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Amb. Akan appointed the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan

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Pakistan has a great potential for tourism

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Briefs

Pakistan expresses solidarity with Jordan

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday expressed complete solidarity with Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. A statement from foreign office said that Pakistan is following the situation in Jordan. "We stand in solidarity with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, led by His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein". It further added that Pakistan fully supports the right of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to preserve its security, stability and sovereignty.

Maryam awaits Covid result

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz's health has deteriorated once again and she has undergone corona test again. Sources privy to the PML-N said that Maryam Nawaz is awaiting her corona test report, however, she is undergoing treatment and will take part in political activities once her health improved. It is pertinent here to mention that Maryam Nawaz had cancelled all kinds of political activities in view of her deteriorating health condition after contracting high fever.

Shadab ruled out of upcoming tours

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan all-rounder Shadab Khan will miss the rest of the tour of South Africa and the tour of Zimbabwe due to a toe injury, the PCB said on Monday. The 22-year-old spinner will be sidelined for up to four weeks after injuring his left toe while batting during the second one-day in Johannesburg, which South Africa won by 17 runs to level the three-match series. "X-rays conducted following the match revealed an 'intra articular communicated fracture' though there is neither any displacement nor angulation," the PCB said in a statement.

PML-N, PPP trade barbs in Senate

Five parties demand allotment of separate Opposition benches

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Opposition parties in the anti-government coalition Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) clashed in the first formal Senate session on Monday. Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani chaired the first sitting. Five opposition parties in the Senate, who had earlier decided to constitute an independent group in the House consisting of 27 members, demanded they be allotted separate opposition benches in the Senate. These parties are PML-N, JUI-F, Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, National Party and BNP (Mengal). The group is being led by the PML-N designated opposition leader Senator Azam Nazir Tarrar. "We should be allotted separate opposition benches and the hidden cameras [in the Senate elections] should be investigated," Senator Tarrar said. Senators supporting Opposition leader Yousaf Raza Gillani protested Tarrar's remarks. Government members, too, protested when senators from the

PDM serves show cause notices to PPP, ANP

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) has served show cause notices to the PPP and the ANP (Awami National Party), it emerged on Monday. The development was confirmed by PDM secretary general and PML-N stalwart Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. It was not yet clear on what grounds the notices were issued, but earlier this week it was reported that they would be sent for not attending the alliance meeting on April 2 and violating its decision. Speaking to media, Abbasi said that the show cause notices have been issued after

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Russian FM arrives today

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, will pay an official visit to Pakistan on 6-7 April 2021. The Russian Foreign Minister will have delegation-level talks with Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. He will call on Prime Minister Imran Khan and have interaction with other dignitaries. During the talks between the two Foreign Ministers, the entire gamut of Pakistan-Russia relations will be reviewed and ways discussed to further broaden and deepen bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. The two Foreign Ministers will also exchange views on regional and international issues. Foreign Minister Lavrov's visit is part of the growing interaction and regular high-level exchanges between Pakistan and the Russian Federation. Earlier, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met Foreign Minister Lavrov on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Bishkek in June 2019 and the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting in Moscow in September 2020.



Pakistan and Russia enjoy friendly and cooperative relations based on mutual respect, trust and understanding. Bilateral cooperation is growing across a wide range of areas of common interest including in security and defence, counter-terrorism, and the Afghan peace process. Over the recent past, deepening collaboration in economic, trade and energy sectors has been the focus of the two governments. The visit of Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will contribute to further deepening of the multifaceted bilateral relationship and enhancing mutual understanding on regional and global issues.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan Matsuda Kuninori calls on Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Yemen Mohammed Motahar Ali-Shabi meeting with Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Saeed Al Maliky. - DNA

Amb. Akan appointed Deputy FM Kazakhstan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: By the order of the Head of State of Kazakhstan, Akan Rakhmetullin, the Ambassador of Kazakhstan in Pakistan has been appointed as Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Ambassador Akan shall soon take charge of his new assignment. During his tenure as Ambassador of Kazakhstan Ambassador Akan contributed greatly towards promotion and strengthening of bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

Citizens above 80 to be vaccinated at home

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior citizens aged above 80 in Punjab and Islamabad will be vaccinated at their homes, said the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) chief Asad Umar on Monday. Speaking to a private channel, Asad Umar revealed that the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) took the decision in a meeting today. "We have urged other provinces to vaccinate senior citizens at their homes too," he said, adding that provinces can take up the matter according to their own convenience. Umar said the move to vaccinate senior citizens at home will begin in the next two days. The government has decided to take the initiative since it is quite difficult for old people to stand in long queues to get vaccinated, especially since summers have also begun.

PM wants government triumphs highlighted

The premier said the government was taking "serious" steps to curb inflation

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has called upon spokespersons to highlight the government's achievements so far, stressing that the government's performance will be visible to the masses in the days to come. The prime minister's comments came during a meeting he chaired of the party's spokespersons,

PM Imran directs to devise IT strategy

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed the authorities concerned to finalize short, medium and long-term strategy based on timelines for development of IT sector. Chairing a meeting in Islamabad on Monday on promotion of IT sector in the country, he emphasized on early implementation of the strategy. The Prime Minister said Pakistan has immense potential in IT sector.

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Shahzad Waseem asks Opp to cooperate for electoral reforms

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in the Senate Shahzad Waseem has urged the opposition parties in the House to work for a unanimous stance on electoral reforms. Speaking on the floor at the beginning of new parlia-



mentary year of the Senate, he said electoral reforms are the only way forward in resolving issues about elections. Shahzad Waseem said the opposition should play its constructive role for betterment in the country. He said constructive criticism is the essence of

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Japanese grant for Taxila Museum

Japanese development consultants visited Pakistan from March 15 to April 3 despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic to conduct onsite research and hearings

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Upon request from the Government of Punjab, Tourism Department, the Government of Japan is considering providing cultural grant assistance for the improvement of equipment for exhibition and conservation in the Taxila Museum which stores the rich cultural heritage of ancient Gandhara civilization. For this purpose, Japanese development consultants visited Pakistan from March 15 to April 3 despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic to conduct onsite research

and hearings. Based on series of discussions and onsite survey in the museum, the consultants identified necessary equipment for better exhibition and conservation of excavated items from the Gandhara archaeological sites. While admiring the rich cultural heritage of ancient Gandhara civilization in Taxila, H.E. Mr. MATSUDA Kuninori, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, has said that



the visit of the Japanese onsite research team is very important to pave the way for seeking approval of cultural grant assistance from the Japanese government. "With the post-corona world in sight, Japan supports Pakistan in promoting the exhibition and conservation of the Gandhara Buddhist heritage and attract more tourists to Pakistan in the future", said the Ambassador. He further added that Pakistan has a great potential for tourism and that the ancient Gandhara civilization is very close to the heart of the Japanese people.

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Briefs

2 suspects held during search operation

DNA

SARGODHA: Police on Monday arrested two suspects and recovered weapons during house-to-house search operation launched here in Jhal Chakiyan police limits.

According to police, on the directions of DPO Zulfiqar Ahmed, the police along with other law-enforcement agencies officials conducted bio-metric identification of more than 30 people and 20 houses of chak no.36 NB and its surroundings and arrested two outlaws on the charges of holding weapons. Further investigation was underway.

Woman shot dead

A woman was shot dead over matrimonial issue, in the precincts of Quaidabad police station on Monday. According to police, Meroz of Dhokari village wanted to marry Fatima, 24, but her father refused to do so. In a fit of grudge, Meroz along with Ahmed Sher allegedly shot Fatima dead and fled the scene.

SITE-SSGC agree to form working group

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: SITE Association of Industry and SSGC have agreed in principle to form a Working Group. The very purpose of the Working Group is to get detailed awareness about the gas related issues, being faced by the industries of SITE area which is the oldest & largest industrial zone of Pakistan. The Working Group will also suggest measures to resolve such issues on permanent basis.

SSGC Managing Director Imran Maniar, on the occasion of his visit to SITE Association of Industry, has assured the industrialists of SITE area of full support and cooperation in continuing industrial production without interruption. Patron-in-Chief Zubair Motiwala, President Abdul Hadi, Riaz uddin, SVP, Abdul Kadir Bilawani, VP, Ex-Presidents Jawed Bilwani, Saleem Parekh and Younus Bashir and DMD of SSGC Saeed Ahmed Larik and other high officials were also present on this occasion. Patron-in-Chief Zubair Motiwala, President Abdul Hadi, Ex-Presidents Jawed Bilwani, Saleem Parekh and Younus Bashir drew attention of MD SSGC towards complaints of zero pressure in SITE area and stated that to continue industrial production, industries need gas with required pressure which, unfortunately, is not being provided to SITE industries which is a big hurdle in industrial production. "The Advisors of the Prime Minister had assured in meetings that unless industries are provided with required electricity load, their gas connection shall not be disconnected. However, contrary to it, the gas connections of a number of industries of SITE area have been disconnected which has badly effected industrial production. As such, the disconnected connections should be restored immediately and gas should be provided with required pressure so as to ensure timely shipments of export orders", they pointed out.

SHO among 9 suspended

FAISALABAD: The City Police Officer (CPO) Faisalabad has suspended nine police officers including a station house officer (SHO) Dijkot police station on the charge of abusing his powers, delinquency and negligence.

A police spokesman said on Monday that CPO Sohail Chaudhry, during a meeting, found performance of nine police officials including SHO Dijkot Sub-Inspector Umar Sarfraz, in-charge HIU Sub-Inspector Muhammad Sarfraz, constables Taimoor Ali, Irfan Qaisar, Abdul Khaliq, Nadeem Hussain, Asif Pervaiz, Sarfraz Ahmad and Azmat Khan, very poor.

He also found out that these officials had been abusing their powers. Therefore, the CPO suspended these employees. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs meeting regarding promotion of IT Sector in the country. - DNA

Dist. administration failed to control environmental pollution

It is mentioned with deep sorrow that the harmful smoke emitting industries not only causing the environmental pollution but also major reasons in choking the sewerage system by throwing the waste into sewerag lines

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: District Administration has miserably failed to control the environmental pollution in the city area and the people are forced to lead very difficult life as they are suffering from different harmful diseases of lungs, heart, kidney, hepatitis and eyes. The citizens demanded the district administration to shift the sizing, chemical and other industries outside residential areas because there are emitting injurious smoke which is serious threat to the human health as the taking of breath is not easy in this hazardous environment. It is reportedly alleged the staff of Metropolitan Municipal Corporation, Faisalabad Development Authority, WASA, local Environmental Protection Department, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner officer taking monthly bribe for closing their eyes from the chronic issue facing citizens. These corrupt elements are playing the life of the citizens in lieu



of redressing the longstanding serious problem of pollution creating by the different industries in residential localities. It is mentioned with deep sorrow that the harmful smoke emitting industries not only causing the environmental pollution but also major reasons in choking the sewerage system by throwing the waste into sewerag lines.

At present, the people are facing serious threat of corona virus and the other side the lungs of citizens are open to becoming the victim of environmental pollution. A number of industrial units are working at the residential areas of Maqbool road, Sargodha road, Jhumra road, Summandri road, Chilean road, Jhang road, Mansoor Abad

and other residential colonies where million of people are residing. It is lamented that the incidents of boiler blasts, discharging of injurious and lethal gas, building collapse were occurred and a number of human lives had been lost due the these incidents but the district administration and concern departments has turned deaf ears to ignore

the environment issues. The owners of these industrial units leading joyful life at their form house away from the busy city and continuing their business by creating environmental pollution with the convenc of government departments staff. The huminty is dying with whinging. It is demanded to Commissioner, Deputy Commission-

er and other authorities to take immediate action against the elements causing environmental pollution to save the huminty.

Wheat procurement drive to start soon

The wheat procurement drive will start very soon in Faisalabad division to purchase wheat direct from the growers at government fixed rate. Talking to media here on Monday, Deputy Director Food Ahmad Raza Sipra said that all necessary arrangements were being finalized to kick start wheat procurement drive in the division. In this connection, wheat procurement centers will remain functional across the division even during weekly off days from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

The center incharge will be authorized to issue 500 gunny bags to wheat growers while 1000 bags of Bardana will be issued by Deputy Food Controller. He said that wheat would be purchased direct from growers at govt rate and middlemen would not be allowed to play their role.

