



# Islamabad POST

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Detailed News On Page-08



## Briefs

### Maryam hails SC verdict

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz on Monday said that once again it has been proved that constitution is above tricks and references of 'vote thieves'. Maryam Nawaz, in a tweet, said that government spokespersons are now talking about use of technology in the elections to hide their embarrassment. She reiterated that no system like RTS or excuses of fog like that were made in by-election of Daska will be tolerated.

### Gillani urges PM to vote for him

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PPP leader Yousaf Raza Gillani on Monday urged Prime Minister Imran Khan to vote for him in the upcoming Senate elections which will be held two days later. Gillani - who is contesting the Senate seat from the PDM's platform in the upcoming polls on the Islamabad seat against Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh - has written a letter to all lawmakers to support him in the election. He sent the same letter addressed to members of the National Assembly, seeking support for his candidacy, to the prime minister as well.

### PTI to eliminate horse-trading

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Punjab Chief Minister on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Monday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) wanted to root out politics of horse-trading. Addressing a press conference here, she said that Prime Minister Imran Khan was determined to protect the sanctity of Senate. She said that beauty of democracy was in holding of transparent elections and only independent institutions could strengthen the democratic process.

## Senate polls thru secret ballot: SC

A five-member larger bench of the apex court announced the reserved opinion on the Presidential Reference

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court with a 4-1 majority on Monday opined that the Senate elections would be held through secret balloting under Article 226 of the Constitution. A five-member larger bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justice Mushir Alam, Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Yahya Afridi announced the reserved opinion on the Presidential Reference regarding Senate elections. Justice Yahya Afridi disagreed with the majority opinion. The eight-page court opinion stated that the Senate elections were held under the Constitution and the law. "It is the duty of the Election Commission of Pakistan in terms of Article 218(3) of the Constitution, to ensure that the election is conducted honestly, fairly and in accordance with the law and that corrupt practices are guarded against on which this court has given successive judgments and the most exhaustive being Workers Party Pakistan through Akhtar Hussain Advocate vs Federation of

Continued on Page 06

### SC opinion not binding on ECP: experts

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Various experts on constitutional matters have opined that the Supreme Court verdict is not binding on the Election Commission of Pakistan. Former Secretary Election Commission Kanwar Dilshad while talking to the media said that it is not possible for the ECP to follow the apex court advice as the ballot papers have already been published. He further said that the Attorney General was 'misguiding' the prime minister when he says that the government has in fact become victorious after the SC opinion. He said the court opinion clearly says that the Presidential reference has been rejected. Similarly the Ordinance issued by the government regarding Senate elections has also lost its relevance.

## Govt offers six seats to PDM from Balochistan

The proposal was reportedly brought to Ghafoor Haideri by Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani

KHAYYAM ABBASI

### PDM rejects govt's offer in KP

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The government has reportedly offered six seats to the Opposition in the upcoming March 3 Senate election in the Balochistan Assembly, sources said Monday. The proposal was reportedly brought to opposition lawmaker Ghafoor Haideri of the JUI-F by incumbent Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani. Sources said that an emergency meeting was convened at BNP-M chief Akhtar Mengal's residence in Quetta to discuss the matter shortly thereafter. The development came hours after the

Continued on Page 06

## Shibli Faraz for ensuring transparency in polls

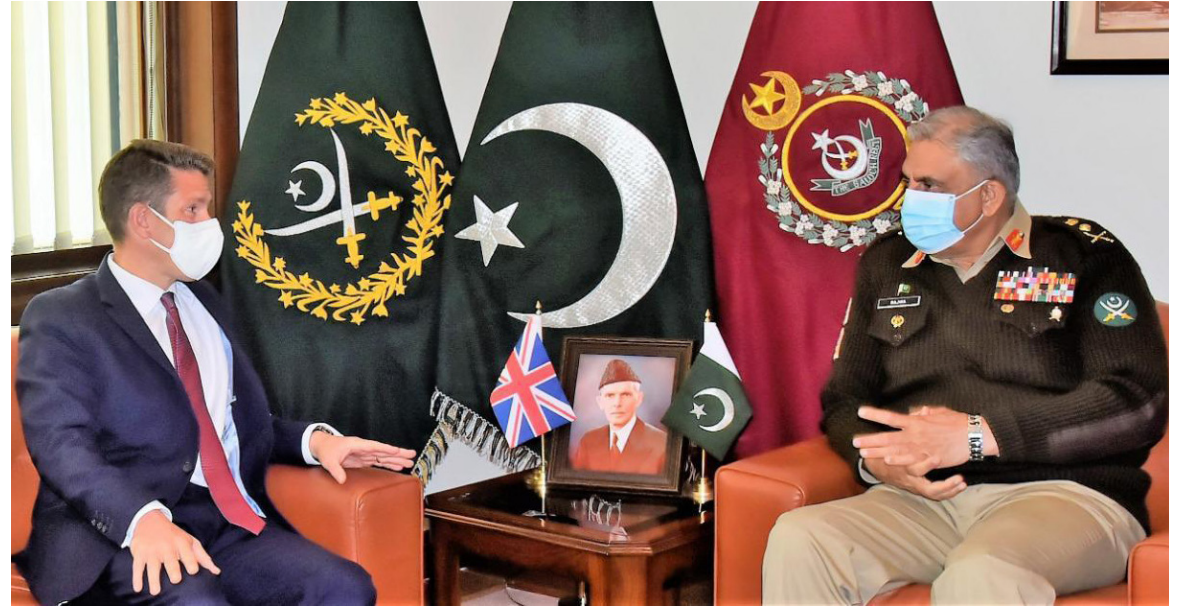
The govt, he said, had taken all possible measures to prevent sale and purchase of votes

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Senator Shibli Faraz here on Monday termed the apex court's opinion on Senate polls as historic said now the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was responsible to take all necessary measures to ensure transparency in the upcoming election. Addressing a press-conference here, the Information Minister said ECP may use technology to end corrupt practices from electoral process to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. He said people had seen in the past that how political loyalties were traded during Senate election. The government, he said, had taken all possible measures to prevent sale and purchase of votes during upcoming senate election. Shibli Faraz said Senate was highly respectable institution and it was necessary for upholding its sanctity to elect honest, upright and competent



candidates who could serve masses irrespective of their personal interests. There was a conflict between two ideologies, he said. The opposition's ideology was to run the country through an obsolete corrupt system based on personal politics and gains. Whereas, the PTI he said, strongly believed in strengthening of the national institutions, rule of law and merit. He said political hypocrisy was the hallmark of opposition's politics and they had chosen a candidate for Senate election from Islamabad who in past had tried to protect its leader facing corruption charges. He (Yousaf Raza Gilani) did not write a letter to Swiss authorities despite the Supreme Court's instructions thus the country had to suffer millions of dollars' loss, the minister said. To a question, he said there were serious differences among coalition parties of PDM on awarding Senate's ticket to Yousaf Raza Gilani and this would certainly benefit PTT's candidate Hafeez Sheikh. He said Hafeez Sheikh was an honest and highly respectable candidate and was all set to achieve overwhelming majority. Shibli Faraz said Prime Minister Imran Khan had awarded party ticket to credible, honest and competent candidates and PTT's parliamentarians would vote them to acknowledge his (Imran Khan's) 22-year struggle against corruption, rule of law and supremacy of the democracy. To a question about Maryam Nawaz's recent statement about long march, the Minister said all institutions were independent and no one was allowed to pressurize them. The minister said opposition's double standards had exposed them before masses and that is why people have shown no interest in PDM's public rallies.



RAWALPINDI: Christian Turner, British High Commissioner called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS). Matters of mutual interest and overall regional security situation including Afghan Peace Process were discussed during the meeting. - DNA

### MQM-P to support PTI in Senate Elections

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Muttahida Qami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has decided to vote its ally ruling party (PTI) in the upcoming Senate elections. In the second meeting of the MQM-P on Sunday night, it was decided that they would support the PTI candidate Abdul Hafeez Sheikh in the Senate election which is scheduled to be held on March 3.

## COAS, British envoy discuss Afghan peace

Army chief also visited the logistics installations and workshop facilities in Rawalpindi

NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Chief Of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa on Monday met British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr Christian Turner at the General Headquarters (GHQ). According to the ISPR, Gen Bajwa and Dr Turner discussed "matters of mutual interest and overall regional security situation including Afghan Peace Process".

Later, Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa visited the logistics installations and workshop facilities here in the city, according to a statement issued Monday by the military's media wing. In its statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Gen Bajwa inspected the workshop's various facilities and infrastructures, which handles the Pakistan Army's extensive transport special items. He was also briefed about

the facilities being prepared and upgradation of vehicles. He was also briefed on the upgradation and improvement issues at the logistics installations and workshop facilities, the statement added. The Pakistan Army chief appreciated the performance and commitment of the workshop staff. Earlier, Chief of the Logistics Staff Lt Gen Azhar Saleh Abbasi received Gen Bajwa upon his arrival to the Rawalpindi facility.



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## Inside...

Transparency imperative for political stability: NA Speaker - Page 02

'Tech is taking over the traditional wars' - Page 03

RCCL construction trade fair ends on a high note - Page 04

Karma of NAB achieving heights of recoveries - Page 05

Covid-19 case: Islamabad United, Gladiators match rescheduled - Page 06

Armenia: Protesters storm govt building amid political crisis - Page 07

CNS lauds services of Air Chief Mujahid Anwar - Page 08



## Briefs

## SC denies Justice Isa's plea for live broadcast

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday denied Justice Qazi Faez Isa's plea seeking live broadcast of the proceedings of his review petition on the national television. A 10-member larger SC bench comprising Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Maqbool Baqar, Justice Manzoor Ahmed Malik, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed and Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan heard the review petition seeking removal of paragraphs 2 to 11 of the June 19, 2020 verdict. During the course of proceedings, Justice Qazi Faez Isa pleaded before the bench that he should be allowed to argue his case as his counsel Munir A Malik was ill. Justice Bandial said the counsel could not be changed in the review case. He also sought reasoning in writing from Justice Isa's attorney regarding his inability to argue the case. Justice Isa asked the bench to decide his case soon as one of its members Justice Manzoor Ahmad Malik was retiring next month. — APP

## Court acquits Uzair Baloch in Baghdadi PS attack case

DNA

KARACHI: Court of Additional District and Sessions Judge South on Monday acquitted kingpin of the infamous Lyari gang war Uzair Baloch in Baghdadi police station attack case over lack of evidence. Uzair was booked in Baghdadi PS attack case in 2012. At the outset of the hearing, the police apprised the court that the police station was attacked on the behest of Uzair Baloch in 2012. Upon being asked by the court, that how come the police came to conclusion that Uzair was the mastermind of the attack, the police said residents of the area confirmed. Was any of the residents made a witness in the case by the police? the judge asked and the police replied, "No one was made a witness in the case." Later, the court acquitted Uzair Baloch in the case. Uzair Baloch is facing more than 52 cases and so far acquitted in 10 cases by the court. He has been accused of committing 198 murders during the Lyari gang war. Baloch had been arrested by the Rangers on January 30, 2016. In April 2017, his custody was handed over to the Pakistan Army after he was accused of espionage. The Army handed him over to the police on April 6, 2020, after three years.

## SMEDA holds three-day pre-budget consultative session

LAHORE: Participants of a three-day pre-budget consultative session conducted by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) have demanded simplification and relaxation in taxes with an added access to finance for SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) sector. The session conducted online was presided over by Hashim Raza, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) SMEDA and was attended by a large number of participants from chambers of commerce & industry, and trade associations of Lahore, Sialkot, Karachi, Dadu, Peshawar, Chakwal, Jehlum, Sahiwal, Mirpurkhas, Mardan, and Kohat, SMEDA spokesman disclosed this to media here on Monday. In his opening address, Hashim Raza said that SMEDA had started a move to facilitate creation of a conducive business environment for SMEs in the country. He invited the participants to share their views, proposals and recommendations for consideration of the government while formulating the Federal Budget 2021-22. He also apprised the participants of developments being made in the SME sector through the recently approved National SME Policy Action Plan 2020. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malki in a meeting with Khorrasm Aslam, Vice President of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, during the meeting cordial conversations and topics of common interest were exchanged. — DNA

## Transparency imperative for political stability: NA Speaker

DNA

ISLAMABAD: During a meeting with Governor Punjab Ch. Muhammad Sarwar and Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar in the Parliament House on Monday, Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser said that political forces could collectively steer the country out of challenges. He also remarked that transparency in democratic process would ensure political stability and economic growth. He mentioned that it was incumbent upon all political parties and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to ensure trans-



parent Senate Elections, said a press release. The speaker remarked that free, fair and transparent Senate Election would ensure that all political parties

to get seats in accordance with their proportion in the upper House. He also said that the role of ECP was of vital importance in that regard. He said

that unopposed elections of Senators from Punjab were a good omen for democracy. The speaker stressed to follow the suit in other provinces too.

Governor Punjab Ch. Muhammad Sarwar said that unopposed Election of Senators in Punjab reflected political maturity. He expressed the hope

that opposition in Punjab would continue to cooperate on issues of national importance and public good.

Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar said that Punjab was improving in socio-economic sectors. He also remarked that the goal of welfare state would be achieved to support welfare oriented policies.

The chief minister mentioned that tourism in Punjab had vast potential to be explored and government had devised policies to explore the potential.

Chief Minister Punjab and Governor Punjab appreciated the speaker to conduct the House proceedings with integrity and partiality.

