



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Kyrgyzstan ready to export cotton to Pakistan: Envoy**

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**Full lockdown not on cards: Asad Umar**

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## Briefs

### COVID-19 vaccine a must

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday said that COVID-19 vaccine was "a must" advising people to beware of skeptics of vaccine as they were ignorant. "Beware of those who create doubt, as they know not. Covid-19 vaccination is a must," he said on Twitter. The president's remarks came after skeptics raised questions on efficacy of vaccine after Prime Minister Imran Khan was tested positive on Saturday two days after getting jab. He clarified that the vaccine was given in two doses and it took a few weeks to become effective. The president explained that in most cases the vaccine was 100% effective and in remaining, it greatly reduced severity of infection which increased survival rate.

### FATF: homework completed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Industries and Production Hammad Azhar said Sunday the homework to help Pakistan leave the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) grey list has been "completed". Speaking to the media here, Hammad Azhar said Pakistan was put on the grey list because of the previous governments but that the PTI regime would "soon" help remove the country from it. "The Opposition's attitude has always remained negative and always been against the country's integrity," he said.

### Amin for restoration of forests

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: On World Forests Day (Sunday), the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam said forest restoration will help in biodiversity conservation and well-being of communities. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Plantation project is aimed at forest conservation.

## PDM is a thing of past, says Shibli

The corrupt mafia considered itself above the law. Completion of public welfare and development projects priority of the govt

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz Sunday declared Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), a grand opposition alliance, as a story of the past and said the alliance actually led by politically immature and juvenile leaders. "PDM leaders were fighting for their personal interests rather than for the sake of the people," he expressed these views while addressing a press conference here. The minister said that the opposition's movement had



failed miserably as it could not impress the people. Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz was pursuing disastrous egoistic and stubborn politics. Her childish policies had

ruined the PML-N. Parties in the PDM were at loggerheads with each other and were serving their own interests. They were not following the interest of the people and were pursuing only self centered politics. The country's economy had started performing better as compared to other countries in the region, he added. The minister said the corrupt mafia considered itself above the law. Completion of public welfare and development projects during the remaining tenure was the priority of the government, he added.

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## Opp will back Maryam during NAB hearing: Fazl

Time to hold govt accountable says Maryam; says anyone who "speaks against Nawaz Sharif will be silenced

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Leaders of all the opposition parties in the Pakistan Democratic Movement will accompany PML-N's Maryam Nawaz to her hearing at the National Accountability Bureau on March 26, JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said. Maulana Fazlur Rehman made the announcement while talking to media persons after meeting Maryam Nawaz in Jati Umra. He said that there was no rift in the opposition alliance, contacts were maintained and they would move forward together. He said that we will wait for the decision of the PPP regarding the resignations. He hoped that PPP would respect the wishes of the remaining nine parties of the PDM. On the issue of growing differences in the PDM, the leader of the opposition alliance, Maulana Fazlur Rehman,



LAHORE: PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman met with PML N Vice President Maryam Nawaz and PML N leader Hamza Shahbaz at Jati Umra, on Sunday. They discussed future course of action. - DNA

reached Jati Umra where he was received by party leaders including PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz and central leader Hamza Shahbaz. PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif also attended the meeting through video link. Speaking about the National

Accountability Bureau (NAB), he said that NAB was always a puppet. Millions of PDM workers will accompany Maryam Nawaz during her appearance on March 26, while PDM leaders will also be by her side. Fazlur Rehman claimed

that PDM is united, some issues will be controlled through mutual contacts adding that the decision of the PPP's CEC will be awaited. PPP will be asked to respect the opinion of 9 parties. We will move forward effectively, he added.

## Diplomats wish good health to PM Imran

Palestinian Envoy Ahmed Ameen, Australian High Commissioner Dr Geoffrey Shaw, Envoy of the EU Androulla Kaminara are among well wishers

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner in Pakistan, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan and Australia's High Commissioner to Pakistan also wished a speedy recovery for the Prime Minister. Palestinian Ambassador Ahmed Ameen, High Commissioner of Australia Dr Geoffrey Shaw, Ambassador of the European Union Androulla Kaminara, German Ambassador to Pakistan Bernhard Schlagheck, the US Embassy, Ambassador of Somalia Khadija Mohamed Almahzoumi and Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation in Afghanistan, Dr Abdullah Abdullah also prayed for swift recovery of Prime Minister Imran Khan from Covid-19.

### PM Imran thanks well-wishers

ISLAMABAD: A day after being diagnosed with the coronavirus, Prime Minister Imran Khan took to Facebook to thank everyone for their "good wishes and prayers." Prime Minister Khan, who is self-isolating, also shared a photo of him sitting in a chair at his Bani Gala residence.

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Besides, other members of the diplomatic corps have wished the prime minister early recovery and health. The Indian Prime Minister Modi has also sent a message to the Prime Minister wishing him early recovery.

## Travel from 12 countries banned

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: In an effort to curb the spike of coronavirus cases in Pakistan, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Saturday notified a fresh list of countries categorised into A, B and C after emergence of South African and Brazilian strain of virus and imposed a complete ban on travel from 12 countries. The travel restrictions and a ban on inbound passengers from 12 countries, categorised as C, will remain effective from March 23 to April 5. The CAA said in a notification: "Conveyed by NCOC, there will be a complete travel ban on inbound travel to Pakistan from category C countries, including withdrawal of exemptions earlier provided to Pakistani passport holders, NICOP holders and POC holders. The temporary measure is being introduced in continuation to the steps being taken to curb the spread of Covid-19 in Pakistan." The CAA has updated its category C, for inbound travellers and shifted the United Kingdom from category C to category B, a spokesman for the Aviation Division said. The CAA has updated its category C, for inbound travellers and shifted the United Kingdom from category C to category B, a spokesman for the Aviation Division said.

## SAARC acknowledges performance of NAB

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: It is an honor for Pakistan that NAB under the leadership of Justice Javed Iqbal is the focal organization of Pakistan under United National Conventions against Corruption. Country's apex Anti-Corruption Organization, NAB is a role model not only for Pakistan but also for entire SAARC countries as NAB had been unanimously elected as Chairman of SAARC Anti Corruption Forum which is great achievement of Pakistan due to NAB's efforts. The performance of NAB



has been lauded by SAARC countries including India. Owing to outstanding performance of NAB, reputed national and International organizations like Transparency International Pakistan, World Economic Forum, PILDAT and Mishal Pakistan have also appreciated NAB's performance.

According to a survey of Gillani and Gallup Pakistan 59 people have confidence in NAB. Pakistan is the only country to whom China has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for eradication of corruption. Pakistan and China are now jointly working for ensuring transparency in China Pakistan economic coordination CPEC projects. NAB is the only anti corruption organization in Pakistan which is playing a vital role in recovering looted money from culprit elements and since its inception have recovered Rs. 714 billion.

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## No lockdown on cards: Asad

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar dismissed rumours that the country was heading towards a "complete lockdown". The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) chief was speaking to private news channel. The discussion revolved around the rising number of coronavirus cases and the government's response towards it. Rumours of authorities contemplating a "complete lockdown" across the country were discussed.

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## Major decisions likely in NCOC meeting

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The National Command Operation Centre (NCOC) will hold an important session to make decisions regarding the closure of schools and the conduction of exams amid surging coronavirus cases today, per sources. The country is currently under the third wave of coronavirus which is said to be more lethal and dangerous by the health authorities. The meeting is expected to decide the implementation of smart lockdowns in more areas across the country. According to sources, violations of the government's coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs) are being reported in most of the schools where examinations are being conducted. Keeping that in view, the coronavirus monitoring body will decide on the future course of action. It will be proposed to keep the most virus-hit areas in the red zone in the federal capital city and other provinces.

## Price of Sputnik V recommended

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has recommended the price of Russian coronavirus vaccine, Sputnik V, to the Pakistani government, according to sources. The vaccine was imported by a private company a few days ago. DRAP has recommended setting the price of two doses of Russian Vaccine Sputnik V between Rs 8,000 and Rs 9,000. According to sources, Drug Regula-

tory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) took the decision regarding the price of the vaccine during an emergency meeting convened by the regulatory authority. Sources said the federal cabinet will give the final approval of the recommendations sent by Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP). Pakistan received the first shipment of privately-imported Russian COVID-19 vaccine, Gam-COVID-Vac or Sputnik V, at the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi earlier this week.

## Pakistan records 3,667 new covid-19 cases

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported 44 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 626,802. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 13,843 on Sunday.

According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) 3,667 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Sindh remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic in terms of cases followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad.

Till now 263,058 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Sindh, 197,177 in Punjab 79,245 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 51,414 in Islamabad, 19,327 in Balochistan, 11,609 in Azad Kashmir and 4,972 in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Furthermore 5,974 individuals have lost their lives to the epidemic in Punjab 4,479 in Sindh, 2,208 in KP, 543 in Islamabad, 333 in Azad Kashmir, 203 in Balochistan, and 103 in Gilgit-Baltistan. Pakistan has so far conducted 9,773,993 coronavirus tests and 41,960 in the last 24 hours. 581,852 coronavirus patients have recovered in the country whereas 2,900 patients are in critical condition.

## Pakistan, China jointly celebrate cultural heritage

The colourful and engaging display of cultural heritage, is in line with the vision of leaders of Pakistan and China to pass on the traditional fraternal ties to the next generation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BEIJING: The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and China Puppet Art Theater co-hosted a Celebration of Pakistan-China Civilization and Cultural Heritage through Puppetry and Related Arts, in collaboration with Ruffi Peer Theater Workshop. The cultural festivities were held at the Grand Theater of China Puppet Art Theatre. The event, which coincided with the World Puppetry Day, was one of the key highlights of a year-long celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. The event was attended by a large gathering of high-ranking officials from the government departments, members of the dip-

lomatic corps, academia, think tanks, cultural organizations, Pakistani community and Pakistani and Chinese school children.

The colourful and engaging display of cultural heritage, including puppetry, is in line with the vision of the leaders of Pakistan and China to

pass on the traditional fraternal ties to the next generation and build a community of shared future in the new era. Cultural and people-to-people exchanges are vital means to foster harmony, friendship, synergies and people's history. The art of puppetry has progres-

sively evolved over the course of millennia and artistically captures various facets of folk culture, fables and story-telling traditions of the two countries. The audience was particularly fascinated to observe similarities in style, technique and rendition of

Pakistani and Chinese puppetry. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador of Pakistan, Mr. Moin Ul Haque, congratulated the participating organizations for showcasing the intangible

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Nowruz: Harbinger of convergence and friendship - Page 07

Pakistan's role in China-US breakthrough hailed - Page 08

## Briefs

## Webinar on US-China relations held

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The US-China confrontation for Global Dominance and Pakistan's Foreign Policy options were discussed in the webinar organized by The Global and Regional Studies Center, IoBM on Saturday, March 20, 2021. Ambassador Asif Ali Khan Durrani and Lt General Naeem Khalid Lodhi (Retd) HI(M) discussed key insights. Ambassador Ghulam Rasool Baluch was the moderator. Lt Gen (Retd) Lodhi viewed that any tension between US-China will affect the world as well as Pakistan. China may be on a path to change the world economic order by countering the power of the Dollar. With CPEC in the offing, Lt Gen (Retd) Lodhi opined that Pakistan must act strategically as China, India, and Afghanistan are a part of CPEC. Looking at the history and proximity, he said that Pakistan needs to shift towards the East – specifically China and Russia. Ambassador Durrani said that the Belt and Road Initiative will be China's key project. Pakistan must observe which countries are playing a positive role in its economic security. According to Amb. Durrani, the US turned into a Hyperpower and was entangled in several direct and indirect global military conflicts, while China as an emerging power did not involve itself in any confrontation. The panelists agreed that Pakistan needs a strong regional policy to set smooth ties for its economic development.

## PR takes steps to recover Rs8375 m

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways (PR) was making all out efforts to recover the outstanding amount of Rs8375million payable by the departments of the federal and provincial governments on account of using its different services. The federal departments had to pay an amount of Rs709.084 million, provincial departments Rs1980.217 million and autonomous and private bodies Rs5685.736 million, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. On the directives of Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati, he said the Ministry of Railways has approached the federal and provincial departments for recovering the outstanding amount. To a question, he said that Pakistan Railways has retrieved around 439.8 acres precious land worth billion of rupees from private individuals under its anti-encroachment operation across the country during the last two and half years. The official said the encroachment operation has been launched with the assistance of railway police and district administrations. Giving details, he said the department retrieved 230.33 acres land in Punjab, 115.92 acres from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 81.81 acres from Sindh and 11.74 acres from Balochistan. The official said that out of the total land, 66.687acres were commercial, 285.9 acres were residential and 87.213 acres were the agricultural land of the Pakistan Railways. He said the government was taking several steps to retrieve encroached land from the land grabbers including detailed survey was being carried out to identify the encroached land, occupied by the individuals and under illegal occupation of various government departments. – APP



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of senator Saufullah Niazi chief organizer PTI, Amir Mehmood Kiani Secy general PTI, Arshad Dad Khan, Nazir Jutt, Hafeez Pasha, Salman Aftab, Malik Suleman, Zafar Bakhtawari, Noman Shah and Waqar Bakhtawari at the dinner given at the residence of Senator Abdul Qadir. – DNA

## Faisalabad admn warns people against spreading of dengue

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali has directed that anti-dengue teams should be vigilant in the field to eradicate the larvae and the progress is being monitored regularly, if there was negligence seen the strict action would be taken against area in charge. He said this while reviewing the implementation of anti-dengue measures in a meeting of the District Emergency Response Com-

mittee held on a weekly basis. The meeting was also attended by officials from Education, Health, Social Welfare, Environment, Civil Defense, Livestock, Industries, Labor, WASA, PHA, Punjab Police, TEVTA and other departments. The Deputy Commissioner directed that dengue larvae breeding sites should be surveyed frequently and effective measures should be taken for continuous checking of such places and timely vector surveillance. He urged the teams to keep their eyes open in

the field and Junkyards, cemeteries, nurseries should be checked immediately while other hotspots should not be hidden from view. He clarified that anti-dengue activities of all the departments should be made clear. He said that the concerned departments should ensure their attendance in the meeting of Tehsil Emergency Response Committees and keep the DC office informed of the proceedings report of the meeting. He said that prevention of dengue is not possible

without the cooperation of the citizens so awareness programs should be continued to make them aware of the implementation of precautionary measures to keep them safe from dengue mosquitoes. He said that keeping Android mobile phones functional and upload the activities on the portal daily. He expressed concern over the constant uploading of unnecessary images by some departments and urged to correct them before the next meeting. During the meeting, District Coordinator Epi-

demics Control Dr. Muhammad Zulqarnain briefed about the performance report on anti-dengue.

