



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, April 08, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Russia offers military support to Pakistan to counter the terrorism**

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**Gwadar, Yangpu can have sister relationship**

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## Briefs

**Tareen still a part of PTI**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senator Shibli Faraz on Wednesday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan wants across the board accountability. Shibli Faraz, in a statement said that people accompanied Jahangir Tareen to the court in their personal capacity and were not representing their party. The Senator further said that Jahangir Tareen is still part of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and has contacts with several people. Earlier, Jahangir Tareen, while talking to media after getting bail from a banking court in Lahore said that his loyalty is being tested for one year but he is still silent.

**Government endangering lives of people**

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday said that provision of health facilities is right of every person but government of Prime Minister Imran Khan is endangering lives of Pakistan. PPP Chairman, in his message on World Health Day, said that government has made unjustifiable increase in prices of medicines and neo-liberal policies of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) are damaging every citizen. Bilawal Bhutto further said that two ministers of Imran Khan's cabinet were removed on charges of corruption but no legal action was taken against them.

**Ashrafi urges public to follow SOPs**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Maulana Tahir Ashrafi has urged the public to strictly follow SOPs during the month of Ramadan. Talking to media in Islamabad on Wednesday, Maulana Tahir Ashrafi appealed the masses to visit mosques after doing ablution at their homes. Maulana Tahir Ashrafi said all mosques and Imambargahs will remain opened during Ramadan.

## Imran raises Kashmir issue with Lavrov

**Imran Khan reaffirms Pakistan's resolve to expeditiously conclude the requisite legal process for the "Pakistan Stream" (North-South) Gas Pipeline project**

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to expeditiously conclude the requisite legal process for the "Pakistan Stream" (North-South) Gas Pipeline project and commence the work as early as possible. He reiterated the importance Pakistan attached to its relations with Russia as a key foreign policy priority. Prime Minister said this on Wednesday when he met with a Russian delegation led by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who is on a two-day visit to Pakistan. A multitude of important issues were discussed in the meeting including improving bilateral relations as well as a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The Prime Minister fondly recalled his interaction with President Vladimir Putin during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Bishkek in June 2019, where he had underscored his desire to take the bilateral relationship to a new level.

## Russia offers military support

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who is in Islamabad on a two-day visit, said Wednesday Moscow is ready to extend military support to Pakistan to strengthen its counter terrorism potential. "This is in the interest of all regional countries," he said while addressing a joint news conference alongside Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. He said both countries have agreed to conduct more military exercises and drills. To further support the energy-deficit Pakistan, the Russian Foreign Minister said his country had offered delivery of Russian Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) through the Russian companies Gazprom and Novatek and was awaiting response from the partners in Pakistan.

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## US to restore more than \$200m in aid to Palestine

DNA

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration plans to provide at least \$235 million in US aid to the Palestinians, restoring a large part of the assistance that was cut off by then-President Donald Trump, people familiar with the matter said. The package, including humanitarian, economic and security aid, is expected to be announced by the State Department later on Wednesday as part of an effort to repair US ties with the Palestinians that all but collapsed during Trump's tenure.

It will mark Democratic President Joe Biden's most significant move since taking office on

Jan. 20 to make good on his promise to roll back some components of his Republican predecessor's approach that Palestinians denounced as heavily biased in favor of Israel. The plan calls for \$150 million through the United Nations relief agency UNWRA, \$75 million in US economic support and \$10 million in development funding, according to a notice emailed by the administration to congressional offices. The new administration has previously pledged to resume hundreds of millions of dollars in assistance and work toward reopening the Palestinians' diplomatic mission in Washington. Biden's aides have also signaled that they want to

re-establish the goal of a negotiated two-state solution as a priority in US policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But they have moved cautiously so far, and any major steps are likely to wait for the dust to clear after Israel's inconclusive March election, which will be followed by Palestinian elections scheduled in coming months. The Trump administration blocked nearly all aid after it severed ties with the Palestinian Authority in 2018. The move was widely seen as an attempt to force the Palestinians to negotiate with Israel on terms the Palestinian leadership branded as an effort to deny them a viable state.

## Pak-KSA enjoy brotherly relations, says Rashid

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malki called on Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed here Wednesday and discussed Pak-Saudi relations and murder of Saudi diplomat at Karachi in 2011. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said the murder of Saudi diplomat was an attempt to target the good relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He said the perpetrators of this act could not escape



and to get the punishment. Sheikh Rashid said Pak-Saudi relations were based on love, mutual understanding and brotherhood. Secretary Interior Yousaf Naseem Khokhar was also present in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan in a meeting with a Russian delegation led by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. - DNA

## China attaches importance to ties with Pakistan: Envoy

**The Governor Sindh expressed gratitude over donation of Covid-19 vaccines to Pakistan**

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Ambassador of China, Nong Rong on Wednesday called on Sindh Governor Imran Ismail at Governor House. They exchanged views on matters of mutual interests and cooperation. Governor Imran Ismail on the occasion said that Pakistan and China enjoy deep political mutual trust and friendly relations between the two countries are deeply rooted in the people. 'Pakistan highly values its friendship with China and worth its strong support and assistance for the development of Pakistan. The government is



committed to promoting Pakistan-China friendly cooperation, pushing forward CPEC, and making every effort

to ensure the security of Chinese citizens working in Pakistan', he said. The Governor while expressing gratitude over donation of Covid-19 vaccines to Pakistan said that the coronavirus vaccination campaign was started quite a while ago, and it was started with vaccines donated by the Chinese government. The Chinese Ambassador said that China attaches great importance to China-Pakistan all-time strategic cooperative partnership. 'The two countries have cooperated closely in international and regional affairs, effectively safeguarding the common interests,' he added.

## US backs direct Pak-India talks

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States stands for direct dialogue between India and Pakistan on "issues of concern", a State Department spokesman said. The Spokesman, Ned Price, was responding to a question from an Indian correspondent who sought comments on the Pakistani Cabinet decision not to import sugar and cotton from India. "I wouldn't want to comment on that specifically," Prince said in his daily news briefing. "What I would say is that we continue to support direct dialogue between India and Pakistan on issues of concern," Price added.

## Jordan king says palace crisis 'is over'

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah broke his silence Wednesday to tell his nation that the worst political crisis in decades sparked by an alleged plot involving his half-brother Prince Hamzah was over. "I assure you, that the sedition has been nipped in the bud," Abdullah said in address read out in his name on state television. "The challenge of these last days was not the most dangerous for the stability of the country - but it was the most painful for me". - APP

## Corona death toll crosses 15,000 mark

**The virus continues to rage in Pakistan as 102 more succumbed to the coronavirus in the last 24 hours**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Amid an intensifying third wave of the pandemic, Pakistan's coronavirus death toll surged past the 15,000 mark, while the number of COVID-19 cases crossed the 700,000 mark on Wednesday. The virus continues to rage in Pakistan as 102 more succumbed to the coronavirus in the last 24 hours. During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in the Punjab followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Out of the total 102 deaths occurred during last 24 hours, 32 of the deceased had died on ventilators during their treatment. The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 70 percent, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 58 percent, Gujranwala 60 percent and Lahore 69 percent. The maximum Oxygen beds (alternate oxygen providing facility other than ventilator administered as per medical requirement of COVID patient) was also occupied in four major areas of Swat 59 percent, Gujranwala 85 percent, Peshawar 82 percent and Gujrat 75 percent. Around 443 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in the country while no COVID affected person was on ventilator in Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Balochistan. Some 41,699 tests were conducted across the country on Tuesday, including 6,778 in Sindh, 17,290 in Punjab, 8,019 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 6,722 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 1,301 in Balochistan, 411 in GB, and 1,178 in AJK. Around 620,789 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. Since the pandemic outbreak, a total of 700,188 cases were detected that also included the perished, recovered and under treatment COVID-19 patients so far, including AJK 13,713, Balochistan 19,942, GB 5,064, ICT 62,775, KP 93,862, Punjab 237,594 and Sindh 267,238. About 15,026 deaths were recorded in country since the eruption of the contagion. Around 4,516 have perished in Sindh among five of them died in hospital and one out of hospital in past 24 hours.

## Armed forces' critics to face jail

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Critics of the Pakistan armed forces now face two years in jail as well as fines worth up to Rs500,000, as per a new criminal law amendment bill passed Wednesday by the National Assembly Standing Committee on Interior. Submitted by PTI lawmaker Amjad Ali Khan, the bill was approved by a majority. The chairperson of the standing committee, Raja Khurram Shahzad Nawaz, broke the 5-5 vote tie by voting in favour of the proposed bill. PPP leader Syed Agha Rafiullah, as well as the PML-N's Marriyung Aurangzeb and Chaudhry Nadeem Abbas Rehaira, argued against the bill, saying it would be used against freedom of expression in Pakistan.

## Bakhtawar tests positive

BUREAU REPORT

KARACHI: Bakhtawar Zahra, daughter of former president and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari, has contracted COVID-19 and now isolated herself. Bakhtawar confirmed the news in a tweet she posted on Wednesday: "I tested positive for COVID-19 on April 2nd isolating and recovering." Bakhtawar Bhutto also cautioned people to adhere to the corona SOPs to contain the virus. "Just a reminder to keep being cautious, call people out if their masks don't cover their nose, get vaccinated and help those less fortunate to get vaccinated too. May Allah keep us all safe. Aameen," she tweeted. Bakhtawar Bhutto had got married in February this year. Earlier, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had contracted COVID-19 and recovered from the virus successfully.

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## 'AstraZeneca shot may cause blood clots'

**The overall benefits of the shot in preventing coronavirus outweigh the risks of side effects**

IP REPORT

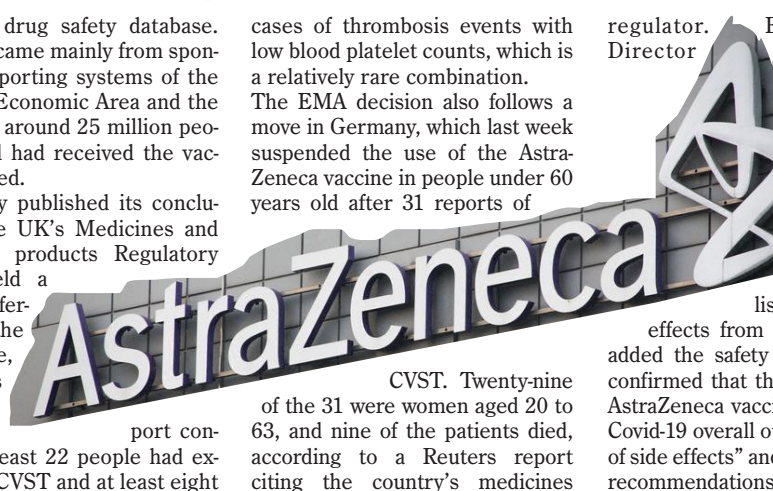
AMSTERDAM: The safety committee of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has found that the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine can cause unusual blood clots with low blood platelets, but stresses the overall benefits of the shot in preventing coronavirus outweigh the risks of side effects. The committee said there had been 18 deaths reported in its review of 62 cases of CVST (a clotting in the sinuses that drain blood from the brain) and 24 cases of splanchnic vein thrombosis (in the abdomen) that were reported

in an EU drug safety database. The cases came mainly from spontaneous reporting systems of the European Economic Area and the UK, where around 25 million people in total had received the vaccine, it noted. The agency published its conclusion as the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency held a press conference on the same issue, five days after its weekly report confirmed at least 22 people had experienced CVST and at least eight

cases of thrombosis events with low blood platelet counts, which is a relatively rare combination. The EMA decision also follows a move in Germany, which last week suspended the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine in people under 60 years old after 31 reports of

regulator. EMA Executive Director Emer Cooke told a press conference Wednesday that the agency would add the clots and low platelet counts to its list of possible side effects from the vaccine, but added the safety committee "has confirmed that the benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine in preventing Covid-19 overall outweigh the risks of side effects" and that that EMA's recommendations for use of the

vaccine were not changing. EMA's statement called on healthcare workers and people receiving the vaccine "to remain aware of the possibility of very rare cases of blood clots combined with low levels of blood platelets occurring within 2 weeks of vaccination." "So far, most of the cases reported have occurred in women under 60 years of age within 2 weeks of vaccination. Based on the currently available evidence, specific risk factors have not been confirmed," the statement said, though Cooke said there was no clear risk profile found when the safety committee looked at age and gender of people reporting these rare adverse reactions.



## Briefs

## Government committed to implement reforms

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Hammad Azhar has reiterated that the government is fully committed to implement structural reforms, protecting social safety nets in order to protect the vulnerable segments of the society.

Talking to Vice President South Asia Region, World Bank Hartwig Schafer, in a virtual meeting, he stressed that harmonization of General Sales Tax is a priority area for the government. He said the Federal and Provincial Tax authorities are working out procedures for its smooth implementation. Hammad Azhar expressed firm resolve of the government in implementing reforms under ongoing World Bank projects.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Energy Omar Ayub Khan and Special Assistant on Power Tabish Gauhar outlined the steps being taken to streamline the power sector, improving service delivery and serving the larger interest of electricity consumers.