## 'SC highlights govt's stance over transparency'

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Dr Babar Awan on Monday said the Supreme Court in its opinion on presidential reference seeking view of the court on senate election highlighted the government stance and asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to ensure transparency in elections. The ECP has received the Supreme Court's opinion on Presidential reference seeking apex court's view on holding of Senate election through open ballot. He termed apex court's opinion's paragraph number 3, 5 and 6 very impor-

tant where the court had highlighted PTI's stance. Talking to media persons outside Election Commission of Pakistan along with Minister for Education Shafiqat Mehmood, Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhry Fawad Hussain and SAPM Shehbaz Gill, he stated that the SC opinion had quoted a verdict of 5-member bench in Niaz Ahmed case in which the court held that the secrecy of the ballot was not absolute and that the secrecy of ballot had not to be tempered by practical consideration necessitated by the process of election. — APP

## CJ BHC inaugurates Martyrs 'Arcade'

DNA

QUETTA: Chief Justice Balochistan High Court Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel inaugurated the Martyrs 'Arcade' in District Court Quetta. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of Martyrs' Arcade, Chief Justice Balochistan High Court Justice Jamal Mandokhel said that it was unfortunate that every department in the country has formed a team to fulfill their own ambitions. All the issues that are lacking should be resolved through negotiations. If terrorism is to be eradicated, then it is necessary to find the reasons and find a solution. The purpose of the establishment

of martyr arcade is to pay homage to the martyrs of the Civil Hospital tragedy. The purpose for which the court buildings have been constructed does not seem to be fulfilled. If justice is not done, the seeker of justice will go out to seek justice himself. Yes, the performance of judges across the country is very good. We will be happy when the number of pending cases in Balochistan is zero, we have to stand firm against corruption and unconstitutional measures, the government has a duty to provide all facilities to the people, when justice is not given to people, then powerful people use money and guns and weak people turn to the courts.

## Punjab minister announces academic year starts from Aug 1

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab's Minister for Education Murad Raas on Monday announced that the school year in the province will begin on August 1, 2021 and will end on March 31, 2022. Taking to Twitter, the minister also posted an official notification issued in this regard, according to which the decision was taken during a meeting of the Inter Provincial Educa-

tion Ministers Conference (IPEMC) on February 26, 2021. A few days ago, Murad Raas had released a list of districts which will follow the alternate-school-day rule until April 1 due to higher coronavirus incidences therein.

Districts not in the list "will follow prior COVID-19 schedule," the minister had written on Twitter. The attached notification stated that districts having a higher COVID-19 positiv-

ity ratio — such as more than 20 cases in the last 24 hours — will be subject to the rule.

The districts with high positivity rates reportedly include Lahore, Gujrat, Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Sialkot, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad.

According to the existing rule: "Students of all the educational institutions shall attend classes on alternate days with 50% ratio on any single working day as detailed in earlier letter [...] dated 12th Sep-

tember, 2020." The above was amended to state: "Students of all the educational institutions are allowed to attend classes 5/6 days a week (as the case may be) w.e.f. 01-03-2021 except in the districts mentioned above."

According to the notification, the amendment will be reviewed on March 31. Strict implementation of safety measures must be ensured and has already been communicated to all those concerned, it added.

## LPG gas container overturns near Machh

DNA

QUETTA: LPG gas container overturned while cutting a bend due to high speed at Gushtri near Machh area of Bolan. National Highway was blocked due to overturning of the container. According to rescue sources, LPG was leaked due to overturning of the container. The body of the driver who died in the container has been shifted to Machh Hospital where he's identified as Muhammad Nadeem son of Safdar Ali resident of Nankana Sahib.

## SAARC-CCI President felicitates Punjab Governor

LAHORE: South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation-Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC-CCI) President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Monday felicitated Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar on winning of his son, Anas Sarwar, in the Scottish Labour Party's election.

In his felicitation message to the Governor here, Malik said that Anas Sarwar had maintained the family tradition of attaining the political hallmark by becoming the UK's first Muslim to lead a party. He said Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar himself was also the first ever Muslim MP, elected to Glasgow Central in 1997 till 2010. He said, "It is a great honour for Pakistan that father is serving the nation here while his son working for humanity and Muslim community in UK by joining a major political party in the UK. It is an incredible and historic achievement and entire nation is proud of Anas Sarwar."

Malik hoped that Anas would keep working closely to bring Pakistan and UK closer to each other in promoting trader and enhancing the economic cooperation besides further cementing their bilateral relations. He mentioned that Anas Sarwar was elected to lead Scottish Labour, beating fellow MSP Monica Lennon by gaining 57.6 per cent and 42.4 per cent votes respectively.

US consulate to host session on PPP on Covid-19

DNA

KARACHI: US Mission to Pakistan would have invited the public to attend an online session about 'The Parallel Pandemic Project: Pakistan, United States and COVID-19' on March 2 at University of Karachi. Parallel Pandemic Project is a university partnership between George Mason University and the University of Karachi sponsored by the U.S. Mission to Pakistan that seeks to document and understand impacts of COVID-19 on the United States and Pakistan converge and diverge over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students and faculty in the social sciences at both universities began the project in the Summer 2020 with a series of virtual conversations and classroom exchanges to discuss how their respective societies were reacting to the public health threat of COVID-19. This session will present findings as they relate to the economy, the family, legislative responses, and media. Presenters include: Dr. James Witte (George Mason University, Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and Director of the Institute for Immigration Research), Dr. Mustafa Hyder (University of Karachi, Research Scholar and Faculty Member in the Department of Public Administration), Dr. Tehmina Faisal (University of Karachi, Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Administration) and Nishit Sahay (George Mason University, Senior Advisor for External Relations at the Institute for Immigration Research).

## President for smart cities for improved governance

The meeting was attended by Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhary Fawad Hussain, Secretary Science & Technology Arshad Mehmood, Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Tariq Banuri and other IT experts from NUST and COMSATS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Monday stressed the transforming of existing cities into smart cities to improve the governance as well as well-being of the people. Chairing a meeting on Smart Cities Programme at the Awan-e-Sadr, the emphasized the need to deploy smart technologies in all cities of the country, ensuring safety,

security and overall optimum quality of life for all citizens. The meeting was attended by Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhary Fawad Hussain, Secretary Science & Technology Arshad Mehmood, Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Tariq Banuri and other IT experts from NUST and COMSATS. President Alvi underscored that it was essential to utilize artificial intelligence and other related technologies to introduce

data-driven algorithms into governance, education, energy, industry, infrastructure, healthcare, mobility and other aspects that directly contributed to improve the lives of the citizens. He said the digital revolution was offering an unprecedented window of opportunity to improve the lives of millions of urban residents and deliver more efficient, sustainable and inclusive urban services to the citizens. A detailed presentation by the Ministry of Science

and Technology highlighted the advantages of Smart Cities Technologies that provided smart solutions to governance, healthcare, infrastructure, crime control, transportation, waste management, cyber security and mobility. The Ministry informed that a team of experts had been constituted to lead the smart cities initiatives. The meeting was briefed about the key products of National Centres which had been established by Higher Educa-

tion Commission to focus on research and development in the specialized domains. The products, prepared by the National Centres, will help in efficiently managing transport, detecting crimes and investigating cyber crimes. It was also apprised that the Government of Nigeria had lauded the efforts of National Radio Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) for providing state-of-the-art counter-terrorism equipment.



ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) organizes an awareness walk against drug abuse. Federal minister for narcotics control, Ijaz Shah was the chief guest on the occasion. The participants were carrying banners and placards inscribed with different slogans against abuse of drugs. — DNA



## Briefs

### Police launch search operation

RAWALPINDI: The police on special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi on Monday launched a search operation in Sadiqabad Chowk and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Sadiqabad Police Station, said a police spokesman.

He informed that heavy police contingent, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and Ladies police under the supervision of SHO Sadiqabad Police Station conducted operation in the area and searched 142 houses while 315 persons were checked and several interrogated. The police also checked particulars of 75 tenants during the search operation. According to Superintendent Police (SP) Rawal, the search operations to net criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly being conducted under National Action Plan in different areas of the district particularly to ensure law and order. — APP

### 12 outlaws held, five bikes recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police on Monday arrested 12 outlaws involved in aerial firing as well as bike lifting and recovered five bikes from them. He said that a team of Khanna police nabbed Zohaib and Faizan and recovered five stolen motorbikes from their possession. Another team of Sabzi Mandi police arrested 10 accused namely Ehsan, Haris, Bilal, Aziz, Sadeer, Abdul Haddi, Sayam Shah, Faisal, Kamran and Basit Mehmood involved in kite flying and aerial firing. Cases have been registered against them. — APP

### ITP issues 21,948 challan tickets during last week

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) have launched "Road Safety Campaign" in order to ensure traffic discipline in the city and overcome accidents through creating awareness about traffic rules among the road users. This campaign is on full swing and ITP issued 21,948 challan tickets imposing fine of Rs 6.1 million during last week over traffic violations.

ITP issued 685 challan tickets to over speeding vehicles, 540 for violating traffic signals, 503 for not giving way to the vehicles, 21 for having damaged lights, 141 to drivers for driving on wrong side, 701 for tinted glasses on vehicles, 130 for using high beams, 16 for violating one way road, 2329 for overloading, 2549 bike riders for not wearing helmets, 50 for taking wrong U-turn, 3505 for rash driving, 292 for driving without license, 415 for driving unregistered vehicles, 30 for picking passengers on non-stop points and hundreds of others over miscellaneous violations.

The IGP Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman said that the purpose of this campaign was to ensure better traffic discipline through cooperation of citizens and create traffic sense among them. "Citizens should obey the traffic rules to save lives" the IGP appealed.

Qazi Jamil ur Rehman said that ITP were taking all possible steps to protect the lives of citizens. ITP are striving hard for safety of its citizens and to overcome the traffic accidents by ensuring safe road environment in the city. To check over-speeding, he said 13 speed checking cameras had been installed at different points. Special campaign was being run in educational institutions to educate the students, Qazi Jamil ur Rehman said, adding that ITP were trying it's best to facilitate public.

# 'Tech is taking over the traditional wars'

Panel and experts from different countries shared their views and analysis during one day International Webinar on Future Wars: A Case Study of Pakistan and India

### CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan House, Islamabad based think tank organized One Day International Webinar on Future Wars: A Case Study of Pakistan and India. Panel and experts from different countries shared their views and analysis on the subject. The organizers discussed what states plan for future wars? What would be the way to understand wars? & what is the future of Pakistan India in terms of War.

Director General Pakistan House Mohammad Athar Javed was the host while Chief Guest was General Phil Jones. Panel consisted of Mr. Justin Bronk,

Dr. Adil Sultan, Dr. Ahmad Khan and Lt General Khalid Rabbani.

Mohammad Athar Javed, in his introductory remarks noted that future war is almost here: battles fought in cyberspace biologically enhanced soldiers autonomous systems that can process information and strike violently before a human being can blink. Technology took the wars to another level and that will cause more disastrous results. The evolving, complex world of conflict and technology demands that we pay more attention to the issues that are or can confront us, before it is too late to control them.

General Phil Jones (ret'd.), former Chief of Staff NATO

(UK), Chairman Army Benevolent Fund, UK-International Security Advisor said "Technology has immense potential to bring profound changes in contemporary world. There is a difference between technological innovation and generational wars because even today soldiers are being seeing carrying rifles. There is no doubt that warfare is changing. The competition between Pakistan and India on national capabilities have been intense and will continue to be intense. This intense competition can become a battle and a struggle but not war. The competition is to erode the economic and political tensions along with ensuring political and social

cohesion. Social media is a trend that can cause a stir in no time and fake news is a potential weapon while being sitting below the recognizable threshold. It is also of great importance that whoever controls the space, controls land. Cyber domain is another trend of carrying out organized crime against nation. Artificial intelligence has become a buzzword of today. AI is already being weaponized, a major strategic activity to turn human activities into automation. In a decade, AI will be unimaginably strong and powerful. AI demands national strategy, not just national security."

Mr. Justin Bronk, Research Fellow, Airpower & Technology, Royal United Ser-

VICES Institute (RUSI), UK shared "The future of warfare is changing with every passing day. China is now producing affordable, small and easy to carry weapons that allow precision and in direct and indirect attacks. For now, point-defence system can be improved. Missile and ballistic weapons can still hit a target if there are trees or mountains in the way but laser cannot be as precious if blocked by mountains. The real revolution in defence system is the microwave weapon system but for that more power is required. Cyber, despite being the slowest, is still a powerful and dangerous enabler."

Corps Commander (Peshawar), member advisory board of Pakistan House summed up the discussion as "I would like to thank all our speakers and participants. Military is one of the most difficult institution to change. Pakistan and India are already in a state of war. There are fields where Pakistan and India would like to outshine each other. Any nation will not be able to survive if it leaves behind Artificial Intelligence (AI) and cyber advancement. Soldiers will always be required even in AI world. AI cannot take over human activities in its entirety. It will be a blended approach. Self-reliance is the answer for any State to equip and train itself with AI."

## RDA seals 10 illegal commercial buildings

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: In ongoing campaign against violations, illegal construction, and land mafia in the city, the Land Use and Building Control (LU&BC) Wing of Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on Monday conducted operation at High Court Road and Commercial Area of Gulraiz Housing Scheme and sealed ten illegal and unauthorized constructed commercial buildings.

