



Islamabad POST

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Danish Ambassador lauds Clean Green Pakistan programme

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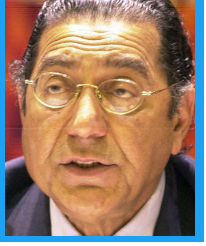
Vaccination for all citizens after Eid: Asad

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Pak calls for joint efforts to curb challenges

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Briefs

Nation stands with armed forces: FM

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with armed forces in the war on terrorism. During a visit to the Armed Forces Institute For Rehabilitation Medicine in Rawalpindi on Thursday, he said our valiant security forces have given immense sacrifices in the fight against terrorism. On the occasion, the Foreign Minister was given a detailed briefing about the Armed Forces Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine.

Criminalizing the criticism ridiculous

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry on Thursday said it was an "absolutely ridiculous idea" to criminalise criticism, a day after a National Assembly panel approved a bill that proposes a two-year prison sentence and a hefty fine for those who intentionally ridicule the armed forces. Though Chaudhry did not directly reference the bill in his tweet, his remarks came in reaction to a tweet by senior journalist Mazhar Abbas who, while apparently commenting on the bill passed by the NA committee, wrote that citizens were free to criticise the parliament, politicians and media but the "rest is national interest".

Could never cause harm to PM Imran

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Jahangir Tareen on Thursday said he could not even think about "causing harm to Prime Minister Imran Khan". Tareen also denied reports that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) stalwart and leader of the opposition in the Senate Yousuf Raza Gilani had travelled on his plane. "If Yousuf Raza Gilani used Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood's plane, how is it my fault," the estranged PTI leader asked.

PM Imran says economy not managed well

Says people still face obstacles when approaching banks for small loans to make a house

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Banks in Pakistan are not in the habit of giving loans to people without influence, said Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday. He was speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony of Farash Town apartments in Islamabad, which is a housing project under the Naya Pakistan Housing programme. The apartments are expected to be completed within the next two years. "People still face obstacles when approaching banks for small loans to make a house," the premier told the audience, explaining that negotiations between the government and banks are still under way. He spoke about going towards automation to make processes, such as going to the Capital Development Authority to get permission for construction or house maps approved, easier. Later, Prime Minister Imran Khan proposed a five-point roadmap to materialize the vision of D-8, which include mobilizing financial resources to recover robustly for the economic and health crises incurred by COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing the 10th D-8 virtual summit Thursday, the Prime Minister invited the D-8 leaders to consider his five-point plan and join advocacy for COVID-19 related relief measures to deal with the unique economic and financial challenges faced by developing countries as a result of the pandemic.

Imran Khan proposed taking concrete actions to achieve target of expanding inter-D-8 trade from currently around 100 billion dollars to 500 billion dollars by 2030.

Pak enters int'l capital market after 3 years

COMMERCE DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has entered the international capital market after a gap of over three years by successfully raising USD 2.5 billion through a multi-tranche transaction of 5-, 10- and 30-year Eurobonds. The transaction generated great interest as leading global investors from Asia, Middle East, Europe and the US participated in the global investor calls and the order book. This is for the first time that Pakistan has adopted a program-based approach with registration of Global Medium-Term Note (GMTN) program. The program will allow Pakistan to tap the market at short notice. The Government intends to make full use of this program and become a regular issuer in the International Capital Markets.

Imran Khan proposed taking concrete actions to achieve target of expanding inter-D-8 trade from currently around 100 billion dollars to 500 billion dollars by 2030.

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Army leadership satisfied with Afghan peace process



RAWALPINDI: Chief Of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa chairing the Corps Commanders Conference (CCC) at GHQ. - DNA

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Corps Commanders Conference (CCC) on Thursday reviewed internal security situation including ongoing third wave of COVID-19 and reaffirmed resolve of the Armed Forces to extend full support to civil administration in controlling the pandemic. The CCC was chaired by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa held here at General Headquarters (GHQ). The participants undertook a comprehensive review of global, regional and domestic security environment, said the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General in a tweet. He added that the Forum expressed confidence in operational preparedness of the Army displayed during recently held formation exercises. The Forum also held a detailed discussion on situation along the Eastern Border and the Line of Control (LOC) especially the environment post ceasefire understanding 2021 between the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGsMO) of India and Pakistan. The Forum reaffirmed complete solidarity with Kashmiri brethren in their struggle for right to self-determination. The Forum undertook a

detailed review of security situation in Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The Forum reiterated the importance of energizing early induction of civil administration and other Law Enforcement Agencies along with speedy implementation of development plan within these districts for their ultimate transition to civil administration in an earlier timeframe. The Forum expressed satisfaction over positive developments in Afghan Peace Process and efforts made so far. The Forum was also apprised about military engagements with friendly countries.

Vaccination registration for all citizens after Eid

Umar terms the coming five to six weeks "critical" in Pakistan's battle against the ongoing third coronavirus wave

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Head of the National Command and Operations Centre (NCO) - the body that is leading Pakistan's fight against coronavirus - Asad Umar, on Thursday said that COVID-19 vaccination registration will be open to all citizens after Eid. According to a report, the Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives was speaking to senior journalists when he announced the development. Umar termed the coming five to six weeks "critical" in Pakistan's battle against the ongoing third coronavirus wave. Speaking of vaccinations carried out so far, he said that 1.1 million people had been inoculated via the government's vaccination programme, whereas 14,000 people had received a jab through the private sector.

Pakistan sees highest daily cases since July

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported 5,329 new cases of coronavirus, according to the Health Ministry on Thursday, the highest single-day number in the country since July 2020. With new infections, the total number of cases in the country reached 705,517. The country also reported 98 more fatalities over the past 24 hours, pushing the death toll to 15,124. Some 623,399 patients have so far recovered, whereas the number of active cases reached 66,994. Infections have risen sharply in the

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SARGODHA: Air commodore Ali Naeem Zahoor, Base commander PAF Base, Mushaf presenting souvenir to Saudi ambassador to Pakistan, Nawaf Bin Said Al Maliki at the closing ceremony of The Aces Meet 2021 maneuvers. - DNA

Multi-national exercise 'ACES 2021-1' concludes

Nawaf Saeed Al-Malky, Ambassador of KSA to Pakistan thanked Pakistan Air Force for arranging such exercise

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Two-week long Multi-National air exercise "ACES Meet 2021-1" concluded at an Operational Base of Pakistan Air Force. A closing ceremony was held in this regard. Air Commodore Ali Naeem Zahoor, Base Commander PAF Base, Mushaf was the chief guest at the occasion. Nawaf Saeed Al-Malky, Ambassador KSA to Pakistan graced the

ceremony as Guest of Honour. Air Vice Marshal (Pilot) / Staff Awad Abdullah Al Zahrani, Defence Attache KSA and Colonel Wallin David, Air Attache USA were also present in the ceremony along with observers from Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan. Addressing the participants of the exercise, the chief guest said, "PAF is happy to share its experiences and expertise in the field of Counter-Terrorism Operations with RSAF & USAF.

At the same time, Exercise ACES Meet has also provided a good opportunity for us for mutual learning." He further said, "With the successful and meaningful conduct of exercise, we have consolidated our resolve, that we stand by each other as allies and friends." His Excellency Nawaf Saeed Al-Malky, Ambassador of KSA to Pakistan while sharing his views with the audience thanked Pakistan Air Force for arranging such exercise, especially in COVID-19 situation. He said that such exercises increase the comradeship and professional excellence of the participants. Colonel Wallin David, Air Attache USA also congratulated Pakistan Air Force on successful completion of the exercise. ACES MEET 2021-1 featured active participation of PAF, RSAF and USAF participated in the exercise whereas Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan air forces were invited as observers.

Pak, Iraq ink MoU for cooperation

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Saleh Hussein Ali Al-Tamimi, Under Secretary for Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq called on Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The Foreign Minister warmly welcomed the Under Secretary and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong and fraternal ties with Iraq. He said Pakistan accorded

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Security: Asad Qaiser's Kabul visit postponed

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser's visit to Kabul has been postponed due to security reasons, tweeted Mohammad Sadiq, Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, on Thursday. The NA speaker was heading a nine-member parliamentary delegation to Kabul on the special invitation of his counterpart Chairman Wolsi Jirga Afghanistan, Mir Rehman Rahmani and Chairman of the Afghan Senate Fazal Hadi Muslimyar telephoned Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser and regretted the postponement of the visit. They said they were looking forward to the visit of the delegation from Pakistan at an earlier date. Speaker Asad Qaiser said he would be visiting Kabul as soon as the security situation improves. - DNA

flight tracker Flightradar 24 and shared by an unofficial PIA enthusiast the aircraft circled for some time near Kabul's Hamid Karzai airport, before heading back home. However, the information available from the Kabul Airport's online arrivals and departures showed regular flight movement. Chairman Wolsi Jirga Afghanistan Mir Rehman Rahmani and Chairman of the Afghan Senate Fazal Hadi Muslimyar telephoned Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser and regretted the postponement of the visit. They said they were looking forward to the visit of the delegation from Pakistan at an earlier date. Speaker Asad Qaiser said he would be visiting Kabul as soon as the security situation improves. - DNA

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AIRLINK
AirLink Smart Phone Production Facility

Another Milestone, Another Achievement

Airlink has established a state-of-the-art smart phone production facility in Lahore in line with 'Made in Pakistan' vision of Prime Minister which was inaugurated by Mr. Hamad Azhar, Federal Minister of Industries & Production, on 20th March, 2021.