**63 more shops sealed in Faisalabad**  
The district administration yesterday sealed 63 more shopping malls, marriage halls, restaurants and private schools for violating Corona SOPs and imposed 3 lac fine to the violators while total 253 points have been sealed so far in a week. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali said that action was being taken against the violation of

SOPs during the ongoing week to ensure implementation of Corona SOPs and lock down. He informed that on 5th day, 3 schools were sealed and 2 were issued warnings. He further said that 50 shopping malls and 10 restaurants were sealed for violating Corona SOPs and fines were also imposed. He directed to the Assistant Commissioners that implementation on corona SOPs should be implemented in letter and spirit and there is zero tolerance in this regard.

## Men allegedly gang-rape woman with mental disability

NEWS DESK

FAISALABAD: At least two men allegedly gang-raped a young woman with a mental disability, with her widowed mother on Sunday accusing the police of deliberately delaying action against the culprits. Faisalabad police said the two men subjected the young woman to sexual assault in the city's Haji Abad neighbourhood. A first information report (FIR) has been registered against the suspect at the Nishatabad Police Station. On the other hand, the survivor's mother claimed that the police were not arresting the suspected individuals. She further alleged that authorities had not included any charge of sexual abuse in the FIR. The woman's mother said an examination to confirm the sexual assault took place three days ago but Faisalabad police have not provided the medico-legal report. Faisalabad police, she further claimed, had not even sent the DNA samples to the Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA) in Lahore for further tests.

## FCCI chief warns against constructions on agri land

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Strict ban may be clamped on the construction of commercial, industrial or residential units on cultivable agricultural land to avert increasing threats of food security, said Chaudhary Talat Mahmood Senior Vice President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). Addressing the second meeting of the FCCI Standing Committee on CPEC, he expressed grave concern over the unprecedented increase in the import bill of food items. He said that the Government must take immediate remedial measures to

check this negative trend through policy intervention, providing maximum incentives and encouraging technology transfer at the farm level. He appreciated the mega project of olive cultivation in Pakistan and said that it will not only cut down our import bill of edible oil but also have a positive salutary impact on the overall environment. Engineer Ahmed Hassan Patron-in-chief of the standing committee stressed the need to introduce latest agriculture technologies to enhance per acre yield. He said that it will help to overcome the issue of rural poverty in addition to achieving food autarky.

## HC of Bangladesh wants to boost bilateral trade

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: High Commissioner of Bangladesh Rahul Alam Siddique has said that the two countries should take maximum steps to strengthen their relations in all economic sectors. He was speaking at a meeting at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah, Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry and Honorary Consul General of Bangladesh Humayun Faired also spoke on the occasion. The High Commissioner said that intensive market research, frequent visits of trade delegations, exchange of socio-cultural programs and close contact between trade bodies of the two countries can lift the existing trade level between the two countries. The High Commissioner said that jute and tea are

the major item being exported to Pakistan. Both countries should identify new areas for cooperation. He said that the exports of Bangladesh to China are being increased gradually. He said that at present all industries in Bangladesh are open and fully functional. He said that jute and tea are the major exports of Bangladesh. There is great demand for jute products because of the ban on plastic and other materials. He said that major exporting countries for Bangladesh are China, European Union and USA. He said that China allowed special preferences to Bangladesh as many Chinese companies are doing business in Bangladesh. We support the export industry by providing them subsidies on raw materials, tax/duty etc. He said that due to the Corona pandemic our growth was declining but now we are improving day

by day through vaccination and it is available for every person. Moreover there is no restriction on getting visa business and family visas are available but the visa obtaining procedures are lengthy. The High Commissioner lauded the role of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry in promoting trade and economic activities. LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah said that after India, both Pakistan and Bangladesh happen to be major members of SAARC in terms of the size of their economies and it should be our prime objective to effectively utilize this platform. He said that South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) should play its role to enhance regional trade that is low as compare to the other economic blocks. He said that Bangladesh is the 10th

largest export destination of Pakistan whereas among the top importing countries for Pakistan. Although, the balance of two-way trade heavily favours Pakistan but at present the volume of mutual trade is still below the actual potential. The LCCI President said that the volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Bangladesh was around 835 million dollars in 2019. Pakistan's exports to Bangladesh are around 793 million dollars while our imports from Bangladesh are merely 42 million dollars. "Pakistan is a major supplier of cotton fabrics, cement, yarn, leather, vacuum pumps and other textile items etc. to Bangladesh. On the other hand, the major imports from Bangladesh include Jute, unmanufactured Tobacco, Fasteners, Yarn of jute, Cotton waste, Tea and Hydrogen peroxide etc.

## Police considered public service as worship

MEHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: Police station Jhal Chakian SHO, Shamsher Ali Joya, ASI Mohammad Ijaz and Muhammad Saleem have said that on the special instructions criminals are being closely monitored within the limits of their police station and operations against them are also being continued. If the media also points out crimes, our entire team will take full action against criminal elements, he added. We understand public services as worship and our doors will be open to the public 24 hours a day, he added.

## 54 criminals held, contraband recovered

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD, Police have arrested 54 criminals and recovered drugs and illegal weapons from their possession in the district during last 24 hours. According to police, raiding teams nabbed one proclaimed offender and 12 drug pushers and recovered 5.9 kg hash and 144 liter liquor from their possession. The police also held 19 gamblers with stake money of Rs 12,5240. In a crackdown against illegal weapons, police arrested 18 persons and recovered 17 pistols and one gun from them. Meanwhile, the police also held 4 kite sellers and recovered kites and string rolls from them. Further investigation was underway, said police.

## UNDP Pak builds GB Judiciary's capacity

DNA

GILGIT: Amid many other responsibilities, justice sector professionals are responsible for ensuring citizen's their basic human rights. It is for this reason that UNDP Pakistan's Amn-Insaf Programme organized two five-day trainings on Human Rights and Rule of Law for the District Judiciary of Gilgit Baltistan at the Judicial Academy, Gilgit. Held between 8 March to 17 March 2021 while observing strict Covid SOPs, the first round of the training was for judges from Gilgit Division while the second round will be held for judges from Skardu Division. Led by Professor Niaz. A. Shah from University of Hull and trained as a barrister at the Lincoln's Inn, London, the target of these trainings was to strengthen the capacity of Gilgit Baltistan's entire district judiciary. Honourable Chief Justice GB Chief Court inaugurated the training and also the GB Judicial Academy. This will be the first training in the newly established Judicial Academy of Gilgit Baltistan. Judges from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judiciary also delivered guest lectures via zoom/team.

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## One corona patient dies

FAISALABAD: One more patient died of the COVID-19 in the district, while 96 persons tested positive during the last 24 hours. A spokesperson for the health department said on Saturday that the death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 573 in the district. He said that 922 tests for coronavirus were conducted in public and private sectors labs during the same period. – DNA

## Briefs

### PNCA to celebrate "Pakistan Day"

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) would organize a special musical event to celebrate "Pakistan Day" on March 23 at the PNCA Auditorium. According to PNCA, the Arts Council would also arrange a reception for the winners of National Civil Awards on March 24. The artists representing all four provinces including Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir would present national songs in the musical show. The National Puppet Theatre of PNCA would also perform a puppet show conveying message of patriotism and love for the country. The puppet characters would also present folk takes, skits and national songs to educate and induce patriotism and love for the country. Director General PNCA Dr. Fouzia Saeed told APP that the event was aimed to mark Pakistan Day that reminds us the sacrifices of millions of Muslims in achieving a separate homeland. She said that COVID-19 SOPs would be strictly adopted during musical show.

### Theater Wallay to stage play 'ChiryaGhar'

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Theatre Wallay would stage a unique play 'ChiryaGhar' an adaptation of 'The Zoo Story' by Edward Albee on March 27. The play is being performed with reference to World Theater Day 2021, said a press release issued here. The Zoo Story is an American play that was shunned by New York producers the first ever performance of the play was held in Germany in 1959 later, it was performed in New York (Off Broadway) and continued to be performed for 17 months. A young team member Usama Khan brings it to Islamabad the play titled: ChiryaGhar, directed by: Usama Ahmad Khan. The play would be organized outdoors and all SOPs would be strictly implemented.

### IRSA releases 66,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 66,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 62,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1408.41 feet, which was 24.41 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 17,800 and 12,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1098.00 feet, which was 58.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 29,600 and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 24,000, 16,400 and 7,200 cusecs respectively. - APP

### Kitchen items' prices further dip

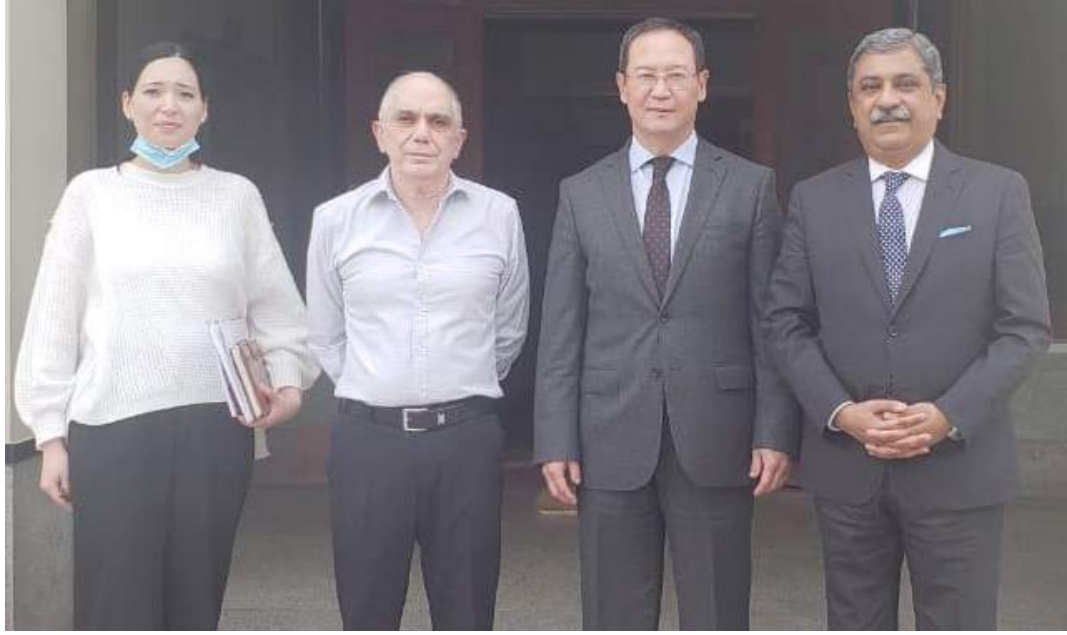
ISLAMABAD: Continuing with declining trend for the second consecutive week, the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation for the week ended on March 18, for the combined consumption group, witnessed decrease of 0.19 percent as compared to the previous week. The SPI for the week under review in the above mentioned group was recorded at 146.86 points against 147.14 points registered in the previous week, according to the latest data of PBS. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 13.21 percent. - DNA

## Kyrgyzstan ready to export cotton to Pakistan: Envoy

The ambassador of Kyrgyzstan said his country attached great importance to its relations with Pakistan and wanted to deepen bilateral ties. He said bilateral relations can further be cemented and diversified by spurring trade and business activity between the two countries

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Erik Beishembiev, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan along with Mr. Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman ISE RMC visited Kohinoor Textile Mills. Taufeeq Sehgal CEO of one of the largest listed composite Textile mills received them and briefed them about their operations. Ms. Sabina Mukhamedianova, economic counselor of Kyrgyz Republic accompanied them. It may be mentioned here that Pakistan's cotton production has decreased over the years therefore Pakistan has to import cotton from abroad, mainly from the USA. The ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic told that his country is the best producer of cotton and is ready to export cotton to Pakistan. He said the since there was



no route available that is why currently cotton cannot be brought into Pakistan.

He explored this opportunity with Taufeeq Sehgal and both sides agreed to move forward in this regard. The ambassador of Kyrgyzstan said his country attached great importance to its relations with Pakistan and wanted to deepen bilateral ties. He said bilateral relations can further be cemented and diversified by spurring trade and business activity between the two countries. Ambassador Erik further told that he was ready to talk to businessmen from his country in order to convince them to come to Pakistan and explore various business opportunities here. The Pakistani side assured the ambassador that they would their best in further promoting bilateral relations.