The LU&BC Wing's staff including Deputy Director Building Control Atif Mehmood Chaudhry, Building Inspectors and others carried out the operation. The owners of the properties constructed illegal commercial buildings without approval of No Objection Certificates (NOCs), in violation of Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976 and RDA Building and Zoning Regulations 2020. The RDA spokesman said that the Director General

RDA directed the LU&BC Wing to take strict action against encroachments, illegal and unauthorized constructions and commercial activities without any fear and favour. He said the general public should also show moral responsibility and remove every type of encroachment as much as they can, so that they could avoid any further loss.

He said the owners of the properties had carried out development work in the different areas illegally, without approval of lay out plan (LoP) from the authority. The general public has been advised in their own interest that they should not make any investment in the illegal and unauthorized area and for high rise buildings as the same are not approved and allowed by the authority. RDA suggested the citizens to consult the authority before investing in such projects as the civic agency would not be responsible for their losses, he added.

## Ring Road Project; proposals by April 12

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Capt (ret'd) Muhammad Mehmood on Monday said that the companies interested in getting contract award of Rawalpindi Ring Road under public-private partnership can submit their proposals by April 12. He said, a committee would be formed soon which would open and evaluate the bidding proposals. He said, more than Rs. 3 billion worth awarded for the 31 km long track of the Rawalpindi Ring Road which would pass through Fateh Jang, Attock and Taxila would also be announced this week. He said this while presiding over a meeting held here at Commissioner's office to review the Rawalpindi Ring Road progress. Chairman Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Tariq Mehmood Murtaza, Director General RDA, Capt (ret'd) Abdul Sattar Issani, Director Finance and Development Nazia Parveen Sundhan, Deputy Project Director Rawalpindi Ring Road Muhammad Abdullah and other officers concerned were present in the meeting. Muhammad Mehmood said that first contract award worth Rs 1.5 billion for the project was announced two months ago and now the process of distribution of compensation amount among the affectees, the land owners has been expedited while the 'Patwaris' have been given weekly target for the compensation. He said that out of 29 'moazas' for the first award of the project, 27 have been transferred to the government. — APP

ment Authority (RDA) Tariq Mehmood Murtaza, Director General RDA, Capt (ret'd) Abdul Sattar Issani, Director Finance and Development Nazia Parveen Sundhan, Deputy Project Director Rawalpindi Ring Road Muhammad Abdullah and other officers concerned were present in the meeting. Muhammad Mehmood said that first contract award worth Rs 1.5 billion for the project was announced two months ago and now the process of distribution of compensation amount among the affectees, the land owners has been expedited while the 'Patwaris' have been given weekly target for the compensation. He said that out of 29 'moazas' for the first award of the project, 27 have been transferred to the government. — APP

## FATF conspiring against Pakistan: PEW

### STAFF REPORT

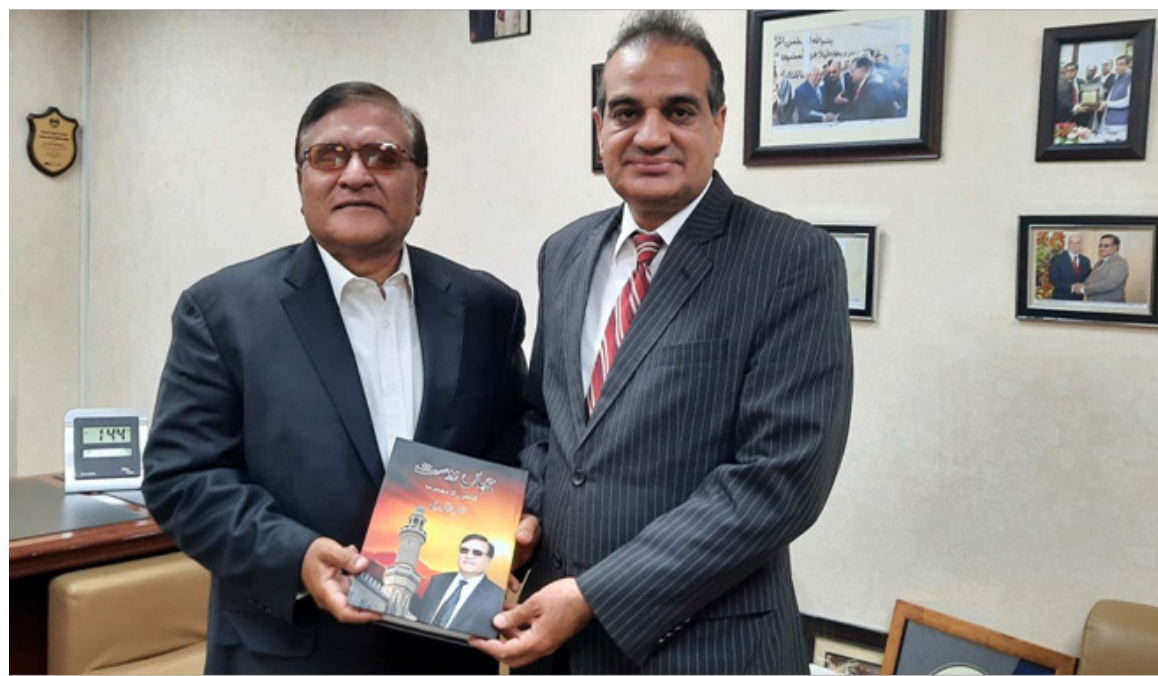
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Monday said Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is conspiring against Pakistan to further damage its fragile economy.

The decision of FATF to keep Pakistan on the Greylist until June is political, disappointing, and against the merit. The FATF's decision to

keep Pakistan on the grey list until June despite Pakistan's significant progress on the recommended actions has disappointed many, it said. People are terming the decision of the global watchdog as slanted as many countries have taken off the watch list despite their performance was below that of Pakistan, said Dr Murtaza Mughal, President PEW. He said that Pakistan has complied with 24 of the

27 actions and it is acting to fulfil three remaining conditions to eliminate terror financing, he said. Dr Murtaza Mughal said that Pakistan is doing best to fulfil all the conditions and it has made significant progress which is evident from the unprecedented increase in home remittances. However, we have no other option but to work quickly and show progress on the rest of the action plan otherwise there will be an economic cost, he said.

Complete compliance of suggested action by FATF and adopting global standards on illicit financing will bring their own dividends for Pakistan's economy, he observed. He noted that FATF should not work as a tool for the superpowers to ignore countries that are in their good books and penalise the nations which are not. Presently there are eighteen countries in the Greylist and two states, North Korea and Iran are on the Blacklist.



ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and renowned columnist Zafar Bakhtawari presenting his book to Editor Daily Islamabad POST, Ansar Mahmood Bhatti. The book titled Awaz Dost is a collection of columns of Zafar Bakhtawari, published in various newspapers. — DNA

## FBR publishes Active Taxpayers' list 2020

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Monday published the Active Taxpayers' List (ATL) for the Tax Year 2020. The list is being published in accordance with the provisions of Rule 81B of Income Tax Rules, 2002, said an FBR press statement issued here, adding presently, FBR's ATL was linked with income tax returns for Tax Year 2019.

The FBR 'Active Tax Payers list 2020' can be viewed at the following link <https://fbr.gov.pk/Downloads/?id=3901&Type=Docs>. It said that the ATL was a central record of online Income Tax Return filers for the previous Tax Year and was being published every financial year on

March 1, remaining valid up to the last day of February of the next financial year. According to the statement, a persons on the ATL could avail many benefits and were not subjected to withholding tax on cash withdrawals, other banking transactions, payment of fee to educational institutions etc. Similarly, for such persons, tax on imports, dividends, goods, services and contracts, profit on debt, prize and winnings, purchase of motor vehicles, purchase and sale of property etc. is withheld at a lesser rate.

The list would include the persons who have filed income tax returns for tax year 2020 within the due date or the dates extended by the concerned

Commissioner Inland Revenue.

The list would be updated on weekly basis every Sunday at 2400 hours and would be available on FBR's website as well as Tax Asaan App.

ATL status of individuals could also be checked by typing message "ATL (space) 13 digits Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC)" and sending to 9966. For checking ATL status of AOP or a Company one would have to type "ATL (space) 7 digits National Tax Number (NTN)" and sending to 9966. The persons who have filed income tax returns after the due date or extended dates have to pay a surcharge for inclusion in ATL. — APP

## Operation conducted against billboards

ISLAMABAD: Upon the directions of Administrator, MCI Syeda Shafaq Hashmi, operation has been carried out by the Directorate of Municipal Administration in PWD and 26 No. Chungi near Tarnol against illegal billboards and streamers. Moreover, in continuation with the directions of Chairman CDA, Amer Ali Ahmed, operation against illegal encroachments in urban centers continued in G. 7 Markaz, G. 8 Markaz, Karachi Company G 9 and G. 11 Markaz. Encroachments in corridors and footpaths have been removed and the activity shall continue in coming days as well. — APP

## 'PTA introduces mechanism for complaints redressal'

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunication Syed Amin-ul-Haque Monday said Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) had introduced an effective mechanism to register and quickly response to complaints of the consumers. Addressing a 4th consumer IT and telecom conference, he assured that all problems related to IT and telecom sector of consumers would be resolved. He was of the view that problems related to telecommunication and the internet of consumers would be solved when they know the rights and the appropriate forum to get their issues resolved. The minister said his ministry was taking steps to further reduce this response time to the call of the consumers for the resolution of their problems. Admitting that customers across the country using mobile networks were facing some problems, he said adding the ministry was working to address the concerns mobile users. "We want take the number of mobile and internet users to 100 percent across the country as soon as possible," he added. The minister said his ministry had introduced various programmes for developing skills and capacity building of country's youth to enable them for availing the best opportunities in the world for their future. He termed the broadband facility and internet connectivity as imperative for sustainable progress and development of the country in line with the vision of "Digital Pakistan" of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said the meaningful efforts were being to extend and improve services in rural areas of all the provinces. The services of a similar and high standard would be provided in all areas of the country without any discrimination, he added. The minister pointed out that there were around 170 million active cellular phones users in Pakistan. Over 90 million users had access to the broadband facility across the country, he added. He said the ministry was also working on projects to provide internet connectivity on highways and tourism destinations.

## AIOU announces results

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Monday announced results of graduate, post graduate and diploma programs offered in autumn 2020 semester. Furthermore, the university has uploaded results of PhD, M Phil/MS, MSc, MPA, MBA, BS and of two diploma programs, a press release said. Result cards have been dispatched to the students. Moreover, admission for programs offered in 2nd phase of Spring 2021 semester including BA (Associate Degree), MA/M Sc and 1.5/2.5/ 4-year B Ed programs are in progress. Prospectuses and admissions forms of all these programs are available online on the university website ([www.aiou.edu.pk](http://www.aiou.edu.pk)). It is mandatory to submit online application to get admission in any of these programs. The deadline for the submission of online application forms is March 25. — APP

## ICCI hails govt decision to lift time restrictions

He said that the businesses have suffered huge losses due to lockdowns and limitations on timings enforced to curb the spread of coronavirus and hoped that the lifting of restrictions on commercial activities would help businesses in reviving business activities and making some recovery of losses

### IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has hailed the government decision to lift time limit from commercial activities and termed it a positive development as it would allow businesses to operate without restrictions, recover from losses and play a role for economic revival of the country. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the government has taken

a proactive approach for businesses as with the decline in the cases of Covid-19 pandemic, it has lifted the time limits from commercial activities, which was a laudable move. He said that the businesses have suffered huge losses due to lockdowns and limitations on timings enforced to curb the spread of coronavirus and hoped that the lifting of restrictions on commercial activities would help businesses in reviving business activities and making some recovery of losses. He expressed special thanks to the ICT Administration,

Deputy Commissioner Hamza Shafaat and Chief Commissioner Amir Ali Ahmed for their cooperation and support to the businesses in these tough times and hoped that they would continue to facilitate the business community similarly in future as well. The ICCI President further commended the decision of the government to allow the indoor wedding ceremonies from 15th March 2021 with stringent COVID SOPs. He said that thousands of people were employed in marquees and wedding halls, but the closure of

these businesses had rendered them jobless putting their families in great financial difficulties. He said that the growth of business activities of many sub-sectors including poultry, meat, fruits & vegetables etc. was dependent on marquees and wedding halls, therefore, closure of these businesses was multiplying the problems of all allied businesses. Therefore, he hoped that allowing indoor wedding ceremonies would be helpful in reviving the business of multiple sectors. Welcoming the government decision to life time limit from

commercial activities, Fatma Azim Senior Vice President and Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry appealed to the business community of all sectors to ensure strict compliance of SOPs while running commercial activities and extend a helping hand to the government's efforts in controlling the spread of Covid-19 pandemic so that with the normalization of COVID situation, all business activities could get back to the normal routine and play positive role in stabilizing the economy.



## Briefs

## IHC grants bail to woman lawyer

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday granted post arrest bail to a woman lawyer Nazia Bibi in IHC building attack case and reserved the decision on bail plea of another lawyer. A division bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhter Kiyani heard the post arrest bail petition of two lawyers. Sardar Latif Khosa, Barrister Rizwan Abbasi and other lawyers appeared before the court. During the course of proceeding, Latif Khosa argued that Nazia Bibi had a two year infant and she was also sick. She had been pursuing a case before bench No. 7 of IHC at the time of incident, he said, adding that the woman lawyer had no connection with the case.

He further argued that another lawyer Naveed Malik had been named in the case but he had no connection with incident. He was in IHC during the incident but was not at chief justice block. Justice Farooq remarked that if the juniors were in forefront then their seniors should have convinced them to avoid such attitude. The involved lawyers should be made accountable in bar council. Justice Farooq said that there was a need of professional training of junior lawyers. However, the state counsel said that lawyer Naveed Malik was leading the protesters in accordance of the CDR and CCTV footage and four witness constables also gave statement in this regard. — APP

## CPI inflation increases by 8.7% on

ISLAMABAD: The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based monthly inflation increased by 8.7 percent on year-on-year (YoY) in February 2021 as compared to an increase of 5.7% in the previous month and 12.4% in February 2020, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Friday.