## Shazia rejects reports of Tareen joining PPP

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Central Information Secretary Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians and MNA Shazia Atta Marri has said that a political party sent us a show-cause notice by using Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) forum and we have given reaction to it's show-cause notice as well.

Ms Marri said that the PPP didn't give any indication of separating from Pakistan Democratic Movement and PPP was among the founders of the opposition alliance. "PPP still wants to send this incompetent government back to home and believes in working with the opposition alliance by keeping differences aside but it seems that PMLN has no intention to work together," she added.

This she said while talking in a private TV's morning show hereon today. Shazia Marri said that PML-N leadership has been harmed the PDM as one or two leaders of their party had made negative statements that has shaken the PDM. "Who so ever harms the PDM will please the government", she added.

While talking about the show-cause notice sent by the PDM to her party, she said that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was showing restraint in the face of growing criticism from the opposition alliance particularly PML-N leaders.

## SAARC CCI hails Pak-Afghan trade accord

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Wednesday hailing the Pak-Afghan Transit Trade Accord extension said it will help uninterrupted flow of trade activities between two Muslim neighbouring countries.

Talking to delegation of traders here Wednesday, President SAARC chamber Iftikhar Ali Malik said that the decision to extend the agreement is mainly aimed at preventing any disruption in trade and transit affairs between the two countries whereas it will also help buy time to further discuss the proposed amendments in the agreement. He said Pakistan's clear vision for trade and economic relations with Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs) is to make Pakistan a hub for trade, transit and shipment. He further explained that Pakistan trade is based on the secure, open, consistent, reliable and legal movement of goods at the Afghan border along with enhanced connectivity with Afghanistan and CARs, he added. He said it's good omen that both sides expressed satisfaction with the extension of the agreement and decided that technical teams of either countries will conclude the revised accord soon.



HYDERABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Azam Khan Swati visit at Hyderabad Railway Station. – APP

## DDC approves 33 uplift schemes for public welfare

As many as 15212 senior citizens above 60 years of age have been vaccinated against corona so far in the district

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The District Development Committee has approved the implementation on 33 development schemes for regional development and public welfare at a cost of Rs. 308 million. In this regard, a meeting of the District Development Committee was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali in which Deputy Director Development Rana Tahir Mehmood briefed about the technical and administrative aspects of various

development schemes. Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Afifa Shajia, Officers of Local Government, WASA, FDA and other departments were also present. The meeting was informed that the under the schemes of Roads, WASA, FDA, Local Government and FESCO would be completed under different programs. Reviewing the schemes approved during the meeting, DC said that expeditious departmental measures should be taken so that these schemes could be completed earlier. He said that the problem should be solved immediately in con-

nection with development projects.

**15212 senior citizens vaccinated**

As many as 15212 senior citizens above 60 years of age have been vaccinated against corona so far in the district. In this regard, five vaccination centers are functional from 8 am to 8 pm. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali said that Sports Complex Saman Abad, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Samundari New Building, Sports Complex Chak Jhumra, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital New Building Tandlianwala and Rural Health Center New Building Kharrianwala are

well functional and provided all facilities to the elderly while active supervision of arrangements is also being underway on daily basis. He informed that Civil Defense volunteers are also active to providing services to the old persons through wheel chair. He told that drinking water with beds for temporary accommodation, washroom facilities and transporting elderly disabled people from the main gate to the center and leaving them for their ride back. Deputy Commissioner said that 1163 shopping malls, restaurants, marriage halls and

private schools sealed in last 23 days for violating corona SOPs. He informed that Assistant Commissioners of district were active to check implementation on corona SOPs and actions were taken against violators.

**Ten more patients die**

Ten more patients died of COVID-19 in the district, while 181 persons tested positive during the last 24 hours.

A spokesperson for the Health department said on Wednesday the death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 653 in the district. He said that 1,518 tests for coronavirus were conducted

in public and private sectors labs during the same period. He said that so far 10,204 patients have recovered from the disease while total active cases in Faisalabad reached 3,207. He said that 220 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital and 106 at the DHQ Hospital for COVID-19 patients. At present, 220 patients, including 137 confirmed ones, were under treatment at the Allied Hospital while 92, including 46 confirmed, were admitted to DHQ Hospital. He further said that 1,895 confirmed patients were isolated at their homes in the district.

## DC for hundred percent wheat procurement targets

MEHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: Deputy Commissioner Naila Baqir directed the officers concerned to achieve hundred percent target of wheat procurement and negligence in this regard would not be tolerated. Addressing the meeting regarding wheat procurement drive here on Wednesday, she also directed the officers to make arrangements for supply of clean drinking water, parking and seating for farmers keeping in view the corona SOPs. Earlier, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Shahrukh Khan Niazi briefing the meeting said that a target had been set to procure 80,000 metric tonnes of wheat in Sargodha district this year and for this purpose, 13 wheat procurement centers had been set up across the district. He further said that wheat

## Annual Literary Festival begins

SARGODHA: The fourth edition of the annual Sargodha Literary Festival (SLF) began on Wednesday virtually for the first time due to restrictions placed amid the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. Highlighting the importance of art and literature, Vice Chancellor Dr Ishfaq Ahmed said: "Life is a race against time and every individual should make his mark in accomplishing goals. The universities have to come forward to engage students in flourishing and preserving art, culture, values and traditions by providing essential critical and technical skills."

After the inauguration, the proceedings followed a keynote speech in Punjabi by Payyaz Baqir, an internationally renowned community development practitioner and professor of Development Practice in Ottawa,

Canada, in a session titled, 'Surt di Sui, Prem dy Dhaagy'. He expressed "Sufism is an intimation of pain and a self-control ideology; it's the doctrine of universality based on tolerance and interfaith harmony". He urged the youth to promote the diversified cultures of Pakistan and live balanced life by recognizing the difference between truth and lie. Apart from the opening session, four other sessions were held on the first day. Adnan Rafique, the Country Director of the United States Institute of Peace for Pakistan chapter, moderated a session on 'Unity in Diversity: Religious, Gender and Class Inclusion in Pakistan', in which, Kapil Dev a famous Minority Rights Activist, Rafiullah Kakar the Director of CPEC Unit in Baluchistan, and Dr Ishfaq Ahmad participated as panelists. – APP

purchase target of Sargodha center No. 2 had been given 7,000 metric tonnes, Asiyanwala center 7,000 metric tonnes, 3,000 metric tonnes Bhalwal center, 4,000 tonnes Phularwan, 12,500 metric tonnes wheat procurement target set in

Sillanwali center, 9,000 metric tonnes Shahnikdar center, 6,000 Shahpur, 8500 metric tonnes Farooka center, 4,000 metric tonnes Sial Morh center, Hialpur center 6500 metric tonnes, 5,000 Sohbagah center while a target of 3500 metric

## Pakistan should improve relations with Iran: FPCCI

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group of FPCCI, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said Russia and western countries continued to trade during high tensions during the cold war, therefore, we should also start trade with all the neighbours.

We should not compromise our principled stance but start business as the issue of Kashmir cannot be resolved unless Pakistan become a significant economic power so that no country including India will not risk relations with Islamabad, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that all the diplomatic and political moves have failed to resolve the issue of Kashmir and war is out of options leaving economic ties the only option to

improve things. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that political tensions have dragged Saarc region down with frictions between India and Pakistan as its core reason.

The negative attitude of India and the arms race has pushed millions below the poverty line in the region while the majority of world's poor reside in this region.

The quickest way to lift millions out of poverty is to resolve political issues and start trading in this least integrated areas Pakistan cannot remain unconcerned with the neighbours as it has not helped in the last seventy years.

He said that China has inked a deal with Iran to invest 400 billion dollars which will revolutionise the economy of later.

Iranian oil and gas will be provided to China through the Caspian Sea and Kazakhstan while a pipeline is also on the cards.

## CDA to take strict action against illegal societies

Chief commissioner further issued directions that action against encroachment must initiate immediately and even if one brick is laid by encroachers criminal action will be initiated against the concerned officials of CDA, District Administration, and ICT police

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Chairman CDA / Chief Commissioner Islamabad, and it was attended by Deputy Commissioner ICT, DIG operations Islamabad Police, Member Estate CDA, and DDG Enforcement CDA. The agenda of the meeting included removal of encroachments from state land and action against unapproved and illegal housing societies in Islamabad, causing loss to the public and state. It was also decided that action be taken against illegally constructed buildings. Following decisions were made in the meeting;

- 1) Strict action will be taken against illegal & unapproved housing societies. No illegal or unapproved housing society shall be allowed to advertise or publish materials to sell and purchase plots/houses.
- 2) FIRs would be lodged against owners, and bank accounts of the societies shall be frozen.
- 3) Chief commissioner further issued directions that action against encroachment must initiate immediately and even if one brick is laid by encroachers criminal action will be initiated against the concerned officials of CDA, District Administration, and ICT police.

**CDA restores water supply from Rawal Dam**  
The Capital Development Au-



thority (CDA) has re-claimed its share of two million gallons per day (MGD) of water from Rawal Dam after a long gap of 30 years. The decision was taken recently by the Chairman CDA, who is also the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, Amir Ali Ahmed and

it was formally implemented last week, said a Capital Development Authority official. The Chairman Capital Development Authority said that the CDA had abstained from availing its share of water from Rawal Dam for three decades because in the past there was enough water available from Simly Dam, the deep sunk tube wells and from Khanpur dam. CDA official said at present, the Capital Development Authority is supplying 60 MGD of water to the residents and utilities in the federal capital. The largest share comes from the tube wells, which is 24.5 MGD. Another 24 MGD is being drawn from Simly water reservoir, 8.5 MGD is being procured

from Khanpur Dam and the three Waterworks located in Shahdara, Nurpur and Saidpur contributed 2 MGD. Now, there will be the addition of another 2 MGD from Rawal Dam, which will help the Authority provide some relief to the residents, especially in sectors G-7/4, I-8 and I-9 and to G-9. He said that the water treatment plant in the 'Park Area' near the Sports Complex, which was dysfunctional for the last 30 years has been re-activated and is now fully operational. He said that a new power generator has also been installed to ensure that any power disruption may not lead to wastage of water or suspension of water supply from this source.

## Four illegal housing colonies sealed

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) on Wednesday sealed four unapproved housing colonies and challaned 21 shopkeepers for setting up encroachments in front of their shops.

According to official sources, an enforcement team sealed offices of Al-Haq Town, Madina Villas, Defence Fort and Moon Housing Colony.

Separately, an anti-encroachment team demolished constructions on state land C-544 Ahmed Nagar and foiled the bid to occupy the plot.

The team also challaned 21 shopkeepers in Bismillah Chowk, Madina Town and forwarded the cases to the court of Judicial Magistrate. The FDA also removed an iron gate installed illegally in F-block, Millat Town.

**Narcotics seized, 2 arrested**

Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) seized heavy cache of narcotics and arrested two accused from Bhawana Road. ANF spokesman said on Wednesday that there team on a tip-off signaled a car to stop near Service Station and during checking 7 kilograms charas was recovered from its secret sections. ANF team also arrested two car riders-Farzand Ali and Liaqat Ali, residents of Faisalabad, and locked them behind the bars for further investigation.

## Two drug peddlers held with hashish

DNA

SARGODHA: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested two drug peddlers and recovered narcotics from their possession. A team of Urban Area police station headed by SHO Rifaqat Hussain conducted raids and arrested two drug pushers Muhammad Azeem and Asghar Ali and recovered 1.100 kg hashish and 60-liter liquor from them. Cases have been registered against the accused.

**RPO Sargodha holds orderly room**

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sargodha Region Ashfaq Khan on Wednesday listened 43 appeals of 21 police officers and personnel during the orderly room held here on Wednesday. Some seven appeals were declared valid, while the answers of 28 were termed unsatisfactory and the sentences of policemen concerned were upheld.

Speaking on the occasion, the RPO advised the police officers to perform their duties with honesty and dedication and listen to the petitioners and resolve their issues on merit as soon as possible. Those showing negligence while on duty would be punished, he added.

## ANP, JUI-F to support PML-N in NA-249

DNA

KARACHI: Awami National Party (ANP) on Wednesday announced the withdrawal of its candidate in the upcoming NA-249 Karachi by-poll in support of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate Miftah Ismail. The ANP had fielded Haji Aurangzeb Khan Buner, but the party withdrew his candidacy after talks with the PML-N.

The development comes a day after Awami National Party (ANP) on Tuesday announced parting ways with the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) after the former was served a show-cause notice over supporting PPP in the appointment of opposition leader in Senate. Similarly, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) has also withdrawn its candidate in favour of PML-N in the NA-249 by-election as today was the last day to withdraw nomination papers. 23 candidates out of 53 have withdrawn their nomination papers including ANP's Aurangzeb Khan and JUI-F's Umar Sadiq. With all eyes set on the vacant National Assembly seat in Karachi, the major political parties who have fielded their candidates for the important NA-249 by-poll have intensified their respective election campaigns in the constituency.