We want to thank our customers, business partners, financial institutions, associates and our team for their trust, confidence and for always considering Airlink as their smart device partner.

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Briefs

Two bus stations sealed

DNA

PESHAWAR: District administration Peshawar during crackdown against the violators of Corona preventive standard operating procedures (SOPs) sealed two bus stations and arrested their managers here Thursday. The officers of district administration along with the officers of the Regional Transport Authority (RTA) inspected bus stands in respective areas of jurisdiction and collectively sealed two bus stations and arrested their managers. A cash penalty amounting to Rs.33000 was also imposed on them over violation of the SOPs. Similarly, 227 commuters' vehicles were also checked in various localities and the owners of 18 vehicles were arrested over not wearing safety masks and a fine to the tune of Rs.149000/- was also imposed on them. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Khalid Mahmood has directed the operators of bus stations and owners for strict adherence to officially announced SOPs, otherwise, stern legal action would be initiated against them.

12 Ramzan Sahulat bazaars to be set up

DNA

SARGODHA: Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Shah Rukh Khan Niazi has said that 12 Ramazan Sahulat bazaars would be set up in the district this year to ensure supply of daily commodities to the people at discounted rates. He was addressing a meeting to review the arrangements for Ramadan Bazaars, here on Thursday. The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioners from across the district, traders, Distributory Council, DO enterprise and concerned officers.

He urged the traders to come forward and play their role in ensuring all possible facilities in Sahulat bazaars during Ramadan.

ADCR said that according to the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar, all food items will be made available in these bazaars.

KPK's covid positivity rate reaches 12.3%

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Health Minister Taimur Khan Jhagra on Thursday said, the province has reported 1,018 COVID-19 cases during the past 24 hours at the positivity rate of 12.3pc. Jhagra in his tweet said, as many as 1,018 coronavirus cases were reported during past 24 hours, while the positivity rate of the cases was recorded at 20pc in five districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Overall positivity stable but still very high," he added. Overall, coronavirus has claimed 98 more lives in Pakistan during the past 24 hours, taking the overall death toll to 15,124. The latest statistics of the COVID-19 has claimed 98 more lives and 5,329 fresh infections were reported during the period. — APP

5 more corona patients die in Faisalabad

DNA

FAISALABAD: Five more patients died of COVID-19 in the district, while 204 persons tested positive during the last 24 hours. A spokesperson for the Health department said on Thursday the death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 668 in the district. He said that 1,150 tests for coronavirus were conducted in public and private sectors labs during the same period. He said that so far 10,215 patients had recovered from the disease while total active cases in Faisalabad reached 3,392. He said that 220 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital and 106 at the DHQ Hospital for COVID-19 patients. At present, 212 patients, including 138 confirmed ones, were under treatment at the Allied Hospital while 99, including 47 confirmed, were admitted to DHQ Hospital.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Hammad Azhar and Governor State Bank Reza Baqir called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

DC Faisalabad inaugurates Insaf Sasta Mobile Shop program

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Under the arrangements of District Administration, the "Insaf Sasti Mobile Shop" program has been formally inaugurated. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali checked quality and presence of rate lists of fruits and vegetables on loader Riksha and departed them to different areas in the city. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Khurram Pervez, Assistant Commissioner Sadar Umar Maqbool, EADA M.Usman besides officers of Market Committee were also present. Talking to media on this occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that Insaf Sasti Mobile Shop Program was a revolutionary initiative of Prime Minister Imran Khan which aims to provide vegetables and fruits to the



citizens at their doorsteps at wholesale prices during the month of Ramadan. In this regard 150 Insaf Sasti mobile shops have been in-

troduced. He said that registration and branding of mobile shops has been done which will provide essential items at

market rate and essential items will be available at lower rates from Sasti mobile shops as compared to the general market.

The Deputy Commissioner said that the vehicles would be parked at designated places in the city, geo-tagging of the vehicles would be done

and the price magistrates would check the vehicles. He informed that 19 Ramazan Bazaars are being set up and Insaf Sasti Shops are being set up outside 40 large mega marts of city where fruits, vegetables and wholesale items will be sold at discounted rates. He said that in Ramzan, the process of providing quality products at lower rates as compared to local market will be monitored completely.

141,200-kg sugar seized
As much as 141,200-kilogram sugar, stored illegally, was seized by the district administration here on Thursday. According to an official source, a team headed by AC Samundri, Faisal Sultan raided two godowns and seized 900 bags of 50-kg each from the godown of one Suleman and 800 bags of 50-kg quantity each from the godown of Fahad.

Govt taking practical steps to address issues

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on Thursday said the government had been taking practical steps to address deprivations of the people and the journey of development would not be stopped as improving the quality of life was top priority of the government. In a statement, the CM said the people had trusted him and he was firmly standing for the rights of the people. Those who were dreaming of destabilizing the government had been fallen, he said. Similarly, those engaged in the politics of chaos had become a symbol of desolation after their disintegration, he added. The CM vowed to continue the journey of development, adding that the government was moving forward with the full trust of the people.

Indonesian Consulate General hosts media gathering

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi held a Media Gathering with the press from a number of well-known media in Pakistan. Responding to the challenges of diplomacy amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi continuously develop

and maintain relations and cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan, especially in people-to-people diplomacy. In this meeting, Consul for Information and Socio-Culture conveyed the important role of the press in society, which becomes very relevant especially in today's information age. During the gathering, the Indonesian Consulate General in Karachi introduced three educational and cultural programs that are organized by the Consulate throughout 2021, namely Indonesian language classes, KNB Scholarship, and Indonesia Virtual Show. Furthermore, the Indonesian Consulate once again promotes the digital platform "Indonesia Portal" which can facilitate the process and initiatives for cooperation between the people of Indonesia and Pakistan in various aspects, including trade, investment, tourism, education, as well as arts and culture. It is hoped that in the future these programs will initiate other supporting activities, through establishing collaboration and cooperation with the media and other stakeholders from the two countries.

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HYDERABAD: Artisan busy in preparing traditional cloth at his workplace. — DNA

Literary Festival continues at UoS

MEHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: The second day of the fourth Sargodha Literary Festival (SLF), featuring an online art exhibition and intellectual discussions here at the University of Sargodha (UoS), attracted a large number of people concerned. The day started with a talk on the 'Art and Liberation', moderated by renowned photographer and graphic designer Ayesha Bilal, while artists from across Pakistan including Dr Ahmad Bilal, Shahnawaz Zaidi, RM Naem, Asrar Hussain Chishti and Nirmal Bano participated as panelists through 'Zoom'. The participants in-

terpreted "Art as a medium to express, invent and comprehend". The artists highlighted the importance of artwork as a reflection of society and a source of inspiration for communication, character building and cultural archives while promoting peace, love, tolerance and compassion among all human beings, irrespective of prejudices of caste or class systems prevalent in our society. The virtual painting exhibition on the theme of "Art and Liberation" mesmerised the audience as artworks of over 50 artists from across Punjab had been showcased at the Zubeida Agha Art Gallery of the Sargodha University.

'Technology use vital to curb corrupt practices'

DNA

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM) on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan said on Thursday that the use of technology was vital for curbing corrupt practices and changing the system. Talking to the media here, she said that it was a very difficult task to introduce technology in the revenue department and change the decades old system, which revolved around the 'patwari'. She said that Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar had started the process of setting up 'Araazi' [land] Record Centres to facilitate people in a transparent manner. Till now, 115 such centres had been set up at 'Kanungo' level, adding that 20 mobile units were operational in the field across the province to facilitate senior, the disabled and ill persons, who could not visit the 'Araazi' centres, she added.

Dr Firdous said that 20 more mobile units would be made operational and 8,000 'Araazi' record centres would be computerised till the end of this year.

The SACM said that digitalisation mechanism had been updated and uploaded in 100 tehsils, while the registry process had also been made easy. Up-gradation of 'Jamabandi' and its printing had been stopped for the last 10 years, she said adding that now 'Jamabandi' would be carried out online on regular basis.