On month-on-month basis, it increased by 1.8% in February 2021 as compared to a decrease of 0.2% in the previous month and a decrease of 1.0% in February 2020. According to PBS data, the urban CPI based inflation, increased by 8.6% on year-on-year basis in February 2021 as compared to an increase of 5.0% in the previous month and 11.2% in February 2020. On month-on-month basis, it decreased by 2.3% in February 2021 as compared to a decrease of 0.2% in the previous month and a decrease of 1.1% in February 2020. The CPI based rural inflation increased by 8.8% on year-on-year basis in February 2021 as compared to an increase of 6.6% in the previous month and 14.2% in February 2020. On month-on-month basis, it increased by 1.1% in February 2021 as compared to a decrease of 0.3% in the previous month and a decrease of 1.0% in February 2020. — APP

## RCB confiscates 296 truckload goods

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) confiscated over 296 truckload goods from different markets under its grand operation against encroachments to make the RCB areas encroachment free during last eight months.

The grand anti-encroachment operation on the special instruction of Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) was launched and the teams conducted a large number of operations in different areas and imposed fines amounting to over Rs 4.4 million on the rules violators. According to RCB spokesman, the grand clean-up operation against encroachments continued during the period in RCB areas and the encroachments were removed from different markets including Saddar bazaar, Tench Bhatta, Peoples Colony, Dhoke Syedan, Bakara Mandi, Chungi Number 22, Choohr, Masrial and several other areas while the teams also issued a large number of notices to the rules violators. Sheds illegally constructed in various commercial areas were also demolished, he informed. — APP



RAWALPINDI: RCCI President Nasir Mirza presenting a memento to South African High commissioner Mthuthuzeli Madikiza at Ayub Park Rawalpindi. — DNA

## RCCI construction trade fair ends on a high note

## STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The first Build 2021 and Construction Trade Fair being organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) ended on a high note at Topi Rakh Complex Ayub Park Rawalpindi. On the third day of Expo, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka Vice Admiral Mohan Wijewickrama and South African High Commissioner Mthuthuzeli Madikiza visited different stalls and appreciated the development projects, High Tech clean and green equipment for buildings. The envoys appreciated RCCI for its efforts towards promoting trade activities and organising exhibitions.

RCCI President Nasir Mirza said the purpose of the exhibition was to promote business activi-



ties. A musical evening and food court was also arranged to entertain people in the evening, Nasir

Mirza said, adding that such exhibitions will be held regularly. Internationally acclaimed artist, Sufi Pop and traditional folk

icon of Pakistan, Arif Lohar performed in the Expo Arena and

amused the participants.

Exhibition Chairman Sardar Tanveer Sarwar said the exhibition provided an opportunity to investors in the field of housing and construction to get more information about various projects under one roof. Also, expo provides some relief to people to come out of stress faced by COVID Lock-down, he added.

During the three-day expo, companies associated with the housing and construction sector had set up stalls. Meanwhile, Federal Minister Azam Khan Swati, Minister Aviation Ghulam Sarwar Khan, Chairman Kashmir Committee Shahryar Afridi, Chairman RDA Tariq Murtaza, ambassadors, high commissioners and commercial counselors, presidents of different chamber of commerce, and representatives of Trade Associations visited the Build 2021 Expo.

## NAHE holds roundtable to identify faculty development needs

## SHAHEEN HANEEF

ISLAMABAD: As part of collaboration for academic excellence initiative, the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) is organizing roundtable discussion events nationally and in the provinces and the first provincial workshop/roundtable was held on Monday to identify faculty development needs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Representatives from universities including those from the quality enhancement cells in universities across the province were in attendance including Buner, Karak, Malakand, Haripur, Peshawar and former Federally Administered Tribal Areas. During the event, participants were able to debate and discuss urgent faculty development needs unique to their contexts, potential collaborations between public and private sector universities and the role NAHE can play to contribute to the professional development of their faculties.

NAHE Rector Dr Shaheen Sardar Ali thanked the participants for making the trip to Peshawar and taking time to participate in these challenging times. She identified both challenges and opportunities identified in the national higher education landscape as a result of COVID-19.

Universities were able to share their varying experiences of capacity building in their respective institutions. Teaching philosophy and methodology, online capability and research mentorship were among the most common problems in capacity identified by the universities. However, there was a great spirit of collaboration and a willingness to create a community of practice to improve the quality of learning available in the higher education institutions across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Sharing of resources, identifying strengths and all that public and private institutions could offer to each other under the guidance of NAHE were possibilities discussed. Over the next few months, members of the NAHE team would travel to Karachi, Lahore, and Sargodha to conduct additional roundtables and hopefully include representatives from all provinces and regions of Pakistan. NAHE is established as a stand-alone, autonomous institution operating under the auspices of HEC to improve the quality of teaching, research, and governance in higher education institutions across Pakistan. This series of workshops is one of multiple ongoing NAHE endeavors to facilitate capacity building of faculty in the higher education institutions.

## CDA operation against land grabbers underway



## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The operation of Capital Development Authority (CDA) against encroachments and land grabbers is underway. The Enforcement department of CDA conducted operation against il-

legal constructions and encroachments at Panjraan, Lehtar road, Khhana pul, Tramari, and Tarlai on Monday. 03 homes, 09 rooms, 04 washrooms, 04 boundary walls, buffalo shelters, and some other constructions were demolished in Panjraan. Construction material was captured from the spot. On

the other hand operations were also conducted at Lehtar road, Khhana pul, Tramari, and Tarlai upon the complaints of the citizens. Poultry stalls, vegetables stalls, push carts, road side setups, tea stalls, and other encroachments from the road sides. Material captured from the spot was submitted to store of CDA.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Egypt for Pakistan Tariq Mohamed Dahroug calls on Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. — DNA

## Moonis calls for strengthening ties with Bangladesh

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is always the first one to take initiatives for strengthening Pakistan-Bangladesh relations, but little reciprocity is shown by Bangladesh. Therefore it is high time for Pakistan and Bangladesh to let go of the past and work together for a progressive future.

These were the remarks made by Dr. Moonis Ahmar, Meritorious Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Karachi, while speaking at the second webinar in the series "Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations" organized by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), earlier today. Speakers included Dr. Sharin Shajahan Naomi, Assistant Professor, Gender Studies, Asian University for Women, Bangladesh, M. Sarwar, Barrister-at-Law of Lincoln's Inn, and Mr. Imtiaz Gul, Executive Director of CRSS.

He added that a flexible visa regime can help in enhancing people to people relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh. He continued that people of both the countries have enormous opportunities to mend economic, political and cultural relations. According to him, efforts should be made to promote academic cooperation between the educational institutes of both countries. This cannot be done unless there are leaders from both sides who are able to promote meaningful interaction between students from Pakistan and Bangladesh. He proposed the truth and reconciliation commission which can help overcome the bitterness of the past and also help in sanitizing the historical literature on the events around 1971. Dr. Sharin Shajahan Naomi expressed that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are happy with each other. In politics there is a binary view but people to people relations are good, despite the past trauma and unfortunate memories.

Currently there is a huge gap in the economic relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh. She suggested that a trade agreement could be a strong starting point to form good relations on a higher level and Bangladesh would be welcoming towards this stance since it wants good relations with all its neighbors including China, Pakistan and India. Barrister M. Sarwar rein forced that we share a common history. He admitted that there have been some political mistakes but we should move on from the past and make progress for the future. Good people to people relations are demonstrated when it comes to sporting events and tourism between regional countries. In his view, in the subcontinent, no country can develop individually, the whole region has to develop economically as economic viability will ensure security. Public opinion is one of the most important foreign policy determinants. Therefore, re-

gardless of reciprocity by the government of Bangladesh, Pakistan should continue doing its bits and invite the citizens of Bangladesh will see the benefits of the policies of Pakistan, they themselves will mobilize support in favor of Pakistan and pressurize their government into taking reciprocal steps. Dr. Moonis Ahmar ended his conversation on the note that history textbooks can make a difference by promoting a sense of joint history instead of spreading hate and violence. For a win-win situation there has to be ease in flights, shipping and trade linkages. He also highlighted that there is nothing against Bangladesh in Pakistan, the youth of both countries should not carry the baggage of the past. Barrister M. Sarwar in his closing remarks admitted that Bangladesh understands the failures of its foreign policy and is working to open up to other countries to have good relations. In this regard he commended Pakistan's efforts in lifting visa restrictions.

## Work on health projects underway

RAWALPINDI: District Finance and Development Officer Health Dr Ali Ahsan on Monday said the construction of a new hospital and up-gradation of various health projects was underway. Giving details, the Director told APP that 74 percent of construction work of setting up the new Tehsil Headquarter Hospital (THQ) at Potohar Town has been completed for which the provincial government has so far spent Rs 355.2 million. The Director informed that in the first phase the construction of 1st floor has been completed while the flooring of 2nd,3rd floor besides Mumty, garages, canteen, laundry, boundary wall and residences for officials are being completed to help ailing segments of the society "The Rs 656.028 million health project, inaugurated in September 2017 will hopefully be completed by June 2021, adding the provincial government has so far spent Rs 355.2 million out of the total Rs 473.31 million allocated for the construction while Rs 182.7 million would be spent on purchasing of necessary equipment", he said.

The Director further informed that the renovation work of Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Murree is in the final stages as 91 percent of construction work has been completed at the cost of Rs 45.24 million out of the total Rs 49.255 mln allocated for the project. Ahsan said that after the installation of the heating system which was in progress the work on the project would be finished. Giving details about the Up-gradation of Basic Health Unit (BHU) to Rural Health Center (RHC) level hospital at Thoa Khalsa in tehsil Kahuta, he said 100% of construction work of the main building has been completed at a cost of Rs 19.8 million while Rs 26.17 mln would be utilized for the purchase of hospital's equipment including x-ray, ultrasound. Ali said that the Punjab government was determined to upgrade the existing health facilities in rural areas of Rawalpindi and all available resources would be used to bring a visible change in the delivery of the best health services.

## ATC extends judicial remand of Shoab Gujjar

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan extended the judicial remand of Shoab Gujjar Advocate, arrested in the High Court attack case till March 4 and adjourned the hearing at the request of his lawyers. On Monday the accused Shoab Gujjar was brought from jail and produced before the court. The court inquired where was the investigating officer? On which it was informed that he was in the High Court. The lawyers requested that the challan had not been submitted by the police so far. it will be ascertained what allegations had been made once the challan would be submitted. The court directed the police to submit the challan. — APP

## Plastic bags' ban enforcement team fines on violators

ISLAMABAD: The Plastic Bags ban implementation team comprising of Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC) and Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) with the support of ICT Administration has initiated enforcement for ban on Polythene bags from Aabpara Market here on Monday. A MoCC official told APP that strict implementation of the ban was launched whereas on the first day the team has imposed fines on violators of Rs 2,30, 000 and confiscated over 25 Kg of Polythene bags. He added that a massive awareness drive was kicked off in the federal capital to apprise the masses for avoiding use of single-use plastic bags. However, on violation an individual would be fined Rs 5,000, shopkeeper Rs 10,000 and a manufacturer would be fined Rs 100,000 whereas in case of repeated violations the penalty would be doubled along with confiscation of plastic bags. — APP



## A big step

On the second anniversary of our response to India's illegal, reckless military adventure of airstrikes against Pakistan, it is clear, in hindsight, who stood with more integrity. Two years later, India is still embroiled in confrontation with IIOK, and has swiftly become a much more dangerous place for its Muslim citizens. In contrast, looking at Pakistan, it seems evident that Pakistan was always committed to peace and human rights, where even the Indian Air Force pilot captured by Pakistan after his MiG 21 Bison aircraft was shot down by a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) jet has praised us once more.

Two years after the two countries come close to a nuclear war, a big step for peace has been taken. The Directors-General Military Operations (DGMOs) of Pakistani and Indian armies in a hotline contact on Wednesday agreed to abide by the 2003 bilateral ceasefire arrangement at the LoC. The DGMO contact also has great symbolic significance in the history of Pak-India ties. The agreement was signed in 2003 but held only for a few years as regular ceasefire violations have occurred since 2008. Border violations became a serious problem after Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, resulting in many deaths and much violence along the LoC. This is a diplomatic victory for Pakistan—its commitment to peace and settlement of disputes through diplomatic channels has convinced even the increasingly fascist government of India that not committing to any kind of negotiation would lead to bad press internationally. Even though anti-Pakistan rhetoric, unfortunately, gains the support of the hard-right in India, the Indian government has evidently calculated that the international consequences of not trying for peace were too high.