CDA to provide better facilities in F-9 Park

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), special instructions to take various measures to provide better facilities to the citizens in F-9 Park. Orders have been issued from the administration, installation of cameras to improve security, construction of new washrooms, planting of seasonal flowers and other improvements. Member Finance and Member Admin paid a detailed visit to F-9 Park and reviewed the facilities provided to the citizens. During the visit, they issued orders to further improve F-9 Park. He directed that beautiful flowers should be planted along the jogging track to make it more beautiful, tennis courts in the park should be constructed and repaired immediately and three new washrooms should be constructed in the park and water should be provided there. - Staff Report

Public hails administration of district Jail Sargodha

MEHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: The performance of Superintendent Jail Javed Iqbal Kachhi and Deputy Superintendent Muhammad Imran Butt posted in District Jail Sargodha and all the staff of the jail was appreciated by the families of the inmates. They said that all the staff is performing their duties in an efficient manner.

All kinds of facilities are being provided to the inmates in the jail. The relatives of the prisoners do not face any inconvenience. The Superintendent of Jail does not cause any inconvenience to the inmates and every effort is made to solve their problems. Cleaning and food arrangements are also good for the prisoners. The relatives of the prisoners who visit them are informed about the coro-

nation and the relatives of the prisoners are not allowed to enter the jail without masks. All the staff of the District Jail are performing their duties efficiently.

Hospitals beds running out in Sargodha

Dr. Sikandar Hayat Warrach, in-charge of Civil Hospital Sargodha, while talking to correspondent Daily Islamabad Post, said that 40 patients of Corona have been

admitted in Civil Hospital while 10 patients of Corona have been admitted in TB Hospital in Sargodha district. Out of a total of 50 patients, 15 are in critical condition. He further said that there is no space for more patients in our hospital as there are 40 beds in the hospital while there are 10 beds in TB hospital. We are trying to get the patients with corona to recover as soon as possible.

Ceremony of Food Distribution Project Ramadan in Balochistan Province 2021



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Production Zobaida Jalal at launching ceremony of Food Distribution Project Ramadan in Balochistan Province 2021. Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malki, delivered gifts. - DNA

Archroma, NED join hands to promote research in textiles

DNA

KARACHI: Archroma, a global leader in specialty chemicals towards sustainable solutions, today announced that it has signed a memorandum of understanding with NED University of Engineering & Technology (NED) in Pakistan. The memorandum will pave way for cooperation initially for a five-year period. The partnership will explore innovations in upscaling textile research with futuristic visualization enabling textile

industry in Pakistan to align itself with the fast pace of global advancements. Another important aspect of this collaboration will be research in other fields of engineering i.e. chemistry, civil and industrial.

Both partners will hold joint sessions to prepare students for challenges of the industry through in-house training sessions, developmental projects, research in textile applications and process innovative methodologies by pioneering value additions.

UNGCNP calls for mobilizing private sector

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The UN Global Compact Network Pakistan organized the GENCNP Summit Pakistan under the theme "Elevating ambition in Pakistan for greater collective action on SDGs" during which multiple panel sessions were held to reflect official prequel event of the UN Global Compact Leaders' Summit 2021.

In the first business session on "Unstoppable Women" co-hosted with Interloop, Ms. Sadia Naveed, Deputy Managing Director, EBM was the keynote speaker while the panel session included Ms. Tara Uzra Dawood, CEO Ladies Fund, Ms. Aliza Ayaz, UN Youth Ambassador & Chair Climate Action, Zareen Qureshi, Executive Director Charter for Compassion Pakistan, Huma Adnan, Fashion Designer - Visionary - Entrepreneur & CEO Funk Asia and Iftikhar Butt, CEO

Momentum Logistics (Pvt) Limited. This session highlighted the importance of Gender Equality and recognized the strong women who are role models for the society due to their determination to walk on the high road of success.

In the next session Ms. Fatima Fahad Malik and Iqra Bawany talked about Cohort that has been launched to promote Girl 2030: Breaking Barriers for Girls and

invited companies to fully support the program. The next session on "The Future is Now! Gen Z- this is our Time" which was Co Hosted with English Biscuits Manufacturers, gave the floor to the youth for sharing their inspirational stories of challenges and opportunities in entrepreneurship. The panel comprised of Salman Tariq, Entrepreneur & Co-founder Davaam Life, Zehrish Khanzadi, Program

Manager, Gender Interactive Alliance, Sarfaraz Hussain, Co-Founder YPay Financial Service, Muskan Siraj Co-Founder & Chief Product Officer at Sewistic, Saad Allahwala, Director the Startup Grind, and Shirin Mehri, Program Manager, Pakistan Business Council. The Power Session with seniors from Industries included Firzan Hashim, Executive Director Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Man-

agement, Atif Bin Arif, Co-Founder & CEO MyGhar Technologies, and Aaminah Saeed, DGM Marketing in the panel. The discussion gave a strong message to the future generation on their promises to make the world a better place to live in. The session on "Climate Action: Net Zero" co-hosted with PARCO was addressed by Salman Zakir, Head of Communication who highlighted the efforts made by PARCO in achieving the goal on Climate Action. Dr. Ayaz Hussain from Child Field Office UNICEF speaking on the "Pakistan Context in Reshaping the Narrative" described the initiatives taken by UNICEF in promoting children's rights and called upon the private sector to play their positive role for improving the child narrative in Pakistan. In the concluding session "Living the Global Compact" Best Practices Sustainability Awards 2020 were conferred on the winning companies.



Govt urged to address private schools

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) Mian Tariq Misbah on Monday assured All Pakistan Private Schools Association (APPSA) that their issues would be taken up with the concerned government departments.

He was talking to the APPSA delegation led by Kashif Mirza here at Lahore Chamber where the LCCI Executive Committee member Mian Maqbool Siddique also spoke on the occasion. The LCCI President said that third wave of Covid was also affecting kids as well that was why government had closed the schools. He urged the government to address genuine reservations of the private schools owners.

President of All Pakistan Private Schools Association Kashif Mirza said that due to Covid, the whole education system was discontinued.

He said that 25 million students out of 50 million students were not going to schools, adding that due to lack of resources only one million students were able to avail online education. He said that many schools were closed down permanently and a large number of teachers had left their profession.

Executive Committee Member Mian Maqbool Siddique said that closing of schools also resulted in closure of allied fields such as printing and publication etc.

3 held for possessing fake currency notes

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: City Jaranwala police on Monday arrested a couple and a van driver for possessing counterfeit currency.

The police at a picket near Jhal Bridge intercepted a van (LEF-6560) and found counterfeit currency notes of Rs 96,000 from a couple travelling in the vehicle. The police arrested Ejaz Ahmad and his wife residents of Safdarabad, Sheikhupura and van driver Shafaqat of Madina Town Faisalabad. During the interrogation, the couple confessed of dealing in fake currency since long. A case has been registered against the accused. Further investigation was underway.

Two held with narcotics
Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) claimed on Monday to have seized narcotics from two drug traffickers in separate raids.

On a tip-off, a team of ANF conducted raid at Sheikhupura Road near Jattwala and arrested Ahmad Khan of Mandi Bahauddin and recovered 7 kg hashish from his van.

In another raid, the ANF arrested Shah Fahad of Hafizabad from Motorway Toll Plaza with 1 kg heroin. Cases have been registered against the accused. Further investigation was underway.

26 shops sealed over SOPs breach

DNA

LAHORE: The city district administration sealed 26 shops, restaurants, marriage halls and imposed heavy fines over violations of coronavirus related Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) here on Monday.

According to spokesperson of district administration, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Model Town Ibrahim Arbab sealed three branches of Rizwan burger at Main Market over SoPs violation. Meanwhile, AC City Faizan Ahmed sealed 22 shops, restaurants and a marriage hall in his jurisdiction.

The teams also inspected public and private transport vehicles and ordered transporters/drivers to follow coronavirus SoPs strictly. Meanwhile, a special team under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Shalimar Mansoor Ahmed Qazi sealed four shops and arrested six person over selling sugar on high rates. He imposed fines amounting to Rs 40,000 in Harbanspura, Tajpura and Butt chowk bazaar areas.

Briefs

PTA launches CERT Portal for Telecom Industry

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has launched Computer Emergency Readiness Team (CERT) / Coordination Center Portal (<https://sec.pta.gov.pk>) for the Pakistan Telecom Sector.

PTA has introduced the CERT portal for its licensees, in continuation to its efforts to improve security posture of Pakistan Telecom Sector and to protect and safeguard National Critical Telecom Data and Infrastructure, said a press release. This initiative will enable PTA and its licensees to share Threat Intelligence with each other to achieve regulatory compliance of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Cyber Security regulations.

This portal has been established after close coordination and input from the telecom operators. Primarily, this portal will facilitate information sharing and exchange between Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and telecom service providers on latest cyber security threats, incidents, vulnerabilities, security news and other related information. Continual improvements in portal will be carried out based on operational requirements.

IESCO issues power suspension schedule

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule:

On Dated 6th April From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM Sangjani, Pind Parian, Paswal, Shah Allah Ditta, Dharik, Bhan Bhola, Burhan, Haro, Ghauri, Boi Garh, Salar Gah, Sector 1 & 2, PM Colony, POF Sanjwal, D.I.Colony, Attock Rural, Shakar Dara, SDW Colony, DEC, Khanabad, Munirabad, Lalazar, Lala Rukh, and surrounding areas from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM Kot Sarang, Dhok Pathan, Thahi Feeders From 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM Capt. Nisar Shaheed, MES 1&2, Binnie, Mangla Cantt Feeders From 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Syed Kasran, Qutbal, Rama Feeders From 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Lehtar, Bilwara, Caror, Kotli Sattian Feeders From 7:00 AM to 10:30 AM CWO, Major Riaz New, Dharijala Jalap, Rawal, Sugharpur, Abdullahpur Feeders From 03:00 PM to 06:00 PM CWO, Major Riaz New, Dharijala Jalap, Rawal, Sugharpur, Abdullahpur Feeders and surrounding areas will remain without power. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

ATC grants bail to 5 lawyers in IHC attack case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) on Monday granted bail to five lawyers involved in Islamabad High Court (IHC) building attack case.

ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan announced the decision after listening arguments from both the sides at large. The five lawyers including Khalid Mehmood, Mudassar Rizwan, Fazal Iahi, Akhter Hussain and Ayub Arba were granted post arrest bail against surety bonds worth Rs50,000 each. However, the hearing on bail petitions of Tasaduq Hanif and Hamad Saeed Dar was adjourned till April 7.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi during question & answer session with the participants of 22nd National Security Workshop at Naval Headquarters. – DNA



Police recover liquor, hashish

RAJA PERVAIZ

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police in their ongoing drive against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other lawbreakers conducted raids in different areas and arrested two accused, a drug peddler and one bootlegger besides recovering over two kg charras and 22 bottles of liquor from their possession.

According to a police spokesman, Kahuta police rounded up a drug peddler named Muhammad Hafeez and recovered 2010 grams charras from his possession while 22 bottles of liquor were recovered from the possession of Waqar Masih, a bootlegger. Mandra police recovered 7500 grams charras and 3700 grams opium from a suspicious unattended vehicle parked in Dhoke Waziran in jurisdiction of the police station. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused under Narcotics Control Act while further investigations are underway.

IRSA advisory committee to meet Thursday

ISLAMABAD: The Advisory Committee of IRSA would meet on April 8 for approval of anticipated water availability for Kharif season 2021. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting would be conducted on line via "Zoom", said a notification issued here Monday. The Chairman IRSA would preside over the meeting. Secretaries Irrigation and Agriculture of Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa provinces, officials of WAPDA and Ministry of Water Resources, Met Office would participate in the meeting. – APP

ICCI assures support for promoting mission of PSH

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, ICCI lauded the role of Zamurad Khan for turning Pakistan Sweet Home into a strong and growing institution and assured that the business community will extend financial and moral support to his institution

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Zamurad Khan, Patron-in-Chief, Pakistan Sweet Home (PSH) said that taking care of orphan children and arranging quality education for them was highest mission of his life and stressed that the business community should fully cooperate with him in this noble cause as partnering with this mission was very rewarding for them in this world as well as in the life after death. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry along with a team of PSH children. He said that 200 children of PSH were now studying in Siddique Public School and all were selected purely on merit. He offered to make sitting President ICCI as one of directors of PSH so that the business community could contribute in running its day to day affairs. He said that PSH had taken a humble start and now its network has grown to many parts of the country. He thanked all former Presidents and members of ICCI for their cooperation with PSH and said that this institution needed their regular support for



further growth and expansion. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) lauded the role of Zamurad Khan for turning Pakistan Sweet Home into a strong and growing institution and assured that the business

community will extend financial and moral support to his institution. He said that a mechanism would be developed to provide regular financial support to Pakistan Sweet Homes and other public welfare-oriented organizations from CSR fund of ICCI. He said that other major chambers of commerce

and industry would also be taken on board for extending financial support to PSH so that it could further expand its network. He said that ICCI was ready to provide career counselling and internships to the children of PSH so that they could get practical experience of theoretical knowledge. He also shared his experiences and provided useful tips to the children of PSH for achieving a successful career in life.