Four killed over old enmity

DNA

SARGODHA: Four persons were shot dead, while three others suffered serious bullet wounds over old enmity in Khushab police limits here on Thursday. Police said seven people including Muhammad Yaqoob, Tahir Iqbal, Nasar Iqbal, Muhammad Naveed, Amir Raza, Khan Muhammad and Israr Ahmed, residents of Jhagyan, were in a market near Sandral road when three armed men resorted to indiscriminate firing at them and managed to escape from the crime scene. Consequently, Muhammad Yaqoob, Tahir Iqbal, Nasar Iqbal and Muhammad Naveed died on the spot, while three others suffered serious injuries. On getting information police and Rescue-1122 team reached the spot and shifted the bodies and injured to DHQ hospital Khushab. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Ashfaq Khan took the notice of the incident and directed the concerned team to arrest the accused at earliest.

16803 senior citizens vaccinated

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: As many as 16803 senior citizens have vaccinated so far in which first doze to 14595 and second doze provided to 2208 old people. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali visited vaccination center at Sports Complex Samanabad and reviewed the process of vaccinating. He checked the sitting arrangements for senior citizens in connection with the corona SOPs. He talked with the senior citizens and asked them about the arrangements.

He also checked the availability of drinking water and facility of washrooms. He directed the duty officers and staff present on the spot to implement corona SOPs in the center. He said that the centers of Sports Complex Samanabad, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Samundri New Building, Sports Complex Chak Jhumra, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital New Building Tandiwal and Rural Health Center New Building Khurriwal are under constant supervision while a strategy is being worked out to set up a new center in city area. AdCG Khurram Pervaiz, AC Sadar Umar Maqbool and other Officers were also present.

Notice issued to Khusro's brother sugar mill

KHAYAM ABASSI

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Thursday issued a notice to the sugar mill of Makhdoom Shehryar, the brother of the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Khusro Bakhtiar, for allegedly selling sugar through the practice of satta (price-fixing through collusion). Per the notice, the administration and shareholders have been accused of being involved with the satta mafia, adding that the latter is minting illegal money with the help of sugar mill owners. As the matter surfaced, Minister Khusro Bakhtiar said that he previously had shares in the company but does not have them anymore.

Last month, the Commercial Banking Circle of the FIA had arrested seven people allegedly involved with the sugar satta mafia which persistently increased sugar prices by creating an artificial shortage of the commodity, Geo News reported Sunday. The FIA had recently launched a crackdown against the sugar satta mafia for its involvement in money laundering. The suspects, who were arrested, allegedly colluded with the sugar mill owners to create the situation. During an operation, three brokers — identified as Dayal Das, Santosh Kumar, and Raj Kumar — were arrested first. In the second operation, four more people were taken into custody for their alleged involvement in the sugar scandal.

According to the FIA, the accused had created different social media forums and fake bank accounts to carry out illegal activities. Sources at the FIA said that the accused were involved in creating an artificial shortage of sugar because of which the price of the commodity had skyrocketed. Currently, there are two cases registered against the accused at the Karachi branch of the FIA which were filed in accordance with the Anti-Money Laundering Act. To carry out further investigations, the FIA has also obtained a remand for the arrested individuals from the court. The FIA had also exposed the sugar mafia's involvement in monetary fraud, speculative trade, and money laundering after obtaining strong evidence.

The sugar mafia earned Rs110 billion in a year by increasing the sugar prices from Rs70 to Rs90 via satta and stashed the illegally-earned money in fake and secret accounts, the FIA said. Almost all the major sugar-producing groups — some of which belong to major political parties — including Sharif Group, Tareen Group, Alliance Group, Almoiz Thal Group and Hamza Group, were found to be involved in satta, the agency added. FIA Director Lahore Dr Muhammad Rizwan, while talking to the media on Thursday about the operations against the sugar mafia, said that solid evidence has come to light in the operations via data retrieved from 32 digital devices belonging to the sugar mafia. He said owing to the sheer vol-

ume of the data gathered, "thousands of books" can be printed. Rizwan said that 10 cases have been registered against the sugar mafia while 40 people have been identified who "were all in touch with each other". The FIA had decided to investigate and scrutinise the accounts of prominent members of the sugar satta mafia, and then arrest them after registration of cases under the Anti-Money Laundering Act, said the director. Rizwan said of the "satta" mafia groups, 10 are from Lahore, while others are located in Multan, Hasilpur, Khanewal, and Bahawalpur. It was also revealed that the sugar mafia conspired to further increase sugar prices through satta in the month of Ramazan.

Briefs

Recognizing the role of a Muslim woman: IMW

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Chairperson International Muslim Women Union (IMW) Dr. Samia Raheel Qazi said the world community has deliberately shut their eyes on transparent and selfless role of a Muslim woman. The global wave of terrorism has multiplied the problems and miseries of Muslim women, she said while addressing online the inaugural session of annual meeting of the Union's Council of Trustees here Thursday. Dr Samia Raheel Qazi said that as focal point of love in our social and family system, woman was always the first victim of any kind of odd situation in the society. She said, women has always played remarkable and pivotal role at forefronts by realizing and performing her responsibilities during all challenges including prevailing Covid pandemic. Later during the meeting, the participants were apprised about various welfare projects, both in-hand and insight of the Council in different regions besides presenting annual reports by the heads of respective regions.

Gilani files ICA against senate elections

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP)'s Senator Yousaf Raza Gilani on Thursday filed an Intra court appeal (ICA) in Islamabad High Court (IHC) challenging the results of chairman senate elections. The petitioner had named Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani, Presiding Officer Mazhar Hussain Shah and others as respondents in his case. Gilani stated that he was elected as senator on March 3, 2021 and then participated in polls of chairman senate on March 12. He alleged that the ruling parties had used its influence to defeat him in polls. Cameras were also installed illegally in polling booths and the opposition members including Farooq H. Naek and Saeed Ghani submitted complain to secretary senate in this regard. The petition further said that the presiding officer had rejected seven votes of Yousaf Raza Gilani in violation of law. Gilani prayed the court to turn down the decision of single member bench and declared the decision of presiding officer regarding votes rejection as void. He also prayed the court to declare him as successful in chairman senate elections. It may be mentioned here that a single member bench comprising Chief Justice Athar Minallah had previously dismissed this petition and termed that the courts couldn't interfere into the affairs of parliamentary proceeding.

Rawalpindi police recover cache of arms, ammunition

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police recovered a cache of arms and ammunition from a car and arrested two accused, said a police spokesman on Thursday. He informed that City police during snap checking recovered cache of arms and ammunition from a suspected car and arrested two accused namely Naseeb Haq and Obaidullah. He said, SHO City Police Station along with a team party managed to recover three 44 bore rifles, a 223 bore rifle, 10 magazines, 15,500 rounds of 9mm pistol, 46,500 rounds of 30 bore pistol, 1000 rounds of rifle 7mm, 450 rounds of 222 rifle and other items from the possession of the accused arrested during the operation. He informed that a case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan performed the groundbreaking of Farash Town apartments in Islamabad under the Naya Pakistan Housing program. Prime Minister Imran Khan was also given a detailed briefing on the program. – DNA

PM Khan ensuring rapid economic development

PM to approach IMF for relaxation in strict terms and conditions which are necessary to provide relief to the masses and deal with the negative impact of the Covid-19 crisis

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Thursday said Prime Minister Imran Khan is ensuring rapid economic development amid the third wave of the pandemic. He is also trying to reduce inflation for which the new economic team has been given the task, it said.

The benefit of a strengthened exchange rate will not be limited to the business community as it would be transferred soon to the masses, said Chairman Pakistan Economy Watch Brig. (ret'd) Aslam Khan. He said that changes in the Economic Advisory Council and inclusion of noted businessmen in it will improve situation through much needed bold policy and administrative decisions.

He noted that PM is aware that improved focus on progress in energy, taxation and the agriculture sector is the key to ensure rapid economic development. The PM is now preferring growth over stabilization so that masses can get employment and relief amid devastation by the pandemic. He also lauded the decision of

the PM to approach IMF for relaxation in strict terms and conditions which are necessary to provide relief to the masses and deal with the negative impact of the Covid-19 crisis. The IMF must soften its conditions for the remaining period of the loan to provide the government with room to pursue pro-growth strategies for mass relief, he demanded.

Annually over one trillion dollars find their way from underdeveloped countries to developed nations and tax heavens and Pakistan is no exception. However, he said some recent steps by the government has not only increased home remittances but also lured overseas Pakistan to invest in their own country which is a very welcome development, he said.

RCCI urges consultation for the upcoming budget 2021-22

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) that the budget for the next financial year 2021-22 should be prepared in consultation with the stakeholders. The Chamber's recommendations should be included in the budget. In a statement, Muhammad Nasir Mirza, President RCCI said that the Pakistani economy is currently facing many challenges. "We demand that electricity and gas prices be reduced to lower business costs."