However, it must be reminded that this step does not mean our biggest issues have been resolved. There is the insurmountable issue of protecting the Kashmiri populations' rights—a cause Pakistan counts as one of its highest priorities. Pakistan must make sure this commitment to the ceasefire does not just mean empty words and inaction—outstanding issues can be resolved if only the neighbour reciprocates our words and acts on them.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

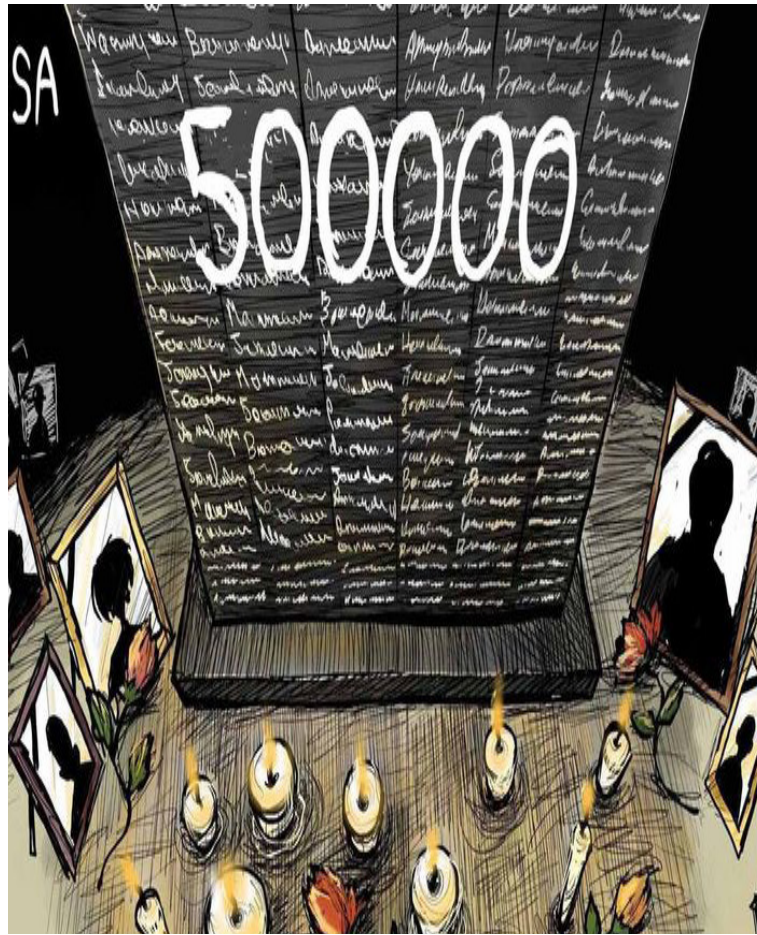
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## Uplifting Sindh

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar's revelation that the government is announcing a mega developmental project for Sindh is praiseworthy. The government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) intends to carry out the direly needed developmental project with the help of its political allies, Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) and Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA).

The main areas in which the government intends to bring reforms include federal organisations, i.e., NADRA, WAPDA, NHA and power distribution companies. Indeed, the government's decision to improve these institutions will greatly facilitate ordinary people. However, the cities and rural areas, especially in interior Sindh, lack social services and infrastructure facilities. Even Karachi, which is the most developed city in the province, faces severe infrastructural issues.

A prudent approach is to focus on improving the basic needs in the rural areas of the province. For instance, many cities lack proper facilities in primary health setups and even district headquarters hospitals. Schools in the towns and villages are in bad conditions.

Many villages in interior Sindh do not have water supply facilities. Likewise, many areas lack proper drainage facilities. Therefore, the developmental package must allocate a good share of funds for improving municipal and infrastructure issues in rural areas. What is missing from this laudable announcement is the participation of the ruling party in Sindh, Pakistan People's Party (PPP). If PTI can join hands with PPP to develop Karachi, why is it reluctant to do the same now? If the federal government wants real change in Sindh, it must not work without PPP. Together, the both the federal and provincial governments can bring substantial changes in Sindh. Including PPP will ensure the allocation of more funds for the project. Just one of the two political parties cannot ensure the successful implementation of such a grand infrastructural initiative.

# Karma of NAB achieving heights of recoveries

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



In Islam corruption is prohibited because corruption is the mother of all evils. It has multiplier socio-economic and geopolitical damaging and destructive effects in the country. Corruption is an anti-human and development act also. It has rigged system and weaker factions and sections of society are now on its mercy

Despite hue and cry of corrupt elements of the society in the country, karma of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is achieving skies in terms of new heights of recoveries from the different sectors of economy, production channels, departments and of course corrupt individuals since its inception. Now NAB stands for total transparency, accountability, trust, efficiency and above all professionalism.

accountability since its inception in Pakistan.

In Islam corruption is prohibited because corruption is the mother of all evils. It has multiplier socio-economic and geopolitical damaging and destructive effects in the country. Corruption is an anti-human and development act also. It has rigged system and weaker factions and sections of society are now on its mercy. Devils & Devis have been sitting on the peaks of mountains of corruption for so many years untouched, unnoticed, unanswered and unaccounted. For the first time through NAB numerous Devils & Devis have been caught red-handed and punished.

Unfortunately, our elite junta has been looting national treasuries with no mercy due to which common people, general health, schooling, clean drinking water, basic human rights and basic necessities of life has been compromised. But NAB has become ray of hope in the siege of darkness, injustice, malpractice, corruption, embezzlement, fudging of funds, decay of judicial system and above all untamed official discretions in the country.

It seems that now caravans of ultimate accountability, justice and recovery are on the right path under the supervision of NAB Chairman Justice (r) Javed Iqbal and prosecutor General Syed Asghar Haider. Due to their tireless systematic organizational mechanism eradication of corruption has become the voice of the whole nation as it not only halts progress of the country but also usurps the rights of the deserving people. Pakistan is facing the challenge of corruption which is the root cause of all problems being endured by the country.

Corruption has a chain which acts like a termite. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was established in 1999 to cope with the menace of corruption. Besides bringing corrupt elements to justice, it was tasked with recovering the looted amount, and then either returning it to the affected or depositing it in the national exchequer.

According to statistical data of the NAB since its inception, out of 457,668 complaints NAB has received so far 405,212 were taken care of, while the scrutiny of 556 complaints was still continuing at final phase. NAB has so far approved 100,644 complaint verifications. Of which 100,865 complaint verifications completed. Right now 779 complaint verifications are being scrutinized. Some 8,953 inquiries have been completed from out of 9,883 inquiries approved so far. Moreover, working on some 930 inquiries is still continuing nowadays. Some 4,201 investigations have so far been completed from out of 4,547 investigations approved. Working on 436 inquiries is still continuing. NAB has filed 3,645 corruption references since inception. Of which 2,398 references have been decided by relevant accountability courts. Right now 1,247 references are under trial in different accountability courts.

NAB Chairman Justice (r) Javed Iqbal has developed an

excellent system of anti-corruption strategy. NAB during 2019, received a total of 53,643 complaints during 2019. Of which 42,760 were taken to logical conclusions.

Under the visionary leadership of Justice Javed Iqbal, the bureau has so far recovered Rs363 billion directly or indirectly. The recovered record amount has been deposited in national exchequer. A total of 97 mega corruption references were under-trial from out of 179 mega corruption references filed in different accountability courts. Some 57 such references have been concluded as per law. A total of 10 inquiries, 15 investigations are under trial from out of a total of 179 mega corruption references filed by the anti graft watchdog. Justice (r) Javed Iqbal has established a CIT system for improving internal performance mechanism and benefiting the experience of senior supervisory officers. A consultative committee has also been established for resolving business community issues. Business community has already thanked the chairman for taking vital measures to resolve their problems. Chairman has already directed NAB officers to deal visiting businessmen, politicians and others with respect and dignity as NAB is people friendly organisation and it does not believe in hurting anybody's feelings. Moreover, NAB has established a forensic lab at Islamabad in which the facilities of analyzing digital forensic, documents and fingerprints are available. It helps saving time besides ensuring accuracy. NAB is the sitting chairman of SAARC anti-corruption forum. It is a significant achievement of the country. NAB is also a focal anti corruption institute according to the UN anti corruption convention, which is an honour for Pakistan.

The bureau has also signed a MoU with China in connection with anti corruption. This is aimed at cooperating and benefiting each other's experiences for eradication of corruption.

Despite character assassination NAB officers have no affiliation with any group, individual or party but only with state of Pakistan. The performance of NAB under the leadership of Javed Iqbal and prosecutor General Syed Asghar Haider has been lauded by reputed World Economic Forum, Pildat, Transparency International, Mishaal Pakistan. According to Gallup survey 59 percent Pakistanis have expressed satisfaction over NAB's performance.

Most recently, the NAB released its three-year performance report, showing a total recovery of Rs487 billion. The highest recovery and best performance was shown by the bureau's office for Rawalpindi region. Of the total Rs487bn, the Rawal-pindi NAB recovered Rs290bn, showing the best performance among all seven regional offices of the anti-graft watchdog during the last period under review. It was followed by Karachi, which managed to recover the plundered wealth of Rs93.17bn. Lahore NAB recovered Rs72.2bn, Sukkur Rs26.16bn, Multan Rs4.10bn, Ba-

lochistan Rs1.81bn and Khyber Pakhtun-khwa NAB Rs733.3 million. The total recovery of NAB, since its inception in 1999, is said to be Rs714bn.

The Lahore NAB received 10,211 complaints in 2018, 14,008 in 2019 and 5,023 in 2020 which have also been disposed of and presently 757 complaints are said to be under process. It authorised 326 complaint verifications in 2018, 243 in 2019 and 148 in 2020 and authorised 213 inquiries in 2018, 103 in 2019 and 56 in 2020. The NAB Lahore authorised 37 investigations in 2018, 36 in 2019 and 26 in 2020 and filed 74 references in 2018, 55 in 2019 and 38 in 2020. It recovered Rs9.63bn in 2018, Rs33.55bn in 2019 and Rs29.02bn in 2020.

NAB Chairman retired Justice Javed Iqbal said that one of NAB's major achievements since its inception was the recovery of around Rs714bn directly and indirectly which was a remarkable achievement as compared to other anti-corruption organisations with an overall conviction ratio of 68.8 per cent.

Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan has also appreciated performance and recoveries of the NAB told during 2019 and 2020 amounting to Rs389 billion in comparison to previous 10 years (2008-2018) recoveries. The premier said that anti-corruption department in Punjab has recovered Rs206 billion in 27 months in comparison to only Rs3 billion in the past 10 years under the corrupt rulers.

Human civilization and evolution of modern governance uphold the significance of justice and accountability. From Prophet David to Salman to Moses and Jesus concept of accountability and justice mattered and acted as first deterrence. The rise & fall of Roman Empire and other splendid states of ancient China, Persia, Egypt and even India all bowed towards the strategic importance of concept of accountability and justice in the societies at large.

In any civilized society there is no scope for corruption. People of this country have been at the receiving end because of unstoppable corruption and uncountable deeds of so-called dignified political figures and its cartels for the last sixty years. Somehow, they all remained untouchable and repeated undue compromises unfortunately, transformed them diva and deity. Now PTI government has showed some courage to trial the corrupt politicians. In this regard despite constant criticism on National Accountability Bureau (NAB) various cases of corruption and money laundering are being filed in the courts.

Pakistan has now entered into a defining moment. The tussle between state and corrupt political states, courts and conspiracies, law and loot, justice and jugglers and above all accountability and fugitiveness will come to its logical conclusion very soon because state is at stake and a series of political balderdash will achieve nothing but total catastrophe in which National Accountability Bureau karma will play a vital role.

# Middle East needs positive US engagement

Osama Al Sharif

But he also pointed the finger at China, as an economic foe, and Russia as a political adversary. Both countries present challenges to the US and its European partners. Moscow, he said, wants to weaken the European project and undermine the transatlantic alliance

US President Joe Biden made his debut on the international stage last Friday when he addressed a virtual meeting of the Munich Security Conference and outlined his administration's foreign policy foundations. Putting an end to Donald Trump's isolationist era he declared that "America is back" in reference to it reclaiming its role as a global world leader that is ready to engage with its partners and foes.

He set out a humanitarian message that focused on embracing and supporting democratic values, human rights and the rule of

law while underlining his embrace of multilateralism. Moving away from Trump's "America First" mantra Biden outlined how his administration was quick to rejoin the Paris Agreement on climate change and the World Health Organisation (WHO) while pledging billions of dollars to support a fund that aims at delivering COVID-19 vaccines to poor countries. Regardless of how one feels about US politics and role in the world, America's leadership is sorely needed at a time of a global pandemic, economic meltdown, environmental catastrophes and endemic regional conflicts. Biden promised positive engagement and working with America's partners to strengthen alliances and putting diplomacy first as a way to resolve conflicts.

But he also pointed the finger at China, as an economic foe, and Russia as a political adversary. Both countries present challenges to the US and its European partners. Moscow, he said, wants to weaken the European project and undermine the transatlantic alliance. His reference to the Middle East focused almost entirely on Iran and its nuclear activities. He announced that the US was prepared to re-engage in negotiations with the P5+1 on Iran's nuclear program while also addressing Iran's destabilising activities across the Middle East. In the view of many US analysts Biden's foreign policy priority in the region will target renegotiating the nuclear agreement with Iran in a bid to roll back unilateral measures taken by Tehran to resume its uranium enrichment outside any international oversight. The US has welcomed a European initiative to hold fresh talks with Iran.

But a hawkish Iranian parliament backed by the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khomeini is refusing to back down and insists on the unconditional return of the US to the 2015 nuclear deal while lifting all economic sanctions.

Iran is also refusing any suggestions to renegotiate the deal that includes putting constraints on its long range missile program. The US, as well as its European and regional partners, want to discuss Iran's regional agenda and its meddling in the affairs of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.

As things stand now it looks almost impossible that the US will cave in to Tehran's conditions. It also seems that Iran's hardliners will prevent the Hassan Rouhani government from making any concessions. Iran will hold new elections in June and hardliners are expected to dominate. For now the stalemate will remain at least until after the Iranian elections. Analysts also believe that Biden may resume the pivot to Asia policy of President Obama and that the Middle East may not be a priority for his foreign policy team. That would be a grave mistake.