Mian Akram Farid, Chairman, Founder Group paid tribute to Zamurad Khan for his services to the children of PSH and assured him that the business community would extend support to him in his noble mission. He said that he would also cooperate in imparting technical and vocational training to the children of PSH so that they could play an effective role in the industrial development and economic growth of the country. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Naveed Malik and others also paid tribute to the services of Zamurad Khan for taking good care of orphan children and assured him that the business community would continue to provide support to him in this noble cause.

NAVTTC's initiative on agri based trainings lauded

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar and Ms. Shandana Gulzar Khan, Member National Assembly on Monday visited the NAVTTC Headquarters. Chairman NAVTTC, Syed Javed Hassan welcomed them and Dr. Nasir Khan, Executive Director, NAVTTC briefed them on progress and development of ongoing "Hunarmand Pakistan" (Skills for All) Programme. "NAVTTC's initiatives under the umbrella of Prime Minister's Hunarmand Pakistan Programme would

not only change the TVET landscape in Pakistan by bringing it at par with international standards but further enhance the employability of our youth in the international market thus increasing the image of Pakistani skilled workers worldwide and giving huge boost in foreign remittances", Chairman NAVTTC added. Muhammad Usman Dar said that the government is making serious efforts for youth inclusivity in the economic development of the country. "Investing in our youth in terms of capacity building for the matching jobs market is our prime objective. Our focus is on imparting

relevant and required skills to our youth," Dar said during the briefing session." Moreover, he appreciated the initiative of NAVTTC to introduce agriculture based training programs and highlighted the need to further expand the scope of the skill development of youth in emerging agriculture sector technologies. Commenting on the NAVTTC's initiatives Usman Dar said that well planned and timely implementation of such programmes will contribute in achieving the desired goals of producing highly qualified and skilled youth and in improving the image of Pakistan's TEVT sector globally.

Excise dept issues new guideline

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Excise and Taxation department has issued new guidelines with strict precautionary measures to contain the third wave of coronavirus pandemic. Applicants having online appointment were being entertained for new registration of vehicles and transfer of ownership, said Director Bilal Azam on Monday. Talking to media, he said all leasing companies/Banks could send only one nominated focal person for the new registration of vehicles. The applicants might avail door to door service for vehicle registration and transfer of ownership through contact No. 051-90395386 and 051-2775386.

He said those coming for collection of smart card were asked to check the delivery status of their smart card on excise website before visiting the office. Timing would be observed for delivery of registration cards from 03:00pm to 07:00pm. To a query, Azam said token tax were being collected through online means like 'City Islamabad app' mobile bank app or via ATM. All Registered Motor Vehicles Dealers having at least 10 or more files for new registration or transfer of ownership might also avail the door to door facility after booking an online appointment, he added.

SC dismisses Al-Khair University students' appeals for verification

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday dismissed the Al-Khair University Rawalpindi campus students' appeals for verification of degrees. A three-member bench comprising Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah and Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan heard different appeals of students of Al-Khair University Rawalpindi Campus seeking recognition and equivalence of

degrees by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). At the outset of hearing, the court ruled that the HEC could not verify Al-Khair University degrees. Advocate Munawar Dogal said the HEC should stop Al-Khair University from admissions. He pleaded the court to sought reply from the HEC as future of students was at stake. Justice Sajjad Ali Shah said Al-Khair University was in Azad Kashmir. Azad Kashmir was an independent state with its own

rules, he added. He asked how the HEC could interfere in the affairs of Azad Kashmir Justice Bandial observed that students deliberately enrolled despite the ban on Al-Khair University campuses. If the apex court declared the degrees of one campus valid, thousands of people would come to the courts, he added. He asked could anyone from the United States or the United Kingdom get their degree certified by the HEC.

Schools closure: Important NCOC meeting today

SHAJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre will meet today (Tuesday) to decide on the fate of schools in Pakistan amid the third coronavirus wave. The meeting will be attended by the federal and provincial education ministers. "Education and Health Ministers will meet at the NCOC Tuesday to decide whether to open or further close educational institutions," Federal Education Minister Shafiqat Mahmood tweeted on Sunday. "The exam situation will

also be discussed." The minister said that a decision will be taken considering the virus situation of the country and after consultation with the health ministry. In the last NCOC meeting on March 24, the education ministry closed educational institutions in virus hot-spots of Islamabad, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa till April 11. All educational institutions across the country were closed in late February 2020 after coronavirus cases began to rise. They were reopened in phases starting September 15, 2020. On November 23, 2020, after the second wave of coronavirus cases hit the country, the government

announced that all educational institutions would close again from November 26, 2020. Classes were taken online till December 24, 2020, and winter vacations started from December 25, 2020, and were supposed to last till January 10. The government said it would hold a meeting to review the decision to reopen schools on January 4. The NCOC then decided that schools would reopen in phases with classes nine to 12 being the first to reopen on January 18. On March 10, the government closed schools in Punjab, Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for two weeks in light of the third wave of the coronavirus.

AIOU commences final exam of BA from April 19

ISLAMABAD: AIOU has announced that the final examination of B.A (Associate Degree) Program offered in autumn 2020 semester will commence from April 19th, 2021. University has uploaded the date sheet and roll number slips on the website. Roll number slips are also being dispatched to the students at their given addresses. According to the Controller Examinations, practical exams of F.Sc program offered in autumn 2020 semester are starting from Thursday (April 8th, 2021). A center at Govt College of Technology Samanabad, Faisalabad, has been set up for practical exams of F.Sc course codes (379, 380, and 384). It is pertinent to mention here that the university has already called off the FSC program and these practical exams commencing from 8th April will continue till 10th April, are only for those students whose degrees are in the process of completion. Timings for the practical exam are 02:30 PM to 05:30 PM daily. He further said that roll number slips have been dispatched to the postal addresses of students for their participation in the practical exams. For more information, students can contact at 051-9250051. Invigilation staff has been directed by university administration to ensure the implementation of precautionary measures against Covid-19 issued for these exams. – DNA

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Briefs

PAL to organize Int'l literary seminar today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) would organize an international literary seminar on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of renowned historian, scholar and researcher Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch.

The program will be held on April 6 in the Conference Hall of Academy of Letters, said a press release issued here.

Mazhar-ul-Haq Siddiqui, Prof. Fateh Mohammad Malik and Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Jamani will be in the presidium.

Eminent scholars including Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman, PAL. Dr. Abdul Ghafar Soomro (Karachi), Gul Mohammad Imrani (Hyderabad), Dr. Mohammad Ali Manjhi (Hyderabad), Inamullah Sheikh (Islamabad), Hafiz Arshad Andhar (Karachi), Mohammad Omar Chand (New Zealand), Ayub Baloch (Quetta), Dr. Abdul Hai Abro (Islamabad), Dr. Sofia Khushk (Islamabad), Amima Baloch (Karachi), Dr. Manzoor Ali Vesrio (Islamabad), Aqil Ali Kaka (Islamabad) will shed light on the literary work Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Baloch.

Futsal Tournament from April 9

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Twin City Hafiz Salman Butt Memorial Soccer Futsal Tournament would kick off from April 9 at Prostar Football Stadium, Bahria Town, Rawalpindi.

According to Adnan Ahmad Malik, Senior Vice President, Pakistan Soccer Futsal Federation (PSFF), as many as 32 teams from Rawalpindi and Islamabad would feature in the event. "Osama Manzoor is appointed as Organizing Secretary of the tournament to be played on knockout system as per PSFF rules," he said. He said the officials can register their teams by April 7. "The final match of the tournament will be played on April 11 and prizes will be distributed among the winning teams at the end of the tournament," he said.

Rs 75m project to ensure clean environment

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Bait ul Maal Syed Yawar Abbas Bokhari Monday said that different schemes of sewerage, drainage and metalizing of culverts had been completed in different areas of the district at the cost of Rs 75 million to ensure provision of hygienically clean environment to the people. He said this while talking to media persons here at his residence. He said that 12 schemes of drainage and sewerage were being completed at the cost of Rs 103 million in different areas including Mehrpura, Mehmoabad, Bihar Colony, Farooq Azam Colony, Farrukh Sultan Colony, Aslam Colony, Lalazar Colony, Dar ul Salam Colony, Khattak Colony, Mehrpura, Dhok Fateh, Pind Ghulam Khan, Samundarabad, Shah Faisal Abad, Aminabad, Mohala Eidgah and other areas. The minister said that he himself visited all the sites of the on-going schemes and directed the concerned for timely completion of the schemes with out compromising on quality of the construction work.

Hotels sealed over violation of SOPs

RAWALPINDI: A team of Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), on Sunday raided different areas of Rawalpindi and sealed some thirty shops and hotels in violation of standard operating procedure (SOPs), ordered by the local administration for protection of people from corona virus. According to TV reports, 30 shops and hotels functioning in Adyala and Scheme III areas, have been sealed by the LEAs, and imposed fine besides registering 28 cases against the violators. - APP

PM's 'Ehsaas Koi Bhooka Na Soye' to open in 3 cities before Ramadan

On special instructions of PM, the programme is now being expanded to three other cities before the holy month of Ramadan. Across Lahore, Faisalabad and Peshawar, EKBNS mobile trucks carrying cooked food will visit the localities of laborers and hospitals to distribute free meals

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Under the umbrella of Ehsaas, the concept of truck kitchens 'Ehsaas Koi Bhooka Na Soye' (EKBNS) was launched by the Prime Minister on March 10, 2021 to serve free meal boxes twice a day to daily wage earners in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. On special instructions of PM, the programme is now being expanded to three other cities before the holy month of Ramadan. Across Lahore, Faisalabad and Peshawar, EKBNS mobile trucks carrying cooked food will visit the localities of laborers and hospitals to distribute free meals. Detailing EKBNS operations, Dr. Sania Nishitar stated, "In an initial phase, the two trucks are currently serving the poor and labour class of the twin cities. Each truck feeds 1500 people daily on designated service points. With the upcoming expansion to 3 other cities through 12 new truck kitchens- the EKBNS would explicitly target those who cannot access Ehsaas Panagahs and Ehsaas Langars." According to a statement, EKBNS is PM's vision for the year 2021. While



inaugurating Tarnol Panagah in Islamabad on the evening of New Year, PM had committed his resolution for the year 2021 that EKBNS would be rolled out to make sure that no one goes to bed empty stomach.

The delivery of free meals will help the poor, deserving, laborers and piece-rate workers save their hard-earned money to feed their children and families. The programme will be up scaled to other parts of

the country later this year in phases. Designed to serve healthy meals, EKBNS truck kitchens are well equipped with safe cooking appliances. EKBNS is founded on a public private partnership whereby the Pakistan

Bait-ul-Mal is responsible for the operations of truck kitchens and Saylani Welfare International Trust for the provision of meals. The Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division has established a 'Donor Coordination

Group' to encourage the private sector to fund the programme. Commitments by philanthropists, private sector, international agencies, civil society and individuals will be routed by the coordination group.

FDE invites employees on deputation for personal hearing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) has invited its employees presently working on deputation basis for personal hearing before a four member Committee of FDE here at Islamabad Model School for Boys, G-6/4, Islamabad. According to a statement issued by FDE on Sunday, the decision has been taken in compliance to a judgement of the Islamabad High Court. This is a 05 days exercise starting from Monday, the 5th April, 2021 and is likely complete on 09-04-2021, it added.

FDE feels greatly concerned

over health and safety of all its employees during the onset of 3rd Covid wave and has, therefore, managed in the process of personal hearings in a manner to maintain optimum social distancing and strict adherence to the SOPs in vogue. All employees are awarded separate hour slots for personal hearing on each day with not more than 10 employees called in any hour slot, the statement said. It also added, avoiding rush, only the principal candidate with departmental letter of invitation is allowed entry on the main gate having body temperature checked through thermal gun on the entry point.