## Briefs

### E-Challan launched to regulate traffic

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jameel-ur-Rehman Wednesday launched an E-Challan system to regulate traffic in the federal capital. The initiative was aimed at ensuring traffic laws in absence of traffic wardens, the IGP said while speaking at inauguration ceremony. Director General Safe City, Muhammad Saleem briefed the IGP over the process of issuing e-tickets to the violators.

The commuters would receive tickets at their home address after reporting violations through Safe City cameras, installed at various locations in the city. The system was directly linked to the Safe City and Excise and Taxation Office, he maintained. The challan included over speeding, signal jumping, line and lane, one way, without lights, rash driving, excessive smoke, mobile phone usage, not wearing seat-belt and helmet.

The violator would have to pay the fine amount within 10 days of receiving the challan, in case of failure his/her vehicle would be impounded. The fine could be paid through JS Bank, Jazz cash, mobile accounts and other digital means.

### 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 temporarily suspended as per given schedule: On 8th April 10:00am to 2:00pm Industrial, Industrial-2, Crystile, Siraj Steel Mill feeders, 09:00am to 02:00pm Sang jani, Pind Parian, Paswal, Shah Allah Ditta, Dharik, Bin Bhola, Burhan, Haro, Ghauri, Bohi garh, Salar Gah, Solar II&I, PM Colony, POF, Sanjwal, DI Colony, Attock Rural, Shakar Dara, STW, SDW, DEC, Khan abad, Munir abad Lalazar, Lala Rukh, Purmiana, Industrial Estate, Ghari Afghanistan, River Garden Feeders, 09:00am to 04:00pm Tarnol, Syed Kasran, Raman feeders, and surrounding areas. 08:00am to 02:00pm Captain Nisar Shaheed, MES II&I, Bhaini, Mangla Kent, Gadari feeders and surrounding areas will remain without power. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

### AKF distributes meals among rehab team

SHAHEEN HANIF

RAWALPINDI: The Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF) here on Wednesday distributed meals and other food items among workers who were busy in rehabilitation and reconstruction works at Urdu Bazaar where several shops were reduced to ashes due to eruption of fire few days back.

The ill-fated incident inflicted millions of property losses to the affected traders. Talking to the traders and rehabilitation workers, President Al-Khidmat Foundation district Rawalpindi Ch. Munir Ahmed also announced that the Foundation would provide meals and other edibles to the rescue and rehabilitation workers till conclusion of work. Expressing his sympathy with the affected traders and other shopkeepers on the occasion, he said that the volunteers of the Foundation were always standing shoulder to shoulder with the affected in their every difficult moment.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Russia, Sergey Lavrov was warmly welcomed by Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi at the Foreign Office today. Later, Russian FM also planted a Pine tree at the Foreign Office Lawn. – DNA

## MCI organizes 1st food safety training workshop

MCI, in coordination with Ehsaas, CDA and Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), is also launching the first pilot project for street vendors in Islamabad

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) has embarked upon streamlining street food vending with better licensing regime and enhancing hygiene standards. Pakistanis are fond of street food and these vendors are also fulfilling food security demand of a large section of urban poor.

This was stated by Syeda Shafaq Hashmi, Administrator MCI, while addressing the certificate award ceremony of the 1st food safety training workshop for street vendors in Islamabad. Administrator, MCI, Ms. Syeda Shafaq Hashmi, organized this training workshop in collaboration with Institute of Food & Nutritional Sciences of University of Arid Agriculture Rawalpindi (UAAR), which is also the advisor of Punjab Food Authority. Ms. Hashmi also conveyed the message of the Chief Commissioner/ Chairman, CDA, Mr. Amer Ali Ahmed, on the



occasion that the street vendor's initiative shall serve as a model to be replicated across the city and country and shall serve to bring street vendors at par with international standards. The training

is meant to be transformative for the vendor trainees, as all of them has been in the food selling vocation for years and has never attended such training.

The purpose of the training was

to enhance awareness among street food vendors about the food safety and hygiene practices. The participant vendors were trained in maintenance of sanitation during preparation, cooking

and serving. The day-long training session covered areas such as food handling, food safety, personal hygiene, cart hygiene, cleaning and garbage disposal. Focus also remained on precautionary measures for reducing the impact of COVID-19 during food and client handling. 14 in number street vendors attended the training, which was the first batch from G-11, Markaz, Islamabad.

MCI, in coordination with Ehsaas, CDA and Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), is also launching the first pilot project for street vendors in Islamabad. These food safety training workshops will be regular feature of the ongoing street vendors' regularization initiative, where more and more street food vendors will be trained. Mr. Zia Bandy, senior fellow, PIDE and focal person for the street vendors' initiative, informed the participants on government's efforts of bringing street vendors through adoption of best standards of modular carts, service standards and hygiene practices.

## NUMS, Turkish Ege university collab ignored in global health agenda

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) in collaboration with Turkish Ege University is working on a 2-year joint research project on Leishmaniasis, an endemic tropical disease which is a source of skin infection mostly in KPK and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan. Dr. Shumaila Naz, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences of NUMS, who is working on this project said that NUMS and Ege University are working jointly to diagnose and treat Cutaneous leishmaniasis, a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) which affects about 2 billion people world-wide. The WHO NTD road map 2021-2030 establishes the need for a One Health ap-

proach, to 'address health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interface' as an important tool for human and economic development. Pakistan Scientific Foundation and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (PSF-TUBITAK), Dr. Shumaila said, are jointly funding the research project to help those suffering from this disease. TUBITAK and PSF are also funding 10 other projects through their collaboration in six different fields like earth sciences, aeronautics, materials science, biotechnology, renewable energy and environmental science. In his remarks, the Vice Chancellor of NUMS, Lt Gen Syed Muhammad Imran Majeed, HI (M), (Retd), said that although there is little overall work in terms of an economic impact of NTDs in Pakistan; based on existing

evidence from other low- and middle-income countries, we expect that large sections of Pakistani society are trapped in poverty due to the impact of these conditions. "Federal Ministry of Health have had some important public health successes in terms of reductions in vaccine-preventable diseases, but there is a need to address NTDs to add to these victories," he said inviting attention of the concerned authorities. NTDs are generally found in the underprivileged areas, both in Pakistan and other regions of the globe and can cause infections like yellow fever, dengue and leprosy contributing to morbidity and mortality of across the world. These diseases are called "neglected" because they generally affect the globally poor and historically have not received as much attention as other diseases have.

## MoHR asks people to give feedback on NAP

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) has asked the people to give their feedback and recommendations on country's draft National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights. A statement issued by Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) here on Wednesday stated that only two-day were left in submitting the recommendations and feedback.

The last date of recommendation is April 9, the project has been developed in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which are a set of guidelines to prevent, address and remedy human rights infringements in business operations.

## IPS, KU ink MoU for joint research

ISLAMABAD: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad and Karachi University to foster joint efforts in the areas of research, dialogue and publications on policy related affairs. The agreement was signed on behalf of the two institutions by Vice Chancellor Karachi University Dr. Khalid Mahmood Iraqi, Chairman IPS Khalid Rahman, Director ORIC (Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization), Karachi University Dr. Alia Rehman, IPS' Vice Chairman Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain and IPS' GMO Naufil Shahrukh in a ceremony held via video link. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Khalid Iraqi, Khalid Rahman, Syed Abrar Hussain shed light on the need and significance of collaborated efforts for promotion of policy studies. Prior to signing of the agreement, IPS' focal person in Karachi University Assistant Professor Samina Qureshi shared views on long-standing relations between the two institutions and probable areas of cooperation for future. – DNA

## UKPBC role lauded in cementing Pak-UK business ties

We are thus providing an international platform not only to promote the brands and marques, but the personalities behind the scenes who have been instrumental in attaining the coveted positions

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: It is an excellent initiative by UK Pakistan Business Council for UK Pakistan Business Achievement Award 2021 to be held in Serena Hotel, Islamabad on the 20th May 2021 said Spokesman of Prime Minister of Pakistan for Trade & Investment in UK & Europe Sahibzada A. Jahangir.

He said that, I appreciate efforts of UKPBC in bringing potential investors from the United Kingdom to interact face to face with the Pakistani exporters. Such events will further strengthen the trade and investment ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom as per the vision of our Prime Minister Imran Khan. Meanwhile, on behalf of



Sahibzada A Jahngir



Khurshid Barlas

our government I extend to you my best wishes for the event and assure UKPBC of my continued support at all times. I thank you for your invitation to participate as Chief Guest in the forthcoming UK-Pakistan International Business Awards 2021.

President UK Pakistan Business Council Pakistan Chapter Khurshid Barlas said that It is for the first time that an event of such nature is being held in Pakistan which encompasses the achievements of the cross-nation trade & business community of UK and Pakistan. We are thus providing an international platform not only to promote the brands and marques, but the personalities behind the scenes who have been instrumental in attaining the coveted positions.

## SECP to offer ESOP

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP) is a popular method of attracting, motivating, and retaining employees. Stock Option Plans permit employees to share in the company's success without requiring a startup business to spend precious cash, said a press release issued here. Previously, only public companies were allowed to issue employee stock options.

As a step forward to facilitate corporate sector, the SECP hereby clarifies that private limited companies especially startups can also now offer ownership rights to their employees as a non-monetary compensation for their intellectual services and promotion of their business. A private company may offer shares to its existing shareholders in accordance with section 83(1)(a) of the Companies Act, 2017, and if the whole or any part of the shares offered is declined or is not subscribed, such shares can be offered to its employees under pre-determined contractual arrangements.

Option for employees to own a company they work for proves to be a highly motivating factor to increase productivity and efficacy which startups immensely require at their initial stages of business commencement.

The trend of offering shares to employees is globally more prevalent in startups who might not be able to afford hefty compensation packages for their employees.

Therefore, in order to accelerate business growth in Pakistan, the SECP has given clearance to private limited companies including startups to offer Stock Option Plans which gives them the flexibility to award stock options to employees.

## ATC extends judicial remand of three lawyers

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday extended the judicial remand of three lawyers till April 14, in Islamabad High Court (IHC) building attack case.

The three lawyers including Tasaduq Hanif, Hamad Saeed Dar and Naseer Kiyani were produced before ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan. Meanwhile, the prosecutor opposed the post-arrest bail cases of the three lawyers and argued that the accused were involved in the incident. The video of three lawyers had been sent for forensic analysis, he said. During hearing, the judge said that the release order for other two lawyers including Khalid Taj and Raja Farukh would be issued once the court receive the bail orders of IHC. After this, the hearing of the case was adjourned.

## CPO awards certificates to Police officers

DNA

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer CPO Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas distributed cash reward and commendation certificates to officials for showing good performance, informed police spokesman. CPO praised the sub-inspector Shakil Ahmed and assistant traffic warden Khadim Hussain for exhibiting best performance and to perform their duties honestly while cash rewards and commendation certificates were given to them.

CPO made it clear that the performance of police officers and personnel is being monitored and rewards are given to them on merit. He said that such traffic officers are role models for others and they would be encouraged at all levels. He pointed out that strict action would be taken against those found negligent in performing their duties. Steps are being taken for the welfare of the force, he added.

## Briefs

## Dr. Nabi Bakhsh's services unforgettable

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: An online Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch International Literary Seminar was organized by the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of renowned historian, linguist, researcher, educationist and intellectual Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Khan Baloch.

Mazhar-ul-Haq Siddiqui, Prof. Fateh Mohammad Malik and Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Jamani were in the Presidium. Key note address presented by Dr. Yousuf Khushk.

Dr. Abdul Ghaffar Soomro (Karachi), Dr. Mohammad Ali Manjhi (Hyderabad), In-Allah Sheikh (Islamabad), Mohammad Omar Chand (New Zealand), Ayub Baloch (Quetta), Dr. Sofia Khushk (Islamabad), Amima Baloch (Karachi), Dr. Manzoor Ali Vesrio (Islamabad), Aqil Ali Kaka (Islamabad) expressed their views. Dr. Hakim Ali Barro was the moderator.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. Yousuf Khushk said that Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Baloch was a renowned researcher, historian, educationist and intellectual.

He gained worldwide fame for his scholarly and research services. His scholarly and literary services is not limited to Sindhi language but extends to Urdu, English, Persian, Balochi and Seraiki languages. Dr. Nabi Bakhsh Baloch's specialty is that the outstanding services he has rendered in the field of science and research are exemplary. He has done significant work on the main source of the history of Sindh, "Fathnama Sindh" or "Chachnama", "Tarikh Masoomi" and "Tohfah-ul-Kalam".

## IESCO issues online 'E' katcharies schedule

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: IESCO spokesman for immediate solution of valued customers complaints, online Katcharies in all Operations Circles are being conducted regularly and getting positive response from customers.

According to schedule on 08th April 2021, SE IESCO Islamabad Circle on telephone No. 051-9260194, SE Rawalpindi City Circle on telephone No. 051-9292675, SE Rawalpindi Cantt Circle on telephone No.051-9292675, SE Attock Circle on telephone No. 051-4950343, SE Chakwal circle on telephone No. 0543-668500 and SE Jhelum Circle on telephone No. 0544-9270276 will attend complaints/suggestions of customers from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM.

IESCO requested valued customers to participate in on line Katcharies for immediate solution of their complaints. IESCO Chief Ch. Abdul Razaq is personally monitoring online Katcharies and passed directives to all officers to resolve customer's issues on priority and same is the actual motto of these Katcharies.