### DC urges citizens to adopt SoPs

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Capt. (r) Muhammad Anwar-ul-Haq has urged the citizens to adopt all possible precautionary measures against coronavirus and follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Punjab government to protect themselves against the virus. According to a district administration spokesman, the DC had canceled the permits of all the gatherings and programs allowed earlier by the district administration. The decision has been taken to control spread of coronavirus, he added. He said, all the programs including Majalis, Mehfil-e-Naat, Urs, public gatherings, conferences, cinema halls, theaters, Jashan-e-Baharan, sports and cultural activities and other events scheduled to be held in wedding/banquet halls and Marquee of the district would not be allowed.

## Academia, lawmakers' joint working group formed

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A Special Joint Working Group of Academia and Parliamentarians has been formed to develop research and advocacy agenda on SDGs, Human Rights and make recommendations to foster cooperation among academia, civil society and parliamentarians. According to the notification, Chairman National Parliamentary Taskforce Rizafatyana, Member National Assembly with the joint signatures of Muhammad Shaufiq Chaudhry Executive Director

Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights and Muhammad Murtaza Noor National Coordinator Inter University Consortium for Promotion of Social Sciences, has notified 42 members working group which will include nineteen parliamentarians, twenty senior academics across Pakistan and three civil society experts. The working group has been established as follow up of signed MOU among National Parliamentary Taskforce, Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights and Muhammad and Inter University Consortium for Promotion of

Social Sciences (IUCPSS), largest network of Pakistani universities. The main functions of the working group would include organizing national/regional consultations, advocacy seminars, consultative workshops, conferences and other academic activities in the areas of the common interest, including sharing of the expertise and other strengths. The working group would also opt other members from the relevant fields from time to time. It will share expertise and resources for efficient and effective use to improve the capacities of

and service delivery by parliamentarians, policy makers, IUCPSS member universities and the community associated with research. In addition, the working group would collaborate in setting the research agenda on annual basis, improving and strengthening the scientific, academic and research capacities of the IUCPSS member universities in SDGs and socio-economic-environment nexus in the context of social sciences, human rights, arts and humanities for meaningful research at the universities.

### LokVirsa offers courses under PM program

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (LokVirsa) has launched three free six-month training courses under Prime Minister's Hunarmand Pakistan program-Batch 2. According to details, the willing participants can apply in the following courses including "Documentary Ad & Short Film Making", Wood carving and Fine art (painting). The minimum educational qualification for admission in these courses is matriculation. The applicants' age limit is 18 to 30 years old. The six months course timing is 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The applicants asked to submit the following admission documents; two passport size photos, two copies of your and your parents' National Identity Card (NIC), a copy of academic credentials, a copy of the domicile. The admission form can be downloaded at [www.navtvc.gov.pk](http://www.navtvc.gov.pk) & [www.kamyabjawan.gov.pk](http://www.kamyabjawan.gov.pk). After completing the form, send it to the following email address: [info@lokvirsa.org.pk](mailto:info@lokvirsa.org.pk). You can also send the form to the following number through WhatsApp: +923365770379. - DNA

### Transporters warned of strict action

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) has launched a crackdown against overloaded vehicles which contribute to fatal accidents. According to Punjab Highway Police spokesman, the campaign has been launched on the directives of Additional Inspector General of police. The transporters have been warned of strict action on the violation, he said adding, vehicles of the violators would be impounded besides imposing heavy fines. He said the overloaded heavy vehicles not only put the drivers at risk but the passengers and other road users as well. - APP

## Nawab of Junagadh meets ambassador of Palestine



ISLAMABAD: In continuity of efforts to highlight the case of Junagadh State, Nawab of Junagadh Muhammad Jahangir Khanji and Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali (Dewan of Junagadh) met Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Ahmed Rabai. The Palestinian delegation was briefed about the accession of Junagadh State to Pakistan and the Indian occupation later on in 1947. The legal aspects of the issue were also discussed as per cannons of international law. Furthermore, the importance of the resolution of the issue for sustainable peace in South Asia was also highlighted. The delegation was presented with the recent reports published on the history and issue of Junagadh State. - DNA

## Police guides get good response

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The complainants at various police stations hailed the Inspector General of Police, (IGP) Qazjameel-ur-Rehman for appointing guides at police station to assist the visitors in resolving their grievances. Terming the move a positive step towards changing typical 'thana culture' they said it would also help

improving police image among the masses. They were of a view that complainants now felt secure themselves during visit of police stations rather than getting frightened. Muhammad Fahad Shoaib, a varsity student who visited Ramna police station said he was satisfied with this new initiative as it gave a feeling of honor and respect to the complainant. 'Decent and polite attitude

by the police guide has improved my confidence on the force," he said. "The guide received me at I-9 police station and he accompanied me until my complaint was lodged," said Rehman another visitor. Luqman, a resident of I-10/1 who came to the police station to file a dispute application said 'Thana culture' being changed due to the appointment of qualified staff.

## Education key to promote inclusivity: Dr. Shaista

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Education is the key to ensure inclusivity, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society. This was stated by Executive Director Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, Dr. Shaista Sohail while addressing the closing ceremony of a three-day series of webinars entitled, "Nurturing Peaceful, Respectful and Inclusive Societies in Pakistan: Seerat counters hate speech through decisive action," jointly organised by HEC and the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. Twenty four speakers from three continents, i.e., Asia,

America, and Europe, including representatives of minorities and youth, expressed their views in six different sessions on Seerat and Global Peace; Perspectives of Diverse Religious Communities of Pakistan; Global and Local Perspectives; Youth, and Concluding Recommendations for Manual. The webinars aimed at encouraging peaceful, inclusive, and empathetic communities in Pakistan through tools like active and continuous intersectional participations, dialogue, and collaboration. These events also aimed to contribute to achieving the SDGs, in particular SDG16 on building peaceful, inclusive and just societies. She hoped that the webinars would prove to be a

stepping stone towards achieving the goal of giving an end to hate speech, violence, persecution, marginalization, and stigmatisation of specific groups. The manual of the webinars, being prepared on the basis of the thoughts shared by speakers, will be a rich contribution to inspiring the youth to move towards a more tolerant society. She assured the UN officials of HEC's full support in carrying out webinars and workshops on efforts to combat hate speech in the future. In her closing remarks, United Nations Special Adviser Dr. Alice Wairimu Nderitu emphasised building resilience against hate, online and offline, while upholding the role of youth in this regard.

## INVITATION OF BIDS



Sealed bids (Technical & Financial bids) are invited on Single Stage Two Envelope basis for "Construction, Operation, Maintenance & Transfer back of Commercial Complex on 65320 Sft near Mardan Railway Station against Unsolicited Proposal" from firms/consortium of firms duly registered from SECP or Registrar of Firms.

- The Project has been initiated on the basis of an Unsolicited Proposal received from a firm hereinafter referred as 'Initiator'. Bidding will be in accordance with PPRAs Rule No. 37A. Therefore, Initiator is exempted from submitting Bid Documents (Technical & Financial Proposal).
- The Scope of the Project has been defined in the Bidding Documents.
- The Employer invites sealed bids from eligible firms on the basis of Single Stage - Two Envelope bidding procedure.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by the interested Bidder on submission of a written application to the under mentioned office and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Rs.5,000 (Pak Rs. Five Thousand only) in cash.
- The Technical Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security of Pak Rs. 5.00 Million (Pak Rs. Five Million only) in the form of a Bank Guarantee on the prescribed form provided in the Bidding Documents. Bid Security is also required to be provided by the Initiator, till the last date of submission of Bids.
- A pre-bid conference shall be held on 30.03.2021 (Tuesday) at 11:00 hours at under mentioned address for which prospective firms/consortium of firms are requested to attend.

Bids must be delivered to the under mentioned office upto 14:00 hours on or before 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 (Saturday). Technical Bids will be opened at the same venue and date at 14:30 hrs in the presence of Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

Muhammad Saeed Khan

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## Briefs

## One die, another hurt in motorbike-truck collision

DNA

ISLAMABAD: One motorcyclist was killed and another sustained critical injuries when a motorbike collided with a parked truck in Jehlum on Sunday. According to rescue sources, the tragic incident was occurred due to over speeding of motorcyclist. A motorcyclist was killed on the spot and other injured was shifted to nearby hospital for proper treatment. Police have registered a case and further investigation was underway.

## Rehman urges to follow SoPs of COVID-19

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) A. Rehman Malik Sunday urged the people to strictly follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs) to combat the third wave of deadly pandemic. He prayed for the speedy recovery of Prime Minister Imran Khan from coronavirus, said a press release. Rehman Malik said the third wave of coronavirus has spread not only in Pakistan but all over the world and unfortunately the increase in positive cases of coronavirus is due to carelessness as SOPs and precautionary measures to control its rapid spread are not followed strictly. He said, "I had earlier said that the third wave of coronavirus could be more fatal than earlier two waves as I had warned in my book on COVID and also in my articles that the second and third waves of coronavirus will prove more fatal". Rehman Malik said the new UK strain of Covid is spreading in Pakistan at the moment that can remain active in the air for 24 hours. He urged that the only way to combat the pandemic is to follow the SOPs. He also urged the government to expedite the vaccination that every citizen of the country could be vaccinated. He prayed for all those who are currently suffering from Coronavirus. - APP

## PNCA, PCP announces poster competition

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with the Population Centre Pakistan (PCP) would organize a poster competition. The competition is aimed to highlight the rapid population growth in the country and its cross cutting impact. The theme for poster competition is "Striking a balance for sustainable population growth. At pieces watercolours, poster paints and easy to post formats will be accepted by Pakistan National Council of the Arts until March 31. The top three winners will be given cash prizes.

## Month last rain spell to continue till Tuesday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Spokesman Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Dr Khalid Malik Sunday said the month last rain spell would continue till Tuesday (March 23) in twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi including KP, Gilgit-Baltistan and North Balochistan. Talking to media, he said during the spell the wind thunderstorm including hailstorm would likely to grip the upper Punjab and isolated places of different parts of the country. Adding he said, the ongoing rain spell would have a positive impact on pollen count as it reduces in the federal capital.

## RCCI expresses concern over proposed ordinances

In a statement, the Chamber president expressed strong reservations over the proposed bill, saying the country's economy was going through difficult challenges due to the COVID-19 epidemic. The COVID has hit the business community hardest

ZUBAIR AHMAD

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) President Mohammad Nasir Mirza has expressed deep concern over the government's proposed money bill to abolish income tax exemption and termed it a mini budget. He said that as per media reports a summary in this regard has been approved by the federal cabinet where about 77 proposals are under consideration for withdrawal of tax exemp-

tion available under the Income Tax Ordinance 2001. These include company/firm listings in the stock market, non-profit organizations, discounts/tax credits on setting up refineries, special economic zones (SEZs) being setup under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Independent Power Producers (IPPs), plant and machinery installation of new machinery, real estate investment trust, film industry, sports board and IT Export services. In a statement, the Cham-



ber president expressed strong reservations over the proposed bill, saying the country's economy was going through difficult challenges due to the COVID-19 epidemic. The COVID has hit the business communi-

ty hardest. At such a time, introduction of a tax-exempt money bill has ringed alarm bells among the business community. He said that the Chamber has always demanded that stakeholders be consulted in economic policy making. The IMF's terms should be seen in the context of the ground realities.

He said that actually tax exemption has led to an increase in investment in many sectors in Pakistan especially in IT, Real Estate Investment Trust and CPEC Industrial Zones and the

government has received many times more tax. Abolishing tax exemptions will stop investment in these sectors in the country as a result of which the FBR's annual tax targets will not be met, he added.

Governments around the world have announced special incentives, tax breaks and financial support packages in the wake of the Corona epidemic.

He said that due to the Corona epidemic, business activities were slowing down and a full recovery would take a long time.

## NCOC calls session to decide Pakistan Day parade

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Saturday has decided to call its session on March 22 (Monday) to decide Pakistan Day Parade conduct amid rising disease trend across the country in general and the federal capital in particular.

The Forum would discuss either to cancel the main parade of Pakistan Day celebrations or hold limited event on the occasion.

The NCOC Monday morning session would also take stock of the education sector and prevailing disease situation across the country. It may be mentioned here that Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health Dr Faisal Sultan in a brief press conference had underscored abrupt spike in Covid-19 positivity ratio and public negligence in following safety protocols outdoors.

He has also urged the public and provincial administrations to ensure compliance safety guidelines to avert serious impacts of rising pandemic spread amid third wave if the Coronavirus.

He has also urged the public and provincial administrations to ensure compliance safety guidelines to avert serious impacts of rising pandemic spread amid third wave if the Coronavirus.

## IGP urges police staff to show positive attitude

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Qazi Jameel-ur-Rehman has directed the police station staff to demonstrate positive attitude towards complainants for improving police culture in the federal capital.

Negative behavior and unprofessional dealing with the applicants may tarnish the repute of police force, he said during his visit at Kohsar Police Station on Saturday.

The Inspector General of Police during his visit checked record of first information report (FIR), front desk facilities and hygienic conditions at the station.

He was accompanied by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) operations Afzal Ahmad Kausar, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) operations Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer and Superintendent of Police (SP) city zone Umer Khan.

Rehman also made an interaction with the visitors and inquired about the staff behavior and their complaints. He directed to expedite the investigation process of pending cases to provide early relief to the plaintiff. 'Delay in registration of first information report will not be tolerated,' the Inspector General of Police remarked.

He stressed the need to launch an effective awareness drive to eradicate drugs and social crimes in the society.

Rehman asked the personnel to ensure all out efforts to maintain good liaison with the public.

## Bike lifter gang busted; 3 arrested

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Police have busted a dacoit and bike lifter gang and arrested its three members besides recovering 15 stolen motorcycles, two pistols and other items.