Around 37,000 youth trained under 'Hunarmand Pakistan'

The govt launched the programme with an aim to train 50,000 each in high tech and traditional trades in the current year

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) Executive Director (ED) Dr. Nasir Khan said on Monday that around 37,000 young people were imparted six-month courses in traditional and high-tech trades under first phase of 'Hunarmand Pakistan' (Skill for All) programme launched last year. Talking to media, he said assessment of all the

trainees was completed, whereas the course-completion certificates were being issued at the moment. Adding further, the ED said over 20,000 from under-developed areas were trained in conventional trades such as welding, plumbing, stitching and cooking, while around 17,000 youth for high tech trades like artificial intelligence, robotics and cloud computing from across the country were also imparted trainings. He said most of the

ees were recruited by the quality organizations prior to the end of their trainings. "This is testament of success of the Kamyab Jawan Programme, aims to increase the number of country's skilled workforce," he added. To a query, Nasir said the 'Skill for All' project was rolled out in the start of 2020 under the Kamyab Jawan Programme with Rs 10 billion seed money. The government launched the programme with an aim to train 50,000 each in high tech and tradition-

al trades in the current year. He said second phase of the Hunarmand Pakistan programme had also been launched with an aim to train more than 50 thousand youth in conventional and high-tech trades. ED said so far 170,000 applications were received under the current phase. He expressed a hope that the classes under the second phase would kick off by second week of April if the government opened the educational institutions.



RAWALPINDI: A view of wrongly parked vehicles under a "No Parking" sign at Faizabad creating problems in the flow of traffic and needs the attention of the concerned authorities. - DNA

Air Quality record healthy in federal capital since March

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The air quality of the federal capital on Monday was recorded healthy as atmospheric pollutants were recorded below permissible ratios amid cloudy weather and gusty winds helping in keeping the environ clean and healthy. A Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) official told APP that the eight hours average ratio of particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5) was recorded below permissible limits of 35 micrograms per cubic meter. PM2.5 was recorded at 15.3 micrograms per cubic meter in Islamabad, which is much lower than the National Environ-

mental Quality Standards (NEQS) of 35 micrograms and the World Health Organization (WHO) standard of 20 micrograms per cubic meter. The air quality data revealed the presence of 16.9 micrograms of Sulphur dioxide and 12.8 micrograms of nitrogen dioxide per cubic meter against the NEQS of 120 micrograms and 80 micrograms per cubic meter, respectively. According to the EPA official, dry weather and increased vehicular emissions were the main reasons for the bad air quality. It is the most health-damaging environmental pollutant causing chronic respiratory diseases and premature deaths as it could easily penetrate human blood through lungs cells, she added.

RWMC continues 'Dastak' initiative

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Under its ongoing door-to-door cleanliness awareness campaign 'Dastak', the teams of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) on Sunday visited Mohallah Eid Gah UC-16 and told the residents about the importance of neat and clean surroundings around their houses and the negative impact of solid waste and garbage on human health, particularly during current wave of epidemics and Covid pandemic.

The local residents, shopkeepers and traders were requested to dump their waste and garbage in covered containers and bins placed at all important points in the area or hand it over to the waste specialists deputed by the Company for this purpose rather than burning it at open areas. The RWMC deputed enhanced number of sanitary workers who conducted special cleanliness drive at all small and big graveyards, mosques, Madaris and their adjoining areas of the city for the Shabe-Baraat.

Cases register against 100 SOPs violators

DNA

RAWALPINDI: District Administration Rawalpindi Monday registered FIRs against 100 persons including the chief guest of a programme on violation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by Punjab government to contain spread of coronavirus. According to a district administration spokesman, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Saddar, Mehar Ghulam Abbas along with police conducted a raid at an inauguration ceremony of a shop and arrested 20 persons for violating of SOPs.

The AC said that Rawalpindi district administration officers under their ongoing campaign launched to check implementation of coronavirus SOPs. He said, the public parks were also being inspected and fines were imposed on those who breached the SOPs. The shopping malls, markets and plazas were regularly being checked under efforts being made by the administration to contain spread of coronavirus. The marriage halls and restaurants on violation of the SOPs were being sealed, he added.

Listeners mesmerize at online Easter Day concert

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first opera singer Saira Peter and internationally renowned cricket legend Zahir Abbas blow away listeners at an online Easter Day concert, by singing super-hit song "Vey Mundiya Sialkotiya Tere Mukhray Te Kala Kala Til Ve" from film Chan Vey. According to details, the live programme was broadcast on social media and attracted viewers from across the globe, including the Pakistan, UK and US, said a press release issued here on Monday.

During the broadcast, 'Asian Bradman' and 'Run Machine' Zahir Abbas said that "From the first moment I ever heard Saira sing, I became a lifelong fan of her voice."

Her singing reflects the kind of heavy duty vocal homework she puts in before ever setting foot on-stage.

She's an absolutely amazing singer with full command of both Eastern and Western vocal styles. I have liked music from childhood and have listened to Mehdi Hassan and Noor Jehan many times in my life."

Opera singer Saira Peter revealed to her audience that at a private music event, Madam Noor Jehan had once sung the same song for Zahir Abbas, paying tribute to both his birthplace Sialkot and the large mole on his left cheek.

Saira Peter added "Singing this song today with such a massive star is a huge honor; I feel incredibly privileged."

The song had been specially requested by Sonia, granddaughter of Madam Noor Jehan, who also viewed the event. - APP

Punjab to procure 1m COVID-jabs worth Rs 1.5b

Punjab government has allocated an amount of Rs 1.5 billion from its own budget for the purchase of one million C-vaccine which would be administered to the residents of the province during the holy month of Ramzan

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister (SACM) Punjab on Information Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan Monday said the provincial government would purchase COVID-19 vaccines autonomously as the federal government has allowed provinces to procure C-shots. Talking to media during her visit to Corona vaccination centre here at Sports complex, Shamsabad, she informed that the Punjab government has allocated an amount of Rs 1.5 billion from its own budget for the purchase of one million C-vaccine which would be administered to the residents of the province during the holy month of Ramzan. Dr. Firdous informed that pres-

ently, 127 vaccination centres were operating across the province, from where 4.75 lacs people including health workers and senior citizens have got themselves vaccinated against the coronavirus. Giving further information, the SACM said the third wave of coronavirus was taking a risky turn as 2,275 new cases have been reported besides 15 deaths during the last 24 hours in the province while a total of 233,343 have, so far, been tested positive in the province. She added that 1362 confirmed cases were reported in Lahore, 141 in Faisalabad, 92 in Rawalpindi and 60 in Sialkot during the last 24 hours. She urged the people to continue following standard operating procedures (SOPs), as it was the



most reliable way to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. Dr. Firdous said Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar was transforming the province towards genuine development and was going to announce a Ramzan subsidy package of Rs 7 billion while 313 sahulat bazaars would be set

up across the province to provide relief to the people during the upcoming holy month. "A Sahulat Bazaar Authority was being established which would monitor the prices of daily use items including sugar and wheat at the bazaars," she added. She said to control inflation during Ramzan, public representatives would also carry out the monitoring of prices at Bazaars, adding, the strict action would be taken against profiteers causing an artificial price hike. Commenting on the by-election in Daska, she said the government will consult the Election Commission of Pakistan for holding of election in the context of the prevailing COVID-19 situation as violations of C-virus SOPs can lead to the spreading of COVID-19 in the election.

She said that direction has been passed to the CEO District health authority to provide ambulance service to the elderly and disabled for vaccination. Answering a question about the future of PDM, she said the politics of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) has been ended and the nation has rejected the narrative adopted by the convicted princess. The SACM also lauded the role of media during the current coronavirus situation, saying that the media had done "objective reporting and made people aware". Earlier, she along with Deputy Commissioner Capt. (Retd) Anwar Ul Haq and CEO Health Dr. Faiza Naem took a round of the vaccination centre and asked people about the facilitates being provided to them at the centre.

Ehsaas programmes

As the coronavirus pandemic lowers the average income and purchasing power of the citizens, it is becoming imperative for the government to elevate its social welfare programmes. This is in line with the government's expansion of the Ehsaas schemes for education. One such scheme is the Ehsaas Secondary Education Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme, which Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar announced has recently been approved. The Ehsaas programme included a strategy to provide children of underprivileged households conditional cash grants of Rs3,000 per quarter for the girl child and Rs2,500 for the boy child on the fulfilment of 70 per cent attendance in school. The CCT programme builds upon that to further incentives for higher attendance of female students. Such programmes are highly necessary. As every other sphere of the economy has seen crisis because of the pandemic, so has education. Already parents in Pakistan have been reluctant to invest in education—as of 2019, secondary school enrolment in Pakistan was reported at 43.82 percent. This rate has in all likelihood sharply decreased because of the pandemic—lockdowns and a fall in income and savings of people have weighed heavily on school attendance. As with all things, these factors impact the already disadvantaged—girls' school enrolment was already much lower than boys'. Affirmative action to incentivise parents of female children to send them to school is a good way to bridge that gap. Despite severe hurdles brought on by the coronavirus, the education sector seems to be going all out in its effort to provide access to quality education for the masses. Apart from these ongoing Ehsaas programmes, over 27,512 primary and secondary institutions are going to be upgraded in Punjab. These developments are an excellent initiative—what the government must work on is ensuring that a system of checks and balances must be in place to determine whether these social welfare schemes are being carried out effectively, and are bringing about social reform.



New EAC

WITH the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) reconstituted by PM Imran Khan, opportunities to improve Pakistan's overall economic performance and promote cohesion between private and public sectors could increase tremendously. As long as the authorities tread carefully and avoid repeating the mistakes of previous versions of the EAC, the advisory body can actually have a positive impact on the economy and people. The new EAC consists of 25 new members—13 business men from the private sector and 12 members of official government bodies. Compared to its 2018 version which incorporated the expertise of 18 individuals, the strength of the new EAC might be an advantage. It stands to extend a platform for additional members to voice their concerns and suggestions with regards to policies that can be adopted by the government. However, this slight moderation might only bring about marginal potential at best. Instead, it would bode well for the government to ensure that the patterns of the past are not repeated yet again. The previous EAC failed to schedule regular meetings and often, members would meet once in eight to 14 months. Furthermore, the council was unable to retain its members for a longer duration, something that is vital if any worthy change was to be made. It was due to such circumstances that the PM embarked upon the mission to reconstruct the EAC and thus, it is instrumental to craft a better path on this occasion for actual gains to be made. The job of the EAC to provide informed opinions and suggestions to policymakers, encourage collaboration between both sectors of the economy and enhance the overall standing of the masses in the end is not a simple task. Immense focus, dedication and effort is needed to ensure that this EAC succeeds in what it has set out to achieve.

Xinjiang cotton, development status and situation

Khalid Taimur Akram



The employment level is stable and a large number of job opportunities have been created by the startling policies of Chinese leadership. According to United Nations trade data, almost two-third of the clothing sold in Australian stores is manufactured in China

CHINA is one of the largest and leading cotton producers in the world. The province of Xinjiang is the fifth largest producer and distributor of cotton to the globe. The country has developed its cotton production rapidly during the last 60 years. Currently, China produces 30% of the world's cotton. Its textile industry is also the biggest exporter to many major and leading brands worldwide. In many major Western clothing brands, China has been their biggest growth market for couple of past decades. It is the world's biggest apparel market, accounting for about 24% of global sales. Chinese-made fabric may

contain cotton from a variety of both Chinese regional and international sources. Its exports both cotton yarn and fabrics to apparel-manufacturing nations across Asia. In this aspect, Xinjiang's cotton production is relatively high yield and good quality. Xinjiang an important producing area of upland cotton and sea-island cotton in the world with perfect cultivation and management technology. Recently, the province's cotton is banned, and the issue is being politicized by Western players, which would be devastating for the whole globe's need for cotton. This article highlights the existing great potential of China's textile industry and development status of exceptional Xinjiang's cotton production. The study also analyses the recurrent situation of the false issue created by the West over Chinese cotton and elucidates prospects of flourishing cotton production. **China's Textile Industry: An Overview** The economy of China has witnessed massive transition since the economic reforms of the 1960s. The central planning system has given numerous ways to a state-led market mechanism and paved the way for robust transformation in many domains. After the reforms, the structural and institutional arrangements have provided sufficient support to nurture the emerging industrialization, sustained the technological upgrading, enhanced farming techniques, introduced an efficient mechanism for agriculture outputs, and built regional and international production networks. In this aspect, the Chinese textile industry has grown rapidly and now it is one of the leading industries globally. Due to the effective initiative taken by the visionary Chinese leadership and advanced technologies, the textile industry experienced an era of golden growth. Over more than a decade, the country production capacity is enhanced and now it is more focused on value-added and branding cultivation. Constructive engagement with the international market. It happened because of China's accession to World Trade Organization (WTO) which brought production expansion, and sustainable long-term sectoral development. In this aspect, a profound understanding of the strong institutional support behind the substantial growth is vital. Likewise, the emergence of the clothing/textile sector was possible because of an optimal institutional arrangement to facilitate Chinese firms to upgrade horizontally and functionally. The robust system was started by the authorities' decision to open up the transformation process, including industrial upgrading. Furthermore, broader use of digital technologies has proliferated extensively into clothing manufacturing. These factors have pushed this sector towards the technology frontier and a modernized economy. **Xinjiang Cotton: Sustainable Development** Xinjiang accounts for 87% of China's domestic cotton production. Apart from Xinjiang, the areas in which major cotton production is held in China are the Yellow River basin and