## Inter district robbers gang busted, four arrested

RAWALPINDI: Police have busted an inter-district gang involved in street robberies and recovered snatching jewelry worth Rs 2.8 million besides recovering arms and ammunition used in crime, informed police spokesman. During course of action, Bani Police have arrested those were identified as Rana Mohammad Sajid, Mohammad Junaid Javed, Mohammad Zafar and Munir with the help of modern technology and recovered Rs 2.8 million snatching jewelry. During interrogation, the gang revealed to conduct big robbery in Sarafa Bazaar and fled away from the scene. The accused used to loot people at gunpoint, according to the police.

City Police Officer CPO Muhammad Ahsan Younis commended SP Rawal and the police team on the successful operation and said that operations against organized and active gangs must be continued. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Fifth Steering Committee meeting on Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative (PRIM) chaired by Abdul Razak Dawood, Advisor to PM on Commerce & Investment, Ishrat Hussain, Advisor to PM for Institutional Reforms & Austerity and Atif R. Bokhari, MOS/Chairman Board of Investment held at BOI. — DNA

## Japanese companies asked to explore setting up JVs in Pakistan

Pakistani people have great trust and confidence in the quality of Japanese products and by manufacturing in Pakistan where labor was quite inexpensive, Japanese companies would get immediate penetration in domestic market

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan was a vibrant market for business and investment and Japanese companies should explore the possibilities of setting up JVs to manufacture automobiles, mobile phones, IT, electronic and other products in Pakistan. He said that Pakistani people have great trust and confidence in the quality of Japanese products and by manufacturing in Pakistan where labour was quite inexpensive, Japanese companies would get immediate penetration in domestic market and boost their exports to many other countries.

He said that the current volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan and Japan was not reflective of the real potential of both countries and both should focus on developing strong business linkages between their private sectors to further improve it. He said this while exchanging views with ISHII Kensuke, Counsellor,



embassy of Japan during his visit to ICCI along with Kuwamura Akinobu, First Secretary. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Muhammad Shakir, Muhammad Saeed Khan, and Hafiz Bilal Munir, Executive Board Members of ICCI were also present at the occasion.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that Japan should consider technology transfer to Pakistan, share technical know-how and cooperate in capacity building to enhance the export competitiveness of Pakistan. He said that Japanese companies should take advantage of

the business opportunities in investor friendly Special Economic Zones of Pakistan. He said that Japanese cooperation in value addition of agriculture products, fisheries, textiles, food processing, and ICT would help Pakistan in improving exports. He said that

Pakistani agro products including mangoes, rice, fisheries and many other products could find a good market in Japan. He said that ICCI was ready to conduct the visit of the Ambassador of Japan to various local industries to show him the export potential of Pakistani products. ISHII Kensuke, Counsellor, Embassy of Japan thanked Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President ICCI for sharing useful ideas to further enhance bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Japan. He acknowledged Pakistan's geo-economic location with its connectivity potential as an export destination for Japanese goods and services for the Pakistan market and also to the wider region.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to work for enhancing the mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation in diverse fields between Pakistan and Japan. Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Muhammad Shakir, Muhammad Saeed Khan, and Hafiz Bilal Munir, Executive Board Members of ICCI also offered useful suggestions for further enhancing trade relations between the two countries.

## NHA continues ISO-9001 certification for 2020-21

## SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: National Highway Authority (NHA), the International Certification Agency has maintained the certificate of ISO-9001:2015 for NHA for the year 2020-2021 on account of its excellent performance, which is a source of pride for the Authority. Furthermore, it is to recall that NHA, for the first time, was awarded with ISO-9001:2015 Quality Management System Certificate in 2018. Meanwhile, in order to maintain this certificate,

chairman NHA undertook extra ordinary steps. The ISO cell in NHA was assigned the important task of maintaining this certificate. Under the patronage of Chairman NHA, this cell performed well and worked with devotion and dedication which paved the way to maintain this certificate. Further the top management of NHA also played valuable role to achieve the target. In additions NHA's ISO Zonal coordinators put in untiring efforts to this effect. In order to serve the purpose, NHA arranged training workshop on International

Quality Management and ensured implementation of SOPs of various sections of the Authority. It seems apt to mention that the annual surveillance audit for NHA was held in Jan. to March 2021. The internationally qualified auditors performed the external audit. The purpose of the audit was to assess the level of quality management system implementation at NHA. Based on the progress made during the second year of certification, the auditors recommended the continuation of ISO 9001:2015 certification 2020-2021 for NHA.

## Sania visits facilitation center at Holy Family Hospital

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation, Dr. Sania Nishtar Wednesday visited the Ehsaas Facilitation Center in Holy Family Hospital (HFH), Rawalpindi to appraise operations of the Ehsaas Tahafuz that is currently in its pilot phase.

The visit was aimed at commemorating the World Health Day 2021. During the course of the quick appraisal visit, Dr. Sania held a meeting with Ehsaas Tahafuz's technical team of medical experts, hospital administrators and programme verifiers, took stock of the progress and gained firsthand insights for programme expansion later this year.

Briefing the media after the Tahafuz stocktake, Dr. Sania shared, "Ehsaas Tahafuz is Pakistan's first shock-oriented precision safety net. The programme is centered on protecting the deserving patients from catastrophic health expenditures. Enhancements are being planned to expand its scale and scope later this year based on lessons of the pilot." She then continued, "The programme is yielding great results and is being upscaled. This innovative "fund based" approach to health financing is complementing health insurance, to achieve universal health coverage (UHC) in Pakistan, a policy priority of our government to build back better, in a post COVID-19 context." — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Workers busy in repairing CCTV cameras installed during the maintenance work in Islamabad. — DNA

## Leadership role stressed for women in varsities

Reflecting on personal and professional experiences, women at the forefront of higher education in Pakistan talked through challenges confronted in their professional life

## ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: As many as 22 women Vice Chancellors, Provosts, Executive Directors and Deans from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Pakistan logged in to participate in a workshop entitled "Collaboration for Excellence — Women Leadership in the Higher Education Sector" organized by the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE).

All participants had one goal in mind — to work together and find a way to enable women in leadership roles in universities as well as those on the cusp of leadership positions. Participants from all four provinces and Islamabad were part of this groundbreaking conversation chaired by Dr. Sha-

heen Sardar Ali, Rector NAHE. Reflecting on personal and professional experiences, women at the forefront of higher education in Pakistan talked through challenges confronted in their professional life, how they overcame them and opportunities that helped them. Dr. Ruksana Kausar, Vice Chancellor, Government College Women University (GCWU) Sialkot touched upon the unique challenges of women working without support structures and financial cushions in place. Dr. Farhat Haq, Provost, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) spoke about the edge that Pakistani women hold in the shape of strength and resilience.

Dr. Saima Hamid, Vice Chancellor, Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) reiterated how women

leaders in higher education have had to fight to be heard and to have their contributions seen. Dr. Parveen Munshi, Vice Chancellor, University of Sufism and Modern Sciences spoke of the administrative and financial competencies that need to be learned on the job, because most institutions lack preparatory capacity building opportunities. Dr. Tashmin Khamis, Vice Provost, Aga Khan University (AKU) touched a chord with all participants when she spoke of the further justifications women have to give when making changes or suggestions and the constant 'guilt' trip women employees find themselves taking.

Themes that became clear through the course of the discussion and which will form part of

the 'Women leadership Program', included women's perception of self, social structures that may work for or against women, the need for networking and reiterating ideas, and the crucial role of good mentorship. Becoming part of the 'power circle' or 'decision-makers circle' within universities can be challenging for women; information sharing, and decision making can happen in social settings which may not be accessible to women. In the time ahead, participants hoped to collaborate and work together to address these challenges, create opportunities, and provide women at the cusp of leadership with the resources they need.

Going forward, NAHE intends to draw upon the ideas generated by this incredible group of women

leaders to design and implement excellence and leadership courses across Pakistan, both centrally and through regional hubs of learning. This virtual engagement is one of several and on-going workshops NAHE intends to hold with women working in HEIs to support and widen the pool of women in leadership positions.

NAHE is established as a stand-alone, autonomous institution operating under the auspices of HEC to improve the quality of teaching, research, and governance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Pakistan. It is envisioned as the premier institution for quality research and teaching related to all aspects of higher education in Pakistan. This series of trainings is one of multiple ongoing NAHE endeavors at HEC.

## NUST to continue annual blood donation drive

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: NUST Community Services Club (NCSC) resolved to continue holding up the Olympic flame of their annual Blood Donation Drive straight into 2021 under strict COVID-19 SOPs.

The shortage of blood to save lives is one of those issues that NCSC hold important as it had already did prior the COVID-19 Pandemic, said a press release on Wednesday.

The spirit of donating to save lives is not a novel concept, rather it is something that has permeated across eras, nations and cultures, through time, space and custom. NUST Community Services Club (NCSC) reckons for itself a place in that spirit, it added.

The pandemic has ascended towards us a morose reminder of the need to stick together for the sake of the world around us, yet it has itself threatened the execution of important charitable events that allow us to help each other.

Despite having been taken hostage by one dangerous virus, the other now-silenced emergencies that have always faced us still rage in the background, it said.

Indeed, in order to ensure the health of all those involved and society as a whole, BDD'21 will, instead of the usual camp tent drawing an enthusiastic crowd, feature a mobile methodology.

## Polio refusal cases covered

## MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

RAWALPINDI: In-charge Anti-polio drive Muhammad Islam Wednesday said that polio refusal and unattended cases have been covered whose parents had refused to administer drops to their children during five day-anti polio drive concluded on April 2.

Islam told media, that to end doubts and convincing parents with the help of local community leaders, a few number of unattended and refusal cases had been covered in all tehsils of the district. He informed that drive was declared of good quality by third party evaluation monitoring teams for achieving 100% target to administer drops over 718,000 children below five years of age. He told that 2964 polio teams, 240 health centers, 307 fixed centers, allied hospitals, and tehsil headquarter hospitals participated in the drive to complete the task of immunization.

## 1453 vehicles issued tickets for over-speeding

## SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) issued 1453 challan slips for over-speeding and imposed fines amounting to over Rs 5, 58,500 on the rules violators.

According to In-charge Camera Squad Iftikhar Hussain, CTP on the directives of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Rai Mazhar Iqbal were checking over-speeding on various roads of the district and taking action in accordance with the law against the violators.

He informed that the squad conducted operations to check speeding through speed cameras on main roads particularly old Airport Road, New Airport Road and in other sectors including Taxila, Kalar Syedan and Cantt areas.

The CTO said that CTP had formed a special camera squad to check over-speeding on various roads and the step had helped controlling fatal road accidents considerably in the district. The squad was directed to take strict action against the violators without any discrimination, he added.

He said, CTP were making all out efforts to control over-speeding and violation of traffic rules aimed at minimizing road traffic accidents. The CTO said, the camera squad had been directed to take strict action in accordance with the law against speeding and wrong overtaking. The CTP Education Squad was also making efforts to create awareness among road users about the road safety laws.

## Russian FM in Pakistan

**D**UE to FM Qureshi's interaction on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in 2019 and the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) meeting in 2020, Russian Federation's Foreign Minister (FM) Mr Sergey Lavrov has paid an official visit to Pakistan. The importance of Mr Lavrov's visit to Pakistan can be gauged from the coverage it is receiving in the media of our eastern neighbour. In the past few years, engagements between Islamabad and Moscow witnessed a thaw owing to rapidly changing geostrategic realities. The two sides will be holding delegation-level talks to review the bilateral relationship.

The two FMs will share ideas on regional and international issues, as the press release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) states. The new developments in Afghanistan reveal that western influence in the region is waning. China and Russia, along with Pakistan, have emerged as the real brokers of any deal that will ensure peace and stability not only for Afghanistan but also for the whole Eurasian region. The dawn of this new era—which both China and Russia want—primarily depends on peace in Afghanistan without any foreign presence.

As the integration of Europe and Asia will change the fate of both Russia and China, Pakistan will also be affected by the newly emerging geopolitical landscape. After all, Islamabad stands to be in the centre of those rare moments in history when the political and economic axis of the world is shifting. Given all these developments, Islamabad and Moscow need to collaborate in all regional initiatives to reap the dividends. All regional cooperative efforts can benefit immensely if Russia becomes a party to them. Therefore, Pakistan needs to sign some tangible memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with Russia regarding its participation in development and infrastructural projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (TAPI) pipeline.

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## Private vaccinations

**W**ITH Sputnik V being distributed amongst major hospitals, labs and healthcare facilities, private vaccinations have finally opened up for the people of Pakistan. As those who can afford the price tag that the antidote comes with rush to register themselves for their doses, more places open up in the public vaccination drive for the poorer sections of society—fortunately so. Already, the government decided to expand the drive by administering doses to those above 80 in their respective homes, opening spots for people aged 50 and above as well as catering to all frontline workers that are at maximum risks.