According to a police spokesman, police team under the supervision of SHO Sadiqabad was constituted which after hectic efforts managed to net three accused namely Zeeshan Abbasi, ring leader, Muhammad Haris and Abdullah Naseem who were dacoit, bike lifter gang members and street criminals and allegedly involved in a number of cases registered in different police stations.

Police recovered 15 stolen motorcycles, cash, two pistols and other items from their possession. They confessed to have committed dacoities, bike lifting and other crimes in different areas.

A case has been registered against all the accused while further investigation is underway, he added.

## Wajiha hails PM vision

We are working under the guidance of minister for education to bring improvement in higher education sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar on Saturday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision for quality education would change the fate of coming generations.

In an interview with PTV, she said President and Prime Minister's enlightened policy in the field of education would help entire nation. "We are working under the guidance of minister for education to bring improvement in the higher education sector," she said. The reforms, she said, was being made to implement the vision of Prime Minister for equal education system



across the country. Lamenting over the weak policies of the previous regimes, Wajiha said there had been a vacuum in policy making but incumbent government following the directives of PM was taking imperative steps to achieve speedy progress in education sector. She added that improvement in policy would definitely enhance the soft image of Pakistan in the comity of nations.



ISLAMABAD: Madame Zlatomira Yurdakul and spouses of the Head of Missions donated school bags and pencils for the students of Gosha-e-Mashal. - DNA

## NAHE launches 4-week course on online teaching

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) on Saturday launched a four-week course on Online Teaching. The purpose is to build capacity of faculty of both public and private sector higher education institutions for teaching online.

In keeping with the remit of NAHE, and in view of the current COVID-19 pandemic and post pandemic teaching in a blending or online environment, the Academy is extending support to the higher education sector for online delivery of courses. To this end, NAHE has developed a foundational level course, Online Teaching Level 1, for online teaching to facilitate the Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in the enhancement of online teaching pedagogies, engagement in online learning environment, educational technology, and online evaluation strategies.

The main purpose of Online Teaching Course Level 1 is to develop and enhance the probability of success of the participants in teaching online and blended courses at the HEIs in Pakistan. This course has been designed as a follow up to a high demand from universities in preparing and supporting faculty for online teaching and use of educational technology tools to enhance instructional design of online content, increase engagement in online lectures, and develop formative and summative assessments in an online environment. This is a 20-hour course comprised of both synchronous sessions containing live webinars lead by reputable and qualified instructors. NAHE initiated a call to all higher education institutions for nominations on March 5, 2021 by reaching out to vice chancellors of all private and public universities in Pakistan. Based on the nominations received over the course of next two weeks, 403 faculty members from academic disciplines ranging from social sciences to physical sciences, medicine, and arts have registered for the course from all across Pakistan. Prof. Shaheen Sardar, Rector NAHE, delivered the opening remarks and instructors introduced themselves before commencing first module i.e. enhancing instructional design with educational technology using cognitive load theory.

## Technical skills need of the hour: Shafqat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Technical Training Shafqat Mahmood said that the greatest need of the time is for technical skills and industrial vocational education which is the guarantor of rapid development and prosperity. Keeping in view the importance of vocational training and skills of the youth, the Prime Minister of Pakistan has launched revolutionary programs for the said sector which will be successful with the help of local industry. Under them, high tech and modern style vocational education and training will be important for the youth. The way will be paved for the achievement and the youth of the country and the nation will set the stage for development. He expressed these views during a meeting with Chairman Skill Development Council Islamabad M. Akram Farid. Chairman SDC Islamabad said that he has already signed a memorandum of understanding with the Islamabad Industrial Association, NTB, Chambers and



Associations, under which the Skill Development Council and the Industry would benefit from each other's experiences. He said that practical education in vocational education would be ensured and the concept of "Ustaad -Shagird" traditional training System should be abolished. Chairman SDC further said that in order to trained the youth Government can use free of Cost modern lab facility of

Industry such as pharmaceutical, flourmills, steel oil and Ghee and others. Our more than 70 million people are employed in other countries, most of these young people are serving abroad by taking short-term courses in technical education, of course those countries that have made vocational education as a part of their general education and their pace of economic growth is high. The annual revenue of \$24

billions could be increased up to \$40 billion within two years by equipping the youth with skills. Moreover he said that the industry has played a key role in creating jobs, Students are benefiting from the use of industrial labs and other equipments. We lag far behind other countries in product manufacturing and are spending heavily on foreign exchange imports. We need to harness the potential of our youth for the production and growth of goods so that they can run the technical and productive sectors on the right track and the country can move forward.

Under the Skill Development Council Islamabad, technical and professional courses for men and women are being introduced which are in high demand abroad. Consumption opportunities in various industries are also increasing in Pakistan. He presented the annual activity report of Industry, Employers Federation of Pakistan and Skill Development Council Islamabad to Federal Minister for Education and Technical Training to Shafqat Mahmood.

## ICCI opposes imposition of new taxes

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has shown great concerns over the media reports that to meet the conditions of IMF, the government was preparing to introduce two ordinances to impose taxes of Rs.290 billion by abolishing tax exemptions of Rs.140 billion given to various sectors of the economy and slapping surcharge of Rs.150 billion on power consumers. ICCI termed it a negative move as it would further enhance the cost of doing business, give rise to inflation for the common man, badly affect the business growth and damage the confidence of potential investors. She expressed these views during a meeting with members of the business community. Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Khalid Chaudhry former Senior Vice President ICCI and others were present at the occasion. Fatma Azim, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce



& Industry said that the power tariffs in Pakistan were already considered highest in the region, which have caused high production cost and affected the competitiveness of our industrial sector. In these circumstances, imposing a huge burden of Rs.150 billion surcharge on power consumers would further enhance the manufacturing cost in Pakistan, lead to great increase in inflation for people and further slowdown

the growth of business activities as a result of which, all efforts to revive the economy would be doomed to fail. Therefore, she urged that instead of levying the power surcharge of Rs.150 billion to tackle the circular debt, the government should focus on improving the performance of power companies by controlling their transmission & distribution losses and power theft issues.

The Acting President ICCI said that the withdrawal of existing tax exemptions of Rs.140 billion from various sectors would affect the growth of business activities and damage the confidence of investors. She said that consistency in tax policies was vital for businessmen and potential investors to make investment decisions. However, the frequent changes in tax policies would have a negative impact on both existing and poten-

tial investment. She said that the time-bound tax exemptions should be allowed to continue for the existing businesses and urged that the government should announce at least a 5-year tax policy to give a clear future direction to the businessmen and investors that would help them in making decisions for business expansion and investment with more confidence. Abdul Rehman Khan, Vice President ICCI said that instead of imposing taxes through ordinances, the government should introduce such proposals in the parliament for thorough discussion on them so that the genuine interests of business and economy could be safeguarded instead of issuing ordinances just to appease the IMF. He said that the IMF loans have always created more problems for businesses and the common man, therefore, instead of relying on foreign loans, the government should focus on generating indigenous resources in order to promote self-reliance and put the country on the path of sustainable economic growth.

## IMF deadlines

WITH an IMF deadline looming before it, the government is in a rush to complete the necessary obligations imposed on the country by the global monetary fund. One of the conditions placed—which has to be completed before the IMF executive board meeting scheduled for March 24th—is legislation for withdrawal of corporate tax exemptions and instead increasing automatic electricity power tariff. Unless an extension of the deadline can be negotiated, the release of a \$500 million tranche is at stake. The meeting is three days away, and with nothing concrete to show for our obligations, the government is in a panic to complete the conditions immediately. The only way possible for us to comply with the necessary legislations is through an ordinance—an Act would be near impossible to squeeze through. The government is putting in place a mechanism for automatic electricity power tariff increases of about Rs5.36 per unit over the next 27 months through presidential ordinances. The ordinance is set to be called “Ordinance to Further Amend the Regulation of Generation, Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power Act 1997”, with the law enabling the government to streamline and impose electricity tariffs more easily. The government will, in all likelihood, also pass an ordinance for corporate tax returns in order to comply with IMF’s deadlines, in the upcoming days. Yet, even as the government tries to complete IMF’s conditions last-minute, the burdens worsening the economy and increasing our dependence on the IMF are still in place and regurgitating. Pakistan’s reliance on foreign commercial loans has been increasing at a swift pace. According to official data of the Economic Affairs Division (EAD), during July-February of fiscal year 2020-21, the government has received \$7.208 billion total external inflows from multiple financing sources, which is 59 percent of annual budget estimates of \$12.233 billion. While the government struggles to meet its deadlines in order to secure IMF releases, it must also remember its campaign promises and work to free the country from the burden of foreign commercial loans which put us in this position in the first place.

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## A lonely path

THE PPP’s decision to contest the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections without eliciting the support of the PDM alliance is yet another worrying sign for opposition parties. A PPP breakaway looks likelier by the day. PPP claims that it has the numbers in AJK and looks to be confident in taking on the government. This might well be true—Peoples’ Party might be able to compete with PTI on near even footing in AJK, but it must not forget the lessons that the recent Gilgit-Baltistan contest should have taught. PTI has a strong support base in many key areas, and the norm in regions like GB and AJK has been to vote for the party that is in power in the centre. GB saw the opposition parties allied, but still unable to form a government after the results had been finalised. Is the PPP truly confident of an upset, or is this just false bravado at a time when the opposition looks weak? PML-N and other parties in the alliance have already indicated that they could move on if the PPP chooses to strike its own path. Consultations will be made after the stipulated April 2 deadline. But as damaging the lack of support from PDM might be for PPP, its status as one of the two largest parties in the alliance means that the loss will be felt both ways. In the past two years, until the opposition parties joined the common cause, there was no pressure on the government at all. Even within parliament, the government might have had a problem in passing legislation, but the opposition had been unable to mount any serious challenge. Is the alliance willing to risk it all by taking unflinching positions? In little over two weeks, the opposition parties will have to make a decision.

# SCO countries celebrate the Int’l Day of Nowruz

Vladimir Norov



Alisher Navoi, one of the outstanding poets of the East, the great thinker, statesman, the founder of the Uzbek literary language, whose 580th birth anniversary was celebrated by poetry lovers around the world on February 9, wrote in his works: Understand, people of the whole earth: enmity is a bad thing. Live in friendship among yourselves—there is no better fate

IN 2010, the United Nations General Assembly in its 64th Session adopted a resolution, arguing that Nowruz as the embodiment of the unity of cultural heritage and centuries-old traditions plays an important role in strengthening ties between peoples based on mutual respect and the ideals of peace and good neighbourliness, approved March 21 as the International Day of Nowruz. The draft of the resolution was prepared and submitted to the UN General Assembly by the delegation of Tajikistan, one of the founding countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, together with the delegations of other SCO Member States, observer, and dialogue partner countries, including Albania, the Republic of Northern Macedonia and Turkmenistan. At the same

meeting, the General Assembly welcomed the 2009 UNESCO decision including Nowruz in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In the resolution, the UN General Assembly, emphasizing the importance of processes of mutual cultural enrichment and the need to encourage exchanges among civilizations, contributing to the development of international cooperation, especially underlines that the basis of the ancient traditions of Nowruz reflects the cultural characteristics and ancient customs of the civilizations of East and West, which had influenced the formation of these civilizations through the mutual exchange of human values.

The resolution also recommends that UN Member States make efforts to raise awareness about Nowruz and subsequently hold annual events to commemorate the holiday as deemed appropriate and encourages the study of its origins and traditions to spread knowledge of the Nowruz heritage to the international community. The focus of Nowruz on affirming life in harmony with nature, awareness of the inseparable link between creative work and natural cycles of renewal, and a caring and respectful attitude toward the natural sources of life were also noted.

Ban Ki-moon, who was UN Secretary-General when the International Day of Nowruz was established in 2010, said that the tradition dates back as far in time as there was no written language. It allows us to erase borders, overcome divisions, unite, and confront crises together. Care for the environment calls collective approach and promotes friendship between quite different cultures. This, of course, resonates with the values of the UN. After all, the hope of renewal is a powerful driving force. The word Nowruz (Novruz, Navruz, Nooruz, Nevruz, Nauruz), means “new day,” and its spelling and pronunciation may vary from country to country.

Nowruz, the day of the vernal equinox, has been celebrated as the beginning of the new year for over 3,000 years in most of the SCO “family” countries, including those in Central Asia, as well as in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Black Sea Basin, and other regions of the world. Nowruz, both in its external manifestations and in its underlying sense, meant and honored. Above all, the arrival of spring - the time of year when the sun, having overcome the winter darkness as well as cold and frost, began to gain strength again, and increase the daylight hours. On the other hand, it is the time when nature awakens, wakes up, seeks, and finds strength to renew itself again.

An important tradition practiced during Nowruz celebrations in most of the SCO countries, which cover almost half the world’s population and 60 percent of Eurasia, is the communion and joint meal of relatives and friends at a festive table decorated with objects symbolizing purity,

brightness, prosperity, and wealth. People wear new clothes, visit relatives, especially the elderly and neighbors, and exchange gifts made by artisans, especially for children. There are street performances of music and dance, community rituals, competitions in traditional sports and handicrafts. Such practices in Nowruz celebrations promote values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families, as well as reconciliation and neighbourliness between different communities, henceforth, contributing to cultural diversity, friendship and understanding among peoples and nations in the SCO region.

Over its millennial history, Nowruz has become a symbol of rebirth and renewal of nature and society, of spiritual purification and human self-improvement. It represents prosperity, unity, brotherhood, and mutual support to timeless cultural and historical values that unite the peoples. It is a great heritage inherited by the peoples of the SCO countries, and we must cherish and develop it. Nowruz knows no national borders; it unites people as well as various societies through bonds of goodwill and friendship. It is noteworthy that representatives of all ethnic groups, nationalities, and cultural communities residing in the countries celebrating Nowruz join the celebration of this bright holiday. This holiday is the best proof of the enduring value of unity in diversity and a reminder that humanity shares a common destiny.