He said traders should not be harassed on the account of documentation and registration. Sales tax rate should be reduced to single digit. Point of sale registration should be extended. He demanded that interest



free loans on soft terms be provided to business women especially women entrepreneurs and women belonging to cottage industry. A special Covid 19 concession package should also be announced for women, he said.

He referred to RCCI ICS2021 where a joint declaration was adopted which urged the government to take immediate steps in addressing the impact of Covid pandemic. The tourism sector has been severely affected and a package should be announced for this sector too. Corporate tax rate should be reduced to 20%. Focus on agro-based industries and form a special task force for food security. Cotton production has been affected. A new policy should be formulated regarding seed procurement. Like the construction package, a concessional package should be announced for other sectors, he added. Nasir Mirza added that for easy business, the FBR should combine all taxes to make filing easier.

PNCA sets up its regional office at Gilgit Baltistan

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts, opens up its regional office at GB. The office was formally inaugurated by the GB's Minister for Tourism, Sports, Culture & Archeology, and Youth Affairs, Raja Nasir Ali Khan on Thursday 8th April 2021, Dr. Fouzia Saeed DG PNCA, Mr. Sumair Ahmed Syed, Secretary Tourism, Sports & Culture GB, Zafar Taj a cultural personality and Secretary,

Agriculture and PNCA's Board member Mr. Taqi Akhuzada were also present at the occasion. Shafiq Mehmood, Federal Minister NH & CD was also going to be present, however, due to flight cancellation he could not come. He sent a special message expressing his intentions to be actively engaged with GB in future. He said "I am happy that PNCA has set up this regional office at GB. We will make sure that we contribute to the promotion of the rich culture of GB through

cultural activities. "PNCA's office is located in a small portion of the Sports Complex in Jutial. This complex features sports and cultural facilities. PNCA has constructed a sound proof audio recording studio within the allocated space, which is fully equipped with latest technology. It is prepared to record all genres of music. The Council intends to talk to the KIU for their interest in setting up a music archives for traditional and modern music of GB.

"Serendipity Saturdays" in full swing

ISLAMABAD: Theatre Wallay in collaboration with Backyard Youth Theatre "Serendipity Saturdays" is in full swing a unique online experience of theatre games and fun activities. According to Theatre Wallay, these weekly sessions being continue every Saturday till May 8 for 45 minutes. "These are free sessions, open for people to showcase their expertise in games activities. After the huge success of pilot project, Theatre Wallay and Backyard Youth Theatre in Boston has collaborated again in Serendipity Saturdays. – APP

AIOU: Pasban group wins EWA elections

ISLAMABAD: 'Divine providence has established the system of reward and punishment for just and smooth functioning of this world so that goodness may prevail, and evil is shunned. Progress and development of the institutions is, also, grounded in fair application of the same principle. The employees who work with an utmost sense of devotion, dedication and commitment not only ensure institutional progress but also promising future for themselves. We will mutually collaborate for raising quality standards of AIOU and for its further progress and development', these views were expressed by Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum during his meeting with the newly elected representatives of Employees Welfare Association (EWA). He congratulated the new office bearers and assured them maximum cooperation of AIOU administration in resolving legitimate issues of the employees. EWA President, Daleel Khan, Vice President, Raja Sabir, and General Secretary, Muhammad Nadeem, assured the Vice Chancellor, AIOU of maximum cooperation of their association. Moreover, the newly elected representatives appreciated and thanked AIOU administration for providing peaceful and congenial environment throughout the process of elections and announcement of results. They, further, added that they believe in negotiation and dialogue for peacefully resolving genuine issues of employees. Therefore, they have unanimously decided to extend full support to Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum for the betterment of AIOU and its employees. – DNA

PTWS appeals for blood donation

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Thalassemia Welfare Society (PTWS) has appealed the people, particularly the youth, to donate blood to save the lives of thousands of children suffering from thalassemia. PTWS spokesman Muhammad Asad said on Thursday that due to the prevailing lock down situation, hospitals and blood banks have been facing an acute shortage of blood as people have been remaining indoors on the government's orders as part of a preventive measure against the spread of coronavirus. He said that society was being set up three days blood donation camp from April 11 to 13 at Allama Iqbal Park from 2 pm to 6 pm to collect the blood for children suffering from this deadly disease. – DNA

CTP provides licensing services to citizens

IBRAR KHAN

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi provided licensing services to as many as 21,128 citizens during March. According to Incharge Licensing, Saqib Rizwan, CTP issued over 16,154 learner permits during the period besides 1580 new driving licenses. He informed that 2871 old licenses were renewed in March besides issuing 75 duplicate licenses. The licensing branch also issued 64 international licenses to the applicants. The CTP licensing branch renewed 288 licenses of other districts, he said. He informed that the computerized driving licenses

are issued under a transparent procedure. The CTO said, the citizens should directly contact licensing branch of the traffic police and get all required information in this regard so that they could not face any difficulty regarding issuance of driving license. He informed that CTP had launched one window operation system to facilitate the applicants. He said, CTP had made arrangements to adopt all possible precautionary measures against coronavirus and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Punjab government to contain spread of coronavirus were being followed in letter and spirit.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Narcotics Control, Akbar Durrani (TI) / PAS met with Mr. Jeremy Milsom, representative UNDOC Copak and presented souvenir. – DNA

38,142 motorist fined during ongoing year

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) issued 1, 25,616 fine tickets during the ongoing year to those drivers involved in careless driving on roads. Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed said that as per directions of IGP Islamabad Qazi Jamil ul Rehman special squads have been constituted to take action against careless drivers putting the lives of others at risk. He also asked to adopt decent attitude with road users and ensure implementation on policy of 'Phele Salam-Phir Kalam', a news release said. He said that all officials have been directed for strict action against such drivers and to ensure steps for safe road environment in the city. He said that directions have been made to ensure renewed efforts for awareness about traffic rules among citizens by ITP education wing. He directed ITP's teams to visit educational institutions to create traffic sense as several students have joined ITP as traffic volunteers. The SSP (Traffic) said that purpose of action against such drivers is to ensure their own as well as others safety. He also assigned task to ITP's education team to present weekly report about its performance.

Dacoit gang busted; two arrested

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

RAWALPINDI: In a crackdown against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police have busted a dacoit gang and arrested its two members besides recovering cash over Rs 850,000, gold ornaments worth one million rupees and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Chontra police in a raid arrested Kamran Khan, ring leader of 'Kamri' gang and Danish Ali and recovered cash Rs 850,000, gold ornaments worth over one million rupees and other items from their possession. He informed that the Police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Chontra Police Station on the directives of SP Saddar conducted a raid and managed to net the gang members. As per preliminary police record, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he added. SP Saddar said that other members and facilitators of the gang would also be arrested following preliminary investigations with the detainee culprits. The SP also lauded endeavor of Chontra police team for netting the accused.

IESCO issues power suspension schedule

DNA

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 9th April From 08:30 AM to 12:30 PM KRL, Fazio, Jinnah Camp, Falcon, CDA, FHS, I-8/4, Shakrial, Noor Muhammad, Kurry Road, Khurram Colony, Service Road, Tariq Shaheed, Muslim Town Feeders, On Dated 10th April From 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM K-Block, Mushtaq Hussain, Kala Khan, PMC Feeders, From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM Chakri, Arsalan Poultry Farm, SPD, Pariyal, Tarlai, H-8, Highway, Iqbal Town, Fazio, NPCC-II, SWD, DEC, Hussainabad, Col. Sher Khan, Burhan, Shafi Chauhan, Sarai Kharboza, Pind Parian, ECHS, Sangiani, Shah Allah Ditta, Belout, Taxila, Shaheed, Salar Gah, Bohi Ghar, Fateh Jang Rural, Khandia, Laniwala, Kot Dhamik, Baba Shaheed, New Rawat, Mansoor Shaheed, Mureed, SPARCO, PAF Mureed, Gharial, Mandi Bhalwal, NIH, Golf City, Gadari feeders and surrounding areas will be remain without power.

Briefs

Visitors violate SOPs on trails: MHN

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The avid nature enthusiasts of the federal capital are flouting Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs) or safety guidelines while hiking in the scenic trails of Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP) despite repeated exhortations by Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) staff. Chairperson IWMB Rina Saeed Khan first highlighted the repeated violations of the citizens with a snapshot shared by her on Twitter. She wrote, "This picture was taken at the Ficus spring atop the popular trail 5 this weekend (April 4). I was there: not one person was wearing a mask and the trail was crowded. Now tell me should IWMB close this trail on weekends? Staff running around asking people to wear masks, no one listens!" She regretted that the irresponsible attitude of the visitors was cumbersome and tantamount to spread Covid-19 with open arms and jeopardize public health and life at large. An IWMB official told APP that the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board staff deputed at the entrance and patrolling teams on the trails was regularly advising the visitors to wear mask and face social distancing.

