolved in consultation with local industrialists.

He expressed these views while addressing an important meeting with business community at SCCI. President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Qaiser Iqbal Baryar, Senior Vice President (SVP) Khurram Aslam Butt, Vice President (VP) Ansar Aziz

Puri, Chairman Air Sial Fazal Jilani, Khawar Anwar Khawaja, members of the executive body and exporters attended the meeting.

The SACM said the government was fully aware of the perturbing problems being faced by the business community, saying that the government was making all out sincere efforts for early amicable solution to these problems by taking the businessmen into confidence.

The SACM acknowledged the role of industrial city of Sialkot in the economic sustenance of the province and the country.

The SACM said that Sialkot was exporting best quality sports goods, surgical instruments, leather products, gloves of all sorts, textiles

items, sports wear, martial arts uniforms & accessories, musical instruments, kitchen ware, hollow ware, knives, cutlery items and military uniform badges etc. internationally.

He shared that his office was open to the business community for anything related to trade and investment and that he would ensure maximum support to the business community of Punjab. He said that facilitating the exporters, through ease of doing business initiatives, was the foremost priority of the Punjab government. Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan assured the SCCI president of his full support on the issues and proposals submitted. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief

Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar were trying to increase exports.

For investment and promotion of industry in the country, there was a dire need to focus on advanced technology, he added.

The SACM president lauded SACM Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan for his focus and commitment on the business community, especially of Sialkot. He requested special facilitation from the PBIT Chairman on issues pertaining to early execution of projects like Sialkot Industrial Zone, Technology University Sialkot.

Availing of the opportunity, various proposals including One Window Facility and Reforms in Export Processing Zone were shared.

Secy industries Sindh visits SITE association

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Secretary Industries Sindh Muhammad Riazuddin has assured the industrialists of SITE area to play his due role in resolving issues being faced by industries of SITE area and improve its infrastructure on priority basis so as to continue industrial production unabated.

He paid a visit to the SITE area on the invitation of Abdul Hadi, President SITE Association of Industry and exchanged views on the infrastructure related issues of the area with the office bearers and executive members.

He assured the members of his full support & cooperation in the uplift of SITE infrastructure, aimed at in-

ustrial promotion. Senior Vice President Riazuddin, Vice President Abdul Kadir Bilwani, Ex-Presidents Majid Aziz, Jawed Bilwani and Suleman Chawla and EC Member Arif Lakhani were also present on this occasion.

Briefing the Secretary Industries on the setting up of Combined Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) in SITE area, Abdul Hadi said that land is available in SITE for the said CETP. 1/3rd funds shall be provided by the Federal Government while 2/3rd funds will be arranged by Sindh government. The Federal Government has already issued the 1st installment out of the approved fund but despite the lapse of 14 months, there is no development on PCI of the CETP.



COLOMBO: Pakistan high commissioner to Sri Lanka Maj. Gen. Retd Muhammad Saad Khattak called on Sri Lankan Foreign minister Dinesh Gunawardena as follow up to recent successful visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Both sides had fruitful interaction, discussed key issues of mutual interest & showed a keen desire to effectively pursue agreements reached upon during the visit. High Commissioner presented a letter of thanks to Foreign Minister on cooperation extended to Pakistan-Sri Lanka during the visit.

KSA wants to buy Turkey's armed drones: Erdogan

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Saudi Arabia is seeking to buy armed drones from Turkey, said President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday, in a move that could mark a rapprochement between the two rival regional powers. Ties between Ankara and Riyadh have been strained since the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018. Trade has collapsed under an informal Saudi boycott, but both countries have said they will work to improve relations. But speaking during a press briefing, Erdogan also voiced

his displeasure at the kingdom's decision to conduct joint air exercises with Turkey's longstanding rival Greece, suggesting an agreement on drones depended on Riyadh's future conduct. "Saudi Arabia is conducting joint exercises with Greece," Erdogan said. "Yet at the same time, Saudi Arabia is asking us for armed drones. Our hope is to solve this issue calmly without getting heated."

Turkey has emerged as one of the world's premier makers of armed drones, which helped ally Azerbaijan make sweeping gains in a six-week war with Armenia last year over the disputed re-



gion of Nagorno-Karabakh. Turkish drones have also been deployed to the conflicts in Syria and Libya. Riyadh already has a technology transfer agreement with Tur-

key's private Vestel company that allows Saudi Arabia to manufacture its own military drones. But there is widespread speculation it is also seeking military deliveries that could circumnavigate arms embargoes some Western countries have imposed over its military campaign in Yemen. Turkey's hopes of easing tensions with Saudi Arabia are part of a wider regional effort. Ankara has repeatedly said it also sees prospects to improve relations with Egypt, strained since the Egyptian army toppled Muslim Brotherhood President Mohamed Morsi, who was close to Erdogan, in 2013.