the Yangtze river basin. The area of Xinjiang cotton-planting is the most appropriate cotton-planting region in China. It has the largest cultivation scale, the highest yield, the most advantageous output to input, and the greatest development potential. The technological advancement has paved the way for more efficient cotton production in the province. The techniques include "dwarf, dense, early" core technology and its supporting technologies. For example, film mulching, selection of appropriate cultivars, drip irrigation technology and fruit-cotton intercropping. To get maximum advantages out of these systems, resources from soil and water and use of local light are essential elements to overcome the deficiencies of ecological climate in the cotton field of Xinjiang. These factors are ensuring the attainment of quality cotton and sustainable yield. The technological system of cotton planting has significant relevance and value for cotton production in other states. In China, for twenty-one consecutive years, the per capita amount of cotton, total yield, per unit area yield, commodity export rate, and transfer amount in Xinjiang have been ranked first. Therefore, it has attracted wide range of experts and investors at domestic and international levels. The primary cotton-planting area of the region is a typical irrigation system. Thereby, cotton's growth and development process can be artificially regulated by artificial irrigation according to the law of physiological water requirement of cotton plants. These factors have contributed high production of cotton and increased growth rate. Moreover, in Xinjiang major cotton-planting area, the soils mainly composed of multiple things. For example, moderate clay and sandy soil, light loam, deep strata, loose soil texture, and flat land. In this regard, appropriate cotton-planting regions and particular production areas accounts for about 35% of the entire agricultural areas in the province. Presently, some type of machinery for soil preparation, seeding, plant protection, and straw returning have been developed and widely used in China's cotton production. **Supporting Techniques in Enhancing China's Cotton Production** For China to be one of the countries with the highest yield of cotton globally, intensive farming technologies have played a crucial role. The great achievement in Beijing's cotton production has much potential. It was possible due to the adoption of certain intrinsic technologies. For example, cultural practices and intensive farming technologies, including seedling transplanting, adaptation of improved varieties, plastic mulching, double cropping, drip irrigation, plastic mulching, plant pruning, and super-high plant density technique. In this regard, the transition is happening in this sector to foster agriculture output. The reforms supported China's sustainable cotton production development. Furthermore, with relevance to farming and cultural system, the cotton yield has a bright prospect in the near future.

The demand for Xinjiang Cotton will expand. **False Propaganda against Xinjiang Cotton: An Analysis** The Western media gives extraordinary coverage to false news and mostly blows small incidents out of proportion. Presently, the western market has banned Chinese cotton supply, claiming human rights violation in the cotton-growing Xinjiang region (the Uighurs minority area). The U.S., Australia, and other big international firms have raised concerns over the sources of cotton production. The leading brands which stop cotton purchases from Xinjiang include H&M, Gap, Nike, Adidas, Zara, and Ikea. The local Muslim community in Xinjiang, is being portrayed as a subject of abysmal poverty, acute injustice, and grave oppression. However, all the allegations are meaningless and merely politicizing campaigns against the rising Chinese economy. The fabricated stories of western media are focused to gain sympathies of Muslim countries in Belt and Road Initiative regions. China has alleviated poverty and sustainable development in Xinjiang autonomous region. The employment level is stable and a large number of job opportunities have been created by the startling policies of Chinese leadership. According to United Nations trade data, almost two-third of the clothing sold in Australian stores is manufactured in China. For some cotton products, China's share is much greater than the average. About 80% of men's undergarments, 90% of handkerchiefs and almost 98% of some cotton fabric categories come from China. Furthermore, it is also estimated that about 4% of Australia's clothes are manufactured locally, and much of that use Chinese fabric and yarns. In this aspect, disengaging and restricting China's cotton supply chains over false allegation and mere propaganda would be detrimental for the cotton availability in the international market. **Conclusion:** The upgraded farming techniques, an advanced mechanism for agriculture productivity, and efficient workforce are the key factors in making China the world's biggest producer and supplier of cotton. It is expected that in future, the growing industry of cotton will develop further. Industry's revenue will increase and boost the agriculture and economic sector of China. It is believed that the state's cotton has a good prospect with the support of new farming technologies. Even with the ongoing fierce market competition, Beijing will utilize its existing potential, enhance cotton capacity and continue to supply it internationally with a high ratio. In this aspect, any meaningless allegations or claims by the Western countries to halt Xinjiang cotton supply or any false propaganda would have huge economic repercussions for the world as many Western states and leading international brands are heavily dependent on China's cotton. **- The writer is the Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad**

Green Saudi Arabia

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman said that Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude oil exporter, would reduce carbon emissions by generating 50 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2030

WHILE the world is now indulged in the Biden Climate Change conference and invitation cacophony the Prime Minister in its tweet congratulated the Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman on its noble initiative of planting 10 billion trees, as part of ambitious to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions. While sharing the grand plan Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman announced the Saudi and Middle East Green Initiatives. He was of the opinion that the Kingdom, the region and the world needed to act much faster in combating climate change. He proudly stated that the 10 billion trees would be planted in the country over the coming decades, in addition to working with regional neighbours to plant a further 40

billion trees in the Middle East. During his statement he showcased his country holistic approach to combat with the increasing levels of carbon footprints in the region as well around the globe and claimed that the total planting of 50 billion trees in the region would be "the largest reforestation program in the world," twice the size of the Great Green Wall planting project in the Sahel region of North Africa, which seeks to combat desertification. Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman said that Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude oil exporter, would reduce carbon emissions by generating 50 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2030. According to latest Climate Action Tracker (CAT) the kingdom's current emissions rated in the "critically insufficient" category, far off being consistent with the Paris Agreement target to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. He highlighted sense of responsibility in advancing the fight against the climate crisis, and desired to lead the coming green era. He lamented the technological inefficiency in oil production in the Middle East, and stated that the share of clean energy produced in the region was only 7 per cent. He showed his willingness to work with international community and countries to transfer knowledge and share experiences which would contribute to reducing carbon emissions by more than 60 percent. He termed the joint effort would reduce more than 10 percent of global emissions. In January 2021 Bloomberg reported that oil company Saudi Aramco, which launched the world's biggest public listing in 2019, had significantly understated its carbon footprint to potential investors by excluding emissions from its refineries and chemical plants. The said report estimated that including all such facilities could nearly double Aramco's self-reported carbon footprint, adding as much as 55 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents to the emissions produced by Portugal. The new green initiative forms part of the kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy to move away from oil reliance and to modernize the kingdom. On his part earlier this year he launched "The Line," an ambitious plan to build a new eco-city in a 170km straight line that would have no cars, roads or carbon emissions. The newly announced green initiatives aim to chart a path for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the region in protecting the planet, by clearly defining an ambitious road map that rallies the region and significantly contributes to achieving global targets in confronting climate change. HRH the Crown Prince highlighted that The Kingdom and the region face significant climate challenges, such as desertification, an immediate economic risk to the Kingdom and the region (USD 13Bn is currently lost due to dust storms in the region every year). Air pollution from greenhouse gases also is estimated to have shortened average Saudi life

expectancy by 1.5 years. He planned to work through the Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) to raise vegetation cover, reduce carbon emissions, combat pollution & land degradation, and preserve marine life. He outlined that this initiative will include a number of ambitious initiatives; the planting of (10 billion) trees within the Kingdom in the upcoming decades, the equivalent to rehabilitating roughly (40 million) hectares of degraded lands, translating to a 12-fold increase from current tree covers, this represents the Kingdom's contribution of more than (4%) in achieving the goals of the global initiative to limit the degradation of lands and fungal habitats, and (1%) of the global target to plant (1 trillion) trees. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia will also coordinate to raise the percentage of protected areas to more than (30%) of its total land area, representing roughly (600,000) square kilometers, exceeding the current global target of (17%), in addition to launching a number of ambitious initiatives to protect Marine and Coastal Environments. HRH the Crown Prince further outlined that the Kingdom's SGI will also work to reduce carbon emissions by more than (4%) of global contributions, through an ambitious renewable energy program that will generate (50%) of the Kingdom's energy from renewables by 2030, and several other projects in the fields of clean hydrocarbon technologies, estimated to eliminate more than (130 MT) of carbon emissions, alongside raising the rate of waste diversion from landfills to reach 94% in the Kingdom. HRH Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman further announced to start working on The Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) in coordination with neighboring and sister countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and Middle Eastern countries to plant an additional (40 billion) trees in the Middle East. He termed the regional (50 billion) tree planting program as the largest reforestation program in the world, twice the size of the Great Green Wall in the Sahel (the second largest such regional initiative). According to him the SGI & MGI will restore an area equivalent to (200 million) hectares of degraded land, representing (5%) of the global target of planting (1 Trillion) trees and reducing (2.5%) of global carbon levels. He shared that the share of clean energy production in the Middle East did not exceed 7%, and technologies used in hydrocarbon production in the region remained efficient, therefore the Kingdom will work with regional partners to transfer knowledge and share our experiences, which will contribute to reducing carbon emissions resulting from hydrocarbon production in the region by more than (60%), adding that these joint efforts and various other initiatives, will achieve a reduction in carbon emissions by more than (10%) of global contributions. He highlighted that these two green initiatives

mainly SGI & MGI resultant of the environmental efforts in the Kingdom over the past few years in line with our Vision 2030. These two initiatives testified the Kingdom's serious desire to address the environmental challenges it has faced, from increase in temperatures and dust waves to low levels of rain and desertification he added. In this context, the Kingdom has carried out a comprehensive restructuring of the environmental sector, established The Environmental Special Forces in 2019, raised the percentage of natural reserves from (4%) to more than (14%) and increased vegetation cover by (40%) in the past 4 years, the kingdom was also able to achieve the most efficient levels of carbon emission of hydrocarbon producing countries, alongside other initiatives that have already started on the ground and resulted in tangible positive results for the environment. This is all part of the Kingdom's efforts to promote public health and raise quality of life for its citizens and residents. HRH the Crown Prince showcased numerous meaningful policy measures to control the ratios of carbon footnotes in the country which highlighted KSA leadership role in climate change ranging from its presidency of the G20 summit during 2020 adopting the concept of Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) and the first environmental taskforce was established, alongside the launching of two global initiatives to reduce land degradation and protection of coral reefs. To conclude the Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman stressed the need that the region and the world need to go much further and faster in combating climate change. Being prominent regional expert of GCC & MENA I submit that the KSA SGI & MGI will enhance competitiveness, spark innovation, and create millions of high-quality jobs. It will promote new culture of a cleaner, greener and more inclusive future. It hopes that the KSA will coordinate with all international partners to further develop SGI & MGI and the various programs to control high ratios of climate change. Survival of humanity at large and efficient working of regional as well as international productive channels is heavily rest on the control of climate change. Green is the name of game changer, sign of future economic development. Green is also the icon of massive diversification of economies and massive industrialization. Let us hope that holy country Saudi Arabia will follow a holistic approach to achieve these goals of largest nation drive in the world in the days to come. In this regard, diplomatic sources reveal that KSA approached Pakistan to be part of this Saudi and Middle East Green Initiatives which will be another source of income and foreign revenue for the macro-economy. **- The writer is the Director, Geopolitics/Economics Member Board of Experts, CGSS Islamabad**

Briefs

Shoaib Akhtar disappointed on match officials

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistani pacer Shoaib Akhtar expressed disappointment after opener Fakhar Zaman narrowly missed out on a much-deserved 200-run knock in the second ODI between Pakistan and South Africa on Sunday saying that the laws were not properly enforced by the match officials of the game.

Pakistan lost the second ODI to South Africa by 15 runs and would play the third ODI on Wednesday (April 7). "Everyone must be as disappointed as I am that Fakhar Zaman could not get to 200.

I wouldn't call it cheating but I wouldn't call it in the spirit of the game either, the way Quinton de Kock removed him. In article 41.5, I think, if you deliberately distract a batsman, the side batting would be awarded five runs and the guilty side would have to bowl again.

That means Pakistan could have gotten the two runs on the delivery in which Fakhar got out, a no-ball and five runs which makes it eight runs from that one ball," Akhtar said in a video on his Youtube channel as quoted by cricketpakistan.com.pk.

FIFA to decide fate of Pak football next week

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The governing body of world's football, FIFA will decide the fate of the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) next week.