Futsal Tournament from today

ISLAMABAD: The Twin City Hafiz Salman Butt Memorial Soccer Futsal Tournament would kick off from Friday (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 were featuring in the event. He said that the Tournament would be played on knockout system as per PSFF rules. "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. The tournament was being organized by Islamabad and Rawalpindi Soccer Futsal Associations in collaboration with Pakistan Soccer Futsal Federation. — APP

Dastak drive to focus mosques today

DNA

RAWALPINDI: As part of its ongoing cleanliness awareness campaign 'Dastak', the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) is all set to kick off the next phase of the campaign at various mosques of the city from today (on Friday). During the campaign, the communication teams of the Company will hold meetings with Imam Masjid and Khateeb of the mosques and ask them to disseminate the cleanliness messages regarding dengue fever in their Khutbat-e-Juma or in other religious congregations. They would also tell the people that public cooperation and participation was essential to make the campaign successful. The religious clerics would be told to educate the general public about putting their waste in the waste bins or dump it into the waste holders of the company or hand-over it to sanitary worker. The mosque clerics would also be requested to follow the SOP's regarding corona i.e. to wash hands with soap for 20 seconds, keep distance, wear mask, avoid gatherings, cover nose and face if there is flu or cough. They were requested to inform the general public that not to burn the waste, dump it in the waste containers or hand it over to the waste specialist of the companies. The helpline number would also be highlighted for any public queries regarding sanitation and cleanliness in their area, registration of complaints or giving suggestions.



RAWALPINDI: Lt. Gen. Nigar Johar presenting a souvenir to Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi during his visit to Armed Forces Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine Rawalpindi. — DNA

Ehsaas pioneers orphanage living standards in the Muslim World

This is the first time not just in Pakistan but also across the Muslim World that such a historic initiative has been taken by the government for the welfare of orphans and deserving children

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar Thursday unveiled the new Ehsaas' standards for private sector orphanages in a special launching event. This is the first time not just in Pakistan but also across the Muslim World that such a historic initiative has been taken by the government for the welfare of orphans and deserving children, aimed at minimizing variation in the orphan care and to support private sector orphanages in raising their service standards nationwide. Predicated under the policy no. 37 of Ehsaas strategy, the 25-point living standards have been tailored to needs of orphan care centers. For the first time ever, a stakeholder committee had been put in place under the umbrella of Ehsaas by Dr. Nishtar in 2019 to stipulate "Living Standards for Orphanages and Child Care Centers"



in the country. Dr. Nishtar richly lauded the expert committee for their stellar work on the formulation of Ehsaas' orphanage standards and emphasized on the widespread implementation in the country. "These standards have been laid out by a diverse group of orphanage organizations across Pakistan,

all committed to delivering the best possible care to children who live in orphanages", Dr. Sania Nishtar remarked. She added, "With the formal launch of Ehsaas' standards, the expert committee will now transit to an observatory role to track the implementation of these quality care guidelines. The committee

will also oversee continuous improvement by providing private sector orphanages to add value and build on the care their institutions already provide. I am hopeful all orphanages in public as well as private sector will be able to use these resources to improve the quality of boarding." The philanthropic landscape of

Pakistan has a number of orphanages in the private sector which have been established all over the country. Nevertheless, the care and service provided is of varying quality. Many of orphanages are managed by the private sector. Ehsaas' standards for orphan care not just look at processes in place but it also looks at whether these deliver what orphans need. Chaired by Nadeem Ahmed Khan Chairperson Khubaib Foundation, the Ehsaas' Orphan Care expert committee had brought together all major NGOs hosting orphanages along with Parliamentarians.

Formally, UNICEF was also part of the committee. The standards that are developed had several iterations and UNICEF and other technical stakeholders have endorsed these standards. The committee formally met 17 times last year, and after taking stock of the on-ground situation, finalized these standards which will now be notified and shared with provinces for endorsement.

SAPM inaugurates super feeder for tube wells

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Capital Development Authority (CDA) Affairs Ali Nawaz Awan Thursday inaugurated a dedicated super feeder for the tube wells, installed at Pona Faqera, to ensure uninterrupted water supply to the multiple sectors of Islamabad. After the inauguration, he told the media that the dedicated feeder was meant to provide constant electricity supply to the tube wells at Pona Faqera which would

eventually ensure round the clock availability of water for the residents of different sectors of Islamabad including G-11, I-9 and I-10. He said earlier, the people of those sectors were facing severe problem of water shortage due to the load shedding in Pona Faqera. The water issue used to be worsened in those areas during summer season and the holy month of Ramazan, he added. The SAPM said the government was striving to resolve water woes of the people of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad on permanent basis through inclusive initiatives.

He said two Million Gallons per Day water supply to Islamabad from Rawal Dam had been restored recently, whereas work on bringing 100 MGD water for the Islamabad from Ghazi Brotha Dam was started. "Water is one of the biggest problems of the Islamabad and we are trying our best to resolve this issue," he maintained. To a query, the SAPM said initiation of inquiry against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's senior leader Jehangir Khan Tareen was an example for other political parties of the country. He said no one was above the law in 'Naya Pakistan', adding this was the change; the PTI had strived for almost 24 years. Ali Awan said some element seemed perturbed by the action against Jehangir Tareen as in Pakistan, there was no culture of punishing their own people for a wrongdoing. The PTI had had a track record of taking action against its own people, he added while citing Aleem Khan as an example who remained in custody of the National Accountability Bureau in the past.

CDA reviews layout plans of new buildings

ISLAMABAD: DVC, a committee of Capital Development Authority (CDA) regarding the approval of Building Plans Design met at CDA's secretariat in Islamabad on Thursday. Layout plans for designs of 10 new buildings were presented for approval during the meeting. 02 of them were approved, 01 was partially approved, 05 were rejected, 01 approved after the implementation of code of conduct, and another one has given the permission of approval in case CDA's board approves it. During the meeting of DVC, building plan design of plot No. 87,88, block No. 11, Civic Center Gulberg Green was partially approved; Plot No. 38, 40, 46 of Gulberg Green Zone 4 business square and plot No. 72, 73, 74 of street road 6 block business square Gulberg Green Zone 04 were approved. Designs of apartments, and buildings in Capital Residencia at Sector E-11 Gola were set to be considered as approved in case CDA's board would do so. Building plan design of Capital Icon at Loi Bheer was given condition of implementing the code of conduct for approval. Plot No. 69 business square Zone 04 Gulberg Green was approved according to the decision of design adjustment. Building plans of sector apartments and flats at sector E-11 would be approved if CDA's board would do so. The rejected building plans during the meeting include, apartment building's layout for design plan in E-11. — DNA

Crackdown starts against illegal housing schemes

ISLAMABAD: Chief Commissioner (CC) Office of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) has directed all the relevant departments for a comprehensive crackdown against illegal housing schemes to protect public from real estate sector's tricksters. CC office passed the directions on Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Registrar Cooperatives, Director Municipal Administration and

directorates concerned of the Capital Development Authority on receipt of numerous complaints, a senior official told media on Thursday. She said all the departments concerned were told to step up efforts to bar illegal housing schemes' offices from plot bookings, marketing and advertisement through brochures, publication material as well as through billboards, hoardings and panfles. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination, Dr. Fehmida Mirza chaired a meeting on issues relating to veterinary education with VCs of public sector universities. — DNA

Govt starts upgrading IHITC with 150 beds

In view of the third wave of Covid-19, with unparalleled support from the ministry, IHITC management was able to ramp up the bed capacity to 105 beds

KHAYAM ABASSI

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination has started upgrading Isolation Hospital and Infectious Treatment Centre (IHITC) Islamabad with addition of 150 beds, enhancing other facilities. According to ministry spokesman, this 250 bed purpose-built facility for infectious diseases has been serving Covid-19 patients since its

inauguration by the Prime Minister Imran Khan in July, 2020. He added the Ministry of National Health Services took over the facility from January 1st, 2021. Initially only 35 beds were functional with a limited number of medical, paramedical and support staff. In view of the third wave of Covid-19, with unparalleled support from the ministry, IHITC management was able to ramp up the bed capacity to 105 beds. He said that IHITC now has 52 doctors and a paramedical staff of

86 while 84 patients are currently being treated at IHITC. The facility now has a total of 55 ventilators, 100 BiPAPs, 250 syringe pumps, 19 infusion pumps, 92 cardiac monitors, 25 portable oxygen cylinders, one ultrasound machine and eight mobile X-Rays units. He said that initially a 6,000L tank of liquid oxygen was being used for centralized oxygen supply. A master tank of 15,000L is currently being installed in addition to this to ramp up the liquid oxygen

storage capacity. Pathology lab at IHITC was initially totally outsourced however within a short period of time, with support from the ministry, the management has been able to start indigenous testing becoming self-reliant and economical. The spokesman said that independent PCR testing will commence soon to while one fully equipped ambulance is stationed at IHITC for transportation of critical patients to-and-from the facility.