For one while the US is no longer dependent on Middle East oil, its interests stretch beyond the economic sphere. The Iranian question presents a challenge for America's partners in the region and Europe. America's presence in Iraq and its attempt to stabilise that country almost two decades after it invaded it will not be settled while Iran and pro-Iran militias continue to divide that country. Iran's backing of the Assad regime in Syria and of the Hizbollah group in Lebanon is a

red line for Israel, America's closest ally in the region. The possibility of a major clash between Israel and Iran in Syria and Lebanon cannot be discounted.

Also while Biden and his team reiterated their support for the two-state solution to end the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, the White House is not expected to launch any new initiatives. Allowing Israel to continue its policy of colony building in Palestinian territory will complicate future peace efforts.

The reality is that the region needs US engagement and leadership. America's absence in the past four years has exacerbated regional problems and allowed countries like Turkey and Iran to extend their influence in the region beyond their borders. And as President Biden said the US cannot allow Daesh to regroup once more. For the international coalition to succeed in stamping out terrorist groups in the region US leadership is needed.

But the US must revise its policy of military interventionism in the region, which after more than two decades, has failed to deliver peace and stability. It must also expand its engagement with its partners to go beyond military and security cooperation. The simple fact is that the US cannot afford to walk away from the region's challenges which could and will spill over. Positive engagement is what the US needs to do and while resolving conflicts will not be easy or quick, Biden can draw a road map along with his partners towards ending much of the region's terrible woes.

Courtesy: Gulf News



## Briefs

## PAF clinches U25 sailing c'ships 2021

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Air Force (PAF) sailing team maintained their supremacy in the National Junior U-25 Sailing Championship 2021 by winning all three Gold Medals at open sea near Clifton beach Karachi.

PAF won 8 out of a total of 9 medals and made history, said a press release issued here in Monday. On the final day of the Championships, PAF Sailors were unopposed and comfortably won all medals in Laser Standard, 470 Class and Windsurfing RSX Class championships. In the Laser Standard category Awais of PAF maintained his domination throughout the Championship. After a very tough competition Hamza of Navy managed to get second position followed by Augustin of PAF.

In 470 Class category, all Gold, Silver and Bronze medals were clinched by PAF. Pazeem and Mubashir Ali won Gold medals, Zain Bin Yameen and Muhammad Abdullah got Silver and Daniyal Tanveer and Imran of PAF were awarded Bronze medals respectively. In Windsurfing RSX Class category, PAF also dominated by getting all three medals. Sami Ullah was awarded Gold medal, Naveed Iqbal won Silver and Muhammad Suleman claimed Bronze medal.

## Govt offers six seats to PDM from Balochistan

From Page 01

Supreme Court of Pakistan opined that the Senate election is held "under the Constitution" and thus cannot be conducted through an open ballot, as per the government's demand.

However, it also said that the secrecy of the ballot is not "absolute" and that the Election Commission of Pakistan can employ technology and seek help from federal agencies to ensure that the elections are held in a free and fair environment and guarded against any corruption.

The proposal also mirrors a similar arrangement made recently in the Punjab Assembly, where five candidates each from the PML-N and PTI and one candidate from the PML-Q were declared elected to the Senate seats by default.

The unusual result was the fruit of an understanding between the government and the opposition which saw them both withdraw their challengers to each others' seats in favour of a division of seats that was representative of the party positions in the province.

## Prince Philip transferred to second hospital

DNA

LONDON: Britain's Prince Philip has been transferred to a different hospital for infection treatment and heart condition tests, a Buckingham Palace statement said Monday. According to the statement, Philip was transferred to a second hospital, which is also located in central London, to continue treatment for an infection, "as well as undertake testing and observation for a pre-existing heart condition".

It added that the 99-year-old Duke of Edinburgh "remains comfortable and is responding to treatment", but is expected to remain in hospital until at least the end of the week. The duke's condition is not related to COVID-19, according to the Buckingham Palace. He was admitted to a London hospital about two weeks ago as a "precautionary measure" after feeling unwell. Prince Charles visited his father in the hospital last month and spent about 30 minutes together. Turning 100 in June, Philip retired from public duties in 2017 and rarely appears in public. He has been staying with the Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle since COVID-19 restrictions were first introduced in the country last year. Last month, Buckingham Palace confirmed the Queen and Philip had both received their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine.



ISLAMABAD: Leader of the house in Senate Dr Shahzad Waseem meeting President Dr Arif Alvi. – DNA

## Covid-19 case: Islamabad United, Gladiators match rescheduled

In the statement, the PCB said that the coronavirus test results of players from both squads have come back negative. "This is being done to ensure players from both sides get time to prepare for the game," it said

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: The match between Islamabad United and Quetta Gladiators has been postponed after a player from the United's squad tested positive for coronavirus on Monday, sources said.

The Pakistan Cricket Board, confirming to media, said

that the match will be played at the same time, 7pm tomorrow.

In the statement, the PCB said that the coronavirus test results of players from both squads have come back negative. "This is being done to ensure players from both sides get time to prepare for the game," it said.

Moreover, the PCB said

that the tickets for the match that have already been bought can be used to watch the match live tomorrow.

Following the incident, Ahmed asked everyone to remember him in their prayers, thanking people for their kind messages. "Thanks for all the kind messages, please keep me in your prayers, much needed

@IsbUnited @thePSL120, and please everyone stay safe," he said.

Meanwhile, after he tested positive for the virus, the other players were asked to wait at the hotel and as their rapid coronavirus tests were conducted.

In response to the development, Islamabad United confirmed that one of their players had tested positive,

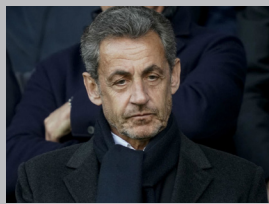
while all of the others players have been cleared to play.

"One of our players, Fawad Ahmed tested positive for Covid and was immediately put in isolation 2 days ago. All other Islamabad United players & members have tested negative & have been cleared to play," they said, wishing him a speedy recovery.

According to the PCB's protocol, Ahmed will remain in isolation until he returns with two negative results in 10 days time.

A night before the PSL 2021 kicked off on February 20, a player had tested positive for the coronavirus, the PCB had confirmed, adding that he had earlier showed symptoms of COVID-19 and stayed in isolation.

## Sarkozy found guilty of corruption, sentenced to prison



## FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: A Paris court has found Nicolas Sarkozy, France's former president, guilty of corruption and influence peddling, sentencing him to one year in prison and a two-year suspended sentence. The 66-year-old politician, who served as president from 2007 to 2012, was convicted on Monday for having tried to illegally obtain information from a senior magis-

trate in 2014 about a legal action in which he was involved. Prosecutors told the judges that Sarkozy had offered to secure a job in Monaco for judge Gilbert Azibert, in return for confidential information about an inquiry into allegations that he had accepted illegal payments from L'Oreal heiress Liliane Bettencourt for his 2007 presidential campaign. This came to light while they were wiretapping conversations between Sarkozy and his lawyer Thierry Herzog after the right-wing leader left office. The wiretapping was carried out in relation to another investigation into alleged Libyan financing of the same campaign.

## Joe Biden in 'no rush' to remove Venezuela sanctions

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: A White House official says the administration of President Joe Biden is in "no rush" to remove US sanctions against Venezuela, signaling the continuation of predecessor Donald Trump's unsuccessful goal of overthrowing the elected government of President Nicolas Maduro. While ruling out the lifting of sanctions, the official told in an interview on Sunday that the Biden administration would only consider easing the restrictions if Maduro took "serious steps" toward engaging with the opposition. "If the regime undertakes confidence-building measures that show that they're ready and willing to engage in real conversations with the opposition ... if they're ready to take serious steps, then we will consider the alleviation of sanctions," the official said, requesting anonymity. Without specifying what "serious steps" would entail, the official said

Maduro should not be allowed to use negotiations as a "delaying tactic" to consolidate his power.

The official claimed that the bans have enough special provisions to allow for humanitarian aid shipments to help the Latin American country cope with economic hardships and the COVID-19 pandemic. The assertion flies in the face of a recent study by a US government watchdog that said the sanctions imposed by the Trump administration have contributed to Venezuela's economic deterioration and caused obstacles for humanitarian workers.

However, the official said the Biden administration will continue to keep specific sanctions in place, including those targeting the OPEC member's oil sector, despite the failure to force Maduro from power.

In an apparent attempt to divert attention from the humanitarian cost of US sanctions, the official instead accused the Maduro government of "actively preventing the delivery of humanitarian assistance" to the public.

Venezuela descended into political turmoil after opposition figure Juan Guaidó, former president of the National Assembly, unilaterally declared himself "interim president" in January 2019, arguing that Maduro's reelection in 2018 was fraudulent.

With Washington's greenlight and help from a small number of rogue soldiers, Guaidó later launched a botched putsch against the elected government.

The Trump administration recognized Guaidó as the legitimate leader of Venezuela and publicly pursued a "regime change" policy against Maduro.

The Biden administration has reaffirmed US recognition of Guaidó as Venezuela's interim president and has ruled out negotiations with Maduro anytime soon.

Seeking to draw a contrast to Trump's go-it-alone approach, the White House official told Reuters that the new administration seeks to enlist more countries to help seek a diplomatic solution to Venezuela.

## Yemen donor conference seeks blns to prevent famine

## WEB DESK

NEW YORK: The United Nations has said it hopes to raise \$3.85bn to prevent large-scale famine in Yemen, warning that life in the war-ravaged nation was unbearable, with children enduring a "special kind of hell". More than 100 governments and donors will take part in a virtual donor conference on Monday – co-hosted by Sweden and Switzerland – as Yemen's Houthi rebels push to seize the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi's last northern stronghold of Marib.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed and millions pushed to the brink of famine since a Saudi-led coalition inter-

vened militarily in March 2015 in support of Hadi's internationally recognised government, which had been unseated by the Houthis. But with aid funding dropping in 2020 amid the coronavirus downturn, resulting in the closure of many humanitarian programmes, the situation in the country has become even worse.

The UN, which has described the situation in Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, and its partners received \$1.9bn last year – about half of what was required.

It called on Monday for "immediate funding" to support 16 million people in Yemen, where some two-thirds of the population is in need of some form of aid to survive.



RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Soud Abdurehman Al-Thani call on Ms. Zobiaida Jalal, Federal minister for defence production at ministry of defence production. – DNA

## China urges for political settlement of Afghanistan

He said that the Chinese side noticed the implementation of the peace agreement between the US and Taliban and the advance of the intra Afghan talks and also notice the relevant sides and the international concerns on the Afghan situation

BEIJING: China on Monday said that situation in Afghanistan was still severe and complex and called upon the relevant sides and international community to deal with the peace process in Afghanistan in a responsible and constructive manner and work for political settlement for early peace and solidarity in that country. "Now the situation is still severe and complex, and the intra Afghan talks are going forward to substantial negotiations. We believe the relevant

sides and international community should deal with it in a responsible and constructive manner and work for political settlement for the early realization of peace, solidarity and cooperation of Afghanistan," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing held here. He said that the Chinese side noticed the implementation of the peace agreement between the US and Taliban and the advance of the intra Afghan talks



and also notice the relevant sides and the international concerns on the Afghan situation.

"We support the Afghan led, Afghan owned inclusive, extensive and peaceful reconciliation process," he added. The spokesperson said that the Chinese side would continue respecting the will of all relevant sides, take an impartial stance and continue to be supporter, mediator and the convenience provider of this process, and "we will continue playing constructive role in this regard."

In response to a question on

the report of China's involvement in hacking India's power grid, he firmly opposed and rejected the report and said, "China is a staunch upholder of cyber security. We firmly oppose and fight any kind of cyber-attacks." He pointed out that it is hard to track the origin of the cyber-attacks, adding, "You cannot make wanton guesses or smear a specific country without any proof. This is irresponsible and ill intentioned. China firmly opposes such behaviour." – APP

## PSL-6 Fixture

Wednesday, March 3: Karachi Kings v Peshawar Zalmi (2pm); Quetta Gladiators v Multan Sultans (7pm)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Monday, March 22: Final (7pm)

## Senate polls thru secret ballots: SC

From Page 01 Pakistan (PLD 20123 SC 681)," it noted. The court stated that the ECP was required by the Constitution to take all necessary steps in order to fulfill the mandate/duty in terms of Article 222 of the Constitution, which empowers the Parliament, subject to the Constitution to legislate, inter alia, on the conduct of elections and matters relating to corrupt practices and other offences in connection with elections but categorically provides that, "no such law shall have the effect of taking away or abridging any of the powers of the Commissioner or the Election Commission" under Part VIII, Chapter 1 of the Constitution.

## Former FC Barcelona President arrested

MADRID: Former FC Barcelona President Josep Maria Bartomeu was arrested on Monday morning along with the club's General Manager, Oscar Gray and the former director to the Presidency, Jayme Masferrer as part of an investigation into a corruption scandal. The arrests happened as Catalan regional police searched the offices at the Camp Nou Stadium as part of an investigation into an affair known as 'Barcagate'. Barcagate broke in February when the Cadena Ser radio network revealed that the club had used an outside company called "13 Ventures" to criticize the club's players and rivals of the Board of Directors through a series of social media accounts. The payments to 13 Ventures are alleged to be six times the usual market price, with payments of around a million euros divided into smaller amounts in order to avoid internal controls. The online criticism is one reason for the breakdown of the relationship between Bartomeu and star player Leo Messi, who asked for a transfer last summer. FC Barcelona issued an official communique, saying they had "offered up their full collaboration to the legal and police authorities to help make clear facts which are subject to investigation." "The information and documentation requested by the judicial police force relate strictly to the facts relative to this case. "FC Barcelona express its utmost respect for the judicial process in place and for the principle of presumed innocence for the people affected within the remit of this investigation," reads the communique. – APP



## Briefs

**US deaths surpass 513,000, cases top 28.6M**

## MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: The total number of COVID-19 cases in the United States surpassed 28.6 million with over 513,000 deaths on Sunday, according to the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University.