The study of the traditions of other peoples can have a beneficial effect on mutual understanding and on the way of the life of mankind itself. Now, in the age of high technology, it has become easier to obtain information that serves to bring different cultures closer. Eastern traditions, poetic legends, and colorful festivals attract attention of the world. The inspiring contemporary writers and filmmakers by the way they seamlessly combine antiquity with the future, the wisdom, and values of all peoples, captured in the songs, parables, and legends of antiquity, in the films and books of today, tell us how invaluable friendship, mutual assistance, and human unity are.

The great Eastern geniuses Abu Reyhan al-Biruni, Omar Khayyam, Ferdowsi, Nizami Ganjavi, Abdurrahman Jami, and Alisher Navoi left behind a multitude of poems about the Navruz celebration, in which they called on people to live in peace and harmony. Alisher Navoi, one of the outstanding poets of the East, the great thinker, statesman, the founder of the Uzbek literary language, whose 580th birth anniversary was celebrated by poetry lovers around the world on February 9, wrote in his works: Understand, people of the whole earth: enmity is a bad thing. Live in friendship among yourselves—there is no better fate. Humanity has entered the third decade of the third millennium, filled with contradictions and cataclysms with geopolitical and geoeconomics causes, as well as

those associated with climate change and environmental degradation.

Under these conditions, the SCO Member States emphasized the importance of promoting interaction in building a new type of international relations based on the principles and norms of international law, above all, mutual respect, justice, equality, and mutually beneficial cooperation. The countries of the SCO Family make a significant contribution to maintaining peace, security and strengthening trust and cooperation between countries and peoples.

In addition to that, the SCO Member States advocate the development of multilateral and bilateral cultural ties that promote mutual understanding among nations, preservation of cultural diversity, mutual respect, and dissemination of knowledge of the traditions and customs of the peoples of SCO Member States. They encourage intercultural dialogue in the interests of peoples in the SCO region, promote the enhancement of cultural diversity, cooperation in research and preservation of cultural and natural heritage in the region.

And so, the peaceful and constructive spirit of Nowruz is deeply in tune with the “Shanghai spirit” - the main content of which is mutual trust and benefit, equality, mutual consultation, respect for the diversity of cultures and civilizations, the desire for joint development and the values enshrined in the SCO Charter of June 7, 2002. In this regard, the joint celebration of Nowruz by the countries of the SCO Family has profound meaning and particular significance in strengthening mutual understanding, mutual respect, and friendship among peoples, and bringing cultures closer together in all their diversity. The SCO Secretariat, in cooperation with embassies of SCO countries and Chinese partners in the PRC, annually organizes festive events on occasion of the International Navruz Day, comprised of an exhibition of arts and crafts of SCO countries and photo exhibition depicting the traditions of Navruz celebrations. The incendiary music, colorful dances, traditional sports/games, and national rituals give the holiday a special charm. As the SCO celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year, 18 countries of our organization jointly celebrated Nowruz on March 19 at the SCO Secretariat - our common home.

In general, the broad celebration of Nowruz in the SCO region is in accordance with the UNESCO Universal Declaration of 2001 on Cultural Diversity, which states that awareness of the unity of humankind and the development of cultural exchange, respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue, and cooperation in a climate of trust and understanding are the best guarantees of international peace and security.

— The writer is the SCO Secretary-General of SCO

# Colonizing minds: An in depth analysis

Syed Nasir Hassan

Throughout the imperial raj, the political corporation had drowned Indian continent into depths of debt by exploiting its resources for the empire’s own benefit and got the thrust it needed. It has been noted by Shashi Tharoor that by the time EIC anchored on the shores of India, India made up 27% of the world GDP and by the time it left, India stood at merely 4%

THE indigenous manufacturing was abandoned, and Indians were coerced to buy the British products which were produced using the Indian raw material. Extra duties were imposed in order to clamp the indigenous products. The premise of Britain’s rule was never the so-called white man’s burden to civilize but in fact the absolute subjugation and exploitation of Indian sub-continent and its people. After incapacitating much of the Indian continent with its resources, British Government decided to roll back its imperialism. Modern inception of world has now established new but blurred battle grounds. What once was overt is now done in an oblivious manner. Previously empires used to shape world dynamics at the expense of the colonies. Throughout the imperial raj, the political corporation had drowned Indian continent into depths of debt by exploiting its resources for the empire’s own benefit and got the thrust it needed. It has been noted by Shashi Tharoor that by the time East India Company (EIC) anchored on the shores of India, India made up 27% of the world GDP and by the time it left, India stood at merely 4%. The indigenous manufacturing was abandoned, and Indians were coerced to buy the British products which were produced using the Indian raw material. Extra duties were imposed in order to clamp the indigenous products. The premise of Britain’s rule was never the so-called white man’s burden to civilize but in fact the absolute subjugation and exploitation of Indian sub-continent and its people. After incapacitating much of the Indian continent with its resources, British Government decided to roll back its imperialism.

Today it’s been more than seven decades since we got rid of the British rule, yet it seems that after plundering Indian sub-continent with material resources decades ago, it is now up to ransacking intellectual capital. Western powers seem to have adopted a subtle way of legitimizing their colonial and coteremporary supremacy by employing the soft power. What seems to appear as a part of public diplomacy, has in fact deep rooted impacts. Most of the western powers, including the Great Britain have been offering scholarships to students from the under-developed and developing countries as a part of public diplomacy. However, most of the time it seems that it is done in order to suffice the foreign policy objectives through non-traditional and sneaky means. Majority portion of the scholarships are offered to those countries which were once ruled by the British or Britain has encountered them in political manner.

Although, the scholarships are mostly offered/granted to underdeveloped countries but once scholarships students are enrolled new form of orientalism comes into play where an accident instructs an orient to do the same task. The students are conditioned to see their home country in a rather negative way. Rarely any non-resident scholar would research upon European affairs and mostly their work revolves around the praise of westerners or criticism towards their home country. What is achieved by doing so and what it reflects? It reflects the sheer sense of degraded socio-political environment narrated by indigenous people of a country which is then exaggerated by the western discourse. By using the same strategy, a passive message is being delivered throughout the globe that western civilization still dominates and it rightfully ruled in colonial

times; professing the idea of white man’s burden. This cultivation of narrative is being done under the veil of public diplomacy aimed at harnessing non-resident ambassadors of western dominance. By employing informal means, imperial powers particularly Britain is on retribution of freedom of former colonies and dominions.

As we are living in first empire free millennium, it is hard for imperial powers to digest the change and let go of the leverage it used to have over foreign territories for centuries. That is why west continuously ploy to shape modern times as per their desires. In order to cast imperial shadows to the present day world, discourse needs to be steered in a manner which should advocate the western high social and political standards. Another aspect to this type of diplomacy is to shape national identities through experience and creating plethora of discourses. The free thinking has now been molded into staged thinking and for that diaspora of former colonies need to sing the symphony of the former masters. The great “willingness” to share knowledge can be judged by the fact who these former imperial powers are welcoming to people from former dominions but have a very high cost of education for their own people.

In such an environment, where education programs are seems to be used to promote foreign objectives, developing world needs to widen the thinking space and own the indigenous work and discourse by native scholars rather deeming pride in foreign funded studies.

— Syed Nasir Hassan is Research Fellow at Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR). He is doing MPhil (Defence and Strategic Studies), at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

## Briefs

## EU leaders to meet by video conference

## FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: An EU summit scheduled for Thursday and Friday in Brussels will no longer be held in person due to the accelerating third wave of the coronavirus in Europe, a spokesman said.

European Council chief Charles Michel, who organises the regular leaders' meetings, made the decision "following the surge of #COVID19 cases in member states," his spokesman Barend Leyts tweeted on Sunday.

The meeting is scheduled to address several sensitive topics, including deteriorating ties with Russia as well as Turkey, and disorganisation in the EU response to the pandemic. EU diplomats said that leaders last week urged Michel to cancel the in-person meeting, though he had hoped to tighten sanitary measures to avoid reverting again to a video-conference.

The leaders have only met physically a handful of times since the pandemic began, most notably a four-day marathon in July to agree the EU's 750 billion euro recovery plan. Diplomats complain that topics requiring delicate diplomacy cannot be properly addressed in a video meeting. The leaders next scheduled in-person meeting is in Porto, Portugal on May 8.

## Pakistan, China jointly...

## From Page 01

cultural heritage of Pakistan and China and successful organization of the event. He emphasized that both countries were deepening their cultural linkages to elevate the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership to a new pedestal of bilateral cooperation.

Party Secretary and Chairperson of Beijing Performance and Art Group, Ms. Zhao Jichen, President of China Puppet Arts Theatre, Ms. Zhao Yongzhuang, Mr. Saadaan Peerzada, Director of the Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop, and Ms. Himalchuli Gurung, Programme Specialist for Culture of UNESCO spoke on the occasion.

They highlighted the importance of education through entertainment and preserving the rich cultures and traditional arts for the future generations.

On the occasion, Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop and China Puppet Art Theatre signed a MoU for Cooperation. The two sides also exchanged puppets depicting popular characters from their folklore and mythology for the respective museums. Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop is involved in Puppetry in Pakistan since 1978. The Workshop has done 30 International Puppet Festivals which brought almost 230 International Groups from 56 countries to Pakistan.

Rafi Peer Museum is also the First Puppet Museum of its kind in South Asia which is built over 44000 sq feet with a display of Puppets from around 36 countries. China Puppet Art Theatre is keeping the tradition of puppetry alive since 1955 and its depiction of world-renowned folklore of Monkey King has won it laurels.

## No lockdown on cards: Asad

## From Page 01

The NCOC chief shot down the rumours. "Complete lockdown is not the solution," he said.

"We tried to explain that to people during the first wave [of the coronavirus] but they did not understand. You cannot shut down the entire country and steal people's livelihoods," added the minister.

Umar, however, hinted at "targeted interventions", saying that the government tries to take steps that would not affect people's livelihoods. The minister said the NCOC had identified coronavirus hotspot areas to provincial governments. He said the implementation of these smart lockdowns were not satisfactory.



**KATMANDU:** Pak Army team won gold medal in international Adventure Competition held at Nepal from 18 to 21 March. The competition was aimed at testing physical endurance and mental agility of participants and included cross country running, cycling and rafting. Pakistan Army participated in the event for first time. A total of 20 teams participated in the event. – DNA

## Saudi coalition launches air raids on Houthi-held capital

The United Nations has described the situation in Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian disaster with mass hunger, disease and poverty, largely caused by the war. The conflict has killed about 130,000 people – including more than 12,000 civilians

## DNA

SANAA: The Saudi-led coalition battling Yemen's Houthi rebels struck military targets belonging to the Iran-aligned movement in the capital, Sanaa, in the early hours of Sunday, residents said.

The raids came after the Houthis claimed responsibility for drone attacks on an oil refinery in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, on Friday, which caused a fire that was brought under control. On Saturday, the coalition said it intercepted and destroyed an explosive-laden drone launched towards the southern Saudi city of

Khamis Mushait. Residents in Sanaa told news agency that coalition warplanes bombed areas housing Houthi military camps in southern Sanaa and a military manufacturing site in the north of the city. Houthi-run Al Masirah television also reported coalition air strikes on Sanaa airport. The rebels have stepped up attacks inside Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, in recent weeks. Saudi Arabia says it intercepts most of the drones and missiles that the Houthis launch at airports, air bases and energy infrastructure, but some do inflict damage.

## No.4 on most wanted list, Houthi leader dead

RIYADH: A senior official at the Iran-backed Houthi militia confirmed Sunday the death of Zakaria Al-Shami, the fourth Houthi leader on the Arab Coalition's wanted list. The coalition has previously announced a \$20 million reward to any one providing information leading to Al-Shami's arrest or location. He was the fourth Houthi member on the "A list" that includes 40 names of leaders and elements responsible for planning, implementing and supporting Houthi terrorist activities. The cause and date of his death remain unclear. Earlier in the day, Arab Coalition forces carried out airstrikes at dawn Sunday targeting Houthi militia sites near the Yemeni capital Sanaa used by the group to manufacture missiles. The targeted manufacturing facilities were in Sanaa and Hodaidah, Yemeni sources quoted by Arab media said. Earlier, the coalition bombed Houthi militia sites and military barracks, south and north of Sanaa. – DNA

The Saudi-led coalition has been battling the Houthis since March 2015, months after the group seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa. The war has ground into a deadlock since then, with Saudi Arabia facing international criticism for its indiscriminate air strikes. The United Nations has described the situation in Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian disaster with mass hunger, disease and poverty, largely caused by the war. The conflict has killed about 130,000 people – including more than 12,000 civilians. In renewed diplomatic efforts to end the war, the United Nations and United States have urged

the Houthis – who are also pressing an offensive against the government-held city of Marib in Yemen – to turn to negotiations rather than military escalation. Analysts say the Houthi push into Marib – which until recently has been relatively peaceful and stable because of well-protected oilfields nearby – threatens to ignite more fighting elsewhere in Yemen. Meanwhile, government-allied forces have ramped up attacks in other areas recently in an apparent attempt to force the Houthis to spread out their resources and make them more vulnerable.

## Azeri President marks Nowruz in retaken city

## DNA

SHUSHA: President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and their daughter Leyla Aliyeva have lit the holiday bonfire in Jidir Duzu, Shusha. The head of state then made an address.