In addition, a standard ambulance is also stationed to facilitate patients while a mass vaccination center was established at IHITC on March 16, 2021. He said that 2,126 people have since been inoculated with capacity to vaccinate 4,000 people daily. He added there are total eight registration counters, 40 vaccination counters, 54 observation beds four emergency rooms, 8,000 vials storage capacity and three ILRs with zero serious adverse effects reported till date.

Twenty commercial centers sealed

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Administration on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Anwar ul Haq on Thursday conducted raids at several places to check implementation of COVID-19 SOPs and impounded 23 Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) while 20 commercial centers and seven restaurants were sealed for flouting SOPs. According to a district administration spokesman, the officers concerned were regularly conducting raids in Rawalpindi city and all tehsils of the district to ensure implementation of the SOPs issued by the Punjab Government to contain spread of coronavirus. He said, 11 raids were conducted at PSVs during last 24 hours and those found violating the SOPs were imposed fines amounting to Rs 23,600 while 23 vehicles were impounded. The administration had accelerated its ongoing operation against coronavirus SOPs violators. He said, 52 public places including parks were checked and Rs 3000 fine imposed on those not following the SOPs. Similarly, eight bus and van stands were also inspected besides imposing Rs 5000 fines on the violators. The administration officers checked 30 marriage halls and 78 restaurants and sealed seven restaurants and a marriage hall while fines amounting to Rs 43,500 were imposed for breaching the guidelines of the government issued to contain spread of coronavirus.

10 gamblers arrested; stake money recovered

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: Gangmandi police have arrested 10 gamblers and recovered Rs 22,900 cash stake money, six mobile phones and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Gangmandi police acting on a tip off conducted a raid and rounded up 10 gamblers namely Khalid, Muhammad Shan, Hamza Rashid, Muhammad Azeem, Huzafa Bashir, Muhammad Hamza, Rasheed, Zubair Butt, Kala Khan and Muhammad Ramazan allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. Police recovered Rs 22,900 cash stake money, six mobile phones and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against all the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent Police (SP) Rawal division appreciated the police team and directed them to continue crackdown against lawbreakers.

IBA files review petition in lawyers' case

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Bar Association (IBA) on Thursday filed a review petition in the Supreme Court pleading to review its decision of demolishing illegal chambers of lawyers constructed on football ground in Islamabad. The 17-page review petition was drawn and filed by Sardar Muhammad Latif Khan Khosa, Hamid Khan and others through Tariq Aziz Advocate-on-Record. On March 2, the apex court had maintained the Islamabad High Court's verdict to demolish the illegal chambers constructed on Islamabad's sector F-8 football ground and dismissed the bar association's appeal. The Supreme Court in its decision had ordered the administration to demolish all illegal chambers in two months. The IBA in its review petition had stated that several applications against the encroachment were pending in the Islamabad High Court. It is unfair to demolish just the lawyers' chamber and no other structures, the application said. It further stated that real facts were not presented in the court.

Reforming police stations

IN a sudden move, the Inspector General (IG) of Punjab Police Inam Ghani removed station house officers (SHOs) bearing criminal record. The action on the part of the IG can be seen as an initiative to reform the police department from within. The initiative can help in the uprooting of corruption from the police station. Undoubtedly, the removal of the SHOs is a big step in cleaning up the police force provided more such actions back the so-called reform drive. This is not the first time that police officials with a 'tainted' record have been banned from being appointed as SHOs. Last year, the department blacklisted at least 16 such police officials for their chequered record. The recent suspension of 61 SHOs shows that the last year's clean-up operation did not serve the purpose of deterrence. In all likelihood, this drive will also not go too far in eliminating corruption from the system. Such action, which according to some police officials is nothing but a gimmick, if not backed by a holistic strategy, will not alter 'thana culture' that symbolises corruption and abuse. It is a fact that the SHO is effectively the leading police officer of an area. Therefore, her/his accountability is of utmost significance. If s/he is corrupt, the entire precinct or station members follow in their footsteps. Admittedly, cities such as Kasur, Faisalabad and Lahore were in dire need of this change. And now that this fundamental and challenging step has been taken, the next efforts should focus on maintaining transparent checks on replacements to ensure that the new SHOs do a far better and cleaner policing. Further accountability can be ensured if cameras are installed in the police stations. Likewise, it is worth recalling the old idea regarding the equipment of cops with body cams to ensure the police serve the public instead of exploiting and abusing them. Lastly, the police department also needs to offer competitive salaries to the officials. Otherwise, dreaming of a corruption-free department is just wishful thinking.

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Careless statements

PRIME Minister Imran over the weekend held a two-hour long question and answer session with the public, during which he was asked about what steps the PTI-led government had taken to prevent rape and child abuse. What could have been an opportunity to educate the public on how grievous the crime of rape is and all the new steps that the government is taking to curb it and make the country safer for women was completely missed. Instead, the Prime Minister gave some statements linking rape to "vulgarity in society", putting the onus on victims, and brought on a lot of backlash on himself and his government. There is a lot to unpack. This misstatement reflects the lack of good messaging from the government. The Prime Minister could have used the opportunity to bring light to the positive steps the government has taken, with regards to legislation, to stop rape crimes. Instead, his careless remark not only brought criticism from women's rights groups, civil society and also international media and organisations. These remarks do not fare well for Pakistan's reputation, considering the country has already fallen on the Global Gender Gap Index. Moreover, the statement reflects an unhelpful approach on curbing rape crimes. Rape is a result of power imbalance not temptation. Rapists control their urges when they have a fear of social and judicial retribution, accountability and conviction. Unfortunately, fewer than three percent of sexual assault or rape cases result in a conviction, according to the Karachi-based group War Against Rape. Statements appearing to blame victims or putting the onus on the women to prevent such crimes also takes away from the social stigmatisation of rape as a criminal act. It is hoped that the Prime Minister will take in account the thoughtful criticisms and make a clarification of his statement. Gender discrimination and sexual abuse are unfortunately a reality in our society, and victim blaming and deflection can only worsen the situation.

Protect the trees to save the planet

Ranvir S. Nayar



Brazil again occupied top spot in terms of the loss of primary forest, with 1.7 million hectares – an increase of 25 percent in a year and three times as much as the DRC, which was next on the list. The figures from Brazil are hardly surprising, as President Jair Bolsonaro has openly dismissed talk of climate change and has actively encouraged the clearing of vast tracts of the Amazon forests for farming, commercial plantations, businesses and even for housing and roads

EXACTLY a year ago, when societies around the world were largely closed down in order to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, the first reports appeared of the very positive impact these lockdowns were having on the environment, with the emergence of clear blue skies, refreshed water bodies, and renewed wildlife. By the end of May, there were many more reports and photographs of previously dirty rivers flowing clean again and of people in the most polluted parts of the world experiencing unusually clear views, such as those in northern India who were able to see the Himalayas, more than 200 km away, for the first time in a century. This sharp improvement in the all-round state of the environment – with cleaner land, water and air – brought about discussions on how the pandemic and its related lockdowns did have at least one positive, even as they cost millions of lives and drove the global economy into the ground. It was said that world leaders should capitalize on the opportunity by pushing for and implementing wide-ranging policies relating to the green economy and sustainable businesses and lifestyles. But by last June it had become clear that the world had learned nothing from its mistakes. Protecting the environment or making businesses sustainable were low priorities globally. Deforestation was high on the list of missed targets for governments across the world, as media reports from countries as far apart as Russia, Australia and Brazil, as well as large parts of Central and Western Africa, told of huge forest fires raging for weeks on end. Last year saw a 12 percent increase in the area of tree cover lost, up to 12.2 million hectares, according to a report released by Global Forest Watch (GFW) last week. The total loss of virgin primary forests, which have existed for millions of years and are among the richest storehouses of biodiversi-