Erdogan and his foreign minister said last week Turkey had resumed diplomatic contacts with Egypt and wants further cooperation. Cairo said Turkey's actions "must show alignment with Egyptian principles" to normalise ties. The two countries back rival sides in the Libyan conflict and in the Eastern Mediterranean. Egypt signed a maritime agreement with Greece that angered Turkey. Erdogan said recent steps taken by Cairo in the region were the "manifestation of a temporary mistake", but that he believed the Egyptian people would not oppose Turkey's stance in the Eastern Mediterranean.

'No evidence AstraZeneca jab caused blood clots'

LONDON: AstraZeneca's Covid vaccine shot is safe and there is no evidence of health risks, the UK's health minister wrote in a newspaper article published on Wednesday, after some EU countries halted rollouts over fears of blood clots.

Matt Hancock urged the British public to take the vaccine even after countries including France, Spain and Germany suspended it.

The European Medicines Agency, which previously approved the jab, is conducting a review of the vaccine but said in the meantime it remained convinced of its benefits.

"There is no evidence that vaccines caused these clots," Hancock wrote in The Sun, stressing that the jab had the backing of the EMA, the World Health Organization and Britain's medicine's regulator.

"More than 11 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine have now been administered across the UK," he wrote. "The rate of reported cases (of clots) among the people vaccinated is lower than what would be expected to happen naturally in the general population."

Britain has given nearly 25 million people a first dose of a Covid vaccine, after starting a mass inoculation programme in December last year. — APP

WB grants Bangladesh \$200M grant

DHAKA: The World Bank Wednesday approved \$200 million to help Bangladesh urban youths and involuntary home returnees improve their earning opportunities and resiliency in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

The financing through the project called "Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment" will help about 175,000 poor urban youth and low-income micro-entrepreneurs enhance their access to employment and productivity. It will also help them access services such as life skills training, apprenticeship programs, counseling, microfinance, and self-employment support, according to a World Bank statement.

"To help about 200,000 eligible migrants who had been forced to return since January 2020 either sustainably reintegrate into the domestic labor market or prepare for re-migration, the project will provide cash grants, counseling, and referrals to relevant services based on their needs and aspirations," it read.

"International migration and the urban informal sector have played a central role in Bangladesh's remarkable success in reducing poverty over the years. However, both sectors were hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Mercy Tembon, World Bank country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan. — APP

Huthis voice 'deep regret' over migrant deaths

SANAA: Yemen's Huthis expressed "deep regret" Wednesday over the deaths of dozens of migrants in a fire which Human Rights Watch said started when the rebels fired projectiles into a detention centre.

A senior official in the rebel movement, which is locked in a six-year campaign against the internationally recognised government, said that an investigation into the March 7 incident was under way.

"We express our deep regret over the accidental incident at the migrant detention centre in Sanaa," said Huthi official Hussein Al-Azi, according to the rebels' Al-Masirah television. "The victims are 44 migrants and the wounded are 193, most of whom have gone to hospital, and there is an investigation into the reasons for the incident." The United Nations called Tuesday for an independent investigation into the blaze, shortly after Human Rights Watch blamed it on "unidentified projectiles" fired by the Huthis.

"There must be an independent investigation into the cause of the fire," the UN envoy for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, told the Security Council. — APP

Briefs

Highest daily vaccination achieved on Tuesday

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar on Wednesday said that highest daily vaccination rate was achieved on Tuesday after over 41,000 people were inoculated. The federal minister, in a tweet, said that out of the total vaccinations on Tuesday, 28,424 shots were given to senior citizens. He also urged public to encourage everyone who is over 70 years old to register for the vaccination drive. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan has reported 61 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 612,315. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 13,656. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCO) 2,351 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Till now 261,823 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Sindh, 189,362 in Punjab 76,819 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 48,938 in Islamabad, 19,247 in Balochistan, 11,161 in Azad Kashmir and 4,965 in Gilgit-Baltistan.