Dear sisters and brothers, I heartily congratulate all of you on Novruz and wish all the people of Azerbaijan good health and happiness! This year we are celebrating Novruz in Shusha, in Jidir Duzu. This is a historic event. Every year since 2004, when congratulating the people of Azerbaijan on the occasion of Novruz, I was saying that we would return to our ancestral lands. I was saying that we would restore the territorial integrity of our country. I was saying that we would celebrate Novruz in Karabakh after the liberation of our lands, and this day has come. Today we are celebrating Novruz in our ancient city Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan. This is a historic event. This is a great happiness. God heard the prayers of the Azerbaijani people. Every year, on the eve of Novruz, we probably all thought and said to each other that next year we



would celebrate Novruz in Karabakh Inshallah, that we would celebrate Novruz in Shusha next year, and this day has come. After 28 years, we have returned to Shusha. We are celebrating Novruz in Jidir Duzu. We have restored historical justice. On 8 November, when announcing the great news of the liberation of Shusha to the people of Azerbaijan, I said, "Shusha, you are free!" Today, we are celebrating our national holiday Novruz in free Shusha. Shusha was held in captivity for 28 years. For 28 years, it

would be ruined and destroyed by the contemptible enemy. The historical appearance of Shusha was destroyed. The enemy wanted to Armenianize Shusha. They wanted to erase the heritage of the Azerbaijani people in Shusha. But they did not succeed in doing that. Shusha may have been destroyed, our historical sites in Shusha may have been destroyed by the loathsome enemy. However, Shusha did not break. Shusha did not break. It preserved its dignity, protected the national spirit of Azerbaijan,

and today, while in Shusha, we are witnessing this once again. Shusha was able to protect the spirit of the Azerbaijani people and was waiting for us. We had to come and we did. But we had to gather strength to come here. We had to get ready to come here. Preparations had to be and were made in all directions. We had to ensure the development of our country. We had to ensure the unity of our people. This was not an easy task for a country and nation that has emerged from civil war.

## KC-EU hails EU's stance on IIOJK

BRUSSELS: Chairman Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU) Ali Raza Syed has lauded a wise stance of chair of European Parliament Sub committee for criticizing India over worse situation of human rights in occupied Kashmir and rights of the minorities and other oppressed sections of masses in India. It is important to mention that Maria Arena, chair of the EU's parliament sub committee for Human rights while addressing a recent online session of the parliament expressed her grave concerns over the worse situation of human rights in occupied Kashmir and as well rights of the minorities in India.

Talking about upcoming EU-India summit on 8th May in Portugal, she said, this meeting is an important opportunity for EU authorities to talk about human rights in India because civil society, journalists, students and the members of the minorities are under pressure in India, particularly India has forcibly closed the office of amnesty international which is condemnable. Chair of EU parliament sub committee further advised the European Union to ask India to release the political prisoners, remove sanctions on freedom of expression, and allow the human rights organizations to work specially end the lockdown and other restrictions in occupied Kashmir. – DNA

## Protests in France against police impunity

PARIS: Thousands of demonstrators marched alongside families and relatives of victims of police violence across France on Saturday to protest impunity and racism by law enforcement. Several groups including the Network of Mutual Aid Truth and Justice, family collectives of killed, wounded and mutilated by violence and crimes by law enforcement and prison officers, Amnesty International and Stop Global Security Law coordination collective, trade union organizations representing journalists, organized and participated in the rally. Demonstrators assembled in major cities and towns like Paris, Toulouse, Lyon, Lille, Rennes, holding posters that said, "stop impunity" and chanted "No justice, no peace" to mark the international week against law enforcement violence and racism. They demanded the immediate suspension of those implicated in violence or homicide, committed or made racist remarks or acts. – Agencies

## Syria: Regime attack kills 6 civilians, injures 15

The shelling "hit the courtyard and main entrance of the hospital inside a cave, killing five civilians including a child and a hospital employee," the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said

## FOREIGN DESK

IDLIB: Syrian government artillery fire killed five civilians, including a child, when it hit a hospital entrance in Syria's last major rebel bastion of Idlib, Turkey's defence ministry and a war monitor said. The attack on Sunday on the northwestern town of Atareb came despite a Russian-Turkish ceasefire since March 2020, supposedly to protect the wider rebel-held stronghold. The shelling "hit the courtyard

and main entrance of the hospital inside a cave, killing five civilians including a child and a hospital employee," the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Eleven others were wounded including healthcare staff, said the Britain-based monitoring group's head Rami Abdulrahman. The hospital is located underground, a tactic used by the opposition to avoid being targeted in the conflict-prone area. The Idlib region is home to 2.9 million people, of whom two-thirds have been displaced from

their homes by conflict, the United Nations says. The ceasefire brokered by rebel backer Turkey and regime ally Russia last March stemmed a months-long regime military offensive on the bastion that killed hundreds of civilians and displaced more than a million people from their homes. It has since largely held despite repeated violations including Russian air strikes on the region, according to the Syrian Observatory. Medical facilities have been hit multiple times in the Idlib region during the war, attacks which

are mostly blamed on government and allied forces. The United States-based Physicians for Human Rights has documented 598 attacks on at least 350 separate healthcare facilities in Syria since March 2011, the vast majority of them allegedly committed by the Syrian government and allied forces, including Russia. In the same 10-year period, at least 930 medical personnel were killed, the rights group said. Between 2016 and 2019, the World Health Organization documented up to 337 attacks on healthcare sites

in Syria's northwest. The health directorate in the rebel-controlled northwest said Sunday's attack was the first on a medical facility in the region since February 2020. The civil war has killed more than 388,000 people and displaced millions at home and abroad since starting in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests. Seventy percent of healthcare workers have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, while after years of bombardment, only 58 percent of hospitals remain fully functional, the UN says.

## PDM is a thing of...

## From Page 01

Shibli Faraz urged the opposition, specifically Jamiat Ulema e Islam Fazl (JUI-F) leader Maulana Fazlur Rahman to not misguide the people about coronavirus and its vaccination. Commenting on PDM's press briefing, he said the government was not worried about their plans but they should do something positive that could help the masses during the coronavirus pandemic. He informed that the government was taking optimum measures to control the inflation and was trying to expand the targeted subsidy to facilitate masses, adding, the difficult phase of economic hardship had already been passed.

Shibli said the government would continue working for the welfare and betterment of the people. Health cards would be distributed among the deserving people of Punjab on the pattern of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the universal health care programme.

The government had already delivered 1,000 houses and 500 flats among the deserving. He said the government aimed to decrease prices and food inflation by giving targeted subsidies. "Prime Minister Imran Khan and first lady had contracted coronavirus, and we all pray for the good health of the first couple," he said. Coronavirus has been hit the highest number of victims in the last eight months. The availability of vaccines in the current wave of COVID-19 was encouraging, he observed.

## PM Imran thanks...

## From Page 01

Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi tested positive for the coronavirus the other day. The prime minister tested Covid-19 positives two days after receiving the vaccine, triggering a debate on the effectiveness of the jab.

"PM Imran Khan has tested positive for Covid-19 and is self isolating at home," Dr Faisal Sultan, the premier's Special Assistant on Health, announced in a Twitter statement the other day.

Hours later, PTI leaders confirmed that Bushra Bibi has also contracted the virus. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication Dr Shahbaz Gill said that Prime Minister Imran Khan and First Lady Bushra Bibi – a day after it was confirmed had tested positive for coronavirus – are feeling "comfortable with mild symptoms". In a tweet, the premier's aide thanked PM Imran Khan's fans and well-wishers for praying for his quick recovery. "The prime minister and Bushra Bibi are thankful to you all for your good wishes," he told followers on the micro-blogging site.

## SAARC lauds...

## From Page 01

The recovery made possible to return to hundreds of effectees and some government departments/private persons and not single rupees has been received by NAB employees and all recovered amounts deposited in national exchequer considering it as national service. This reflects excellent performance of NAB. NAB is determined to eradicate corruption as corruption is the mother of all evils and is a major hurdle in the development of Pakistan.

## WHO urges to continue AstraZeneca vaccine

GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) urged countries on Sunday to continue using the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine against COVID-19, as its benefits outweigh risks with tremendous potential to prevent infections and deaths from the pandemic. Following the review on the AstraZeneca vaccine by WHO Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS), concerning blood clots and low platelets among some people vaccinated, the WHO has concluded that the available data do not suggest any overall increase in clotting conditions following administration of the vaccine, said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at a press briefing.

## Briefs

## Economy lacks competitiveness in absence of productivity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Officer of National Productivity Organization (NPO) Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry on Sunday said that Pakistan's economy was lagging behind in major potential sectors owing to the absence of productivity and efficacy in system to achieve competitiveness.

"The local industrial sector is lacking the efficiency in its value chain through technology efficiency, productivity, innovation; managerial productivity and human labor productivity, which are the major tools to enhance the productivity and efficiency in the local industrial sector," chief of NPO, an attached department of Ministry of Industries and Production, told APP.

Alamgir Chaudhry said that the main focus of his organization was to take initiatives and implement programs that inculcate productivity and quality culture in Pakistan to compete with other regional and global competitors.

Replying to a question, he said that country's local public and private sector required more hard work to achieve the productivity and efficiency in the local industrial sector to attain the quality and competitiveness and enhance exports.

## Output of LCVs increase 20per cent in 7 months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The production of light commercial vehicles (LCVs) has witnessed 20.01 percent increase during the seven months of the financial year 2020-21 against the output of the same period of last fiscal year.

As many as 10,417 LCVs were manufactured during July-January (2020-21) as compared to the production of 8,680 units during July-January (2019-20), showing growth of 20.01 percent, according to official data revealed by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

During the period under review, the production of cars and jeeps also increased by 8.61 percent as it surge from 81,256 units last year to 74,817 units during 2020-21. The production of motorcycles during the period under review rose by 15.59 percent by going up from the output of 1255,513 units last year to 1451,305 units during current year.

However, the production of trucks decreased from 2,084 units last year to 1,738 units, showing decline of 16.60 percent while the production of Buses also declined by 8.79 percent, by going down from 364 units to 332 units. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the production of LCVs rose by 86.95 percent, from 866 units in January 2020 to 1,619 units in January 2021. The production of jeeps and cars also increased by 27.38 percent by going up from 11,861 units in January 2020 to 15,108 in January 2021 while the production of motorcycles also increased by 4.38 percent from the output of 195,762 units to 204,342 units.

## 2,764 foreign terrorists deported since 2019

DNA

TURKEY: Turkey has deported a total of 2,764 foreign terrorists fighters (FTFs) of 67 different nationalities since 2019, the country's Interior Ministry announced on Sunday.

In a statement, the ministry said the FTFs had left their home countries to join ranks of terror groups such as Daesh/ISIS or PKK/PYD. As part of Turkey's fight against terrorism, 1,595 FTFs were deported in 2019, followed by 1,019 in 2020 and 150 in the first 2.5 months of 2021.

Notably, a total of 224 foreign terrorist fighters were deported to the EU member countries, among them are 66 French, 57 German, 22 Dutch, 14 Swedish and seven Swiss nationals.

## Nowruz: Harbinger of convergence and friendship

DNA

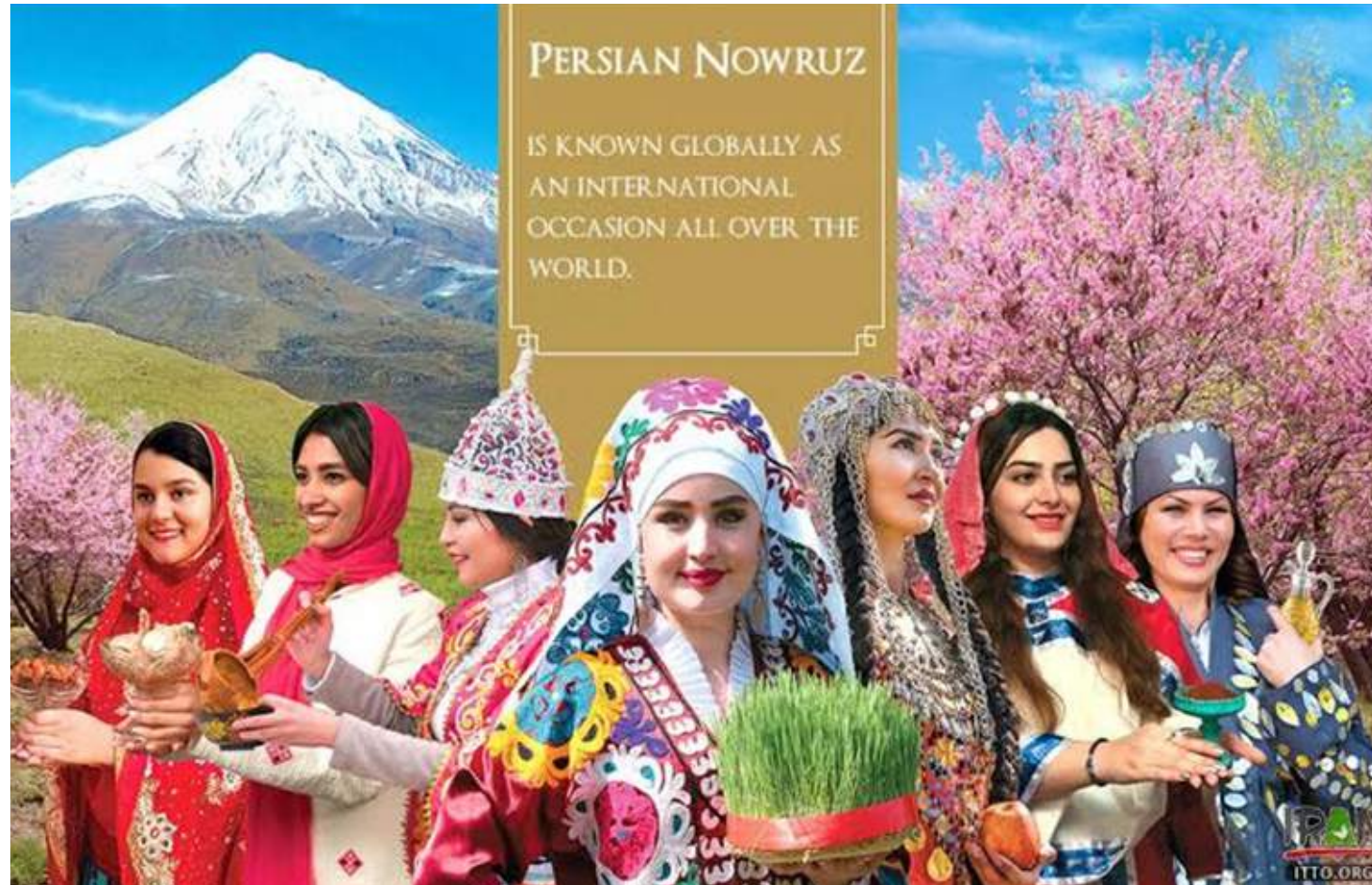
TEHRAN: "As the world comes together to defeat COVID-19, Nowruz serves as an inspiration to recover and rebuild in a more just and durable way, in harmony with nature."