ty, stood at 4.2 million hectares in 2020, the equivalent of an area the size of the Netherlands. The loss of primary forest also led to carbon dioxide emissions of 2.64 gigatons, more than 6 percent of the total for 2019. Ironically, way back in September 2014 at the UN Climate Summit, countries, companies and international organizations set a goal of cutting the global forest loss in half by 2020 and stopping it entirely by 2030. This was the first goal of the New York Declaration on Forests, a voluntary and nonbinding international declaration to take action to halt global deforestation. It is evident that this target, like almost all other climate-related goals, has been missed by a wide margin. While the loss of forests due to natural causes like extreme weather, landslides or fires is difficult to predict and control, what is worrying is that, as in the past, the overwhelming cause of deforestation across the world was human actions. The main reasons for this deforestation were logging or the clearing of land for agriculture. Brazil again occupied top spot in terms of the loss of primary forest, with 1.7 million hectares – an increase of 25 percent in a year and three times as much as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which was next on the list. The figures from Brazil are hardly surprising, as President Jair Bolsonaro has openly dismissed talk of climate change and has actively encouraged the clearing of vast tracts of the Amazon forests for farming, commercial plantations, businesses and even for housing and roads. While Brazil has seen deforestation due to its government's own policies, in Africa, notably the DRC, it is the lack of a proper government and a collapsed economy that has caused widespread forest loss. With the country in the midst of civil war and dozens of armed groups ravaging the forests and the people, the DRC's economy has taken

a serious hit, as has the government's grip over the nation. As a result, it has lost nearly half a million hectares of primary forests. There were similar stories among many of the DRC's neighbors. Fortunately, the GFW report was not all bad news. There are a few countries that oversaw a dramatic drop in forest loss in 2020, notably the Southeast Asian nations of Indonesia and Malaysia. Indonesia saw its rate of deforestation fall for the fourth straight year and, for the first time since GFW launched, it is not in the top three countries in terms of most forest lost. This is partially due to natural causes, such as a very wet season after a few years of drought, but mainly the cut in deforestation is a result of government initiatives, both at federal and regional levels, including a moratorium on new palm oil plantations, which are one of the primary causes of deforestation. The country has also begun efforts to restore its wetlands and forests. The story is very similar in neighboring Malaysia, which also has seen a drop in the rate of deforestation due to government policies. These successes clearly show that it is not impossible to achieve the goal of ending deforestation without causing major economic havoc, as Bolsonaro and former US President Donald Trump have frequently argued. Although humanity has missed its first target for the cutting of deforestation, it is still possible for us to end it entirely if governments use the carrot of incentives and subsidies and the stick of severe punishments for offenders. This would need a concerted global effort, as the timber industry and the trade in other forest goods are global phenomena and one or two governments cannot fight this on their own. It needs all governments, businesses and global bodies to align their policies and put in place the best practices for the protection of forests and also reforestation.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Aiding Palestine refugees is not political

Philippe Lazzarini



The recent attacks on UNRWA – alleging that we teach "jihad" and "terrorism" – are biased attempts to drag a principled humanitarian agency into a highly politicised sphere where it does not belong. Moreover, they incorrectly cast UNRWA students as prone or supportive to jihad and terrorism

MOHAMMAD is a seven-year-old boy living in Gaza, which in June will enter its 15th year of a land, air, and sea blockade. Like the nearly 300,000 students in Gaza who attend schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), he has been in and out of in-person and remote learning since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic a year ago. He battles against electricity cuts every day to receive online educational materials prepared by UNRWA teachers who also struggle to get access to electricity and the internet. Mohammad's right to education remains inalienable even during a pandemic and a humanitarian crisis. He is just one of the 5.7 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA today, many of whom have faced unimaginable suffering since their ancestors were displaced from their homeland over 70 years ago. The one-year anniversary of the global lockdown marks 12 months of even greater suffering for Palestine refugees across the region. As commissioner-general of UNRWA, my responsibility is to ensure that Palestine refugees in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, receive the basic services to which they are entitled. And yet, in the past year, UNRWA has been the subject of attacks of unprecedented ferocity and bias. The charge most frequently levied against us is that UNRWA plays a political role. This could not be further from the truth. UNRWA is mandated to provide direct, vital humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees pending a just and lasting solution to their plight. That is the agency's priority and focus. It does not engage in politics. UNRWA, like all other United

Nations agencies and international NGOs, is bound to the four humanitarian principles (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence) that are enshrined in two UN General Assembly resolutions. This means that all UNRWA operations are exclusively driven by the alleviation of suffering (humanity), while ensuring that our response is independent from military and political aims (independence), with no discrimination (impartiality), and not taking sides in conflict (neutrality). Being political is antithetical to being a humanitarian. Strict commitment to humanitarian principles drives all our positions and decisions. Every UNRWA staff member is trained in upholding the principles of neutrality and non-discrimination and is held accountable and disciplined if found in breach of them. At all 711 UNRWA schools in the region, our students organise in school parliaments and learn about the importance of human rights, equality and tolerance. UNRWA schoolteachers are constantly trained on how to approach critically any educational content that is not in line with UN values. It is a testament to our 28,000 staff and some 532,000 students that they overwhelmingly assert these values even amid emergency and crisis, remaining neutral even during conflicts. The recent attacks on UNRWA – alleging that we teach "jihad" and "terrorism" – are biased attempts to drag a principled humanitarian agency into a highly politicised sphere where it does not belong. Moreover, they incorrectly cast UNRWA students as prone or supportive to jihad and terrorism. There should be no tolerance for stereotyping. Firmly sticking to neutrality and non-discrimination ensures that we can work with all parties to be able to

assist and protect Palestine refugees, whether by importing medicines for our 144 health clinics that 3.1 million refugees access each year, obtaining visas for our teachers to attend conferences abroad, or ensuring the sanctity of our buildings in wartime. As the largest UN or humanitarian agency operating in one of the most complex and long-standing conflicts in the Middle East, we know better than anyone else the importance of remaining neutral. The ongoing attacks and unfounded allegations against UNRWA are but a political tool to delegitimise the agency and the Palestine refugees that it protects. These attacks seek to draw the focus away from the hardships Palestinian refugees face due to their ongoing dispossession and displacement. In the face of these political attacks, it is the voices of the most vulnerable like Mohammad and his classmates, struggling to learn in the harshest of settings, that are muted. Shaking the foundations of the agency that provides aid to millions of individuals across the Middle East constitutes yet another blow to a highly volatile region. Just imagine a Middle East without UNRWA and an unresolved conflict. In the absence of a political solution, no UNRWA means no education for half a million children or no health clinics for 3.1 million Palestine refugees a year and mostly, no sense of safety and stability for millions of Palestine refugees who are made to feel increasingly discriminated against, disenfranchised and marginalised. As humanitarians, finding a solution to this conflict does not fall in our remit. But ensuring that the human rights of Palestinian refugees are fully respected and their voices are not silenced, until the international community finds a solution, does.

– Courtesy: Al-Jazeera

Briefs

Govt making efforts to control inflation

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Senator Shibli Faraz Thursday said the government was making all-out efforts to control inflation. The government's performance in other economic sectors was good and it was focusing on institutional reforms to provide maximum relief to the masses, he said while talking to a private news channel. Shibli Faraz said the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) had tried to create hurdles in the way of the government, which was taking many initiatives for public relief and welfare. The so-called alliance of the opposition parties was now 'buried' with its 'dirty and negative politics', he added. The plunderers of national wealth, he said, had gathered under the umbrella of PDM, who failed in their endeavours to dislodge the elected government as their reprehensible politics aimed at political gains, was rejected by the people. Shibli Faraz said today all the national institutions were independent, which were carrying out investigations against corrupt elements without any discrimination. "Nobody is above the law," he added.

U.S. Chargé d'affaires visits Gwadar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chargé d'affaires a.i. Angela Aggeler visited Gwadar on April 8. Aggeler was the first U.S. official to visit Gwadar in 15 years, and this was her second trip to Balochistan. Aggeler highlighted U.S.-Pakistan cooperation on maritime security, increased commercial and economic ties between the United States and Balochistan, and promoting prosperity in Balochistan.

Pakistan HC issues 1,100 visas to Sikh pilgrims

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: The High Commission of Pakistan in India has issued 1,100 visas to Sikh pilgrims to participate in the annual Baisakhi celebrations being held from April 12 to 22. Under the framework of the Pakistan-India Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines of 1974, a large number of Sikh Yatrees from India visit Pakistan to observe various religious festivals every year. The issuance of pilgrimage visas is a part of the Government of Pakistan's efforts to facilitate visits to religious shrines and its commitment to faithfully implement bilateral protocol in this regard.