The country's case count rose to 28,602,101 with 513,137 deaths as of 19:32 Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Sunday, according to the CSSE tally. US media said a nationwide telephone hotline and vaccine-appointment system for seasonal flu had been created in 2013 by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The system was originally designed to provide free information for people who are sick and reduce the stress of medical institutions. One year on since the COVID-19 hit the country, the system hasn't been applied to cope with the surging pandemic. Andrew Needleman, chief executive officer of a software company involved in the system, said that adopting this system could possibly ease the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines, even if it would only be applied in a small scale.

Since its establishment in 2013, the system has gone through tests for five years. In 2018, a vaccine booking service was added. In the summer of 2020, the entire system was tested again. However, it has remained out of operation during the pandemic. Needleman also said that it was a missed opportunity for not using the system during the pandemic, as it could book five million vaccination appointments per day.

**'Israel attacked areas around Damascus'**

## FOREIGN DESK

DAMASCUS: The Syrian army said on Sunday evening that Israeli-fired rockets struck parts of southern Damascus in escalating attacks that regional intelligence sources said target Iran-linked assets. A Syrian army statement said the attack came from the Golan Heights and that it had brought down most of the missiles, in the second such attack in less than a month on the outskirts of the capital. An Israeli military spokesman declined to comment on the report.

Israel has struck a wider range of targets than usual since the start of the year, including a major attack on Iranian-linked strongholds further east, near the Iraqi border. Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz on Friday said Israel was taking action "almost weekly" to prevent Iranian entrenchment in Syria. Regional intelligence sources said Iran's Quds Force and the militias it backs, whose presence has spread in Syria in recent years, have a strong presence in the Sayeda Zainab neighbourhood of southern Damascus where the militias have many underground bases.

**India urged to provide refuge to Rohingya Muslims**

## WEB DESK

LONDON: Human Rights Watch (HRW) has urged the Indian government to provide refuge to dozens of Rohingya Muslim asylum seekers who have been adrift in the Andaman Sea for more than two weeks. Although India's coast guard has reportedly repaired the vessel carrying the refugees and provided food, medical and technical aid to them, New Delhi has not permitted the boat to enter Indian waters, requesting its return to Bangladesh. Despite the alleged assistance, eight refugees have died and the 81 survivors are reported to be in bad health condition, suffering from extreme dehydration. The boat set off from southern Bangladesh almost two weeks ago in the hope of reaching Malaysia. Meenakshi Ganguly, the South Asia director of Human Rights Watch, said India should undertake its commitments as the closest country and provide protection for the survivors.



BAKU: World's first tanker museum opened in Surakhani, Baku President Ilham Aliyev and first lady Mehriban Aliyeva attended the event. – DNA

## Armenia: Protesters storm gov't building amid political crisis

It was ended in November when both sides signed a Russian-brokered peace deal. Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, even by Armenia, but has been dominated by ethnic Armenians since the early 1990s

## FOREIGN DESK

YEREVAN: Protesters have stormed a government building in the Armenian capital, escalating a months-long political crisis over Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's handling of last year's Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Demonstrators forced their way into the building in Yerevan on Monday to demand Pashinyan quits, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti reported. Social media footage, which Al Jazeera is attempting to verify, showed a few protesters in the building, one with a mega-

phone, as police watched on. Monday's drama comes after thousands participated in rival demonstrations in Yerevan on Thursday; anti-government crowds had called for the premier to resign, while Pashinyan managed to rally many supporters behind him on the streets. The street protests followed what Pashinyan described as an attempted coup after the army also called for his resignation. Anger is boiling as critics lament Pashinyan's management of the bloody six-week conflict with Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which killed thousands on both sides and saw swathes of

territory ceded to Azerbaijan. It was ended in November when both sides signed a Russian-brokered peace deal. Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, even by Armenia, but has been dominated by ethnic Armenians since the early 1990s. In response to the military's demand, Pashinyan dismissed Onik Gasparyan, chief of the army's General Staff, on Thursday. Armenian President Armen Sarkissian on Saturday refused to formally approve Gasparyan's sacking. Sarkissian said the move was unconstitutional and that the army should be kept out of politics.

Pashinyan retorted, saying on Facebook that the president's decision "doesn't contribute to the solution of the current situation at all". On Saturday, about 15,000 people rallied again in Yerevan seeking Pashinyan's resignation. The demonstrations against the 45-year-old had gone dormant for a spell in the depth of Armenia's winter. Further rival rallies were expected in Yerevan on Monday. Pashinyan, who came to power spearheading peaceful protests in 2018, has urged his supporters to gather in the capital's Republic Square. The opposition has called its own rally in another area of the city.

## Azerbaijan warns against Yerevan's revanchism policy

## DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Leyla Abdullayeva has said that Armenia's revanchist position might undermine the security and prosperity in this country. "If Armenia, as its Foreign Ministry representative said, takes the position of revanchism by modernizing its army, if this country still does not understand that decades of aggression and occupation have only resulted in hostility and discord, and if it does not draw conclusions from recent events, this country itself is drawing the line over the secure and prosperous future of its people," Abdullayeva said on February 28. Abdullayeva added that Azer-



baijan is always ready to ensure its territorial integrity and is able to prevent any threat. She reminded that as proved by the Patriotic War, Azerbaijan is always ready to ensure its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its international borders and is able to resolutely prevent any threats that potentially may emanate in this regard. Abdullayeva's statement came after the Armenian Foreign Ministry's comments on Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's speech at a presser on February 26. "While the President of the

Republic of Azerbaijan spoke at a press conference for the local and foreign media about the prospects for construction and cooperation in order to achieve security and peace in the region in the post-conflict period, the destructive approach and aggressive rhetoric presented by the Armenian side clearly demonstrate the malicious intention of official Yerevan," she said. On November 10, Baku and Yerevan signed a Moscow-brokered deal that brought an end to six weeks of fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani army declared a victory against the Armenian troops. The signed agreement obliged Armenia to withdraw its troops from the Azerbaijani lands that it has occupied since the early 1990

## Trump slams Biden's first month, rules out new party

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: Former US President Donald Trump slammed his successor Joe Biden on Sunday, claiming the Democratic leader had the most disastrous first month of any president in US history. "In one short month, we have gone from America First to America Last," Trump said at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) on Sunday, which marked his first major speech since leaving the White House. He called the Biden administration's policies "anti-jobs, anti-families, anti-border, anti-energy, anti-women and anti-science," adding "It took the new administration only a few weeks to turn this unprecedented accomplishment into a self-inflicted humanitarian and national security disaster." Trump, on the other hand, vehemently denied reports that he would establish his own

political party. "I am not starting a new party. That was fake news ... Wouldn't that be brilliant? Let's start a new party and let's divide our vote so that you can never win. No, we're not interested in that ... We have the Republican Party. It's going to unite and be stronger than ever before," he said. "For the next four years, the brave Republicans in this room will be at the heart of the effort to oppose the radical Democrats, the fake news media, and their toxic cancel culture," Trump continued. "And I want you to know that I am going to continue to fight right by your side," he added. A massive 59% of Republicans said they wanted Trump to play a major role in their party going forward, according to a poll by Politico and Morning Consult last month. Media reports in January claimed that Trump discussed forming a new political party with several aides, named the Patriot Party.

## No engagement with US without lifting sanctions: Iran

## WEB DESK

TEHRAN: Iran has reiterated that the US has to lift its inhuman sanctions on the Islamic Republic before the two sides could engage in any negotiations.

"Not only has Iran opened up the pathway towards diplomacy, it has also lip it up," Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told a press briefing in Tehran on Monday. He repeated a three-step pathway that Tehran has devised for Washington before the latter could find its way back to any negotiation featuring the

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA came about in Vienna in 2015 between Iran and the P5+1 group of countries – the US, the UK, France, Russia, and China plus Germany.

The US, however, left the deal three years later under president Donald Trump and returned the draconian economic sanctions that the accord had lifted. Washington's non-commitment and its European allies' subsequent violations of the JCPOA prompted Iran to take a number of nuclear countermeasures. Tehran has unequivocally asserted that it would only reverse its retaliatory steps in return

for an effective lifting of the sanctions. Referring to Trump successor Joe Biden's administration, Khatibzadeh said, "The course that the US has to take should feature putting the wrong policies of the previous administration behind." He also regretted that to date, the Biden team has not effected any changes in his predecessor's approach. "We respond to measures with measures, and actions with actions. We respond to positive measures with positive measures, and will respond proportionately if we see a different behavior on the part of the US and Europe," the spokesman noted.

## Suu Kyi hit with new charges as protesters rally again

Another charge was also added under a telecommunications law, the lawyer said, which stipulates that equipment needs a licence. The next hearing will be on March 15

## FOREIGN DESK

YANGON: Myanmar's deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi appeared in a court hearing via video link and was charged with additional criminal offences on Monday, as anti-coup protesters rallied across the country again in defiance of a security force crackdown that killed at least 18 people the previous day. The 75-year-old looked healthy as she took part in the court hearing from the capital, Naypyidaw, and asked to see her legal team, lawyer Min Min Soe told Reuters news agency. The leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD), which swept last November's now-annulled election, has not

been seen in public since her detention on February 1 when the military seized power, alleging widespread electoral fraud. Shortly afterwards, she was charged with illegally importing six walkie-talkie radios as well as violating a natural disaster law by staging a campaign rally during the coronavirus pandemic. A third charge, filed on Monday, was under a section of the colonial-era penal code prohibiting the publication of information that may "cause fear or alarm" or disrupt "public tranquillity", Min Min Soe said.

Another charge was also added under a telecommunications law, the lawyer said, which stipulates that equipment needs a licence. The next hearing will be on March 15. Khin Maung Zaw, a



second lawyer for the deposed leader, said her legal team had not been able to speak to her ahead of the hearing. Myanmar has been in chaos since the February 1 coup, which brought a halt to the country's tentative steps towards democracy after nearly 50 years

of military rule. It has drawn widespread international condemnation and hundreds of thousands of demonstrators onto the streets of cities and towns across Myanmar. As Aung San Suu Kyi appeared in court, police in Yangon fired tear gas and stun grenades to disperse protesters gathered at multiple locations throughout the city. Many of the protesters wore hard hats, while those at the front lines carried makeshift shields to protect themselves from security forces, who killed at least four people in Yangon and wounded dozens more the previous day. In the city's Kyauktada township, one protester was seen blocking out security cameras, while in other parts of Yangon, demon-

strators taped to the ground hundreds of pictures of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, bearing the words: "Shame on you, dictator, we will never forgive you." Crowds also marched in the second city of Mandalay, while live video on Facebook showed a small crowd of protesters gathered across a street in Lashio, Shan State, chanting slogans as police marched towards them. The new rallies came a day after the worst violence since the coup. Clashes took place in various parts of the country on Sunday, as police opened fire on crowds in Yangon, Mandalay, Dawei and other places after tear gas and warning shots failed to clear protesters demanding the restoration of Aung San Suu Kyi's government.