PIA plane lands safely after bird strike

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: A plane of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has landed safely at Karachi Airport after a bird hit the right engine. According to spokesperson of the airline, the bird strike occurred during takeoff of flight PK-368. All 162 passengers have been shifted to the lounge as officials evaluate damage to the aircraft. The spokesperson further said that pollution around airport and lack of an effective mechanism to stop birds are major reasons behind such incidents and stressed that air safety is collective responsibility of society and concerned departments.

EU agency satisfied with CAA's safety standards

DNA

KARACHI: The European Union's Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on Wednesday expressed satisfaction over the safety standards of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). As per details, a video-link meeting was held between Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and European Union's Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The meeting continued for two days. During the meeting, DG CAA briefed the EU agency over safety measures taken by Civil Aviation Authority. Deputy Director General (DG) Regulatory Shafi Dar briefed EASA about matters pertaining to flight standard airworthiness and licensing. The deputy DG Regulatory responded to several questions asked by the European commission on matters related to aviation authority safety measures. The EU agency expressed satisfaction over the briefing given to them by different departments of CAA.

The European Union's Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) also expressed satisfaction over the safety measures of CAA. The CAA officials also informed the EU safety agency about the installation of the UK-like system for licencing and examination of pilots. The British system for conducting pilots' examinations and other processes will make the licences of Pakistani pilots acceptable all around the world besides ending irregularities. Moreover, the Aircraft Accident and Investigation Board informed the meeting about the ongoing investigation into the PIA plane crash that happened last year.

Japan keen to expand bilateral ties with Pakistan

The Japanese Ambassador says the bilateral relations between the two countries have strengthened with the passage of time

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Japan has expressed strong desire to expand relations with Pakistan in different fields including trade, economy, investment, military and sports besides enhancing political and cultural exchanges. The views were expressed by Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Kuninori Matsuda in an exclusive interview with Radio Pakistan on Wednesday. Giving a complete background of historic relations between Pakistan and Japan, the Japanese Ambassador said the bilateral relations between the two countries have strengthened with the passage of time. He said both the countries would celebrate next year the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. He said they would continue cooperation with

Pakistani partners in different fields for peace, stability and development in the region. Alluding to the Japanese cooperation to Pakistan in the areas of road infrastructure, power generation and polio eradication, the Japanese envoy said his country would prioritize development of those areas which was the requirement of Pakistan. He said Pakistan could also benefit from the latest technology and expertise of Japan in the areas of water and sanitation, health, education and to cope with the natural disasters. Kuninori Matsuda said they also wanted to extend cooperation to Pakistan in import substitution and promotion of its exports. He pointed out that there was great demand for agricultural products in Japan including that of Basmati rice, Mango, sesame, dates, salt and textiles. Referring to Pakistan's fisheries potential, he said



his country would support the country to strengthen the sector to enhance its exports to Japan and other countries. The Japanese Ambassador said Japan has offered services to Pakistan for the development of a weather surveillance network to

deal with the floods triggered by monsoon rains. As a result, ninety percent of Pakistani land could be seen through Japanese Weather Surveillance Radar Network. He said in future they intend to upgrade the Radio and TV networks so that the people have fast access to information generated by these networks. Referring to Pakistan's diverse landscape, the Japanese Ambassador said the security situation has significantly improved in Pakistan. He said the country has a great potential of attracting tourists not only from Japan but the entire world. He also expressed his gratitude to Pakistani people for taking interest in Japanese culture and language. To a question, the Japanese Ambassador said Japan has opened for jobs and training. He said given the low birth rate and aging population, there was a huge shortage of skilled workforce in Japan. He said there was

great room for Pakistani human resource especially in the field of Information Technology. He said these IT experts were not required to learn the Japanese language and they could work in English language. He said they were also trying to enhance enrollment of outstanding Pakistani students in Japanese universities under government sponsored programs. Responding to a question about the cooperation extended by Japan for upgradation of infrastructure of Radio Pakistan, Kuninori Matsuda said repair and rehabilitation of PBC Headquarters Islamabad and Faqirabad Transmission station was completed at a cost of 1.385 billion Yen. He said now they were planning repair and rehabilitation of Karachi transmission station. He assured to continue cooperation with the PBC saying he was impressed with the professionalism of its staff.