With major players administering private doses as well, there is no doubt that we will be able to cater to a larger fraction of the public. Private vaccines dispensed through hospitals in Karachi have sold out and, with just the average wait time of four to eight hours, it seems as though Lahore is following suit. Such robust enthusiasm to get vaccinated must be encouraged by the government, especially since more slots will open up for high-risk individuals who are barely able to afford taking precautionary measures as well. While the vaccination campaign seems to be looking up, there are still certain reforms that must be introduced to ensure that we remain ahead of any future problems. We have a monumental task ahead of us—vaccinating over 224 million citizens—and for that, a systematic process of data collection is vital to track progress. Just as private tests were accompanied by data gathering to keep account of the transmission rates, vaccination doses should also be tracked—for public and private sectors—so that we have an accurate picture of where we stand. This will help us determine the accuracy of the vaccination drive and allow for more informed policy decisions to be made with regards to the rate of its expansion. The goal must remain in sight and all steps must accompany effective recording of data for the purposes of accountability and determining whether the responsibility to restrain the pandemic is being fulfilled.

## Japan in spring

Dr Nusrat Majeed



This sense of appreciating nature —petals falling on the ground along with change in people's lives, the delightfulness and gentle excitement of it all—is closely connected with the perishing of the moment. We are startled into thoughts on the brevity of life. This is a deep philosophy of the Japanese culture which is reserved, humble and formal.

**G**LOOMY lockdown in beautiful spring makes me nostalgic about my stay in Japan and the lovely springs that I enjoyed in different parts of the country. The first spring was experienced during my cardiology training in Tokushima university. What took me there is a frequently asked question. It dates back to my studies in Mc Master's university in Canada and then Mayo clinic Minnesota in the US, where I had gone for my post graduate training, after graduating from King Edwards medical college in Lahore.

At both these prestigious universities I was thoroughly impressed by original work and the research by the Japanese cardiologists, so I decided to go to Japan to have firsthand experience. It was not easy but I was bent upon visiting Japan and finally landed at Tokushima airport on the 20th of March 1992. I was greeted very warmly by the Dean and the professorial staff of cardiology department.

It was a new world all together, homogeneity of society, very rich culture and above all THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS were out of this world. My university was in Shikoku [four countries] prefecture. It is famous for its towering mountains in the middle of island and has its share of natural marvels and attractions not to be missed. Like our twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Tokushima too has a twin city Naruto, a place famous for Whirlpools, as a matter of fact it is among the world's top three whirlpools. In between sky and the whirlpools is Naruto bridge, a beautiful piece of architecture, is simply awe inspiring.

Shikoku's history can be traced back all the way back to the era, when Buddhism was first introduced to Japan from China. This prefecture is full of ancient, historical temples and shrines and has breath taking scenery [only in Tokushima there are 86 temples and shrines].

Now coming back to Spring —In Japan it is synonymous with Sakura [cherry blossom] and Hanami, it literally translates to flower [hana] viewing [mi] It is much more than just admiring flowers, though it



is a celebration of newness but it is also transience. Hanami and sakura are a major cultural phenomenon throughout the country and heralds the arrival of spring. Boughs upon boughs of cherry blossoms decorate the sky in pale pink, their delicate silhouette no larger than a thumb. Beneath this sea of flowers is the huge sea of plastic mats. The delicate cherry blossom trees bloom and from the very first pop of colour to the last fallen petals, the people celebrate Hanami.

The full bloom of cherry blossoms happen from late March to Early April. It is also a season of many changes in Japan including graduations and entrance ceremonies to school, so there are many reasons to celebrate. Academic and fiscal year also starts from 1st April.

This fleeting beauty of Japan is renowned all over the world. On the 3rd day of my arrival, my department planned a Hanami trip at Mount BIZAN, it is called so because it is shaped like an eye brow.

It was an unforgettable experience. People from all walks of life including women, children and the elderly come out in these beautiful gardens.

They eat and drink while basking under the flowers. Appreciation of nature aside, HANAMI is where everyone from salary man to tourists can meet and greet, with the sole purpose of having good time. It is an experience so uniquely Japanese. For centuries sakura has been an integral part of culture from music and performing arts to handicrafts and cuisine.

This sense of appreciating nature —petals falling on the ground along with change in people's lives, the delightfulness and gentle excitement of it all—is closely connected with the perishing of the moment. We are startled into thoughts on the brevity of life. This is a deep philosophy of the Japanese culture which is reserved, humble and formal.

## Mental well-being and social cohesion

Hani Zarbaft Ali



There is evidence to suggest that this concept of community-level social cohesion is useful in investigating the determinants of general health status and common mental health disorders (CMD), social portability mirrors how much individuals can change their situation in the public arena and lead a progressive life, mentally and physically. Studies suggest that social cohesion had a protective role on the risk of experiencing high depressive symptomatology

**T**HE association between Mental well-being and social cohesion are recognized as the key elements in the concoction of a healthy lifestyle. Mental health as characterized by the World Health Organization (WHO) is a state of well-being permitting individuals to understand their own abilities, to learn and have a positive sense of identity, to control their contemplations and emotions, to adapt to the ordinary stresses of life, to work profitably and productively, to have a satisfying public activity and extending full cooperation to the community. Emotional wellness accordingly surpasses the shortfall of mental issues or incapacities. All things considered, it is a powerful capacity to discover a harmony between all parts of life.

In accordance with the WHO, mental health analysts progressively recognize that the shortfall of dysfunctional behavior doesn't really suggest a condition of a healthy mind. There is so much pain in the world, and most of these people keep their secret, rolling through agonizing lives in invisible wheelchairs, dressed in invisible body casts. Even though the subject under examination and its related predicaments is not given enough consideration and is generally described as a "shortcoming of character", its fundamental significance can't be denied. Psychological well-being is impacted by numerous variables, including regular practices that can be modified by people. Emotional and psycho-social wellness can be achieved by improving ordinary wellbeing practices that are empowering, destigmatizing, and can have a huge effect at populace level requiring little to no effort. Individuals manifesting adequate rest, physical activity, work, supportive family, social circle, and a healthy eating regimen (sufficient fruit/vegetable intake) foster a healthier lifestyle resulting in lower emotional disturbances, stress and higher self-esteem; while several risk factors have been identified to cause dramatic cognitive decline including high liquor utilization, smoking, obesity, peer pressure, conflicting social environment leading to higher mental pain, stress, and lower self-confidence. The pertinence of lifestyle on mental health as indicated by the WHO fact sheet shows huge relationship to psychological well-being.

The relationship among MHP (Mental Health Problems) and irregularities of circadian rhythms is reported, particularly for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, delirium, and a lack of concentration. Interruptions of the circadian cycle may trigger or aggravate manic episodes. There is proof that the circadian framework does likewise impacts one's ability for disposition guideline. Moreover, a sporadic social cadence, which incorporates social contacts, are additionally connected with state of mind problems. In one of the primary populace based examinations researching social inconsistency and emotional wellness, unpredictable social rhythm

was related with more MHP and lower life fulfillment. This finding is reproduced diversely by cross cultures. Corpulence, which depicts extreme overweight with a BMI higher than 30 is related with more terrible MHP, particularly with self-announced manifestations of gloom, depression and stress.

The idea of social cohesion, albeit complex, typifies a theoretical supporting that is transforming into a huge savvy contraption of various human practices experienced by individuals in certain social settings. Social association, alongside its components, is multidimensional as explained by the assortment of available designs and approaches used to examine it. Existing literature describes social cohesion in a startling manner; the capacity of societies, not merely groups or networks, to manage collective action and solve problems. It is the glue that holds the society together.

The first definition of social cohesion as a policy tool (as opposed to academic concept) was suggested by "Judith Maxwell": "Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community." The OECD describes a socially cohesive society as the one that pursues the prosperity of every one of its individuals, battles prohibition and underestimation, makes a feeling of having a place, advances trust, and offers its individuals the chance of upward friendly mobility.

It is adversely identified with pay imbalance; social capital is a blend of trust and metro commitment; social capital has been associated with two components, structural and cognitive. Structural refers to associational links and activity within society, such as civic engagement or 'what people do'. Cognitive refers to people's perceptions of their social relationships, such as interpersonal trust, sharing and reciprocity, or 'what people feel', and is a measurable indicator of social co-

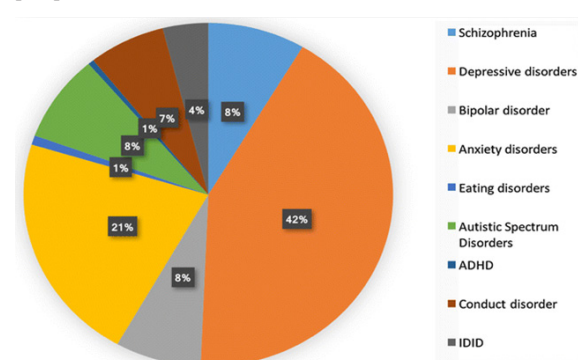
hesion which is conceptualized as a collective community-level characteristic measured by the level of trust, norms of reciprocity and the formation of strong social bonds within the local social structure.

There is evidence to suggest that this concept of community-level social cohesion is useful in investigating the determinants of general health status and common mental health disorders (CMD), social portability mirrors how much individuals can change their situation in the public arena and lead a progressive life, mentally and physically. Studies suggest that social cohesion had a protective role on the risk of experiencing high depressive symptomatology.

Social cohesion has been seen both an objective, as well as a process by which to improve the health of the public. It has been referenced as a means of improving health in numerous policies. However, recent evidence suggests the need for social cohesion to be studied at a local level, as the function of social cohesion appears to vary by the characteristics of the community being studied. Among a relatively homogeneous cohort, the reported level of social cohesion was found to be significantly associated with higher mental wellbeing. It may ensure against common mental health issues by discouraging deleterious health behaviors, through the regulation of social norms and security against daily stressors. Given the current interest in resource-based approaches to support health and well-being, it is proposed that examinations to investigate the relations involving social cohesion are required before mediations which endeavor to adjust social cohesion to improve wellbeing are created.

It is therefore stated that Positive Mental Health is necessary to human wellbeing and prosperity. Mental health and its associated markers areas yet not addressed in the wellbeing framework in Pakistan. A critical need exists for an acknowledgment from both public and private areas for improving mental health plan and services in the country. Government should complete social procedures that ought to be basic, impartial, and practical, just as having the option to address the issues of the standard necessities. It is critical that interventions are made to review about existing strategies with a focus on setting sustainable priorities in the field of mental health, particularly in policymaking, mindfulness among public, and the utilization of media to minimize social stigma. Such actions throughout would give freedom to both improving population mental health and diminishing perils of those psychological issues that are associated with social inequalities.

— The writer is a 3rd year Medical student, an aspiring Doctor, and a member of Students Research Society. Her research interests revolve around Interventional Medicine and Public Health.



## Briefs

## Players must learn from Babar: Zaheer Abbas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Asian Bradman Zaheer Abbas has high hopes from Pakistani Skipper Babar Azam to become a 'Great' player saying the players in the team must learn the skills and techniques from the prolific batsman. "Babar is a consistent scorer. Other players get relaxed after scoring big runs and think we have got the full series and the other by one good performance.

We will become the best team of the world, the day we will get consistent and will stop thinking like this," he said in a video on YouTube channel 'Cricket Baaz'.

The former great, who held the record for scoring the most runs by any batsman in a four match bilateral ODI series (346 runs) from 1982 to 2015, said Babar's consistency shows that he was a big player. "He can score even big if he plays full 50 overs, if he can do a 100 he can also score 200s and more.

The bowler also fears and respects the batsman who has scored 200s. Other players should learn from him," he said.

## Pollock criticises De Kock 'deception'

DNA

CENTURION (SOUTH AFRICA): Former South African captain Shaun Pollock on Wednesday said he believed South African wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock was guilty of deception in the run-out of Pakistan batsman Fakhar Zaman during the second one-international in Johannesburg on Sunday. But Pollock said he believed De Kock was not aware of a law which outlaws wilful attempts to "distract, deceive or obstruct" a batsman.

Speaking in his role as a commentator for SuperSport television in the build-up to the third and final match in Centurion, Pollock said he believed the incident should have been sent to the third umpire for a ruling. It happened off the first ball of the final over, which started with Pakistan needing 31 to win. Fakhar hit the ball to long-off and was run-out when he slowed down before completing a second run, with De Kock seemingly indicating that a throw from Aiden Markram should be aimed at the bowler's end.

## Iran calls for sustainable co-op with Kazakhstan

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Foreign Minister of Iran Mohammad Javad Zarif stressed the need to find ways for lasting cooperation with Kazakhstan, which he described as a friendly Caspian Sea neighbor. In a meeting with President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, held in Nur-Sultan on Wednesday, the Iranian foreign minister called for efforts to find ways for sustainable cooperation with Kazakhstan in order to maintain and enhance the bilateral relations.

Describing Kazakhstan as a friendly neighbor of Iran in the Caspian Sea region, Zarif highlighted the importance of closeness of the views of the two states on regional and international issues.

For his part, the Kazakh president described Iran as a "key partner" in the region, emphasizing the necessity for the promotion of political and economic cooperation with the Islamic Republic. The two officials also discussed the developments concerning the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the peace process in Afghanistan, the Astana Process for Syria peace, and the Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The senior Iranian diplomat is visiting Kazakhstan in a tour of Central Asia that took him earlier to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.