## Bangladesh called for overhaul of security law

DHAKA: Hundreds of Bangladeshi activists staged a fourth day of protests Monday over the death of a writer in detention as the UN rights chief called for a review of a digital security law used against opposition figures. Students tried to march to the home ministry in Dhaka demanding action over what they called the "murder" of Mushtaq Ahmed in a high-security jail, as well as the repeal of the Digital Security Act (DSA). Riot police stopped them 100 metres from the government complex that houses all major ministries. Ahmed, one of hundreds detained under the DSA since it was enacted in 2018, died last Thursday at a jail where he had been held since May. The protesters also demanded the release of more than a dozen activists detained during clashes with police since the death. Student leader Masud Rana said there could be a "revolt" against the government. More groups also planned protests during the day over the death of Ahmed, and to demand the release of cartoonist Ahmed Kabir Kishore, who was detained with the writer. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet on Monday urged Bangladesh to ensure a transparent probe into Ahmed's death. "There needs to be an overhaul of the Digital Security Act under which Ahmed was charged – and all those detained under this act for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and opinion must be released," she said in a statement. – APP

## Several arrested during raid at FC Barcelona: police

BARCELONA: Police raided the offices of FC Barcelona on Monday, carrying out several arrests just six days ahead of the club's presidential elections, a Catalan regional police spokesman told AFP. Spain's Cadena Ser radio said one of those arrested was former club president Josep Maria Bartomeu, who resigned in October, along with CEO Oskar Grau and the club's head of legal services. But the police refused to confirm names, saying only "arrests are taking place" and adding that the operation was being run by officers from the financial crimes unit. "We are in the process of carrying out an operation right now with agents of the financial crimes unit," the police spokesman told AFP. According to reports in the Spanish media, the operation is linked to last year's investigation into the 'BarcaGate' scandal, which saw the club deny hiring a company to criticise current and former players on social media to improve the image of the then-president Bartomeu. Cadena Ser said Barca paid one million euros in six separate invoices to the company B3 Ventures, with whom the club have since cut ties. – APP

## US, Russia warships dock in strategic Sudan port

PORT SUDAN: A US warship docked in Sudan Monday a day after a Russian frigate arrived in the same key Red Sea port where Moscow is planning to establish a naval logistics base. The arrival of the guided-missile destroyer USS Winston S. Churchill to Port Sudan follows Washington's delisting of Khartoum as state sponsors of terrorism, following the April 2019 ouster of strongman Omar al-Bashir. An expeditionary fast transport ship, the USNS Carson City, had already docked in the port on February 24, the "first US navy ship to visit Sudan in decades," the US embassy in Khartoum said in a statement at the time. It "highlights the willingness" of the US military to "strengthen their renewed partnership" with Sudan's armed forces, it added. The arrival of the USS Churchill was "the second (US) ship to stop in Sudan this week," said US Charge d'Affaires Brian Shukan. Its arrival, "sheds light on US support for a democratic transition in Sudan," Shukan added, in a message on Twitter. The USS Churchill docked shortly after Russia's Admiral Grigorievich frigate arrived in Port Sudan, where the Russian navy said "a logistical support base" would be created. The Admiral Grigorievich frigate would refuel and its crew rest after exercises in the Indian Ocean off Pakistan, the navy added. – APP



**Briefs**

**Turkey to keep supporting Afghan security**

DNA

ANKARA: Turkey will continue to contribute to the development and security of Afghanistan, the country's foreign minister said Monday. "We continue to contribute to the security of our brothers and sisters with the NATO mission providing training and equipment support to Afghan security forces," Mevlut Cavusoglu said during a reception marking the centenary of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Afghanistan via video link. "We will continue to stay in this country as long as our Afghan brothers want," Cavusoglu added. Turkey will maintain its contributions to peace efforts, which should be supported by economic development, he underlined. "In this context, making Afghanistan, located in the heart of Asia, the center of connectivity projects should be our main goal." On Dec. 16, 2020, the Turkish parliament approved a motion to extend the deployment of Turkish troops in Afghanistan for 18 months as part of NATO's support mission in the war-torn country. On Jan. 6, 2019, legislation was put into effect allowing the Turkish government to send troops to Afghanistan to support the NATO-led mission, Resolute Support.

**UAE's first envoy to Israel arrives in Tel Aviv**

DNA

JERUSALEM: The first ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Israel arrived in Tel Aviv on Monday after the two countries agreed to normalize their relations. The Israel in Arabic website, affiliated with the Israeli Foreign Ministry, said: "The first Emirati ambassador to Israel Mohammad Mahmoud Al Khajah arrived at Ben Gurion Airport." Al Khajah is expected to present his credentials to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin on Monday, according to the website. Last month, Al Khajah was sworn in as UAE's ambassador to Israel. On Sept. 15, 2020, Israel and the UAE signed agreements on the normalization of relations in an official ceremony held at the White House. Following this, the UAE's Cabinet approved on Jan. 24 the establishment of an embassy in Tel Aviv. Israel appointed Eitan Na'eh to head a temporary mission in Abu Dhabi until a permanent envoy is assigned.

**Sh Rashid terms SC's opinion as constitutional**

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid on Monday has termed the opinion of Supreme Court (SC) on presidential reference regarding Senate elections as constitutional and according to the law. Talking to a private news channel, the minister expressed hope that the Senate polls will become interesting now. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh will win from Islamabad whereas other provinces are considering the option of settlement, he claimed. The reaction came after SC, in its opinion on the presidential reference on open Senate vote, said that the elections in the upper house of the Parliament will be held through secret ballot under the article 226 of the Constitution of Pakistan. The apex court has directed Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to use latest technologies to stop corrupt practices and all institutions should assist ECP in holding the elections. It is to be mentioned here that a total of 170 candidates had filed their nomination papers in the ECP for the polls on 48 seats in the upper house of the Parliament.

**CNS lauds services of Air Chief Mujahid Anwar**

Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan paid a farewell visit to Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi at Naval Headquarters

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan paid a farewell visit to Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, Air Chief was received by the Naval Chief and a smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Navy presented him Guard of Honour. Thereafter, the dignity laid a floral wreath at the Shuhdas Monument. During the call-on, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi commended the



remarkable services of Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan for Pakistan and Pakistan Air Force during a long and illustrious career. The Naval Chief also highlighted the dynamic role played by Air Chief Marshal and acknowledged PAF's all-out support to Pakistan Navy in strengthening the maritime defence during his tenure of command to enhance the operational capabilities of sister services. Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan also thanked Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for his support and well wishes.

**Govt delegation visits ECP**

ISLAMABAD: A government delegation called on the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) at the election commission (ECP) here to express the government's stance in the context of the Supreme Court's opinion on the presidential reference. "In our meeting we urged for the steps to curb the corruption," Shafiqat Mehmood said a media talk after the meeting with the CEC. "We expressed the PTI stance in the election commission (ECP) and given reference of the court's five-member bench in Niaz Ahmed case," Babar Awan, Prime Minister's Adviser for Parliamentary Affairs said. "The election commission (ECP) has to take decision in view of the ground situation", Prime Minister's Adviser Babar Awan said. "The constitution demands an honest election," Awan said. "It is fair to remain loyal with the party that has awarded ticket for election," Babar Awan said. "It is decisive phase for election in Pakistan," he further said. "It is the government of Imran Khan that has referred the matter of election to the Supreme Court," Awan said. "The open ballot and an identifiable ballot was also the demand of the charter of democracy". "The election commission (ECP) should ensure transparent elections", the adviser said. "We have expressed our confidence over the election commission," another government minister Fawad Chaudhry said. "The vote will be secret for the political parties but not for the election commission," he said. "The ECP has been requested to enforce the decision of the Supreme Court in letter and spirit," the minister said. "Each and every vote in the election will be identifiable afterwards," he said. The government delegation earlier held a meeting with the CEC and presented stance over the Supreme Court's opinion on the presidential reference. The government delegation comprised of Babar Awan, Fawad Chaudhry, Shafiqat Mehmood, Shahzad Akbar, Faisal Javed and Shehbaz Gill. - DNA

**UAE welcomes LoC ceasefire**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation have welcomed the declaration of a ceasefire agreement between Pakistani and Indian armies across the LoC. In a statement received here, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation commended the efforts of the two countries to reach this achievement and said it gives weight to its relations with both India and Pakistan. The move, it said was an important step towards achieving security, stability and prosperity in the region. The ministry emphasized the importance of adhering to a permanent ceasefire between the two friendly countries to the benefit of both sides and committing to diplomatic means - through dialogue - to build bridges of confidence and establish a lasting peace that achieves the aspirations of both peoples.

**COVID-19 claims 36 more lives**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Monday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 22,098 with 1,392 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,094 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Thirty six corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 32 of them were under treatment in hospital and four in their respective quarantines and homes on Sunday, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO). During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in the Punjab followed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 18 percent, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 28 percent, Peshawar 18 percent and Lahore 34 percent. The maximum Oxygen beds (alternate oxygen providing facility other than ventilator administered as per medical requirement of COVID patient) was also occupied in four major areas of Gujrat 94 percent, Peshawar 37 percent, Lahore 24 percent and ICT 24 percent.

Around 206 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in the country while no COVID affected person was on ventilator in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Balochistan. Some 38,338 tests were conducted across the country on Sunday, including 10,057 in Sindh, 16,777 in Punjab, 6,344 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 3,907 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 383 in Balochistan, 330 in GB, and 540 in AJK. Around 546,371 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients.

**Exports crosses \$2b consecutively in 5 month, says Razak Dawood**

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood on Monday said that Pakistan's exports have crossed \$ 2 billion consecutively for the 5th month in current Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21. "Our exports for February, 2021 (28 days) stand at \$ 2,044 million as compared to \$ 2,140 million for February, 2020 (29 days), a decline of 4.5 percent, the Adviser said this on his official twitter account. Razak Dawood said that for last 8 months from July to February 2021 of the current financial year, our exports increased by 4.2 percent at \$ 16,300 million as compared to \$15,643 million during July to February 2020. "We wish to congratulate our exporters for their hard work in earning the foreign exchange for the country and urge them to market their exports even more aggressively, he said. - APP

**Pak Army team spirit competition kicks off**

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The 4th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit Competition 2021 commenced at the National Counter-Terrorism Center Pabbi near Kharian on Monday. Besides eight domestic teams of the Pakistan Army, teams from eight allied countries will participate in the competition, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). Teams from Jordan, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Uzbekistan will take part as participants whereas Morocco, Indonesia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan will be participating as observers in the three-day long competition. The competition is designed to test tactical skills in physical and professional domains as well as agility of the participating teams to generate responses in challenging real-time field scenarios. The 62-hour long event will subject the teams to various cross-domain scenarios and will encompass tasks including physical endurance, water obstacle crossing, close target reconnaissance and protective approach under chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear environment.

**Indian troops martyr six Kashmiris in February**

DNA

SRINAGAR: In occupied Kashmir, Indian troops, in their unabated acts of state terrorism, martyred six Kashmiris during the last month of February. According to the data issued by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, on Monday, of those killed three youth were martyred in a fake encounter. Sixty-three youth were arrested and as many as five people were injured after Indian police used brute force on peaceful protesters. The forces destroyed and damaged two houses during the month. Indian troops also disgraced and attempted to abduct a young girl during the month.

**Hundreds nominated for Nobel Peace Prize**

MUBASHAR BHATTI

OSLO: More than 300 people have been nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize, the Nobel Institute announced Monday, with climate activist Greta Thunberg and ex-US president Donald Trump among them. The total of 329 falls short of the record set in 2016, when the institute was faced with 376 nominations. The names of nominees are kept secret for at least 50 years, but sponsors - who include politicians, former laureates and university professors - may choose to make their choices public. Alongside Trump and Thunberg, known nominees this year include groups on the forefront of the pandemic fight including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Vaccine Alliance Gavi. "It has been a special year, marked by Covid, and it would have been surprising if this had not been reflected in the nature of the nominations," Nobel Institute director Olav Njohstad told AFP, declining to be more specific. Receiving a nomination for the prize does not mean endorsement by the Nobel Committee, which accepts all nominations from qualified sponsors. The committee, which will unveil its choice on October 8, awarded last year's prize to the World Food Programme (WFP). This year, other known nominees include press freedom NGOs such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Political activists like Svetlana Tikhanovskaya of Belarus and Russia's Alexei Navalny are also on the list.



RAWALPINDI: Troops of various countries taking part in military drills. - DNA

**Coronavirus hits PSL-6**

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The match between Islamabad United and Quetta Gladiators has been postponed after a player from the United's squad tested positive for coronavirus on Monday, sources said. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), confirming to media, said that the match will be played at the same time, 7pm tomorrow. In the statement, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said that the coronavirus test results of players from both squads have come back negative. "This is being done to ensure players from both sides get time to prepare for the game," it said. Moreover, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said that the tickets for the match that have already been bought can be used to watch the match live tomorrow. (Detailed News on Page 6)

**'Chinese brands to become biggest beneficiaries'**

Covid-19 epidemic in 2020 was the largest epidemic virus event since the Spanish Flu, in which about one billion people were infected and 2.5-5% of the world's people died

DNA

BEIJING: With countless hotel brands wiped out in China and other countries during the Covid-19 pandemic, the post-crisis business opportunities can also be anticipated, said Haoping Jiang, Co-Founder of UEASY/UFUN Hotels. "In my opinion, Chinese and Pakistani companies can work together to grasp the opportunities to share the benefits, Haoping Jiang said on Monday. Covid-19 epidemic in 2020 was the largest epidemic virus event since the Spanish Flu, in which about one billion people were infected and 2.5-5% of the world's people died. As a result, after a year has passed, countries in the world

have not yet resumed normal economic trade and population movement, he said in an interview. He said that the service industry undoubtedly hit the hardest, hotels being the first to be affected. This is a big black swan that Chinese brands have encountered in their rapid rise. Meanwhile, the Chinese market is also experiencing the innovations of the Internet, communication technology, artificial intelligence (AI), big data and other technologies. A hundred years later, pre-epidemic era and post-epidemic era may be used to record the historical changes in the history of Chinese hotels. Haoping Jiang informed that the service industry accounts for about 70-80% in the developed European and

American countries, but China did not exceed 50% until 2015. In other words, despite China's excellent performance during the epidemic, European and American countries still took a far harder hit than China even if the epidemic had the same impact on countries around the world. China beat other countries to recovery in the post-epidemic era and the technological revolution accelerated the process, it is fair to consider this moment as an inflection point for global service industry. Haoping Jiang said, "As a founder resolved to create a Chinese hotel brand to be remembered, we are lucky to witness the history and share some ideas with our peers. He observed that the compa-

nies go through several stages of development. The first stage is price competition. Companies gain access to a market by selling similar products at a lower price. This is the most initial stage of market competition. The second stage is product competition. Companies enhance their product superiority to gain competitiveness and markets in the competition of similar products; Chinese companies are generally at this stage. The third stage is brand competition. Companies provide products of different and standard brands with their product power to obtain the recognition of the market consumers. Many companies in China have begun to make huge profits at this stage. The fourth stage is

culture competition. Companies build a unique culture with their own efforts, and also contribute to the development of the industry. A company can be larger in the first two stages, stronger in the third stage, and longer in the last two stages. He said that many companies can think about building their own style and culture in business and making contributions to the industry. Only planning for the long term with strategic thinking can a company become the irreplaceable choice of consumers. "In the coming long time, we will take the opportunities to make intensive studies with our partners in these industries, and we also welcome more like-minded friends to join us," he said.