The decision has been delayed as FIFA offices are closed these days due to the Easter holidays. Normalisation Committee (NC) and Ashfaq Hussain's group have submitted respective details to FIFA.

Ashfaq's group opined that an audit report of 19 months should be taken from the normalisation committee while the scandals of the normalisation committee have also tarnished Pakistan's image.

According to the procedure, FIFA will initially suspend Pakistan's membership. In the second phase, further action will be taken against

It must be noted here that Syed Ashfaq Hussain-led group took over the PFF house charge forcefully from the FIFA-installed Normalisation Committee. Later on, FIFA reacted on this matter and warned the Ashfaq-led group to return PFF headquarters to the NC within a day.

Ashfaq, who was elected PFF president after winning the elections conducted under the supervision of the Supreme Court, refused to return the office which leads Pakistan on a verge of international suspension once again.

PM Imran directs to devise IT...

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He said the government is taking steps on priority basis to organize experts in information technology, especially the freelancers. Underlining the importance of building Special Technology Zones in the country, Imran Khan said establishment of STZs will play a pivotal role in development of IT sector. The Prime Minister said various challenges have emerged during the pandemic; however, it has also created countless opportunities for IT-professional youth to work from home.

Shahzad Waseem asks Opp...

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real democracy and we welcome it at every forum. The Leader of the House expressed hope that opposition in the House will play a positive role in making the parliament more functional. Earlier speaking in the House, opposition leader in the House Yusuf Raza Gilani expressed the resolve to work in tandem with all political parties for providing relief to the people.



TASHKENT: A delegation led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif visited MFA of Uzbekistan. During the talks, the sides discussed the current state of relations between the two countries in political, trade, economic, investment and other spheres, as well as future plans. – DNA

Uzbekistan, Iran vow to boost strategic cooperation

The issues of implementation of interregional transport and logistics projects aimed at increasing the volume of mutual trade and enhancing trade and economic ties were discussed

DNA

TASHKENT: The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Javad Zarif, who arrived in Tashkent on a visit.

The parties discussed the state and prospects of bilateral relations in the political, trade and economic, transport and communication, investment, cultural, humanitarian and other fields. The ministers noted with satisfaction the fruitful results of the recently held VI round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of the two countries

and stressed the need to continue a constructive dialogue at all levels. At the talks, special attention was paid to the interaction of the two countries within the framework of international and regional organizations. The issues of implementation of interregional transport and logistics projects aimed at increasing the volume of mutual trade and enhancing trade and economic ties were discussed. An exchange of views on Afghan problems also took place. The Iranian side highly appreciated the practical work carried out by Uzbekistan to fully support direct inter-Afghan negotiations and the socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan. During the meeting, the Iranian side confirmed

its interest in participating in the High-Level International Conference "Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectedness. Challenges and Opportunities", which will be held this year in Tashkent. Expressing hope for expanding cooperation between the two countries, Zarif noted that Iran could provide a transit route for Uzbekistan to access global markets and also open waters. "The two countries of Iran and Uzbekistan enjoy high potentials in different areas," he said, adding, "The age-old historical ties between the two countries can further expand the preliminaries for friendship between the two countries of Iran and Uzbekistan." Iranian Foreign Minister Moham-

mad Javad Zarif traveled to Central Asia to meet with officials from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. Developing relations with Central Asia, a region of civilizational, historical and cultural commonalities, has always been one of Iran's top priorities. During the meeting, FM Zarif reviewed bilateral relations, especially economic issues, trade exchanges and cooperation in the fields of transportation, transit, and energy, political issues, cultural and tourism cooperation, as well as ways to expand cooperation. Uzbek Foreign Minister also stressed the regional position and international influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran, underscoring the cooperation be-

tween the two countries in various fields, including cooperation in international forums, as well as parliamentary cooperation. He also emphasized the bilateral cooperation in the fields of transportation and transit, the use of Iran's port capacities along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, the existing capacities for cooperation in the fields of economy, transportation, and logistics beyond the current situation. Unilateral and oppressive US sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, cooperation between the two countries in the Afghan peace process, and cooperation in legal and international forums were other topics discussed by the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Uzbekistan

Pakistan and Iran Naval exercise in the offing



DNA

BANDAR ABBAS: Commander of Iranian Army's first zone Rear-Admiral Jaafar Tazakkor says that sharing maritime information and knowledge carries a message that security and peace in the southern strategic Iranian region, Strait of Hormuz, and the

Indian Ocean. Rear-Admiral Tazakkor made the remarks in a meeting held in south of Iran on Monday with Khan Mahmood Asif, commander of Pakistani flotilla which docked at a harbor in Bandar Abbas two days ago. Rear-Admiral Tazakkor said, aim behind interaction between the two countries' naval forces is

to strengthen military relations and reach agreement on a method to design and stage maritime drills. Bilateral cooperation also shows the two sides' determination to ensure security in sea transportation and trade, the Iranian official noted. The Pakistani commander, for his part, said exchange of naval dele-

gations will lead to deepening friendly ties. The two can also share experiences during the visits, Commander Asif added. The two commanders said that they gave importance to establishment of security in the Persian Gulf as the main global way. Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Iran, he underlined.

Bangladesh disaster death toll hits 26

NARAYANGANJ (BANGLADESH): The death toll from a ferry disaster in Bangladesh jumped to 26 on Monday after rescuers pulled the vessel out of the water and found more bodies inside, officials said Monday. The sunken ferry was extracted from the heavily polluted Shitalakshya River in the central district of Narayanganj as hundreds of onlookers and relatives of the missing watched from the shore. "We have found 21 bodies today after the ship was pulled out of the water," local official Mustain Billah told media.

The one-and-a-half storey Sabit Al Hasan sank after it collided with a bigger cargo vessel on Sunday. The vessel had departed less than an hour earlier from Narayanganj, 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Dhaka, officials told media. A local police inspector said the ferry was packed with passengers after the government confirmed it would impose a seven-day lockdown across the country to combat the recent rise in coronavirus cases. Billah said the ship was carrying at least 46 people when it left.

"Some 20 people swam to safety after the vessel sank," he told AFP, adding several people could still be missing. "We have ordered a probe into the accident," he said. Local police chief Dipak Saha said rescue efforts were hampered for hours by a powerful storm that hit after the accident. Under the lockdown, all domestic travel services - including buses, ferries, trains and flights - will be suspended from Monday. Shops and malls will be shut for a week and a night curfew in effect. Public and private sector businesses were told to only have a skeleton crew in their offices. Ferry accidents are common in Bangladesh, a delta nation crisscrossed by hundreds of rivers. – APP

Prince Hamzah vows to disobey 'keep silent' order

The half-brother of King Abdullah II and former heir to the throne said in a voice recording sent to contacts on Monday and released by the country's opposition that he would not "escalate" moves after being barred from any activity and told to keep quiet

FOERIGN DESK

AMMAN: Jordan's estranged Prince Hamzah says he will disobey orders by the army to not communicate with the outside world after he was put under house arrest. The half-brother of King Abdullah II and former heir to the throne said in a voice recording sent to contacts on Monday and released by the country's opposition that he would not "escalate" moves after being barred from any activity and told to keep quiet.

"I don't want to make moves and escalate now, but of course I'm not going to obey when they say you can't go out, you can't tweet, you can't communicate with people, you're only allowed to see your family," he said in an audio recording post-

ed on Twitter late on Sunday. Jordan's deputy prime minister said on Sunday that Prince Hamzah, 41, had been liaising with foreign parties in a "malicious plot" to destabilise the country. On Saturday, the military said it had issued a warning to the prince over actions targeting "security and stability" in the kingdom. Prince Hamzah later said he was under house arrest. Several high-profile figures were detained. Hamzah - a former crown prince stripped of that title by Abdullah in 2004 - has emerged as a vocal critic of the monarchy, accusing it of corruption, nepotism and authoritarian rule. In a video he sent to the BBC Saturday, he denied being involved in a plot and said he had been ordered under house arrest by Jordan's most senior military figure,

General Youssef Huneiti. In the latest recording, Hamzah said: "When the head of the joint chiefs of staff comes and tells you this ... I think it's a bit unacceptable". It is unclear why the king-



dom decided to take action against Prince Hamzah now, but he has reportedly put himself at risk by making frequent visits to tribal gatherings where some people criticised the king. Officials said efforts were under way to resolve the crisis within the royal family, in the first such open rift in many years, but the prince was not cooperative. The palace turmoil has laid bare divisions in Jordan, usually considered a bulwark of stability in the Middle East. Washington, major Gulf powers, Egypt and the Arab League were all quick to pledge their support for King Abdullah and all his steps to ensure stability. Jordan has only 10 million people but outsized strategic importance in a turbulent region. It borders Israel and the occupied West Bank, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

It host US troops and is home to millions of exiled Palestinians and more than half a million Syrian refugees. On the streets of Amman, people on Monday expressed their hopes for an end to the crisis. Residents said they hoped dissent within the royal family is resolved in a peaceful way. "I was surprised as everyone else with this disturbing news, it really caused pain to everyone," said Mohamad Abdel-Latif. "We wish for prosperity and progress for Jordan, and for the issues to be resolved as the king called for - with in the royal family." Another Amman resident Ezziddin Abu-Salah noted the unprecedented nature of the royal turmoil in Jordan. "We were surprised that this touches higher ranks, [but] there is no dispute over the king, all Jordanians support him," said Abu-Salah.

Pak teen elected to California student senate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Dubai girl has been elected vice president of finance for a student body for 116 community colleges representing 2.1 million students in California, USA, according to the Gulf News report on Monday. Fiza Syed, a 17-year-old Pakistani born and raised in Dubai, was elected after taking the lead by 10 votes in an online poll last month to receive her winning 43 votes from 76 delegates.

Fiza, a student of De Anza College in Cupertino, California, is currently pursuing her studies online from Dubai due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She won the elections for the Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC), which gives students a voice in the formation of state policies that have a significant impact on students. Fiza said she aims to "implement reforms" to increase funding for students' basic needs, which have only been "exacerbated" by the pandemic.

PML-N, PPP trade barbs in Senate

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Balochistan Awami Party were presented with gifts and a commotion broke out in the House. Tarrar said that 27 senators from five parties have formed a separate opposition group. He said the opposition will play a "positive and constructive" role. He said he was saddened by the appointment of the Leader of the Opposition.

On the other hand, the Dilawar Khan group, which supports Gillani, also demanded separate seats in the Senate. The House met today after the election of new senators on March 3, the Senate chairman and deputy chairman on March 12 and notification of Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani on March 26.

PM wants government triumphs...

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where he spoke to them on several matters and directed them to promote the government's works.

The premier said the government was taking "serious" steps to curb inflation, as he vowed the regime would not let the "satta" (gambling) mafia thrive in the country. During the meeting, Special Assistant to PM on Interior and Accountability Shahzad Akbar also provided a briefing on the government's legislation on basic commodities, while Finance Minister Hammad Azhar spoke about the country's economic situation. "We have fixed the price of sugar," the prime minister said, as he told the members of the meeting that the government was legislating on stabilising the prices of basic commodities. "The government will take indiscriminate action against people involved in artificially hiking prices," the premier vowed. The premier, giving another take to party leaders and spokespersons, said they should keep an eye on inflation. Following the meeting, Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid said the prime minister had directed government officials to provide relief to the people during the Holy month of Ramadan.

"The prices of basic food items will be available at lower rates," the interior minister said, speaking to the media, adding the premier had also directed to ensure flour, sugar, and other food commodities are available at cheaper rates during the Holy month.

PDM serves show cause notices to PPP, ANP

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approval from PDM President Maulana Fazlur Rehman. "The notices have been sent on WhatsApp. Hard copies will be handed over during today's Senate session," he said, adding that both the parties have been given seven days to respond to the notices.

Briefs

Mass testing to begin in UK

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: People in England will soon have access to a COVID-19 test twice a week, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said, as the country looks ahead to post-pandemic life. Johnson said on Monday that the programme would break the chain of transmissions and help detect asymptomatic cases, which are believed to account for one in three of all infections. The mass-testing plan, which will come into effect on Friday, will see lateral flow kits capable of providing results in about 30 minutes made available, free of charge, at COVID-19 testing sites, pharmacies and via the post.

Next week, England is set to ease further out of lockdown, a move underpinned by the swift rollout of vaccines.

"As we continue to make good progress on our vaccine programme and with our roadmap to cautiously easing restrictions under way, regular rapid testing is even more important to make sure those efforts are not wasted," Johnson said in a statement.