MINSK: Pakistan ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan posing for a group photo along with Rector of the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts, Dr. Natalya Karchevskaya and children participating cultural show. – DNA

## 2-week Pakistan cultural show begins in Belarus

The Ambassador along with the Rector of the University also inaugurated the Art/Photographic Exhibition at University premises displaying Pakistani paintings, primarily by famous Pakistani Artist Jimmy Engineer

DNA

MINSK: Fifteen-day Pakistani cultural show titled "Pakistan Cultural Weeks" begins in Minsk, Belarus, organised jointly by Pakistan Embassy there and Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts. The inaugural ceremony held at University campus was participated by one hundred faculty members and students of the university. The campus has enrollment of at least 4000 students, said news release received here on Wednesday.

The ceremony commenced with the welcome remarks by Rector of the University, Dr. Natalya Karchevskaya. Pakistan's Ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan made a comprehensive presentation on Pakistan's rich art and cultural heritage developed over several civilizations including that of Mehergarh, Indus Valley, Hara-



ppa and Gandhara. The diversity of art and culture, contemporary art scene and tourism potential of Pakistan were also extensively covered during the event. It said besides a short video documentary on Pakistan, the inaugu-



ral ceremony also comprised two dance performances—by Tamazur Dance School on Pakistani music wearing traditional costumes and a Belarusian dance performance by the university students. The Ambassador along with the

Hussain. The exhibition will continue for the next two weeks at the campus. At the end, a reception was also held for the participants, where selected items from Pakistani nationalistic attractions by Hamid

## 3rd ODI: Pak win by 28 runs, clinch series 2-1



CENTURION: Pakistan defeated a weakened South Africa by 28 runs in the third and final ODI at Centurion on Wednesday, clinching the series 2-1. Set a 321-run target by Pakistan, South Africa, who were without several of their IPL-bound regulars, folded for 292. After winning the toss, the hosts invited Pakistan to bat first. The tourists got a great start from their openers, with Fakhar Zaman continuing where he had left in the last match, scoring another century - this time a 101-run knock. His partner Imam-ul-Haq also chipped in with a 57. At one point, Pakistan were 206-1, with Fakhar and Babar Azam at the crease, and targeting a score around 350. But a batting collapse saw them lose the next five wickets for just 51 runs and at one point even 300 seemed difficult. Hassan Ali (32 off 11) and Babar's blitzkrieg in the final few overs erased that dip as Pakistani finished 320-7. In the run chase, South Africa were always behind, always playing catch up. They got a trio of half-centuries from Janneman Malan (70), Kyle Verreynne (62) and Andile Phehlukwayo (54) but never had the innings under control. Mohammad Nawaz was the pick of the bowlers as this three-for featured all specialist batsmen, although Shaheen Afridi also got three and Haris Rauf (2) did reasonably well too and was inexpensive for a change. The home side decided to play without its six key players; five including Quinton de Kock, David Miller, Kagiso Rabada, Anrich Nortje and Lungi Ngidi, who left the national squad to participate in the Indian Premier League while Rassie van der Dussen has been ruled out due to injury. Four major changes were made in Pakistan's squad as well with Sarfaraz Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz, Usman Qadir and Hasan Ali coming in for Danish Aziz, Asif Ali, Shadab Khan and Mohammad Hasnain. – DNA

## Economic Diplomacy vital: Amb. Janjua

DNA

BELGIUM: The Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union, Zaheer A. Janjua held a virtual meeting with CEO of Pakistan Textile Council, Ms Saleha Asif, today. The meeting focused on enhancing Pak-EU trading ties. Underscoring the importance of increasing Pakistan's economic outreach with Europe, Ambassador Janjua stated that Economic

to Pakistan have increased by 44 percent, since inception of the GSP Plus in 2014. Commenting on the potential opportunities created by the preferential market access, Ambassador Janjua emphasized on diversification and value addition of Pakistani exports to the EU. Highlighting the government's continued efforts to support the export sector of Pakistan, Ambassador Janjua assured close cooperation and support for Pakistani exporters. He also highlighted government's



Diplomacy was the Key to consolidate and expand Pakistan's economic outreach in Europe. He noted that the GSP Plus Scheme had played a vital role in enhancing bilateral trade between Pakistan and the EU. Ambassador Janjua highlighted that GSP Plus has been mutually beneficial for Pakistan and the EU. Pakistan's exports to the EU have witnessed a growth of 65 percent and the EU's exports

to attract foreign direct investment and observed that in the last two years Pakistan had climbed 39 positions in the 'Ease of Doing Business' ranking. Ms. Saleha Asif appreciated the efforts of the Embassy in promoting trading relations between Pakistan and Europe. She also apprised the Ambassador about the plans of PTC for enhancing textile exports through R&D and its efforts to secure greater market access in the European block.

## FIFA suspends PFF over third party interference

This suspension will only be lifted once FIFA has received confirmation from the normalisation committee of the PFF that the PFF's premises, accounts, administration and communication channels are again under its full control and it can continue to carry out its mandate without further hindrance

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Apr 07 (APP): The Bureau of the FIFA Council on Wednesday suspended the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) with immediate effect due to third-party interference, which constitutes a serious violation of the FIFA Statutes. This situation was prompted by the recent hostile takeover of

the PFF headquarters in Lahore by a group of protestors and an alleged decision by certain individuals to remove the FIFA-appointed normalisation committee of the PFF led by Haroon Malik and to hand over the leadership of the PFF to Syed Ashfaq Hussain Shah, the world game governing body said in a statement. Earlier, FIFA had issued a letter warning

that, should the illegitimate occupation of the PFF headquarters not be lifted and the office-bearers recognised by FIFA not be permitted free access to the building to carry out their mandate, the matter would be immediately submit-

ted to the Bureau of the Council for decision. As the situation remains unchanged, the suspension will only be lifted once FIFA has received confirmation from the normalisation committee of the PFF that the PFF's premises, accounts, administration and communication channels are again under its full control and it can

continue to carry out its mandate without further hindrance. The Bureau of the FIFA Council also decided to suspend the Chadian Football Association (FTFA) with immediate effect due to government interference. The suspension was prompted by the recent decisions of Chadian government authorities to permanently withdraw the powers delegated to the FTFA,

establish a national committee for the temporary management of football and seize control of the FTFA's premises. The suspension will be lifted once the relevant government decisions have been repealed and the FTFA and its management, led by President Mocrar Mahamoud Hamid, have confirmed to FIFA that the FTFA premises are again under its control.



Bureau of the Council has decided to suspend the PFF. This suspen-

communication channels are again under its full control and it can

## ICC readies pandemic backup plan for T20 WC

DNA

NEW DELHI: Cricket's governing body has a plan B in case the coronavirus pandemic prevents India from staging the Twenty20 World Cup this year, but is still months from a final decision, its interim chief Geoff Allardice said Wednesday. India is scheduled to hold the World Cup in October and November but a new surge in coronavirus cases has prompted health concerns. "We are certainly proceeding on the assumption that the event is going ahead as planned," Allardice told reporters at the International Cricket Council (ICC) headquarters in Dubai. "Cricket is being played in a number of countries around the world and we are taking the lessons from all of those," he added.

Allardice, who took temporary charge of the ICC after disciplinary proceedings were started against Manu Sawhney, said the governing body had a World Cup backup ready if needed.

## Imran raises Kashmir...

From Page 01

The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the steady growth in bilateral ties, including deepening cooperation in trade, energy, security and defence. Enhanced bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, industrial modernization, railways and aviation was discussed. It was agreed that the Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC), due to meet in Moscow later this year, would closely pursue specific proposals and projects in that context.

Views were also exchanged on the health and economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister congratulated Russia on its development of SputnikV Vaccine and underscored Pakistan's procurement plans in that regard. In the regional context, the Prime Minister stressed the importance of a negotiated political settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan. Pakistan appreciated Russia's efforts in promoting the Afghan peace process including through the hosting of the recent meeting of Extended Troika in Moscow. With reference to the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), the Prime Minister shared Pakistan's perspective on issues of peace and security in South Asia, including the need for peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Views were also exchanged on the situation in West Asia, the Gulf, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region. The Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to President Putin to visit Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

## Russia offers military support

From Page 01

The Russian foreign minister expressed satisfaction over the growth of bilateral trade by 46 percent and expressed readiness to "further strengthen economic relations". He mentioned that substantive growth of bilateral trade was mainly due to trade of over 200 million wheat to Pakistan and added, "We want to make this increase sustainable and diversify our trade". He said Pak-Russia Intergovernmental Commission to meet in Moscow the current year would be a key step in defining the sphere of cooperation in multiple areas.

On nuclear energy, he said Russia's ROSATOM and Pakistan's Nuclear Energy Commission were in touch for cooperation for use of technology for medicine and industry. Regarding security cooperation, Lavrov said Russia was ready to "strengthen Pakistan's anti-terrorist capacity including supply of special equipment". "This serves in the interest of all States of the region," he said, adding an agreement was today reached on conducting more joint military exercises including the Arabian Monsoon maritime drill. Since Pakistan's accession to Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) three years ago, he said, the country was actively pursuing its anti-terrorist strategy.

## Briefs

## Turkey jails 22 former soldiers for life

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: A Turkish court on Wednesday sentenced 22 former soldiers to life in jail for their roles in a failed 2016 bid to remove President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In its latest mass trial of suspects whose failure to depose Erdogan was followed by a sweeping political crackdown and arrests, an Ankara court investigated the role of 497 former soldiers, including members of the presidential guard. The putsch attempt included a raid on Turkey's main state television broadcaster, whose newscaster was forced to read out a statement from the military leaders. One of the president's lawyers provided AFP news agency with a document showing the judge jailing 22 former ranking military personnel for life. These included former lieutenant colonel Umit Gencer, who was convicted of "violating the constitutional order" by making TRT television read out a "coup declaration". The court also handed ex-major Fedakar Akca an aggravated life sentence for leading a team from the regiment to the general staff headquarters on the night, state news agency Anadolu reported.

## Myanmar military may extend emergency

## FOREIGN DESK

YANGON: Since launching their February 1 military coup, Myanmar's generals have largely stayed out of the limelight, secluded in the country's ghost town capital of Naypyidaw. In both a figurative and literal echo chamber that are the cavernous halls of the now-empty parliament, aided by a surplus of yes-men, the generals have shut out the rest of the country as they justify deadly crackdowns suppressing anti-coup protests. Until now, reporters from outside Myanmar have also been strictly kept out. But in an unexpected move apparently intended to showcase the military's control of an increasingly desperate situation, a Southeast Asia Globe journalist, reporting on behalf of Al Jazeera, was invited along with CNN on a week-long tour of Yangon and Naypyidaw that ended on April 6. The tour, organised by controversial military PR man Ari Ben-Menashe, provided insight into the outlook and workings of a military government disconnected from the majority of people across the country.

## N. Korea facing 'worst situation': Kim

## WEB DESK

PYONGYANG: Kim Jong Un says North Korea is facing its "worst-ever situation" and called on "grassroots" members of the ruling Workers' Party to be more proactive and responsible in carrying out the country's new five-year economic plan. The comments, reported by state media on Wednesday, came as experts warn Kim is facing perhaps his toughest moment as he approaches a decade in rule, with North Korea's coronavirus lockdown unleashing further shock on its sanctions-battered economy. North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim made the comments during an opening speech at a meeting of the Workers' Party's cell secretaries on Tuesday. "Improving the people's living standards ... even in the worst-ever situation in which we have to overcome unprecedentedly numerous challenges depends on the role played by the cells, the grassroots organisations of the party," Kim was quoted as saying. He urged members to carry out the decisions made at a party congress in January, where he announced a new five-year plan and showed unusual candour by acknowledging that his plans to improve the economy were not succeeding.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan in a group photo with Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar, Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination Fehmida Mirza, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan, Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah, Federal Minister for Energy Omar Ayub and Chief Minister Balochistan Jam Kamal. – DNA

## 'Turkey determined to develop ties around globe'

Erdogan added that Turkey continues to "make every effort for our neighbor Syria to attain a climate of peace, trust, and stability based on territorial integrity and national unity"

## DNA

ANKARA: Turkey is determined to develop relations with countries around the globe on the basis of rights and justice, the nation's president said on Wednesday. "Especially in places we have close relations with, such as the European Union, the United States of America, Russia, Iran, Central Asian countries, and the Arab world, we are determined to develop our relations with everyone on the basis of rights and justice," Recep Tayyip Erdogan told his Justice and Development (AK) Party's parliamentary group in the capital Ankara. Erdogan reiterated that over the past two decades the number of Turkey's foreign missions worldwide surged significantly, rising from 163 in 2002 to 251 this year. "We are actively working to find a

permanent solution in every crisis region from Syria to Libya, from the Eastern Mediterranean to Aegean, from Cyprus to [Nagorno] Karabakh," he said. Erdogan added that Turkey continues to "make every effort for our neighbor Syria to attain a climate of peace, trust, and stability based on territorial integrity and national unity." Syria has been ravaged by a civil war since early 2011 when the Assad regime cracked down on pro-democracy protesters. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and more than 10 million displaced, according to UN estimates. Turkey has long been a major player in peace initiatives, including the Astana process and cease-fire efforts with Russia. Turkey also hosts over 3.6 million Syrian refugees, more than any country in the world. In an update on the planned Canal



Istanbul, Erdogan said they have largely completed their preparation for the mega-project, which he called "the largest and most strategic infrastructure project in our country." "The fact that 90% of international trade is carried out by sea and that our straits are one of the most important sea trade routes raises the importance of the Canal Istanbul

project," he said. Tenders for the Canal Istanbul project will soon start, and "we are laying the foundations this summer," he added. "We are starting Canal Istanbul, we will do it, and it will be in our nation's service," he said. The construction of Canal Istanbul, with a daily passage capacity of 185 vessels, is expected to be completed in 2025-2026. The planned 45-kilometer (28-mile) canal will be built west of the city center on the European side of the Istanbul province. The mega-project, which aims to stem risks posed by vessels carrying dangerous materials through the Bosphorus Strait, was approved by the country's Environment and Urbanization Ministry. Erdogan also criticized the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) over its links to Sunday's controversial statement by

some retired admirals. "Let me say this very clearly: The CHP itself is at the center of these retired admirals," he said. Erdogan accused the CHP of trying to sow chaos "by breaking the hope of our nation, especially our youth." "We see this malignant mentality, which sees its power in calamity for the country and nation, as being as dangerous as terrorists and coup plotters," he said. After an online statement by over 100 ex-admirals this Sunday warning against calling into question the 1936 Montreux Convention, top Turkish prosecutors launched a probe. The controversial statement, which warned that Turkey could face "dangerous ... events, risks, and threats to its survival, something which we know from our history," was seen by many observers as hinting at a coup.