NAB again summons Maryam on March 26

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Lahore, has again summoned Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-President Maryam Nawaz on March 26 in connection with Chaudhry Sugar Mills case. The Bureau has directed the PML-N vice-president to appear before it on March 26, Friday. According to the sources, the NAB has received new evidence in the case which prompted the Bureau to call Maryam Nawaz again for questioning. The last time Maryam Nawaz appeared in court was on August 11, 2020, when clashes took place between the PML-N activists and the security personnel. The NAB, Lahore had, on Saturday (March 13), also filed a petition in the Lahore High Court (LHC), seeking cancellation of Maryam Nawaz's bail. The LHC last Monday had issued a notice to Maryam Nawaz to submit her reply to the court in her bail cancellation case on April 7. Maryam, who was incarcerated on money laundering charges in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills' case, had been granted bail by the Lahore High Court in November 2019. Also in a statement issued on Tuesday, the NAB had strongly rebutted the allegations levelled by Maryam Nawaz against the Bureau on print and electronic media.

COVID-19 claims 61 more lives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Wednesday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 22,792 with 2,351 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 2,853 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Sixty-one corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 56 of whom were under treatment in hospital and five out of hospital in respective quarantine or home, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO). Some 38,799 tests were conducted across the country on Tuesday, including 8,878 in Sindh, 16,132 in Punjab, 7,001 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 5,260 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 545 in Balochistan, 334 in GB, and 649 in AJK. Around 575,867 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients.

SC seeks report on Hindus' killing in India

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought an investigation report from the Foreign Office of Pakistan on the killings of 11 Pakistani Hindus in India. A three-member SC bench comprising Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah and Justice Munib Akhtar heard the case. During the course of proceedings, the Deputy Attorney General said that the Foreign office had sought postmortem report from India on killing of 11 Hindus. He said that the Foreign Office had assured Dr. Ramesh Kumar of full cooperation. Advocate Qalib-i-Hassan counsel for the petitioner said that this issue should not only be discussed with India but it should also be investigated. The court directed the Foreign Office to submit a written reply on the contacts and initiatives taken up with India on the issue and later adjourned the hearing of the case. 11 Pakistani Hindus from the same family were killed by injection in India. Sharmati Makhni of the family of the slain Hindus had filed a petition in the Supreme Court. - APP

President confers Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Civil) on Air Chief

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi conferred Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Civil) on Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan here on Wednesday. The President decorated the outgoing Air Chief with the prestigious award in recognition of his outstanding service for the country. He is a graduate of Combat Commanders School, Command and Staff College, Jordan and National Defence University, Islamabad. He did his Master's degree in War Studies and Defence Management. He was decorated with "The Legion of Merit Medal" by the Government of Republic of Turkey. He was promoted to the rank of Air Chief Marshal and appointed as Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force on March 19, 2018. - APP

er squadron. He held the operational appointments as Base Commander PAF Shahbaz, Base Commander PAF Mushaf, Air Officer Commanding, Central Regional Air Command, Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Support) and Deputy Chief of Air Staff (Operations) at Air Headquarters. He is a graduate of Combat Commanders School, Command and Staff College, Jordan and National Defence University, Islamabad. He did his Master's degree in War Studies and Defence Management. He was decorated with "The Legion of Merit Medal" by the Government of Republic of Turkey. He was promoted to the rank of Air Chief Marshal and appointed as Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force on March 19, 2018. - APP



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi, conferring the Award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Civil) upon Air Chief Marshal, Mujahid Anwar Khan, Chief of Air Staff, in a special Investiture Ceremony, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

UK publishes Integrated Review of foreign policy

LONDON: The UK Government published its Integrated Review, which lays out how it will work with other countries in the world over the next decade. The Integrated Review sets out the UK Government's vision of its role in the world through to 2030 and the actions that UK will take at home and with other countries to ensure that it is stronger, safer and more prosperous in a competitive age. It identifies the major changes in the world that will shape the next decade, including, Global challenges such as climate change, Covid-19, organised crime and terrorism which impact all our lives and risk reversing decades of shared progress; and UK will focus on 5 key areas to achieve this, 1. Solving global challenges, for example: Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss will be UK's top international priority, supported by the £11.6 billion the UK has committed to international climate finance and the UK's ten point green plan to reach net zero by 2050, Helping the world to beat Covid-19 by accelerating equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics worldwide. 2. Investing in science and technology and acting as a responsible cyber power, for example: Increasing economy-wide investment in research and development to 2.4% of GDP by 2027. Establishing a new advanced research and invention agency. 3. Acting as a force for good in the world, defending democracy and human rights, for example: Using UK leadership on international development to help tackle global poverty and achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030, Championing gender equality, including getting 40 million more girls into school in low and middle income countries by 2025. 4. Championing the free flow of trade, capital and knowledge as the best way to drive economic growth, for example: Strengthening the global trading system and updating rules, especially on environment, services and digital sector. Enabling growth through economic partnership agreements. 5. Taking a more robust approach to security and deterrence. - DNA