Tribal clashes in Sudan kill 18

DNA

KHARTOUM: Tribal clashes in Sudan's restive Darfur region have killed at least 18 people and wounded 54, a local doctors' committee said Monday. "The committee recorded 18 fatalities and 54 wounded, who are receiving medical care at Al-Jeneina Teaching Hospital," the West Darfur Doctors' Committee said in a statement, citing clashes on Saturday and Sunday. "On Monday, we woke up to the sound of gunfire... clashes are still ongoing and have spread to the western suburbs of the town (Al-Jeneina)," Abdelrahman Ahmed, an eyewitness, told AFP.

The committee, part of a nationwide independent body formed in 2016 representing the medical community, said an ambulance carrying wounded victims was attacked in the melee.

Hospitals are still receiving victims, it added. The vast Darfur region was the scene of a bitter conflict that erupted in 2003, leaving around 300,000 people killed and 2.5 million displaced, according to the United Nations. The conflict has subsided over the years, but ethnic and tribal clashes still periodically flare in the region over land and access to water.

Netanyahu accused of 'illegitimate use' of power

FOREIGN DESK

JERUSALEM: Israeli prosecutors accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of treating favours as "currency" on Monday at the opening of a corruption trial which, along with an inconclusive election, has clouded his prospects of remaining in office.

Wearing a black mask and dark suit, Netanyahu was seated in the Jerusalem District Court following an order from judges to appear in court to face charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust. Netanyahu, who denies all wrongdoing in the three cases against him, conferred quietly with lawyers as his supporters and critics held raucous demonstrations outside. He left before the first witness was called to testify.

Israel's longest-serving prime minister misused "the great governmental power entrusted to him, among other things, to demand and derive improper benefits from owners of key media in Israel in order to advance his personal affairs - including when he faced his desire to be re-elected", prosecutor Liat Ben Ari said during opening arguments. He "made illegitimate use of the great governmental power entrusted to him", Ben Ari added.



KATMANDU: Pakistan ambassador to Nepal, Syed Haider Shah calls on KP Sharma Oli, Prime minister of Nepal at his Residence. Matters related to mutual interest and cooperation were discussed during the meeting. - DNA

Pakistan continues cotton trade with Xinjiang

"Pakistani importers have conspicuous understanding that Xinjiang cotton industry meets all standards and parameters set by World Trade Organization (WTO) related to working conditions in industries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cotton Export and Import Bodies have announced to continue cotton trade with China especially from Xinjiang dismissing all accusations and sanctions imposed by the western countries.

According to China Chinese media, they took crystal-clear stance that Xinjiang cotton industry is not stigmatized at all by human right abuses and forced labour rather the move is politically-motivated.

Pakistan Textile Exporter Association (PTEA) Chairman Muhammad Ahmed in an interview to media said that Pakistan traders characterize Xinjiang cotton boycott reprehensible.

"We have nothing to do with western campaign hell-bent to play Xinjiang cotton card to eclipse China image under the pretext of concocted accusation of human rights," he asserted. Pakistan's import trade with China, he said, will remain unhurt as traders are not going to succumb to any pressure. "Pakistani importers have

conspicuous understanding that Xinjiang cotton industry meets all standards and parameters set by World Trade Organization (WTO) related to working conditions in industries. It is beyond comprehension that neither World Trade Organization (WTO) nor United National (UN) raised any eyebrows over the working qualities in Xinjiang cotton growth and production practices," he revealed and added that satisfaction of WTO and UN are enough to substantiate that EU, US, UK and Canada have their own ulte-

rior motives to serve their trade agenda and political designs. Punjab Trader Association (PTA) President Asim Husain said that under CPFTA phase I and phase II, spillover of incentives on export and import with China, Pakistani is the main beneficiary. "Since Pakistan-China trade scenario has been deepened and broadened recently especially under CPEC framework, cotton trade with China is up and running smoothly," he mentioned. "With the products of Chinese cotton including Xin-

jiang from which Pakistan imports cotton, Pakistani traders are in a position to meet the deadlines of fulfilling international contracts secured from Nike, Addidas, Zara and other global brands," he said. According to data, during the first half of the fiscal year 2019-20, Pakistan imported 24,299 tonnes of cotton yarn from China and other countries including Turkey, Oman, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Vietnam and other countries. Pakistan imported 14,100 tonnes of cotton yarn from China (58pc of total im-

ports), 2,067 tonnes from Turkey, 1,038 tonnes from Oman, 915 tonnes from Uzbekistan, 246 tonnes from Indonesia, 172 tonnes from Vietnam and 1,028 tonnes from other countries. For the year 2020, the worldwide cotton market was worth \$38.54 billion. That is expected to reach \$46.56 billion by 2027, compound annual growth of 2.74 per cent from 2020 to 2027. That's how lucrative the cotton market is. Roughly 1 in 5 cotton garments sold globally contains cotton or yarn from Xinjiang.

More than 90 dead in Indonesia, East Timor floods

The cyclone, which was picking up strength as it moved toward the west coast of Australia, hampered efforts to reach trapped survivors

DNA

LEMBATA: Tropical cyclone Seroja pounded Indonesia and East Timor Monday after torrential rains triggered floods and landslides that have killed at least 91 people and left dozens missing.

Packing heavy winds and rain, the storm heaped more misery on the Southeast Asian nations after Sunday's disaster turned small communities into wastelands of mud and uprooted trees and forced thousands of people into shelters.

Downpours are expected over the next day as the storm triggers offshore waves as high as six metres (20 feet), Indonesia's disaster agency said. The cyclone, which was picking up strength as it moved toward the west coast of Australia, hampered efforts to reach trapped survivors. Indonesia's disaster agency said at least 70 people have been killed, with another 70 missing.

In East Timor, at least 21 people have been killed according to an official in the tiny half-island nation of 1.3 million that lies between Indonesia and Australia. Many of the deaths were in Timor's inundated capital Dili, where the front of

the presidential palace was transformed into a mud pit.

In Indonesia's remote East Flores municipality, torrents of mud washed over homes, bridges and roads, while strong waves have prevented search teams from accessing the hardest-hit areas.

On Lembata, an island east of Flores, parts of some villages were swept down a mountainside and carried to the shore of the ocean. Soon after flash floods began tearing into resident Basir Langoday's district in the early morning, he heard screams for help from a nearby home covered in rubble. "There were four of them inside. Three survived but the other one didn't make it," he told reporters. Langoday and his friends scrambled to try and save the trapped man before he was crushed to death. "He said 'hurry, I can't hold on any longer,' Langoday added.

Juna Witak, another Lembata resident, joined his family at a local hospital where they wept over the corpse of his mother who was killed in a flash flood Sunday. Her body was found by the seashore. "There was a rumbling sound and the floods swept away homes, everything," Witak said.

Pakistan business delegation visits Minsk, Belarus



DNA

MINSK: Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan received a seven members business delegation from Pakistan led by Mr Walid Mushtaq Honorary

Consul of the Republic of Belarus in Punjab, today at the Embassy. Mr. Nadeem Malik, Chairman of Master Group of Industries was also among the prominent businessmen. The delegation is currently visiting Belarus from 4-9 April 2021.

The Ambassador briefed the delegation on various aspects of Pakistan-Belarus relations and the two sides discussed the possibilities of expanding trade and investment relations between the two friendly countries.

Zong helps Pakistan get 100m Broadband subscriptions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With China Mobile Communication Corporation's CMPak (Zong) as one of the major broadband players, broadband subscriptions in Pakistan have reached a historic 100 million mark, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. According to Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the historic 100 mil-

lion mark has been achieved owing to supportive government policies, effective competition among telecom operators and PTA's commitment to introduce and utilize innovative technologies. "All four national Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs), SCO and fixed line broadband operators including PTCL collectively have broadband subscriptions of over 100 million now," according to PTA.

China Mobile owns CMPak, which operates under Zong 4G in Pakistan, and is the fastest growing cellular mobile operator in Pakistan. According to the PTA official website, CMPak (Zong) enjoys 22.6% cellular market share in Pakistan. Market share of all four national cellular mobile operators in Pakistan. [PTA Website]. The CMPak is a 100% owned subsidiary of China Mobile Communications

Corporation that came to Pakistan in 2007. Being young of all four national Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs), Zong has shown exponential growth to attract a large number of users within a short period of time. Currently, CMPak engages in the provision of cellular mobile voice and data services to the Pakistani market through 2G, 3G and 4G technologies.

FBR urged to reduce turnover tax on Yarn traders

The majority of yarn traders will be forced to close their businesses, which are already badly affected by the Corona epidemic and are facing severe financial crunch

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Farhan Ashrafi, Vice Chairman of Pakistan Yarn Merchants Association (PYMA) & convener FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Yarn Trading and Khurram Bharaa, former SVP, have demanded Muhammad Javed Ghani, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to withdraw 1.5 turnover tax imposed on yarn traders and restore the previous rate of 0.1%. Otherwise, the majority of yarn traders will be forced to close their businesses, which

are already badly affected by the Corona epidemic and are facing severe financial crunch.

A letter to FBR chairman, Farhan Ashrafi informed that PYMA members, who are yarn traders have brought attention towards this important issue, as they were doing business in large volume but unfortunately at nominal rate of profit margin which is 1pc even less. By virtue of SRO.333 (I) 2001 dated 02.05.2011, the traders of yarn had been subject to turnover tax at concessional rate 0.1pc, which constitutes about 10pc of their margin. Provision of rate of

minimum tax 0.1pc was made under clause 45 (A) second schedule to the income tax ordinance 2001. "Because of some oversight traders of yarn were not included in the purview of minimum tax under the first schedule Part-I (Division IX) of the Income tax ordinance 2001, which would be the correct approach to treat the levy of concessional rate on yarn traders, as is the case with various other sectors and persons", they added. Due to this lacuna a state of confusion remains about the levy of tax and frequent changes are made in the rate of turnover tax without

consultation with stakeholders. Khurram Bharaa said that to compound the misery of yarn traders an amendment was made through Finance Act 2020, whereby Yarn Traders have been taken out of the scope of clause 45A (Part IV of 2nd Schedule) and the exemption from application of minimum turnover tax under Section 113 has been withdrawn, which prescribes 1.5pc turnover tax. Accordingly, the yarn traders are how subject to turnover tax at the rate of 1.5pc, which is way above their actual margin. Consequently, many traders of yarn have to dis-

continue their business unless the previous rate of 0.1pc is restored. Farhan Ashrafi asked to FBR chairman to remove the anomaly by insertion of the provision of minimum turnover tax at 0.1pc for the yarn traders in the first schedule Part-I Division IX (exempting yarn traders from minimum 1.5pc tax under section 113 of income tax ordinance 2001). He requested Javed Ghani for intervention in the matter will help to rescue the complaint tax-prayers, who are conducting a large volume of trade and sustaining the textile sector of Pakistan

Iran receives first batch of COVAX vaccines

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: The first consignment of vaccines allocated to Iran under the World Health Organization's COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) program has arrived in the country's capital, the country's Food and Drug Administration said on Monday.

The shipment, including over 700,000 doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, was shipped to Iran on Sunday night, Tasnim news agency reported, quoting Kianoush Jahanpour, the administration's spokesperson.

Iran's quota under the COVAX program amounts to 16.8 million doses, Jahanpour said. So far, Iran has received 520,000 doses of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine, and plans to produce domestic vaccines in the next months.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani recently blamed Washington's sanctions for "hindering the availability of COVID-19 vaccines" for Iranians.

Turkey held 10 retired admirals

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkish authorities on Monday detained 10 former admirals after a group of more than 100 retired senior navy officers issued a statement that government officials tied to Turkey's history of military coups.

State-run Anadolu news agency said the retired admirals were detained as part of an investigation into their open letter, which was launched by the chief prosecutor in the capital, Ankara. Prosecutors also ordered four other suspects to report to Ankara police within three days, opting not to detain them because of their age, the report said.

The former senior military leaders are accused of "using force and violence to get rid of the constitutional order", NTV broadcaster reported.

The detentions come a day after the open letter signed by 104 retired admirals was sharply condemned by the presidential office, which said the move was "reminiscent of coup times" during Turkey's past.

Gold prices decrease by Rs950 per tola

DNA

KARACHI: The price of per tola of gold fell by Rs 950 and reached Rs Rs104450, Karachi Sarafa Bazaar Association said on Monday. The continuing trend of gold continued on Monday where it fell by Rs950.

While price of 10 grams of gold fell by Rs 814 to Rs 89550 at the closing time of trading. Globally, the price of gold also fell by \$5 per ounce and reached \$1,726 per ounce. The price of a tola of silver remained at Rs1360.