Bilawal urges to accept all demands of employees

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has asked Balochistan government to accept all the genuine demands of its employees without any delay and expressed sympathy and solidarity with the provincial government employees who are on the streets under a mass protest nowadays. In a press statement issued here, the PPP Chairman said that people of Pakistan are reeling under unbearable inflation generated by the selected regime of Imran Khan and it has become very difficult to survive for the poor employees like the downtrodden people. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari extended support to all the genuine demands of the employees of Balochistan govt.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan, Lis Rosenholm calls on Minister of State for Climate Change, Zartaj Gul. – DNA

Denmark's interest in Pak green initiatives lauded

"Both sides agreed to boost bilateral cooperation and joint working for learning from each other's green initiatives related to forestry, renewable energy, energy efficiency, vertical gardening initiatives and water management"

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul lauded the Danish government for its interest in Pakistan's green initiatives and furthering it through enhanced collaboration in the shape of transfer of technology and capacity-building of the relevant sectors for effective implementation of the Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision. Danish Ambassador Lis Rosenholm on Thursday called on Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Wazir and conveyed her government's interest to join and support various

green initiatives launched under the Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision for Clean Green Pakistan. "Both sides agreed to boost bilateral cooperation and joint working for learning from each other's green initiatives related to forestry, renewable energy, energy efficiency, vertical gardening initiatives and water management," Climate Change Ministry media spokesperson Muhammad Saleem Shaikh said in a press statement while sharing various aspects of the bilateral meeting held at the climate change ministry. "However, the Danish Ambassador and minister of state Zartaj Gul resolved

to deepen further Pakistan-Denmark relations through enhanced cooperation and collaboration in, among others, forestry, renewable energy, water and disaster management through jointly working towards Prime Minister's world-acclaimed vision for clean, green and climate-resilient Pakistan," he added. Danish ambassador told the state minister Zartaj Gul that Danish government, which is committed to global climate and environmental sustainability actions, is deeply appreciative of the stimulating vision of PM Khan for Clean Green and environmentally-sustainable and resilient Pakistan.

Ambassador was also impressed with Clean Green Pakistan programme and various green projects initiated under the vision, specially one of the world's largest ambitious 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Programme (TBTP) Ecosystem Restoration Initiative for promotion of nature-based solutions, Protected Areas Initiative for conservation and protection of the environmentally-sensitive and biodiversity-rich wildlife areas. She also informed the minister that Denmark is a world leader in fighting climate change. We aim to reduce country's carbon emission to 70% by 2030 (below its 1990 levels), with carbon

neutrality targeted already by 2050. During the meeting, the Danish envoy Lis Rosenholm extended her government's offer to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with climate change ministry in Green Framework for enhanced bilateral collaboration in environmental, climate change, renewable energy, water management and forestry sectors for supporting Pakistan's green initiatives. "We are very much honoured to receive the offer for signing agreement with the Danish government for boosting cooperation in the forestry, environment, ecosystem restoration, renewable energy, water conservation,

vertical gardening, urban forestry and would sign the MoU after go-ahead from the Prime Minister Imran Khan," Zartaj Gul told media after the meeting. While sharing details of Pakistan's green projects being implemented under the environmental leadership of PM Imran Khan, she told the Danish ambassador that the climate change ministry was implementing several globally-acclaimed flagship programmes and projects in technical support with the international UN organisations including United Nations Development Programme and UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Bank.

President approves ordinance ending HEC autonomy

Appointment of the HEC chairperson will be for two years and the members of HEC will be appointed for four years

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi has approved Higher Education Commission Amendment Ordinance 2021, formally ending the autonomy of the commission. According to details, now all decisions of Higher Education Commission (HEC) will be subject to approval of Ministry of Education. Meanwhile, appointment of the HEC chairperson will be for two years and the members of HEC will be appointed for four years. Earlier on March 27, government removed Chairman HEC Dr. Tariq Banuri before the expiry of his term. A formal notification issued in this regard stated "In terms of sub-section (5), read with sub-section (5A), of Section 6 of Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002, as amended vide Higher Education Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021, Dr. Tariq Danuri has ceased to be the Chairperson, Higher Education Commission forthwith and is accordingly removed from the said post, with immediate effect". Banuri was appointed at the position by former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in May 2018. He was to complete his tenure in May 2022.

UAE embassy, CGSS discuss cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held between Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, and Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad. During the meeting, it was decided that CGSS will collaborate with various think tanks and institutions in the United Arab Emirates to enhance the bilateral ties of both countries. It was agreed that CGSS and the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates, Islamabad will work in the field of research, and seminars/conferences will be arranged for cooperation. As this year marks the 50th Anniversary of Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates of diplomatic ties, CGSS and the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates will jointly take arrange various activities to celebrate this historic event.



ISLAMABAD: Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Pakistan, and Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), posing for a picture. – DNA

NAB for modern training of IOs, prosecutors

Accordingly, a comprehensive yearly Training Plan for 2021 was devised to ensure continued professional development of its officers/officials and Prosecutors

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has said that NAB accords top priority for training/capacity building of its Investigation Officers and Prosecutors on modern lines as training is a continuous process which is an effective tool for improvement and maintaining the quality of Investigation Officers and Prosecutors. He said this while chairing a meeting to review the performance of the Training and Research Division of NAB at NAB Headquarters on Thursday. According to a press statement issued after the meeting, Justice Javed Iqbal said that NAB is an

apex anti corruption organization of the country which has assigned the mandate of eradication of corruption and corrupt practices from the country. He said that this requires an extremely dedicated and highly trained man. He said that NAB attaches great importance to its Human Resource Development. Accordingly, a comprehensive yearly Training Plan for 2021 was devised to ensure continued professional development of its officers/officials and Prosecutors. In order to ensure successful implementation of the Training Plan, it is equally important that trainers are fully capable and geared up to undertake this responsibility. He said Training Cells have been created at all Regional levels are primarily responsible to liaise



and carry out the planned activities in their respective Regional Bureaus. Therefore, the Training of Trainers (ToT) program was organized by the T&R Division NAB at NAB Headquarter. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman

NAB said that NAB gives top priority to the training of its Investigation officers/ Prosecutors. He said that NAB recognizes the centrality of training as a tool of improvement and maintaining the quality of its manpower. He said that a standardized syllabus for all investigation officers, refresher and capacity building courses on Accounts matters, General Financial Rules, FR, SR, Digital Forensic Questioned Documents and Fingerprint Analysis has been formulated by NAB to ensure quality and uniformity. It will help NAB in achieving standard application of SOPs, Laws and rules. The performance objectives of training programs will also be continuously evaluated so as to form a basis for subsequent review and improvements

in future training needs. The Chairman NAB said that a state of the art Forensic Science LAB has been established in NAB. The Forensic Science LAB has the capacity to conduct analysis in the fields of Digital Forensics, Questioned Documents; Fingerprints analysis so that investigation officers and prosecutors may utilize Forensic LAB facilities in order to investigate cases within stipulated time period as per law. He said that NAB has established Anti Money Laundering / Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Cell in Islamabad. The main responsibilities of the Cell shall include compliance, monitoring, analysis and coordination with the National FATF Secretariat and relevant stakeholders as per law.

Pakistan for joint efforts to deal with challenges

BUREAU REPORT

NEW YORK: Pakistan has called for collective efforts to deal with various challenges including that of COVID-19. Addressing the tenth Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Munir Akram stressed that vaccines must be made available to everyone and everywhere. He said we must understand that no one will be safe until everyone is safe. The Pakistan envoy called for mobilizing national and international efforts especially finance to recover from the recession which has been induced by the pandemic and to revive the prospects of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Munir Akram said the commitments made at the Paris Conference to mobilize one hundred billion dollars in climate finance annually must be fulfilled to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and ensure transition to a green global economy.

Govt notifies office timings for Ramazan

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Thursday notified new timings for public offices during the holy month of Ramazan, which is expected to begin from April 14. In this connection, Cabinet Secretariat Establishment Division has issued a notification confirming two different time slots for offices working for five and six days a week. As per the notification, public offices under the federal government working five days a week (Monday to Friday) will operate from 10 am to 4 am for the first four weekdays and will close down at 1 pm on Friday. Similarly, the government offices working six days a week will operate from 10 am to 3 pm. The offices will close at 1:00 pm on Friday. Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Fawad Chaudhry predicted on Saturday that the Ramadan moon will be sighted on April 13. The moon of Ramadan, 1442 AH will be sighted on the evening of April 13, 2021, and the first Ramadan will be on April 14, Fawad Chaudhry tweeted. The moon will be clearly sighted in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and other parts of the country, the minister had said.

NA-75 polls: ECP issues SOPs for polling staff

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Election Commission of Pakistan issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) for polling staff to conduct the by-polls on the Daska NA-75 seat scheduled for April 10. The presiding officer (PO) and assistant presiding officer will have a smartphone, according to the ECP announcement. If the PO does not have a smartphone, the assistant PO will be appointed in his place. It has to be ensured that the location service feature of the smartphone is enabled, the ECP said, adding that the PO is to send a picture of Form 45 to the ECP and RO. The location feature should stay active even while taking the picture of Form 45, the ECP statement reads. Polling agents are to be present when the picture is being taken. In case of a network connection failure, the PO has been told to immediately reach the election office. The POs have been instructed to submit the polling record, including Form 45, on time. The RO, meanwhile, is tasked with making all the forensic details part of the record. The NA-75 constituency has more than 823,000 voters and the turnout in the last three elections has remained over 55%.