Muhammad Ali from PU wins Great Debate competition

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commission's fifth annual GREAT Debate competition final was held virtually on Wednesday. The event witnessed a high intensity competition between twelve of the top debaters from across universities in Pakistan, who spoke for and against topics on trade, gender and UK Pak Dosti. The Chief Guest at the event was the Acting British High Commissioner Iona Thomas. After a competitive round of debates, Muhammad Ali from Punjab University and Mustafa Shaukat from Lahore University of Management Sciences were judged to be the winner and runner-up of the GREAT Debate 2020-21 competition. The Acting British High Commissioner Iona Thomas said: "Our annual GREAT Debate competition gives the youth a platform to debate on themes which are important to Pakistan's future and lie at the heart of the UK-Pakistan relationship. This is the fifth edition of the GREAT Debate, and like previous times, we've included debaters from across

Pakistan. "Due to COVID, the finale of our competition was held virtually - but this did not hamper the passion and determination of our debaters, who I am sure will all go on to play a vital part in the future success of this country." The GREAT Debate competition held in 2020-2021 was the fifth annual edition of the competition that

gives students from across Pakistan a platform to participate in debates, interact with other students from different universities and hone their skills in research, analytical thinking and public speaking. The winner and runner-up of the overall competition will receive a scholarship reward to contribute towards their tuition fees.

The GREAT Debate is a debating competition for university students. There were six semi-finals - in six different cities (Islamabad, Lahore, Faisalabad, Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi) involving students from over 50 leading universities across Pakistan - and the winner and runner-up of each semi-final competed in the final. - DNA



Pak thanks China for speedy vaccine delivery

Pakistan has signed a deal with Beijing Institute of Biological Products for delivery of Sinopharm vaccine that aims to fight against COVID-19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has taken elaborate measures to vaccinate millions of its people, thanks to the Chinese government for speedy delivery of anti-corona vaccine which is still coming in batches, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. Officials confirmed that another batch of China's Sinopharm vaccine has arrived on Wednesday which will be given to elderly population (60 & above) as well as the critical patients of COVID-19.

Mass vaccination centers have been set up across Pakistan just ahead of the arrival of 500,000 doses of Sinopharm Vaccine. "We have set up these centers in Islamabad, Multan, Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar. More will be established across other cities," a senior official dealing with the Vaccine program project in Pakistan told Gwadar Pro. Pakistan has signed a deal with Beijing Institute of Biological Products for delivery of Sinopharm vaccine that aims to fight against COVID-19. Pakistan will purchase 1.2

million doses of coronavirus vaccine from Chinese manufacturer Sinopharm, Federal Science Minister Fawad Chaudhry confirmed earlier. "The Cabinet Committee has decided to initially purchase 1.2 million doses of the vaccine from the Chinese company Sinopharm, which will be provided free of cost to frontline workers in the first quarter of 2021," Fawad said. In Pakistan, Federal Health Ministry has recently launched a registration drive across the country in collaboration with National Database Registration Authority

(NADRA) advising the masses to register to have jabs of vaccine. "Vaccine is being administered to people who have registered online to get free dose of vaccine. The vaccination will continue until the whole population gets jabs of vaccine," a spokesperson of Ministry of Health told this correspondent. Early this week, authorities announced to administer jabs of vaccine to people aged 70 & above at their door step. "We have advised people aged 70 & above to stay home as we have taken steps to administer jabs of

vaccine to them at their door step as per directives given by Prime Minister Imran Khan," spokesman of Ministry of Health said. On March 5, 2021, Pakistan approved the emergency use of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine for people over 60 years of age, a statement by National Command and Operation Center (NCO) said. Since then, a large number people in Pakistan, mostly frontline health workers, have been administered doses of Sinopharm vaccine. The vaccine has had great results so far, Pakistani authorities said.

Meanwhile, Pakistani authorities have confirmed they have placed an order to purchase single-dose Chinese vaccine Ad5-nCoV vaccine (Cansino Bio) for COVID-19 and its first batch is expected to be delivered to Pakistan shortly. According to officials of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination (NHS, R&C) the single-dose Chinese vaccine could be administered to people of all ages as it was found effective among people from 18 to 80 plus years of age during trials in Pakistan and other countries of the world.