## Chinese delegation discusses collaboration with UVAS

## DNA

LAHORE: An eight-member Chinese business delegation led by Royal Group China President Mr Chen Yiyivisit the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore on Wednesday and discussed the possibilities of collaboration in livestock sector, especially import of buffalo semen and embryos and setting of semen and embryo labs in Punjab. Minister for Livestock and Dairy Development Punjab Sardar Husnain Bahadur Dareshak chaired the meeting while UVAS Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmad, Vice-Chancellor University of Education Prof Dr Talat Naseer Pasha, UVAS Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Masood Rabbani and officers from Livestock Department were present. Other members of the Chinese delegation were Royal Group Vice-President Ms Teng Cuijing, GM Cattle Company Royal Group Mr Li Shijiang, Investment Directors of China Orient Cap-

ital Mr Zhang Chong and Liu Zhiyuan and Chairman Guanxi Bushan Co Xiao Ziqi. The Chinese delegation desired collaboration with the UVAS in processing of buffalo milk products, establishment of joint semen and embryo labs in both Pakistan and China and exchange of scientists. Speaking on the occasion, the livestock minister said

that the Punjab government welcomes the Chinese investors in Punjab and help them in import of buffalo semen, embryos and other dairy products. He said that Pakistan being an agricultural country is open to working with China for development of livestock and agriculture sectors. Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Nasim Ahmad briefed the

delegation on UVAS academic and research projects and national and international collaborations. He said that the university is working very closely with industry and is keen to play a facilitative and catalyst role in national and international collaborations for the establishment of labs, training and exchange of human resource and other related areas.



## Tajikistan, Belarus and Afghanistan expand trade co-op

## DNA

DUSHANBE: Trade between Tajikistan and Belarus has increased twofold between 2019 and 2020. This was noted yesterday at the forum of business circles of Tajikistan, Belarus and Afghanistan which took place in Dushanbe. Over 200 people, including heads of state bodies, enterprises, organizations, entrepreneurs, business circles of Tajikistan, Belarus, and Afghanistan were in attendance. The Chairman of the State Committee for Investments and State Property Management of Tajikistan Sadi Kodirzoda, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Belarus Vladimir Ulakhovich, Minister of Agriculture of Tajikistan Sulaimon Ziyozoda, Minister of Agriculture and Food of Belarus Ivan Krupko, Member of the Board of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Afghanistan Khan John Alkozai, and other representatives of business circles

participated in the forum. Cooperation between the three states has the potential to expand even further as there are vast untapped opportunities, noted the participants. Trade and economic opportunities of all three countries in various fields were presented, and the business and commercial circles of Tajikistan, Belarus and Afghanistan were informed about the business and investment climate, investment opportunities in tourism, industry and agriculture, food, pharmaceuticals, and other sectors. Also, a bilateral meeting of entrepreneurs of the three states was held in the B2B format, as a result of which new documents were signed on cooperation in the field of agriculture, agricultural production, agro-industrial, and pharmaceutical equipment. Belarusian goods and products under the name Made in Belarus were showcased as part of the forum, with the inclusion of 40 enterprises and manufacturing companies of Belarus.

## Iranian ship attacked in the Red Sea

## FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: An Iranian cargo ship believed to be a base for the paramilitary Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and anchored for years in the Red Sea off Yemen has been attacked. Iran's foreign ministry on Wednesday confirmed the attack, saying the MV Saviz was hit with an unknown explosion that caused "minor damage" around 6am local time in the Red Sea on Tuesday, close to the shores of Djibouti.

Foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said the Saviz is a non-military vessel formally registered with the International Maritime Organisation that acts as Iran's "logistic station" in the Red Sea, providing anti-piracy services. "Fortunately no fatalities were incurred due to the incident, and technical evaluations on how the incident occurred and its origins are under way," he said. The attack came as Iran and world powers sat down in Vienna for the first talks about the US potentially rejoining Tehran's tattered nuclear deal, showing that challenges ahead do not rest merely in those negotiations.

## Ukraine virus deaths hit new record

## FOREIGN DESK

KIEV: Ukraine on Wednesday registered another record number of coronavirus deaths and hospitalisations, with officials warning the situation is "critical". The government on Wednesday reported 481 deaths in the previous day and 5,587 people taken to hospital, both the highest figures recorded since the start of the pandemic. Coronavirus infections and deaths have been rising steadily in Ukraine for months, as the ex-Soviet country's ageing healthcare system struggles to cope with the contagion. "It is no exaggeration to describe the situation as critical," the mayor of the capital Kiev, Vitali Klitschko, said at a briefing. "If we do not stop the rapid spread of the disease in the nearest future, the capital's medical system will not hold," Klitschko said, adding that hospitals would run out of beds "very soon". Kiev tightened coronavirus restrictions on Monday, closing kindergartens and primary schools and introducing travel restrictions. Since the start of the pandemic the country of 40 million has recorded more than 1.7 million infections and more than 35,000 deaths. Its vaccination campaign has struggled with a lack of supplies, with only 500,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine and 215,000 doses of China's CoronaVac jab so far delivered.

## Xi, Merkel discuss bilateral, ties

## FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping on Wednesday spoke to German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the two discussed bilateral as well as regional ties, state-run media said. Xi asked Germany and the EU "to make joint efforts with China to protect and promote the healthy and stable development of their cooperation, so as to bring more certainty to the volatile world," according to the Global Times newspaper. "China's development is an opportunity for the EU." The Chinese president hoped that the EU can "make a correct, independent judgment to achieve strategic independence." The development comes days after the EU, UK, US, and Canada as a coordinated effort imposed sanctions on Chinese officials over its alleged abuse of the Uyghur Muslim minority. China has been accused of discrimination against Uyghurs in its northwestern Xinjiang autonomous region. Right groups say it has held up to a million Uyghurs in detention centers, which the state calls "re-education camps." On Jan. 19, on his last full day in office, then-US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused China of committing genocide against the minority group.

## Iran-China strategic partnership to benefit Pakistan

The expert went on to say while Chinese-Iranian economic relations will continue to be dominated by the energy sphere, their inevitable diversification into other domains will lead to more bilateral trade being conducted across CPEC

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: A Russian based American political analyst says Iranian-Chinese Strategic Partnership is a game-changer which is equally beneficial for Pakistan adding the country can enhance its regional cooperation through economic ties. Andrew Korybko in an article published in Pakistani media said that Beijing plans to make investment upwards of \$400 billion into the Islamic Republic's economy over a 25-year period, with a specific emphasis on energy and infrastructure. He said the deal would ensure long-term stability for Iran against American sanctions and increased US-led regional military pressure from its GCC and "Israeli" rivals.

He said that it is in Islamabad's interests not only to see to it that the larger neighborhood remains stable, but also to enhance its regional connectivity. "Considering the fact that Pakistan hosts the Belt & Road Initiative's (BRI) flagship of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), it's only natural that this mega-project expands westward into Iran as a result of China's reportedly promised investments there," said the political analyst. Andrew Korybko added that this would advance the regional integration vision that I've previously described as W-CPEC+, with the "W" referring to CPEC's western expansion, in this case overlaid through Iran en route to Azerbaijan, Turkey, and eventually further afield to Russia and the EU via those two pivotal transit states

respectively. The expert went on to say while Chinese-Iranian economic relations will continue to be dominated by the energy sphere, their inevitable diversification into other domains will lead to more bilateral trade being conducted across CPEC. Pakistani entrepreneurs can easily take advantage of this to enhance their own trade ties with both countries. "Keeping the ambitious W-CPEC+ vision in mind, one can also begin to talk about its long-term geopolitical dimensions," he said. Andrew Korybko in the article said the Iranian-Chinese deal would immensely benefit Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and Turkey's relevant interests if their relations with Iran further improved as well considering the fact that the Islamic Republic provides the most logical means for more closely in-

tegrating the western (Azerbaijan, Turkey) and eastern (Pakistan) halves of this emerging bloc. "W-CPEC+ is the best opportunity for bringing this about, which could eventually result in the emergence of a broader regional integration network comprised of all four countries that could tentatively be described as TIPA after their initials," said the expert. He added the Chinese-facilitated rise of TIPA via W-CPEC+ could profoundly impact transregional geopolitics by creating a belt of powerful and economically stable Muslim-majority states straddling the frontier of West and Central Asia. "The Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) that those four Muslim-majority states participate in could also become more significant, especially if China is

bestowed the honour of observer status," he viewed. Andrew Korybko said the economic and geopolitical dimensions of the Chinese-Iranian Strategic Partnership stand to be nothing short of game-changing, though it'll of course take time for these expected benefits to unfold. "The four complementary factors influencing these scenarios are CPEC, W-CPEC+, the recently improved trilateral coordination between Azerbaijan-Pakistan-Turkey, and Iran's inevitable incorporation into the former in order to create the TIPA regional integration network," he said. He added all of these are poised to combine in mutually beneficial ways that will unleash the power of the Eurasian Century and consequently improve Pakistan's pivotal role within it.

**Briefs**

**Three killed in Karachi cylinder blast**

**DNA**  
KARACHI: At least three people, including two children and a woman were killed while six others got injured in a cylinder blast in Karachi's Crown Garden Apartments, Gulshan-e-Jahar on Wednesday. Rescue sources relayed the explosion took place inside a shop in the port city's Mosamat area. According to details, the explosion has destroyed several shops and cars. On getting information, rescue teams and ambulances reached the scene of the blast and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital where three of them were pronounced dead upon arrival. The explosion was so powerful that it destroyed three shops and a vehicle parked nearby. A bomb disposal squad has been called to determine the cause of the explosion.

**Court directs Govt, mills to consult over sugar price**

**DNA**  
LAHORE: A bench of Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday heard sugar mills petition challenging the government's order of fixing the ex-mill sugar price at Rs80. The high court had on Tuesday restrained the Punjab government from implementing a notification about fixing the ex-mill and retail price of sugar at Rs 80 and Rs 85 respectively. Justice Shahid Jamil Khan heard the case. "Will you take the stakeholders onboard over the price," the bench asked the official of provincial ministry of industries, present in the court. "The sugar mills not responded to the ministry," the official said. "They have affirmed to come for meeting. Sit with them and fix the price," the court said. "Under the Article 18 sugar mills owners have right to bring the matter to the court," the bench further observed.

**Vaccination centres to be closed once a week**

**IBRAR KHAN**  
ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOCC) has decided closure of the COVID-19 vaccination centres across the country once a week. The NCOCC approved weekly holiday of coronavirus vaccination centres and issued directives to the provincial chief and health secretaries regarding its closure for a day in a week. According to sources the vaccination centres will be closed on Friday in order to give rest to the administrative and medical staff. On the weekly holiday, the vaccination centres will complete their tasks including vaccine transfer and other related matters. Earlier on April 5, the government had decided to administer Covid-19 jabs to elderly people aged 80 and above at their homes after the NCOCC approved the recommendation.

**Security Workshop's participants visit GHQ**

**DNA**  
RAWALPINDI: Participants of National Security Workshop - 22 visited GHQ on Wednesday. The Participants were briefed about global and regional security dynamics and national security environment. Later the participants had interactive session with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa. National Security Workshop is an annual event at the National Defence University participated by representatives from all segments of society. National Security Workshop - 22 is being attended by 54 participants including parliamentarians, Civil Servants, Senior Armed Forces Officers and Representatives of the Civil Society. - DNA

**FM stresses transformation of D-8 to markets' needs**

Qureshi thanked Turkey, the outgoing Chair, for providing an effective leadership to the Organization

**STAFF REPORT**  
ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Wednesday urged the D-8 members to transform themselves to markets' needs as economies could not compete equally without adapting the new paradigm of development in fourth industrial age. "The new way is to produce in a highly decentralized and interdependent world economy. We must transform ourselves to the needs of our markets. Unless our economies adapt to this new paradigm of development in the fourth industrial age, we will not be able to compete as equals," the foreign minister said addressing the virtually held 19th D-8 Council of Ministers Session.