Bulgaria ruling party wins elections

WEB DESK

BULGARIA: Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov's party is set to take the largest share of seats in the country's parliament, according to official interim results released on Monday. The tallies, however, show the center-right, pro-European Union GERB party falling short of an absolute majority - indicating a tough road ahead for coalition talks.

Partial results released by the Central Election Commission show GERB garnering around 25% of the vote. Five other parties, however, are set to enter parliament as well - including three protest parties.

In a surprise showing, the protest party "There Is Such a People" (ITN) is in second place with 19%. The party is led by TV presenter, cabaret artist and prominent COVID-19 denier, Slavi Trifonov. Results show the opposition Socialists coming in third with just under 15%.

Briefs

Govt to formulate SOPs during Ramadan

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The government on Monday decided to formulate standard operating procedures to prevent the spread of the third wave of coronavirus pandemic during the holy month of Ramadan. The decision was taken in a virtual meeting presided over by President Dr. Arif Alvi to deliberate upon the plan of action to ensure the implementation of all SOPs in mosques and Imam Bargas to contain the deadly virus. The meeting was attended by governors, federal minister for religious affairs and inter-faith harmony and religious scholars. The participants of the meeting were briefed by the Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Health, Dr Faisal Sultan. The meeting decided to formulate SOPs to contain virus spread during the Holy month of Ramadan and Taravah prayers. Speaking on the occasion, President Arif Alvi underlined the important role of religious scholars in fight against the coronavirus.

Pervaiz Elahi slams Punjab govt farmer policy

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has on Monday strongly criticized the provincial government over its policy regarding farmers and said they are being treated poorly. Representatives of Pakistan Muslim League Kisan Wing and other farmers' organizations called on Pervaiz Elahi. After listening to the problems of the farmers, Ch Parvez Elahi remarked that there is no need of district wise ban if the government is not even procuring wheat from farmers. Pervaiz Elahi said the Ukrainian farmers were provided benefits last year also instead of ours, and only time will tell about the circumstances through which our growers will go this time around. The speaker said that the Sindh government is procuring wheat at Rs 2,000 per 40 kilograms while the farmers of Punjab including Bahawalpur, Multan, South Punjab and other districts are worried.

Rabbani tables bill seeking powers for Senate

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Senator Raza Rabbani tabled a bill seeking equal powers for Senate and National Assembly in the upper house of Parliament on Monday. The constitutional bill 2021 seeks amendments in articles 57, 72, 73, 86, 126, 159, 160, and 166 of the Constitution. He remarked that Senate has fewer powers compared to National Assembly, adding that the power should be shared between the two houses of Parliament. "Chief ministers should be allowed to on the floor of the Senate," Minister of State on Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan opposed the bill. - APP

Indonesian amb. Adam Tugio opens virtual trade expo 2021

CGSS and the Indonesian embassy organize online internship program as well; The theme of the first session was Indonesian Politics: Between Islam and Nationalism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic Indonesia, Adam M. Tugio officially opened the Indonesia - Pakistan Virtual Trade Expo 2021 on 5th April 2021. The expo participated by 10 exhibitors from Indonesia which are exporters of products in various sectors and more than 50 potential buyers from various companies in Pakistan. The Expo is part of the efforts to boost people-to-people relations between Indonesia and Pakistan as well as strengthen the economic and trade ties currently being enjoyed between the two nations, despite of this current situation of Pandemic. The First Session of the International Online Internship Program, "Contemporary Dynamics of Indonesia" was held. The internship program is jointly organized by the Embassy of Indonesia



to Pakistan and the Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad. The ambassador emphasized that Indonesia has exciting opportunities for scholars and researchers that can be explored during this internship program. He concluded by inviting more ideas and areas of cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan. Meanwhile the CGSS and Indonesian embassy jointly

organized Online internship program. The theme of the first session was Indonesian Politics: Between Islam and Nationalism and the speaker for this session was Dr. Abdul Gaffar Karim from the faculty of Political Science, Gajah Mada University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. He discussed four perspectives during the session including, brief history and geography of the country, the political history of In-

donesia, implementation of Syariah (Shariah) in the daily lives of Muslims in the country, and lastly the prospects. He highlighted the social outlook of the country and mentioned that Indonesia has almost 17000 islands and it is the 4th most populous country. Moreover, it is the home to hundreds of ethnic and religious groups with a majority Muslim population. Discussing the political out-

look of the country, Dr. Abdul Gaffar shared that the state ideology is based on Pancasila, it is a democratic state with a bicameral legislature and presidential form of government where people elect their president after every 5 years. He also highlighted the Syariah Banking system under the Bank Syariah Indonesia that follows the finance system based on the concept of Islamic monetary system,

Non-riba. Furthermore, 40.4% of the Islamic bank industry is controlled by the state through the Bank Syariah Indonesia. He added that the Syariah banking on the local level marks the presence of Islam in the daily life of people and is implemented pragmatically. Dr. Abdul Gaffar stated that Indonesia will remain a nationalist, semi-secular state with some Islamic-inspired policies in many sectors. The session was moderated by Ms. Laraib Fatima Hassan, Communication & Coordination Manager, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad. Masters and Ph.D. level Students from across Pakistan are a part of this Online International Internship Program. This program will equip them with the knowledge of the contemporary dynamics of Indonesia and its various sectors.

Asad Umar in huge mid-air plane scare

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Federal Minister of Planning Asad Umar was among the passengers of an Islamabad-bound aeroplane that experienced a technical fault in mid-air but landed back safely on Karachi's Jinnah International Airport. The plane of a private airline, SereneAir's Karachi-Islamabad flight ER-502, took off at 12:50 PM and made a technical landing at Karachi airport at 2:10 PM after developing a fault, the captain of the aircraft contacted the control tower and safely landed the plane at the airport. The airline administration confirmed that the aircraft landed in Karachi due to a technical fault. The passengers have been shifted to the airport's lounge and arrangements are being made for their departure at the earliest, the administration added. Federal Minister of Planning Asad Umar was also among the passengers who later headed to Islamabad from a PIA flight. Airport sources said that the fault was developed in the aircraft's engine and engineers are working to remove it. Sources added that the second engine of the same plane had earlier developed a fault. An alternative flight will be arranged for transporting the remaining passengers.

Hajj 2021 risk cancellation over virus fears

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD, APR 05 (DNA) - Fears of cancellation of this year's pilgrimage are growing due to the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Quoting sources in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the channel reported that the Saudi authorities had sealed their lips completely with respect to making arrangements for the annual ritual. They added that there had been no contact between the governments of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on the subject for the last few days. According to a private television channel report it had been the government of Pakistan's desire to complete arrangements for Hajj on time in view of the pandemic, but due to no response from the Saudi side, some important matters were still awaiting settlement.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Baber Sidhu called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

Pakistan announces phased Covid-19 vaccination for youth

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: It was announced Monday that the process of vaccinating young citizens against Covid-19 will be started in phases. Next month, more of the country's population will be vaccinated. Talking to media after inauguration of a vaccination center in Islamabad, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr Faisal Sultan informed about the government's decision and said that it is ensuring uninterrupted supply of vaccines as planned. The Special Assistant said that vaccines were being administered in a systematic manner while the government was also buying vaccines for the citizens. He appealed the public to follow the SOPs to contain the spread of COVID-19. The Special Assistant asked all the registered citizens to get their vaccination done at their respective centers. He said till now nine hundred thousand people have been vaccinated. On the other hand, Par-

liamentary Secretary for National Health Services Dr. Noshin Hamid said that Pakistan has received more than 900,000 doses of Covid 19 vaccine and those who choose to get vaccinated at government centers can do so free of charge. She said the registration process has started for people over the age of 50, while the vaccination campaign for people over the age of 60 and frontline health workers was already underway. "We are accelerating this process and want to take it to a stage where a large number of Pa-

kistanis will be vaccinated to help prevent the spread of the virus," she added. She said the government was currently providing free vaccines to citizens and some of the certified private hospitals had also been given permission to administer Russian-made Sputnik-V vaccines. Dr. Noshin Hamid said that registration of the public for vaccination was slow at the beginning but now, people are slowly becoming aware and getting registered. About 78% of people have registered at government vaccination centers, she added.

Government wants consensus on moon sighting

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government is in consultative process with all stakeholders to develop consensus on beginning of Ramadan and Eids on the same dates across the country. This was stated by Minister for Religious Affairs Dr Noor ul Haq Qadri in an exclusive interview with Radio Pakistan. He said the meeting of Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee will be held in Peshawar to achieve this objective. Noor ul Haq Qadri said the government desires to make decisions about moon sighting of Ramadan and Eid as reflective of national unity. In a question about observance of COVID SOPs issued by the government, he said Mosques and Imambargahs play an effective and important role in implementing precautionary measures and creating awareness among masses to reduce adverse impacts of current wave. He added that Ulema, Mashaikh and Aima Masjid are on the



same page in following government's instructions in this regard. Meanwhile, Noor ul Haq Qadri said a large scale consultative meeting held today which was attended by over 100 religious scholars, Ulema and Mashaikh including Governors from all provinces and Gilgit Baltistan while representative from Azad Jammu and Kashmir was also present on the occasion. The participants assured their full support in this regard. Fawad Chaudhry had claimed on Saturday that the Ramadan moon will be sighted "clearly" in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar on the evening of 13 April and again on Sunday.

Is 5G harmful to health? Court serves notice to PTA

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday issued a notice to the Pakistan Telecommunication Technology (PTA), asking whether 5G technology is harmful to health. The court's notice came during a hearing on a petition seeking a ban on the 5G technology. During the hearing, the court asked the petitioner to explain how the 5G technology could be harmful to health and whether anyone had been licensed to roll it out.

"Will the PTA be able to explain whether 5G has adverse effects on health or not ... the world is advancing in information and technology, why should we ban it?" The court, sending a notice to the PTA, said it would move forward with the proceedings once it receives a response from the telecommunication regulator. It is pertinent to mention here that the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), after 7 years of research, released 2020 guidelines on limiting exposure to electromagnetic fields. They include information about 5G.

Dr. Faisal briefs WHO Pakistan head

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Dr Faisal Sultan on Monday briefed WHO Pakistan head Dr Palitha Gunarathna Mahipala about ongoing COVID vaccination in the country. Dr Sultan along with Dr Palitha visited the COVID vaccination centre located at Tarlai, Islamabad to inaugurate a special vaccination counter. - APP

NAB's strategy being lauded: Chairman

NAB's faith is corruption free Pakistan by adopting Accountability for all" policy on the basis of evidence as per law

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting to review overall performance of NAB at NAB Headquarters. During the meeting, it was informed that Operation and Prosecution Divisions of NAB are working closely in order to have operational and legal assistance to all Regional Bureaus of NAB in conduct of complaint verifications, inquiries, investigations as per law and pleading cases of NAB in learned Courts. The Chairman NAB said that NAB has chalked out a very comprehensive Anti Corruption Three pronged Strategy comprising Awareness, Prevention

and Enforcement for eradication of corruption. NAB's faith is corruption free Pakistan by adopting Accountability for all" policy on the basis of evidence as per law. He said that NAB has introduced a "Combined Investigation Team" (CIT) system consisting of two investigation officers and a legal consultant, financial expert for a fair and transparent inquiry/ investigation. This system is not only lending quality. He said that the overall conviction ratio in respected accountability courts is about 68.8%. He said that the performance of all Regional Bureaus of NAB would be conducted on midterm and annual basis at a given criteria under Quantified Grading System in order to review

and further improve the performance of officers/officials of NAB as with better quantitative and qualitative improvements in Operational Efficiency Index, rationalized workload, clearly drawn job descriptions and institutional support and supervision. He said that Monitoring and Evaluation System (MES) has been developed for catering the needs of all concerned having salient features of maintenance of data at each stage including complaint entry, complaint verification, inquiry, investigation, prosecution stage and record preservation of Regional Board Meetings and Executive Board Meetings including case brief was discussed and decided that Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System will be implemented

forthwith with the ability to analyze data in qualitative and quantitative form having warnings and alarms system for violators. The Chairman NAB appreciated the devoted efforts of NAB Headquarters and all regional bureaus and directed to double their efforts in eradication of corruption and to recover looted money from corrupt as NAB is determined to make Pakistan corruption free as per law. He said that NAB is an apex national anti corruption organization, as per report of Gillani and Gallup survey, 59 people have shown confidence upon NAB. Pakistan is considered as a role model for SAARC Countries in eradication of Corruption due to NAB's efforts.

Thank You




Sarmad Ali
President / Jang Group

Nazafreen Saigol
Secy General / Dawn Group



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