UN Secretary-General António Guterres message for 2021

"I congratulate all our dear compatriots, especially the respected families of martyrs and disabled war veterans, on Nowruz and the Persian New Year. I also congratulate all the nations that celebrate Nowruz."

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, The great leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Nowruz is the Iranian New Year also known as the Persian New Year which begins on the spring equinox, marking the first month of the Iranian solar calendar. It is celebrated worldwide by various ethno-linguistic groups. Nowruz falls on March 20 in 2021. Over 300 million people around the world celebrate the event of Nowruz which mainly live in the Greater Iran or Greater Persia i.e. the regions of West Asia, Central Asia, South Asia and Transcaucasia where Iranian culture has had significant influence and Iranian languages are spoken. International Nowruz Day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/64/253 of 2010, at the initiative of several countries that share this holiday. Under the agenda item of "culture of



peace", the member states of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan prepared and introduced a draft resolution (A/64/L.30) entitled "International Day of Nowruz" to the ongoing 64th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations for its consid-

eration and adoption. Nowruz has Iranian and Zoroastrian origins; however, it has been celebrated by diverse communities for over 3,000 years in Western Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Black Sea Basin, the Balkans, and South Asia. Today, Nowruz is the beginning of the New Year not only in Iran but also in Afghanistan, and in some other countries Nowruz is celebrated as a cultural

event including Tajikistan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Syria, Georgia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Albania, China, Turkey, Turkmenistan, India, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. In some countries Nowruz is an official holiday, and people in these countries rejoice with the onset of spring. Nowruz is not just the beginning of the new year of nature. Rather, it is an opportunity to preserve the cultur-

al and civilizational commonalities of the nations of the region. The beautiful customs of Nowruz bring us together again. Believing in the roots of this religion and that the culture and civilization of an ancient nation is formed by these rituals, borders, ethnicities, colour and race have lost their value and solidarity among the peoples of the world is increasing. Great rit-

uals can be considered as one of the best factors for communication between nations and establishing friendly relations between countries. Undoubtedly, the victory and peace of every nation and peace of the world, and the freedom, happiness and prosperity of the peoples of the world have and have motives that we can seek those motives in the customs, rituals and legends left by nations of our region.



TASHKENT: President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev waving to people on the occasion of Nowruz festival. – DNA

## "Pakistan Book Corner" inaugurated at University of Dosso

DNA

DOSSO: Mr. Ahmed Ali Sirohey, Ambassador of Pakistan visited University of Dosso in Dosso Province of Republic of Niger. During visit Ambassador presided the inauguration ceremony of Pakistan Book Corner. The ceremony was conducted at Governor House Dosso. Governor Dosso, Chief Secretary, Rector, Registrar of the University and other faculty members warmly received the Pakistani envoy.

H.E Ambassador of Pakistan in his speech informed the audience about Pakistan-Niger Education Corridor. He highlighted Embassy scholarship and internship program for young graduates. He further informed about cooperation in health sector and arrival of a team of Pakistani doctors to establish free eye medical camp and surgeries in different region including Dosso province.

Governor Dosso Mr. Ousman appreciated Ambassador of Pakistan personal efforts in helping Niger in different sectors.

Professor Koura, Rector, Dosso University thanked Ambassador of Pakistan on opening of Pakistan Book Corner in Dosso University. He wished to increase mutual cooperation including cooperation in educational sector, matters pertaining to scholarships and others. Ambassador of Pakistan assured him full assistance and cooperation for enhancing educational relations between the two sides.

## Munir Akram urges action to stop deforestation

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The President of UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram, has called for urgent action to stop deforestation, saying forest restoration would bring gains for both livelihoods and the environment.

"The world's forests are fast retreating," Ambassador Akram warned during a virtual event to commemorate the International Day of Forests, observed annually on 21 March.

"As the coronavirus crisis takes its toll on the most vulnerable segments of the society, and incomes and livelihoods decline," he said, "the dependence of millions, especially in the rural commu-

nities, on forests and forest products, like fuel-wood, will continue to grow.

"We must take urgent action to stop deforestation and forest degradation and provide alternatives to rural populations dependent on wood-burning, through renewable energy installation and job creation in rural areas."

At the same time, the ECOSOC chief called for prioritizing restoration of forests, saying restoring the degraded forest landscapes offer direct long-term benefits for local communities.

In Pakistan, Ambassador Akram said the government has embarked on an eco-system restoration plan through its national agencies. Prime Minister Imran Khan, he said, has launched a cam-

## Investors show interest setting industrial units in Rashakai

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Rashakai Special Economic Zone under the CPEC is getting very encouraging response as more than 2000 investors have shown interest in establishing their industrial units in the zone, according to a high-level meeting held here. Quoting the meeting's sources, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday that the applications from all such investors to set up their units would be processed in a transparent manner to allocate appropriate space within the zone, said an official statement issued after progress review meeting on the development and ground-breaking of Rashakai SEZ.

The meeting was presided over by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar, and was attended by provincial finance Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Taimur Khan Jhagra and senior officials of the federal and provincial governments. The meeting reviewed the work progress at the SEZ. It was informed that the camp office at the site has been established, while the first industrial unit has started its construction work within the zone. The minister appreciated the work carried out by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company and development to set up Rashakai as first SEZ in Public Private Partnership model.



campaign to plant 10 billion trees over the next three years, creating employment opportunities for unskilled labour, especially women, and providing fruit and other income-enhancing products.

tation should be incorporated into national poverty alleviation programmes."

The United Nations system, Ambassador Akram said, could help member states to plan and initiate such actions in developing integrated and holistic reforestation plans.

In this regard, he called for using modern technologies, including drones to survey and map forests, and even plant trees in remote inaccessible areas.

The ECOSOC chief called on governments to invest in reforestation and other nature-based solutions.

"Forest restoration offers a cheap and efficient way for local communities to build their natural capital, improve their environment and ultimately support peoples' livelihoods and well-being," he said.

## Sino-Pak olive production-tech co-op imperative

DNA

BEIJING: Technical cooperation in olive cultivation and olive oil production should be the focus of agricultural cooperation between China and Pakistan, said Chinese scholar Prof. Cheng Xizhong, according to China Economic Net (CEN).

Cheng who is visiting Professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law noted that both China and Pakistan attach great importance to deepening and expanding cooperation in the agriculture sector under the framework of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Prime Minister Imran Khan recently said large-scale olive cultivation would prove

to be the best investment for Pakistan in terms of earning valuable foreign exchange, creating employment opportunities and ensuring food security while addressing the launch of nationwide olive cultivation drive starting from Nowshera.

Prof. Cheng added, Pakistan has immense potential in cultivation of olive trees owing to suitable topography and climate from north to south.

Olive is a subtropical evergreen tree, cold and drought resistant, as well as a long-lived tree with strong growth capacity.

Therefore, water scarce areas such as Suleiman Mountains near Waziristan, plains in Balochistan and diverse terrain in Punjab offer en-

vironment for low-irrigation olive farming.

If olives are planted on all arable land in Pakistan, the country could become one of the world's leading olive oil producers and exporters.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has repeatedly stressed the importance of national secu-

urity, including food security. The Prime Minister had emphasised that it was time for Pakistan to get a stronghold of national security by expanding its domain inclusive of climate change, economic stability and food security, besides focusing on defense preparation.

In the post-pandemic era,

food security is a global challenge, and all countries in the world attach great importance to it.

As one of the most populous countries in the world, Pakistan puts more emphasis on food security. This is a manifestation of the forward-looking and strategic thinking of the Pakistani government.

In recent years, Guangyuan City of Sichuan Province has planted more than about 7,000 hectares of olive trees, which has become an important olive planting base in China.

China's olive tree planting and olive oil production technology is leading in the world, and China and Pakistan can carry out extensive cooperation in this regard. With a population of 1.4 bil-

lion, China is the most populous country in the world. China's olive oil is mainly imported.

According to the data of the General Administration of Customs, China's olive oil imports in 2019 were 53,699 tons, up 35.64% year on year.

Currently, olive brands from Spain and Italy are highly recognized in the Chinese markets. With the large-scale cultivation of olive trees in Pakistan and the close technical cooperation between China and Pakistan in this regard, China could be one of the potential markets for Pakistani olive products in the future, which could also help reduce trade deficit between the two countries, Prof. Cheng said.

Aware that some countries, mainly eastern EU states, resist that, the new pact proposes they contribute funds instead to help the others taking in asylum-seekers. – APP

## Former Malta PM charged with corruption

VALLETTA: A top aide to former Maltese prime minister Joseph Muscat accused of graft by journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, whose brutal murder rocked the nation, was charged Saturday with money laundering and fraud.

Anti-corruption campaigners hailed the prosecution of Keith Schembri as a vindication of the work of Caruana Galizia, whose death in a car bomb in 2017 sparked grief and anger across the Mediterranean island.

Schembri, who was Muscat's chief of staff from 2013 to 2019, appeared in court Saturday charged with money laundering, corruption, fraud and forgery. He pleaded not guilty and was denied bail.

He was among what police said would be a total of 11 people arraigned for similar offences, including a number of his associates. Charges were also being brought against 20 companies.

The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation, an NGO set up after her death, said the charges were "long overdue". "Prosecuting Schembri today brings us a step closer to a Malta where no one is above the law. It is the country Daphne fought for and the one we all deserve," it said. – APP

## Thousands rally against Netanyahu

FOREIGN DESK

JERUSALEM: Thousands of Israelis rallied outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Jerusalem residence Saturday to call for his resignation, days before a general election that could see the long-standing leader removed from power.

First launched in June last year, the vocal and colourful demonstrations against Netanyahu have gained momentum over the past 38 weeks, with Saturday night's rally due to be the largest in recent months.

Netanyahu, in power for a record 12 consecutive years, is hoping to remain in office following Israel's fourth election in less than two years on March 23.

Netanyahu, 71, was the first Israeli premier to be indicted in office for corruption when he was formally charged last year in three cases over claims he accepted improper gifts and sought to trade regulatory favour with media moguls in exchange for positive coverage.

The combative premier denies wrongdoing and claims he is the victim of a witch-hunt, but he would be forced to resign if convicted with all appeals exhausted.

Police warned Jerusalem residents to keep away from the site of the Saturday demonstration and the route of the march leading up to it. – APP

## S. European countries united against migration

ATHENS: Southern European countries on Saturday showed a united front at a meeting in Athens, urging solidarity from other EU states in sharing the migration burden.

Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Malta and Spain took part in the talks ahead of a March 25-26 EU summit focusing on EU-Turkey relations.

Four of those southern EU countries that bear the brunt of refugee arrivals – Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain – have already told the European Commission that a proposed New Pact on Migration and Asylum does not share the burden of migrants arriving in Europe widely enough.

"We repeat our strong plea in favour of a needed true balance between solidarity and responsibility as in its current format the Pact does not provide sufficient reassurances to the front-line Member States", the common statement said on Saturday.

The Commission wants to overhaul the rules so that the asylum-seekers are shared out across the 27 member countries and not left the responsibility of Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain.

Aware that some countries, mainly eastern EU states, resist that, the new pact proposes they contribute funds instead to help the others taking in asylum-seekers. – APP



**Briefs**

**ECP summons Gillani on March 22**

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on March 22 in connection with disqualification plea filed by ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The ECP has directed the Senator to appear in person or through his lawyer for the hearing which will be conducted on Monday. The petition has been filed by PTI leaders Farrukh Habib and Kanwal Shauzab, seeking disqualification of Senator Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani over the leaked video of Ali Haider Gillani. The petition states that it is clear in the video that Ali Haider Gilani, an MPA from Multan, was telling members of National Assembly how to waste their votes in order to benefit his father Yousaf Raza Gillani in the Senate elections.

**PTI issues show-cause notices to two leaders**

DNA

QUETTA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has issued show-cause notices to two regional presidents in Balochistan over violation of party discipline. As per details, Two PTI regional presidents of Balochistan have been issued show-cause notices for violations of party discipline. PTI Balochistan Northwest President Dr. Muneer Baloch and Northeast President Nawab Khan are among the party leaders who have been issued show-cause notices for breaching the party discipline.