He thanked Turkey, the outgoing Chair, for providing an effective leadership to the Organization. He also congratulated and extended best wishes to Bangladesh as the incoming Chair of the D-8 Summit. The theme of the Summit- "Partnership for a Transformative World: Harnessing Power of Youth and Technology"- is both apt and timely. "We are living today in a highly digitalized but unequal world. And COVID-19 has further accentuated these differences. Most of the developing countries have low integration into the global economy, the global supply chains and the world of education and culture," Qureshi remarked. He said the inequality not only increased the gap be-

tween the rich and the poor countries, but also bred discontent among the masses, especially the youth. Emphasizing the youth to play their role in shaping the future, the foreign minister said the D-8 was especially endowed with a youthful population. He told the session that around 60% of the 220 million Pakistanis were under the age of 30. He said investing in youth was therefore a key priority of Government of Pakistan which was empowering them through education, employment and engagement. He said the young people had ideas on how to break out of the constraints under which the societies and economies of developing countries continued to operate. They

realize that our responses need to be innovative and advanced in terms of technology application, he added. "We must acknowledge that we are living at an inflection point in history. We are moving from the stage of mass production in industrial goods to the age of mass communication and mass development of products based on ideas. The new way is to produce in a highly decentralized and interdependent world economy," he said. He said Government of Pakistan's vision of regional cooperation and development was anchored in 'responsibility within and beyond'. He said the country believed that economic inter-dependence and enhanced connectivity and trade could pave the way

for mutually beneficial cooperation. Calling the D-8 as the fulcrum to take this vision forward, the foreign minister said the Organization had come a long since its inception in 1997, the progress falls far short of the promise and the potential. "We must renew our commitment for an early realization of D-8 vision and objectives. For a strong partnership, we need to fully implement various instruments and agreements for mutually beneficial collaboration, create opportunities for entrepreneurs, and mobilize our private sector," Qureshi stated. He said Pakistan welcomed the adoption of the Decennial Roadmap 2020-2030, and was confident that the milestones and priority areas

outlined in it would stimulate cooperation. He told the session that Pakistan had always contributed to strengthening of the D-8 as the country had ratified almost all D-8 instruments. Landmark documents -the D-8 Charter and the Global Vision - were signed in the 2012 Islamabad Summit, he added. He said Pakistan had hosted four key sectoral meetings in the last four months which was a clear demonstration of our resolve to do our part in furthering the work of the Organization. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the vision and objectives of the D-8 and resolve to continue playing an active role to enable the Organization achieve its full potential.

**CJCS visits air defence firing ranges**

**DNA**  
RAWALPINDI: General Naadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee visited Army Air Defence Ranges near Karachi and witnessed firing of different Air Defence weapon systems and Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs) including LY-80 Missiles and FM-90 Missiles. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff and H.E. Nong Rong, China's Ambassador to Pakistan also witnessed the exercise. The firing marked the culmination of Army Air Defence exercise 'Al-Bayza-II'. Chairman JCSC was given a detailed briefing on the aim and objectives of the exercise including drills/procedures being practiced. CJCS appreciated the display of high standards of training by the troops and emphasized the importance of Air Defence in modern warfare. Earlier, upon arrival at firing ranges, Chairman JCSC was received by Lieutenant General Hamood Uz Zaman Khan, Commander Army Air Defence Command.

**PIA starts flights from Lahore to N. Areas**

**DNA**  
LAHORE: The national carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has commenced direct flights from Lahore to northern areas as the first flight carrying 153 passengers flew to Skardu. The first direct flight departed from Lahore to Skardu, the junction of tourist destinations in northern areas of Pakistan. The national airline has achieved another milestone by announcing to connect different cities through enhanced flight operations. The passengers who have arrived at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport were saw-off by PIA District Manager Abdul Muqaddam and Station Manager Ali Asghar Zaidi. In a statement, PIA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Arshad Malik said that the national airline is performing its national duty to promote tourism. He said that the airline has also commenced flights from Lahore to Swat. The PIA spokesperson announced earlier that the national flag carrier will operate two flights twice a week between Lahore and Skardu. The PIA will use Airbus A-320 aircraft for Skardu flight operation and the fare of one person will be Rs7500. On March 26, Swat's Saidu Sharif airport had welcomed the first flight on Friday, after a hiatus of 17 years.

**Syria allows Pakistani Zaireen to visit country**

**SAIFULLAH**  
ISLAMABAD: Pakistani official sources confirmed on Wednesday that Syrian government has issued a circular regarding the resumption of pilgrimage from Pakistan. Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs also issued a statement on Wednesday stating that Damascus had sent an official letter to the ministry about resumption of pilgrimage from Pakistan to Syria. Accordingly, companies based in Syria, including the Transport and Tourism Company (Al Karnak), will be allowed to coordinate visas for Pakistani pilgrims and air travel. The pilgrimage from Pakistan to Syria will be carried out in accordance with health protocols and the preparation of required documents, including a health certificate, the statement said. In September last year, the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PIA) launched direct flights to the Syrian capital, Damascus. Islamabad also wants to resolve the Syrian crisis through dialogue and diplomacy.

**Jahangir Tareen questions govt's 'victimization drive' against him**

**ABID RAZA**  
LAHORE: 'Estranged' Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader Jahangir Khan Tareen said on Wednesday that not one, not two but three FIRs had been registered against him as his loyalty to the party is being tested. Talking to the media outside a banking court in Lahore, Tareen said his loyalty to the PTI was being tested. "I ask as to why I am being victimized. I was Prime Minister Imran Khan's friend. Why am I being turned into a foe," he questioned. At the same time, however, he made it clear that he had not parted ways with the PTI. "I have toiled hard for my party for 10 years. I am part of PTI, and will remain so," he vowed. When a reporter asked him about his much-talked-about meeting with Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari, Tareen said that was not true. Tareen regretted he had been facing an inquiry for the last one year, but he had not uttered a word against the government. "I demand justice from the PTI government," he said, and asked, "Why my and my son's bank accounts were frozen and who is benefiting from it." The estranged PTI leader said his persecution at the hands of the PTI government was increasing with each passing day. "The time has come that whoever is behind all this witch-hunt is exposed," Tareen said, and claimed that if Prime Minister Imran Khan desired he could expose these elements. "Am I the only sugar mill owner they are after?" he questioned. Jahangir Tareen stressed that only he is the target out of 80 sugar mills of Pakistan. I want justice from PTI, he said while adding that his bank accounts have been frozen along with his son's. He affirmed that he is a member of PTI and will not part ways. Meanwhile, a banking court, while extending the interim bail granted to PTI leader Jahangir Tareen and his son Ali Tareen, barred the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) on Wednesday from arresting the accused till April 10. It is pertinent to mention here that Tareen reached the banking court accompanied by several members of assemblies.



RAWALPINDI: Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of Russia called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff at GHQ. - DNA

**Russia lauds Pakistan's role in Afghan peace**

**STAFF REPORT**  
RAWALPINDI: Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov on Wednesday acknowledged Pakistan's sincere efforts in the Afghan peace process in his meeting with Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), in a statement, said during the meeting, the foreign minister and army chief discussed matters of mutual interest including enhanced defence and security cooperation, regional security, and in particular the Afghan peace process. "The visiting dignitary acknowledged Pakistan's achievements in the war against terrorism and contributions for regional peace and stability especially Paki-

stan's sincere efforts in the Afghan peace process," the statement read. The foreign minister said Pakistan and Russia's relations were on a positive trajectory and would continue to develop in multiple domains. Meanwhile, the army chief said Pakistan values its relations with Russia and reciprocates the desire for enhanced bilateral military cooperation. "Pakistan welcomes all initiatives which can bring peace and stability in Afghanistan as the whole region will benefit from it," he stressed. "We have no hostile designs towards any country and will keep on working towards a cooperative regional framework based on sovereign equality and mutual progress," he added.

**'Gwadar, Yangpu port can have sister city relationship'**

**FOREIGN DESK**  
BEIJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque said that Pakistan and China's Hainan have great potential for cooperation in the field of port and shipping and opined that the Gwadar port and China's Yangpu Free Trade Port can have a sister city relationship. The Gwadar Port is an important hub of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which connects China's western region and the Arabian Sea. While Yangpu Port is an important hub for the construction of Hainan Free Trade Port and a node for integration into the new western land-sea corridor, he said in interview. Ambassador Haque said that he attaches great importance to the profound friendship between China and Pakistan. According to CEN, he said that the construction of Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) is booming and he is very opti-



mistic about the cooperation between Pakistani cities and Hainan in the fields of port and shipping, education, and agriculture. "With the increase in trade volume between Pakistan and China and the increase in economic and trade exchanges, I think the two ports can all play a vital role in cementing trade between China and Pakistan," he added. China's aviation authority unveiled a plan in 2020 to trial the Seventh Free-

dom of the Air in the Hainan FTP, a move aimed at boosting the opening-up of the air-transport industry. Ambassador Haque said that the seventh freedom will allow airlines from various countries to enter Hainan, and stimulate the development of Hainan's civil aviation industry and the construction of Hainan FTP. "I think that is a good development because Hainan is a tropical area, it's very famous for its beautiful beaches and tropical forests. I think this policy will attract more tourists to Hainan and promote its development," he added. Ambassador Haque is also very optimistic about bilateral cooperation in the field of education. "Agriculture is a very strong sector of Hainan, and Pakistan is also a strong agricultural country. We would like more and more Pakistani students to come and study master and doctoral courses in the field of agriculture, and apply their studies to promote the development of Pakistan's agriculture."

**IMF says Pakistan's economy to grow 4.0 pc by 2021-22**

**ISLAMABAD:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow by 4.0 percent by next fiscal year (2021-22). In its annual report "World Economic Outlook 2021", the IMF has forecast 1.5 GDP growth for Pakistan during the current fiscal year 2020-21. This however, is in contrast to the revised growth forecast of 3.0 percent for current fiscal year by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The actual growth rate target set by the federal government for the corresponding year is 2.1 percent. Minister for Finance Hammad Azhar also reaffirmed the government's resolve to have higher GDP growth than the target set for the current fiscal year. "Pakistan's economy this year will grow at a faster rate than earlier forecasts. Starting from next fiscal year, we will be targeting an even higher growth rate that may exceed 4% per annum. This growth will not be based on deficits or depleting reserves but will be sustainable," he said in his tweet on Tuesday. The IMF has also forecasts the country's inflation rate to gradually subside to 8.0 percent by next fiscal year from 8.7 percent in the year 2020-21. - APP

**Pak Navy keen to further strengthen ties with Iran**

During the interactions, Mission Commander conveyed good wishes of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for the people of Iran in general and the IRI Navy in particular

**NAZIR SIYAL**  
KARACHI: Directorate General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy) in a statement on Wednesday said Pakistan Navy Ship AZMAT visited port Bandar Abbas, Iran during overseas deployment to Persian Gulf/ Gulf of Oman. "Upon arrival, Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) extended warm welcome and PN Ship was received by senior officers of Iran and Defense Attache of Pakistan in Iran," it said. The statement said during the port stay, Mission Commander along with Commanding Of-

ficer of PNS AZMAT called on Governor General and Representative of Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Hormuzgan Province and commander of the 1st Naval District of IRIN. During the interactions, Mission Commander conveyed good wishes of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for the people of Iran in general and the IRI Navy in particular. It added the Mission Commander also extended gratitude for the whole-hearted support provided by Iranian authorities for

PN Ship Port Call during COVID-19 scenario. According to the statement Pakistan Navy Ship AZMAT also participated in Passage Exercise with IRI Navy Ships ALBORZ, FALAKHAN AND KHADANG. It said the visit of PN Ship and participation in exercise with IRI Navy is a manifestation of PN resolve to work with regional navies in order to enhance peace and security in the region. "Pakistan Navy believes in promoting stability in the region and has remained committed to maritime security and order at sea," it noted. It said the visit of PNS AZMAT

is aimed to further strengthen bilateral ties and enhance naval collaboration. It is expected that the recent visit will further contribute towards strengthening close and fraternal ties of Pakistan with Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran staged a joint naval drill with Pakistan on Tuesday in the waters of the Persian Gulf amid tensions between Tehran and Washington. Iranian officials said the exercise aims at bolstering combat capabilities of the naval forces of the two countries and sharing information and expertise. "The exercise sought to demon-

strate naval prowess and ensure closer coordination between the two sides," said Captain Reza Sheibani, a senior Iranian Navy officer. "It also sought to establish dynamic interaction to create lasting peace and security in the region." The annual naval exercise is part of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two countries and had been halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic last year. The drill saw the participation of an Iranian destroyer, a missile-launching vessel and a helicopter apart from logistics units, Sheibani said.