**16 wind, solar projects get financial closing**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As many as 16 wind and solar power projects with a cumulative capacity of 860 MW have successfully achieved Financial Closing which is expected to be fully operationalized by 2021. Official sources told APP here that in compliance of the CCOE's decision, Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) has actively been facilitating the Alternative Renewable Energy (ARE) projects that were discarded by the past government on December 12, 2017. They said that ARE projects were placed in three categories. Under category-I, 19 projects of 531 MW that have already been issued Letter of Support (LOS) subject to revision of tariff in case tariff determination has been done since more than one year or if the tariff validity period has lapsed. Under category-II, 24 projects of 1339 MW that have acquired tariff and generation license subject to revision of tariff in case tariff determination has been done since more than one year or if the tariff validity period has lapsed. Similarly, under category-III, 110 projects of 6707 MW cumulative capacity holding LOIs to be allowed to proceed ahead after becoming successful in a competitive bidding to be undertaken as per demand communicated by NTDC. It is pertinent to mention here that AEDB has been promoting and facilitating the development and deployment of alternative and renewable energy technologies in the country. The development of renewable energy based power generation projects is being pursued on IPP mode through private sector investors. They said 24 wind power projects of 1233.37 MW cumulative capacity had already been operationalized and providing electricity to the grid. Similarly six solar projects of 430 MW cumulative capacity were also providing electricity.

# Pakistan's role in China-US breakthrough hailed

Pakistan played key role in China-US breakthrough, says Dr Kissinger in speech to China Development Forum; Sen. Mushahid Hussain says honour for Pakistan to play pivotal role in China-US opening

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China Development Forum, a high-level annual event organised by China's State Council in Beijing, organised a Webinar on '50 Years of China-US Relations' with keynote speeches from former US Secretary of State Dr Henry Kissinger and Senator Mushahid Hussain on Pakistan's pivotal role in arranging Dr Kissinger's secret journey to China in 1971. Dr Henry Kissinger praised Pakistan for its key role during that period and how President Yahya Khan acted as a go-between China and US, communicating secretly with Premier Zhou Enlai and President Nixon, which led to Dr Kissinger's path-breaking journey in a PIA plane from Islamabad to Beijing on July 9, 1971. Dr Kissinger recounted on

how the first message from China was in the form of a handwritten note which was personally dictated to him in the White House by the then Pakistan Ambassador in Washington, Agha Hilaly. Speaking next after Dr Kissinger, Senator Mushahid Hussain, representing Pakistan, said that this historic breakthrough in China-US relations became possible due to the 'indispensable role of Pakistan which enjoyed the trust of both China and the United States, whose then President, Richard Nixon, had tremendous affection and goodwill for Pakistan'. Senator Mushahid Hussain said that Pakistan's then President, General Yahya Khan, once entrusted with this task by both President Nixon and Premier Zhou Enlai, undertook this sensitive mission with 'military precision, secrecy and deception', with an official announcement



of a decoy visit by Dr Kissinger to Nathiagali on the pretext that 'the American official was resting due to an upset stomach', while he had secretly flown to Beijing! He said that President Yahya relied only on a 2-man team of his top diplomats, Foreign Secretary

Sultan Mohammed Khan and Pakistan Ambassador to the US, Agha Hilaly. Senator Mushahid Hussain said that 'it was an honour for Pakistan to play such an important role in the shaping of history, as Dr Kissinger's visit to China led

to a tectonic shift in the global balance of power in 1971'. He said that normalisation of relations had been beneficial for not just China and the US but also Asia and the world. China had helped the US win the Cold War and the US helped China come out of isolation which led later to China's reform and opening up policy that has transformed China. Senator Mushahid Hussain concluded that 50 years later, one lesson of China-US relations is that cooperation is good for both the countries, and there is no room for outmoded policies like containment or a New Cold War. The China Development Forum was attended by a large number of high officials, policy makers, economists, opinion and business leaders in Beijing, while Dr Kissinger and Senator Mushahid Hussain spoke virtually from New York and Islamabad respectively.

## Judicial reforms need of the hour

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry on Sunday sided with the Sindh government over the suspension of two PPP MPAs due to the increasing number of dog-bite incidents in their constituencies. Taking to Twitter, Fawad Chaudhry said that such court decisions are in "clear violation of the Constitution. Judicial reform, especially the system of appointment of judges, requires immediate attention," he wrote. "The Opposition should play its role in the government's reform programme. The people of Pakistan want improvement in the system. After the postponement of the [Pakistan Democratic Movement's] long march, there is a chance for the Opposition to [work towards reforms]."

## Govt to facilitate people: Chohan

MUNIR FAISAL

ATTOCK: Provincial Minister for Prisons Fayyaz ul Hasan Chohan Sunday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government was utilising maximum available resources for provision of basic facilities to the people specially those living in far-flung areas. He said this during his visit to THQ Hospital Jand. He was also accompanied by DC Attock Ali Anaan Qamar, AC Jand Ejaz Abdul Karim, DPO Attock Syed Khalid Hamdani and other officers. He visited different portions of the hospital and reviewed the facilities being provided to indoor and out door patients. He said that he visited Jand on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab and a report will be presented to Chief Minister in this context. He emphasised upon the officers to ensure timely completion of development projects and not to compromise on quality of the work. He also directed the officers to ensure maximum relief to the people during the forth coming Ramazan ul Mubarak. Earlier, in a meeting held in AC office Jand, the minister was briefed about the development projects being completed in this tehsil.

## Palestine ambassador visits Allama Iqbal Open University

The meeting focused on education and study was held in this very important university which contains of one and a half million students, as well as discussed cooperation in teaching the Arabic language to Pakistani students

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei visited Allama Iqbal Open University, and was honored and pleased to meet with Professor Dr. Zia ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University and Prof. Dr. Mohy ul Din Hashmi, chairman Department of Islamic Thought, History and Culture, and Dr. Sami Ullah Zubairi, in charge department of Arabic.

The meeting focused on education and study was held in this very important university which contains of one and a half million students, as well as discussed cooperation in teaching the Arabic language to Pakistani students, studying in higher education institutions in the two countries. Cultural and educational exchange in a way that strengthens the bilateral



ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of AIQU Dr. Zia ul Qayyum presenting a souvenir to the Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei. - DNA

relationship between the two brotherly countries was also discussed. The ambassador of State of Palestine felt proud of this visit, which allowed him to learn about the

high level of university education, success and progress that the university has reached. All participants of the meeting agreed upon the collaboration between Al-

lama Iqbal Open University, Qadas open university and the universities of Palestine in several disciplines like Arabic, Islamic studies, physics food and nutrition and computer science.

## US must lift all sanctions, says Khamenei

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei says the United States must first lift all sanctions it has imposed on Tehran after unilaterally withdrawing from a 2015 nuclear deal with Iran before the Islamic Republic would return to full compliance with its commitments under the deal. Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei made the remarks in his New Year speech on Sunday one day following his Nowruz congratulatory message during which the Leader designated the new Iranian calendar year as the year of "Production: Support and the Elimination of Obstacles."

Reflecting on the current standoff between Iran and the US over the implementation of a nuclear deal clinched by Iran and six world powers, officially known as the Joint Com-

prehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Leader emphasized that the so-called "maximum pressure" policy adopted by the former US administration of President Donald Trump toward Iran after leaving the JCPOA has totally failed. "The previous fool had designated the 'maximum pressure' [policy] in order to corner Iran and take Iran to the negotiating table and impose his arrogant demands on a [presumably] 'weak' Iran. However, he disappeared [from the political scene] in such a way that both himself and his country were disgraced while the Islamic Iran is standing fast and proud," Ayatollah Khamenei said. "They must know that the enemy's 'maximum pressure' [policy] has failed and if the current American government wants to pursue the maximum pressure [policy] again, it will also fail and disappear [from the political scene]," the Leader emphasized.

## US defence chief Austin visits Afghanistan

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: US defence secretary Lloyd Austin has arrived in Kabul on his first trip to Afghanistan as Pentagon chief amid swirling questions about how long American troops will remain in the country. Austin arrived in Kabul from India on Sunday, state-owned media reported. He met President Ashraf Ghani and other senior government officials. Last week, President Joe Biden said it would be "tough" for the US to meet a May 1 deadline to withdraw troops from Afghanistan. But he added that if the

deadline, which is laid out in an agreement between former President Donald Trump's administration and the Taliban, is extended, it would not be by a "lot longer". On Friday, the Taliban warned of consequences if the US failed to meet the deadline. Suhail Shaheen, a member of the Taliban negotiation team, told reporters that if US troops stay beyond May 1, "it will be a kind of violation of the agreement. That violation would not be from our side ... Their violation will have a reaction". Austin is also expected to meet Afghanistan's new acting defence minister, General Yasin Zia, who was appointed this week.

## 660 shops sealed in capital

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Local administration has sealed some 30 restaurants and 660 shops for defying coronavirus related standard operating procedures (SOPs) during the last 24 hours. As per details, the authorities have imposed over Rs100,000 fine to the violators. Around 52 schools and 28 mosques were inspected to check implementation of measures advised against the virus. The administration had step up efforts amid third wave of corona virus pandemic as the number of positive cases in the federal capital continued to rise.

## Pakistan striving for peace: Dr Moeed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The two-day Islamabad Security Dialogue has ended on Thursday past week with its clear message to the world that the country's national leadership with clear vision and direction is striving to unveil a new era of regional peace, stability and development with Pakistan at the core of all global economic activities amid its geo-economic location potential. At the opening session of the country's first ever hosted international security dialogue, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Security Division Dr Moeed Yusuf said Pakistan was striving for peace and would never compromise on her key national interests along with unveil-



ing its economic security paradigm shift. The country's national leadership was on the same page to roll out a comprehensive national security framework based on a clear strategic vision which it scarcely had in the past. It was the formal task of the National Security Division to put the well deliberated and thought out national security framework in a documented form for consistent implementation. National Security was a combination of traditional and non-traditional pillars of the security

policy. National Cohesion was paramount to ensure national security whereas three pillars were identified to lay the foundation of comprehensive the country's first comprehensive national security framework. The National Security Adviser said the New Comprehensive Security Framework (CSF) was based on the three pillars of military, economic and human security with economic progress at the core. The Economic Security lens of National Security framework namely connectivity, development partnerships and regional peace were interlinked. "It will also lead to a cultural shift as it demands to have all inclusive approach of the government and proactive policy making," he said.

## Germany poised to tighten curbs

BERLIN: Germany is poised to tighten a partial lockdown into April to halt an exponential spread of the coronavirus driven by variants. Europe's biggest economy had progressively began easing restrictions, first re-opening schools in late February, before allowing some shops to resume business in March. But hopes for indoor dining, cultural and leisure facilities to follow suit will now have to be delayed, as a third wave of the virus has sent infections numbers rising again. Instead, worst-hit areas may from Monday have to reimpose restrictions and order shops close again. "Given the current infection dynamics accelerated by the Covid-19 variants, forceful action is still required," said a draft document, which is to be discussed by Merkel and regional leaders of Germany's 16 states on Monday. Existing restrictions including a requirement for employees to work from home whenever possible will have to be extended until an as yet undetermined date in April, according to the draft. To prevent any contagion at the workplace, companies would be required to provide at least two rapid tests a week to employees who are unable to work from home, under the draft rules. With an eye on upcoming Easter school holidays beginning next weekend across most of Germany, travellers would be required to be tested and go into quarantine when they return to Germany, it adds. - APP

## Pak, China earth sciences co-op boosts CPEC

Chinese and Pakistani scholars shared academic achievements and discussed academic issues related to earth sciences and CPEC

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pak-China earth science cooperation will efficiently benefit construction of CPEC projects, experts said at a high-level Webinar. Quoting experts, Gwadar Pro reported that the "Pak-China academic cooperation in earth sciences is not an impractical project and far from daily life. In fact, it's closely related to people's well-being and economic development of the two countries," Prof. Su Lijun, Deputy Director-General of China-Pakistan

Joint Research Centre on Earth Sciences (CPJRC), told Gwadar Pro. The Webinar on Earth Sciences Cooperation, themed Sustainable Development of CPEC, held by CPJRC in Beijing and Islamabad online. CPJRC, which is jointly sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, is to join efforts of both Chinese and Pakistani scientists to carry out scientific research on natural disasters, environment, geology, ecology, climate change and sustainable development in Pakistan, especially along with CPEC.

On the webinar, CPJRC released a report contained by researching results, challenges, research direction in 2021. Both Chinese and Pakistani scholars shared academic achievements and discussed academic issues related to earth sciences and CPEC. Prof. Zhang Yaping, Vice President of CAS, commented on the event that the discussion will help CPJRC to identify areas of priority for our cooperation in earth sciences in the future. He also said on the occasion that CAS will work with all partners even more closely in the future to jointly address the challenges

ahead and maximize the potential value of CPJRC as an international center of excellence. Prof. Asif Khan, Fellows of both PAS and CAS; HEC Distinguished National Professor for Earth Sciences, U. of Peshawar, delivered a speech themed Spectrum of Earth Sciences Research in Pakistan: Expected Contributions to Socio-Economic Development of the Country. He believed that Pak-China earth science cooperation will efficiently benefit construction of CPEC projects and boost economic development of both sides through avoiding natural disasters and

utilizing resources in a reasonable way. Pakistani and Chinese scientists also delivered academic presentations on climate change, hydrology, metallogeny, geologic hazard, energy and ocean sciences. Prof. Dr. M. Qasim Jan, Former President of PAS; Nong Rong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan; Prof. Muhammad Ali, Vice-Chancellor, Quaid-i-Azam University; Ruan Xiangping, Senior Counsel, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Science and Technology of China, and other scientists, researchers, enterprises also attended the event.